

ETERNAL LIFE

(Life After Death)

Murtada Mutahhari



Islamic Propagation Organization

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Publisher's Note

What is the nature of death? Is there an afterlife?
What about the purgatory or the Day of Judgement?
What is the connection between the earthly World and the
Worldafter?

This work lifts many of the curtains hiding the mysteries surrounding these questions which so often crop up in our mind in the course of our daily lives. Though brief, it assembles facts that gear the reader to review his present philosophy of this earthly life, encouraging him to enjoin good so that he may reap the harvest of his deeds in the Hereafter.

**International Relations Department
Islamic Propagation Organization**

Chapter

1

THE RESURRECTION

One of the Bases of the Islamic World View

One of the principles of the Islamic world view which is an important foundation of Islamic faith is the belief in eternal life. Faith in the hereafter is an essential requirement for being a Muslim. That is, if one denies this belief, one can no longer be considered a Muslim.

The Messengers of God, without exception, next to the principle of monotheism, have pointed out this (other) principle to people as the most important one and have asked them to have faith in it. This is the principle known as «the Resurrection» among Islamic theologians.

In the Holy Quran, we come across hundred of verses which discuss the world after death, the day of Resurrection, the scales of judgement and evaluation, records of our deeds, Heaven and Hell, eternal life, the next world and other issues regarding the world after death. However, there are twelve verses in the Quran where faith in the «Last Day» has been specially mentioned next to faith in God.

There are several expressions in the Quran regarding the Day of Resurrection, each of which is a gate to knowledge. One of these is *alyom-al-akhir* meaning the Last Day in which the Holy Quran reminds us of two points:

a) Not only the human life, but also that of the whole world is divided into two periods, each of which is known as one «day». The first day or period referring to this world is

temporary. The last day or period referring to the other world is everlasting. In some other verses of the Holy Quran, life in this world is called «the first life» and life in the hereafter, «the Resurrection».

b) Going through this first life or period and not having come to the second day or period which is concealed from us, our happiness in this world and the other world lies in having «faith» in that day and period.

Our happiness today depends on this belief because it warns us of the consequences of our action. Thus, we realize that our deeds, behaviour, thoughts, words and morals, from the most important to the most trivial, have a beginning and an end, like the human being itself. But they do not terminate in the first period, but remain to be taken into account on the successive day. Therefore we should strive to be good and abstain from evil deeds and thoughts. As it will subsequently be discussed, our happiness on that day depends on this belief because in the other world, man will be rewarded in light of his virtuous acts or punished as a result of his evil deeds in this world. That is why in the Holy Quran, faith in the Resurrection is considered an essential requirement for man's happiness.

Origin of Belief in the Lifeafter.

The origin of belief in eternal life, the last life, is in the first place, the revelation from God, brought to mankind through His Messengers.

When man comes to know God, believes in the truth of the prophets' messages and realizes that what they bring is revelation from God, in order not to be a transgressor, he will come to believe in the Day of Resurrection and eternal life which all prophets have stressed to be the most significant principle next to that of monotheism.

On the one hand, the degree of man's faith in eternal life depends on his belief in the principle of prophecy and the truth of the prophets' messages. On the other hand, it depends on the extent of his general knowledge and the

degree of his logical and rational concept of the Last Judgement.

Besides God's revelation, brought to man by His Messengers, there are other means, signs and proofs to cultivate faith in the Resurrection, one of which is the outcome of man's mental, intellectual and scientific endeavours. They confirm the truth of the prophets' messages regarding the Last Judgement. These are:

1. The Way of Knowing God
2. The Way of Knowing the Universe
3. The Way of Knowing the Human Being's Spirit and Soul

We are not concerned with those ways necessitating a series of philosophical and scientific arguments. We will discuss it merely through revelation and the principle of prophecy. But since these ways are mentioned and classified in the Quran itself, we will refer to them later in a section entitled «The Quran on the other world».

The following issues must be considered while discussing the problem of eternal life and the lifeafter from an Islamic point of view.

- * The Nature of Death
- * Life after Death
- * Purgatory
- * The Great Day of Judgement
- * The Connection between this World and the Other World

* Manifestation and Eternality of the Human Being's Deeds and Acquisitions

- * Life in this World and the Hereafter.
- * The Quran on the other world
- * God's Justice
- * God's Wisdom

The Nature of Death

What is death? Is it mortality and annihilation or does it suggest evolution and transference from one place to

another, and from one world to another?

This question has always been under consideration by man. Everyone is inclined to discover and answer directly or believe in what is asserted. We Moslems answer this question from what has been said in the Holy Quran about it, and have faith and belief in it.

The Holy Quran gives a particular answer with a specific interpretation about the nature of death. It uses the term '*tawaffa*' for death.

'*Tawaffa*' and '*istifa*' are both from the same origin (*wafa*). In Arabic the word '*tawaffa*' is used whenever a person receives something in full, without the least slicing or omission. «*Tawaffat-al-mal*» means «I received the property in full». This expression is used for death in fourteen verses of the Quran from which we conclude that death is something we receive. That is, at the moment of death, man is delivered to the angels who receive him in his full reality and personality. The following ideas are inferred from that expression in the Quran:

a) Death is not mortality, destruction and annihilation. It is a transition from one world to another and from one state to another where man's life will continue in another form.

b) What forms one's real personality and is considered one's real «self», is not one's body, organs and subordinate elements of the body, because these are mortal and gradually disintegrate. What forms one's real personality and is considered one's real «self», is interpreted as «soul» or occasionally as 'spirit' in the Quran.

c) Man's spirit or soul which is the basis on which his real self is determined and on whose immortality, his own immortality depends has an existential position in a horizon superior to the horizon of matter and material elements. Although spirit or soul is the product of nature's substantial evolution, through the latter, the existential horizon and the real position of nature is changed and elevated, that is, it is

made to evolve in the metaphysical world. With death, the spirit or soul is transferred into a state which is a category of the spirit. In other words, in death, that super-physical truth is taken over and received.

The Holy Quran has discussed man's creation in some other verses, without mentioning the Resurrection and eternal life, but pointing out something real in him with a quality and category above that of clay and water. Regarding Adam it asserts:

— «وَنَفَخْتُ فِيهِ مِنْ رُوحِي» —

«And breathed of My spirit into him.» (15-29)

The spirit, soul, and the survival of the spirit after death are among the most significant teachings (issues) of Islamic sciences. Half of the original, indisputable Islamic sciences are based on the originality of the spirit, its independence from the body and its survival after death. Humanity and real human values are also based on this truth without which they would be entirely imaginary.

