



## The Correlation (*Taḍāyuf*) Between This World and the Hereafter: Impact on Honorable Life from the Perspectives of *the Qur'ān* and *Nahj al-Balāghah*

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### Abstract

### Research Article

The relationship between this world and the Hereafter is one of the key issues in Islamic teachings and philosophical anthropology. Some Islamic scholars use hadith-based and philosophical arguments to support this relationship and they believe that the correlative relationship implies the current existence of the Hereafter. This paper employs a descriptive-analytic method to examine the validity of these arguments and to critique the objections raised against the “correlative relationship.” It seems that the correlative relationship between the two worlds and its implication (current existence of the hereafter) is compatible and consistent with the philosophical rules and Islamic teachings. Paying attention to this correlative relationship and its implication plays an important role in attaining an honorable life. This article shows some of the important outcomes of this attention, such as accelerating the process of controlling and directing human behaviors, prioritizing spiritual actions over bodily actions, eliminating negligence, and so on.

**Keywords:** Imam Ali (a), honorable life, the Qur'ān, Nahj al-Balāghah, correlation.

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## Introduction

One of the important issues in the Islamic worldview is the relationship between the life of this world and the life of the world after death. Is the account of this world separate from that of the other world, or is there a connection between them? Does merely being aware of the life of the other world, which is an eternal life, have an effect on the lifestyle and voluntary actions of humans in this world? Or is this awareness effective only when there is a relationship between this life and the eternal life?

In response to these questions, some consider the world and the hereafter to be opposites, while others believe in their compatibility. Those who believe in compatibility are divided into several groups: those who consider these two realms in sequence and those who see them in parallel (Ghazālī 1900, 2:201; Ṣadr al-Dīn Shīrāzī 1984, 670). However, it should be noted that Islam does not advocate for disconnection and separation of the accounts of this world from the hereafter. From the Islamic perspective, in addition to the connection between these two worlds, the connection between the deeds of this world and those of the other world is also considered; meaning that what makes our hereafter prosperous will also enrich the life of this world, and whatever is for the prosperity of this world, if done with a lofty and divine intention, will lead to the prosperity of the hereafter. A hadīth narrated from the Prophet Muhammad (s) states: “The world is the farmland for the hereafter”<sup>4</sup> (Ibn Abī Jumhūr 1984, 1:267).

There is literature on the relationship between the world and the hereafter in various books and articles. Some researchers have examined this topic under the discussions of ‘the realm of religion’ or ‘the relationship between religion and the world.’ Among the most precise discussions is the chapter on the relationship between the world and the hereafter in the book “Anthropology in the Quran,” (*Insān-Shināsī dar*

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<sup>4</sup> . وَ قَالَ ﷺ: «الدُّنْيَا مَرْزَعَةُ الْآخِرَةِ».

*Qur'ān*) written by 'Allāmah Miṣbāḥ Yazdī (2016). Ayatollah Javādī Āmulī also referred to this topic in his book “The Relationship Between Religion and the World” (*Nisbat-i dīn va dunyā*) (2002).

Moreover, 'Abdul-Ḥusayn Khusrawpanāh in his book “The Scope of Sharia” (*Gustariyih Sharī'at*) (2003) mentioned several opinions regarding the relationship between the world and the hereafter, which are the contractual relationship, the cause-and-effect relationship, and the relationship between the apparent and the hidden. However, due to brevity, these books have not critiqued and examined the sequential theory (*naẓariyyah-ye tawālī*), nor have they correctly explained the reciprocal theory (*naẓariyyah-ye taḍāyuf*) and its advantages.

It is essential to clearly articulate the relationship between the world and the hereafter. This research aims to explore whether this relationship is sequential or reciprocal, as this has significant implications for one's lifestyle.

This research investigates the relationship between the world and the hereafter. Several key points are addressed regarding this connection. First, we present various viewpoints on the subject, along with their supporting justifications. The article begins by analyzing opposing theories, critically reviewing all the evidence that underpins these claims. Following that, we will discuss the evidence supporting the reciprocal theory and explore its advantages and implications for lifestyle.

## Conceptual Analysis

Before explaining the nature of the relationship between the world (*dunyā*) and the hereafter (*ākhirah*), it is necessary to define the concepts of *dunyā*, *ākhirah*, and the relationship between the two.

### The Concept of This World (*al-Dunyā*) and Hereafter (*al-Ākhirah*)

The word “*dunyā*” is a comparative adjective (*waṣf-i tafḍīlī*) derived from the root “*dunuw*” (Ibn Fāris 1990, 2:303). In Arabic, “*dunyā*” is the



feminine form of “*adnā*,” meaning “closer,” and is commonly used to refer to the life closer to us (the life before death). Being a comparative adjective, “*dunyā*” should always be used as an adjective alongside its subject; however, sometimes the subject is omitted due to frequent usage. For example, in the Holy Quran, “*dunyā*” is mentioned alongside its subject. Almighty God says: “*seeking the transitory wares of the life of this world*”<sup>5</sup> (*Quran 4:94*); “*You desire the transitory gains of this world*”<sup>6</sup> (*Quran 8:67*).

As you can see, in the first usage the subject (life) is mentioned, but in the second usage, it is omitted.

Upon reflection on the Holy Quran, it becomes evident that a considerable number of verses discuss the Hereafter and the final realm in a way that it is said approximately two thousand verses in the Quran refer to the Hereafter (Anwarī et al. 2024, 134).

