



Eternity of Man

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Foreward



The discussion regarding the resurrection of man after death is, in reality, an answer to a general and universal question. In addition, it is also the answer to an individual and social need, in the meaning that, with the proving and establishment of the life after death, one of the most important individual and social needs of man - and that is - the love for permanence (or love for eternity) shall be fulfilled. Most important of all, man, in the light of his belief in

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Resurrection and in an eternal life, becomes directed, motivated and purposeful in his worldly life and saves the priceless moments of his life from becoming aimless and without goal and direction. From another aspect, with the clarification and understanding of the issue of Resurrection, an important historical, philosophical, scientific and social issue, and the summary of a doctrinal and religious belief, shall find itself the object of discussion and deliberation. That faith and belief which has been the object of deep attention of all the Divine religions and amongst them - Islam, and towards which they have attached a great deal of importance. So much so that, the Holy Qur'ân has always mentioned the belief in Resurrection and life after death, after mentioning the belief in God. The importance which the Holy Qur'ân associates with this issue is such that some of the commentators of the Holy Qur'ân have said that a third of the Holy Qur'ân - directly or indirectly - deals with the issue of Resurrection.

However, it must be understood that the scope of the discussion of Resurrection is very vast and encompasses different and varied discussions within itself. However, considering the fact that this present work is only a brief discourse regarding Resurrection, it is only natural that many of the secondary aspects and some of the fundamental aspects which are related to the main discussion may not have been fully dealt with or if dealt with, may not be in an expanded and detailed manner as it ought to have been. In spite of this, particularities in the topics under discussion have been taken into consideration so as to render the reader independent of the need to refer to any other detailed work. Especially the young readers, who, by means of a short study, wish to obtain all that is necessary to know pertaining to Resurrection and gain the necessary knowledge and belief regarding it.

This book comprises of three parts, which are as follows:-

Part 1: Eternity of Man.

Part 2: Death or Another Birth.

Part 3: The Multilateral Influences of the belief in Resurrection.

In Part 1, the concept of Resurrection and the various theories and opinions regarding it have been mentioned and critically dealt with. After that, in a separate chapter, the possibility of Resurrection and the proofs for it, have been presented. Then, we have dwelt upon the need and the necessity of the Resurrection of man after death. Because of its importance, we have deliberated this part, especially the discussion of the Immateriality of the Soul, in a more detailed manner. In the last chapter, we have discussed the corporeal resurrection and have thus brought to conclusion Part 1 of the book.

In Part 2 also, the essence and the reality of death has been the focus of attention and discussion following which, the view of the Holy Qur'ân and the Islamic traditions regarding it

has been the subject of debate and deliberation. In this chapter, the philosophy of death has also been focused upon. In the subsequent chapter of this Part, causes and factors of the fear of death have been propounded and deliberated. In the last chapter of this Part, we have dwelt upon the type of relation between this world and the Hereafter, and investigated it according to the Islamic and Qur'anic outlook.

In Part 3, the concluding part of the book, a summary of some of the important effects of the belief in Resurrection has been propounded and has been the focus of investigation and deliberation.

The point to be mentioned is that the topics in this book have been discussed in a fluent and flowing manner and without any intricacies and unnecessary jargon and the deep and profound philosophical, scientific and Gnostic points have been included within other subject matters in a simple language. In other words, in spite of the fact that the entire discussion comprises of philosophical, scientific and Gnostic aspects and is useful for men of learning, at the same time, it is completely comprehensible for the adolescents and the youths also.

Chapter 1 : Different views regarding the meaning of Resurrection

Before we proceed with the proofs of the possibility of the eternity of man, it is necessary that we clarify what is our view with respect to life after death and the eternity of man. Just as one's impression regarding a matter, differs from person to person, views and opinions about life after death also differ. Here, four views worthy of attention exist.

1. We find for ourselves, in the traces or the people that remain after our deaths, a living presence, and in this way attain eternity. We call this view, Eternity in Reminiscence. Industrialists, craftsmen, writers and artists leave behind traces and memories of themselves (such as their beliefs, hopes, tragedies and ideologies). They hope that whatever they have created, attain a stable value and position so that their names attain a life, which is much longer than their own. Others, due to the traces, which they leave on the pages of history, become eternal.

2. Man prolongs and continues his existence within his offspring and progeny and in this way becomes eternal. Man has got a yearning for eternity and non-acceptance of extinction, and the reproduction of offspring is a means of escape from the feeling of failure resulting from the realization of the inevitable extinction of man. We seek the extension of our lives in the lives of our children. Very many people yearn to have a male child so that their family names continue to

remain. They name their children after themselves or their ancestors and pressurize their children to accept their beliefs, ideals, objectives, and to choose their profession.

3. After death, we experience union with the Ultimate Truth, which ultimately is Unity. That is, we in our worldly lives have forgotten our fundamental oneness and unity with The One Entity (God) and have erred in our thinking that we are distinct and separate to The One Entity. One day we shall realize that our separation from The One Entity was nothing but a misconception and with the freedom (from this misconception), we shall, once again, unite with Him.

4. It is possible to call the fourth view as "Individual life, after death". According to this view, individuals after the physical death, either continues their own lives or after a period of time, start their own lives once again.

For each of these four views, especially the third and the fourth, it is possible to have different interpretations, such that, some of the interpretations can portray the Islamic concept of Resurrection to a certain extent.

However, it should be noted that the first and the second view shall not be the focus of attention, because, firstly: Our view and that of all the other Divine religions regarding Resurrection cannot be the first two views but a wider, subtler, more transcendental and more ethical than them. Secondly: With respect to the first two views, we do not have any conflict with the materialists and the deniers of resurrection, in the meaning that even they accept these two views. Thirdly: The first view does not include all the people, but is restricted to craftsmen, actors, writers and... Whereas the resurrection under consideration of Islam and the Divine religions includes all the people. On the other hand, the second view lacks the moral and spiritual aspects, which is anticipated as a result of the belief in Resurrection. In other words, belief in Resurrection is regarded to be the source of spirituality and virtues, whereas, according to the second view, this most fundamental result is conveniently forgotten.

The third view, in spite of the fact that it is, fundamentally, not incompatible with the beliefs of Islam and the Divine religions regarding resurrection, and can be accepted in general, but all the same it is not possible that the Islamic view on Resurrection be summarized as the third view, especially, considering the problems that this view is encountering. For example, according to this view, man, after death gets united with the One Entity and in that state, is unaware of his individuality or even his distinction, similar to a drop which unites with the ocean. In this assumption, the drop unites with the One Whole; however, its identity does not remain protected.

Therefore, it must be said that our discussion is restricted to the 4th view among the meanings of Resurrection - of course, by taking into consideration the explanations and particularities that

shall be propounded in the course of the discussion.

Chapter 2 : Is Eternity of Man Possible?

Those who do not support the theory of eternity of man and deny this reality - state that the occurrence of such an event is impossible. Of course, two explanations exist, for their claims of the impossibility of this reality,1) The basis of the first objection is doubt and uncertainty in the Power of Allàh. Such people state that Allàh does not have the Power to make man alive again after death, or to grant him a new life, once dead.

2) Bodies that have decayed and turned to earth are in such a state that they are not capable of being collected and as a result, it is not possible to bring them forth in the form of a man. The Islamic philosophers and other scholars, for the occurrence of each and everything, consider two points to be necessary:

1. Power and the will of the agent.
2. Receptivity of the recipient.

As a result, if on an occasion, the power or the will of the agent exists, but the recipient lacks the receptivity for a particular work, the work can be reckoned to be impossible.

Here too, some are of the belief that the Power of Allàh is infinite, however, collection of the decayed bodies is an act, which does not possess possibility.

The Holy Qur'àn, in response to the first objection proceeds to state and explain the Infinite Power of Allàh, and compares the re-creation of man after death to the great creation of the heavens and the earth and reminds that He who has created this entire universe also possesses the Power to give life to the dead.

الْعَلِيمُ الْخَلَّاقُ وَهُوَ بَلَىٰ مِثْلَهُمْ يَخْلُقُ أَنْ عَلَىٰ بِقَادِرِ الْأَرْضِ وَالسَّمَاوَاتِ خَلَقَ الَّذِي أَوْلَىٰ

“Is not He who created the heavens and the earth able to create (again) the like of them. Yea! and He is the Creator, the All-Knowing.”[1]

It is self-evident that the creation of the heavens and the earth is Greater than the creation of man. So when Allàh is Powerful to create the entire Existence, would he not be Powerful to create

man, who is just a part of the entire Existence, once again?