All the verses which clearly describe immediate life after death, some examples of which have been mentioned in this book, are proofs of the fact that the Quran confirms the spirit as a reality, independent of the body and a surviving element after its destruction.

Some think that according to the Quran, there is no spirit or soul, and that one's life comes to an end at death; that is, there is no sense, understanding, joy or pain till the Great Day of Judgement, when one is restored to life. Only then one finds oneself and the world again.

However, the verses explicitly describing immediate life after death are definite proofs which reject this opinion.

These people believe that the verse, «Say: The Spirit is at My Nourisher's command», is the proof for those who believe in the spirit. These same people assert that something else is actually meant by the word «spirit» which is mentioned

repeatedly in the Quran. This verse also illustrates the same meaning as that of the other verses.

They do not know that proof for those who believe in the soul is not based on this verse but on twenty other verses. This verse and other verses discuss the word «spirit» as used independently or in phrases such as «Our Spirit», «the Holy Spirit», «My Spirit»,

— «قُلِ الرُّوحُ مِنْ أَمْرِ رَبِّي»

«Say, the Spirit is our command», including the verse regarding man:

— «وَوَفَّخْتُ فِيهِ مِنْ رُوحِي»

«And breathed of My Spirit into him», showing that from the Quran's point of view, there is a truth called spirit, which is above angels and man. Thus angels and man have this «commanded» reality (their spirit) through God's Grace. All the verses about the spirit, including the verse regarding man, «And breathed of my Spirit into him», show that man's spirit has a non-physical reality.¹

The origin of the spirit has not only been confirmed in several verses of the Quran but also by the Prophet Muhammad, praise be to him, and the immaculate Imams in books of tradition, prayers and the Nahj-ul- Balagha (a book by the first Imam). As a matter of fact, the denial of the spirit is an odious western idea which originates from western materialism and sensualism unfortunately influencing some of the honest followers of the Quran too.

The following examples are three out of the four verses where death is interpreted as tawaffa, attributing a series of vital actions such as conversation, desire and request to man right after death.

— «إِنَّ الَّذِينَ تَوَفَّيْتُهُمُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ ظَالِمِي أَنْفُسِهِمْ قَالُوا فِيمَ كُنْتُمْ؟ قَالُوا كُنَّا مُسْتَضْعَفِينَ فِي الْأَرْضِ. قَالُوا أَلَمْ نَكُنْ أَرْضًا مَسَعَةً فَتَنْهَاجُوا فِيهَا؟»

فَأُولَٰئِكَ مَا لَهُمْ مِنْ آلِهَةٍ مَا يَتَّبِعُونَ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ قَالُوا يَا وَيْلَنَا إِنَّا كُنَّا مِنَ الْمَلَأِينَ الْأَعْيُنَ

«Surely (as for) those whom the angels cause to die while they are unjust to their souls, they shall say: In what state were you? They shall say: We were weak in the earth. They shall say: Was not Allah's earth spacious, so that you should have migrated therein? So these it is whose abode is hell, and it is an evil resort;» (4:97)

This verse is about those who live in an unfavorable environment which is ruled by the will of others. These people are condemned to tolerate their environment. In an attempt at justifying their lethargy, they argue that though the environment is corrupt, circumstances are unfavorable and they are frustrated in their attempt at doing something about it. They continue living in that corrupt environment, giving in to its ways and sink into its depravity instead of improving it or saving themselves from its evil influence, if changes are impossible. When God's angels receive these spirits, they talk to them and consider their excuses unjustifiable because the least they could have done, was to settle elsewhere. The angels remind them of their faults and make them understand that they themselves are responsible for the sins they have committed and for the oppression they have suffered.

In this holy verse, the Holy Quran points out that poverty and frustration in an environment, are not justifiable excuses unless there is no possibility of changing one's domicile.

As perceived in this holy verse, death which is apparently the destruction, the mortality and the termination of life, is interpreted as *tawaffa*, meaning receiving. The word '*tawaffa*' in this verse does not only refer to death, but explicitly shows a conversation and reasoning between angels and man at the moment after death. Evidently, if the human self was entirely mortal and merely an unconscious, senseless corpse, an after death conversation would make

no sense at all. This verse implies that man talks with invisible creatures called angels through different eyes, ears and tongue after one leaves this world and this state.

«وَقَالُوا آءِذَا ضَلَلْنَا فِي الْأَرْضِ أَإِنَّا لَفِي خَلْقٍ جَدِيدٍ؟ بَلْ هُمْ بِلِقَاءِ رَبِّهِمْ كَافِرُونَ قُلْ يَتَوَفَّاكُمْ مَلَائِكَةُ الْمَوْتِ الَّتِي وَكَّلَ بِكُمْ نَمًا إِلَىٰ رَبِّكُمْ تُرْجَعُونَ»

«And they say: What! When we have become lost in the earth, shall we then certainly be in a new creation? Nay! They are disbelievers in the meeting of their Nourisher. Tell them, the death angels, who is assigned for you will revive you fully and wholly at your death, and return you to God.» (32-110)

In this verse, the Holy Quran mentions one of the disbelievers' problems and doubts about the Day of Resurrection and everlasting Life, and solves it. The problem and doubt here is how we shall be created anew after death when our body disintegrates and is annihilated. Referring to the fact that these doubts are all pretexts put forth as a result of perversity and denial, the Holy Quran explains that, contrary to one's supposition and claim regarding the disintegration of one's body, one's real self and personality is not lost. One is delivered to God's angels in possession of all one's entity and reality.

What sceptics mean by «being lost» is that in death, our physical body is scattered; it completely vanishes and therefore how can it be restored to life again?

A similar doubt concerning the disintegration and decomposition of the body is discussed in some other verses of the Quran. The explanation is that «the loss» is only in one's mind. It is a difficult and even an impossible task for man to reconstruct a human body but not for God Whose knowledge and power is infinite.

In the verses mentioned, the disbelievers question the reconstructing of one's physical being. But here the explanation differs. The problem here is not that our body

decomposes and disintegrates but that when it is lost, «we» are lost and consequently «we» or «I» would no longer exist. In other words the sceptics claim that with the disintegration of the body, our real self is annihilated. The Quran here explains that, contrary to your supposition, your real self is not lost. It is delivered to Our angels right after death. Therefore there is no need to find it.