The word “*ākhirah*” is the feminine form of “*ākhir*” which means latter and is the opposite of “*awwal*” (first) and “*mutaqaddim*” (preceding) (Farāhīdī 1984, 39). Therefore, opposite to the word “*dunyā*,” which refers to the nearer life, “*ākhirah*” is used for the farther life (the life after death). In the Holy Quran, just as the word “*dunyā*” is used adjectivally for life, the word “*ākhirah*” is also used adjectivally for life, as seen in expressions like “heavenly life”, which is often translated as “*the abode of the Hereafter*”<sup>7</sup> (*Quran 7:169*). Therefore, both “*al-dunyā*” and “*al-ākhirah*” are adjectives for life, but with the difference that one refers to the nearer life and the other to the farther life (after death).

## The Concept of the Relationship Between *al-Dunyā* and *al-Ākhirah*

<sup>5</sup> . ﴿تَبْتَغُونَ عَرَضَ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا﴾ (النساء/ ٩٤)

<sup>6</sup> . ﴿تُرِيدُونَ عَرَضَ الدُّنْيَا﴾ (الانفال/ ٦٧)

<sup>7</sup> . ﴿الدَّارُ الْآخِرَةُ﴾ (الأعراف/ ١٦٩)

Before we mention the opinions related to the relationship between *dunyā* and *ākhirah*, it is necessary to explain what we mean by this relationship. Our meaning of the relationship between *dunyā* and *ākhirah* involves a kind of precedence, succession, and simultaneity. We call the simultaneity and correspondence between *dunyā* and *ākhirah* the reciprocal relationship, and the succession of *ākhirah* after *dunyā* the sequential relationship.

## **Different Perspectives on the Relationship Between This World and the Hereafter**

### **a) Sequential View (*Tawālī*)**

This perspective asserts that there is no existence of the hereafter at present. Instead, the hereafter will come into existence after the end of this world. Advocates of this view are known as the Muʿtazilites. According to them, paradise (*Jannah*) and hell (*Jahannam*) have not yet been created: “And they say: ‘Paradise and Hell have not been created yet...’” (Āmudī 2006, 4:327; Ibn Shādhān 1981, 6; Ibn Babawayh 1977, 118; Imām al-Ḥaramayn 1995, 151; Mufīd 1992, 220). In this view, the hereafter is not currently in existence, and its realization will occur after the end of the worldly life.

### **b) Concurrent View (*Taḍāyuf*)**

This perspective holds that both the world (*dunyā*) and the hereafter (*ākhirah*) exist simultaneously. The world exists materially and is transient, while the hereafter exists with a supernatural and everlasting reality.

## **Evidence of the Sequential View (*Tawālī*)**

Supporters of this view can be divided into two groups: some believe that the hereafter currently exists but in a material and perishable form. Others argue that the hereafter exists now but with a non-material, eternal existence (Āmudī 2006, 4:327). Essentially, the hereafter is the inner reality of this world.



According to this view, the hereafter coexists with the world, and their relationship is distinct.

### Evidence from the Quran

Advocates of the sequential view rely on specific Quranic verses to support their position. For instance, they cite verse 88 of *Sūrat al-Qaṣaṣ* which emphasizes that everything will perish except Allah's essence: "...Everything is to perish except His Face"<sup>8</sup> (Quran 28:88). Additionally, the verse "He is the First and the Last"<sup>9</sup> (Quran 57:3) highlights that Allah is both the beginning and the end, implying that nothing existed alongside Him before creation.

If the destruction of all things (before the Day of Judgment) is necessary, then the current creation of paradise and hellfire would be futile. Their existence would serve no purpose if they were to be destroyed later.

The question raised here is how proponents of this perspective can reconcile it with verses that imply the descent of Prophet Adam (a). Because these verses seem to indicate the current existence of paradise. In response to this question, they argue that the concept of 'descent' does not necessarily mean falling from the sky to the earth; rather, it could refer to descent from an elevated place within the earth itself (Ibn Abi al-Ḥadīd 1959, 1:109).

### Critique and Examination

The arguments presented by both sides contain underlying assumptions. The first assumption is the exclusivity of the purpose of creating paradise and hellfire for the punishment of humans. However, no evidence supports such exclusivity. Ignorance about the philosophy of the current creation of paradise and hellfire does not necessarily negate their existence. The second assumption is that paradise and hellfire are material and have

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<sup>8</sup>. ﴿كُلُّ شَيْءٍ هَالِكٌ إِلَّا وَجْهَهُ﴾ (القصص/ ٨٨)

<sup>9</sup>. ﴿هُوَ الْأَوَّلُ وَالْآخِرُ﴾ (الحديد/ ٣)

specific locations. This view may limit the understanding of their true nature.

The response to critics can be approached from two perspectives: the theological standpoint (*mabnā-ye kalāmī*) and the transcendent theosophy perspective (*mabnā-ye hikmat-i muta'āliyah*). From a Theological standpoint, critics can argue that the purpose of paradise and hellfire extends beyond mere punishment and includes encouragement, guidance, and warning for humans. However, according to the perspective of the transcendent theologians (Şadr al-Muta'allihīn), this matter negates itself. From their viewpoint, paradise (*jannah*) and hell (*jahannam*) are essential consequences of human actions. In other words, through their deeds, humans themselves bring about either blessings or punishment. The inner reality of human actions determines their fate. It is not as if God created paradise or hellfire separately from human actions beforehand (Şadr al-Dīn Shīrāzī 1981, 9:202; ibid 1984, 1:601).