The Holy Qur'ân in reply to the second objection also alludes to the first creation of man and says:

رَّءِمَ أَوَّلَ فَطْرِكُمْ الَّذِي قُلَّ يُعِيدُنَا مَنْ فَسَيَقُولُونَ

“So they say Who will bring us to life? Say: He who created you the first time.”[2]

In another verse it states:

عَلِيمِ خَلْقِ بِكُلِّ وَهُوَ قَوْمٌ أَوَّلَ أَنْشَأَهَا الَّذِي يُحْيِيهَا قُلَّ رَمِيمٍ وَهِيَ الْعِظَامُ يُحْيِي مَنْ قَالَ خَلْقَهُ وَنَسِيَ مَثَلًا لَنَا وَضَرَبَ

“And he strikes out a likeness for Us and forgets his own creation. Says he: Who will give life to the bones when they are rotten. Say: He will give life to them Who brought them into existence at first, and He is Cognizant of all creation.”[3]

The above verse alludes to a philosophical proof [4], which states that if two or more things are similar to each other, then with respect to being possible (in existence) and not being possible (in existence), they are equal. That is, if one is possible (to exist) the other will also be possible (to exist) and vice-versa, if one is impossible (to exist), the other shall also be impossible (to exist).

Thus Allàh, Who created man in the first instance would also be Powerful to create him once again, since the second creation is not only possible but, assuming that the words 'difficult' and 'simple' convey their meanings in the Holy Presence of Allàh also, the re-creation appears to be simpler. Since, in the first creation, neither was experience at work, nor did a model-plan exist, whereas in the re-creation, both experience and a model-plan exist[5] .

In any event, from the human point of view, the re-creation must be simpler than the creation of man at the first instance, although, with respect to Allàh, both are easy and similar.

The Holy Qur'ân, for the purpose of proving the Power of Allàh for bringing man to life after death, refers to the coming to life of the earth and the growth of plants, and considers the Resurrection of men similar to the coming to life of the earth which takes place every year in spring. How is it that every year man himself witnesses the leaves of trees falling off every autumn and then decay and turn to earth, but in the next spring, new leaves clothe the plants and the earth becomes fresh and green, and in spite of all this, when his coming to life after death is propounded, he considers it to be impossible and out of the ordinary and insists on denying it.

The Holy Qur'ân says :

النَّشُورُ كَذَلِكَ مَوْتِهَا بَعْدَ الْأَرْضِ بِهِ فَأَحْيَيْنَا مَيِّتٍ بَلَدٍ إِلَى فُسُقَاتِهِ سَحَابًا فَتَثِيرُ الرِّيَّاحُ سَلْأَرُ الَّذِي وَاللَّهِ

“And Allàh is He Who sends the winds so they raise a cloud, then We drive it on to a dead country and therewith We give life to the earth after its death. Even so is the Resurrection.”[6]

Therefore the same Allàh, Who every year, brings to life and makes green the dead earth, would be Powerful to create man again, after death. Because, every year, Allàh, by the renewed growth of plants, in reality makes the dead earth a part of the bodies of plants and trees and converts it into living plant cells. In addition to this, if we focus our attention upon the start of the creation of life on the earth, we shall conclude that in the beginning, no living thing existed on the earth and after the start of life, these plants were the ones that appeared on the earth. In other words, for the first time, the plant life manifested itself on the earth. An appearance and manifestation, the wonderful and astonishing secrets of which remain a mystery to the scholars even today. However, this point is certain that, in any event, this plant life has appeared from this very dead earth.

Creation of the Embryo

Another example, which the Holy Qur’àn presents, for the purpose of proving and bringing into the focus of man, the boundless Divine Powers and uses it to prove the Power of Allàh in bringing man to life again after death, is the creation of the embryo. It states if you have doubt and uncertainty in the possibility of Resurrection - reflect upon how we created you from a sperm-drop. Then we brought out this sperm-drop as an 'alaqah' (blood clot). After that we made it grow in the womb and finally in the form of a complete human, we gave him birth by means of his mother.

الْمَوْتِ يُحْيِي أَنْ عَلَى بِقَادِرٍ ذَلِكَ أَلَيْسَ وَالْأُنثَى الذَّكَرَ الرُّؤُوسِ مِنْهُ فَسَوْفَ جَعَلْ فَخُلِقَ عَلَقَةً كَانَ يُمْنُثَمَّ مَنِيٍّ مِنْ نُطْفَةٍ بِكَ أَلَمْ

“Was he not a (mere) drop of sperm emitted? Then he was a clot of blood, then He Shaped (him) and fashioned (him). Then He made of him of two kinds, the male and female. Is not he able to bring the dead to life?” [7]

The above verse and so do the other verses which deal with resurrection, consider it to be a natural phenomenon and similar to the creation of sperm-drop and the birth of a child or giving of life to the plants and making them grow and as a result regards Resurrection to be like the other Divine Acts, whereas, the deniers of Resurrection view it as a strange, new and an impossible phenomenon, the pattern of which cannot be found in Nature. As a result, it is possible to state that fundamentally, it is necessary to balance our view on Resurrection and view it through the looking glass of the Qur’àn verses. In such a case, not only shall we not consider Resurrection to be impossible, but on the other hand comprehend it to be necessary and compulsory, upon which

we shall dwell in the chapters to follow.

Transformation of the Energies

We usually imagine that energies after use get exhausted and destroyed. For e.g., we imagine the solar energy after being radiated towards the earth and the other planets gets destroyed.

Whereas today, science has proved that energy does not get destroyed but simply gets transformed into another form and manifests itself in a different form of energy. In other words, the energy continues to exist in new conditions and in a new environment.

The Holy Qur'ân, in proving the possibility of Resurrection makes use of this fact also and states:

مِنْ لَكُمْ جَعَلَ الَّذِي عَلِيمٌ خَلَقَ بِكُلِّ وَهُوَ مَرَّةٌ أَوْلَ أَنْشَأَهَا الَّذِي يُحْيِيهَا قُلْ رَمِيمٌ وَهِيَ الْعِظَامُ يُحْيِي مَنْ قَالَ خَلَقَهُ وَنَسِيَ مَثَلًا لَنَا وَضَرَبَ تُوَقِّدُونَ مِنْهُ أَنْتُمْ فَإِذَا رَأَى الْأَخْضَرَ الشَّجَرَ

“And he strikes out a likeness of Us and forgets his own creation. Says he: Who will give life to the bones when they are rotten? Say: He will give life to them Who brought them into existence at first, and He is Cognizant of all creation. He Who has made for you the fire (to burn) from the green tree, so that with it you kindle (fire).”[8]

The interpretation, which according to some of the commentators, is appropriate for the above verses and which has been brought to light as a result of recent scientific advancements and discoveries, is that plants and trees, during the entire span of their lives, regularly absorb the light and heat from the sun and in addition also absorb water and necessary substances from the ground by means of their roots and by the combination of these, generate cellulose, which formats the mass of the trees and the wood of the trees is thus formed.

Thus, plants, for the purpose of absorption of vital substances from the ground, must utilize the heat and light of the sun as an active energy. It is due to the utilization of this light and heat that trees grow and develop and accumulate a great deal of energy of the sun within themselves and transform it into wood. Now, observe the burning of wood, as to how the transformed energy of the sun within it, after burning once again turns into heat and light. According to the verses of the Holy Qur'ân, Resurrection of man is just this. And so, in these verses, reference is made at the onset to the first creation of man and then the Resurrection and the re-creation of energies is pointed out.

Another interesting point that exists in the verse is that, usually we consider dried wood to be more capable and more suitable for burning, whereas in the verse, reference has been made to a green tree. Perhaps, the reason for it is that the greenness of the trees and their leaves is a pre-requisite for the taking in of the heat and light of the sun. In simpler words, a living tree is one,

which can transform the energy from the sun into wood and store it within itself whereas a dried tree does not have such a capability. And because of this the verse says: “That Allàh who has made for you the fire (to burn) from the green tree, has the Power to create man once again after death.”[9]

In short, one of the things to which the Holy Qur’àn has made reference to, in order to establish the possibility and the necessity of Resurrection of men is the resurrection of energy or transformation of energy under different conditions.

Motives for Denying Resurrection

As we have observed, the polytheists and the deniers of Resurrection had no philosophical proofs, experimental witnesses or convincing evidences to support their claim. Their arguments always centered on, either, the coming to life of decayed and destroyed bones being strange and peculiar, or something to that effect. And because of this, the Holy Qur’àn does not enter into answering their scientific doubts and misgivings, because fundamentally, scientific doubts and misgivings do not exist. In fact, in Surah-e-Qiyamah after mentioning the talks of the deniers, it refers to their motives. Their motives for denying Resurrection were promiscuity, libertinism and in one sentence, escape from the burden of commitment and responsibility. Now, the acceptance of Resurrection obligates the acceptance of commitment and responsibility, which some people do not approve of and instead are of the belief that as much as possible, one should be engrossed in seeking success and pleasure. This is the thing, which in the first stage denies the belief in Allàh and the Resurrection.

Regarding this, the Holy Qur’àn says:

أَمَامَهُ لِيَفْجُرَّنِ الْإِنْسَانَ يُرِيدُ بَلَّ بَنَانِهِ نُسُوءِي أَنْ عَلَى قَادِرِينَ بَلَى عِظَامَهُ نَجْمَعُ أَلَّنَّ الْإِنْسَانَ أَيَحْسَبُ

“Does man think that we shall not gather his bones? Yea! We are able to make complete his very fingertips. Nay, man desires to deny what is before him.” [10]

Of course, the idolaters and the deniers of Resurrection also had and have another argument, which is nothing except idle and nonsensical talk. That is, there does not exist any rational, philosophical, logical or scientific reasoning in their argument. They would say that belief in Resurrection is only a myth of the ancestors. Now since all the Divine religions persisted in the belief in God and Resurrection and since times immemorial, these two beliefs have been present among the religious people and were considered to be among the fundamentals of religion, the idolaters and the deniers, instead of presenting evidence to prove these beliefs as incorrect, they would just claim that these beliefs are nothing except historical legends and myths.

