**BELIEF IN THE HEREAFTER**

*Sura Bakara/Ayat 4:*

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And those who believe in what is sent down to you, and what was sent down before you (such as the Torah, Gospel and Psalms, and the Scrolls of Abraham), and in the Hereafter, they have certainty of faith.**4/5**

***4.*** *The word translated as “certainty of faith” is yaqīn . It means having no doubt about the truth of a matter and arriving at accurate, doubt-free knowledge. This knowledge can come from either Revelation, or study and verification. Yaqīn has three degrees: first, that which comes from knowledge ( ‘ilm al-yaqīn ); second, that which depends on seeing and observation ( ‘ayn al-yaqīn ); and third, that which comes from direct experience ( ‘haqq al-yaqīn ). For example, rising smoke is the sign of fire and gives us some certainty about the existence of a fire where it is rising. This certainty is that which is based on knowledge. When we go to where the smoke is rising and see the fire with our own eyes, our certainty of the fire's existence is the kind coming from direct observation. If we put our hand into the fire and feel its burning quality, then we obtain experienced certainty about the existence and quality of fire.*

*One may acquire certainty about, or certain faith in the Hereafter, through Revelation or discovery; through the seeing of the “heart” (the spiritual intellect); through intellectual deduction or reasoning; or through some sort of contact with the spirits of the dead (provided that this last is done through authentic ways); through true dreams; or through scientific studies. In all these cases, it will be certainty based on knowledge, that is, certainty of the first degree.*

***5.*** *By describing the qualities of believers in a few concise phrases, the Qur'ān wonderfully summarizes the main essentials of Islam. Islam is based on believing in the meta-physical – including first and foremost the reality of God with all His Attributes and Names, which is the source of all truths. Believing in one of the pillars of the Islamic faith requires believing in the others, because one cannot be conceived of without the others. For example, believing in God requires believing in the Messengership, because, first of all, it is only through Messengership that we can have accurate knowledge about God and receive answers to the basic questions we all ask as human beings: Who am I? What is this world all about? What is the essence, nature and meaning of life? Who sent me to this world and why? What do life and death ask of me? What is my final destination? Who is my guide in this journeying of life? Believing in Messengership requires believing in Revelation, Divine Books and angels. Finally, the afterlife is both the inevitable, eternal consequence of this life and a requirement of God's being eternal, with all His Attributes and Names.*

*Second, as stated in a Prophetic Tradition, the (prescribed) Prayer constitutes the central pillar of Islamic life (ad-Daylamī, 2: 204). Without it, one cannot establish the building of Islam. Giving to those in need is the bridge between people, a bridge that fills the space between social classes. Believing in all the Prophets and Divine Books make all believers from the time of Adam brothers and sisters. Islam is the consummation of all Divine religions and the Prophet Muhammad, upon him be peace and blessings, was heir to all his predecessors. Belief in the Hereafter extends life and time to eternity and embraces all believers among humankind, jinn and angels, in a single, eternal embrace. (1)*

*Sura Bakara/Ayat 62:*

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(The truth is not as they – the Jews – claim, but this:) Those who believe (i.e. professing to be Muslims), or those who declare Judaism, or the Christians or the Sabaeans (or those of some other faith) – whoever truly believes in God and the Last Day and does good, righteous deeds, surely their reward is with their Lord, and they will have no fear, nor will they grieve.**74**

***74****. The aim of the verse is to repudiate the illusion cherished by the Jews that, by virtue of their being Jews, they have a monopoly over salvation. They had long asserted their belief that a special and exclusive relationship existed between themselves and God. They thought that Jews, as Jews, were predestined to salvation, regardless of their beliefs and actions, whereas all non-Jews were predestined to serve as fuel for the Fire.*