Regarding the concept of “descent,” it is essential to seek the true intention of the Almighty, not merely a superficial interpretation. Understanding the Quranic verses requires attention to context. The term “*qarīnah*” (context) has various definitions. Jurjānī considers it as something that refers to the intended meaning (Jurjānī 1991, 174). Therefore, in interpreting this verse, we should not limit ourselves to the literal meaning, as ‘*qarīnah*’ can signify something even without explicit specification (Tahānawī 1996, 2:1315). As for the objection related to the descent, the response is that the paradise from which Adam (a) descended was not the promised paradise.

### **Evidence from Nahj al-Balāghah**

In this section, we want to mention some points that may be considered incompatible with the correlative relationship between this world and the hereafter. These points are as follows:



A: Imam Ali (a) states: "...the deeds of the servants in their worldly life will be presented before their eyes in the hereafter"<sup>10</sup> (Nahj al-Balāghah, Wisdom 7). The actions performed by individuals in this world will become visible to them on the Day of Judgment.

The description of the world as "*ājil*" (immediate) and the hereafter as "*ājāl*" (deferred) suggests that they do not exist simultaneously but sequentially. Since "*ājāl*" implies "delay," it can be said that the term "*ājāl*" in "*ta'khīr*" (delay) serves as textual evidence. Therefore, the word "*ājāl*" signifies the delay of proof, indicating that the world and the hereafter do not exist correlatively but sequentially.

B: Imam Ali (a) further explains: "When the last day of this world and the first day of the hereafter arrive, a person's wealth, children, and deeds will be manifested to them..."<sup>11</sup> (Kulaynī 1986, 3:231). Some might argue that this interpretation of "the last day of this world and the first day of the hereafter" implies a lack of simultaneity between the two realms.

C: In describing the differences between the world and the hereafter, Imam Ali (a) emphasizes that the world is a place for sowing (planting), while the hereafter is a place for reaping (harvesting). He states: "...today is the day of action without reckoning, and tomorrow is the day of reckoning without action!"<sup>12</sup> (Nahj al-Balāghah, Sermon 42). Additionally, there is a well-known saying attributed to the Prophet (s): "The world is the farmland for the hereafter"<sup>13</sup> (Ibn Abī Jumhūr 1984, 1:267). This

<sup>10</sup>. «وَأَعْمَالُ الْعِبَادِ فِي عَاجِلِهِمْ تُصَبُّ أَعْيُنُهُمْ فِي آجَالِهِمْ».

<sup>11</sup>. عَلِيُّ بْنُ إِبْرَاهِيمَ عَنْ أَبِيهِ عَنْ عَمْرِو بْنِ عُمَانَ وَ عِدَّةٍ مِنْ أَصْحَابِنَا عَنْ سَهْلِ بْنِ زِيَادٍ عَنْ أَحْمَدَ بْنِ مُحَمَّدٍ بْنِ أَبِي نَصْرِ وَ الْحَسَنِ بْنِ عَلِيٍّ جَمِيعاً عَنْ أَبِي جَمِيلَةَ مَفْضَلِ بْنِ صَالِحٍ عَنْ جَابِرٍ عَنْ عَبْدِ الْأَعْلَى وَ عَلِيِّ بْنِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ عَنْ مُحَمَّدِ بْنِ عَيْسَى عَنْ يُونُسَ عَنْ إِبْرَاهِيمَ عَنْ عَبْدِ الْأَعْلَى عَنْ سُؤَيْدِ بْنِ غَفَلَةَ قَالَ قَالَ أَمِيرُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ عليه السلام: «إِنَّ ابْنَ آدَمَ إِذَا كَانَ فِي آخِرِ يَوْمٍ مِنْ أَيَّامِ الدُّنْيَا وَ أَوَّلِ يَوْمٍ مِنْ أَيَّامِ الْآخِرَةِ مُثَلَّ لَهُ مَالُهُ وَ وَلَدُهُ وَ عَمَلُهُ...».

<sup>12</sup>. «...وَ إِنَّ الْيَوْمَ عَمَلٌ وَ لَا حِسَابَ وَ غَدًا حِسَابٌ وَ لَا عَمَلٍ».

<sup>13</sup>. وَ قَالَ صلى الله عليه وآله: «الدُّنْيَا مَرْزَعَةُ الْآخِرَةِ».





implies that the world is where seeds are sown for the harvest in the hereafter.

### Critique and Examination

In addressing these issues, several points need to be considered. First, attention should be given to the connotation of “verification” in narrations. Additionally, we must consider the relationship between the temporal aspects of this world and the hereafter in these narrations. While some of these narrations have been interpreted more metaphorically, focusing on the term “آجل” (*ājil*), it is essential to also consider the connotation of “verification” (*al-dilālat al-taṣdīqiyya*). We should determine whether a given narration pertains to the reward and punishment context or if it relates to self-assessment. If it falls into the latter category, using this narration as evidence for the sequential view (*tawālī*) or refuting the correlative view (*taḍāyuf*) seems unpalatable and insufficient.

Regarding the temporal aspects of this world and the hereafter, as briefly mentioned in the section on “Sayings about the Relationship between the World and the Hereafter,” there are various types of precedence and delay, including precedence in rank, time, order, nature, and honor. It appears that the precedence of this world and the hereafter is a matter of rank.

