



Allāh ﷻ has granted us a temporary life in this world and promised us an everlasting life in the Hereafter. This world is called Dār-ul-‘Amal and the Hereafter is called Dār-ul-Jazā. Dār-ul-‘Amal means the place of ‘amal (deeds) i.e. the place to do good and abstain from wrong and evil; and Dār-ul-Jazā means the place for retribution i.e. the place where we will be rewarded for whatever good we do in this world and face the consequences for whatever evil or wrong we commit. Therefore, this world is a place where we make preparations for the Hereafter. Now we have a choice between utilising this life for doing good to acquire the eternal bliss of the Hereafter, or indulging in enjoyment and neglecting the Commands of Allāh ﷻ, thereby throwing away the bounties of the Hereafter.

Allāh ﷻ desires that we choose the success of the Hereafter, hence, whilst evaluating the two worlds, Allāh ﷻ uses the superlative form to describe the Hereafter. He says,

You give preference to this worldly life; whereas the Hereafter is far better and more lasting. (87:16-17)

This verse advises us that the Hereafter is far better than this world in both quality and quantity and therefore, we should endeavour to seek the success of the Hereafter.

Quality of the Hereafter

The quality of the bounties which Allāh ﷻ will

grant His obedient servants in the Hereafter are beyond imagination and description. Rasūlullāh ﷺ has said,

Allāh ﷻ states: ‘I have prepared for My pious servants that which no eye has seen, no ear has heard and neither has it crossed any person’s heart and mind.’ (At-Tirmidhī)

In another ḥadīth, Rasūlullāh ﷺ has said,

Listen carefully, the merchandise of Allāh is invaluable; the merchandise of Allāh is Jannah. (At-Tirmidhī)

It is as if Allāh ﷻ is selling Jannah in exchange for our good deeds. Jannah is not cheap nor insignificant, rather it is priceless. On the other hand, worldly comforts and pleasures hold no value in the sight of Allāh ﷻ. Allāh ﷻ says,

And the comforts of the world are very little in comparison to the (pleasure of the) Hereafter. (9:38)

Furthermore, Rasūlullāh ﷺ has said,

If (the value of) the world equalled a wing of a mosquito in the eyes of Allāh ﷻ, He would not even give a sip of water to the one who rejects Him and His message. (At-Tirmidhī)

Therefore, the person striving for the luxuries and enjoyments of this world should reflect and realise that the better thing to strive for is the luxury and enjoyment of the Hereafter.

Quantity of the Hereafter

The life of the Hereafter is much longer and more lasting than this worldly life, in fact it is everlasting. Allāh ﷻ says,

...we shall enter them into Jannah, beneath which rivers flow, where they shall live forever and ever.” (4:57)

Imām Al-Ghazālī رحمه الله beautifully illustrates an example to help us comprehend the longevity of the Hereafter. He states that if all the space between the earth and the sky was filled with grains and a bird was to come and take away one grain every million years, a day will eventually come when no grains will remain; however the life of the Hereafter will never end. (Iḥyā-‘Ulūm-id-Dīn)

Once, Sayyidunā Sulaymān ؑ was travelling on his throne high up in the sky. Two ladies saw this amazing scene and in wonder and astonishment said, “*Subḥānallāh*, the family of Dāwūd ؑ have been granted a great kingdom.” As the winds were under the command of Sulaymān ؑ, they would bring every sound to his ears. When Sulaymān ؑ heard this, he ordered the winds to bring his throne to the ground. Sulaymān ؑ, questioned them about their statement. They replied, “We spoke only good, O Nabī of Allāh! We said, ‘*Subḥānallāh*, the family of Dāwūd ؑ have been granted a great kingdom.’” Sulaymān ؑ remarked, “Your saying *subḥānallāh* is far more precious than all that has been given to the family of Dāwūd ؑ.” (Tārīkh Dimashq) The reason behind this statement by Sulaymān ؑ was that his great kingdom would eventually perish, whereas the reward for saying one *subḥānallāh* would remain forever.

The same is the case with all our actions;

whatever we do, use or save for any worldly benefit remains limited to our life in this world, and whatever we do for the Sake of Allāh ﷻ and our Hereafter will remain forever. Once, the Ṣaḥābah ﷺ slaughtered a goat and distributed its meat. Rasūlullāh ﷺ asked what was left from the goat. ‘Ā’ishah ﷺ replied that all of it had gone apart from its shoulder. Rasūlullāh ﷺ, remarked, “The whole goat remains but the shoulder,” i.e. the reward of the meat which has been distributed will remain and the shoulder which you have saved for me will not. (At-Tirmidhī)

Allāh ﷻ says,

You will find by Allāh whatever (good) you send forth to Him. (2:110)

Whatever remains by you will perish and whatever is with Allāh will remain forever. (16:96)

What are You Going to Choose?

As we can see, from the perspective of both quantity and quality, the Hereafter is by far better than this world. However, if hypothetically, the Hereafter was only better from the aspect of it being everlasting, and from a quality aspect the materialistic things of the world were better, even then an intelligent person would give preference to something everlasting over a temporary benefit. If a sound-minded person was given a choice between having a very nice and elegant mansion worth a million pounds, with all its luxuries and comforts, for a limited period of only five years followed by being homeless, or having permanent ownership of

a cheap terraced house worth only seventy thousand pounds, he will no doubt choose the second option, as it will benefit him his entire lifetime and even his progeny. Similarly, if the Hereafter only had the aspect of being everlasting, we should still give it preference over this world. In reality, this world is no comparison to the Hereafter; neither in quality nor quantity. Allah ﷻ orders His Messenger ﷺ in the Glorious Qur’ān to say,

Tell them, the pleasure of this world is short and the Hereafter is best for those who have taqwā. (4:77)

...the Hereafter is far better and more lasting. (87:17)

Sayyidunā ‘Alī ﷺ advises,

*....become from amongst the people of the Hereafter, and do not be from the people of the world. Indeed today there is the opportunity to carry out a’*māl* without reckoning, and tomorrow there will be reckoning without the opportunity to carry out a’*māl*. (Al-Bukhārī)*

May Allāh ﷻ grant us the ability to make the right choice and live our lives in a manner which will secure for us the true everlasting success, Āmīn.

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