The following verse also points out quite explicitly that although one's physical being decomposes, one's real self (spirit) survives after death:

— «اللَّهُ يَتَوَفَّى الْأَنْفُسَ جِئْنَ مَوْتِهَا وَالَّتِي لَمْ تَمُتْ فِي مَنَامِهَا فَيُمْسِكُ
 آتْنِي قَضَىٰ عَلَيْهَا الْمَوْتَ وَيُرْسِلْهُ إِلَىٰ آخِرَىٰ إِلَىٰ أَجَلٍ مُّسَمًّى إِنَّ فِي ذَٰلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِّقَوْمٍ
 يَتَفَكَّرُونَ»

«God takes the souls at the time of their death and those that die not during their sleep; then He withholds those on whom He has passed the decree of death and sends others back until an appointed term; most surely there are signs in this for a people who reflect.» (39-42)

This verse states the similarity between sleep and death, wakefulness and final Resurrection. Sleep is a light, short death and death is a deep and long sleep. In both cases, one's spirit or soul goes from one state to another. The difference is that while sleeping, one is unconscious and when one awakes one does not know that one has actually returned from a journey, contrary to death when everything is clear to one.

Considering these three verses, one can perceive perfectly that the nature of death is not mortality and annihilation, but transference from one state to another.

Meanwhile, the nature of sleep is clarified from the Quran's point of view. It is clear that although sleep physically and outwardly implies a suspension within the forces of nature, it is spiritually and for the soul, a kind of

escape and return to the innermost being and the heavens. The problems of sleep and death are among the unknown in science. Whatever is discovered in science regarding this problem is a part of the physical process which takes place within the realm of the body.

Life After Death

Does one directly enter the Day of Resurrection after death and is one's futurity then decided? Or, does one pass into a special world in the interval between death and the Great Day of Judgement? (Evidently only God has the knowledge of the time of the Great Day of Judgement, even the prophets are unaware of it.)

According to the Holy Quran and successive and indisputable reports and narratives from the Holy Prophet and the immaculate Imams, no one enters the world of the Great Day of Judgement right after death because the Great Resurrection coincides with a series of fundamental revolution and transformations in all the earthly and celestial bodies such as mountains, seas, the moon, the sun, the stars and constellations. On the Great Day of Judgement, nothing will remain in its usual condition. Moreover, on that day, the first and the last will come together. We see that the world still exists and will perhaps exist for millions, even billions of years with billions and billions of people coming afterwards.

Besides, from the Quran's point of view and according to the previous verses and a series of other verses, no one undergoes an unconscious or senseless state in the interval between death and the Great Day of Judgement. After death, one enters another stage of life where one feels everything. One experiences joy, pleasure, pain, and sorrow. One's enjoyment and suffering has a direct relation to one's thoughts, morals and deeds in this world. This stage continues until the Great Day of Judgement when a series of unique revolutions and transformations will simultaneously take place all over the universe, from the farthest stars to our

earth. This stage or world, which is an interval and medial stage between the world and the Resurrection for everyone, will eventually terminate.

Therefore, according to the Holy Quran, the world after death consists of two stages, that is, one passes through two worlds after death. The first, called purgatory, is finite, as the present world. The second is the world of the Great Judgement which is infinite. The following discussion involves purgatory and the Resurrection.

Purgatory

The word «purgatory» means barrier. The Holy Quran interprets the life between death and the Great Day of Judgement as purgatory.

— «حَتَّىٰ إِذَا جَاءَ أَحَدَهُمُ الْمَوْتُ قَالَ رَبِّ ارْجِعُونِ لَعَلِّي أَعْمَلُ صَالِحًا فِيمَا تَرَكْتُ كَلِمًا إِنَّهَا كَلِمَةٌ هُوَ قَائِلُهَا وَمِنْ وَرَائِهِمْ بَرْزَخٌ إِلَىٰ يَوْمِ يُبْعَثُونَ»

«Until when death overtakes one of them, he says, «Send me back my Lord, send me back. Perhaps I may do good in that which I have left.» By no means! it is mere words that he speaks; and before them is a purgatory until the day they are raised.»

(23-99-100)

This is the only verse which calls the interval between death and the Last Judgement, purgatory. Islamic scholars, drawing from this verse, have designated the stage between death and the Great Day of Judgement as purgatory.

This verse refers to life after death only in so far as mentioning that some people are repentant after death and ask to be returned to the world, but are answered in the negative. It explicitly reveals that, after death, one lives a kind of life which makes one request to be returned to the world, but his request is not accepted.

There are plenty of verses stating that one will be living after death and till the Resurrection. During that period, one

will feel intense, converse and hear, feel happy, suffer and grieve, and will ultimately attain a certain happiness. There are fifteen verses altogether which depict in one way or another, a kind of life proving that one lives a complete life between death and the Day of Judgement. These verses are classified as follows:

First, there are numerous verses which refer to the conversation between the virtuous and benevolent or the corrupt, wicked people and the divine angels immediately after death, such as, the previously mentioned verses

Second, there are verses which, in addition to the above verses, confirm that after conversation, the angels will tell the virtuous, benevolent people to enjoy all God's blessings, that is, they will not have to wait for the Great Day of Judgement. The following two verses express this point:

«The angels will receive the souls of good men saying:

— «الَّذِينَ تَتَوَفَّاهُمُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ طَيِّبِينَ يَقُولُونَ سَلَامٌ عَلَيْكُمْ آدْخُلُوا الْجَنَّةَ

بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ»

Peace be with you. Enter Paradise, the reward of your labours» (16:32)

«He was told to enter paradise, and he exclaimed:

— «فَدِيلَ آدْخُلِ الْجَنَّةَ قَالَ يَا لَيْتَ قَوْمِي يَعْلَمُونَ بِمَا غَفَرَ لِي رَبِّي

وَجَعَلَنِي مِنَ الْمُكْرَمِينَ»

«Wished that my people knew how Gracious my Nourisher has been to me, how highly He has exalted and included me among His favourite ones.» (36:26-7)

In the verses previous to this one, a discussion between this believer (from the Yasin family) and his people is stated.

He invites them to obey the Messengers in Antioch (a city), who persuade the people to worship God devotedly and nothing but Him. He declares his belief in the Messengers and asks his people to pay attention to his statements and follow him.

It is said in these verses that he passed away while those people did not follow him. Experiencing God's forgiveness and generosity in the other world, he wished that his people who were still alive, could be informed of his happiness. These events obviously happen before the Great Day of Resurrection when the first and the last shall gather and no one will remain on earth.

