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The Function of Belief in the Hereafter and Its Impact on Religious Behaviour: A Comparative Study between Islam and Christianity

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Abstract

The aim of this research is to shed light on one of the functions of belief in the Hereafter, namely its behavioural function in both Islam and Christianity. This is because belief in the Hereafter is one of the doctrinal pillars of faith that profoundly influences human behaviour. The research first defines the concept of the behavioural function of belief in the Hereafter, and then examines it through several approaches, including: an analysis of religious texts with clear implications in both religions; an examination of their ethical implications across various issues; and a comparative approach to identify points of convergence and divergence in the function of belief in the Hereafter and its impact on shaping behaviour. The study adopted a comparative analytical methodology, focusing on the analysis of primary and interpretive religious texts, in an attempt to understand the religious phenomenon in its functional dimension. The research concluded that belief in the Hereafter constitutes a fundamental pillar in the moral and spiritual development of the individual, and that the eschatological dimension imbues human action with a teleological dimension that transcends immediate utility and extends toward a horizon of meaning and commitment. The research highlighted that the fundamental points of convergence between Islam and Christianity lie in regarding moral behaviour as a criterion of the sincerity of faith, despite the differing theological premises underpinning such behaviour.

Keywords: faith, Islam, Christianity, the hereafter, religious behaviour, behavioural function.

Introduction

The doctrine of belief in the Hereafter is a foundational element in the belief systems of both Islam and Christianity, impacting the guidance and regulation of human religious and moral behaviour.



However, doctrinal studies have typically addressed belief in the hereafter from a conceptual, faith-based perspective, without giving sufficient attention to its functional dimension and practical impact on shaping both individual and social behaviour. In addition, comparative studies focusing on the functional aspect and behavioural impact of this doctrine remain limited. The significance of this study stems from its aim to shed light on the mechanisms through which the theoretical belief in the hereafter is transformed into an active force that guides the believer's daily behaviour, within a comparative framework that reveals the similarities and differences in its practical manifestations. The study is based on the premise that belief in hereafter has an impact on the religious and moral behaviour of believers. Its aim is to analyse how this belief is expressed in Islam and Christianity, and to identify the similarities and differences in the guidance of religious behaviour. The research problem is defined by the following main question: How does belief in the hereafter shape the religious behaviour of believer in Islam and Christianity, and in what ways are these beliefs similar and different?

The research problem gives rise to several sub-questions:

1. What is the role of belief in the hereafter in both Islam and Christianity in terms of behavioural function?
2. What are the scriptural foundations upon which the behavioural function of the hereafter is based in each religion?
3. What are the main areas of behavioural influence?
4. What mechanisms does each belief system employ in order to exert this influence?
5. What are the points of convergence and divergence between Islam and Christianity in this regard?

Objectives of the study:

1. To define the concept of the behavioural function of belief in the Hereafter in Islam and Christianity.
2. To reveal the scriptural foundations upon which this function is based in both religions.
3. To analyse the main areas of behavioural influence resulting from belief in the hereafter.
4. To compare the functional mechanisms from the Islamic and Christian perspectives.
5. To identify the points of convergence and divergence between the two religions in this area.

Significance of the study:

The significance of this study lies in its focus on the functional and behavioural dimensions of belief in the Hereafter; a dimension that has not received sufficient attention in comparative doctrinal studies. Furthermore, the study contributes to an understanding of the relationship between religious belief and practical behaviour in contemporary societies, and promotes a culture of dialogue between followers of the two religions by highlighting shared values.

Limitations of the study:

Thematic Scope : The study is limited to the behavioural function of belief in the Hereafter in Islam and Christianity, without addressing the pillars of faith or other doctrines.

Temporal Scope : The study is not restricted to a specific time period, but it is based on the foundational religious texts and their interpretations throughout history.

Geographical scope: The study is not restricted to a specific location but addresses Islamic and Christian conceptions in general.

Research methodology: The study adopted a comparative analytical approach, which involved analysing the foundational religious texts of both Islam and Christianity. The ethical implications of these texts were then analysed in depth, and compared to reveal points of convergence and divergence in each religion's conception of the function of belief in the Hereafter and its impact on the shaping of human behaviour. The comparative analytical approach is based on the following steps: Firstly, identifying the fundamental concepts in both religions.

Secondly, analysing the relevant religious texts.

Thirdly, deriving the ethical and behavioural implications.

Finally, comparing the two conception to identify the points of convergence.