The Holy Qur'ân mentions their talks as follows:

الْأُولَئِينَ أَسَاطِيرُ الْأَهْدَىٰ إِنَّ قَبْلَ مِنْ آبَائِنَا لَخُنُودًا وَعَدْنَا لَمُخْرَجُونَ أَنِنَّا وَأَبَاؤُنَا تُرَابًا كَمَا أَنْدَ كَفَرُوا الَّذِينَ وَقَالُوا

“And those who disbelieve say: When we have become dust like our fathers, shall we verily be brought forth (again). Indeed we had been promised this, we and our fathers before; these are naught but fables of the ancients.”[11]

Any sensible person shall see that, such idle talk does not merit any answer or response, because the historical background of a theory does not signify its baselessness, and a realist and a just person should accept or reject a matter on the basis of proof and evidence and not on the basis of the matter being antiquated or new. And so, the Holy Qur'ân does not get itself involved in answering these arguments, but on the other hand, reasons out and presents evidence to prove Resurrection as not only possible, but also necessary and these reasoning are so strong and clarifying that should any person reflect appropriately upon them, not only would he notice that the occurrence of Resurrection is very ably proved but all the other doubts and misgivings would also appear to have been cleared.

Notes:

[1] Ya Sin (36):81

[2] Isra (17):51

[3] Yà Sin (36):78-79

[4] يجوز واحد حكم المثال في ما يجوز و ما لا

[5]It is apparent that, these words or terminologies, possess meanings, with respect to us, the finite creations and humans but are devoid of any meaning or concept with respect to Allàh, the Infinite. Hazrat 'Alî ('a) referring to this fact that Allàh was not in need of any reflection or experience for creating his creations says :“Allàh created the things and the creations and started without reflecting or investigating or seeking benefit from experience.” Nahjul Balaghah, Speech. No. 1

[6] Fàtir (35):9

[7] Qiyàmat (75):37-40

[8] Yà Sin (36):78-80

[9] Extract from Payàm-e-Quràn, Vol. 5, Pg. 194

[10] Qiyamat (75):3-5

[11] Naml (27):67-68

Chapter 3 : Proofs for the Necessity of Eternity of Man

In the previous chapter, the arguments of the deniers of Resurrection were, to a certain extent, propounded. After that, the verses that pointed out to the Power of Allàh in creating man and the universe and as a result, proving the Power of Allàh for granting life once again to man, were briefly studied. In short, the reasoning of the previous chapter revolved around the possibility of Resurrection. However the proofs for the need and necessity of Resurrection were not mentioned. Because of this, we shall place this matter under discussion in the third chapter. Here it is necessary we mention that the Holy Qur'àn has never based any of its religious beliefs on forced devotion or statements without proofs and evidences, but instead, the subject matter and their interpretation are always based on sound and rational reasoning. The proofs and the reasoning, which appear in the Holy Qur'àn for proving the certainty of the occurrence of Resurrection, shall be mentioned here.

1. The Ultimate aim of Motion of Objects

Each and every object in this universe, from the minute atoms to the gigantic galaxies, are perpetually in a state of motion. Generally, this motion must be for an aim or objective, because, motion without an aim does not exist. In other words, the underlying reason for every motion is to reach perfection and step from potentiality into actuality, and objects, till such a time that they do not attain their aim and objective, cannot attain tranquility. According to this, if an appointed aim itself possesses another aim and objective, it can be understood that, it was not propounded as an ultimate aim from the very onset but was just a route and a course, which we had assumed to be the aim and objective. Because, the inevitable fall-out of a real and an ultimate aim is that the mover, upon reaching the ultimate aim attains tranquility and becomes stationary. As a result, if we assume infinite aims for the motion of objects, it is equivalent to considering them aimless and without any objective, since in any event, it is necessary that the chain of aims and objectives reach a terminus, just as it is absolutely necessary that the chain of 'efficient causes' reach a cause who is the First Agent and the Inherent Origin of the entire existence, otherwise it would be as if the universe is without an Origin and an Agent.[12]

The Holy Qur'àn considers Resurrection to be the terminus of the motion of objects and believes that reaching Allàh is their ultimate aim and states:

الْمُنْتَهَى رَبِّكَ إِلَىٰ وَأَنَّ

“And that to your Lord is the goal.”[13]

An interesting point here is that one of the attributes and names of Resurrection and the Hereafter is (الْقَرَارِ دَارُ) Dar-ul-Qarar meaning the 'final halting-place', 'place of rest', 'house of peace and tranquility'.

The Holy Qur'ân states:

الْقَرَارِ ارْدَ هِيَ الْآخِرَةَ وَإِنَّ مَتَاعَ الدُّنْيَا الْحَيَاةُ هَذِهِ إِنَّمَا يَأْفُومُ

“ And verily, the hereafter is the abode to settle.”[14]

So, just as the origin of creation and the start of the motion of objects is from Allâh, the termination of the motion of objects is also the return towards Allâh.[15]

2. Divine Wisdom

In order to prove, the Resurrection of man being necessary by means of the 'Wisdom Proof' certain presumptions are required, which have to be previously established by other proofs and evidences. Some of these presumptions are as follows: -

- 1) Allâh, the Wise Creator, has created the Entire Existence.
- 2) This Creator, according to the exigency of being Wise, does not indulge in vain and purposeless activities.

In addition to the above mentioned two points, which should be previously proved and established in their appropriate places, another matter must also be placed under discussion here, in the form of a premise. That matter is that there is a marked difference between the 'Aim of the Agent' and the 'Aim of the Act' and that the two are not the same. According to this, Allâh in accordance with the necessity of His Inherent Needlessness, is not in need of a thing such that by performing an action He can obtain that thing, however, at the same time, the Acts of Allâh also cannot be without aim and purpose or in other words vain and purposeless.

So Allâh does not have the 'Aim of the Agent'. That is, by creating His creations, He does not wish to attain a Perfection, which He did not previously possess. But at the same time He does have the 'Aim of the Act', in the meaning that creating the creations so that the creations themselves reach perfection, is the aim and purpose which Allâh has ascertained for them. And because of this, the Holy Qur'ân regarding the 'Aim of the Act' of Allâh in creating His creations states:

لِيَعْبُدُونِي إِلَّا وَالْإِنْسَانَ الْجِنَّ خَلَقْتُ وَمَا “And I have not created the jinn and men, but that they worship me.”[16] This verse, in reality, presents the 'Aim of the Act' of Allâh, in the meaning that if the creations of Allâh did not recognize and worship Allâh, they themselves have suffered losses and

have not attained their Spiritual Perfection - which has been the aim and purpose of their creation. Not in the meaning that Allàh had an aim and has not achieved it, because this meaning is incompatible with the Inherent Needlessness of Allàh. In addition to this, the Holy Qur'àn itself pronounces Allàh as not being in need of worship and says:

الْعَالَمِينَ عَنْ غَنِيِّ اللَّهِ فَإِنَّ كَفَرَ وَمَنْ

“And whoever disbelieves, then Surely Allàh is Self-Sufficiently independent of the worlds.”[17]

So, if the recognition and the worship is not achieved, the creations have not reached their aim and purpose, that the Creator is deprived of his aim and purpose. This is because the Inherent Needlessness and the Inherent Essentiality will not have an aim and purpose different from the Infinite Essence and also will not have the ability to accept any violation, because it itself is the actual aim and purpose.

After this premise and the clarification of the distinction between the 'Aim of the Agent' and the 'Aim of the Act', we shall state that the creation of the universe is not without aim and purpose because our assumption was that the Creator of the universe is Wise and does not indulge in vain acts.

The next point is that, the short life of this world cannot be the aim and purpose of this creation, because, in the worldly life, there always exist a chain of troublesome and worrying events like shortages, deprivations, destruction and inconveniences. In other words, this present worldly life is intermingled with troubles and disturbances and as a result cannot be considered to be the aim of creation, because aim and purpose should be such that, as a result of it, the act of creation becomes perfect and the benefits of it return back to the creatures and servants. Hence, with no other option, there must exist another world which would be the aim and purpose of man's journey towards attainment of perfection, such that man, upon reaching it, should consider the aim and wisdom of the act of creation, to be practical and completed.

For providing more explanation, it is possible to say that the present world and all that in which we are leading our lives is very large and wondrous and the Power which causes the growth of a plant and provides it the strength to slit open the surface of the earth or at times split open hard rock or even the asphalt of the roads and emerge out, and also the Power, which has brought forth the gigantic galaxies into motion with an absolutely accurate calculation, the same Power is the Boundless Intelligence, who has created man as His most superior creation.

