

# DEATH & THE HEREAFTER IN ISLAM



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# Death & the Hereafter in Islam

*"Every soul will taste death."*

*The Clear Quran 29:57*

## Death is Near

*"Wherever you may be, death will overcome you – even if you were in fortified towers."*

*The Clear Quran 4:78*

Death is the reality from which none can escape. It draws nearer every day; every hour; every minute. According to the CIA's *The World Factbook 2007*, almost two people die each second. That's a staggering 57.9 million people each year! Every single being will reach this inescapable fate, regardless of their age, health, background, social status or piety. Where are the past kings, the billionaires and the powerful? Where are the once beautiful, the famous, and the intellectual elite?

## The Reality of Death

Death is not a disaster, but simply a passing from this world onto the next. It should make us reflect and ponder about the purpose of life, and what will become of us after death.

Allah (God) has informed us in the Quran that He has created us with the purpose of worshiping Him alone and that He made this life a test to see who will fulfill that purpose:

*"I did not create Jinn and humans except to worship Me."*

*The Clear Quran 51:56*

God has also informed us the purpose behind the creation of death and life:

*"He is the one Who created death and life in order to test which of you is best in deeds. And He is the Almighty, All-Forgiving."*

*The Clear Quran 67:2*

One does not prepare for death by pre-paying funeral services or selecting a coffin in advance. It is about fulfilling one's purpose in life – to worship Allah alone, to live according to His commandments, and perform good deeds. The concept of worship in Islam is all encompassing and is not merely restricted to praying. In fact, any action that is pleasing to Allah is considered an act of worship, and a person will be rewarded for it.

## The Moment of Death

*"Let every soul look to what 'deeds' it has sent forth for tomorrow."*

*The Clear Quran 59:18*

Every day we see examples of death. We perceive a peaceful death as one with neither pain nor violence. However, this is not necessarily the case. When a person dies, the soul leaves the body, and so the physical appearance of the body may not reflect the situation of the soul.

The peacefulness or unease of the soul will be a direct result of how well a person fulfilled their purpose in this life, and has little to do with the cause of death.

Consider an example of two people who have a one-way ticket to a destination they have never been to before. The first person takes the time to learn about the language, culture and practices relating to the destination. He acquires the right currency and vaccinations, and when it comes time to travel, he arrives without any surprises. He is safe and content, because he has taken the time to prepare.

In contrast, the second person is careless in his preparations and simply lives for the moment until the time comes to depart. He arrives at the unknown destination, scared and confused. His unpreparedness causes him to end up with a dreadful fate, as all of the things he has brought with him were of no use.

Describing such a heedless person, Allah says in the Quran:

*"When death approaches any of them, they cry, 'My Lord! Let me go back, so I may do good in what I left behind.' Never! It is only a 'useless' appeal they make."*

*The Clear Quran 23:99-100*

Also consider the response of those people consigned to hell, when they are questioned regarding what put them there:

*"They will reply, 'We were not of those who prayed, nor did we feed the poor. We used to indulge 'in falsehood' along with others, and deny the Day of Judgement, until the inevitable came to us.'"*

*The Clear Quran 74:43-47*

We all have an appointed time with death, and we will all travel to this unfamiliar destination. Ask yourself – have you prepared for it?

## The Purpose of Life

*"Did you then think that We had created you without purpose, and that you would never be returned to Us?"*

*The Clear Quran 23:115*

Life is a test which ends in death, but it does not mark the end of one's existence. Once death arrives, the opportunity to do good ceases. It will be too late to repent and our fate will be determined solely by our beliefs and deeds that we do in our current life. Man's life is divided into two parts: a brief stay in this world, and an eternal life in the next. Any sane mind will conclude that eternal bliss is far more beneficial than short lived pleasures on Earth.

Allah created mankind and made us responsible for our actions by granting us freedom of choice, and intelligence to discern right and wrong. If there were no afterlife in which the good were rewarded and the bad punished, that would contradict the perfect justice of Allah.

Hence it is an absolute demand of justice that there be a Day of Judgment on which every soul is brought to account.

*"Should We then treat those who have submitted like the wicked? What is the matter with you? How do you judge?"*

*The Clear Quran 68:35-36*

# The Day of Judgment

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*"The death you are running away from will inevitably come to you. Then you will be returned to the Knower of the seen and unseen, and He will inform you of what you used to do."*

*The Clear Quran 62:8*

Everyone's deeds in this life are meticulously recorded and preserved, as Allah says:

*"And the record of deeds will be laid open and you will see the wicked in fear of what is written in it. They will cry, 'Woe to us! What kind of record is this that does not leave any sin, small or large, unlisted?' They will find whatever they did present before them. And your Lord will never wrong anyone."*

*The Clear Quran 18:49*

We will be amazed by the accuracy of such a record of all our actions, as we will be reminded of matters long forgotten. Allah says:

*"God has kept account of it all, while they have forgotten it."*

*The Clear Quran 58:6*

Thinking deeply on this should make us ashamed of committing any sin while knowing that it will be recorded against us and exposed on the Day of Judgment in front of Allah.