*The context of the verse makes it clear that it does not aim to enumerate in full all the articles of faith in which one should believe in order to be saved. They are mentioned elsewhere, in the appropriate places. No one should conclude from this verse that for eternal salvation, it is not compulsory to believe in the Prophet Muhammad, upon him be peace and blessings, and follow his way. There is a clear relationship between this verse and verse 38 – If, henceforth, a guidance (like a Book through a Messenger) comes to you from Me, and whoever follows My guidance (and turns to Me with faith and worship), they will have no fear (in this world and the next, for they will always find My help and support with them), nor will they grieve .– and the beginning of the sūrah , where belief in the Qur'ān and the previous Books, together with establishing the Prayer and spending in God's cause, are mentioned as the attributes of the believers who prosper. Verses 41, 42, 43 – Believe in that which I have sent down (the Qur'ān), confirming that which is with you (of the truth), and do not be the first to disbelieve in it. And (you scribes, fearful of losing your status and the worldly benefit accruing from it) do not sell My Revelations for a trifling price (such as worldly gains, status and renown); and in Me alone seek refuge through piety and reverence for Me. Do not confound the truth by mixing it with falsehood, and do not conceal the truth while you know (the meaning and outcome of what you do, and that what you strive to hide is true, and that Muhammad is the Messenger of God, the Messenger whose coming you have been anticipating). Establish the Prayer, and pay the Prescribed Purifying Alms (the Zakāh); and bow (in the Prayer, not by forming a different community or congregation, but) together with those who bow (the Muslims) . –explicitly address the Jews and explicitly invite them to believe in the Prophet Muhammad, upon him be peace and blessings.*

*In order to fully understand the message of this verse, verse 22: 17 should also be taken into consideration. (2)*

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Abu Huraira reported: One day the Messenger of Allah (may peace be upon him) appeared before the public that a man came to him and said: Prophet of Allah, (tell me) what is Iman. Upon this he (the Holy Prophet) replied: That you affirm your faith in Allah, His angels, His Books, His meeting, His Messengers and that you affirm your faith in the Resurrection hereafter. He (again) said: Messenger of Allah, (tell me) what does al-Islam signify. He (the Holy Prophet) replied: Al-Islam signifies that you worship Allah and do not associate anything with Him and you establish obligatory prayer and you pay the obligatory poor-rate (Zakat) and you observe the fast of Ramadan. He (the inquirer) again said: Messenger of Allah, what does al-Ihsan imply? He (the Holy Prophet) replied: That you worship Allah as if you are seeing Him, and in case you fail to see Him, then observe prayer (with this idea in your mind) that (at least) He is seeing you. He (the inquirer ) again said: Messenger of Allah, when would there be the hour (of Doom)? He (the Holy Prophet) replied: The one who is asked about it is no better informed than the inquirer. I, however, narrate some of its signs (and these are): when the slave-girl will give birth to he master, when the naked, barefooted would become the chiefs of the people - these are some of the signs of (Doom). (Moreover) when the shepherds of the black (camels) would exult themselves in buildings, this is one of the signs of (Doom). (Doom) is one of the five (happenings wrapped in the unseen) which no one knows but Allah. Then he (the Messenger of Allah) recited (the verse):" Verily Allah! with Him alone is the knowledge of the hour and He it is Who sends (down the rain) and knows that which is in the wombs and no person knows whatsoever he shall earn tomorrow, and a person knows not in whatsoever land he shall die. Verily Allah is Knowing, Aware. He (the narrator, Abu Huraira) said: Then the person turned back and went away. The Messenger of Allah (may peace be upon him) said: Bring that man back to me. They (the Companions of the Holy Prophet present there) went to bring him back, but they saw nothing there. Upon this the Messenger of Allah remarked: he was Gabriel, who came to teach the people their religion.(3)

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[**ARGUMENTS FOR THE RESURRECTION AND THE AFTERLIFE**](http://www.neicc.net/arguments-for-the-resurrection-and-the-afterlife/) **(4)**