Accordingly, if it is deemed that this most superior creation, is for a certain period a weak child and then for a certain period a worn out and tired individual, who, for most of the time, is entangled in procuring the necessities of his life - which can be summarized into eating and

sleeping, and then after death, is annihilated and ceases to exist, how tyrannical and far from wisdom it would be, whereas, we, at the very onset, had considered Allàh to be Wise.

In short, if we assume, that the aim of Allàh in creating man was that the results and benefits of it would reach Him, this would not be correct because He is the Absolute Needless and possesses Inherent Needlessness. Hence, there must exist an aim whereby its benefits reach man. Under this assumption we see that the limited and material life of this world lacks the ability to be proclaimed as the aim and purpose for the creation of man and it is necessary that another world exist so that Man can achieve the aim for which he was created.[18]

The Holy Qur'àn, in mentioning this proof, quotes the words of wise and intelligent people (after reflection upon the creation of the heavens and the earth) and states:

النَّارِ عَذَابٍ فَبِئْسَ مَا كَانُوا يَكْفُرُونَ
النَّارِ عَذَابٍ فَبِئْسَ مَا كَانُوا يَكْفُرُونَ

“O' our Lord! Thou hast not created (all) this in vain! Glory be to Thee! Save us then from the torments of the (Hell) fire.”[19]

Thomas Aquinas explains this very proof saying: “We have been created for attaining the Ultimate end (i.e. Happiness). However this Happiness cannot be achieved in the life of this world, because the individual wealth is not lasting, body and will, weak, and our knowledge, incomplete. However, God has not created us in vain, and so we must be able to reach the end and the aim for which we have been created, and this necessitates that our lives have a continuity even after death.”

But why should anyone think that we are not able to be prosperous in the life of this world? According to Aristotle, Happiness is not the transient sensation of pleasure, but Happiness is that a person, in the span of his entire life, can convert his abilities into actualities: If we keep ourselves occupied with the activities of the intellect (thinking), we shall attain Happiness, and the transient troubles shall not cause us to lose our Happiness.

However, Thomas sees Happiness in a different light. According to him, the human Happiness is related to the aim and the purpose (that is Union with God) for which we have been created. The cognition of God, which we obtain by means of belief and faith, is an Act of the Will and not of Intellect and hence, it is possible that, the present cognition of God, which is obtained by means of natural intellect, may be faulty or may not be an intuitive faith. Hence, the cognition about God, (in which is secured our Ultimate Happiness) is not attainable in this Worldly life (except in a fleeting and transient manner). So in order that we completely experience such a Happiness-creating insight, it is necessary that we continue our lives even after death.[20]

Chapter 5 : The Reality and the Philosophy of “Departing from the World”

What is the reality of death? What is the philosophy of life and death? For answering these questions, first of all, we must clarify our perception regarding death, in other words, at the beginning we must see how exactly death is and how we must visualize it.

Usually, most of the people are alarmed and fearful upon hearing the word 'death', and to them, death appears dreadful and terrifying, whereas, according to the Islamic ideology, this terminology or this subject has a different appearance and can be perceived in a different way. Basically it can be said that those who fear death, consider it to be a negative entity. According to this insight, death is an end of life and a moment of everlasting separation of man with his life. They believe that with death, the compounded substances of the body suffer a breakdown and return to nature and man too, is nothing except this very broken-down body. Hence, with death, everything ends with no hope remaining!!

Indeed, with this view and insight, death is darker and more dreadful than every other thing and perhaps, no calamity, pain, sorrow and tragedy can be greater and more painful than the tragedy of death, because death would mean the burial of all the desires, hopes, longings and in short, the termination of all things for man--- that man who loved life and eternity very dearly.

Anyway, Islam does not possess such a dark and fear-instilling view of death because according to the Islamic view, death is a positive entity. The moment of death is a moment of rebirth of man and a moment of his hastening out from a confined region of this world into a world, which is wide, expansive and rapturous. A world, wherein, man is not troubled by anxieties, sorrows and the material and natural limitations. Of course, those who have habituated themselves to worries and limitations must free themselves of such habits. In other words, becoming free from the clutches of mother nature entails some transient hardships but after that, in place of a confined and dark place, man is taken into a world which is extensive, infinite and full of luminosity and happiness.

According to this view, death is not annihilation but is inherent fallout of one stage of progress and development of man. Similar to an infant in the womb of the mother, which, after reaching a particular stage of its development, just should not and cannot stay in the confined and dark womb of the mother and obtain nourishment from her blood, but must come out and continue its development in a more extensive world. Similarly, after a certain period, he should attain freedom from the confined and limited world of nature and hasten to another world, which is appropriate for his eternity-desiring soul.

In short, it is according to this view that life of man becomes pleasant and sweet and his death too, not only does not become a means of sorrow but also is regarded as an escape from the misfortunes, sorrows and limitations. And if his death is like the death of the champions and by his own choice and on the path of Truth and as a result, can be called martyrdom, then surely it will be more pleasant and more sweet, and in the moment of death and departure from the world he shall experience such pleasure that only the very righteous and the martyrs on the path of virtue and piety have the knowledge of, and these are the very people who can taste this pleasure. This is because, those pleasures cannot be described and if ever described, does not possess the same pleasure (which is gained by experiencing it).

The reality of death, according to the Holy Qur'ân[56], as was previously referred, is 'Tawaffa' and not 'Faut'. 'Tawaffa' means the angels commissioned to seize the soul of man, seize it and release it from the captivity of the body and then transfer it to another world, towards his Lord.

Philosophy of Death

Why is it that man is created, and then after a certain period of time, in which he lives in this world, departs from it? If death is total annihilation and man after death becomes totally non-existent, this question is propounded with greater seriousness, meaning that, according to this assumption, the probability of the creation of man being futile and the life being vain and empty increases. But, in the event that we do not consider death to be a 'negative entity' and define it to be a transfer or a renewed birth, still the question arises and seeks its answer as to why exactly do we come into the world and why exactly do we get transferred from it?

This very question can be expressed in one of the two possible ways:

i) What aim did Allàh or the Agent possess in creating His creations, or in other words, what benefit does He wish to avail of by the life and death of man and other creations?

If the question is put up in this form, it is necessary to state that the question and its answer is not related to our discussion and it must be deliberated in a discussion related and appropriate to it. All we can say is that Allàh is an Independent Entity, and He avails of no benefit as a result of His creating His creations. Hence, the exact answer for "Then why did He create?" is related to profound, Gnostic topics.

ii) What purpose did Allàh or the Agent have for his action? In other words, Allàh created His creations and among them man, that they travel along which path and to where they reach or what goal they follow? If the above question is expressed in this manner, we must say that according to the Qur'ânic verse, Allàh created the heavens and the creations so that they recognize Allàh and worship Him:

لِيَعْبُدُونِي إِلَّا وَالْإِنْسَانَ الْجِنَّ خَلَقْتُ وَمَا

“And I have not created the jinn and the men except that they worship me.” [57]

In the meaning that, all the creations must, in their journey for perfection, reach a stage that they can, by means of man, become a mirror for the Divine Attributes, because it is in this stage that the worship and cognition of Allàh can reach a stage which is befitting it.

In short, Allàh created His creations and amongst them, man so that finally they reach the level of cognition of Allàh and can understand His Beautiful Attributes and manifest them within themselves, because the real worship and cognizance of Allàh can take the creation and man to a position and status, the specialties and the grandness of which must be referred to in gnostical topics.

So according to this view, the philosophy of life and death, which are part of the creation of Allàh, become clear. The life and death and basically, the changes in the material world and the transfer from one stage of life to another of it or the transfer from one world into another world, all of these play a part in the journey of man and the creations towards perfection. Such changes or the ups and downs must be present, in the light of which, people can be tested, and the pure are separated from the unpure. This is what, the Holy Qur'àn says:

الْعَفُورُ الْعَزِيزُ وَهُوَ عَمَلًا أَحْسَنُ أَيُّكُمْ لِيَبْلُوَكُمْ وَالْحَيَاةَ الْمَوْتَ لِقَدْ الَّذِي

“Who created death and life that He may try you - which of you is best in deeds; and He is Mighty and Forgiving.” [58]

According to this verse, firstly, both life and death are part of the creation of Allàh. Thus, death is a thing which Allàh has created and hence cannot be a 'negative entity', because a negative entity is not capable of being created.

Secondly, tests and trials are considered to be the philosophy of the creation of life and death so that it can be known who is the most righteous.

Of course, it should be known that this “ test “ is not in its literal meaning that takes place on an appointed time and is taken from one particular group or according to a pre-determined subject-matter, but it possesses a very wide meaning. In other words, the tests and trials here, encompass all the moments of the life and death of man, his ups and downs during the span of his entire life, even during his transfer into the next world and after that too. Basically, these changes and transfers prepare the ground for the development and progress of man. Similar to sportsmen, for

whom, not only their competition is a trial and a test, but the pre-competition training is also considered as a form of test and these phasic trials and tests, help to prepare them for the original competition. Life and death and the transfer of man from one world to another world and also the bounties and at times the problems of life, according to the verses of the Holy Qur'ân, are trials and tests for man which prepare him, stage by stage, for attaining his ultimate objective.

