

Chapter Two: The Resurrection (Eschatology)

Section One: The Human Essence

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Introduction

All humans in this world are temporal beings whose lives have a beginning and end. Their past reaches oblivion and so does their future. The span between the beginning and end, which is the repository of one's life, is surrounded by nihility. We experience life and existence but we have not experienced oblivion and never shall.

Our experiences are restricted to our existence. Thus, we learn from experience that, "No human life is permanent and it has a finish just as it has a start". Even though we have not reached the end of our lives (i.e. death), we realize from the deaths of our fellow humans that there is no escape from this unavoidable juncture. The two points of start and finish draw our attention; two disparate and sensitive phases or rather—two extremities.

People see their inception as a transferal from inexistence to existence and the opposite point as a transferal from existence to inexistence. However, in becoming existent, we traverse an eternally long path—what distance is longer than the gap between nullity and reality?

This apparently impassable distance brings up various questions. Such as, how is our genesis possible? Where have we come from? Who is our originator? We cannot find the efficient cause for our existence and continuity either in ourselves or in the beings around us. The intellect drives us to seek the entity

that has invited us into existence—an entity to which the whole world is indebted for their existence; an entity who is sufficient of all others and who is untainted by any restrictions and conditions.

Endeavoring to understand and contemplate our end makes the question of our origination more sensitive and important, and it suffuses every moment of our lives. The Master of the World has made all beings in existence His guests; He maintains this feast, and has made humans exempt from facing oblivion. This end has confronted us with oblivion and the span between existence and inexistence. It has made us aware that not only are we needy in our genesis, we are also needy in our continuation. We humans believe that the gap between existence and nonexistence is miniscule. However, coming into existence out of the void is a miracle that has removed humanity's genesis from the restrictions of nature.

On the other hand, the eventide of our existence, as opposed to our dawning, is a terrifying and macabre juncture. We humans live and relish our lives and existences. We have tasted of the exotic drink of existence and thus, all our endeavors are based on preserving it. We guard our existence against anything that will bring about our ends. Our aspiration is to eradicate exterminative factors and their symptoms (such as weakness and frailty). We dream of finding the elixir of life. We aim at the ideal of freedom from the constricted and impenetrable prison of time. We wish that our past and future sorrows would not hurt us. We abhor this final juncture, thus, we ask ourselves:

Is there a way to cheat death? Will I continue to exist after death? Moreover, if I am not obliterated after death, where shall I be and where shall I go from there?

These questions confront the human identity. Hence, thoughtful people cannot disregard such questions and cannot delude themselves into believing that they are exaggerated. This essential quality has released these questions from historic and geographic boundaries. Archeological and anthropological studies have attested to the fact that understanding our beginning and end has always been a universal issue. For instance, the relics of ancient graves and primitive customs regarding the method of interment of the dead are telltales of their particular beliefs about life after death and the state of the dead.¹ Modern humans also seek answers to these questions in both their personal lives and scientific and philosophic studies.

Whenever a question agitates the sea of our intellect, our mind's ambition is to reach the truth even though in this context the obscure truth of creation is not easily discerned. The deeper a question penetrates into the profundity of existence, the harder it is to determine its answer. Existence is profound, complex, involute, exquisite, and tenacious. Thus, even discovering all facets of its most apparent layer has no end. We must have perceptive eyes and acute ears and think straight. All fantasies regarding existence will be repelled some day. Even though it may be hard, we must understand the language of existence. The world is not mute. It speaks and does not allow any utterance to be forced upon it.

Due to various mental–spiritual reasons, in order to answer their complex questions, many people seek refuge in delusive thoughts and fabricate beliefs by fantasizing and making groundless suppositions. Sometimes these superstitious beliefs turn into incontrovertible and dogmatic beliefs in future generations due to the predominance of followership mentalities. Thus, these beliefs dominate the minds and souls of a people for centuries. Doubtless, many weak and superstitious beliefs about death and the afterlife are thus originated.

In Quest for an Answer

Two repositories of knowledge open the path for human understanding:

1. The Results of Scientific Research and Investigation

In modern day, we divide this repository into science and philosophy. Science comprises empirical knowledge or knowledge based on inductive syllogism and philosophy comprises non–empirical knowledge or knowledge based on intellective syllogism. The common attribute of these two divisions is that the scientist or philosopher endeavors to arrange and prove a hypothesis according to logical principles. Whether its accordance with actuality is proven or its fallaciousness is revealed, both have a great part in human knowledge. The caravan of human knowledge has traversed many treacherous and unpredictable paths in order to reach its contemporary state while accelerating every moment. However, our lack of knowledge is indubitably incomparable with our knowledge.

Obviously, in order to attain stable and trustworthy knowledge regarding life after death, we cannot utilize empirical knowledge. Even if science can successfully present a natural explanation of life and death, it cannot reveal knowledge of the state of death and the dead. This is because, empirical knowledge relates to perceptible and repeatable phenomena and it is mute regarding other phenomena. Those who have gone are silent and those extant are unaware of these tidings.

Various thinkers have attempted to answer questions regarding our finale using their intellectual findings and rational contemplation of humanity and the cosmos. Varieties of philosophical schools have presented diverse theories on this issue. However, these theories are typically general and can at most prove the continuation of individuals. The intellect cannot depict postmortal spiritual incidents or even the experience of death. In order to advance in this field the intellect has fixed its eyes upon a different source. This source must present the intellect with conceptual and factual intuitional elements so it can begin its progress in this field.

2. Revelation

Revelation is knowledge that has been given to humanity freely and that is not a result of human toil. Thus, it does not have the limitations and flaws of human knowledge. This cascading fount of knowledge has set forth the main lines for all exterior and interior discoveries regarding existence and has

presented a solid image of the whole truth or, in other words, the big picture. Without this knowledge, humans can neither truly understand their current state nor their continued existence. Divine prophets and messengers have bestowed this vital knowledge upon humanity. They are the first to whisper the song of eternity in our ears. They have reminded us that the thirst for everlastingness is a true thirst and can only be quenched with the elixir of eternal life.

The prophets have illustrated our beginning and end, and our fall and ascension. They have engraved absolute perpetuity and immortality in our minds. Knowledge of our origin and destination is an element of guidance that may only be found in the teachings of divine prophets. The result of this knowledge is true self-awareness; it is never falling astray in the world; it is precise awareness of one's path and destination. Prophets are experienced voyagers who warn travelers of the dangers and deviations of the path and guide them to the depths of existence. We humans may learn endless knowledge and wisdom from the prophets. With the aid of these immaculate souls, we may purify all aspects of our existence and attain perfection.

In exchange for these blessings, all they ask for is faith. The messengers of God ('a) bestow something upon humans that they can never attain on their own and all they ask for in return is what logically entails from their enjoinder. Faith [إيمان] is a process in which all human systems—such as the system of knowledge or emotions—participate. Faith in our origin is faith in prophethood, and faith in our destination is faith in returning to our origin. Faith in the Prophet (S) is faith in God and faith in God and the prophet is faith in life in the Hereafter.

Denying the Resurrection and life after death is denying our origin, both of which are denying prophethood. By disseminating divine messages, the prophets show us our true station and shed us of the stain of negligence towards God and ourselves. By aiding our intellect, they purify our worldly lives. They increase our passion for righteousness and free us of despair, fear, and anxiety; thus, they swiftly guide us to the harbor of tranquility.

They present us with the past and future of existence and from within nature, they make us a guest of the supernatural. These experienced voyagers reveal the essence of natural phenomena through their divine identities. In other words, prophets tear the veils between nature and the extramundane. Thus, the paths between the heavens and earth are opened and earthly humans can perceive the supernatural just as they see nature.

The teachers of logic and certitude and the deniers of blind advocacy present their enjoinder such that it leaves no intellectual justification for doubt or refutation, unless mental states or psychological conditions interfere to simulate inner doubt.

Revelation has specific attributes that differentiate it from the first source of knowledge (human knowledge):

Freedom from all errors and faults

Benefiting from the divine fountainhead of absolute knowledge and the prophets' needlessness of methods of knowledge acquisition that have the possibility of fault

Dependency of these teachings upon objective scientific arguments

The Noble Qur'an and the compendium of the teachings of the Prophet (S) and the Immaculate Imams ('a) have provided us with a valuable treasury of truths regarding death and life in the Hereafter. Researchers must have the same attitude towards revelational and religious statements as they have towards all other aspects of existence. These descriptive revelational statements explain reality and accurately report the past, present, and future of existence. Thus, any researcher who knows the laws of apprehending and discovering truths can theorize regarding religious statements, including statements about death and immortality, and attempt to prove their theories. Interpretation and elucidation of religious propositions and concepts is a scientific endeavor. In scientific research, we must prevent influence of personal and psychological conditions that separate us from the path of truth. This is not easy, but it is possible. We must not forget that we humans are subject to errors and the probability of these errors is high. However, we must not let this discourage us; rather, we must increase our resolve and precision. Therefore, even though this second source is complete and infallible, our scientific knowledge is progressive (not absolute) and sometimes erroneous. Our cognitive system acknowledges its limitations; however, it does not tolerate a standstill.

Reliance upon revelation does not mean that the intellect is faulty and must be put aside; rather, correct understanding of revelational concepts requires reason. We mean to say that without the aid of revelation and by utilizing only reason, one cannot fathom life in the Hereafter. Even with the guidance of religion, reason cannot answer all its questions at once. Thus, many illuminated philosophers—while they have been successful in philosophical research about various issues regarding death and life in the Hereafter—have found themselves at an impasse regarding other philosophic issues on this subject. As a result, they have sufficed themselves with faith in the concepts and teachings in the Qur'an and Hadith² or have organized their philosophic theories with inspiration from divine revelation.³ It must be reminded that the path of discovery of truth, like all human affairs, is progressive.

عقل، چون جبریل گوید احمدا

گر یکی گامی نهم سوزد مرا

تو مرا بگذار زین پس پیشران

حدّ من این بود ای سلطان جان

As Gabriel says O Ahmad, reason;

Burns me if I (revelation) take a step.

Hence, set me as the navigator;

This is my station O leader of hearts (reason). [4](#)

Eschatology and Anthropology

Since death and life in the Hereafter deal with human states, understanding humans and humanity has a direct effect in eschatological discussions. To state the matter differently, we must first harmonize our opinions on immortality with our views regarding the nature of humankind. Therefore, anthropology is an important prerequisite of eschatology. Accordingly, it is befitting that we first take a glance at several important anthropological principles that have a close link with immortality. Then, we shall commence the discussion on death and eternity.

[1.](#) – In their findings from primitive peoples, researchers have encountered issues that reveal various types of beliefs in life after death; regardless of whether these beliefs are superstitious or not. For example, they state that primitive humans have devised plans in order to ease the transportation of the dead that have various forms all over the world. For instance, they would cover the dead with heaps of stones, or they would tie their dead with strong ropes. In some places, they would even impale their dead into the ground with sharp poles through their chests. Moreover, mummifying the dead; placing pictures, icons, and food in graves; burying the friends and family of the deceased in its grave; etc. were various ancient customs that reveal early humans beliefs. For more information, see: Will Durant, *The Story of Civilization*, vol. 1, pp. 49, 155, 180, 283, 429, 851, 925; vol. 2, p. 18; vol. 3, p. 9; and Nass, John B., *The Comprehensive History of Religions*.

[2.](#) – Ibn-e Sīnā (Avicenna), *Ilḥiyāt-e Shifā'* (Healing, Theology), disquisition 9, chap. 7.

[3.](#) – Mullāsadr, *Asfār* (Journeys), vol. 9, p. 179.

[4.](#) – Jalal ad-Din Maḥlavī, *Mathnavī-e Ma'navī* (Spiritual Couplets), Book I, verses 1069–1070.

Section One: The Human Essence

As far as the history of human knowledge shows, we humans have continuously endeavored to discover our station in the world and our relationship with other creatures. These endeavors were obstructed at the very beginning of history and today, this obstruction has not been relieved even in advanced scientific communities. Humanity's existence is not analogous to the existence of other natural entities.

It seems that among the discovered creatures in nature, we humans are unique and that our existence is not in concord with the image of the natural world. The existence of humans in this collection has made it difficult to explain and elucidate this structure overall. Experts in natural science tell us that the world is

made up of chaotic and mindless physical particles.

However, we perceive ourselves as purposeful and intellectual creatures. How can a creature with awareness come about in a world full of mindless particles? How can the mechanical world produce an entity that can present itself unto the world? How can we conceive of an essentially purposeless world that nurtures beings with transcendent purposes? How can a being with free will emerge from a world that according to determinism has foreshadowed its elements? Yea, human qualities and attributes have resulted in these questions and have made the coordination of humans and other natural beings challenging.

According to common belief, human qualities reside in two general vessels: body and soul. Languages attest to the existence of this common belief. There are two types of concepts in all languages. Consequently, we are faced with two classes of statements that possess a common subject (humans) with the variation of the predicate. For instance, regard these two statements:

Mary is 90 pounds.

Mary hopes to attend college.