Although scientific findings like the second law of thermodynamics show that existence is gradually disappearing, even a collision of two planets could destroy the universe. If existence began with a big bang, why should it not end with another big bang or collision? Existence is an extremely delicately calculated “organism,” a system with parts subtly dependent upon each other. A human body is made up of about a hundred million million cells. Just as a single deformed, cancerous cell can kill the entire body, any serious deformation anywhere in the universe also could “kill” it. Our death sometimes comes unexpectedly and without any visible, diagnosed reason. Do we know whether or not the universe might “die” all of a sudden, unexpectedly, from a “disease” or a “heart attack”? Maybe our old world has terminal cancer because we abuse it.

What follows comprises some other arguments for the Resurrection and the afterlife:

• God’s Mercy and Munificence are, of course, eternal. An Eternal One Who manifests Himself eternally requires the existence of eternal beings. His eternal Mercy and Munificence demand eternal manifestation and thus eternal beings on whom to confer eternal bounties. But our world is only temporary, and millions of its living creatures die each day. What can such a fact indicate, other than this world’s final and complete death?

This world cannot receive the comprehensive manifestation of the Divine Names and Attributes. Nor can living beings, who experience great hardship and difficulty in maintaining themselves. For example, we cannot satisfy all our desires and appetites. Our youth, beauty, and strength, upon which we set our hearts, leave without a word and cause us great sorrow. Also, we have to exert ourselves even to obtain a cluster of grapes. If we were denied eternal nourishment after having tasted it, would this not be an insult and a mockery, a source of great pain? For a blessing to be real, it must be constant. Without an eternal life in which we can satisfy our desires eternally, all of God Almighty’s bounties bestowed upon us would change into pain and sorrow. Therefore, after destroying this world, God will transform it into an eternal one that can receive the comprehensive manifestations of His Mercy and Munificence without obstruction, one in which we can satisfy all our desires eternally.

• God’s Names and Attributes are absolute and eternal. Therefore, He is absolutely and eternally Merciful, Relenting, and Forgiving, as well as absolutely and eternally Mighty, Just, and Dignified. Although His Mercy embraces all things (7:156) and, as stated in a hadith, “exceeds His Wrath,”6 some people’s sins are so serious (e.g., unbelief and associating partners with God) that they deserve eternal punishment. Besides, the verse: whoever kills a human being unjustly, it is as if he (or she) has killed humanity (5:32) cannot be ignored. This is especially true today, where “might is right,” thousands of innocent people are killed daily, and many others are wronged and deprived of their basic human rights. Even worse, many of the most serious sins and injustices go unpunished.

Death does not discriminate between the oppressed and oppressors, the innocent and the guilty, and the sinless and the sinful. This only can mean that just as in the world major crimes are deferred to supreme tribunals, so too, major sins (e.g., unbelief, associating partners with God, murder, and oppression) are referred to the Hereafter’s Supreme Tribunal, where God will dispense absolute Justice. Even if God Almighty sometimes punishes them also here in the world, many injustices remain unpunished due to some instances of wisdom. Therefore, God’s Justice will be fully implemented in the other world.

One day, those who thanked God will be welcomed with: Eat and drink to your hearts content because of what you did in days gone by (69:24) and Peace be upon you! You have done well. Enter here to dwell forever (39:73). In this place, God has prepared for us things we cannot even begin to imagine. Meanwhile, those who engaged in bloodshed, sin, and other prohibited activities will be thrown into Hell with the shout: Enter (through) the gates of Hell to dwell therein forever: what an evil abode for the arrogant! (39:72).

• This world cannot judge our actual worth. Although we have a small physical body, our mental and spiritual faculties allow us to embrace the universe. Our acts are not restricted only to this world, and therefore cannot be bound by time and space. Our nature is so universal that even the first human being’s acts affect the last one’s life and character and all of existence. Restricting us to a physical entity, a very short lifespan, and a limited part of space, as materialists do, shows a complete misunderstanding and lack of appreciation of what each of us really is.