'Death'- according to the Holy Qur'an

In the Holy Qur'ân, interesting and varied interpretations have been made, regarding death, the study of all the aspects of which, shall become very elaborate, hence we suffice by mentioning a few of the beautiful and expressive interpretations, which have appeared in some of the verses.

1. Meeting with Allàh

The Holy Qur'ân, in the last verse of the Surah Kahf, has expressed death as a meeting with Allàh and says:

أَحَدًا رَبَّهُ بِعِبَادَةِ يُشْرِكُ وَلَا صَالِحًا عَمَلًا فَلْيَعْمَلْ رَبَّهُ لِقَاءَ يَرْجُوا كَانَ فَمَنْ

“So whoever desires to meet his Lord, he should do good deeds and not associate anyone in the worship of his Lord.”[59]

2. Return to Allàh

Another interpretation which the Holy Qur'ân has and which makes clear the reality of death, is “return to Allàh”. However, the Islamic philosophers, regarding the manner of the creation of the entities (and amongst them, man) by Allàh and after then, their return towards Allàh, have subtle, profound and interesting theories. The Holy Qur'ân says:

رَاجِعُونَ إِلَيْهِ وَإِنَّا لِلَّهِ إِنَّا

“Verily, we are Allàh's and verily to Him shall we return.”[60]

3. Seizing of the Soul

One of the beautiful interpretations of the Holy Qur'ân in the matter of death is (تَوْفَى). This word means seizing a thing in its entirety. Hence, according to the verse under consideration, the reality of death is that the angels commissioned to take the soul, seize the entire personality of man at the time of death, and remove it from the captivity of the body. They, then carry it to the Divine Presence:

تُرْجَعُونَ رَبِّكُمْ إِلَىٰ تَمَّ بِكُمْ وَكُلَّ نَدِي | الْمَوْتِ مَلِكٌ يَتَوَقَّأكُمْ قَلْبُ

“Say: the Angel of Death who is given charge of you shall cause you to die, then to your Lord you shall be brought back.”[61]

'Death' - according to the Traditions

The traditions also contain beautiful, subtle, instructive and interesting interpretations regarding death, some which are mentioned.

1. The bridge of crossing

In some of the traditions, death has been referred to as a bridge, over which people, at the time of transfer from this world to the other world, shall cross and reach their goal, which is the other world. For example, Imàm Husayn ('a) on the day of 'Ashurà, speaking to his loyal companions said:

الى الجنان الواسعه الضراء و البؤس عن تعبر بكم الاقنطرة الموت فما الكرام بنى صبراً

“Remain firm, O sons of noble people, because death is just a bridge which will cross you and transfer you from discomforts and troubles, into the extensive gardens of paradise. So which of you does not desire his freedom from prison and entering into a castle. Of course, death for your enemies is like their being transferred from a palace and a castle into prison and torture.”60

2. Removal of clothes

In some of the traditions, death has been compared to clothes, which of course differs, with respect to a believer and an unbeliever. Death, for a believer is like dirty clothes, which he removes and frees himself from its dirtiness and unpleasant odor, whereas, death with respect to an unbeliever is also like clothes, but beautiful, costly and pleasant-smelling, which he must remove from his body at the time of transfer to the other world.[62]

3. Sleep

In some other traditions, death has been compared to sleep, in which the soul goes out of the body. The only fundamental difference between sleep and death is that the coming out of the soul from the body, at the time of sleep, is only for a short period of time. In addition, the connection between the body and the soul is not completely severed. On the other hand, researches pertaining to the soul has proved shown that the soul maintains a connection with the body in a very special manner. While, at the time of death and after that, the severance of this connection is more complete than that during sleep, although, after death too, a weak connection

does exist for a certain period.

Another point is that the coming out of the soul at the time of death continues up to the Universal Resurrection. This tradition says:

تَقِيلُهُ وَ قِيُودُهُ وَ اغْلَالُ فَكِّهِ وَ قَمَلُهُ سَخَّةٌ وَ ثِيَابُ كَنْزِ عِلْمٍ لِلْمُؤْمِنِ قَالَ الْمَوْتُ؟ مَا (السلام عليه) الْحَسِينِ بْنِ لَعْلِي قِيلَ
الاسْتِبْدَالُ بِأَفْخَرِ الثِّيَابِ وَ أَطْيَبِهَا رَوَائِحِ وَ أَوْطَىءِ الْمَرَكَبِ وَ أَنْسِ الْمَنَازِلِ وَ لِلْكَافِرِ كَخْلَعِ ثِيَابِ
...فَأَخْرَهُ

“Imam Muhammad Baqir (a’) was questioned as to what is death? The Imam (‘a) replied “ Death is the very same sleep that comes to you every night. However this is a sleep, which is very long, and man shall not wake up from it until the Day of Judgement. Thus one who sees different types of pleasure and happiness in his sleep over which he, (in his wakefulness) has no power and similarly he sees the different types of fear-instilling things, while he has no power over them. Thus, how is the state of happiness and fear in the sleep? (The affairs shall be similarly so in the state of death too). This is death. So be ready and prepared for it.” [63]

Notes:

[56] Sajdah (32):11

[57]Zariyat (51):56

Of course, in our traditions, this worship has been compared to recognition of Allàh, because worship with awareness is a consequence of recognition

[58] Mulk (67):2

[59] Kahf (18):110.

[60]Baqarah (2):156

[61]Sajdah (32):11

60 Ma’anil Akhbàr, Pg. 289

[62] Ma'anil Akhbàr, Pg. 289

[63] Ma'anil Akhbar, Pg. 289

Chapter 6 : Why Do We Fear Death?

The fear of death, for most of the people, is not a matter which requires any evidence because it is totally obvious and we also see that a lot of people manifest extra-ordinary sensitivity with respect to the term 'death' and its reality. Thus the actual matter is self-evident. That which

requires proof and an answer is the reason for this fear and alarm as to why we fear death?

Reasons for the Fear of Death

In answer to this question, it is possible to mention some reasons, which have also appeared in our traditions, and which are as follows:

1. Not having a correct insight

In the previous discussions, we had mentioned that a lot of people considered death to be an eternal destruction of themselves. Consequently, it is but natural that they fear death and visualize it dark and gloomy, because the love for permanence and eternity is one of the natural instincts of people and each one in his own way, tries to protect himself from calamities and diseases and ensure his own permanence, and death, in his view, is greater and more pain-inflicting than any disease or calamity, because it is the start of his everlasting extinction.

Nevertheless, if the alarm and fear of death is as a result of non-recognition of the reality of death, then for the removal of this fear, it is vital that its reality, which is found in the Islamic insight, be understood and with regard to it, a strong conviction be developed. If a person bases his views regarding death on correct foundations, many of his fears regarding death will cease to exist because, once he comprehends that with death, he shall enter into a world, more extensive and eternal and also that he shall be liberated from the material, natural and corporeal shackles, how then would he consider it to be abominable and hateful.

2. A new and an unfamiliar path

One of the causes due to which man tends to fear death is that man, after death, steps onto an entirely new path and embarks upon an entirely new journey. Man, usually tends to travel on frightful paths, over which he has traveled a number of times and has not encountered any trouble, better than paths which are comparatively safer, but which are totally new. Since, the path being new and unfamiliar, it becomes reason for hesitation and anxiety, especially since no one, who has traveled this path, has brought any news about it, for the others.

Anyway, if the fear of death is due to the place and path being unfamiliar, then it is necessary that the reality of death be completely comprehended and one's conviction strengthened. In addition to this, it is necessary to obtain the necessary information by means of the Revelation and the traditions of the Infallible Imams (a.s.) and the righteous people, regarding the stages, places of danger and the other particularities of death and after it, then believe in them and prepare oneself to encounter them. Just like a person, who during the course of a journey, finds himself lonely and unaware of his whereabouts, manages to lessen his perplexity with the help of

necessary information, maps and equipment's, we too must obtain the map of the way and the necessary information from authentic and reliable sources.

الموت من تخاف الله عبد يا: له فقال. الموت من يجزع و يبكي هو و اصحابه من مريض على (السلام عليهما) محمد بن علي دخل في الغسل ان علمت و جرب و قروح اصابك و عليك الوسخ و القذر كثرة من تأديت و تقدّرت و اتسخت اذا رأيتك , تعرفه لا لانتك فذلك: قال. الله رسول يابن بلى: قال عليك؟ ذلك فيبقي تدخله ان تكره ما او عنك ذلك فتغتسل تدخله تريدان أما كلّه ذلك يزيل حمام...الحمام ذلك هو الموت

In a tradition from Imàm 'Alī ibn Muḥammad ('a), it is narrated that he ('a) approached one of his companions who was sick and in a state of crying and grieving and complaining due to fear of death. The Imàm ('a) then addressed him saying: "O servant of Allāh, you fear death because you do not comprehend it". Then the Imàm ('a) presented an example and said "If you had become dirty, and due to the excess of dirt and dirtiness you were in suffering and inconvenience, and you knew that the cure for all this lay in your taking a shower, would you wish to go to a bath and clean yourself or would you wish to remain in the same state of dirtiness and as a result continue to undergo the suffering." The sick man said, " Yes, I would wish to take the shower ". Then the Imàm ('a) replied "death (for you) is the very same shower..."[64]

The point to be considered in the above tradition is that, the sick person was one of the companions of the Imàm ('a) and was aware of the Islamic insight regarding death, but in spite of this, was intensely fearful of death. And so, the Imàm ('a) by presenting an example explained to him the states and circumstances after death and thus calmed him.