One class of statements, like the first, describes the states and conditions of the human body. Even though the predicate of this type of statement relates to the human body, it is usually common with other corporeal beings, such as predicates that indicate weight, shape, or size. In contrast, other statements, such as the second sentence, sometimes mostly and sometimes absolutely pertain to humans and do not indicate bodily statuses. These predicates encompass thought, reasoning, deduction, love, intimacy, faith, etc. As a result, in studying humans, we are faced with two sets of qualities:

Material or corporeal attributes such as heat, size, color, weight, etc.

Incorporeal or spiritual attributes such as fear, love, courage, aspiration, hope, etc.

These two classes are essentially different. For example, the attributes in the first class are obvious and can be perceived with the senses. However, the attributes of the second class, such as sorrow, belief, fear, impatience, etc. are not such. The first type of states can be perceived by everyone; yet, the second type can only be cognized by the person experiencing them. Each individual's intentions are clear to themselves but obscure to others. No one can hide their height or width, nevertheless intentions, sorrow, and happiness can be concealed.

Additionally, the manner in which an individual realizes each of these qualities is not the same. For example, we can feel pain without any intermediates. Therefore, if someone asks us, "How do you know you have pain?", we would deem the question irrational. However, becoming aware of a physical disorder such as a gastric ulcer requires reasoning. Consequently, if someone asks, "How do you know that you have an ulcer?", we would have to present our reasons, which may be the physician's

diagnosis. Therefore, at least the three factors of spatiality, general exposure, and indirect accessibility dissociate corporeal qualities from spiritual qualities.

The public, scientists, and philosophers all agree on this matter. Everyone concurs with the duality of all languages regarding humans, which indicates duality in humanity's attributes and characteristics. Here, the question exists: Are these two classes based on one essential aspect or two disparate essential aspects that, while linked, are independent of one other and can be intellectually separated? Advocates of the first theory are called monists and supporters of the second theory are called dichotomists or dualists.¹

The first view states that the first-class attributes—that describe the human body—are fundamental human attributes and each of the second-class attributes depend upon the quality of the first class.

Consequently, second-class attributes cannot exist without first-class attributes. For example, “hope” is a function of specific states within the human body, especially the brain and the nervous system. Thus, we do not possess two distinct and independent aspects; rather, humans are similar to machines comprised of cellular blocks and have two distinct classes of attributes. However, they both, directly or indirectly, pertain to the human body such that visualizing a person without a standard body is visualizing the inexistence of that person.

Advocates of the second view however, have discovered these attributes so inherently different that they have attributed the first class to the body and the second class to another entity called soul. Some have even stressed that the soul equates with the human identity. Even though these two entities are linked in a mysterious and mystical manner and they create a single human identity in this world, one can imagine them existing apart from each other. It is worthy of note that the issue of the intercommunication of the body and soul—according to this view—or mental states—according to the first view—has been problematic throughout history.

Duality of Humans and Our Rationale

Advocates of the second view maintain that our introspective contemplations attest to this duality. Each of us discovers a truth within ourselves separate of our body, which we call “self”. This “self” signifies our essence as opposed to our bodies; it is not identifiable with our bodies. This averment includes various rationales some of which are enumerated below.

In every person, there exist actions and manifestations that cannot be rendered as pertaining to the body. The body cannot manage these phenomena; however, they must have an originator. Since the body cannot be considered the author of these occurrences, they must be predicated by another entity. We call this entity the soul. Intuitive perception, thought, analysis, judgment, religious experience, emotions, and sentiments are a number of phenomena that signify the existence of the soul.

Contrary to other creatures in existence, human actions do not occur according to a standard routine. Human actions are not similar in identical situations. This makes it almost impossible to predict human behavior. Discovering the laws governing human behavior is not like discovering the laws governing natural objects. This rationale is indicative of the element of free will. Explaining and interpreting free will based on mechanical determinist laws of nature is not possible.

We relate all our internal and external actions to our “self”. We say, “I walk”, “I see”, “I think”, etc. Since there is no organ in the body to which we may attribute all our actions, it is revealed that there is a distinct aspect to humans that is transcendent to the body and that holds the status of originator of all actions. In addition, we can say regarding the body and its parts, “my hand=hand belonging to the self”, “my heart=heart belonging to the self”, etc. We can clearly perceive an “otherness” between the noun (i.e. hand, heart, etc.) and the pronoun (i.e. my). Because this apprehension is intuitive and thus infallible, it is conclusive evidence that we have a dual constitution.²

Moreover, in differentiation of natural sciences, humanities, and social sciences, scientific philosophers stress issues that indicate the duality of the human constitution. The following issues have resulted in the natural sciences overshadowing the liberal arts:

Existence of free will in humans and the superfluity of causality and determinism in virtue of this factor

The purposefulness of humanity

The significance of human actions

Incorporeality of the Soul

Our previous rationales indicate that those who advocate the existence of the soul both stress the identification of self with the soul and its incorporeality. An incorporeal entity is an entity that transcends material attributes such as volume, mass, direction, shape, size, location, time, etc. After proving the disparity of the body and soul, Islamic researchers have brought various arguments for the incorporeality of the soul. Here, we shall briefly discuss these arguments.

One of the properties of corporeal entities is their divisibility. Scientifically, all material objects can be divided into smaller parts, even though this may be unfeasible in practice. On the other hand, we distinctly realize that dividing “self” into two or more constituents is meaningless and impossible. Thus, the human soul is not a material and divisible object.

Moreover, human capacities, such as our capacity for knowledge, are inexhaustible, but unlimited affairs cannot be explained in terms of the human body.

The modern science of parapsychology speaks of mental phenomena that support existence of the soul. These phenomena are divided into two groups:

Phenomena that do not necessitate life after death, but are credible evidence of the incorporeality of humans: These include psychokinesis (PK) and extrasensory perception (ESP) in its various forms, such as telepathy and clairvoyance.

Phenomena that are related to life after death: These include communication with the dead by means of mediums, revival of the dead, and out-of-body experiences.

In telepathy, the thoughts in one person's mind are transferred to the mind of another without using normal channels of communication under conditions that cannot be regarded as chance, such as mental communication over vast distances through steel shields. Clairvoyance is the knowledge of objects and affairs without the intermediacy of sensory organs and without physical contact of the clairvoyant with the perceived object. Psychokinesis is the ability to move objects by mental effort without using physical devices.³

In short, these affairs, which are called paranormal phenomena, attribute abilities to humans that cannot be explained in terms of the physical framework, from subatomic and submolecular approaches to neurological and physiological approaches.

Below is a summary of the theories about the human nature as regards the issue of immortality:

The human being is an indissoluble unity and its entire existence is limited to its corporeal frame. The monotheist advocates of this theory believe in the existence and perpetuity of humans after death in a future age.

Humans have a dual constitution with disparate and heterogeneous qualities. Most supporters of human immortality advocate this theory, although, they are divided into two groups:

Those who believe in the duality of the human nature, however, because they identify humans with their souls, they understand that only the spiritual aspect is immortal.

Those who regard the identity of humans as the sum of their body and soul; therefore, they regard humans as a spiritual-corporeal entity in all aspects of existence.

Aspects of Human Existence in the Qur'an

﴿ثم جعلناه نطفة في قرار مكين. ثم خلقنا النطفة علقة فخلقنا العلقة مضغة فخلقنا المضغة عظاما فكسونا العظام لحما ثم انشأناه خلقا اخر فتبارك الله احسن الخالقين﴾

“Then We made it a sperm in a secure receptacle (womb). Then of the sperm We created blood-clot, next of the blood-clot We created tissue, and then of the tissue We created bones, afterwards We covered the bones with flesh, and then We originated within it a different

existence. Glory be to Allah, the fairest of creators.”4

﴿ثُمَّ سَوَّاهُ وَنَفَخَ فِيهِ مِنْ رُوْحِهِ وَجَعَلَ لَكُمُ السَّمْعَ وَالْأَبْصَارَ وَالْأَفْئِدَةَ﴾

“Then He shaped it and breathed in it of His spirit and He appointed for you ears, eyes, and hearts.”5

﴿وَيَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ الرُّوحِ قُلِ الرُّوحُ مِنْ أَمْرِ رَبِّي وَمَا أُوتِيتُمْ مِنَ الْعِلْمِ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا﴾

“And they ask you about the soul; say, ‘The soul is my Lord’s Command and you have not been given knowledge save a little.’”6

﴿أَلَا لَهُ الْخَلْقُ وَالْأَمْرُ﴾

“Know that Creation and Command solely belong to Him.”7

﴿أَنَّمَا أَمْرُهُ إِذَا أَرَادَ شَيْئًا أَن يَقُولَ لَهُ كُنْ فَيَكُونُ﴾

“His Command is such, when He wants something, the moment He says to it, ‘be’ it immediately is.”8

Commentary and Interpretation

As can be seen, the first verse previously mentioned contains terms that signify the corporeal structure of humans and its origination. The stages of development of the body are distributed through a determined time span. In each stage, the simpler form slowly evolves into a more complex anatomy. The stages of embryo and fetus growth are identified as sperm/zygote [nuḥfah], blood-clot [‘alaqah], tissue [muḥghah], bone [‘iḥḥam], and flesh/muscle [lahm]. These stages encompass the introduction of the sperm into the uterus throughout the emergence of the human limbs. From beginning to end, this body feeds from nature, develops within it, and ultimately returns to it.

The term “سَوَّاهُ” [sawwahu] in the second verse indicates the period of anatomical formation. At the end of this period, as it is also indicated at the conclusion of the first verse, something occurs that is essentially different from the previous stages. Here the Qur’an speaks of a “different existence” in contrast to the previous gradual stages. In order to describe this stage, the verb “انْشَأَ” [ansha’a] was used. According to the second verse, the “originated” being is the soul [rūḥ] that is firmly established in the body by the “divine breath”. We cannot say that the soul is breathed into the body from the outside;

however, it is evident that the origination of the soul is inherently different from preceding occurrences. Henceforth, the body is charged with an abode of the soul. Prior to the establishment of the soul, this body had eyes, but did not see; it had ears, but did not hear; it had a form but no content. The body was matter therefore possessed the qualities of matter. Yet now, this matter has been transferred to a different level, that is, adorned with qualities such as awareness, life, knowledge, volition, etc.

We can only see the body; therefore, the question is, “What kind of creature is this esoteric and imperceptible entity?” This question is answered by the third verse, which identifies the soul as the Lord’s Command [amr].

The second verse, in a manner, attributes the soul to God; while the third verse clarifies that this attribution means that the soul is God’s Command. However, what does “Command” mean? The fourth verse provides the answer. God identifies some of His creatures as “Creation” and some as “Command”. Thus, in a manner of speaking, there are two extant worlds: the world of Creation and the world of Command. Usually, the Qur’an identifies these worlds as the Manifest world and the Invisible world. The Invisible world is the world that cannot be perceived by the senses and is considered the spiritual or inner world [ʿālam al-bāʿin], whereas the Manifest world is discernible and apparent. Humans partake of both worlds; they are the conjunction of the natural and supernatural or the Manifest and Invisible planes. The human soul is an entity of Command and has no kinship with the corporeal world, while the human body has developed in the context of nature.

Yea, humans have both form [ṣūrah] and essence [bāʿin], both eyes and perception, both brain and mind since they have both body and soul. The human body is discernible to all; however, its soul is hidden to all but itself. The soul is the individual’s sanctum. It is so profound that at times, its depths are obscure even to the self and thus must be discovered. The body is alive, energetic, and animated as long as its soul is its confidant. When the soul, which was established within the body by the Divine Breath, is recalled by the draw and summons of the Lord, the body submits to silence.

The fifth verse reveals that entities of Command—such as the soul—transcend time, space, and gradual conditions, and that they occur at the behest of the Divine.⁹

In short, we explained that:

According to the Qur’an, humans are the integration of body and soul

The soul is incorporeal since it belongs to the world of Command

^{1.} – These are the major theories regarding the human constitution. However, there are minority theories regarding the nature of the person, such as trichotomism, which states that humans are made up of three distinct components: body, soul, and spirit. [trans.]

^{2.} – One might say that in normal speech we use terms such as “my essence=essence belonging to the self” or “myself=self belonging to the self”. We must bear in mind that in these cases, we do not intuitively apprehend discord or otherness between the possessive and noun; and with little thought, we realize that these two are in fact, one and the

same.

[3.](#) – For more information, see: John Hick, Philosophy of Religion.

[4.](#) – Sūrah Mu'minūn 23: 13–14.

[5.](#) – Sūrah Sajdah 32:9.

[6.](#) – Sūrah Isrā' 17:85.

[7.](#) – Sūrah A'rāf 7:54.

[8.](#) – Sūrah Yūsuf 36:82.

[9.](#) – For more information refer to Allāmah Ḥabībullah, Tafsīr-e Al-Mīzān (Al-Mīzān Exegesis), vol. 13, pp. 196–198; and Allāmah Ḥabībullah, Ras'īl-e Tawḥīd (Monotheistic Disquisitions), Disquisition of Humans before this World, pp. 169–170.