Finally, drawing conclusions and making recommendations.

Previous studies:

1. Study by Ahmad Sabah El-Khair Rizq Allah (2021): This study addressed 'The Hereafter in the Three Abrahamic Religions: Judaism, Christianity and Islam'¹, and focused on doctrinal aspects without delving into the comparative behavioural dimension.
2. Ibn Taymiyyah's study (1999): This dealt with Al-'Aqidah al-Wasitiyyah² and noted the impact of belief in the hereafter on behaviour, though it was limited to the Islamic perspective alone.
3. Wayne Grudem's study (1994): This dealt with Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine³ from a Protestant Christian perspective, without making any comparison with Islam.
4. N. T. Wright's study (2013): Paul and the Faithfulness of God⁴ addressed the relationship between eschatological hope and moral behaviour in Pauline thought.

This study differs from previous ones in that it combines the doctrinal and behavioural dimensions within a comparative framework between Islam and Christianity, focusing on the functional mechanisms through which belief in the Hereafter influences behaviour.

First: The Conceptual Framework

1. **Faith:** is "a declaration with the tongue, a belief in the heart, and actions performed by the limbs; it increases with obedience and diminishes with disobedience"⁵. This means that it refers to belief in the heart, to utterance with the tongue, and to actions performed by the limbs, such as prayer and the like; it increases as these increase and diminishes as they diminish.
2. **Islam:** This is submission to God through monotheism, obedience to Him, and disassociation from polytheism and its adherents⁶. It is a comprehensive religion that governs a person's relationship with their Lord, themselves, their family, their community, and all of humanity⁷.
3. **Christianity:** The religion founded by Jesus Christ, based on faith in him as the Saviour of humanity from sin⁸.
4. **The Hereafter:** This term refers to the life following death; it is the period that begins with the end of this worldly life and encompasses the Barzakh, the Resurrection, the Reckoning and the Reward, ending with the entry of the people of Paradise into Paradise and the people of Hell

into Hell⁹. Scholars state that it is called the Hereafter because it comes after this worldly life, This is indicated by reason and human nature, as stated in all authentic heavenly scriptures, and proclaimed by the prophets and messengers. It is also said to be called the Hereafter because there is no day after it, as the people of Paradise will settle in Paradise and the people of Hell in Hell in their respective abodes¹⁰.

-The concept of belief in the Hereafter in Islam: Belief in the Hereafter in Islam is considered a fundamental pillar of the Six Pillars of Faith. It refers to the firm belief in all that the Qur'an and Sunnah have revealed concerning the events that follow death, as Allah, the Exalted, says:(and of the Hereafter they are certain" in faith") [Al-Baqarah: 4]. In the Islamic texts, this belief is linked to righteous deeds, which indicates its practical and functional nature in the life of a Muslim. Scholars of Islamic theology emphasise that belief in the Hereafter is not merely an intellectual conviction, but rather a behavioural motivation that guides a person's actions and regulates their relationship with God and with other people¹¹.

- **The concept of belief in the Hereafter in Christianity:** The term 'the Hereafter' or 'the Day of Judgement' is used in Christianity and holds a significant place; belief in the Hereafter is closely linked to the doctrine of the Second Coming of Christ, the Day of Judgement, the Resurrection, and eternal life in the Kingdom or in torment. St Paul expressed this in his First Epistle to the Thessalonians, saying: 'For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, and so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him' (Thessalonians 4:14)¹². The Gospel texts emphasise that belief in the resurrection entails a practical moral commitment, manifested in love, repentance and abstaining from evil, as evidence of true faith, which gives this doctrine a clear behavioural dimension¹³.

5. **The concept of religious behaviour:** This refers to any action or statement made by an individual under the influence of religious motives, whether ritual, moral or social¹⁴. It thus refers to the practical commitment to the teachings of religion in all aspects of life, both outward and inward¹⁵.
6. **The concept of behavioural function:** This is the practical effect that a belief or principle has on an individual's behaviour and actions, such that it transforms from a mere mental concept into a driving force that guides and regulates behaviour¹⁶.