3. Lack of preparation

Some of the people have comprehended the reality of death and are also aware of the Islamic insight regarding death. On the other hand, they have also obtained some information regarding the stations and the journey after death, however, in spite of all this, they still fear death. This fear is not due to the two reasons previously mentioned but because they have not made available for themselves the tools and things necessary for this journey of theirs, while, on the contrary they have been paying more-than-necessary importance to their present lives; like a person who knows that he would have to spend the rest of his life in another country, but has not collected any money for his journey. Instead, all that he has gathered is in the form of house, shop, land or other things which, presently, are neither capable of being changed, nor transferred. In other words, he has strived and worked and collected a capital, but the capital is such that it cannot be transferred and there is also nobody who will buy it. In short, it is not useful in any way for the objective, which he had in mind. It was because of this that Imàm Ḥusayn ('a) said:

أخبرتكم وأخبرتكم و عمرتك دنياكم فأنتم تكرهون النقلة من العمران الى الخراب أنكم

“You have ruined and destroyed your hereafter and instead have made habitable the present life. So you do not like the transfer from a habitated and comfortable place to a ruined and destroyed one.” [65]

This kind of fear of death, which results from the lack of preparedness and the absence of the provisions of the journey usually occurs with the believers, which in reality is not fear of death but instead, fear of not possessing the sufficient provisions necessary for this journey.

Another point is that such a fear is usually mixed with eagerness. Because, on the one hand, a believer is eager for the Divine meeting and also for the companionship of the Righteous people. On the other hand, due to lack of sufficient piety and the necessary provisions, finds himself in a state of anxiety and fear, whereas the unbelievers do not possess such a fear and eagerness. They fear the actual death, because they consider it to be a complete annihilation. Of course, it could be said that the fear of the unbelievers could have a universal meaning, and the causes of it could be those mentioned and also those not mentioned.

Nevertheless, death or transfer into another world is a universal law, acceptance of which or fear of which shall create no change in the law itself, and finally sooner or later, everyone shall taste the nectar or the poison of death. That, which is more important than death, is the preparation for it, and Insha-Allàh, Allàh shall bestow such a success upon us.

Notes:

[64] Ma'anil Akhbàr, Pg. 290

[65] Ma'anil Akhbar, Pg. 289

Chapter 8 : The Multilateral influences of the belief in Resurrection

If, at a time, it was imagined that mind and intelligence taking the place of God and armed with knowledge, it is possible to lead the society to happiness and tranquility today, such an imagination and misconception, would find no place for itself in the human society. This is because experience has shown that the advancement of knowledge also cannot overcome the human problems. Indeed it cannot be denied that the efforts of the scholars have yielded great results in the field of inventions and discoveries, which have changed the lives of humans but in exchange have brought forward new, complex and bigger problems as presents. Problems such as weapons of mass destruction, devastating wars on the face of the earth, new and killing diseases,

and spread of psychological sicknesses and suicides are some of these problems.

On the other hand, the passing of times and experience have shown that setting up of laws or external pressure for the purpose of training and controlling man is not very efficient. This is because those people who possess power and the others, each one trample the laws beneath their feet or find a way to escape from it. Whereas, if the factor which controls man is belief and internal to man, the results shall be definitely better. Accordingly, Islam has placed the training and controlling factor of man within himself, and with the faith in Allàh and a sincere conviction regarding Resurrection, it has paved and evened out the way for him to become a true human and so also for his development and perfection, such that should a person or a society, really act upon these Islamic teachings, or at the least, achieve a firm conviction regarding the Universal Resurrection and the life after death, then he has laid out the foundation for his and his society's happiness. Here, we shall mention concisely only a few examples of the influence of this liberating and constructive belief.

1. Spiritual Tranquility

It has been proven by experience that material luxuries, successes and pleasure seeking on his own, cannot take man to his objective and to ease and happiness. That which can make life sour for man in spite of having all the material luxuries is anxiety and mental and psychological disturbances. These anxieties and disturbances, more than anything, cause suffering to man and is the reason for an increase in suicide and drug tragedies, which threaten the present civilization.

Unfortunately, this present century of ours, in spite of the advancement of knowledge, sophistication of technology, the diminishing of the hours of work and also the simplification of the various works which previously were performed with great difficulty, and similarly the quantitative and qualitative increase in the various types of amusements, as also their being in the reach and use of the general public, have not only not reduced the anxiety and the disturbance of the mind, but according to the sociologists and the psychologists, the spiritual diseases are on the ascent. One of the main reasons for this new chaos and the spreading of the spiritual diseases is the feeling of emptiness in the life and it being without a purpose. The twentieth century man has, by turning away from religion and placing aside the necessary and life-constructing beliefs of it, entangled himself in an empty and purposeless life and has painted for himself a terrifying face of death and as a result has become caught in life-taking sufferings which he could never have even imagined.

Professor Young one of the famous psycho-analyst and one of the well-known assistants of Freud says: "Two thirds of the people, from all over the world, who have consulted me are people who are educated and successful in life, the major trouble of them being the emptiness and aimlessness in life and this major trouble is causing them suffering, anxiety and disturbance of

mind. The reason for this problem of man in the twentieth century is haughtiness resulting from sophistication in technology, shortsightedness and prejudice which resulted in their losing their religion, and even now, until they do not revert to the correct religious beliefs, they shall not attain tranquility, because irreligiousness means emptiness and absence of purpose in life.”[71]

Not only does lack of belief in life after death, fill the life of man with anxiety, distress and purposelessness, but also tends to strike out at the instinct of the love for permanence of man. In other words, man who is always seeking perfection and eternity will never be satisfied with this limited material world and in no way shall achieve his tranquility in this cage. Whereas, the belief in resurrection and an eternal life fulfils this desire and in its light shall obtain the spiritual tranquility, and shall attain freedom from the sufferings and diseases resulting from this anxiety and disturbance of the mind.

2. Justice and Social Security

Great efforts have taken place in various human societies, so that by some means, justice and social security be established and the violations and crimes diminish or cease altogether. However, one fundamental problem which exists in these efforts is that they desire to compel the individuals to a desired state by setting laws and building prisons and in short, by using an external control, but this method did not have any effectiveness, and was tested time and again. This is because if the control is only by means of laws and other controlling tools, which work on an individual externally, then the leaders and chiefs who exercise control over the people shall consider themselves exceptions to the law or may find means to escape from it and thus abscond.

In addition, in the courts also, important factors like recommendation, bribes presentation of forged documents and thousands of other deceptions, play a pivotal role. In short, that which is not exercised is the Truth and that which is not heard is the complaints of the oppressed. It is because of this lack of effectiveness of the laws and other methods of control, that the national security and the defense budgets are always on the increase and the prisons are increasing day by day, whereas if, alongside these measures and laws, an internal control also existed, the results would be much better. That is, if an individual (or a society) believes that after death, he would have to be present in a court in which he shall witness the reality of his deeds and their results without the slightest reduction and should he have any objection, the parts of his body which performed the deeds would stand witness against him and in addition to this, in such a court, no bribes, friendship, recommendation and reconsideration exist. In such a circumstance, how much would crime, violations and revolts diminish in the society? It is possible to claim that basically, with the presence of such a faith and belief, the occurrence of such acts of crime and violations, is strange and unanticipated and would, in all totality, become effaced and cease to exist. Of course, since varied instincts and numerous and at times contradictory, tendencies exist within man, violations and crime cannot be totally uprooted from the human society, however at the very

least, the part played by these beliefs and the internal control with regards to the happenings which usually take place in material, godless and irreligious societies, is beyond question and denial.

Another point being, it should not be concluded that thus, no offence and crime exist in the Islamic and religious societies or that the state of these societies are, according to statistics, cent per cent better than the other societies (which indeed is), because two fundamental factors serve as a hindrance for the total uprootment of offences and crime in the human and religious societies, and they are as follows:

- i) The varied and at times contrasting instincts of men, shall continue to incline man towards uncleanness.
- ii) Weak beliefs of the people with respect to Allàh and Resurrection after death.

Hence, however much the beliefs of the people with respect to Allàh and life after death become stronger and deep-rooted, calmness and security shall increase in the society and as a result, the quantity of offences, crimes, treason, criminals and prisoners shall decrease.