Section Two: Death

Humans are death-aware creatures; we know in advance that our current lives are unstable and ephemeral. We realize that terminating factors numerous and our lives are so fragile that it is miraculous that we linger in existence. While we observe life with the depths of our being, a small part of us also looks ahead to death. Our lives are worthwhile only if our deaths are worthwhile. We are immortality-loving creatures; however, we cannot attain unity and tranquility except through death. Yea, life and death must coexist in order for them both to have significance.

We realize that life and death are not under our control. Before we can take full advantage of the buffet that life has set before us, we are faced with the heralds of death—weakness and frailty. This infirmity increases every moment and saps our strength and vitality, but it does not decrease our thirst for life. Our dream is neither life with a finale nor life intermingled with death; we desire eternal life. There is no death in eternal life and an eternal human is one whose life surges from within and who is not shadowed by the notion of death. This is not possible save with the promise of life. Death guides us to the Life-provider, and true eternity can only be realized through this union.

Nature of Death

The issue of death can be studied through philosophical, psychological, and biological approaches. Due to the variety of these approaches, there are numerous interpretations of death. Whatever the nature of death may be, that which is certain is that it is contingent upon on the nature of life. If human life is interpreted in terms of biology, its death must also be interpreted through biology. If we regard life philosophically, such that life is predicated on the supernatural, so also is death. There is no contradiction between these various perspectives since each deals with the means, causes, and purposes of its respective field, and assesses and interprets phenomena within this framework.

As a consequence of these varying perspectives regarding human nature, our philosophic endeavors

have resulted in varied expositions of death. The following are several of these views:

Those that identify humans with the material body and regard the human individual equatable and restricted to the corporeal frame view death as the termination of life. This is because humans have no other reality that can protect them from deterioration and extermination. Death of the body equates with extinguishment of the individual. Death of the body truly severs off the thread of the person's existence. The question of whether or not the person shall later return to life is a separate issue that will be discussed later. In short, this perspective states that death is the termination of the human existence.

Some dualists believe that the body does not consist of the essence of the individual and that the human consciousness pertains to the soul. According to this viewpoint, death is not the end of the individual's life. Some advocates of this view believe that the soul is trapped within the body and that death is nothing but freedom from corporeal restrictions. During every moment of the soul's captivity, the body presents it with additional troubles. It continuously demands food, water, and other necessities and exploits the abilities of the self to satisfy its needs. Natural death ends this incarceration and returns the soul to its true station. [1](#)

Those who believe that the individual is a synthesis of body and soul regard death as the separation of the soul's intellectual link with its natural body and the world. Thereafter, it persists in union with a different body free of material qualities.

The common factors of the two prior theories are that human life is not discontinued at the time of death and that death is regarded as a transition from one existential state to another. Some advocates of the third view interpret death as follows:

Contingent beings are divided into incorporeal beings and material beings or rather, perfect entities and imperfect entities. Incorporeal entities are not characterized with movement and change, and they perpetuate exclusively through the maintenance of their efficient cause. However, material beings or beings that are linked with materiality essentially evolve, change, and strive towards their purpose. Because we are a part of the natural world, we too are evolving beings. Our development has an end and by arriving at it, we reach our deaths. Our end is not a place external to ourselves that we can reach by making effort; rather, it is like maturity for an adolescent. Maturity is not external to the adolescent's being; the adolescent gradually develops towards maturity. In other words, the human aim is evolution from absolute materiality towards incorporeality and the supernatural plane. Our life in the natural world is the span of this evolution. When we humans adequately develop our capacities through worldly life, we are ready to elevate to a higher plane where our material bodies are not necessary. Thus, we end our journey in this world by leaving behind our corporeal form.

An example that can better formulate this perspective in the mind is that for the duration that humans exist as a fetus, they continually evolve from faultiness towards perfection and the course and distance of this evolution is the time spent in the womb. During this transition, the fetus needs and belongs to the

uterus; such that if for any reason its evolution terminates before reaching its perfection, it remains premature and faulty. However, when its course is fully traversed, it must be delivered outside the abdomen and birth is vital. At this point, the existence of the former fetus is so altered that it no longer requires its embryonic receptacle.²

Consequently, it must be understood that death is not the annihilation and extinction of human individuals; rather, it is a transition from one existential plane to the next or in other words, it is the evolution of human beings from faultiness to a certain level of perfection.

This interpretation of the nature of death reveals it as a part of humanity's existence. In fact, death is an upholder of our existence not its eliminator. More precisely, we humans die and come to life every moment, in the sense that we cross over from our previous states to reach new ones. The condition for reaching the next state is traversing our previous more flawed state. Hence, death shall expire in the world of perfection and perpetuity where our actions shall become manifest.

Jalāl ad-Dīn Mawlāwī has versified this interpretation using a beautiful analogy:

This world is like a tree, O Bountiful;

And we, like green fruit.

The unripe hold fast to the branch

For in their immaturity, they not suitable for a palace.

When they ripen and become lip-stingingly sweet;

Their hold on the branch weakens.

When a mouth is sweetened by its fate;

*To the person, the world becomes cold.*³

Death as stated by the Qur'an and Hadith

الله يتوفى الانفس حين موتها و التي لم تمت في منامها فيمسك التي قضى عليها الموت و يرسل الاخرى الى اجل مسمى

“Allah completely retracts souls at the time of their deaths and also retracts those that have not died, while they sleep. So, He holds souls upon which He has decreed death and returns the rest until an appointed end.”⁴

In this verse, death is represented with the term *tawaffa an-nafs* (complete retraction of the soul).

Tawaff^٥ happens at death and in sleep. During each phenomenon the soul's connection with the body—and thus the natural world—is severed in some way. During each phenomenon, the soul is withdrawn; however, one is temporary and partial and the other is permanent and complete. At the moment of death, our essence or soul, which is the body's sustaining agent, is completely retracted.

Thus, the soul completely abandons the natural world and enters an invisible quarter of existence. Sleep provides us with a muted perception of the experience of death. As long as the soul is linked to the corporeal body, it may remain asleep; but if this link is severed, death occurs. As a result, death is not annihilation; rather, it is the launch of a new state of human existence, different from life in this world. Consequently, the soul discards its corporeal body, which belongs to the natural world.

﴿إلى ربك يومئذ المساق﴾

“That is the day of propelling towards your Lord.”⁵

This type of verse indicates a deeper facet of death. The day of death is the day of return to God. God is the master of existence and whatever enters His presence is protected from inexistence. At the Lord's command, the soul leaves the natural world at the time of death and enters an alternate world, which is its original residence and exempt from time and space. Death shreds all veils and reveals to us the reality of existence. Even though we might not have volitionally observed this reality in life, in death we are compelled to notice all truths.

Accordingly, death is a passageway on which we travel from one facet of existence (the Manifest) to the other (the Invisible). On one side it is an exit and on the other it is an entrance. Imam 'Alī ('a) has stated:

“So, surely the world has not been created for you as a place of permanent stay; rather, it has been created for you as a passageway so that you send forth your actions as provisions for the abode of permanence.”⁶

﴿...ما كان لنفس ان تموت الا باذن الله كتابا مؤجلا﴾

“No soul dies save by the leave of Allah, at an appointed time.”⁷

Death, like life, occurs by the hand of God. No person comes to life by their own efforts and no one retrieves their own soul. The agent that gives and takes life is not the self because life and death are not volitional phenomena.

The soul cannot pass into the next world until an appointed time, just as it could not enter this world at will.

“All souls shall taste death.”⁸

The general law of death has no exceptions. Immortality in this world is nothing but a dream—nature cannot endlessly sustain the human individual. In order to overcome a law of nature one must make use of an alternate natural law. There is no law in nature that can prevail against the law of death. Humanity cannot violate the laws of nature. All we can do is to resort to a different natural law through scientific endeavors. However, there is no law in nature that can free us of death. This is because death is one of our existential conditions—it is not exterior to our nature. Therefore, we cannot create in an impregnable fortress against death in which to hide. Death is a reality that emanates from our beings; thus, escape from death can only result in a checkmate.

﴿أينما تكونوا يدرككم الموت و لو كنتم في بروج مشيدة﴾

“Wherever you may be, death will find you; though you be in secure towers.”⁹

Fear of Death

Fear is one of the most common feelings that dominate us. It is an experience that no person enjoys; one that everyone attempts to circumvent. Due to its variable sources, the nature of this phenomenon is not constant, even though we indicate it with a single term. Fear of poverty, fear of disease, fear of losing one’s reputation, fear of other people, fear of disasters and natural phenomena, etc. each have their own conditions and effects. However, among the various factors that cause terror and dread, none is more dreadful than death. The mention of death quivers hearts and turns pleasure to mourning. Nowadays, many intellectuals have abandoned study of the reality of death due to inability to gather empirical data and have therefore inclined towards study of the psychological and physiological aspects of death instead. They endeavor to present us with methods of delaying or prevailing over death. Some common ideas regarding fear of death include:

Death alters life into oblivion.

Even though death is inevitable, its time is unspecified. Thus, we are continually fearful and distraught regarding death.

Death is an unidentified phenomenon and we have no experience regarding it. In fact, it seems that death is the end of experiences. Thus, we do not know what happens to us at that moment, and if we have continuity, what will happen after it.

Each person has to face death alone. If we could experience it with others, it would not be so fearsome

and horrendous.

By reaching death, all our hopes and wishes are lost and thus, we are severed from all our desires.

There is a great gap between those who support individual immortality to overcome their fear of death and those who seek to alleviate this fear by regarding humans mortally perishable and introducing death as the finale of the individual's existence. Socrates is of the first group:

“A man who has grown grey in the love of wisdom must be cheerful at the approach of death, because he can promise himself the greatest happiness after it.. If this is the case, what an absurdity would it be if he, who points all his efforts here on earth at one single object, were to feel affliction, when the long-wished-for aim was at last accomplished.”¹⁰

However, materialists such as Epicurus attempt to banish fear of death by denying life after death and introducing death as the termination of awareness and absolute painlessness. These ideologists neglect the fact that our fear of death is not because we regard it painful; rather, it is love for life that makes the taste of death bitter to our tongues. How can one soothe people by declaring that death is the end of their lives? Regarding fear of death, Spinoza states:

“A free man thinks of death least of all things; and his wisdom is a meditation not of death but of life.”¹¹

This statement signifies that humans can alleviate fear of death merely by not thinking about it. Spinoza neglects that remembrance and fear of death is not a volitional feeling that one can evade. To say, “do not think of death” is not enough. It has to be explained how one can not think of death and whether not thinking about death is truly wise or ideal.

Religion and Fear of Death

One of the ethical aims of religion is purifying our being of all internal conflicts and saving us from bitter and costly psychological experiences such as grief, fear, and anxiety. Religious education evolves us existentially by propelling us, and all our aspects and states, toward our Creator whereby transforming all our interactive states. For example, a believer in God fears Him. However, this fear is essentially different from fear of beings other than God. God is an entity that the faithful are fearful of in their hearts; even so, they still seek refuge with Him. Besides God, nothing can simultaneously be an agent of fear and an agent of security and trust. If fear of anything except God penetrates into one's soul, it will continuously grow and ultimately imbue one's being. However, fear of God sears the roots of all fears within one's being. Hence, fear of God is a human perfection and fear of created things is a fault. Courageous persons are those who fear nothing besides God while the memory of God imbues their hearts with humility, modesty, and fear—a fear that suffuses them with felicity and joy.

L^۹ takh^۹f^۹¹² is the offering of the fearful;

It is worthy of those who are fearful of Him.

Whoever fears is made safe and secure;

Thus, all quaking hearts are made calm.

Those who shed their fear when it is said: 'Fear not!'

Whether you teach them or not, they need no lesson. [13](#)

Therefore, the only solution for fear is based on the main pillar of Islam, which is Tawhīd or belief in the One God. No one can escape the fear of death, nor can they convey themselves from a state of unrest to the harborage of tranquility, save by having faith in God and surrendering to Him. This is why religion does not ask that we forget death; rather, it constantly asks us to contemplate death and remember always the boundaries of our current lives. It does not tolerate neglect of this fact and regards this negligence a cause of squandering the opportunities of life. Islam teaches us to live objectively. It describes the stages of life and encourages us to recognize them all. Ultimately, Islam fashions humans into loving beings, not fearful ones because it interprets death as the point of acceleration towards our Creator and the encounter of the limited with the Infinite.

The main lines that divine religions present for confronting fear of death are briefly described below:

1. Divine religions introduce humans as immortal and eternal beings and regard the desire for eternity rational and with cause. Fear of death cannot be eradicated by regarding death as complete annihilation and nihility of the self because our love of perpetuance is incompatible with this approach. It causes internal conflict within the human soul and adds to our pain instead of relieving it. While revering life, divine religions remind us that this world is transitory and that a person who regards death as the end becomes dominated by intense attachment to this world and fear of death. This sort of person unduly lauds this ephemeral life. Religious teachings emphasize the negligibility of this life compared with otherworldly life. These teachings consider it unbecoming for humans to lower themselves by sufficing themselves with this world.