Second: Belief in the Hereafter in Islam and its behavioural impact:

- a. **The behavioural function of belief in the Hereafter in Islam:** Belief in the Hereafter occupies a central position in the Islamic doctrinal system, as it is considered one of the pillars of faith upon which religious and behavioural foundations are built, Belief in the Resurrection and the Day of Reckoning is not limited to being a mere abstract conception of the unseen; rather, it goes beyond that to fulfil a profound educational and behavioural function, instilling in the Muslim a sense of moral responsibility. This leads them to regulate their conduct and actions, both in private and in public, and to strive to direct them towards righteousness and moral commitment. For when the believer contemplates the reality of standing before God and the meticulous reckoning of words, deeds and intentions, an internal self-monitoring mechanism is formed within them, making them more committed to values and less prone to deviation, even in the absence of external supervision. The Holy Qur'an has clearly expressed this meaning in the words of God: (So whoever

does an atom's weight of good will see it (7) And whoever does an atom's weight of weight of evil will see it) [Al-Zalzalah: 7–8]. This is an accurate depiction of the individual's personal accountability before God and the direct impact this has on one's daily conduct.

Furthermore, moral development in Islam is based on the principle of encouragement and deterrence, whereby good deeds are linked to reward, whilst disobedience is linked to accountability and just punishment. The Qur'an expresses this in the words of Allah: (Inform My servants that is I who am the Forgiving, the Merciful (49) and that My punishment which is the painful punishments) [Al-Hijr: 49–50], which reflects the delicate balance between fear and hope, as these are fundamental elements in the development of sound moral character. Furthermore, belief in the Hereafter helps to instil self-discipline in the individual, as the Muslim feels that Allah is aware of both their private and public affairs; this motivates them to adhere to moral values even in the absence of human supervision. The Prophet, peace be upon him, alluded to this meaning in a lengthy hadith narrated by Abu Hurayrah concerning ihsan, in which he said: "Ihsan is to worship Allah as though you can see Him; for although you cannot see Him, He indeed sees you..."¹⁷. This expresses the highest degree of behavioural awareness associated with belief in the Hereafter. Consequently, belief in the Hereafter, in the Islamic conception, constitutes a comprehensive educational system that contributes to the development of the righteous individual and the formation of a society imbued with moral values such as trustworthiness, justice, accountability and self-restraint... amongst others. This makes belief in the Hereafter a vital element in the moral rectitude of the individual and the achievement of social balance.

- b. **The textual foundations of the behavioural function:** The behavioural function of belief in the Hereafter in Islam is based on clear textual foundations, established by the Holy Qur'an and the Prophetic Sunnah, as the Qur'anic discourse did not merely describe Paradise and Hell, but linked the fate in the Hereafter to specific moral behaviours and attitudes. An example of this is the Qur'an's linking of denial and arrogance with deserving punishment, as in the words of Allah: (But the ones who deny Our verses and are arrogant towards them—those are the companions of the Fire) [Al-A'raf: 36]. On the other hand, the Qur'an links entry into Paradise with piety, as in the words of Allah: (Gardens of perpetual residence, which they will enter, beneath which rivers flow. They will have therein whatever they wish. Thus does Allah reward the righteous) [An-Nahl: 31], and His words: (And those who feared their Lord will be driven to Paradise in groups)[Az-Zumar: 73]. The Qur'an also explicitly links faith, righteous deeds and entry into Paradise, as in His words: (Indeed, those who have believed and done righteous deeds – they will have the Gardens of paradise as a lodging)[Al-Kahf: 107]. It is understood from all these texts that the relationship between faith and behaviour is a close one, within the framework of educating people on the principle of moral responsibility and just recompense in the Hereafter. The meaning of piety, as explained by Ibn Kathir, is to perform the obligatory acts and to avoid the forbidden acts¹⁸, which constitute the essence of disciplined religious behaviour. The Prophetic Sunnah also confirms this meaning, as it is reported in the noble hadith narrated by Abu Hurayrah, may Allah be pleased with him, from the Prophet, peace be upon him, who said: 'Whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day should speak good words or remain silent'¹⁹. This is an explicit instruction linking belief in the Hereafter with restraint in speech, and establishing faith as a moral standard

governing a person's conduct in daily life. It is thus clear that the textual foundations of belief in the Hereafter are not limited to elucidating a person's fate after death, but rather establish a comprehensive ethical and behavioural system, making faith an inner force that guides individual and social behaviour, and a foundation for building a society based on justice and righteousness.