The quote from Shahid Mutahhari further elaborates on this connection between the world and the hereafter: “The relationship between this world and the hereafter is like two segments of a lifetime, two seasons of a year. In one season, we must sow, and in the other, we must reap. Essentially, one is the seed, and the other is its fruit. Paradise and hell of the hereafter manifest here” (Muṭahharī 1989, 1:223).

The topic to discuss is that we must pay attention to the nature and function of similes and metaphors. As we know, metaphors bring us closer to the essence and do not depict it in its totality. What is essential is to focus on the spiritual meanings behind these similes. These similes serve the purpose of allowing humans to choose a model through contemplation and regulate their behavior accordingly. We will delve into this matter in



the section titled ‘Indications of Considering the Relational Connection Between the World and the Hereafter in Lifestyle.’

However, in a more contentious context, if these types of metaphors are used to prove the theory of succession, similar metaphors can also be found to support the reciprocal theory (*tadāyuf*). For instance, Imam Ali (a) said about the world: “O people, the world is merely a metaphorical abode”<sup>14</sup> (Nahj al-Balāghah, Sermon 203) and “...for the world was not created as a permanent dwelling for you; rather, it was created as a metaphorical abode for you...”<sup>15</sup> (Nahj al-Balāghah, Sermon 132). This implies that the transient nature and bridge-like quality of the world indicate the actual existence of the hereafter, as a bridge has two sides, not just one. Furthermore, considering the derivative concept discussed earlier, we can also say that ‘metaphorical’ is a derived noun, signifying that the world is currently a passage, and this expression points to the existing counterpart beyond it.

### **Rational and Hadith Evidence of Concurrent View (*Tadāyuf*)**

Reasons to disagree with the Theory Advocates of this viewpoint have adhered to both rational and traditional reasons to substantiate their claims.

#### **Rational Evidence**

Knowledge of the world is contingent upon knowledge of the hereafter, and likewise, knowledge of the hereafter is not attainable without knowledge of the world. This is because the world and the hereafter are interconnected concepts, and understanding each one without knowledge of the other is not possible. Imam Ali (a) also alluded to this reality. In explaining the relationship between the world and the hereafter, he stated: “Certainly this world is the end of the sight of the (mentally) blind who see nothing beyond it. The sight of a looker (who looks with the eye of his

<sup>14</sup>. «أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّمَا الدُّنْيَا دَارٌ مَّجَازٌ».

<sup>15</sup>. «... فَإِنَّ الدُّنْيَا لَمْ تُخْلَقْ لَكُمْ دَارٌ مُّقَامٌ بَلْ خُلِقَتْ لَكُمْ مَّجَازًا...».

mind) pierces through and realizes that the (real) house is beyond this world. The looker therefore wants to get out of it while the blind wants to get into it. The looker collects provision from it (for the next world) while the blind collects provision for this very world”<sup>16</sup>(*Nahj al-Balāghah*, Sermon 133). This luminous saying illustrates that anyone who perceives the world as separate from the hereafter is spiritually blind and has not yet attained a true understanding of the world. It provides another perspective on the relationship of interconnectedness.

### Critique and Examination

The above argument has two premises. The minor premise is the saying of Imam Ali (a), and the major premise is the rule “*al-mutaḍā’ifān mutakāfi’ān*” (those who are correlated are intimately coupled). We do not discuss the rational basis for this rule because it is an established principle. However, the debate revolves around the minor premise of this argument. Some may argue that narrations from the Prophet (s) and the Imam (a) challenge the relationship of affinity between this world and the hereafter. Some individuals, adhering to these narrations, may view the relationship between this world and the hereafter as contradictory. For example, consider the saying attributed to the Prophet (s): “The world and the hereafter are two enemies; the closer you get to one, the farther you move away from the other”<sup>17</sup> (Ibn Abī Jūmhūr 1984, 1:277, 4:114). Thus, the world and the hereafter are opposing forces; the more you approach one, the more distant you become from the other.

To address this question, we need to consider other hadiths alongside this one. Understanding this hadith requires examining related hadiths within the same collection and context. The content of this and similar hadiths, which contrast worldly life with the afterlife, suggests that the

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16. «إِنَّمَا الدُّنْيَا مُنْتَهَى بَصَرِ الْأَعْمَى؛ لَا يُبْصِرُ مِمَّا وَرَاءَهَا شَيْئًا، وَ الْبَصِيرُ يَنْفَعُهَا بَصَرُهُ وَ يَعْلَمُ أَنَّ الدَّارَ وَرَاءَهَا، فَالْبَصِيرُ مِنْهَا شَاخِصٌ وَ الْأَعْمَى إِلَيْهَا شَاخِصٌ وَ الْبَصِيرُ مِنْهَا مُتَزَوِّدٌ وَ الْأَعْمَى لَهَا مُتَزَوِّدٌ».

17. وَ قَالَ ﷺ: «الدُّنْيَا وَ الْآخِرَةُ صُرَّتَانِ بِقَدْرِ مَا تَقَرَّبَ مِنْ إِحْدَاهُمَا تَبَعَدَ عَنِ الْآخَرَى».



world is deemed condemned and incompatible with the hereafter. Importantly, these hadiths do not imply a contradiction between the worldly life and the afterlife; instead, they highlight the differences in their pursuits. This implies that if one focuses solely on gaining worldly possessions and desires, they will distance themselves from the afterlife.

