

Man's true abode: Hereafter

Many people assume that it is possible to lead a perfect life in this world. According to this view, a happy and satisfactory life is attainable through material prosperity, which along with a fulfilling home life and recognition of one's social status are generally regarded as the fundamentals of a perfect life.

Yet according to the Qur'anic point of view, a "perfect life" – that is, one without any problems – is never possible in this world. That is simply because life in the world is deliberately created to be imperfect.

The origin of the Arabic word for "world" – *dunya* – has a significant meaning. Etymologically, it is derived from the root *daniy*, which means "simple", "inferior", "low" and "worthless". Hence, the word "world" in Arabic inherently comprises these qualities.



The insignificance of this life is emphasised many times earlier in this book. Indeed, all factors believed to make life wonderful – wealth, personal and business success, marriage, children, and so on – are nothing but vain deceptions. The related verse follows:

Know you (all), that the life of this world is but play and amusement, pomp and mutual boasting and multiplying (in rivalry) among yourselves, riches and children. Here is a similitude: How rain and the growth which it brings forth, delight (the hearts of) the tillers; soon it withers; you will see it grow yellow; then it becomes dry and crumbles away. But in the Hereafter is a penalty severe (for

the devotees of wrong). And forgiveness from Allah and (His) good pleasure (for the devotees of Allah). And what is the life of this world, but goods and chattels of deception? (Surat al-Hadid: 20)

In another verse, Allah gives an account of the inclination felt by man for the world rather than the hereafter:

Nay (behold), you prefer the life of this world, but the hereafter is better and more enduring. (Surat al-A'la: 16-17)

Problems arise only because, rather than the hereafter, people value this life too highly. They are pleased and content with what they have here in this world. Such an attitude means nothing more than turning one's face away from the promise of Allah and consequently from the reality of His mighty existence. Allah proclaims that a grievous end awaits them:

Those who expect not the meeting with Us but desire the life of the world and feel secure therein, and those who are neglectful of Our revelations... (Surah Yunus: 7)

Of course, the imperfection of this life does not gainsay the fact that there are also good and beautiful things on earth. But here on earth, what is regarded as beautiful, delightful, pleasing and attractive stands cheek-by-jowl with the imperfect, flawed and ugly. In this world, good and evil are commingled. This is but a reminder of paradise and hell. Indeed, if observed with a sound and conscientious mind, these facts would make a person realise the truth of the hereafter. With Allah, that life which is deemed good and beneficial for man is actually that of the hereafter.

Allah commands His faithful servants to make serious efforts to attain paradise in the verse below:

Be quick in the race for forgiveness from your Lord, and for Paradise whose width is that (of the whole) of the heavens and of the earth, prepared for the righteous. (Surah Al 'Imran: 133)

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