Another point is that, there are several heavens for the blessed, not just one. That is, there are various heavens according to the proximity of the believers to God. Besides, as stated by the Prophet's Household, praise be upon them, some of these heavens are reserved for purgatory and not for the Resurrection. Consequently, the word heaven in the above two verses should not be connected to the Resurrection.

Third, these verses do not imply any conversation between the angels and man. They speak directly about the life of blissful, benevolent people, their welfare; and that of the damned, wicked people, their torture and suffering in the interval between death and the Resurrection. The following two verses are of this type:

— «وَلَا تَحْسَبَنَّ الَّذِينَ قُتِلُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ أَمْوَاتًا بَلْ أحيَاءٌ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ يُرْزَقُونَ * فَرِحِينَ بِمَا آتَاهُمُ اللَّهُ مِنْ فَضْلِهِ وَيَسْتَبْشِرُونَ بِالَّذِينَ لَمْ يَلْحَقُوا بِهِمْ مِنْ خَلْفِهِمْ أَلَّا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ»

«You must not think that those who were slain in the cause of God are dead. They are alive, and well-provided for by their Nourisher; pleased with His gifts and rejoicing that those whom they left behind and who have not yet joined them have

nothing to fear or to regret; rejoicing in God's grace and bounty.» (3:169-170)

— «وَحَاقَ بِآلِ فِرْعَوْنَ سُوءُ الْعَذَابِ آلْنَا يُعْرَضُونَ عَلَيْهَا غُدُوًّا وَعَشِيًّا
وَتَوْمَ نَفُوسُ السَّاعَةِ أُدْخِلُوا آلَ فِرْعَوْنَ أَشَدَّ الْعَذَابِ»

«And a grievous scourge fell on Pharaoh's people. They shall be brought before the Fire, morning and evening, and when the Last Day comes, a voice will cry: 'Let the people of Pharaoh be sternly punished!'» (40:45-46)

This holy verse points out two kinds of torture for Pharaoh's people. One will be before the Day of Judgement and called, 'severe punishment', when they will be brought before the Fire twice a day without being put into it. The other will be after the Day of Judgement, and has been referred to as «the most severe punishment», when at the word of command, the people will be put into the Fire. The time of punishment is not clarified for the second one, contrary to the first punishment in which the words morning and evening are mentioned.

According to the interpretation of Imam Ali, Commander of the Faithful, praise be to him, of this verse, the first punishment refers to purgatory where, similar to this world, there are mornings, evenings, weeks, months, and years, while the second punishment refers to the Resurrection which is timeless.

In the narratives of the Holy Prophet, and Imam Ali, Commander of the Faithful, and those of the other Imam (A.S) plenty of emphasis has been placed on purgatory and lives of the believers and wrong-doers.

After the Muslims' conquest in the battle of Badr, a group of the arrogant Quraish tribal chiefs were killed and thrown into a well near Badr. The Messenger of God addressed the chiefs from the mouth of the well and said «What God had promised to us came true, what about you?»

Some of the companions said to the Messenger of God: «Are you speaking to the dead?! Do they hear what you say?» The Messenger said: «They are now more perceptive than you are.» According to this report and others, although death separates the body and life, the spirit does not completely cut off its connection with the body with which it has lived and been united for years.

On the tenth of Moharram, after performing the morning prayer in assembly with his companions, Imam Huscin (A.S) while giving a short speech addressed them: «Have patience and perseverance, death is but a bridge which leads you from pain and suffering towards happiness, generosity and the vast heavens.»

According to tradition, one's life is nothing but a sleep, one wakes up the minute one dies. That is, after death there is a higher and more complete stage of life. In the same way that a sleeping man has a weaker life in terms of perception compared with a man who is awake and leads a more complete life, so man's present life is compared with his life in purgatory where it becomes more complete.

We should mention two points here:

First, as stated in the narratives and reports by religious leaders, in purgatory, one will be interrogated and questioned only on the problems of faith and belief, whereas on the Resurrection Day the rest of the problems will be brought up and dealt with.

Second, the dead will enjoy happiness, comfort and blessings through their descendants' pious acts intended for them. All sorts of offerings made on behalf of dead parents, friends, teachers or others, will be considered as gifts resulting in their happiness. Among them are permanent offerings such as establishing charitable institutions which will remain to benefit the people as well as temporary offerings. The same result comes through prayer, asking for forgiveness, pilgrimage to Mecca or simply circling the Ka'ba, the House of God at Mecca and going on other pilgrimages

on their behalf.

God forbids, but some children may greatly disappoint their parents. But after the parents die, the children may make amends and thus bring about their parents' contentment. The contrary might also be the case.

The Great Day of Judgement

The Great Day of Judgement is the second stage of everlasting life. In contrast to purgatory which involves the individual and one's immediate arrival there, the Great Day of Judgement concerns the whole, that is, all individuals and the whole world. This is an event which concerns everything and all mankind, an event which embodies the whole world. The whole universe enters a new stage, life and system.

The Holy Quran informs us of the great event of the Resurrection. According to this information, this great event will coincide with the extinction of the stars and the sun, the drying up of the seas, the levelling of high and low lands, the disintegration of the mountains, universal quakes, thunder and great, unique transformations and revolutions. All the world will move towards destruction, disintegration and everything will be annihilated. Then it will be reconstructed and revived, continuing and surviving forever with new rules and systems different from the present ones.

The Resurrection is referred to by several names and expressions in the Quran, each signifying a special condition and system ascribed to it. For example, it is called «the Day of Resurrection», «the Day of Assembly» or «the Day of Encounter» since the first and the last will have the same stand regardless of their role in history. It is known as «the Day of Revealing Secrets» or «the Day of Laying Open one's Deeds» because the innermost being will be revealed and the hidden, complex truths unfolded. It is referred also as «the Day of Immortality», since it is indestructible and eternal. Another expression for it is «the Woeful Day» or «the Day of Repentance» as some people will regret and repent for not

having prepared themselves for that «stage». As it will be the greatest occurrence and the most important event, it is also called «the Fateful Message».

The Connection Between This World and the Other World

A very significant, essential subject pointed out to us by the holy books is the connection between these two worlds. These are related to each other. In the other world, one will reap the harvest of one's own deeds in this world.

