

Death & the Eternal Regret for Disbelievers

H A R U N Y A H Y A

Death is considered to be an end and a final destruction by those who do not believe in the Hereafter. This is a flawed perception however because death is not an end but a beginning. For believers, it is the beginning of a perfect, eternal paradise that is free from all evil and flaws. For disbelievers on the other hand, it is a transition to a life in Hell, where a great penalty lasts forever.

Those who comprehend this reality live a pleasant end in the world when death meets them and a pleasant beginning in the Hereafter. These two occur simultaneously. Disbelievers, on the other hand, encounter the irrecoverable regret of disregarding this reality, of which that had previously been informed. They suffer this regret every moment for all eternity and never find respite from it.

Although death is not a subject of profound thought for most people, it is an unavoidable end. That is because God creates death as the definite end of this life. So far, not a single person has avoided death. **No one's property, wealth, career, or close friends have provided salvation from death.** Certainly everyone will meet death. So, does avoiding contemplation over death and the life after death save one from facing this reality? Surely the answer to this question is "No". Since man is desperate against death, the most rational thing to do is to constantly contemplate upon death and to get prepared for the hereafter.

Those who neglect thinking about the Hereafter whilst being distracted by this fleeting worldly life are taken by surprise by death. Those saying "While we are young, we can make the most of our lives and think about death in the latter years of our lives" definitely do not grasp that they might never have such an opportunity. That is because death is predestined by God. A person may well die before he grows old. In this case, solely making future plans and postponing the fulfilment of God's commands will only lead to dreadful regret.

Those who spend their lives distant from God and who only repent when they realise they are close to death will experience such regret. Yet repentance which arises from the fear of death and which doesn't bear sincere intention to correct and purify one's self is not acceptable by God. Because He knows what is inside of man, including his most inner thoughts and deepest secrets. We are informed in the Qur'an that God will not accept repentance based on the fear of death at the very last moment.

There is no repentance for people who persist in doing evil until death comes to them and who then say, 'Now I repent,' nor for people who die as a disbeliever. We have prepared for them a painful punishment. (Surat an-Nisa: 18)

For this reason, it would be erroneous to have a rationale based on the thought "I will repent when the appropriate time comes." This kind of thinking will not save one from the torment in Hell. So **if one does not want to suffer an eternal grievous penalty after death, he should live for a purpose**, knowing that he will absolutely meet God and have to give an account of his actions.