In contrast to such hadiths, some narrations praise the world, such as the conversation of Imam Ali (a) with someone who criticized the material world. Imam Ali addressed him, saying: “Verily, the world is a place of truth for those who deal with it truthfully, a place of well-being for those who understand its essence, a place of sufficiency for those who take only what they need from it, and a place of admonition for those who learn from it. The world is the mosque of God’s beloved ones and the prayer hall of the angels, the place where divine revelation descends, and the marketplace of God’s saints. They have obtained God’s mercy in this world and gained paradise from it”<sup>18</sup> (Nahj al-Balāghah, Wisdom 131).

Therefore, based on the above, the condemnation of the world does not apply to the earth and sky themselves. Rather, the condemnation refers to the ‘description of their condition,’ meaning that the world (as it is) is not condemned. What is condemned and praised is our behavior toward the world and its resources. Consequently, the relationship between the world and the afterlife is not one of contradiction; rather, it is one of concurrency (*taḍāyuf*). This means that understanding the world without recognizing the afterlife is not feasible.

### Argument from Quranic Verses

Many verses from the Quran can be utilized to demonstrate that the world of the hereafter is already established. Some of these verses include:

#### *Sūra Qāf (50:22)*

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18. «إِنَّ الدُّنْيَا: دَارٌ صِدْقٌ لِمَنْ صَدَقَها وَ دَارٌ عَافِيَةٌ لِمَنْ فَهِمَها وَ دَارٌ غَنَى لِمَنْ تَزَوَّدَ مِنْها وَ دَارٌ مَوْعِظَةٌ لِمَنْ اتَّقَطَّ بِها، مَسْجِدٌ أَجْبَاءَ اللّهِ وَ مُصَلًى مَلَائِكَةِ اللّهِ وَ مَهْبِطٌ وَحَى اللّهِ وَ مَنَجَّرٌ أَوْلِيَاءَ اللّهِ اكْتَسَبُوا فِيها الرُّحْمَةَ رَبِحُوا فِيها الْجَنَّةَ».

﴿لَقَدْ كُنْتُمْ فِي غَفْلَةٍ مِنْ هَذَا فَكَشَفْنَا عَنْكَ غِطَاءَكَ فَبَصَرُكَ الْيَوْمَ حَدِيدٌ﴾ (ق/ ۲۲)

*“You were certainly oblivious of this. We have removed your veil from you, and so your sight is acute today” (Quran 50:22)*

In this verse, God addresses someone unaware of a particular scene. The veil has been lifted from their eyes, and now their vision is keen. The term “heedlessness” (غفلة) is used when something exists, but an individual is unaware of it. Rāghib Iṣfahānī explains: “Al-Ghaflah: An oversight resulting from lack of vigilance and alertness. It is said: ‘He was oblivious (غافل).’ Allah says: ‘You were certainly oblivious of this’ (Qāf 50:22)” (Rāghib Iṣfahānī 1983, 362). The Quran does not consider a temporal gap between this world and the hereafter; rather, it always regards the hereafter as imminent. However, due to the veil caused by attachment to the material world, humans fail to perceive the realities related to the afterlife. When this veil is removed, these truths become evident. The phrase “your veil” (غطائك) instead of “the veil” (الغطاء) implies that even in this world, humans possess the potential and capacity to perceive hidden truths related to the unseen and the hereafter (see Majlisī 2012, 70:142). However, due to their actions and preoccupation with worldly matters, they voluntarily place a barrier between themselves and these truths (Miṣbāḥ Yazdī 2006, 1:335).

Imam Ali (a) also alludes to the themes of the above verse. He states: “Until, when He unveils the consequences of their disobedience to them and removes them from the veils of heedlessness, they turn away backward and face forward. They gain no benefit from what they have achieved, nor from what they have spent”<sup>19</sup> (Nahj al-Balāghah, Sermon 153). In summary, the hereafter is a reality, and the Quranic verses emphasize its existence, both in the present and beyond. Therefore, “heedlessness” is a secondary aspect of the existence of the hereafter, as it is inappropriate to use “heedlessness” regarding something nonexistent. Thus, the hereafter

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19. «حَتَّى إِذَا كَشَفَ لَهُمْ عَنْ جَزَاءِ مَعْصِيَتِهِمْ، وَأَسْتَحْرَجَهُمْ مِنْ جَلَابِيبِ غَفْلَتِهِمْ اسْتَقْبَلُوا مُدْبِرًا وَاسْتَدْبَرُوا مُقْبِلًا، فَلَمْ يَنْتَفِعُوا بِمَا أَدْرَكُوا مِنْ طَلِبَتِهِمْ وَ لَا بِمَا قَضَوْا مِنْ وَطَرِهِمْ».



exists now, and its relationship with the world is one of inner and outer dimensions.

### ***Sūrat al-‘Ankabūt (29:54)***

﴿يَسْتَعْجِلُونَكَ بِالْعَذَابِ وَإِنَّ جَهَنَّمَ لَمُحِيطَةٌ بِالْكَافِرِينَ﴾ (عنكبوت/ ٥٤)

“They ask you to hasten the punishment, and indeed hell will besiege the faithless” (Quran 29:54)

This verse suggests the present existence and proximity of Hell (Makārim Shīrāzī 2004, 1:250). ‘Allāmah Sha‘rānī writes about the above verse: “We can argue from this verse that paradise and hell are currently in existence, and due to the material veil, disbelievers or believers do not perceive that world. After resurrection or death, when the veil becomes one-sided, they will perceive it, just as if it were behind a curtain, and the curtain is lifted from before them” (Sha‘rānī 2007, 3:1198)