﴿قُلْ مَتَاعُ الدُّنْيَا قَلِيلٌ وَالْآخِرَةُ خَيْرٌ لِّمَنِ اتَّقَىٰ وَلَا تُظْلَمُونَ فَتِيلًا﴾

“Say, ‘The goods and chattels of this world is little and the Hereafter is better for those who fear Allah and you shall not be wronged [even as much as] a single date-fiber.’” [14](#)

﴿وَمَا هَذِهِ الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا إِلَّا لَهْوٌ وَلَعِبٌ وَإِنَّ الدَّارَ الْآخِرَةَ لَهِيَ الْحَيَوَانُ﴾

“And this worldly life is naught but diversion and sport but surely the abode of the Hereafter is

true life. [15](#)

This sort of worldview mitigates our pains and hardships, and because of it, recalling death is a consolation.

2. If the first factor of fear regarding death is eliminated, unawareness of the time of one's death will become insignificant. In fact, it is not clear whether knowing the time of death would truly comfort us or not. Not knowing the time of death helps us utilize every moment of our lives in the best possible manner. It is important to remember death so that we may sustain a correct course in every moment of our lives and so that our lives do not fall into a monotone. Forgetting death results in forgetting eternal life and also causes self-neglect. Noble 'Alī (‘a) advised his followers thus:

“May God pardon your sins. Provide for the journey as you have been ordered insistently to march and regard your stay in this world as brief.” [16](#)

مرا در منزل جانان چه امن عیش چون هر دم

جرس فریاد می دارد که بریندید محملها

How can I live securely in the abode of the living while every moment;

The bell continually cries, ‘Hitch your supplies!’

3. The third factor causing fear is averted by those whose knowledge surpasses the boundaries of the limited—that is, the wellsprings of eternal knowledge. Divine legates and prophets have made us aware of this hidden abode and have revealed unto us the invisible countenance of existence. It was asked of Imam Jawād (‘a), “Why does death distress some Moslems?” He replied, “It distresses them because they do not understand it. If they understood it and were friends of God, they would love death and they would know that the Hereafter is better for them than this world.” [17](#)

4. Death is a stage in human existence and it is an upholder of our existence. Like all our existential aspects, death is a constituent of our self. We cannot make others partner in our experiences of sorrow and happiness, adolescence and maturity, sickness and health, or even our sleep and wakefulness. These affairs are not within the domain of common experience. People's death, like their birth, is unique to each person.

5. The mentioned states in the fifth fear factor of death are the conditions of the world of separation and schism [between humans and God]. It is not evident whether these states will endure with the continuance of our existence. Everything in this world is subject to change and vicissitude. There are no stable states in this world. Divine religions expound and explicate the circumstances of the natural world.

They interpret them objectively and factually and thus free humanity from fallacious interpretations.

The trials and tribulations of the natural world induce the founts of perfections within humans to gush forth and they make our virtues shine. That which belongs to us will not be taken away and we shall enter the next world with all the true wealth that each of us has amassed in the course of this life.

Moreover, another fear factor for death is fear of the reckoning. The faithful believe in the reckoning and do not fear death in spite of it. However, the unfaithful fear death because of the reckoning. The divine religion guides humans by showing the way to prepare for their future and it frees humanity of this deadlock.

- [1.](#) – See: Plato: Complete Works, Phaedrus (Phaedon).
- [2.](#) – Mulliqadr, Asfir (Journeys), vol. 8, pp. 105, 106.
- [3.](#) – Jalal ad-Din Mawlav, Mathnav-e Ma'nav (Spiritual Couplets), Book III, verses 1293–1296.
- [4.](#) – Surah Zumar 39:42.
- [5.](#) – Surah Qiyamah 75:30.
- [6.](#) – Nahj ul-Balaghah, Sermon 132.
- [7.](#) – Surah Ali 'Imrān 3:145.
- [8.](#) – Surah Ali 'Imrān 3:185.
- [9.](#) – Surah Nisā' 4:78.
- [10.](#) – Plato: Complete Works, Phaedrus (Phaedon).
- [11.](#) – Spinoza, Ethics, prop. LXVII.
- [12.](#) – La takhīf, which means 'fear not', is a phrase from the Qur'an. [trans.]
- [13.](#) – Jalal ad-Din Mawlav, Mathnav-e Ma'nav, Book I, verses 1432–1434.
- [14.](#) – Surah Nisā' 4:77.
- [15.](#) – Surah 'Ankabūt 29:64.
- [16.](#) – Nahj ul-Balaghah, Sermon 28. From the translation of Fayz ul-Islam.
- [17.](#) – Sadq, Ma'ān ul-Akhabr (Meanings of Narrations), p. 290.

Section Three: Philosophical Approaches to Human Immortality

Various interpretations have been presented regarding human immortality. In this discussion, by immortality we mean the imperishability of humans after death of their body. Impersonal immortality is not the subject of this discussion. An example of impersonal immortality is the representation of immortality through our progeny and descendants. Various psychologists state that mental states such as preference of male children over female children and mental disorders such as discontentment due to lack of children originate from this feeling.

In addition, conviction of the legendary status of one's name and memory among the living is another

type of impersonal immortality. Humans regard endurance of their names, works, and progeny as the endurance of their selves. Some of those that regard humans as entirely corporeal and do not believe in human immortality, sometimes comfort themselves and others by impersonal immortality, yet the chief aspiration of humanity is not this type of immortality.

Because of the differences of opinion regarding the nature of humanity, personal immortality has been portrayed in various manners. Therefore, some portrayals are based upon the existence of the soul and its incorporeality and others, which do not advocate the incorporeal soul, depict human immortality solely in terms of the body. Herein, we have included some renditions that are not based on the existence of the soul:

1. Corporal Reanimation

Those who believe that the human essence is restricted to its material body and that the individual identity is determined through its respective body yet accept human immortality usually explain it as restoration of the dead or reassembly of the decomposed body through divine providence. Hence, we are faced with two opinions. One is the belief that the human body, which constitutes the entire identity of the individual, is annihilated after death and recreated by God at the Resurrection.[1](#)

The other is the belief that the human body is composed of both main and subsidiary elements. According to this belief, personal identity is related to the body's main elements, which are constant throughout life and are not destroyed after death but are disjoined and shall be rejoined at the Resurrection.[2](#)

According to these two views, humans lack life until the Resurrection and they gain new life in the true sense of the term when they are resurrected.

2. Subtle or Ethereal Body

This theory pertains to those who believe in the soul's independence from the body but do not regard it incorporeal. According to this belief, the soul is a subtle body that has no mass or weight but possesses some material qualities such as shape and size. The subtle body exists within the corporeal body throughout one's worldly life. It departs the body after death and persists thereupon independent of the body.

As per this concept, life of the corporal body is not inherent; rather, it is essentially inanimate and acquires life through association with the subtle body whose life is intrinsic. The body that is continually changing throughout the life of the individual is the corporal anatomy. This anatomy is an excrescence upon the subtle or ethereal body and is shed at the time of death.[3](#) This theory is grounded on contemporary spiritual research.

The common factor in these two theories is that they do not consider the incorporeal soul to be the origin of the identity and do not support an eternal soul. In the discussion on human nature, we have shown that the human constitution cannot be considered solely material and some of humanity's states and conditions cannot be explained without the existence of a soul. Hence, the inaccuracy of these theories regarding immortality is made obvious.

The ensuing theories regarding immortality are based on the existence of a spiritual and immaterial aspect to humanity.

a. The Unincorporated [n^فmutajassid] Soul

The first person to explicate and expound this theory was Plato. According to his perspective, the human soul, which belongs to the plane of divine and incorporeal beings, has existed before its body. After its fall, the soul became entangled in the tenebrous world of materiality. The body is only a tool for the soul in worldly life. After the death of the body, the soul returns to its original abode, which is free of material and body. When Socrates was asked how he should be buried, he replied:

“As you please, provided I remain still with you, and do not make my escape elsewhere... as soon as the poison has operated I shall remain no longer here, but be transported to the mansions of the blest...”⁴

This perspective does not regard corporeal existence to have a share in human immortality. Advocates of this theory explain parapsychological phenomena in diverse manners.

A noteworthy point is that Plato's theory regarding the existence of the human soul before creation of the material body is accepted among many Moslem mystics and philosophers; even so, the theory that the incorporeal soul is eternally severed from a material body is unacceptable to them.

Regarding severance from the divine plane, Jal^ف ad-D^فn Mawlav^ف declares:

بشنو از نی چون حکایت می کند از جدایی ها شکایت می کند

کز نیستان تا مرا بُریده اند در نفریم مرد و زن نالیده اند

Listen to the reed pipe (humanity) as it tells a story;

It complains of separations.

That as I was severed from my true abode;

*Men and women wailed of my sorrow.*⁵

In his renowned elegy, Ibn al-Sīnā (Avicenna) states:

“A mighty and self-disciplined dove (the human soul) descended towards you (the natural world) from its lofty heights... I guess it has forgotten the covenants it had pledged in its homeland and the habitats that it was unwilling to leave...”

Of course, these two words can be interpreted differently, so that this passage does not signify the existence of a soul before its body but merely that the soul is a supernatural entity.

As we shall explain in the Qur’anic section, return of the soul without any material body at the Resurrection is not accepted by the Noble Qur’an. Therefore, even though various Muslim philosophers such as Ibn al-Sīnā (Avicenna) reached an impasse in attempting to prove the reattachment of the soul to a corporeal body, they would accept spiritual-material resurrection because of their faith in divine revelation. This acceptance signifies the clarity of the Qur’an in depicting the presence of a body in the afterworld, such that Muslim philosophers, who prefer divine revelation and utilize reason to explicate religious statements, regarded material presence in the afterlife a certainty. Humanity does not have a short-term relationship with the body; rather, the body is an integral part of the reality of humankind. If it is such that neither the body nor the soul can be disregarded in the nature of humanity, the interpretation of Ibn al-Sīnā must be challenged as to how it can be possible that there is no body in the span between this life and the next while there is a soul and human individual.

B. Metempsychosis (Reincarnation)

According to this tenet, which is advocated by most Indian religions, including Hinduism, Buddhism, and Jainism, only few humans continue their existence with an incorporeal soul after death while most return to worldly life in a new form and body in successive cycles. This regenerative cycle of life and death continues without interruption until individuals are successful in purifying their respective souls of material restrictions, which is the only way to realize freedom from this unending cycle. Persons that cannot purify their souls shall perpetually remain in the cycle of corporal and worldly life.

There is a difference of opinion among advocates of this belief in whether the soul necessarily enters human bodies or may also enter animal bodies after disjunction of the soul and prior body. At any rate, the law that determines the manner of rebirth and causes transmigration of the soul into a superior or inferior body is called Karma. Karma determines the future life of each human.

This law states that our deeds, speech, and beliefs dictate our future fate and the connection between one’s current and subsequent body is justified in this manner. In their rebirth, the soul enters a body corresponding to the habits and ethical characteristics of the individual’s previous life. This is why religions that support this concept prohibit consuming meat and harassing animals. After death, evil humans are reincarnated within human fetuses that possess inferior social statuses or in weak or lowly bodies as the consequence of their deeds.

According to the concept of metempsychosis, persons who free themselves of the continuous cycle of rebirth shall live on in an absolute spiritual state and as long as they remain in the regenerative cycle, they endure spiritual–physical punishment.⁶

Proponents of this concept have presented many philosophic, dialectic [kalāmī], and empiric rationales. However, not only are these rationales unjustified but there are grounds that show the absence of demonstrability and invalidity of the doctrine of metempsychosis.

In the first place, one must ask, how can the sameness of a person at time A and time B be demonstrated? Each of us lives through stages whose material and psychological qualities differ; nevertheless, links called memories connect these stages to each other. The existence of memories validates the individual unity of a person. However, how can the concept of metempsychosis show the sameness of the soul in the two periods of A and B?

If the criterion is persistence of memories, in nearly all instances the individual has no recollection of previous existences. If the criterion is material persistence, again this is not applicable in metempsychosis because according to this concept, the individual is sometimes reincarnated as a woman, sometimes as a man, and sometimes as an animal.

If the criterion is similarity of psychological tendencies, the duality of individual X and individual Y who live at the same time cannot be justified. In other words, the problem is how much similarity in mental attributes demonstrates the sameness of two individuals.⁷ Consequently, the persistence of an individual identity in two time periods is not possible.

In the second place, the doctrine of metempsychosis is fundamentally fallacious because as we have stated in our analysis of the nature of death, death is traveling beyond the natural world not mere detachment of the body and soul. Accordingly, we cannot accept that the soul can be incarnated within a new body after disjuncture from its previous body and persist in the natural world. To state matters differently, in their essential evolution, humans pass through various stages—one of which is the stage of corporal attachment—and reach a state in which they no longer need the mundane world. Therefore, this doctrine is like the return of an adult to childhood or return from perfection to fault which is not acceptable.

In addition, the relationship of every soul with its body is unique. Thus, there cannot be a relationship between a soul and another body.

Various divine verses and narrations [riwāyat] of the Immaculates (‘a) do affirm the transformation of some humans into animal forms. Some of these verses state that God damns some people and they turn into apes or pigs. Additionally, various narrations state that some people shall be resurrected with faces much uglier than the faces of apes and pigs.