This world’s scales cannot weigh the intellectual and spiritual value of Prophets and their achievements, or the destruction caused by such monsters as Pharaoh, Nero, Hitler, and Stalin. Nor can they weigh the true value of sincere belief and moral qualities. What is the proper reward for a martyr who has sacrificed everything for the sake of God, or for such universal human values as justice and truthfulness; or for a believing scientist whose dedicated research results in an invention that benefits all people until the Last Day?

Only the other world’s delicate scales, which account for an atom’s weight of good and evil, can weigh such deeds accurately: We set up a just balance for the Day of Resurrection. Thus, no soul will be treated unjustly. Even though it be the weight of one mustard seed, We shall bring it forth to be weighed; and Our reckoning will suffice (21:47). Even if nothing required the Resurrection, the necessity of weighing our deeds would require an infinitely just and sensitive balance to be established.

• Nothing disappears completely from this world. While we can record and preserve our every word and act on tapes, why should we not be able to understand that God, Who is the All-Recording and All-Preserving, records all of humanity’s words and deeds The Resurrection and the Afterlife in a way unknown to us? For we see that He enfolds everything in small things like seeds. For example, each human being is enfolded in a sperm or in his or her forty-six chromosomes. If we had forty-four or forty-eight chromosomes, we would be something completely different. He also records and preserves the whole life of a tree in its seeds, each of which will grow into a new, almost identical, elaborate tree. A plant that dies in autumn or winter continues to live not only in its seeds but also in innumerable memories. Likewise, He preserves sounds and voices, as well as appearances and sights to display them in another world. When we die and disappear into the soil, our most essential part, which is like a nucleus or a seed and is called “the root of the tail” (in a Prophetic saying), does not disappear, for God will use it rebuild us on the Day of Resurrection.

• Consider the following analogy: Traveling upon a road, we come upon a caravanserai built by a great person. It is decorated at the greatest expense in order to delight and instruct the guests during their night’s stay. We can see just a little, for we are staying for a very short time. Briefly tasting the joys of what is offered, we continue our journey unsatisfied. However, the great one’s servants busily record each guest’s conduct and preserve the record. We see, too, that most of the wonderful decorations are replaced daily with fresh ones for newly arriving guests.

Having seen all this, can any doubt remain that the caravanserai’s builder must have permanent exalted dwellings, inexhaustible precious treasures, an uninterrupted flow of unlimited generosity? With his generosity shown here, he intends only to arouse his guests’ appetite for what remains in his immediate presence, to awaken their desire for the gifts he has prepared for them.

If we reflect upon this world, we will understand that this world, just like the caravanserai, does not exist for itself. Neither could it have assumed this shape by itself. Rather, it is a well-constructed temporary place, wisely designed to receive those beings who constantly arrive, stay awhile, and then depart. Those inhabiting it for a transient, short time are guests, invited by their Generous Sustainer to the Abode of Peace.

This world’s adornments and amusements are not here for our perpetual enjoyment, for such temporary pleasures result in long-lasting pain when they disappear. They give us a taste to rouse our appetite. But they do not satiate us, for they are too short-lived, or our life is too short. Such valuable and temporary adornments must be there to instruct us in wisdom, arouse gratitude, and encourage us to seek their permanent originals.

In short, the adornments we see are for exalted goals beyond themselves. They are like samples and forms of blessings stored in Paradise, by the Mercy of the All-Merciful, for people of faith and good conduct.

References:

**(1) 2:4/The Quran with Annotated Interpretation in Modern English by Ali Unal**

**(2)2:62/The Quran with Annotated Interpretation in Modern English by Ali Unal**

**(3) Sahih Muslim, The Book of Faith, Hadith #0004**

**(4)Gulen, MuhammedFethullah. The Essentials of the Islamic Faith.The Light, Inc. 2005.**