### **Evidence from the Hadiths of *Ahl al-Bayt* (a)**

Besides the verses of the Noble Quran, we can also infer from various hadiths that the world of the hereafter exists at this very moment. Some of these hadiths are as follows:

a) Hadiths related to the Ascension (*Mi‘rāj*) of the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him and his family): These hadiths indicate that paradise (*jannah*) and hell (*jahannam*) currently exist. During the Ascension, the Prophet (s) witnessed the realities of paradise, its blessings, and the inhabitants of hell. An account attributed to Imam Riḍā (a) confirms this. When asked whether paradise and hell have already been created, Imam Riḍā (a) responded, yes. When the Messenger of Allah (s) was taken to the heavens, he entered paradise and also saw hell. Some argue that these realms are predetermined and not yet created, but Imam Riḍā (a) clarified that they are beyond our existence. Denying the creation of paradise and

hell implies rejecting the Prophet (s) and the Imams (a) and leads to eternal damnation in Hell<sup>20</sup> (Fayḍ Kāshānī 1983, 346; Majlisī 2012, 4:4).

b) Imam Ali's statement to Jathaliq: Imam Ali (a) responded to Jathaliq's question about whether paradise exists in this world or the hereafter. He explained that this world is within the hereafter, and the hereafter surrounds this world. The transition from life to death is evident (Muḥammadī Reyshahrī 2012, 1:356)

c) A hadith about prayer at night (*Tahajjud*): A man approached Imam Ali (a) and said that he had been deprived of performing the night prayer. Imam Ali (a) replied that your sins have restricted you<sup>21</sup> (Kulaynī 1986, 3:450). This hadith illustrates that the consequences of one's actions can immediately affect one's spiritual state. The principle of causality (cause and effect) applies, even if it seems impossible to separate the effect from the cause.

## Critique and Examination

The text raises a question about the concept of the hereafter. Is it merely referring to life after death, or is there more to it? Why do we say that the hereafter exists right now, even though it seems clear that the time before and after death are distinct and cannot be combined?

In response to this question, some scholars have expressed their views. One scholar writes: "Paradise and hell are already in existence, but from a temporal perspective, we have not yet reached them. Our lack of arrival does not imply their nonexistence. Those who transcend earthly time and

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<sup>20</sup> . الهمدانی، عن علی، عن أبيه، عن الهروي قال: قلت لعلی بن موسى الرضا عليه السلام: «... يا ابن رسول الله فأخبرني عن الجنة والنار أهما اليوم مخلوقتان؟ فقال: نعم، و إن رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم قد دخل الجنة ورأى النار لما عرج به إلى السماء. قال: فقلت له: إن قوما يقولون إنهما اليوم مقدرتان غير مخلوقتين. فقال عليه السلام: ما أولئك منا ولا نحن منهم، من أنكر خلق الجنة والنار فقد كذب النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم وكذبنا وليس من ولايتنا على شيء ويخلد في نار جهنم...».

<sup>21</sup> . مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ يَحْيَى عَنْ عِمْرَانَ بْنِ مُوسَى عَنِ الْحَسَنِ بْنِ عَلِيٍّ بْنِ التُّعْمَانِ عَنْ أَبِيهِ عَنْ بَعْضِ رِجَالِهِ قَالَ: جَاءَ رَجُلٌ إِلَى أَمِيرِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ عَلِيِّ بْنِ أَبِي طَالِبٍ عليه السلام فَقَالَ يَا أَمِيرَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ إِنِّي قَدْ حُرِمْتُ الصَّلَاةَ بِاللَّيْلِ فَقَالَ أَمِيرُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ عليه السلام: «أَنْتَ رَجُلٌ قَدْ قَيَّدَكَ دُنُوبُكَ».



space can observe the Day of Judgment even before the worldly order ceases, and we are gradually moving toward it. If the Quranic and hadith-based interpretations suggest the occurrence of the Day of Judgment in the future, it means that humans will reach it afterward, rather than it being nonexistent now and later discovered” (Javādī Āmulī 1999, 1:408).

While this insight is valuable, we can add a few more points. First, we acknowledge that paradise and hell exist now, but our inability to perceive them directly relates to our actions and capacities. The lack of immediate access to this reality does not negate its existence. It is important to highlight the insightful words of Shaykh al-Raʿīs Ibn Sīnā: “Whenever something reaches your ears, as long as there is no evidence to deny its possibility or impossibility, say it might be possible” (Ṭūsī 1995, 3:418).

Additionally, some verses allude to the future occurrence of the hereafter. However, this manifestation is not explicit; therefore, we can interpret it based on textual evidence. Since certain verses and hadiths (mentioned in this text) affirm the actual occurrence of the hereafter, we conclude that the hereafter exists right now. Secondly, the world and the hereafter—both as realities—have dual existences: a) Their intrinsic existence, and b) Their existence as perceived by us (how they appear to us). *Sūra Qāf* (50:22) implies this duality, as the term “*ghīṭā*” (veil) is added to the second person, indicating that this veil depends on the recipient’s understanding, not the actual existence of the hereafter (Ibn Āshūr 2000, 26:309).

In summary, the world and the hereafter have genuine existence, and their true manifestation need not be immediately revealed to us. Our limited sensory and perceptual faculties can only grasp a fraction of reality (Muṭahharī 1989, 5:188).