c. **Areas of behavioural influence:**

1. **Individual behaviour and acts of worship:** Belief in the reckoning on the Hereafter motivates Muslims to devote their worship sincerely to God Almighty and to strive for perfection in it, as He says: (And establish prayer, and give Zakah, and bow with those who bow). [Al-Baqarah: 43] And He also says: (O you who have believed, decrees upon you is fasting as it was decreed upon those before you that you may become righteous.) [Al-Baqarah: 183]. These divine commands, in the Qur'anic context, are often linked to the Hereafter, for it is belief in the Hereafter that transforms fasting, for example, from mere abstinence from food and drink into a school of piety. Similarly, in His words: (O you who have believed, obey Allah and obey the Messenger and those in authority amongst you. And if you disagree over anything, refer it to Allah and the Messenger, if you should believe in Allah and the Last Day.) [An-Nisa': 59], It is evident from the Qur'anic discourse that legal commands are not presented in isolation but are often linked to belief in the Hereafter, as this is regarded as the supreme moral motivation for compliance. The Holy Qur'an thus links behaviour to the reward or punishment in the Hereafter, making belief in the Hereafter the foundation for practical commitment and moral conduct.
2. **Social and moral conduct:** Belief in the Day of Judgement and the reckoning in the Hereafter—which is a manifestation of absolute divine justice, a scale by which the truth of faith and deeds is measured, and a decisive juncture determining a person's eternal destiny—constitutes a powerful internal deterrent that prevents social deviance. For example, the principle of divine oversight in the words of Allah: (Indeed Allah is ever, over you, an Observer) [An-Nisa': 1], reinforces the value of truthfulness and trustworthiness even in the absence of human supervision, whilst also motivating righteous deeds through the hope of the Hereafter's reward, such as: being kind to one's neighbour, honouring guests, and speaking kindly... and so on. It is narrated from Abu Hurayrah that the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, said: 'Whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day ,should not harm his neighbour; and whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day ,should honour his guest; and whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day should speak good or remain silent.'²⁰
3. **Psychological behaviour:** Islam strikes a balance between fear and hope with the aim of achieving psychological stability. We find the believer's fear of the Fire in the words of Allah, the Exalted: (Then fear the Fire, whose fuel is people and stones; prepared for the disbelievers) [Al-Baqarah: 24], which is counterbalanced by his hope in the mercy of his Lord, as Allah, the Exalted, says: (Say: 'O My servants who have transgressed against themselves, do not despair of the mercy of Allah. Indeed, Allah forgives all sins. Indeed, it is He who is the Forgiving, the Merciful) [Az-Zumar: 53]. There is no doubt that this balance prevents the believer from falling into the extremes of excess and negligence; thus, fear does not drive him to despair and despondency regarding Allah's mercy and forgiveness, nor does hope lead him to heedlessness, complacency and delusion regarding security from Allah's scheme. Rather, he

maintains a state of spiritual and behavioural moderation, which keeps him constantly mindful of Allah, the Exalted; eager to obey and avoid disobedience; and striving to purify himself and act in a manner that pleases his Lord. Thus is achieved the perfection of servitude, which is founded upon both fear and hope.

- d. **A sense of reassurance:** Reassurance is one of the effects of faith, that is, peace of heart and tranquillity of soul, as Allah, the Exalted, says: (Those who have believed and whose hearts are assured by the remembrance of Allah. Unquestionably, by the remembrance of Allah hearts are assured) ([Ar-Ra'd: 28].
- e. **Mechanisms through which belief in the Hereafter influences human behaviour:**

Belief in the Hereafter is one of the most prominent doctrinal pillars that contribute to guiding and regulating human behaviour, as it is based on an integrated system of educational mechanisms that have a profound effect on the believer's conscience and practical behaviour. Among the most important of these mechanisms are the following:

 1. **The principle of detailed reward and punishment:** Islam presents a precise and comprehensive conception of the Hereafter's retribution, wherein reward and punishment are directly linked to deeds and intentions. Allah, the Exalted, says: (So whoever does an atom's weight of good will see it (7) And whoever does an atom's weight of evil will see it) [Al-Zalzalah: 7–8]. This reinforces a sense of individual responsibility and makes a person more aware of the consequences of their actions, so that they regulate their behaviour by choice rather than under compulsion.
 2. **Instilling the principle of self-monitoring (God's supervision):** This instils belief in the Hereafter in the believer's heart, reminding them of God's constant and unceasing supervision, both in private and in public, in accordance with His words: (Does he not know that Allah sees?) [Al-'Alaq: 14]. Thus, this supervision transforms from an external force into an internal compulsion that guides behaviour and prevents deviance even in the absence of human oversight, for the believer knows that Allah is watching him, thereby reinforcing righteousness, truthfulness and trustworthiness.
 3. **Spiritual purification and moral development of the self:** Belief in the Hereafter is a fundamental driving force behind the process of purifying the self, which aims to rid it of vices and adorn it with virtues, as Allah, the Exalted, says: (He has succeeded who purifies it) [Ash-Shams: 9]. Thus, the awareness of reckoning and retribution drives a person to strive against their own self, to control their desires, and to constantly seek self-improvement. This belief is clearly reflected in the Islamic ethical system, serving as a motivation to embody truthfulness, justice and trustworthiness, patience, humility and benevolence, as well as the control of one's desires. It has also contributed to curbing deviant behaviour, thereby confirming that the Islamic belief in the Hereafter is not merely a metaphysical concept but an active educational force that contributes to the development of the righteous individual and a balanced society, and that it serves a clear educational and behavioural function²¹.
 4. **Sincerity in worshipping God alone:** whoever realises that they will stand before God Almighty and be held to account for every minor and major deed will regard this transient world as insignificant; they will devote their deeds sincerely to God Almighty and will not seek to impress anyone in their worship, in compliance with His words: (And they were commanded except to worship Allah, being sincere to Him in religion, inclining to truth, and to establish prayer and to

give Zakat; and that is the correct religion of correct religion) [Al-Bayyinah: 5], for sincerity is one of the greatest acts of worship of the heart, as Ibn Taymiyyah explained when he said: 'As for sincerity, it is the very essence of Islam, for Islam is submission to Allah alone and to no one else'²²

Third: Belief in the Hereafter in Christianity and its behavioural impact:

a. The behavioural function of belief in the Hereafter in Christianity

Belief in the Hereafter fulfils a moral and educational function, which is to direct behaviour towards love, tolerance and good deeds. The Bible links a person's fate in the Hereafter to their practical behaviour, as the Messiah, peace be upon him, emphasises that the reward in the Hereafter is linked to deeds, saying: 'For the Son of Man is going to come in his Father's glory with his angels, and then he will reward each person according to what they have done. '(Matthew 16:27)²³ . This connection clearly demonstrates that belief in the Hereafter constitutes a moral incentive that drives the believer to adhere to righteous behaviour.

The behavioural function of the doctrine of the Hereafter is also evident in the call for tolerance, love and service to others, as fundamental criteria for attaining salvation. Christian teachings have made love for one's neighbour a practical criterion of sincere faith, as expressed in Christ's words: "'So whatever you wish that others would do to you, do also to them' (Matthew 7:12), which emphasises the practical nature of Christian ethics, based on the relationship between abstract belief and behaviour²⁴ .

This meaning is most clearly highlighted in Christ's discourse on judgement, where He linked entry into the Kingdom to acts of mercy and charity, such as feeding the hungry and helping the needy (Matthew 25:35–40), thereby making social behaviour an integral part of preparation for the afterlife²⁵ . On the other hand, Christian doctrine emphasises the principle of ongoing repentance as an expression of awareness of moral responsibility before God, whereby repentance is not viewed as a temporary emotional state, but as a practical transformation in behaviour, as stated by John the Baptist: 'Bear fruits in keeping with repentance' (Matthew 3:8). By 'fruits' is meant practical behaviour that reflects the sincerity of repentance, embodies an inner moral transformation, and demonstrates true faith through good works.

Christian theology holds that this behavioural transformation stems from faith in salvation and the judgement in the Hereafter, which makes belief in the Hereafter a regulating factor in individual behaviour, a motivation to resist selfishness, a means of promoting the values of generosity and sacrifice, and a fundamental incentive to strive for a moral life in harmony with the teachings of Christ and the Gospel in general²⁶ .

b. The textual foundations of the behavioural function

The behavioural function of belief in the Hereafter in Christianity is based on a textual and theological framework that places divine love at the centre of the relationship between humankind and God, and the behavioural response a natural fruit of this faith. Christian texts do not present eternal life merely as a legal reward, but as a divine gift that calls for an inner transformation in human behaviour. The Gospel of John clearly expresses this meaning in the