What brings about eternal happiness for one is a pure, proper, real faith and belief (a realistic world view), correct moral standards, freedom from jealousy, deceit, fraud, hatred and cheating, as well as benevolent deeds such as benignity and devotion resulting in the perfection of society and mankind. On the contrary, what brings a very grievous, unhappy life in the other world is disbelief, false beliefs, evil morals, selfishness, egotism, self-conceit, oppression, injustice, hypocrisy, usury, lies, slander, treachery, backbiting, tale-bearing, sedition, abstention from praying and worshipping God.

The Messenger of God, peace be upon him, pointedly expressed this point. «This world is the farm for the other world», (i.e. what you sow here, you will reap there). The quality of your harvest depends on what you sow. It is impossible to sow barley and reap wheat, to get flowers from planting thorns or grow dates from colocynth. In the same manner, having evil thoughts, morals and deeds in this world will not profit one in the next world.

Manifestation and Eternality of the Human Being's Deeds and Acquisitions

According to the verses in the holy Quran and the religious leaders' report and narratives, one is eternal and one's deeds are somehow recorded and preserved forever. One will find one's past deeds «illustrated» and «manifested»

«on Resurrection Day». Virtuous deeds and acquisitions will be manifested in beautiful, attractive, pleasant figures and will be a source of joy and happiness, while one's evil deeds will be manifested in hideous, loathsome, terrifying, harmful figures and will be a source of pain, suffering and torture.²

At this stage, three verses from the Holy Quran and two narratives will be sufficient to illustrate these points:

— «يَوْمَ تَجِدُ كُلُّ نَفْسٍ مَّا عَمِلَتْ مِنْ خَيْرٍ مُحْضَرًا وَمَا عَمِلَتْ مِنْ سُوءٍ تَوَدُّ لَوْ أَنَّ بَيْنَهَا وَبَيْنَهُ أَمَدًا بَعِيدًا»

«The day will surely come when each soul will be confronted with whatever good or evil it has done. As for its evil deeds, it will wish they were a long way off.» (3:30)

The fact that man will see his virtuous deeds as very desirable and pleasant and his evil deeds as terrifying and disgusting is made explicit in this verse. He would like to escape or be kept away from them, but that will not be possible. In the other world, man's manifested, presented deeds will be part of him, thus inseparable.

— «وَوَجَدُوا مَا عَمِلُوا حَاضِرًا»

«And they shall find their deeds recorded there.»

The point stressed in this verse is the same as the previous one.

«يَوْمَئِذٍ يَتَّبِعُونَ النَّاسَ أَشْتَاتًا لِيُبَرِّئُوا الَّذِينَ كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ وَمَنْ يَعْمَلْ مِثْقَالَ ذَرَّةٍ شَرًّا يَرَهُ»

«On that day mankind will come out in broken bands to be shown their deeds. Whoever has done an infinitesimal weight of good shall see it, and whoever has done an infinitesimal weight of evil shall see it too.» (99:6-8)

Man is eternal. One's deeds and acquisitions are also recorded and everlasting. In other words, one will live with deeds and morals acquired in this world. They will be good or bad assets, and a perpetual good or evil companion for one in the everlasting world.

It is stated in a narrative that a group of Muslims from a distant land had the honor of meeting the Messenger of God. They asked for some advice. The Holy Messenger made a few statements, one of which was:

«Since your deeds and behaviour here will be your living friends and companions there, now it is time you tried to choose good ones for the other world.»¹

A believer in eternal life always considers his thoughts, morals, deeds and behaviour seriously, knowing that these will remain and be sent in advance to the other world in the reserve for his living there.

Life in this World and the Hereafter

Considering the similarities between the present life and the life to come, one can observe that both lives are true and real. One is aware of one's self and whatever belongs to one and that there is enjoyment and suffering, happiness and grief, bliss and adversity. In both, instincts, either human or animal, exist. One lives with complete organs and limbs and there is space and mass. But there are still several basic differences.

In contrast to the other world, there is reproduction, birth, childhood, youth, old age and death in this world. Here, one has to work and cultivate the ground. There, one reaps the harvest and benefits from one's attempts in this world. Here, is a place of work and activity, there that of result and evaluation. Here one can change the course of one's life by one's direction of deeds and actions. Here life and death are together. Each living creature is linked with a lifeless substance. Moreover, a living thing moves toward death, whereas a lifeless substance can produce life under

the proper conditions. On the contrary, absolute life prevails there. The substance and matter, the ground and the sky, the gardens and fruits, as man's manifested deeds have life. Even the fire and torture are aware and conscious. Here, specific, chronological circumstances and causes and effects dominate. Also there is movement and evolution. But there, only the Divine Will and Kingdom exist. Consciousness and awareness and in general one's sight, hearing and perception are much stronger; in other words, all screens and veils are removed and one perceives the facts through a profound insight as stated in the Holy Quran:

— «فَكَشَفْنَا عَنْكَ غِطَاءَكَ فَبَصَرُكَ الْيَوْمَ حَدِيدٌ»

«But now we have removed from your veil, so your sight today is sharp.» (50:22)

In this world, there is weariness, boredom and frustration, because of monotony. Man always wonders around, as if he had lost something and looking for it. When he obtains what he has been seeking, he rejoices, though soon, he finds that it has not been the sought object.

That is why man is after what he lacks, and is dissatisfied with what he already has. In the other world, being attached to one's innermost nature and instinct, when one reaches what one has been really looking for, that is, everlasting life near the Nourisher of Creation, one will never be tired, or bored. Referring to this point, the Holy Quran states:

— «إِنَّ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ كَانَتْ لَهُمْ جَنَّاتُ الْفِرْدَوْسِ نُزُلًا. خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا لَا يَتَعَوَّنَ عَنْهَا جَوْلًا».

«They shall forever dwell in the gardens of Paradise, desiring no change to befall them.» (107-108)

Furthermore, since they will be provided with whatever

they wish through God's Will, they will not be perturbed by what they lack.

The Quran on the Other World

Since our belief in the Resurrection originates from our belief in the Quran and the Prophets' messages, it is not deemed necessary to look for proofs of the Resurrection or to give any scientific sign and evidence. In spite of this, to simplify the subject, the Holy Quran mentions a series of reasons to inform us directly of the Resurrection. We shall briefly point out these reasons.