3. Stimulus for service and performance of good deeds

One who does not have faith in Resurrection and life after death and seeks the rewards of his deeds in this very world, does not have sufficient stimulus for fulfilling the needs and wants of other individuals. Hence if he sees a miserable person, he shall not come forward to help him out of his misery, except if it has some benefit in store for him. For example, by providing this service, he can use that person to his benefit. On the contrary, one who has faith in life after death and knows that the rewards for his deeds shall be received by him completely in the other world, with regards to helping the poor and the helpless and fulfilling the needs of the needy and for all good deeds in general, is strongly motivated. His stimulus is not the worldly benefits, but seeks his rewards from Allàh and knows that Allàh shall grant the best of the rewards in this world and the hereafter (the day when he is most in need of the rewards).

Regarding this, Hazrat ‘Alī (‘a) says:

بالعطيّه جاد بالخلف أيقن من

“One who, with respect to the (rewards of) the day of Resurrection, has firm belief and conviction, shall behave in a goodly manner while serving others.”[72]

This sentence of Hazrat ‘Alī (‘a) very clearly relates the stimulus for serving others and the performance of good deeds in the light of the belief in resurrection. On the other hand, some of

the Qur'anic verses mention the lack of stimulus in the unbelievers and the deniers of the day of Resurrection, for serving others, in this fashion:

الْمُسْكِينِ طَعَامٍ عَلَىٰ يَحُضُّ وَلَا تَتِيمٍ الَّذِي فَذَلِكَ بِالَّذِينَ يَكْتُمُونَ الَّذِي أَرَأَيْتَ

“Have you considered him who calls the Final Judgement a lie? That is the one who repels the orphan. And does not urge the (others) to feed the poor.”[73]

The belief in the day of resurrection and the day of rewards and punishments become reason that man on the one hand, reforms his connection with Allàh, while on the other hand, adjusts and makes right his connection with the creations of Allàh. As a result, giving charity and helping others is not difficult for him, because he is convinced that the rewards for his deeds and much more than what he anticipated, shall be given by Allàh in this world and the hereafter.

In short, the belief in life after death also breathes a meaning into the life of this world, and instills a sense of responsibility into the hearts of the people. It compels them, to the understanding of the responsibilities, righteousness and truthfulness in serving others and performance of good deeds and helps them from refraining from the uncleanness in the same measure as the strength of their conviction in the rewards and punishment of the day of resurrection.

4. Liberation from baseness and pollution

One, who does not believe in his eternal life, cannot choose for himself objectives beyond his material and animal needs. As a result, all of his objectives shall be summarized in the fulfillment of his carnal instincts and attainment of the base and worldly lusts. Such individual or individuals cannot have a search for things other than profits, pleasures or attainment of wealth and power. Once such a thing happens, man is ready to indulge in every crime and submerge in every kind of lust and dirtiness, so as to achieve his base and materialistic objectives. As a result, laws, morals, piety and service of people and... do not mean anything to him. On the contrary, one who believes in resurrection, considers the life of the world to be a preamble to his eternal life and, all his efforts and strivations is directed towards the selection of high, lofty and eternal objectives which can help him in the future and which can make him happy and successful. Hence, he shall not drown himself in lust and base and transient worldly objectives. He shall not get entangled in uncleanness and shall not indulge in crimes and offences and shall not be willing to commit suicide or inflict injuries to his body and soul. He shall tolerate the difficulties and the sufferings of life for the purpose of reaching his lofty objectives. In short, he shall choose a clean life and a goodly path for himself.

The Holy Qur'an mentions one of the reasons for the pollution of the polluted ones of the hell, in their own words, to be the lack of belief in resurrection and states:

الدِّينِ بِيَوْمٍ نُّكَذِّبُ وَكُنَّا الْخَائِضِينَ مَعَ نَحْوِضٍ وَكُنَّا الْمُسْكِينِ نُطْعِمُ نَكَ وَلَمْ الْمُصَلِّينَ مِنْ نَكَ لَمْ قَالُوا

“They shall say: We were not of those who offered the regular prayers. And we used not to feed the poor. And we used to enter into vain discourse with those who entered into vain discourses. And we used to belie the Day of Judgement.” [74]

Thus, four basic reasons for facing the punishment and suffering on the day of resurrection has been mentioned, one of which is the lack of faith and the denial of the resurrection.

Chapter 8 : The Multilateral influences of the belief in Resurrection

If, at a time, it was imagined that mind and intelligence taking the place of God and armed with knowledge, it is possible to lead the society to happiness and tranquility today, such an imagination and misconception, would find no place for itself in the human society. This is because experience has shown that the advancement of knowledge also cannot overcome the human problems. Indeed it cannot be denied that the efforts of the scholars have yielded great results in the field of inventions and discoveries, which have changed the lives of humans but in exchange have brought forward new, complex and bigger problems as presents. Problems such as weapons of mass destruction, devastating wars on the face of the earth, new and killing diseases, and spread of psychological sicknesses and suicides are some of these problems.

On the other hand, the passing of times and experience have shown that setting up of laws or external pressure for the purpose of training and controlling man is not very efficient. This is because those people who possess power and the others, each one trample the laws beneath their feet or find a way to escape from it. Whereas, if the factor which controls man is belief and internal to man, the results shall be definitely better. Accordingly, Islam has placed the training and controlling factor of man within himself, and with the faith in Allàh and a sincere conviction regarding Resurrection, it has paved and evened out the way for him to become a true human and so also for his development and perfection, such that should a person or a society, really act upon these Islamic teachings, or at the least, achieve a firm conviction regarding the Universal Resurrection and the life after death, then he has laid out the foundation for his and his society's happiness. Here, we shall mention concisely only a few examples of the influence of this liberating and constructive belief.

1. Spiritual Tranquility

It has been proven by experience that material luxuries, successes and pleasure seeking on his own, cannot take man to his objective and to ease and happiness. That which can make life sour for man in spite of having all the material luxuries is anxiety and mental and psychological disturbances. These anxieties and disturbances, more than anything, cause suffering to man and is the reason for an increase in suicide and drug tragedies, which threaten the present civilization.

Unfortunately, this present century of ours, in spite of the advancement of knowledge, sophistication of technology, the diminishing of the hours of work and also the simplification of the various works which previously were performed with great difficulty, and similarly the quantitative and qualitative increase in the various types of amusements, as also their being in the reach and use of the general public, have not only not reduced the anxiety and the disturbance of the mind, but according to the sociologists and the psychologists, the spiritual diseases are on the ascent. One of the main reasons for this new chaos and the spreading of the spiritual diseases is the feeling of emptiness in the life and it being without a purpose. The twentieth century man has, by turning away from religion and placing aside the necessary and life-constructing beliefs of it, entangled himself in an empty and purposeless life and has painted for himself a terrifying face of death and as a result has become caught in life-taking sufferings which he could never have even imagined.

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In short, the belief in life after death also breathes a meaning into the life of this world, and instills a sense of responsibility into the hearts of the people. It compels them, to the understanding of

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“They shall say: We were not of those who offered the regular prayers. And we used not to feed the poor. And we used to enter into vain discourse with those who entered into vain discourses. And we used to belie the Day of Judgement.” [74]

Thus, four basic reasons for facing the punishment and suffering on the day of resurrection has been mentioned, one of which is the lack of faith and the denial of the resurrection.

5. Moderation in the acquisition and consumption of Income

An individual or a society which does not believe in life after death, shall, in every economic matter, strive to increase its income by means of deceit, trickery, fraud and treachery, or by performing less shall try to achieve a greater benefit. In addition, when he has gathered wealth, he shall not spend it for the goodness of himself or the society, but indulge in extravagance and lavishness and in reality drags the financial resources of the society towards destruction. On the contrary, the individual or the society which has faith in life after death, not only takes into consideration the Divine and the human criteria for acquiring of the wealth and never strives to collect wealth in every manner possible, but even during consumption of the wealth, always takes into consideration the rights of the society.

Unfortunately, that which is destroying the material resources of this world in this era of ours is the lack of consideration of these two important points. In other words, in the twentieth century, the western civilization, and man in general, with the advancement of knowledge and technology, has extracted the god-given resources in every way possible, without giving thought to the protection of the environment or the rights of the coming generations and after that, in its consumption also has not exercised moderation and consideration to the social rights. Consequently, it has destroyed the economic resources and the environment of the world as well as corrupted them.

Here, it is interesting to note that man, after years of destruction of the economic resources and the environment, and extravagance in the consumption of the divine bounties, has now sat back to reflect upon the protection of the environment and more interesting is that the researches of the scholars have shown that the only serious and effective way to protect the environment and to give importance to the economic resources and to safeguard the rights of the future generations lies in the religious teachings and amongst them the belief in the continuation of life after death. With this and the other religious beliefs, it is possible to have an effective check on the pollution of the water, jungles, the incessant consumption of the underground resources and.... etc.

In addition, on the basis of this belief, it is possible to establish the foundations of a correct economic connection in the society and thus stop the economic trickery, fraud and treachery in check.