words: 'For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life' (John 3:16)²⁷. It is understood from this text that salvation is a divine gift to the believer which requires a moral response springing from gratitude and love, not from fear of punishment. The Gospel affirms that this response is manifested in practice through loving behaviour towards others, as Christ says: 'By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another' (John 13:35). Thus, love becomes the true criterion for belonging to the Christian faith; it is not merely a theoretical spiritual value, but a behavioural principle reflected in our daily interactions with others. The Apostle Paul reinforces this understanding when he links the essence of the Law to love, emphasising that the purpose of all the commandments is fulfilled in it, saying: "For the entire law is fulfilled in keeping this one command: 'Love your neighbor as yourself' (Galatians 5:14). Paul links this conduct to a conscious eschatological hope, emphasising that the believer lives between faith and hope, saying: "For through the Spirit we eagerly await by faith the righteousness for which we hope" (Galatians 5:5). It is understood from this text that eschatological hope, as Paul conceives it, is not a passive waiting, but an active stance of faith based on trust in the work of the Spirit, which is reflected in the believer's moral conduct. A number of contemporary theologians have interpreted this interconnection between faith and behaviour as the essence of Christian ethics; Raymond Brown, for instance, maintains that salvation in Christian thought is inseparable from a practical commitment to love, as this is the truest expression of genuine faith²⁸. Furthermore, Wright emphasises that eschatological hope in Paul's thought does not lead to withdrawal from the world, but rather to a deeper moral responsibility towards humanity and society, given that this present life is the arena in which God's salvific purposes are realised²⁹.

C. Areas of behavioural influence in Christianity:

Among the areas of behavioural influence of belief in the Hereafter in Christianity are the following:

1. **Behaviour based on love and forgiveness:** The principle of love and forgiveness is one of the most prominent behavioural manifestations generated by belief in eternal life in Christian thought, as a person's experience of God's free forgiveness calls them to translate this divine pardon into practical behaviour in their relationships with others. The Gospel links God's forgiveness of humankind with one's ability to forgive others, as Paul states: 'Bear with one another and forgive one another, if anyone has a grievance against another; just as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive' (Colossians 3:13). It is clear from this passage that forgiveness is not a secondary moral choice, but rather a spiritual commitment stemming from the believer's awareness of the grace of salvation received without merit. Christ also emphasises that love is the distinguishing mark that sets his followers apart from others, saying: 'By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another' (John 13:35). Love thus becomes the criterion of faith-based identity—not merely a general moral value, but practical evidence of a genuine commitment to Christ.

2. **Church conduct and the spirit of service:** In Christianity, belief in the Hereafter is closely linked to the spirit of service and self-sacrifice, as service is viewed as participation in the mission of Christ himself, who set a practical example of humility. The Gospel expresses this meaning in Christ's words: 'For the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many' (Mark 10:45). Accordingly, from a Christian perspective, service becomes an expression of living faith; it is not merely a social activity, but a practical response to the call of divine love. Furthermore, this dimension of service is linked to the hope of eternal life, since good works are regarded as a living testimony to faith—not a means of salvation in themselves, but its natural fruit—as Jesus explains in his discourse on judgement in Matthew 25: 35–40, where closeness to the Kingdom is measured by service to those in need.
3. **Social behaviour and the realisation of the values of the Kingdom:** The impact of belief in the Hereafter extends to the wider social sphere, where this present life is viewed as an arena for realising the values of the Kingdom of God, such as peace, mercy, justice... and others. Paul expresses this dimension by saying: "For the Kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit" (Romans 14:17). Thus, the believer's social behaviour becomes a practical reflection of their eschatological hope, as they seek to establish the values of peace and justice as symbolic precursors to the full Kingdom in the hereafter.

D. Mechanisms through which belief in the Hereafter influences behavior Christianity:

The doctrine of belief in the Hereafter in Christianity constitutes a fundamental starting point for guiding human behaviour, as its effects are not limited to the doctrinal dimension, but are deeply reflected in the believer's moral and daily practice. These effects manifest through a set of behavioural mechanisms that form the structure of practical Christian life, foremost among which are the following:

1. **Love as the supreme motive for behaviour:** Love occupies a central position in the Christian ethical system, as it is regarded as the natural fruit of true faith and divine salvation. The believer does not practise goodness out of fear of punishment, but in response to a prior divine love, as John expresses it: 'We love him because he first loved us' (John 4:19). Love is the clearest criterion by which the sincerity of one's true belonging to Christ is measured, for he says: 'By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another' (John 13:35). Love, therefore, is not merely a moral virtue, but living proof that salvation has been realised in the believer's life.
2. **Spiritual freedom and inner transformation:** Christ expresses this meaning clearly in His words: 'If the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed' (John 8:36). The Apostle Paul also makes it clear that this freedom does not mean moral licence, but rather walking according to the Spirit, saying: 'For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set me free from the law of sin and death' (Romans 8:2). Thus, moral conduct becomes the result of a profound inner transformation, not merely an outward adherence to rules.
3. **The expectation of the Second Coming and its impact on behaviour:** Faith in the Second Coming of Christ represents a fundamental dimension in the believer's moral formation, for