The Quran's arguments consist of a series of answers to the disbelievers in the Resurrection. Some of these are in response to people who believe in the impossibility of the Resurrection, stating that it is quite feasible. Other verses go further and state that in noticing similarities between this world and the hereafter, there is no reason for regarding the Last Judgement as improbable or for denying it. Some verses go even further and consider the Resurrection essential, indispensable and a definite result of the wise creation of the universe. There are three groups of verses altogether regarding the rationalization of the Resurrection which will be successively mentioned.

« وَصَرَبَ لَنَا مَثَلًا وَنَسِيَ خَلْقَهُ قَالَ مَنْ يُحْيِي الْعِظَامَ وَهِيَ رَمِيمٌ. قُلْ يُحْيِيهَا الَّذِي أَنشَأَهَا أَوَّلَ مَرَّةٍ وَهُوَ بِكُلِّ خَلْقٍ عَلِيمٌ. »

«He gave us an example, and forgot his own creation. He said: 'who will give life to rotten bone?'

«Say He who created them at first, will give them life again. He has knowledge of every creation.» (36:78-79)

This verse is an answer to a disbeliever who was holding a rotten bone. Grinding it in his hand, he scattered the power into the air. Then he asked: «Who can restore these scattered

particles to life?» The Quran responds that he who first created them.

Man often classifies things into the possible and the impossible according to his own power and ability. One considers the occurrence of things beyond one's power and imagination as impossible. The Quran states that regarding man's power, Resurrection is certainly impossible, but it can be accomplished considering the Power who first created life in a lifeless being.

There are many verses in the Quran which discuss the Resurrection relying on God's power. They reveal that the Will of a Just, Wise God is for the occurrence of the last Judgement and nothing can stop it. As the miracle of creation and life originated from this decree, resulting in the creation of the world, life and man, it will restore one to life on the Day of Judgement.

2- The second group of verses give examples and consist of two parts.

a) Those verses which discuss special occurrences in which the dead have resurrected. For example Abraham addresses God, asking him to reveal the secret of Resurrection to him. In reply, he was asked if he had faith in it. He gave a positive answer stating that his question was only to reassure himself. He was then commanded to catch four birds, cut their heads off, tear their bodies apart and place each part on a different mountain. Calling those birds he would find them resurrected, flying towards him through God's command.

b) Those verses which do not refer to a supernatural, exceptional event like the story of Abraham, but to the present, perceptible order in which the earth and plants die in autumn and winter and come to life again in spring. They state that one can repeatedly notice that nature dies and fades after having had life and energy. With the change of the seasons, the conditions change and the earth, trees and flowers begin a new life again. The same process will occur in the whole

universe. It will become extinct, cold and withered. The sun and the stars will decompose and disintegrate. The whole universe will become completely lifeless. But this state of death will be temporary. All beings will begin life again in a different condition and situation.

To put this more clearly, we, human beings, live on the earth which passes through a period of life and death in three hundred and sixty-five days. Since we can live for fifty, sixty or perhaps one hundred years or more, we can experience this order of life and death scores of times without being surprised at the death and rebirth of the earth. Suppose we lived for just a few months like some species of insects and that we were unintelligent, thus unaware of the history of the earth, and its yearly cycles, not observing the death and rebirth of the earth, we would consequently not believe in this process—we would never believe that the dead earth would become alive once again. Beginning life in spring and dying in fall or winter, a mosquito would definitely not be able to imagine the rebirth of a garden.

A worm or a mosquito, whose life is limited to a tree or garden imagines that its home is a subordinate part of a larger system called the farm on which its life depends and that the farm itself is a subordinate part of another system called town, and that the town is a subordinate part of another system called province, and that the province itself is a part of the country which in turn is a part of the general order of the earth which itself is part of the solar system.

How do we know? Perhaps our whole solar system, the stars, galaxies and everything known to follow the law of nature may be subordinate to a larger system. The development of nature over millions and billions of years may be a part or a day of a season in a larger system. This season, which is one of life, might turn into a period of extinction and depression. That larger system including our solar system, the stars and galaxies might begin life in a different form.

Through God's revelation, all the prophets have informed us of the destruction and extinction of the universe, and the new life and resurrection of the dead in a new order. Having realized the truth in their messages through several proofs, we believe in what they say, including those concerning the rebirth of the whole universe after a period of extinction.

The Quran makes us aware of the order of death and life on the earth as a minute example of a larger life so that we may not doubt or reject the resurrection nor may we exclude it from the whole order and laws of creation.

The Holy Quran states that the Resurrection signifies rebirth, a small example of which we can observe on the earth. The Prophet, blessings be upon him and His Household, pointed out:

— «إِذَا رَأَيْتُمُ الرَّبِيعَ فَاصْبِرُوا ذِكْرَ النَّشُورِ»

«Whenever you see spring, keep on talking about resurrection. In other words spring is an example of the Resurrection.»

Mowlavi, (an Iranian poet), refers to this in one of his poems:

This spring coming after the fall
The proof for the resurrection to befall
Fire, wind, clouds, water and the sun
From a mirage the secrets are laid open
In the spring the nature will show
Whatever the earth swallowed will grow
Through its mouth and lips will come up
Its thoughts and beliefs, to sum up
The secrets by God will be revealed
Since it will grow, sow not bad seed

He speaks of the same concept in his collection of poems

called "Divan-i-Shams":

After beholding descent, consider resurrection;
Why should setting be injurious to the sun and
moon? What seed went down into the earth but
did not grow?
Why this doubt of thine as regards the seed of
man?

There are many verses in the Quran regarding the
existing, perceivable order of death and rebirth such as the
following:

«وَأَنزَلْنَا الَّذِي أَرْسَلَ الرِّيحَ فَتُبِيرُ سَحَابًا فَسُقْنَاهُ إِلَى بَلَدٍ مَيِّتٍ
فَأُحْيَيْنَاهُ فِي الْأَرْضِ بَعْدَ مَوْتِهَا كَذَلِكَ نُفُصِّلُ الشُّورِ»

*«God sends forth the winds which set the clouds in motion.
We drive them on to some dead land and give fresh life to its
barren soil. Such is the resurrection.» (35:9)*

And:

«وَتَرَى الْأَرْضَ هَامِدَةً فَإِذَا أَنْزَلْنَا عَلَيْهَا الْمَاءَ اهْتَزَّتْ وَرَبَتْ وَ
أَنْبَتَتْ مِنْ كُلِّ رَوْحٍ يَهْبِجُ * ذَلِكَ بِأَنَّ اللَّهَ هُوَ الْحَقُّ وَأَنَّهُ يُخَيِّبُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَأَنَّهُ
عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ * وَأَنَّ السَّاعَةَ آتِيَةٌ لَا رُشْبَ فِيهَا وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ يَبْعَثُ مَنْ فِي
الْقُبُورِ»

*«You sometimes see the earth dry and barren but no sooner
do we send down rain upon it than it begins to stir and swell,
putting forth every kind of radiant bloom. That is because God
is truth: He gives life to the dead and has power over all things.
The hour of Doom is sure to come; in this there is no doubt.»*

Those who are in the graves God will raise to life.» (22:5-7)

There are many similar verses which consider the Resurrection a part of the system of death and life in the world, a small example of which we can observe on the earth; nevertheless, the above verses will suffice us.