These statements do not affirm this doctrine of reincarnation since the issue of resurrection in the

Hereafter is essentially different from the concept of metempsychosis, which is the return of the soul to the natural world after its disassociation from its previous body. Therefore, statements regarding manifestation of individuals in the afterworld in bodies that are formed of their worldly beliefs and actions—in other words, the manifestation of the reality of each human in the Hereafter—is unrelated to the concept of metempsychosis. The two main reasons for this are as follows:

The supposed bodies that the concept of metempsychosis speaks of are not truly related to each other; however, the body that is the manifestation of actions is a body that has directly resulted from the self and its volitional beliefs and actions.

The successive bodies in the concept of metempsychosis are natural bodies; however, the body that is the manifestation of actions is not natural.

According to Jalāl ad-Dīn Mawlavī:

So the resurrection of the envious on the Day of Judgment;

Shall doubtless be in the form of wolves.

The resurrection of the avaricious carrion-eating scoundrel;

Shall be in the form of a pig on the Day of Reckoning.

Fornicators shall have stinking private parts;

Alcohol-drinkers shall have foul-smelling mouths.

The character that is predominant within your being;

Must necessarily be the basis for your constitution at Resurrection.

One moment a wolf will spring from humanity;

The next, a second Joseph shining as the moon.⁸

C. Life in the Barzakh and Qiyyamat (Resurrection)

The third view regarding immortality is based on segregation of the afterworld into the two planes of Barzakh and Qiyyamat (which literally means the rise). According to this view, which has been extracted from the Qur'an and traditions, in this world humans are an amalgam of soul [nafs] and corporal body. At the time of death, their intellectual attachment is temporarily severed. The soul persists in a plane called Barzakh and the body is decomposed and diffused through the natural order of the world. Ultimately, at Qiyyamat the bodies are recollected, the souls regain intellectual attachment with their respective bodies, and thus humans, that is, amalgams of body and soul, enter the afterlife.

Adherents of this ideology are not like-minded on the question of the attachment of soul and body in the plane of Barzakh. In the theory of unincorporated soul, we have stated that some Muslim intellectuals regard the human soul without a body in the plane of Barzakh. However, others regard the soul attached to an ideal body [badan al-mithqali] that is similar to the material body of the individual. Of course, the properties of these two bodies are very different from each other. Additionally, this ideal body is unlike the subtle or ethereal body discussed previously.

In any event, according to this theory, because humans are an amalgam of body and soul and have partial material perceptions, there is a body corresponding with the plane of Barzakh in the essence of every human. At the time of natural death, the soul and its attached ideal body enters the plane of Barzakh. Mawlana says:

For the soul, the unity of God is more pleasurable;

Other than its apparent form, it has other hands and feet.

These hands and feet can be seen in dreams and divine union;

Deem it true, do not regard it as an exaggeration.

It is your bodiless self that has a body;

So fear not of the withdrawal of the soul from your body.⁹

In Qiyyamat, the soul will have a corporal body, but not with the precepts and requisites of the worldly body; instead, by reaching perfection the material body becomes congruent with the afterworld, which is the world of perpetuity and lack of deterioration. We shall return to this issue in later discussions.

The Quality of Immortality according to Islam

Among the previously stated perspectives, other than the theories of metempsychosis and subtle body, which have some supporters among Muslim intellectuals, the preceding perspective is more proportionate with Islamic anthropological principles and the Qur'an and traditions.

Barzakh

Literally, Barzakh means the barrier or boundary between two things. In eschatological discussions, it is the gap between the end of worldly life (i.e. death) and the commencement of Qiyyamat. As we have indicated, the segregation of life after death into Barzakh and Qiyyamat is one of the teachings of the prophets and divine scriptures and philosophers, who have speculated upon eschatological issues, have utilized these sources. According to this tenet, humans experience three disparate lives: Natural life, Barzakh life, and Akhiraat¹⁰ Life. Accordingly, it is clear that the eternal life spoken of by divine religions is the Akhiraat Life, which begins after the initial stages of Qiyyamat.

Many Qur’anic verses attest to the existence of the span of Barzakh:

﴿حَتَّىٰ إِذَا جَاءَ أَحَدَهُمُ الْمَوْتُ قَالَ رَبِّ ارْجِعُونِ. لَعَلِّي أَعْمَلُ صَالِحًا فِيمَا تَرَكْتُ، كَلَّا إِنَّهَا كَلِمَةٌ هُوَ قَائِلُهَا وَمِن وَرَائِهِم بَرْزَخٌ إِلَىٰ يَوْمِ يُبْعَثُونَ﴾

“Until, when death comes unto one of them, he says, ‘My Lord! Return me! Surely I shall act righteously in that which I have forsook.’ Never! It is just a word he speaks and behind them is an intermission (Barzakh) till the day they shall be resurrected.”¹¹

According to this verse, it seems that returning to the world is not possible after true death. Moreover, between the end of worldly life and the Day of Judgment or Qiyyamat there is an intermission called Barzakh.

﴿قَالُوا رَبَّنَا أَمَتْنَا اثْنَتَيْنِ وَأَحْيَيْتَنَا اثْنَتَيْنِ فَاعْتَرَفْنَا بِذُنُوبِنَا فَهَلْ إِلَىٰ خُرُوجٍ مِّن سَبِيلٍ﴾

“They shall say, ‘Our Lord! You have caused us two deaths and have given us two lives. We confess to our sins, now, is there any escape route [from Hell]?”¹²

This verse reveals two issues:

That which was also revealed from the first verse, that is, there is an interval, called Barzakh, between death and afterlife.

Humans are alive and aware in the recess of Barzakh, not annihilated and silent.

According to this verse, after unbelievers realize two deaths and two lives after their worldly lives, they attest to their faith and confess their sins in order to be delivered from retribution. The story of the two deaths and two lives is thus: at the end of their worldly lives, God causes the death of humans and introduces them into the life of Barzakh. At the end of Barzakh life, again He causes the death of humans and accords them with new eternal life. Therefore, there is life in Barzakh because otherwise two deaths cannot come about.

One might state that by accepting Barzakh life, each individual would have three lives (worldly life, Barzakh life, and later life in the hereafter). That which frees unbelievers of doubt and brings about their conviction are two resurrections in Barzakh and Qiyyamat.¹³ Their worldly life did not cause conviction within them because in their earthly life they denied life after death:

﴿إِنَّ هَؤُلَاءِ لَيَقُولُونَ. إِن هِيَ إِلَّا مَوْتُنَا الْأُولَىٰ وَمَا نَحْنُ بِمُنشَرِينَ﴾

“Surely these [unbelievers] say: There is nothing but our first death and we shall not be revived.”¹⁴

The following verse signifies that the Qur’an regards death as transferal from one type of life to another:

﴿وَلَا تَقُولُوا لِمَنْ يُقْتَلُ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ أَمْوَاتٌ، بَلْ أَحْيَاءٌ وَلَكِنْ لَا تَشْعُرُونَ﴾

“And do not call those who have died in the way of Allah dead; rather, they are alive but you do not realize.”¹⁵

This verse is a short but clear report of the Barzakh life of the martyrs [shuhadā’] of God because the life of martyrs only differs in the manner of their Barzakh life not its reality. Since the terms “do not call...dead” and “you do not realize” are addressed to the faithful, one cannot say that the meaning of this verse is that martyrs are alive at Qiyāmat because this fact was already evident and accepted by the faithful.

Barzakh Body

Visualizing life in Barzakh without allowing for an immaterial aspect in humans is difficult. This is because after death, the material body decomposes and alters into constituent elements that can no longer be called a human body. Furthermore, according to the verse “Allah completely retracts souls at the time of their deaths and also souls that have not died, in their sleep. So, He holds souls upon which He has decreed death and returns the rest until an appointed end...”¹⁶ essentially, the buried material body has no soul. Therefore, life and retribution in Barzakh cannot be attributed to such a body. On the other hand, if humans are merely soul, which according to philosophers can only perceive general and intangible truths, how can it perceive the material punishments and rewards of Barzakh, which are mentioned in the Qur’an and Hadith? Thus, some Muslim philosophers regard humans in Barzakh as possessing an ideal body that corresponds with the plane of Barzakh and which has been derived from the individual’s actions and beliefs, that is, the person’s volitional identity.

In this world, our earthly bodies are attached to our souls. By abandoning its corporeal body our soul enters the plane of Barzakh with a body similar in appearance to its material body. Moreover, various Hadith state that when God withdraws the soul, He gives it a form similar to its worldly form such that an acquaintance that sees the individual will recognize him or her. The perception of bodily forms in dreams, helps in understanding the Barzakh body. Even though this body possesses geometric dimensions and corporal qualities such as color, it is devoid of materiality and its qualities including mass and weight.

Advocates of the ideal body are not in agreement regarding the manner of its genesis. According to one perspective, this ideal body is created independently and after severance of the soul’s bond with its

material body, and then it unites with its ideal body. Another view states that the ideal body is not a detached reality from the soul but an existential facet of the soul that appears after death.

☞khirat Life

According to logical and traditional rationales for the incorporeality of the soul, the fact that the soul endures after death and is present in the plane of Barzakh and the ☞khirat is indisputable. Various Qur’anic verses describe nonmaterial rewards in ☞khirat that can only be attributed to the existence of the soul in ☞khirat. For example, in S☞rah Tawbah it is stated:

“Allah has promised faithful men and women gardens underneath [the trees of] which rivers flow, therein to dwell forever, and also pure abodes in perpetual paradises and greater [than all these] is the satisfaction of Allah. That is the great triumph.”¹⁷

Apparently, in this verse, the Noble Qur’an places the satisfaction and gratification of God against the material pleasures of the faithful and regards it greater than these pleasures. It is clear that it is a pleasure that is realized not with the material body but with the human intellect and soul. Therefore, there is no doubt that Islam agrees with the spiritual immortality of humans. However, the discussion does not end here because there are many verses that indicate the material presence of humans in ☞khirat.

1. Some of these verses attest to the existence of the human body on the Day of Judgment. These verses can be divided into various categories:

a. Some verses denote that in the wake of death humans return to the earth and afterwards on the Day of Resurrection, they reemerge from it. For example:

﴿مِنْهَا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ وَ فِيهَا نُعِيدُكُمْ وَ مِنْهَا نُخْرِجُكُمْ تَارَةً أُخْرَى﴾

“Out of the earth We created you, into it We shall return you, and We shall withdraw you from it once more.”¹⁸

b. Other verses explicitly state that on the Day of Resurrection all humans shall rise from their graves:

﴿وَ نُفِخَ فِي الصُّورِ فَإِذَا هُمْ مِنَ الْآجِدَاتِ إِلَىٰ رَبِّهِمْ يَنْسِلُونَ﴾

“And the Horn shall be blown. Then suddenly they shall emerge from their graves to hasten towards their Lord.”¹⁹

It is self-evident that emergence from one’s grave pertains to the human body not soul.

c. Various verses speak of parts of the human body in the **ʿākhīrat**. These verses are also clear denotations of corporeal resurrection since it is evident that the immaterial soul does not have body parts:

﴿الْيَوْمَ نَخْتِمُ عَلَىٰ أَفْوَاهِهِمْ وَتُكَلِّمُنَا أَيْدِيهِمْ وَتَشْهَدُ أَرْجُلُهُمْ بِمَا كَانُوا يَكْسِبُونَ﴾

“Today, We seal their mouths and their hands speak to Us and their feet bear witness to what they have been earning.”²⁰

Fundamentally, the people’s understanding of the Prophet’s (S) enjoinder to immortality was somatic resurrection and the Prophet (S) did not refute this understanding.²¹

2. In addition to the first genre of verses, which denote the presence of the human body in the **ʿākhīrat**, other verses openly speak of bodily rewards and punishments in **ʿākhīrat**. Many Qur’anic verses speak of “heavenly gardens”, “pleasant shade”, “varieties of foods and dishes”, “medleys of clothes and adornments”, etc. On the other hand, many verses speak of “burning in the fires of Hell”, “appalling food and drink”, “fiery malodorous clothes”, “deathly winds”, “iron maces”, etc. Each of these denotes a part of the physical rewards or punishments of the inhabitants of **ʿākhīrat**. This genre of verses also indicates corporal presence since without a body, perceiving material bounties or chastisements is not possible.²²

In light of these accounts, we can conclude that according to Islam, the immortality of human beings is physical/spiritual and that our existential reality, in both material and spiritual aspects, will be completely present in the Hereafter.

ʿākhīrat Body

We have made it clear that according to Islam, the human resurrection includes both spiritual and corporal aspects. Now, it may be asked: Is our **ʿākhīrat** body the same as our earthly body or is it different? In answer, some Muslim scholars support the first possibility and believe that on the Day of Resurrection each person’s earthly body will be restored and reattached to the soul. These scholars maintain that specific verses, such as those that indicate the exodus of humans from their grave,²³ distinctly demonstrate the factuality of this opinion. In addition, divine justice demands that the next world’s physical rewards and punishments be delivered upon the same body that was occupied in righteous or immoral deeds.