### **The Role of the Concurrent View (*taḍāyuf*) in Attaining an Honorable Life**

In addition to rational and traditional reasons for proving the theory of worldly and afterlife additions, we can also refer to other evidence and



indications. In the philosophy of science, criteria have been expressed for preferring one theory over another, and one of those criteria is attention to the functional aspects of that theory (see Gonzalez 2020, 72 and Scheffler 2013, 134).

Here, to demonstrate the superiority of the concurrent view (*taḍāyuf*), we focus on its function and impact on lifestyle. However, according to the principle of presupposition (*qa'idat al-far'iyyah*), we recognize that the function of the worldly and afterlife correlative relationship is secondary to the existence of such a relationship. Therefore, we use “evidence and indications” rather than “reasons.” Thus, if such a relationship is proven, its impact on lifestyle is greater than that of competing views.

Before delving into the effects, we need to address a potential ambiguity. It may be argued that what influences lifestyle is belief. If people believe in the relationship between the world and the afterlife, they will have a different lifestyle. Now, whether that belief is correct or incorrect is not relevant.

In the life of Amīr al-Mu'minīn, Ali (a), we see that he was never willing to use an illegitimate means to achieve his sacred goals. He stated: “Do you order me to seek victory through injustice against those whom I have authority over? By God, as long as I live, and night and day exist, and stars rise and set, I will never do such a thing. If this wealth were mine, I would distribute it equally among the people, for it belongs to God”<sup>22</sup> (*Nahj al-Balāghah*, Sermon 126). Thus, it is clear from this statement that the goal cannot be achieved through any means, and since lifestyle is the way and method a person pursues their goals, this goal must be attained through righteousness.

Our intention regarding ‘effects’ refers to specific effects, not absolute effects. We seek to optimize and elevate our lifestyle and religious

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<sup>22</sup>. «أَتَأْمُرُونِي أَنْ أَطْلُبَ النَّصْرَ بِالْجَوْرِ فِيمَنْ وُكِّبْتُ عَلَيْهِ وَ اللَّهُ لَا أَطُورُ بِهِ مَا سَمَرَ سَمِيرٌ وَ مَا أَمْ نَجْمٌ فِي السَّمَاءِ نَجْمًا لَوْ كَانَ الْمَالُ لِي لَسَوَّيْتُ بَيْنَهُمْ فَكَيْفَ وَ إِنَّمَا الْمَالُ مَالُ اللَّهِ».



commitment, and to achieve this goal, emphasis on correct belief is necessary because "...the one who acts without knowledge is like a wanderer on a path without clear direction, and distance from the clear path only increases their deviation from their need..."<sup>23</sup> (Nahj al-Balāghah, Sermon 154). An ignorant doer is akin to a traveler lost in an unfamiliar path. The farther they stray from the clear path, the farther they move away from their intended destination. In other words, any knowledge does not necessarily lead a person to their goal; rather, it is true knowledge and belief that guide a person toward their destination.

One of the fruits of the correlative perspective on the worldly and afterlife relationship is the speed in controlling and directing human behaviors. Understanding the connection between the world and the afterlife brings blessings. If our perspective on this relationship changes, our behavior will also change. This means that altering our fundamental desires and aspirations in life leads to a transformation in our actions. An essential aspect of this change is recognizing the relationship between the worldly and afterlife domains. Such awareness prevents us from neglecting the interplay between them and ensures that we do not mistake the means for the ultimate goal. It prevents the allure of the path from halting our progress. This realization holds true when the depth of this relationship is accurately understood because if the sequence of this relationship exists, removing ignorance may take time. To support this claim, let us examine the following verse: "*Kill Joseph or cast him away into some [distant] land, so that your father's love may be exclusively yours, and that you may become a righteous lot after that*"<sup>24</sup> (Quran 12:9). Considering the interpretation of 'after me' and the term 'righteous,' several points arise:

The Notion of Righteousness: The term 'righteousness' is crucial in establishing the discussed principle. Scholars divide it into 'religious

<sup>23</sup>. «...فَإِنَّ الْعَامِلَ يَغْتَبِرُ عِلْمِهِ كَالسَّائِرِ عَلَى غَيْرِ طَرِيقٍ فَلَا يَزِيدُهُ بُعْدُهُ عَنِ الطَّرِيقِ الْوَاضِحِ إِلَّا بُعْدًا مِنْ حَاجَتِهِ...».

<sup>24</sup>. «اقْتُلُوا يُوسُفَ أَوْ اطْرَحُوهُ أَرْضًا يَخْلُ لَكُمْ وَجْهُ أَبِيكُمْ وَتَكُونُوا مِنْ بَعْدِهِ قَوْمًا صَالِحِينَ» (يوسف/ ٩).

righteousness' and 'worldly righteousness' (see Ibn Āshūr 2000, 12:224). While there is disagreement among exegetes regarding whether the righteousness in this verse refers to religious or worldly matters, we won't delve into that debate. However, many scholars attribute it to religious righteousness, which involves correcting behavior and repenting after sinning.

The phrase "after that" (*min ba'dihī*) implies delaying repentance based on a sequential theory. If it were based on the correlative theory, immediate consequences of sin would be considered. However, since it does not emphasize those immediate consequences, the delay in repentance does not align with the correlative theory. Therefore, according to the correlative perspective, ignoring the subtle consequences of sin does not permit delaying repentance.