The difference between this group of verses and the first is that they do not rely merely on God's Power, but give similar examples concerning God's Power in nature which has manifested itself and functioned in the same manner in this perceptible world.

The third group of verses consider the Resurrection essential and definite and its absence an impossibility with respect to God's divine essence.

This has been expressed in two ways: one through God's Justice, that is, God grants each creature what he or she deserves and is worthy of. The other way is stated through God's Wisdom, that is, God has created all creatures for a definite end and purpose. Divine Wisdom directs the progress of man towards his utmost potentiality.

The Holy Quran states: if there were no Resurrection, eternal life, eternal bliss and final reward and punishment, it would be cruel and unjust of God and cruelty is not a characteristic of God. It also states that if there were no eternal life or a definite, everlasting end, Creation would be futile and in vain, and this is not in accordance with God's essence.

There are many verses which, relying on God's Justice and Wisdom, state the necessity and inevitability of the existence of eternal life and return to God. Now, we can give two examples from two chapters in the Quran which emphasize both God's Justice and his Wisdom.

In Chapter 38, it is expressed that those who deviate from the path of God, forgetting the Day of Reckoning will be severely tortured. Then in the verses 27 and 28 of the same chapter, the Quran refers to the Day of Resurrection as follows:

«وَمَا خَلَقْنَا السَّمَاءَ وَالْأَرْضَ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا بَاطِلًا ذَلِكَ ظَنُّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا فَوَيْلٌ لِلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنَ النَّارِ ۗ أَمْ نَجْعَلُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ كَالْمُفْسِدِينَ فِي الْأَرْضِ أَمْ نَجْعَلُ الْمُتَّقِينَ كَالْفُجَّارِ»

«It was not in vain that we created the heavens and the earth and all that lies between them. That is the fancy of the atheists. But woe to the atheists when they are cast into the fire of hell. Are we to treat alike those that have faith and do good deeds, and those that corrupt the earth with wickedness? Are we to treat the righteous as we treat the wicked?»

As we see, it gives evidence of God's Wisdom and His Wise creation in the first verse, and of God's Justice and His Just creation in the second.

In Chapter 45, verses 21 and 22, it states:

«أَمْ حَسِبَ الَّذِينَ اجْتَرَحُوا السَّيِّئَاتِ أَنْ نَجْعَلَهُمْ كَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ سَوَاءً مَخْيَاهُمْ وَمَمَاتُهُمْ سَاءَ مَا يَحْكُمُونَ. وَخَلَقَ اللَّهُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ بِالْحَقِّ وَلِنُجْزِيَ كُلَّ نَفْسٍ بِمَا كَسَبَتْ وَهُمْ لَا يُظْلَمُونَ»

«Do the evil-doers think that they are equal in Our sight with the believers who do good deeds, so that their lives and deaths shall be alike? How ill they judge. God created the heavens and the earth to reveal the truth and to reward each soul according to its deeds. None shall be wronged.» (45:21-22)

The principle of justice has been pointed out in the first verse and that of wisdom in the second.

In the last part of the second verse, God's Justice has been expressed as the ultimate purpose and the goal of Resurrection.

We will clarify how God's Justice and his Wisdom

necessitate eternal life and how the creation of the universe and mankind would be unjustifiable both from the viewpoint of His Justice and from the viewpoint of His Wisdom, if there were no eternal life after this temporary one, where one's deeds would be taken into account and where every person would receive the lasting rewards or the chastisement he deserved in accordance with his deeds in this world.

Chapter
2

GOD'S
JUSTICE

In a general sense, justice means the giving of rights to the deserving without any discrimination. It is unjust to deprive the deserving of their rights. Discrimination, that is, granting some people their rights while depriving some others of theirs is unjust.

If a teacher gives all his students grades lower than what they deserve, he has behaved unjustly. In the same way, by giving some of them the grades they deserve according to their merit, and some others lower grades than what they deserve, again he shall be behaving unjustly.

In one respect, justice accompanies equality, which is considering all people equal, and not discriminating among them. Justice is a requirement for equality, that is, to fulfil the right of every one according to his deserts without any discrimination. Equality does not mean «granting» the same amount to all people regardless of their deserts or the scales of their deserts. If so it would be unjust and signify cruelty. Equality in deprivation is cruelty too. That is, preventing all people from obtaining their deserts, is also a sort of cruelty.

Therefore God's Justice means that He provides his creatures with blessings according to their capability.

The lack of anything in any creature is due to the fact that because of the total conditions and circumstances in which the creature is, it does not possess the possibility and capacity of having the thing it lacks. It would be unjust if some creatures with certain capabilities were deprived of

their full deserts; however, in actuality they are justly granted God's Grace according to their merit.

Among creatures, man possesses unique potentials and skills. His motivations which direct him to work and be active are not limited as is the case with other creatures. In contrast with animals, whose instincts are limited to their environment, human instincts go beyond the limits of this world, being characterized by an everlasting nature.

What affects man's deeds are his supreme moral, scientific, artistic, religious and divine motivations. Man often sacrifices his natural, material and animal life for his supreme, human aims. According to the Quran's interpretation, man regulates his conduct on the basis of «faith and pious deeds» through which he wishes for eternal life and God's contentment. Man possesses an intense capacity for thought and the instincts leading him towards it and he desires eternity.

All these reveal a sort of potential in man for an everlasting life. In other words, they reveal the spirituality, and immaterial quality of man's soul. They compare man in this world to a foetus in the womb where it is provided with circulatory, respiratory, nervous, optic, auditory and genital systems which are in accord with the post-natal life but not with the condition of the womb and the temporary nine months life there.

Although man receives benefits from faith and pious deeds in this life, these are merely consequential. Faith and pious deeds suggest seeds which grow and flourish only in a happy, everlasting life, that is, they will realize their full meaning for and in eternal life.