Other Islamic authorities hold that even though people’s **ʿākhīrat** bodies are material—and of clay—it is not necessary that they be the same as their earthly bodies; rather, they are merely similar to their previous bodies in form. In order to prove their theory, these experts make use of various Qur’anic verses that speak of the creation of a “likeness” of each person in the Hereafter:

﴿أَوَلَيْسَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ بِقَادِرٍ عَلَىٰ أَنْ يَخْلُقَ مِثْلَهُمْ؛ بَلَىٰ وَهُوَ الْخَلَّاقُ الْعَلِيمُ﴾

“Is not He who created the heavens and earth able to create the like of them; yes indeed [he can], and He is the Creator (of all), the All-knowing.”²⁴

Naturally, these scholars maintain that there is no contradiction between the material dissimilarity of earthly and otherworldly bodies and the “sameness” of the individual. This dissimilarity does not result in the reunited person at Resurrection being different from the person that existed in the natural world. This is because the identity of an individual pertains to its soul and the person’s soul in the Hereafter is the same soul that was attached to the individual’s physical body in the mundane world.

Meanwhile, various Islamic theologians have taken a different path that more comprehensively illuminates Islamic teachings on this subject. They believe that our otherworldly bodies are perfected versions of our natural bodies and even though they are distinct in their existential perfection, they are individually equivalent to our respective natural bodies.

On this basis, the otherworldly bodies of all individuals are the same as their mundane bodies with the difference that they have left behind the limitations and faults of their natural stage and have become perfect and complete bodies. This is because the *ʿākhīrat* is an absolutely perfect world not a revision of the natural world. Hence, *ʿākhīrat* bodies are exempt of all diseases and blights and never become old and decrepit. Naturally, this perspective is grounded on specific philosophical principles that are too comprehensive to be discussed in this brief treatise.²⁵

1. – See: ‘Aḥud ad-Dīn-e ‘Aḥḥadī, [Sharḥ-e] Muwḥḥiq (Commentary of Muwḥḥiq), vol. 8, p. 289.
2. – See: Allḥmah ḥillī, Sharḥ-e Tajrīd ul-‘Iḥḥiq (Commentary of the Belief of Incorporability), pp. 402–403.
3. – Murtaḥḥ Muḥḥaharī, Ma‘ḥd (Eschatology or Resurrection), p. 24.
4. – Plato: Complete Works, Phaedrus (Phaedon).
5. – Jalal ad-Dīn Mawlavī, Mathnavī-e Ma‘navī (Spiritual Couplets), Book I, verses 1–2.
6. – Nass, John B., The Comprehensive History of Religions.
7. – John Hick, Philosophy of Religion.
8. – Jalal ad-Dīn Mawlavī, Mathnavī-e Ma‘navī (Spiritual Couplets), Book II, verses 1413–1415, and 1420–1421.
9. – Jalal ad-Dīn Mawlavī, Mathnavī-e Ma‘navī (Spiritual Couplets), Book III, verses 1611–1613.
10. – This is derived from the Qur’anic term *dār ul-‘ākhīrah*, which means ‘the Last Abode’.
11. – Sḥrah Mu‘minīn 23:99–100.
12. – Sḥrah Ghḥfir 40:11.
13. – Allḥmah ḥabḥḥabḥḥ, Tafsīr-e Al-Mḥzīn (Al-Mḥzīn Exegesis), vol. 17, p. 313.
14. – Sḥrah Dukhḥn 44:34–35.
15. – Sḥrah Baqarah 2:154.
16. – Sḥrah Zumar 39:42.
17. – Sḥrah Tawbah 9:72.
18. – Sḥrah ḥḥḥ 20:55. Also see: Sḥrah Nḥḥ 71:18; Sḥrah Rḥm 30:25; and Sḥrah A‘rḥf 7:25.
19. – Sḥrah Yḥsḥn 36:51. Also see: Sḥrah ḥajj 22:7; Sḥrah Yḥsḥn 36:52; Sḥrah Qamar 54:7; Sḥrah Ma‘ḥrij 70:43.
20. – Sḥrah Yḥsḥn 36:65. Also see: Sḥrah Nḥr 24:24; Sḥrah Fuḥḥilat 41:20–21; Sḥrah ‘Abas 80:38, 80:41. Additionally, the Noble Qur’an has enumerated historical examples of resurrection, such as the story of ‘Uzḥr (Ezra) and the story of the

Seven Sleepers of Ephesus [aḥḥāb-e kahf], all of which are congruent with the corporal aspect of the resurrection.

[21.](#) – See: Sūrah Mu'minīn 23:35–36; and Sūrah Yūsuf 36:78.

[22.](#) – In addition to Qur'anic verses, many narrations also indicate the corporal facet of resurrection. However, in favor of brevity, we shall refrain from further elaboration.

[23.](#) – Such as Sūrah Yūsuf 36:51; Sūrah Qamar 54:7; Sūrah Ma'arīj 70:43; and Sūrah Hajj 22:7.

[24.](#) – Sūrah Yūsuf 36:81.

[25.](#) – This view was first presented by Sadr ul-Muta'allih Shahrīzādī (Mullāadrī) in the form of a philosophical theory. Later, Fakīm 'Alī Mudarris Zunzī reformed it. This theory is based upon principles such as Basicity of Being [iḥṭāṭ-e wujūd], Analogicity of Being [tashkīk-e wujūd], and Evolution of Quiddity [ṭarīkat-e jawhar].

Section Four: Life in the Hereafter as stated by the Qur'an

The Noble Qur'an extensively examines the issue of ʿākhirat life. Some Qur'anic verses concern the principle of resurrection (eschatology) [ma'ād] and respond to the criticisms of deniers. Other verses in this regard shed light on the resurrection of the dead and the state of humans in the Hereafter (ʿākhirat). These two issues shall be briefly elucidated in the following sections.

The Possibility and Necessity of Resurrection

The Holy Qur'an has reinforced the intellectual basis of the resurrection of the dead on two fundamental levels. Firstly, it proves the possibility of the occurrence of resurrection, and shows that the presence of the human body and soul in the Hereafter is not impossible. Secondly, it presents rationales for the occurrence of the resurrection of the dead and it not only shows that bringing back to life of all human dead before the final judgment shall occur, but it proves that it is necessary for it to occur.

Generally, in Islam all enjoinders of the prophet are concomitant with challenges [tahaddī]. The prophet challenges all people and encourages them to express any rationale or evidence they have against his enjoinders. Alongside his enjoinder, the prophet was appointed by God to tell the people, "Produce your proof if you speak truly."¹ The purpose of this challenge is abandonment of skepticism and doubt and embracement of rational arguments and evidence.

A. Possibility of the Resurrection

The Qur'an shows the possibility of the resurrection of the dead in various manners.

1. Lack of Reasoning for Denial of Resurrection:

Various verses declare that deniers of ʿākhirat life have no firm and reasonable rationale for their claims.

On the one hand, by studying verses that quote the claims of deniers we realize that these people have no weapon other than considering the resurrection of the dead to be improbable. Using various questions, they endeavor to show that the issue of renewed life and return to God is irrational.² In addition, they sometimes slander the prophets and divine representatives who inform people of the resurrection and they call them mad or liars³, or they regard the tenet of resurrection a superstitious myth.⁴ On the other hand, many verses state that refutation of resurrection is an untrue and baseless assumption and is not grounded on logical foundations:

“And they say, ‘there is nothing but our worldly lives; we die and we live and nothing but time annihilates us’ and they have no knowledge of this; they merely assume. And when Our clear signs are recited unto them, their only argument is that they say, ‘Bring us our fathers if you speak truly.’”⁵

In the first verse, after indicating the claim of the deniers of resurrection, it is lucidly stated that this claim is not based on knowledge, but originates only from speculation and conjecture. In the second verse, it is stated that when faced with rational arguments for the resurrection and *ʿakhirot* life, deniers attempt to justify themselves with an unfounded rationale. They say, “Raise our ancestors in order that we accept the resurrection.”⁶

2. Creation of the First Human

Contemplation of the primary genesis of humanity facilitates accepting the Resurrection since God who created humans in the first place is surely able to revive them:

﴿و هو الذي يبدء الخلق ثم يعيده و هو أهون عليه﴾

“And He is the one who originates Creation then renews it and this is easier for Him.”⁷

﴿قل يحييها الذي انشأها اول مرة﴾

“Say, ‘He shall resurrect them who originated them the first time.’”⁸

As stated by the Qur’an, human *ʿakhirot* life is like a new creation and He who was able to create humans in the first place is also able to recreate them. Nonetheless, deniers of Resurrection doubt the recreation even though they accept the original creation!⁹

﴿افعينا بالخلق الاول بل هم في لبس من خلق جديد﴾

“Have We been wearied by the first creation? [Indeed not]; however, they doubt the new creation.”¹⁰

Yea, little thought regarding our original creation is enough to make us fathom the possibility of our renewed life after death and resolve all doubts.

﴿...يا أيها الناس ان كنتم في ريب من البعث فانا خلقناكم من تراب ثم من نطفة﴾

“O people! If you are in doubt about the Resurrection, hence [know] We have created you from dust then from sperm...”¹¹

3. The Illimitable Power of God

The unlimited power of God is another reason for the possibility of the Resurrection. After reminding us of the aspects of God’s power in the creation of the universe, the Noble Qur’an emphasizes the fact that such a potent Creator can surely restore the dead to life. All possible deeds are easy for the Omnipotent. In fact, basically, the ease or difficulty of an action is stated in terms of limited powers. Therefore, one should not doubt the possibility of the occurrence of Resurrection because of its magnitude: ¹²

“Have they not seen that Allah who created the heavens and earth and was not wearied by creating them is able to revive the dead? Yes indeed; verily, He is capable of all things.”¹³

4. Examples of Resurrection in Nature

A further method the Qur’an uses to resolve doubt of Resurrection is enjoining humans to contemplate nature and the exhibition of the life and death of natural phenomena. According to the Qur’an, the growth of beautiful and vigorous plants from dead earth is an objective and palpable example of the resurrection in Qur’ān and it further clarifies its possibility:

“And He is who sends the winds as a foretoken before His grace [of rain], till when they are charged with heavy clouds, We convey them to a dead land, then, from them We send down water, and from them We bring forth all types of fruits. In this manner We shall bring forth the dead [from their graves]; haply you will remember.”¹⁴

5. Historic Examples of Resurrection

Some Qur’anic verses reveal historic occurrences or objective examples of human resurrection. Hence, a person who witnessed these occurrences or accepted their occurrence on authoritative grounds should not have any problem with accepting the possibility of the Resurrection. After relating these historical phenomena, the Qur’an indicates their relationship with the Resurrection and regards these miraculous incidents as portents of the Day of Resurrection.

One example of these historical events is the experience of a person who was passing by the ruins of a city and the question crossed his mind as to how God would bring the bodies of the dead back to life. By divine providence, this person dies and is resurrected one hundred years later. ¹⁵

“Or such as he who passed upon a city whose walls and roofs had collapsed and said [to himself], ‘How shall Allah bring this back to life now that it is dead?’ So Allah made him die for a hundred years and then raised him...”¹⁶

B. Necessity of the Resurrection

As we have previously stated, the Holy Qur’an does not suffice at showing that the Resurrection is possible. In fact, various Qur’anic verses explain the necessity of the Resurrection. The content of these verses is such that a logical argument for the necessity of Resurrection can be extracted from them. These verses usually emphasize a divine attribute and consider the occurrence of Resurrection as a necessary condition of this respective attribute. Herein, we shall enumerate several such rationales:

1. Divine Wisdom

In the discussion on divine attributes, we stated that God is wise. That is, He does not perform useless acts and all His actions have logical purposes. Of course, the finality of divine acts does not contradict His absolute needlessness of others since these purposes pertain to His creations and contribute to their perfection and their interests. They are surely not in answer to a need of the Creator of the Worlds.

Consequently, the creation of humans, who are the greatest of creations, cannot be in vain; rather, its purpose is that they attain perfections befitting their unique station.

On the other hand, it is apparent that the natural world, and our worldly lives within it, cannot by itself guaranty our perfection. This is because this world is fleeting and our lives in it are suffused with restrictions and deprivations, whereas humanity is a creature that has both an innate tendency to eternal life and also the capability of immortality due to the existence of an incorporeal soul.

Accordingly, divine wisdom requires that the purpose of our creation be realized and that we humans attain our worthy perfection. Complete fulfillment of this purpose is not possible in this world. Therefore, it is necessary that human life endure after death in order to prevent it from being in vain. Regarding this issue, the Holy Qur’an states:

﴿...افحسبتم انما خلقناكم عبثا و انكم اليٰنا لاترجعون. فتعالى الله الملك الحق﴾

“Did you think that We created you in vain and that you will not be returned to Us? And exalted is Allah, the King, the Righteous...”¹⁷

This verse reveals the fact that if there is no return to God after death and our existence ends with our passing then our creation would be in vain whereas the judicious God is too great to perform a useless act.