For those who doubt Allah's abilities to resurrect and judge them, Allah quotes the disbelievers as saying:

*"Who will give life to decayed bones? Say, 'O Prophet,' 'They will be revived by the One Who produced them the first time, for He has perfect knowledge of every created being.'"*

*The Clear Quran 36:78-79*

# Paradise and Hell

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Those who believe in Allah as the only God worthy of being worshiped, and perform good deeds, will be rewarded with Paradise.

*"Indeed, on that Day the residents of Paradise will be busy enjoying themselves. They and their spouses will be in cool shade, reclining on canopied couches. There they will have fruits and whatever they desire."*

*The Clear Quran 36:55-57*

Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) narrated that Allah said:

*"I have prepared for My righteous slaves such excellent things as no eye has ever seen, nor an ear has ever heard, nor a human heart can ever think of."*

This is in sharp contrast to the people who deny the Oneness of Allah, who will be told:

*"This is the Hell you were warned of. Burn in it Today for your disbelief."*

*The Clear Quran 36:63-64*

For the disbelievers, it is the worst of punishments:

*"Indeed, Hell is lying in ambush as a home for the transgressors where they will remain for endless ages. There they will not taste any coolness or drink, except boiling water and oozing pus - a fitting reward. For they never expected any reckoning, and totally rejected Our signs. And We have everything recorded precisely. So the deniers will be told 'Taste the punishment' for all you will get Us is more torment."*

*The Clear Quran 78:21-30*

# Conclusion

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*"O humanity! What has emboldened you against your Lord, the Most Generous, Who created you, fashioned you, and perfected your design, moulding you in whatever form He willed?" But no! In fact, you deny the final Judgment."*

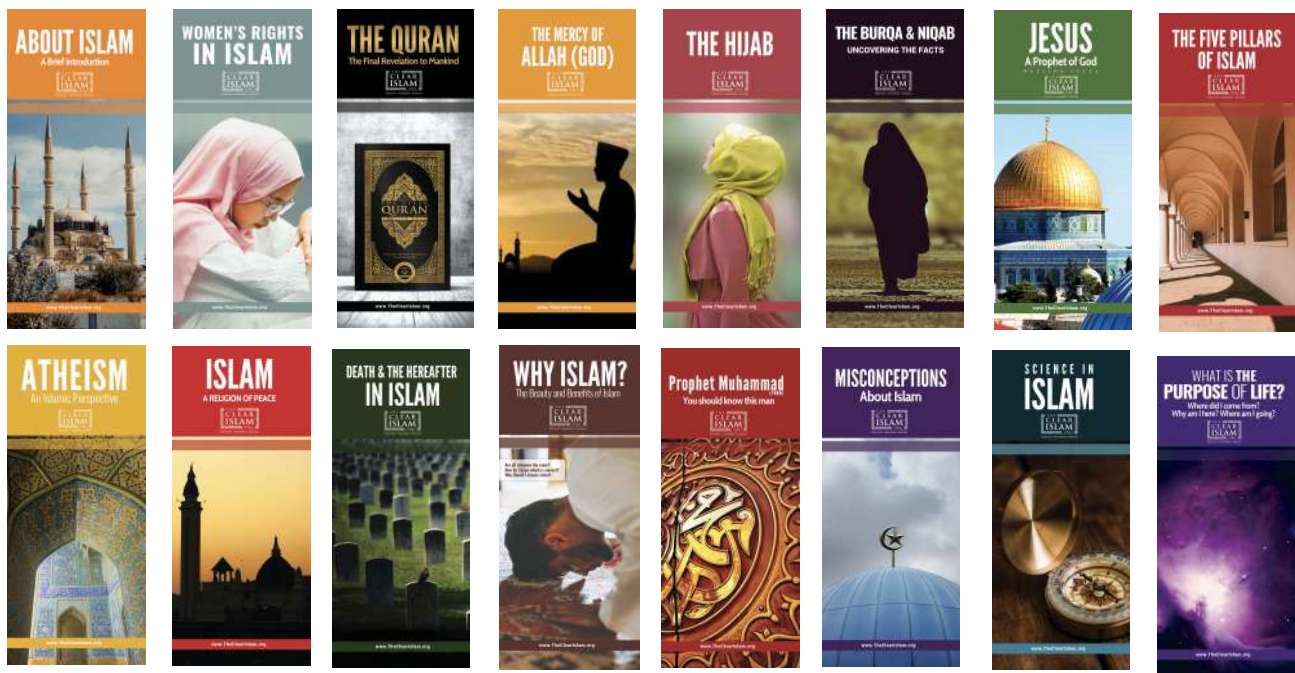
*The Clear Quran 82:6-9*

*"Indeed, the virtuous will be in bliss, and the wicked will be in Hell."*

*The Clear Quran 82:13-14*

Death is inevitable. Our purpose in life is to worship Allah alone, perform acts of righteousness and to avoid all that is forbidden. Our fate is being decided on the basis of our present actions, so we can either make use of our opportunities on Earth to ensure an eternal place for ourselves in Paradise, or we can waste them and condemn ourselves to eternal punishment in Hell.





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Phone

+1 866-54-ISLAM



Email

[pamphlets@TheClearIslam.org](mailto:pamphlets@TheClearIslam.org)



Website

[www.TheClearIslam.org](http://www.TheClearIslam.org)