

Lesson 19: The Return & Resurrection (Al-Ma'ad & Al-Qiyamah)

All revealed religions have clearly stated that death is not an end to the existence of man, by death a man only goes from this world to another world, a world where he will reap the fruits of his deeds.

All prophets and their followers have mentioned that we have not been in vain, and that after we are removed from this world, we shall stand accountable for our deeds and be rewarded or punished accordingly.

The belief in the Return is known as *al-ma'ad*, and the resurrection is known as *al-qiyamah*. This belief is based on the wisdom and justice of God.

1. The Wisdom & Justice of God

God's wisdom requires that those who do good should not be left without reward, that those who do evil should not be left without punishment and that the oppressed be delivered from their oppression. We can see that this world is not a place of complete reward and punishment, and that many good-doers and evil-doers die before they receive complete recompense for their deeds.

Thus if the records of these people were to terminate right here and there is no return and resurrection, what would have happened to God's infinite justice, wisdom and mercy? How can it be said that the Just, Wise and Merciful Creator brought a world into existence where good people are troubled with oppression and injustice, and after a while become nothing?

We all know that this would be nothing less than injustice. How is it possible that a God who had no need to create us, and whose aim in creating us was only to train us and make our existence productive, could be satisfied merely with this present world? How could He cut the root of man's existence before he became aware and reached fruition and annihilate him?

God, no doubt, will give complete reward and punishment for all deeds and behaviour in another world, and will neglect nothing. He says, ***Or do those who commit evil deeds think that We shall make them as those who believe and do righteous deeds, equal their living and their dying? How ill they judge! Allah created the heavens and the earth in truth, and that every soul may be recompensed for what it has earned; they shall not be wronged. (45:21–22)***

Moreover, there are certain deeds for which a person cannot be adequately punished in this world. For example, a person who drops an atom bomb and blows millions of people away cannot be adequately punished by his death—his full punishment will only come in the next world which is an eternal world. Similarly, there are certain good deeds for which a person cannot be rewarded properly in this world.

2. The Return in Islam

Islam has laid most emphasis on the issue of the Return (al-ma`ad). More than a thousand verses of the Qur`ān refer especially to the Return and life after death, whereas the verses related to the individual and social laws scarcely reach five hundred.

The belief in the Return is one of the foundations and basis of Islam. A person who does not believe in the Return and Resurrection cannot and is not considered a Muslim.

Now a few verses from the Qur`ān on the Return and Resurrection.

On the necessity of the Return:

What, does man reckon that he shall be left to roam at will (after death)? (75:36)

We have not created the heavens, the earth, and what is between them for vanity; such is the thought of the unbelievers; wherefore woe unto the unbelievers because of the Fire! Or shall We make those who believe and do righteous deeds same as those who cause corruption in the earth, or shall We make the God-fearing same as the transgressors? (38:27–28)

Do not think that Allah is heedless of what the evildoers do; He is only deferring them to a day when eyes shall stare. (14:42)

On the possibility of the Resurrection:

One day Ubayy ibn Khalaf brought some decaying bones before the Prophet and crumbled them in his own hands, saying: **"Who shall quicken these bones when they are decayed?" (36:78)** In answer, Allah said,

Say, 'He shall quicken them Who created them the first-time [from nothing]; He is well-aware of all creations.' Is not He, Who created the heavens and the earth, able to create the life of them? Yes indeed; He is the Perfect Creator, the All-Knowing. (36:79)

On Reward & Punishment:

Then as for him who was insolent and preferred the life of this world, surely Hell shall be the abode. But as for him who feared the station of his Lord and protected the soul from its caprice, surely the Garden shall be the refuge. (79:37-41)

Whosoever does an evil deed shall be recompensed only with the life of it, but whosoever does a righteous deed, be they male or female, as long as they are believers, they shall enter the Garden, therein they shall be provided without any limitation. (40:40)

O Men, fear your Lord! Surely the earthquake of the Hour is a mighty thing; on that day when you behold it, every suckling woman shall neglect the child she has suckling, and every pregnant woman shall deposit her burden, and you shall see mankind drunk, yet they are not drunk—however, Allah's chastisement is terrible. (22: 1-2)

If these and hundreds of other verses concerning the day of judgement are considered with care and attention, they will transform man's behaviour in this world to such an extent that he will not undertake a thing without first thinking about the hereafter and fearing God's chastisement. Good Muslims, out of fear of the next world, will carefully weigh their acts and words and even thoughts; they will not do things dictated by their pleasure, and will spend the night and day thinking how to improve themselves and the community.

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This lesson is based on Dar Rah-e Haqq, *The Roots of Religion*, Qum.

Question Paper on Lesson 19

Question 1: [15 points]

True or False:

- (a) Belief in the life after death is unique to the religion of Islam.
- (b) God's infinite justice, mercy and wisdom demand that there should be a Day of Judgement and a life after death.
- (c) Man can be adequately punished or rewarded for all kinds of deeds in this world.
- (d) The Qur'ān has only five hundred verses on the Resurrection and the Day of Judgement.
- (e) Belief in the life hereafter is an essential part of a Muslim's faith.

Question 2: [20 points]

Explain in your own words the possibility of resurrection.

Question 3: [15 points]

Explain how the belief in the Resurrection and the Day of Judgement affects the life of a good Muslim.
(You may use some real examples from your own life.)

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