The Qur'an holds that if there is no Resurrection and **Ākhirat**, not only would the creation of humanity be in vain, but also the creation of the natural world would be for nothing:

﴿...و ما خلقنا السماوات و الأرضَ و ما بينهما إلا بالحق، و انّ الساعة لآتية﴾

“And We have not created the heavens and earth and all in between save in justice; and surely the Hour shall come.”¹⁸

After stating the fact that the creation of the heavens and earth and all in between is righteous and exempt from futility, God immediately indicates the inevitable occurrence of the Resurrection. It seems that the purposefulness of creation depends on the existence of the Resurrection and **Ākhirat**. This is why many deniers of otherworldly life become nihilists. By restricting the existence of humans to worldly life, they see it as nothing but extra-redundancy and a cause for bewilderment. According to nihilists, humanity is a lost and confused caravan that has entered the desert without purpose, following a cycle rotating in vain.

2. Divine Justice

Justice is one of God's attributes. One aspect of divine justice is that the faithful and righteous must be worthily reimbursed, and unbelievers and sinners must be punished accordingly. However, we see that because of its various restrictions, the natural world does not possess the capacity to reward and punish all the deeds of human beings since all worldly blessings and pleasures cannot wholly recompense the deeds of the truly faithful and even the heaviest of punishments are not enough chastisement for some crimes. Can a person whose crime is the murder of thousands of innocent people be completely punished in this world? On the one hand, many virtuous and righteous people live in hardship and privation and some sacrifice their lives for what they believe. While on the other, so many malefactors and oppressors live their whole lives in luxury, persecuting others.

Hence, because complete recompense for all humans is not possible in this world, divine justice requires that God's court of justice be established in another place or world in which people may again be faced with all their righteous and evil deeds. This world is called the **Ākhirat**.

In various verses, the Holy Qur'an indicates the fact that equality of the retribution of the righteous and the wicked is unfair and something that the intellect cannot accept. The Qur'an has asked many times that:

﴿افنّجعل المسلمين كالمجرمين. ما لكم كيف تحكمون﴾

“So shall We make those who are submissive [to Allah] as the sinners? What is wrong with you; how [ill] you judge!”¹⁹

﴿ام نجعل الذين آمنوا و عملوا الصالحات كالمفسدين في الارض ام نجعل المتقين كالفجار﴾

“Or must We make those who believe and do good as the corrupt of the world or must We make the pious as the transgressors?”²⁰

Moreover, in another place, after stressing that the equality of the requital of sinners and the righteous is unjust, the Qur’an states that one of the purposes of the creation of the heavens and earth is that every person receives rewards or punishments according to their deeds, such that no one is wronged:

“Or do those who commit evil deeds think that We shall make them as those who believe and do righteous deeds; [such that they be] equal in life and death? How ill they judge! While Allah has created the heavens and earth in justice and that each soul is recompensed for what it has earned and they shall not be wronged.”²¹

Hence, since the just retribution of all humans cannot be realized in this world, divine justice shall accomplish this end in another world.

Depiction of the **ḥ**khirat in the Qur’an

The qualities of the **ḥ**khirat are all beyond sensory experience and the intellect can only begin to apprehend some of its general qualities such as “immortality” and “a just reckoning of our deeds”. Thus, in order to understand the details of Resurrection we have no choice but to resort to another source of information beyond sensory experience: divine revelation.

این راه را نهایت صورت کجا توان بست

کش صد هزار منزل بیش است در بدایت

در این شب سیاهم گم گشت راه مقصود

از گوشه‌ای برون آئی کوی هدایت

Where can be the ultimate end of this path?

Even at first glance there can be more than a hundred thousand halting places!

In this Stygian night, I have lost the path towards my destination;

Come out of your hiding place, O star of guidance!

One of the reasons that the Resurrection has been so extensively described in the Qur'an may be that our intellect and experience are useless in this issue.

In any case, there are hundreds of Qur'anic verses on this topic. We shall present a succinct discussion on the content of some of these verses in order to depict the general appearance of otherworldly life as shown in the Qur'an. Some of the elements will be discussed in greater detail.

1. The Events Prior to the Resurrection

The Qur'an attests that before the Resurrection suddenly and unforeseeably phenomenal events shall occur in the world around us that are portents of Qiyamat. At that time, a great revolution will occur in the cosmos such that it will seem like it is the end of the world. Mountains shall tremble,²² crumble, ²³ become as scattered dust,²⁴ and ultimately nothing but a mirage will remain of them.²⁵ The seas will swarm over²⁶ and ignite.²⁷ A titanic earthquake will transpire.²⁸ The pillars of the earth will break up and what is hidden in the bowels of the earth will be revealed.²⁹ The sun will be darkened, the stars shall be extinguished,³⁰ and celestial bodies will be scattered.³¹ The firmament will be rent asunder,³² become as molten metal,³³ and shall be rolled up as a scroll is rolled up.³⁴

2. Winding the Horn

The word *sūr* (horn) has been used ten times in the Holy Qur'an and all these cases indicate the end of the world or the initiation of Qiyamat. The horn will be blown twice. The results of the first blast [*nafkh*] are different from the second. The following verse explicitly indicates both resonations:

“And the Horn shall be winded and all in the heavens and on earth will fall unconscious save those who Allah wills; then it shall be winded again and suddenly all shall stand beholding.”³⁵

We have extracted the following points from Qur'anic verses and Hadith regarding this issue:

Universal unconsciousness [*sa'iqā*] (euphemistic of death) and disbandment of the current state of the world is a consequence of the first blast, and the collective rise of humans and the uniting of the ancients and future generations for reckoning pertain to the second blast.

The first blast results in the death of contingent beings while the second gives them life. Various savants analogize this to blowing on a fire that may douse it or enflame it.

There is an interval between the two blasts. The first blast is performed by an angel named Israfil, and the second is performed by God.³⁶

3. Advent of ʿAkhirat Life

After³⁷ the second blast, which is the breath of life, our otherworldly souls and bodies are united, humans exit their graves,³⁸ and confused, afraid,³⁹ and bewildered scatter about like moths.⁴⁰ They seek a method of escape but there is none.⁴¹ They flee from their families⁴² and while their eyes are dropped in shame,⁴³ they speed towards the divine presence.⁴⁴ Here, all people, from first to last, are gathered in an immense arena.⁴⁵ The lineaments of unbelievers contrast to those of believers and their visages attest to their faith or unbelief.⁴⁶ Thus, the ʿAkhirat begins.

4. The Reckoning of Deeds

The Qur'an has various designations for the Last Day, each of which signifies a specific quality. Some of these names include the Day of Rising [yawm ul-qiyamah], the Day of Gathering [yawm ul-jam'], the Day of Resurrection [yawm ul-ba'th], the Day of Egress (from graves) [yawm ul-khuruj], the Day of Regret [yawm ul-hasrah], the Day of Separation (of good from evil) [yawm ul-fasl], the Imminent Day [yawm ul-azifah], the Final Day [yawm ul-akhir], the Day of Immortality [yawm ul-khulud], etc. Another name for this day is Judgment Day [yawm ul-hisab] and together with issues such as book of deeds, witnesses, scales, etc. these words all pertain to the establishment of the divine court of justice in the next world.

All people's deeds in this world are their respective capital in the next. This capital belongs to no one save its respective agent. It persists with the endurance of its agent and will persist for all time. The reality of this wealth will manifest in another world. The world in which these deeds are reckoned must be a complete world in order that the truth of the deeds are correctly manifested and so that the judged may correctly and completely perceive the reality of their actions.

﴿وَأَنْ لَّيْسَ لِلْإِنْسَانِ إِلَّا مَا سَعَىٰ. وَأَنْ سَعْيُهُ سَوْفَ يُرَىٰ﴾

“And humans have nothing save what they have labored. And [the fruits of] their labors shall soon be seen.”⁴⁷

Further Reading

1. Every person's actions, consistent with his or her existential make-up, are divided into external (manifest) and internal (hidden) acts. Manifest acts are those that are performed by various parts of the body such as hands, eyes, ears, etc. In contrast, hidden acts are those that stem from the mind regardless of whether they attain corporal manifestation or not. External and internal acts are both considered deeds and will be considered in the Reckoning.

﴿وَأَنْ تُبَدُّوا مَا فِي أَنْفُسِكُمْ أَوْ تُخْفُوهُ يُحَاسِبُكُمْ بِهِ اللَّهُ﴾

“And whether you show what is in your hearts or hide it, Allah will account you for it.”⁴⁸

2. The actions of all individuals are part of them. Not only that, but they make up a person’s essence and determine their identity. Action is not accidental to the human substance and is not uninfluential with our essence; rather, it pierces into the human nature and becomes an integral part of the individual. All humans are free to fashion their true selves with their actions. Thus, due to the difference among their deeds, humans are typically diversified. Various issues can be inferred from this fact, including:

2.1. Before an action, the individual is free to fulfill it or not. In other words, unperformed actions are in the domain of a person’s volition and authority. However, after an action is realized the person becomes dominated by the action, because it achieves union with the existential reality of the individual.

﴿كُلُّ نَفْسٍ بِمَا كَسَبَتْ رَهِينَةٌ﴾

“Every soul is prisoner of what they have earned.”⁴⁹

2.2. The union of persons and their deeds signifies that persons cannot relieve themselves of their actions, they cannot produce associates, they cannot place their blame on others, and they cannot dissimulate and make themselves seem innocent. Here, another difference between this world and [﴿]khirat is revealed.

﴿وَلَا تَزِرُ وَازِرَةٌ وِزْرَ أُخْرَىٰ وَإِن تَدْعُ مُثْقَلَةٌ إِلَىٰ جَمِلِهَا لِأُحْمَلْ مِنْهُ شَيْءٌ وَلَوْ كَانَ ذَا قُرْبَىٰ﴾

“No laden person [with sin] bears the load of another and if a heavily laden person calls for someone’s help, no fraction of it will be carried [by the other] even if the person is close family.”⁵⁰

2.3. The unity of the ego and its deeds shows that an action, even if it is forgotten, will have a constant presence in the individual’s being until the conditions for its remembrance accrue.

3. God, whose knowledge is absolute and who is immanent throughout all things, shall not carry out the reckoning of human deeds for the purpose of discovering unknowns. The reckoning is for people to become aware of the complete reality of their own manifest and hidden actions. Hence, reckoning of the reality of actions necessitates infinite knowledge. No person is able to assess one’s own deeds or the deeds of others.

﴿قُلْ إِنَّ الْمَوْتَ الَّذِي تَفِرُونَ مِنْهُ فَإِنَّهُ مُلَاقِيكُمْ ثُمَّ تُرَدُّونَ إِلَىٰ عَالِمِ الْغَيْبِ وَ الشَّهَادَةِ فَيُنَبِّئُكُمْ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ﴾

“Say: Verily, death, from which you flee, shall encounter you, then you shall be returned to the

Knower of the Invisible and Visible and He will inform you of what you have been doing. ⁵¹

5. Witnesses of Deeds

There are witnesses in the divine court of justice that attest to the deeds of people. These testimonies must be true, accurate, and complete; therefore, not everyone is allowed to testify. A witness in *Qiyamat* must have special characteristics in order that their testimonies are free of all error, ignorance, and bias which may alter the semblance of the truth. Some of these features include the following:

Testifiers must have witnessed the actions where and when they occurred. If witness A testifies to the actions of person B based on the word of person C, even if person C is truthful, the testimony is incomplete since the witness testified to the saying of C, not the actions of B.

Because actions have both an exterior and interior, a complete witness is someone who can perceive the heart of actions. No complete and conclusive judgment can be made on grounds of the superficial aspect of an action. The distinguishing facet of many actions is not just based on their outer shell but the intentions behind them.

Witnesses must be exempt from error in committing deeds to memory and then testifying to them. In its conventional sense, justice does not obstruct all types of errors although it may prevent deliberate errors. However, divine justice must be free of all errors.

Hence, the immaculate saints of God—the Prophets and Imams (‘a)—will give complete testimonies and even the testimonies of other creations, such as each person’s body parts (arms, legs, etc.), must ultimately refer to the testimonies of the Immaculates. It is evident that such testimonies cannot be achieved in conventional human judgments in this world. Thus, religion as practiced in this worldly life puts appearances and principles into effect in order to settle disputes but leaves complete adjudication to the Judgment Day, which is the perfect manifestation of justice.

6. Retribution

One of the names of the final day is the Day of Requit or Religion [*yawm ud-din*]. One meaning for *din* is requital and to requite means to make appropriate return. Therefore, rewarding and punishment may also be called requital [*jaz*] because they are returns for actions committed. Another meaning for *din* is religion. The final day is called the Day of Religion because it is when all elements of religion are revealed.

Otherworldly rewards and punishments are essentially different from the recompense prevalent in this world. Worldly retribution is convention based hence two disparate judicial systems may determine contrasting punishments for a uniform crime. Punishing criminals is usually done with intents such as “prevention of similar cases”, “disciplining wrongdoers”, and “easing the minds of those whose rights were abused”. However, in the *akhirat*, recompense for one’s actions is genuine. It is a place where

none of the worldly intentions and purposes for retribution are applicable. What is given in reward to the faithful and righteous or in punishment to the unbelievers and sinners is purely the reality of their manifest and hidden actions, which results in bounties or tribulations.

Even though walls throw long shadows;

Their shadows return to themselves anew.