One example of the swift control and direction of human behavior is the initiative to repent. Past teachings highlight that a crucial aspect of the relationship between this world and the hereafter is that current actions have consequences in the hereafter. This understanding emphasizes the need for individuals to abstain from committing sins and to embrace piety. In case of slipping, they should quickly return, as delaying the return worsens the situation and turns the illness into an incurable state. Therefore, humans must be swift in repentance and not delay it. This point addresses the period following the commission of a sin. However, it is important to note that a person should not intentionally choose to sin to repent afterward. In this article, we refer to this behavior as "repentance of dismissal." This is contrasted with "repentance of removal," which some sources differentiate into specific repentance and general repentance.

To optimize our lifestyle, we need more of the "repentance of dismissal," which seems to align with the correlative theory rather than the sequential theory. Imam Ali (a) emphasizes the urgency of self-improvement and moving towards repentance and divine forgiveness: "Engage in self-struggle and prioritize repentance so that you attain the



status of obedience to your Lord”<sup>25</sup> (Tamīmī Āmudī 1987, 242). It is possible that this statement also implies an emphasis on prioritizing repentance, as the term “قَدِّم” (*qaddim*: prioritize) in the phrase “*qaddim al-tawbah*” (prioritize repentance) carries the connotation of ‘exaggeration’ or ‘priority.’ Furthermore, Imam Ali (a) states: “Hasten toward the abodes that you are assigned to populate; the abodes of prosperity that never decay and the everlasting abodes that never perish. These are the abodes where God has called you and encouraged you, placing His reward within them.”<sup>26</sup> (Kulaynī 1986, 8:361).

Another fruit of this correlative perspective on the relationship between this world and the hereafter is the removal of negligence and self-accountability. When the impact and consequences of our actions are concurrent with those actions, we feel a greater sense of agency, strengthening our willpower and determination. However, when the effects of our actions are intangible or delayed, it leads to apathy and weakened resolve.

One significant outcome of this perspective is the precedence of intention over physical actions. Intentional actions serve as a preamble and cause for subsequent physical actions. In the correlative view of this world and the hereafter, the consequences of intentional actions do not necessarily align with those of physical actions, as they may occur with a time lag. Consequently, the consequences of intentional actions take precedence over those of physical actions. However, in the sequential theory, this is not the case, as the consequences of both intentional and physical actions occur simultaneously. Therefore, according to the correlative theory, the importance of intention outweighs that of physical actions, emphasizing the need for vigilance regarding our intentions. Imam Ali (a) affirms this: “...O servants of God, examine yourselves before

<sup>25</sup> . « جَاهِدْ نَفْسَكَ وَ قَدِّمْ تَوْبَتَكَ تَفْرُ بِطَاعَةِ رَبِّكَ ».

<sup>26</sup> . « ... فَسَارِعُوا إِلَى مَنَازِلِكُمْ رَحِمَكُمُ اللَّهُ الَّتِي أَمَرْتُمْ بِعِمَارَتِهَا الْعَامِرَةِ الَّتِي لَا تَحْرُبُ الْبَاقِيَةَ الَّتِي لَا تَنْفَدُ الَّتِي دَعَاكُمْ إِلَيْهَا وَ حَضَّكُمْ عَلَيْهَا وَ رَغَبْتُمْ فِيهَا وَ جَعَلَ الثَّوَابَ عِنْدَهُ عَنْهَا... ».

being examined, and account for yourselves before being accounted for...”<sup>27</sup> (Nahj al-Balāghah, Sermon 90). Prioritize self-reflection and self-accountability before you are called to account, and take a deep breath before the breath of life is taken away.

The last fruit that is worth mentioning for a concurrent view of the relationship between this world and the hereafter is the shared destiny of humans in happiness and misery. When retribution and the impact of actions are already evident in society and not deferred until the Day of Judgment, the impact of deeds (sins) made by some individuals in society affects all humans and becomes universal misery. The Holy Quran states: “*And beware of a trial that will not strike those who have wronged among you exclusively, and know that Allah is severe in penalty*”<sup>28</sup> (Quran 8:25). Therefore, individuals in society must engage in various forms of struggle against sin and transgression to save themselves from this shared misery and move toward shared happiness. They should also invite each other to do good deeds.

## Conclusion

Based on the previously discussed points, we can conclude:

1. There is a concurrent relationship between this world and the hereafter. Human contemplation alone cannot fully grasp this relationship, necessitating divine revelation for true understanding. Islamic texts reveal that the material world and the spiritual realm of the hereafter complement each other, indicating a real connection between human actions and their rewards or punishments in the hereafter. Paradise and hell are direct manifestations of one's deeds, with the foundation of the afterlife laid in this world.

2. The hereafter exists concurrently with this world, even though our inability to perceive it stems from our actions and capacities. This lack of

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<sup>27</sup>. «...عِبَادَ اللَّهِ زِنُوا أَنْفُسَكُمْ مِنْ قَبْلِ أَنْ تُؤْرَثُوا وَحَاسِبُوا مِنْ قَبْلِ أَنْ تُحَاسَبُوا...».

<sup>28</sup>. «وَاتَّقُوا فِتْنَةً لَا تُصِيبُنَ الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا مِنْكُمْ خَاصَّةً وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ شَدِيدُ الْعِقَابِ» (الأنفال/ ٢٥)



perception does not negate its reality. Certain verses and hadiths hint at future events related to the hereafter, affirming its current existence.

3. This understanding profoundly influences our lifestyle, urging us to control and direct our behaviors, avoid negligence, and pay close attention to virtuous and sinful actions. Recognizing the interconnectedness of this world and the hereafter shapes how we prioritize actions, emphasizing the need to hasten towards righteous deeds, as advised in the Quran (Quran 3:133).

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