Hazrat 'Alī ('a) has very sweet and eloquent statements in this regard. Amongst them, in one of his letters to one of his governors, who had misused some funds from the public treasury, after reprimanding and rebuking him, says:

“فسيحان الله! أما تؤمن بالمعاد؟ أو ما تخاف نقاش الحساب؟”

“Glory be to God! Do you not believe in Resurrection and do you not fear the accounting and the questioning (of that day?)”[75]

Hence, if one believes in the day of resurrection and does not forget it, he will never misappropriate the funds from the public treasury. A prominent example and a practical and perfect model of this reality is Hazrat 'AlS ('a) who has narrated the incident of himself and his brother AqSI, whereby he states: " By God, I saw AqSI disturbed and in a state of abject poverty. He wanted me to give him some of your wheat (public treasury) and I saw his children whom due to poverty had their hair disheveled and their skin darkened, as if color had been applied to their faces. He would keep visiting me and repeat his request. He imagined that I had given in to his requests.

Then I heated an iron piece and brought it close to him. He wailed out in a manner as a sick person would in pain. He was near to be scalded by the heated iron. I told him "May the criers cry over you as a mother cries over her burnt child. You wail of the iron which man has playfully made hot and wish to drag me into the fire, which the Powerful God has heated by His anger? You moan due to the suffering and I should not moan from the burning due to the anger of the Creator?"[76]

The Holy Qur'an also, after threatening them with the sentence, "Woe unto the defrauders in measuring", says:

الْعَالَمِينَ لِرَبِّ النَّاسِ قَوْمٍ يَوْمَ عَظِيمٍ لِيَوْمٍ مَّبْعُوثُونَ أَنَّهُمْ أُولَئِكَ يَظُنُّونَ الْآ

"What! Think they not that they shall be raised. For a Mighty Day. On the day when men shall stand before the Lord of the worlds?"[77]

From these verses, it can be clearly understood that the belief in Resurrection refrains man from overcharging and other illegal economic actions. Perhaps the reason that the Holy Qur'an mentions the name of the overchargers and threatens them, could be that one of the important economic problems and offences during the time of the revelation of the Holy Qur'an and also throughout the eras, was and is, overcharging.

Anyway, one of the most important results and effects of the belief of Resurrection, is moderation in the consumption, and non-performance of treachery and offence in the way of acquisition of income and also non-destruction of the economic resources and the environment.

6. Steadfastness in Jihad and the battlefield

One of the other most important effects of the belief in Resurrection is steadfastness in the battlefield and perseverance on the path of Truth. This is because, one not having faith in life after death, when confronted by an adversary, does not have the stimulus for being steadfast and at times being killed. As a result, he is always in a state of fear, hesitation and disturbance and at an

opportune time shall readily take to flight.

Such a person shall not only not show steadfastness in the battle-field, but also, during his entire life, whenever he encounters any obstacle in the course of a divine or human objective, he shall change his course and altogether deviate from his path, objective and ideas. But one who believes in the life after death and considers it to be better, wider and more perfect, in the battle-field, not only does he not choose flight, but even fear does not overcome him. He believes in the Holy Qur'ân, which mentions the final outcome of a soldier of a religious war and knows that eventually, he would either be victorious, or attain martyrdom and eternal happiness. The Holy Qur'ân mentions the final outcome of a soldier fighting for truth as:

مَنْ تَرَبَّصُوا مِنَّا فَتَرَبَّصُوا بِأَيْدِينَا أَوْ عِنْدِهِ مِنْ بَعْدَابِ اللَّهِ يُصِيبُكُمْ أَنْ يَكُم تَرَبَّصُوا وَنَحْنُ الْحُسَيْنِيُّنَ إِحْدَى إِلَّا بِنَا تَتَرَبَّصُونَ هَلْ قُلْ

“Say: Do you wait for us but one of two most excellent things? And we wait for you that Allàh will afflict you with punishment from Himself or by our hands. So wait; we too will wait with you.” [78]

In short, the belief in the life after death is the cause for steadfastness, perseverance and incessant strivations in the battlefield and also during the entire life of a person and in all occasions which demand strife and struggle. The Holy Qur'ân while mentioning the incident of a group from the Bani Israel who were under the command of Hazrat Saul (Talut) when embarking on a war with Goliath (Jalut) explains beautifully and subtly the mentality and the characteristics of those accompanying Hazrat Saul and the part played by the belief and the lack of belief in Resurrection saying:

بِيَدِهِ عُرْفَةَ اعْتَرَفَ مَنْ إِلَّا مَنِي فَإِنَّهُ يَطْعَمُهُ لَمْ وَمَنْ مَنِي فَلَيْسَ مِنْهُ شَرِبَ فَمَنْ بَنَهَرَ مُبْتَلِيَكُمْ اللَّهُ إِنَّ قَالَ بِالْجُنُودِ طَالُوتُ فَصَلَّ فَلَمَّا مُلَاقُوا أَنَّهُمْ يَظُنُّونَ الَّذِينَ قَالَ وَجُنُودِهِ بِجَالُوتِ الْيَوْمِ لَنَا طَاقَةٌ لَا قَالُوا مَعَهُ آمَنُوا وَالَّذِينَ هُوَ جَاوَزَهُ فَلَمَّا نَهَمُّ قَلِيلًا إِلَّا مِنْهُ فَشَرِبُوا وَتُبَّتْ صَبْرًا عَلَيْنَا أفرغ رَبَّنَا قَالُوا وَجُنُودِهِ لِحَالُوتِ بَرَزُوا وَلَمَّا الصَّابِرِينَ مَعَ وَاللَّهُ اللَّهُ بِإِذْنِ كَثِيرَةً فَتَنَّهُ غَلَبَتْ قَلِيلَةً فَتَنَّهُ مِنْ كَمِ اللَّهُ دَفَعُ وَلَوْلَا يَشَاءُ مِمَّا وَعَلِمَهُ حِكْمَتُ وَالْمَلِكِ اللَّهُ وَآتَاهُ جَالُوتُ دَاوُودَ وَقَتَلَ اللَّهُ بِإِذْنِ فَهَزَمُوهُمْ الْكَافِرِينَ الْقَوْمِ عَلَى وَأَنْصَرْنَا أَقْدَامَنَا الْعَالَمِينَ عَلَى فَضَّلِ دُوَّ اللَّهِ وَلَكِنَّ الْأَرْضَ لَفَسَدَتْ بِبَعْضِ بَعْضِهِمُ النَّاسِ اللَّهُ

“So when Talut departed with the forces, he said: Surely Allàh will try you with a river; Whoever then drinks from it, he is not of me, and whoever does not taste of it, he is surely of me, except he who takes with his hand as much of it as fills the hand; but with the exception of a few of them they drank from it. So when he had crossed it, he and those who believed with him, they said: We have today no power against Jalut and his forces. Those who were sure that they would meet their Lord said; How often has a small party vanquished a numerous host by Allàh's permission and Allàh is with the patient. And when they went out against Jalut and his forces they said: Our Lord pour down upon us patience, and make our steps firm and assist us against the unbelieving people. So they put them to flight by Allàh's permission. And Dawood slew Jalut...” [79]

The faith and belief in resurrection and life after death, made the Muslims and the soldiers at the time of the advent of Islam so much desirous of martyrdom that they did not in the least fear

death and without any fear, alarm or disturbance of mind, they would bravely rush into the ranks of their enemies. This unbelievable morale and bravery was a cause for astonishment and perplexity for the unbelievers. As a result, the hypocrites, for justifying their fearfulness and the fearlessness of the real soldiers of Islam, said:

دِينُهُمْ هُوَ لَاءِ عَرَّ مَرَضٌ قُلُوبِهِمْ فِي وَالَّذِينَ الْمُنَافِقُونَ يَقُولُ إِذْ

“And when the hypocrites and those whom in their hearts is a disease said amongst themselves: Their religion has beguiled them.”[80]

The purport of the hypocrites from the above sentence was that the real soldiers and Muslims have been deceived by the faith in the resurrection and are warring, with manifest bravery and valor, for the purpose of the meeting their Lord.

It is interesting to know that during the Revolution and especially in the 8 years of the Holy Defense, we ourselves were witness to such morale and bravery that no justification other than the love for martyrdom, exists for it. And more interesting, the enemies and those weak in faith also made the same judgement as that made by the hypocrites of the era of the advent of Islam, that “these adolescents and youths have been deceived.”

Nevertheless, in spite of the fact that the effects of the belief in the resurrection are exhaustive, we shall content ourselves with these few examples, with the hope that we ourselves be among the true believers of the day of resurrection and also with the hope that Allāh, in every state and circumstance, especially on that Day, be our Helper.

Was-salaam.

Notes:

[71] Muh^ammad Taq̄s Falsaf̄s, Ma'ad az Nazar Rūh wa Jism, Vol. 1, Pg., 24.

[72] Nahjul Balāghah, Short sayings, Wisdom 138

[73] Ma'un (107):1-3

[74] Muddassir (74):43-46

[75] Nahjul Balāghah, Subhi Saleh, Letter No, 41

[76] Nahjul Balāghah, Subhi Saleh, Sermon No. 224. Translation by Doctor Syed Ja'far ShahSd̄s.

[77] Mutaffifeen (83):4-6

[78] Taubah (9):52

[79] Baqarah (2):249-251

[80] Anfāl (8):49

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