Not only can man soar above nature and scatter non-material seeds in a system based on faith and pious deeds, but when one deviates (from the true path), which is termed as domains of atheism and depravity in the Quran, the consequences of one's deeds also go beyond animal

limitations and ordinary physical relationships. One's deeds become spiritual and eternal but in a deviant way. Thus one becomes deserving of a sort of eternal life in which one unfortunately suffers pain and agony. In religious terms, one incurs eternal hell-fire.

If one deviates from faith and pious deeds, one descends even below animal life and falls to the lowest status. According to the Quran's interpretation,

«إِنَّهُمْ إِلَّا كَالْأَنْعَامِ بَلْ هُمْ أَضَلُّ سَبِيلًا»

«They are like beasts, and even more misguided.» (25:44)

Those who follow the bases of faith and pious deeds and those who deviate from them can be compared to students, of whom the first group do their assignments conscientiously, while the second waste their time playing. If a teacher did not grade all of them, it would be unjust. In the same manner, if there were no eternal life in which the faithful and pious would be rewarded and those who have followed the path of infidelity and depravity would be punished, both would be deprived of just deserts and this would be oppressive and unjust.

To show this more clearly, we say that God has asked people to be faithful and benevolent. Accepting this, a group of people accord their thoughts, morals and deeds with their beliefs. Rejecting this, another group follow evil deeds and corruption. We notice that the order of this world does not always reward the benevolent or punish the corrupt precisely.

Man sometimes dies before receiving the reward of his righteous deeds; therefore, there should be another place to fully reward the benevolent and punish the wrongdoers, otherwise it would be unjust of God.

Chapter

3

GOD'S WISDOM

The deeds of man are divided into two categories. The first category consists of vain, futile, useless deeds which do not result in our reaching the perfection within our capacity. In other words they do not bring us real happiness. The second includes wise, reasonable, honest deeds which bring about useful, advantageous results and lead us towards the perfection we deserve.

Therefore, our wise deeds are those which lead us towards the perfection we deserve. The question will arise regarding God's Wise deeds. Are God's Wise deeds also those which lead Him towards an ultimate perfection and His vain deeds those which do not lead Him towards it? The answer is negative, because He is Self-Sufficient. His deeds are those of Wisdom, Generosity and Mercy. His deeds are not carried out to fulfil his needs or bring Him perfection and happiness, but to bring His creatures to the perfection they deserve. Attributing futile tasks to God, will mean that He creates a being without leading him to the possible perfection he deserves. That is why the meaning of wisdom regarding God is different from that pertaining to man. Man's wisdom signifies following the right path towards human perfection, whereas God's Wisdom means the guidance of His creatures to their deserved perfection. In other words, God's Wisdom means the creation of things on the basis of directing them towards desired goals and deserved perfections.

Since for man, wisdom signifies accomplishment of the

task for bringing him to his own perfection, there is no need for a real connection between his deeds and their intended consequences, i.e. it is not necessary for that deed to end naturally in that consequence and for that consequence to be considered as a perfection of the task. The consequence should necessarily result in perfection and benefit for mankind. For example, a man makes objects from soil, wood, stone, metal, animal skin, wool and cotton etc. and uses them wisely. One makes chairs, houses, cars and clothing which are not considered perfection for wood, stone, bricks, plaster, steel or an assembly of metal parts. These materials do not move towards these forms and figures, but they provide comfort to man such as, sitting on a chair, living in a house, driving a car and wearing clothes. These signify accomplishments for man or are at least beneficial tasks.

On the contrary, there is a real natural relation between God's deeds and their consequence, that is, the goal and result of every task is the real perfection of that task itself. God leads His creation towards its own perfection. Therefore, we notice that each grain or seed moves towards its ultimate goal and perfection.

The problem discussed at this point is that the world and nature go through change and mutation, that is, each goal in nature is changeable and mutable in itself. In other words, everything is temporary and terminable. All «stages» in nature are means, not ends.

That is why some people think of creation as meaningless and useless. They say that the world can be compared to a caravan which is always moving on and changing its stages and never reaching its final destination, Each destination can be considered as only a stop as nature will pass it, too. It is obvious that a journey can only be made when a real destination is expected. Movements and journeys are futile when there is no arrival, and destinations are nothing but stops. Existence would be vain and what dominates the order of the universe would be nothing but

wandering and constant repetition and departure after each arrival.

The explanation given in the Quran is that this problem and doubt would come up if there were nothing but nature and this world, and birth were for death, growing and blooming for withering and disintegration and renewal for wearing out. This opinion of life originates from a wrong reasoning, imagining life to be limited to the world and nature which is not the case.

This world is referred to as the «First day» which is followed by the «Last day». This world signifies «departure» and the resurrection that of «arrival.» Imam Ali (A.S) states :

— «إِنَّمَا الدُّنْيَا دَارٌ مَّجَازٌ وَالْآخِرَةُ دَارُ قَرَارٍ» —

«This world is a place to leave behind and the Resurrection, that of an everlasting residence.» The Resurrection gives meaning to this world, because movement and struggle have no meaning without a goal.

If there were no resurrection, which is an everlasting world, the world would have no final destination to distinguish it from a mere 'stage' or a «stopping place.» The system of the world would be all wandering and according to the Quran, creation would be «vain», «useless» and frivolous.» The Prophets have come to prevent us from making such a fundamental mistake and to make us aware of a fact which, if not recognized, would make life meaningless and vain, embedding futility in our mind, which would make us useless, meaningless creatures, with no goals in life. One of the effects of faith and belief in the Last Judgement is its ridding us of the state of uselessness and nothingness, making us, our thoughts and our lives meaningful.

Footnotes

1. Refer to Al-Mizan, Exegesis (*Arabic version*) Vol. 13, p. 195 (the holy verse, «Say: The spirit is at my Nourisher's command.») and Vol. 3, pp. 270-5 (the holy verse, «On the day when the Spirit and the angels stand up in their ranks.»)

2. Regarding the celestial manifestation of deeds as blessings and sufferings on the Day of Judgement, refer to the discussion about the Resurrection in 'God's Justice' by the same author.

3. Mowlaj Rumi, *Selected Poems from the Divani Shamsi Tabrizi*, Edited and Translated by Reynold A. Nicholson, M.A. (Great Britain: Cambridge University Press, 1952), pp. 95 & 97.



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