this expectation is not understood as passive waiting, but as a constant call to vigilance and good works. Eschatological hope motivates the believer to persevere in faith and to strive in the service of goodness, as the Apostle Paul expresses it: 'Therefore, my beloved brothers and sisters, stand firm, unshakeable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labour is not in vain in the Lord' (Corinthians 15:58). In this way, the anticipation of the Hereafter becomes a driving force for positive behaviour and a moral responsibility towards oneself and society; that is, a practical expression of faith in the Hereafter.

Fourth: A comparison of the behavioural function of belief in the Hereafter in Islam and Christianity: (points of convergence and divergence)

Based on the preceding analysis, the following comparison can be drawn:

a. The behavioural function of belief in the Hereafter in Islam and Christianity:

In both Islam and Christianity, belief in the Hereafter represents one of the central keys to understanding the relationship between doctrine and behaviour, in that this belief is not limited to being a metaphysical conception of human destiny after death, but is embodied as a principle that organises human behaviour and guides the structure of moral action in life. However, the mechanisms underlying this influence differ in their underlying structure between the two conceptions, despite their shared ultimate goal of refining human nature and guiding it towards goodness.

b. Belief in the Hereafter in Islam: Behaviour as a Response to Responsibility and Divine Justice

The Islamic conception is rooted in the centrality of the principle of accountability in the Hereafter, whereby human beings are understood as beings who bear full responsibility for their actions, and are thus subject to the principle of just reckoning based on all-encompassing divine knowledge; Belief in the Hereafter does not merely serve an emotional function, but establishes an ethical framework based on a constant awareness of God's oversight, which leads to the formation of what is known as the 'watchful conscience'. From this perspective, moral behaviour in Islam is founded on the dialectic of reward and punishment, not as a mechanism of intimidation, but as an embodiment of absolute divine justice, which confers value and meaning upon human action; For a good deed is measured not only by its nature but also by its moral and social consequences; this makes belief in the Hereafter a motivating factor in curbing one's desires, exercising self-discipline, and striking a balance between rights and duties. Thus, in the Islamic perspective, behaviour becomes purposeful, directed towards seeking God's pleasure, and founded on the principle of individual accountability, where there is no collective salvation or moral substitution, but rather a personal responsibility that cannot be transferred or substituted.

c. Belief in the Hereafter in Christianity: Behaviour as a Manifestation of Inner Transformation and Grace

In contrast, the Christian perspective stems from a different conception of the nature of the relationship between human beings and God, centred on the concepts of grace and salvation. Belief in eternal life is not presented as a direct consequence of one's deeds, but as the fruit of a salvific relationship, founded on God's love that precedes any human merit. Hence,

Christian ethics are founded not on fear of punishment, but on gratitude for divine love. In this context, moral behaviour becomes an expression of a radical inner transformation in the human being, shifting from a perspective of 'external obligation' to one of 'inner renewal'. According to this conception, a person does not do good in order to be saved, but because they have already been saved; hence, love takes centre stage as the unifying principle of all values, whilst obedience is understood not as forced compliance, but as the natural fruit of a living relationship with God. Furthermore, the expectation of the Second Coming in Christian theology does not carry the character of an eschatological threat, but is rather a source of hope that motivates the believer towards positive action and provides them with a moral horizon that transcends the present moment, thereby transforming everyday behaviour into a proactive participation in the reality of the coming Kingdom.

d. **Points of Convergence and Divergence in the Ethical Framework**

The Islamic and Christian perspectives converge in emphasising that true faith is inseparable from practical behaviour, and that the moral value of an action stems from its connection to the transcendent. However, the fundamental difference lies in the nature of the relationship between works and salvation: In Islam, deeds are regarded as a condition for salvation and are subject to divine justice, whilst in Christianity, deeds are understood as the fruit of salvation, not its direct cause. Nevertheless, the two systems converge on a single goal, namely the formation of a morally responsible individual, in whom faith is transformed from a mere intellectual concept into a force that guides individual and social behaviour, thereby ensuring human dignity and a balanced value system for society.

