

ISLAMIC TEACHINGS ON LIFE AFTER DEATH (FUTURE LIFE)

1. In Islam, life is defined as a condition of existence. It is divided into three parts; namely life on earth i.e between birth and death, life between death and resurrection i.e Barzakah and life after resurrection.
2. It should be noted that the sole purpose of life on earth is to prepare for future life. Indeed, the righteous on earth will enjoy for millions of years after death just as the evildoers will suffer for ever and ever.
3. The only purpose for man's creation on earth is to worship Allah. Allah says in **Q (51:56)**;
"I did not create jinn and man except to worship me"
4. There is no doubt that life on earth is very short and a mere amusement.
Allah says in **Q (4:77)**; *"...Say; short is the enjoyment of this world. The hereafter is the best for those who do right..."*
5. From the above verse, man must prepare for life to come by worshipping Allah as his sole purpose of creation e.g praying, sadaq, fasting, patience, kindness e.t.c
6. While on earth, Muslims, must carefully consider their beginning and end so that they may get to know the signs of Allah and His greatness.
7. In Islam, future life is marked by death. Death is defined as the separation of the soul from the body and all limbs of the body stop functioning. Allah says in **Q (3:185)**;
"Every soul shall have a taste of death..."
8. It should be noted that the death of the body does not mean the death of the soul. It is Allah who takes the soul at the time of death.
9. Death is the first return journey to Allah and there is no doubt it is caused by Allah.
Q (56:60-61) says; *"We decreed death to be your common lot, and We are not frustrated from changing your forms and creating you again in forms that you do not know"*
10. From the above verse, it is evident that death is caused by Allah and that it is not the end of man's life but it opens the door to a higher form of life.
11. After death, man is put in the grave. The grave referred to here is a place where one's body lies after death. It can be a land grave, water grave or an animal if one eaten by carnivores.
Allah says in **Q (80:21-22)**; *"Then He causes him to die, and put him in his grave. Then when it is His will, He will raise him up again"*
12. After death, man enters into the second stage of life called **Barzakah**. This is the state of life between death and resurrection. Allah says in **Q (23:100)**;
"... and behind them is Barzakah till the day of judgement"

13. Barzakah is the world between death and the establishment of the last hour, the Day of Resurrection. This is where man remains until when the last hour comes when mankind rises from their graves to stand before the Lord of the worlds, their bodies naked, their feet bare, and their eyes fixed in terror as they rush towards a caller.

Characteristics of life in Barzakah

1. According to **Q (80:21-22)**, when man dies, he is put in the grave but due to Allah's mercy, he raises him back to life.
2. After death, man is able to see what is happening in the spiritual world which he could not see while still alive because he is covered by barriers. **Q (50:22)** says;

“You have been heedless of this. But now We have removed your veil. Today your sight is very sharp”

3. Although it is hard for ordinary people to know what happens to a dead person in the grave, it was simple for the prophets of Allah. Prophet Muhammad PBUH said;

“Had it not been my fear that you may refuse to bury one another, I would request Allah to make it possible for you to hear the punishments I hear in the grave”

4. Life in the grave is the intermediate state where one will realize whether he is destined for paradise or hell. Good doers will start enjoying their reward from here and the same will apply to the evil-doers.
5. The evil-doers in the grave will plead to Allah to bring them back on earth to do good deeds after tasting part of the punishments of hell in their graves.

Q (23:99-100) says; *“Oh my Lord! Send me back that I may do the righteous things I ignored”*

6. In the grave, it is the soul which enjoys the rewards or suffers the punishments that are there although the body may indirectly feel it.
7. In Barzakah, even if two bodies are buried together, one a sinner and another one righteous, they receive different treatment. No one can feel or see or hear the treatment of the other.
8. When one dies, the soul goes out of the body to an assigned place. For example, the souls of believers are in heaven, others are in gates of heaven, others in birds flying in heaven while some in their graves.
9. Once a deceased person is placed in his grave and his companions turn and walk away, he hears their last seven footsteps.
10. While in the grave, the dead is visited by two fierce angels, Munikar and Nakiir, which question him about Tawheed, messengership of Muhammad PBUH, Qur'an and Islam.

11. If he gives satisfactory answers, the two angels assure him of paradise and if he answers them unsatisfactorily, he is subjected to torture till the day of resurrection.
12. The souls in Barzakah are grouped into four kinds namely; those who sleep on their backs until their corpses become dust. There are those who are asleep and will only wake up on the first blast of the trumpet.
13. There are souls who stay in the grave for a short while and then fly in the trees or birds of paradise e.g those of martyrs, prophets and saints and those souls who choose their own destiny.
14. After death, the human soul acquires a new body and an abode depending on the nature of the actions which man did on earth.
15. In short, Barzakah is a place of happiness or misery according to one's spiritual conditions. This means that life on earth is a carbon copy of life to come.
16. When a person dies, his or her deeds come to an end except for three types of recurring and rewardable benefits which he did himself. The prophet mentioned these three:

“When a man dies, his deeds come to an end except for three: ongoing charity, beneficial knowledge, and righteous offspring who pray for him”

17. When a believer is put in the grave, a man with a rejoicing face, nice clothing, and a perfect scent will then come to him. This man will say to the person *‘Rejoice at that which will make you joyful. This is your day which you were promised.’* So the person will ask him, *“Who are you? Your face is the face that brings joy!”* The man will reply, *“I am your good deeds.”* He will then say, *‘My Lord, establish the last hour.’*

Likewise, when a disbeliever is put in the grave, a man with a shocking face, ugly clothing, and a horrible stench (stink) will then come to him. This man will say to the person *‘Rejoice at that which will make you sad. This is your day which you were promised.’* So the person will ask him, *“Who are you? Your face is the face that brings evil!”* The man will reply, *“I am your filthy deeds.”* He will then say, *‘My Lord, do not establish the last hour.’*