e. **Comparison table of the behavioural function in Islam and Christianity**

Comparison criterion	Islam	Christianity
Source of behaviour	Divine mandate and individual responsibility	Divine grace and salvation
The fundamental motivation	Fear and hope (reward and punishment)	Love and Gratitude
The Central Mechanism	Self-monitoring and individual accountability	Inner transformation and spiritual renewal
The Goal	The pleasure of God and entry into Paradise	Fellowship with God and eternal life
The Model	The Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him	Jesus, peace be upon him
The criterion	Good deeds are a condition for salvation	Good deeds are the fruit of salvation
The social dimension	Justice, honesty and charity	Love, forgiveness and service

The psychological dimension	Balance between fear and hope	Tranquillity and inner peace
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Fifth: Educational and social applications

1. Educational applications

- **In educational curricula:** The findings of the study can be utilised in the development of religious education curricula so that they focus on the behavioural dimension of belief in the Hereafter, rather than being limited solely to the abstract doctrinal aspect.
- **In da'wah discourse:** There is scope to move away from abstract sermons towards a realistic, educational discourse that links faith to the daily behaviour of individuals and society.
- **In psychological counselling programmes:** The concept of self-regulation and the balance between fear and hope can be utilised in the treatment of certain psychological disorders, such as anxiety and depression.

2. Social applications

- **In promoting moral values:** Belief in the Hereafter can be utilised to instil the values of honesty, integrity, justice and benevolence in society.
- **In combating corruption:** belief in the reckoning in the Hereafter can act as a powerful internal deterrent that prevents wrongful behaviour even in the absence of external oversight.
- **In promoting coexistence:** The shared moral principles between Islam and Christianity can be utilised to foster a culture of dialogue and tolerance.

3. Addressing contemporary challenges

- **Confronting atheism and secularism:** Belief in the Hereafter can serve as a bulwark against atheistic and secular currents that deny the unseen and confine existence to the material realm.
- **Confronting moral crises:** Belief in the reckoning in the Hereafter can help to address contemporary moral crises, such as moral decay, suicide and crime.
- **Promoting mental well-being:** A balance between fear and hope can contribute to psychological stability and inner peace.

Research Findings

This research has yielded a number of scientific findings that highlight the fundamental role of belief in the Hereafter in guiding human behaviour, which can be summarised as follows:

1. Belief in the Hereafter is a central element in the formation of moral behaviour in both Islam and Christianity, as it is viewed not merely as a metaphysical belief, but as a practical motivator guiding individual and social behaviour.
2. The Islamic conception of behaviour is founded on the principle of individual responsibility and accountability in the Hereafter, whereby human action is directly linked to retribution. This reinforces self-discipline and moral restraint, and makes ethical behaviour an integral part of the system of divine command.
3. In Christianity, the behavioural dimension is manifested through the concepts of salvation and grace, whereby moral practice stems from the inner transformation resulting from faith in Christ, and good works become the fruit of love rather than a means of attaining salvation.
4. A comparison of the behavioural function of belief in the Hereafter in Islam and Christianity has revealed that the fundamental point of convergence between them lies in the regard of ethical behaviour as a criterion for the sincerity of faith, despite the differing theological premises underpinning this behaviour.
5. The study showed that belief in the Hereafter fulfils an educational and social function, as it contributes to the refinement of individual behaviour, a sense of responsibility, and the promotion of values of justice and solidarity within society.
6. Overall, the findings confirm that the eschatological dimension, whether in the Islamic or Christian conception, constitutes a fundamental pillar in the moral and spiritual development of the individual, and endows human action with a teleological dimension that transcends immediate utility to embrace a horizon of meaning and commitment.

Consequently, belief in the Hereafter emerges as one of the most important value-driven forces contributing to the consolidation of positive behaviour and the formation of responsible individuals, thereby enhancing the potential for ethical coexistence in multi-religious and multicultural societies.

Recommendations

1. The findings of these studies should be incorporated into religious and guidance discourse, thereby contributing to a shift from abstract sermons to a realistic, educational discourse that links faith to the daily behaviour of individuals and society.
2. Capitalise on the ethical common ground between Islam and Christianity to foster a culture of dialogue, by highlighting shared values such as social responsibility, justice, solidarity and love.
3. Encourage researchers to conduct field studies that monitor the impact of belief in the Hereafter on contemporary social behaviour, thereby enabling the gap between theoretical conception and actual practice to be measured.

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