This world is as a mountain, our deeds as shouts;

The echoes of our shouts return to us in kind.[52](#)

Many verses explicitly speak of the identicalness of actions and their recompense:

﴿وَمَا تَقَدَّمُوا لِأَنْفُسِكُمْ مِنْ خَيْرٍ تَجِدُوهُ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ﴾

“And whatever good you send forth for yourself, you shall find with Allah.”[53](#)

﴿هَلْ تَجْزُونَ إِلَّا مَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ﴾

“Are you recompensed save for what you did?”[54](#)

﴿إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَأْكُلُونَ أَمْوَالَ الْيَتَامَىٰ ظُلْمًا إِنَّمَا يَأْكُلُونَ فِي بُطُونِهِمْ نَارًا وَهُمْ لَا يَشْعُرُونَ﴾

“Verily, those who unjustly consume the properties of orphans are in fact devouring fire in their bellies and shall soon burn in flames.”[55](#)

In conclusion, in Qiyamat, everyone will face their own reality. Requital is the reality of each person’s deeds; the manifestation of each person’s true visage. An example of this can be seen in our inner attributes. The essence of ethical evils, such as envy, is literally pain and torment and the essence of virtues is ease and tranquility. Hence, some scholars hold that if someone truly perceives their inner self in this world, they can realize whether they will be delivered or damned in Akhirat.

Moreover, the wicked will only realize equivalent retribution for their deeds, while the faithful and righteous will enjoy many more blessings than their deeds warrant.

﴿مَنْ جَاءَ بِالْحَسَنَةِ فَلَهُ عَشْرُ أَمْثَالِهَا وَمَنْ جَاءَ بِالسَّيِّئَةِ فَلَا يُجْزَىٰ إِلَّا مِثْلَهَا وَهُمْ لَا يُظْلَمُونَ﴾

“Whoever comes with a good deed will have tenfold equivalent [rewards] and whoever comes with an evil deed will only be recompensed equally and they will not be wronged.”[56](#)

﴿لَهُمْ مَا يَشَاءُونَ فِيهَا وَلَدَيْنَا مَزِيدٌ﴾

“Within it, they shall have all they want and with Us is yet more.” [57](#)

7. Hell [jahannam]

Jahannam is the name of the otherworldly fire which is the place of punishment. Examination of various aspects of this creation is made possible by the many Qur’anic verses on this issue. This infernal fire is characterized using various other names. Crusher [huḡamah] is one of these names. Hellfire, as opposed to worldly fire that may only consume the body, penetrates into the interior of persons and burns their soul:

﴿كَلَّا، لِيُنْبَذَنَّ فِي الْحُطَمَةِ. وَمَا أَدْرَاكَ مَا الْحُطَمَةُ. نَارُ اللَّهِ الْمَوْقِدَةُ. الَّتِي تَطَّلِعُ عَلَى الْأَفْنِدَةِ﴾

“It is not so, they shall be thrust into the Crusher. And what will make you realize what the Crusher is? It is the kindled fire of Allah, which reaches to the hearts.” [58](#)

Jahannam is a living creature that shows emotions such as rage. In Qur’ān, it seeks out unbelievers and envelops them.

﴿إِذَا أُلْقُوا فِيهَا سَمِعُوا لَهَا شَهيقاً وَهِيَ تَفُور. تَكَادُ تَمَيِّزُ مِنَ الْغَيْظِ﴾

“When they are cast into it, they hear it roaring while it boils and it close to bursting asunder from rage.” [59](#)

The retribution of Jahannam is degrading [mahḡn], massive [‘azḡm], painful [alḡm], constant [muḡm], eternal [khuld], intense [shadḡd], engulfing [muhḡḡ], greater [akbar], unknown [nukr], and invariable and necessary [‘izḡm].

People who dwell there reveal their true natures such as excuse-bringing, lying, selfishness, and malice. They viciously assail and curse each other and each of them wants the torment of the rest to be more severe than their own.

In this terrible fire, death lashes forth from all sides but does not permit rest and freedom from agony. The inhabitants of Hell beg for death but there is no death in the ʔkhirat, the realm of everlasting life.

﴿يَأْتِيهِ الْمَوْتُ مِنْ كُلِّ مَكَانٍ وَمَا هُوَ بِمَيِّتٍ﴾

“Death comes at him from every side but he does not die.” [60](#)

Hell, like Heaven, is a divine blessing. Many people shun the path of wretchedness in this world for fear of eternal damnation. Simultaneous with it being the manifestation of God’s wrath, it is an aspect of His universal mercy. In a way, fear of Hell can be likened to fear of Allah’s wrath. Thus, this type of fear is not been forbidden by religion because one pinnacle of religious training is fear of God not His creations.

﴿هَذِهِ جَهَنَّمُ الَّتِي يُكَذِّبُ بِهَا الْمُجْرِمُونَ. يَطُوفُونَ بَيْنَهَا وَبَيْنَ حَمِيمٍ آتِنِ الْآءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكذِّبَانِ﴾

“This is the same Hell that sinners denied. Now they drift between it and burning waters. So, which of your Lord’s bounties do you deny?”[61](#)

8. Paradise

The Noble Qur’an terms the eternal dwelling place of the faithful and righteous Jannat. The word jannat literally means a garden covered with trees. The Garden of Paradise has unending facets and no form of corruption whatsoever prevails over it or its inhabitants.

﴿مَثَلُ الْجَنَّةِ الَّتِي وُعدَ الْمُتَّقُونَ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ أُكْلُهَا دَائِمٌ وَظِلُّهَا، تِلْكَ عُقْبَى الَّذِينَ اتَّقَوْا وَعُقْبَى الْكَافِرِينَ النَّارُ﴾

“This is a description of the Paradise that has been promised to the pious: Beneath its [trees] runs rivers, its produce is perpetual, and its shade is also; this is the requital of the pious and the requital of the unbelievers is the Fire.”[62](#)

As for those who attain the rank of servitude—those who worship God because He is worthy of worship—neither to attain Heaven nor due to fear of Hell—they shall enter a paradise that cannot be described or even imagined.

﴿يَا أَيَّتُهَا النَّفْسُ الْمُطْمَئِنَّةُ. ارْجِعِي إِلَىٰ رَبِّكِ رَاضِيَةً مَرْضِيَّةً. فَادْخُلِي فِي عِبَادِي. وَأَدْخُلِي جَنَّتِي﴾

“O tranquil soul! Return to your Lord while you are well pleased with Him and He is well pleased with you. So join My servants. And enter My Paradise.”[63](#)

Heaven is entirely clean and pure and no defilement or foulness may enter it. Before entering Heaven, all persons are purified of all uncleanness by divine absolution or temporary punishment.

﴿وَنَزَعْنَا مَا فِي صُدُورِهِمْ مِنْ غِلٍّ﴾

“And We shall strip all rancor from within their breasts.”[64](#)

The virtuous shall have all they want in Paradise. In contrast to this world, Heaven does not have a constant appearance and its alteration is not subject to time, ability, deterioration, and corruption. The preference of the heavenly inhabitant determines Heaven's form. However, heavenly inhabitants, who are unencumbered of all vileness, desire only ethical things. Their volition is suffused with ethics and divinity. In heaven, which is the abode of safety and health, there is no trace of fear, sorrow, suffering, fatigue, pain, or spiritual and corporal debilities. Heaven is the place of fulfillment of the divine human's ideals.

“And they say, ‘Praise be to Allah who has taken from us all sorrow. Verily, Allah is All-forgiving, All-bountiful, who through His grace has settled us in the everlasting abode, wherein neither hardship touches us nor weariness.’”⁶⁵

1. – Sūrah Baqarah 2:111.

2. – “And they say, ‘When we become bones and broken bits shall we really be raised up again in a new creation?’” (Sūrah Isrā’ 17:49) “And they say, ‘When we disappear into the earth, shall we truly have a new creation?’” (Sūrah Sajdah 32:10)

3. – “And the unbelievers say, ‘Shall we show to you a man who will tell you that when you have been utterly torn to pieces, then you shall have a new creation? Has he forged against God a lie or is he insane?’” (Sūrah Saba’ 34:7–8)

4. – “This has been promised to us and our forebears before; it is nothing but the fantasies of the ancients.” (Sūrah Naml 27:68)

5. – Sūrah Jūthiyah 45:24–25.

6. – Also see: Sūrah Inshiqāq 84:14; Sūrah Qaḥāf 28:39; and Sūrah Kahf 18:36.

7. – Sūrah Rūm 30:27.

8. – Sūrah Yūṣuf 36:79.

9. – A denier of the Resurrection brought a decayed bone to the Prophet (ﷺ) and asked, “Who shall resurrect this?” While regarding this question a result of forgetting the original genesis of humanity, the Qur’an replies, “Say, ‘He shall resurrect them who originated them the first time.’” (Sūrah Yūṣuf 36:78–79).

10. – Sūrah Qaf 50:15.

11. – Sūrah Ḥajj 22:5.

12. – If we regard this issue from a philosophic point of view, it is clear that the occurrence of Resurrection is not an essential or logical impossibility, which would necessitate a contradiction. By keeping in mind that the absolute power of God is comprised of the ability to accomplish all possible acts, Resurrection is not outside the domain of Divine Power.

13. – Sūrah Aḥqāf 46:33.

14. – Sūrah A’raf 7:57.

15. – The Qur’an does not mention this person’s name or the place of this occurrence. However, various narrations indicate that this individual was Ezra [‘Uzayr] the prophet and others state that it was Jeremiah [Iirmiya’] the prophet. Moreover, some narrations declare that the place of this incident was the city of Jerusalem [bayt ul-muqaddas].

16. – Sūrah Baqarah 2:259.

17. – Sūrah Mu’minīn 23:115–116.

18. – Sūrah Ḥijr 15:85.

19. – Sūrah Qalam 68:35–36.

20. – Sūrah Ḥūd 38:28.

21. – Sūrah Jūthiyah 45:21–22.

22. – Sūrah Muzzammil 73:14.

23. – Sūrah Wāqī’ah 56:5.

24. – Wāqī’ah 56:6.

25. – Sūrah Naba’ 78:20.

- [26.](#) – S̄rah Infiq̄r 82:3.
- [27.](#) – S̄rah Takw̄r 81:6.
- [28.](#) – S̄rah ʔajj 22:1–2; S̄rah Muzzammil 73:14; and S̄rah W̄qīʔah 56:4.
- [29.](#) – S̄rah Zilzal 99:1–2.
- [30.](#) – S̄rah Takw̄r 81:1–2; S̄rah Mursal̄t 77:8.
- [31.](#) – S̄rah Infiq̄r 82:2.
- [32.](#) – S̄rah Inshiq̄q 84:1; S̄rah Infiq̄r 82:1.
- [33.](#) – S̄rah Maʔrij 70:8.
- [34.](#) – S̄rah Anbiȳʔ 21:104.
- [35.](#) – S̄rah Z̄mar 39:68.
- [36.](#) – For more comprehensive information, see: Am̄r D̄v̄n̄, ʔaȳt-e J̄vd̄nah (Eternal Life).
- [37.](#) – Again, this section does not include the complete translation of Qurʔanic verses. Therefore, in order to complete the study it is necessary to refer to the respective verses in the Qurʔan.
- [38.](#) – S̄rah Z̄mar 39:68; S̄rah Ȳs̄n 36:51; S̄rah Kahf 18:99; and S̄rah Q̄f 50:42.
- [39.](#) – S̄rah Q̄f 50:20.
- [40.](#) – S̄rah Q̄riʔah 101:4.
- [41.](#) – S̄rah Qiȳmah 75:10–11.
- [42.](#) – S̄rah ʔAbas 80:34–37.
- [43.](#) – S̄rah Maʔrij 70:44.
- [44.](#) – S̄rah Ȳs̄n 36:51.
- [45.](#) – S̄rah Kahf 18:99; S̄rah Tagh̄bun 64:9.
- [46.](#) – S̄rah ʔAbas 80:38–41; and S̄rah Qiȳmah 75:22–25.
- [47.](#) – S̄rah Najm 53:39–40.
- [48.](#) – S̄rah Baqarah 2:284.
- [49.](#) – S̄rah Muddathir 74:38.
- [50.](#) – S̄rah F̄q̄ir 35:18.
- [51.](#) – S̄rah Jumʔah 62:8.
- [52.](#) – Jalal ad–Din Mawlav̄, Mathnav̄–e Maʔnav̄ (Spiritual Couplets), Book I, verses 214–215.
- [53.](#) – S̄rah Baqarah 2:110.
- [54.](#) – S̄rah Naml 27:90. Additionally, see: S̄rah Muzzammil 73:20; S̄rah Qiʔaʔ 28:84; S̄rah Zilzal 99:6–8; S̄rah ʔilʔImr̄n 3:30, 3:180; S̄rah Nabaʔ 78:40; S̄rah ʔashr 59:18; S̄rah Baqarah 2:272, 2:281; S̄rah Kahf 18:49; S̄rah Taʔr̄m 66:7; S̄rah Takw̄r 81:14; S̄rah Aʔq̄f 46:19; S̄rah Zumar 39:24, 39:48, 39:51, 39:70; S̄rah Tawbah 9:35; S̄rah Naʔl 16:111; S̄rah ʔʔr 52:16; S̄rah Aʔr̄f 7:147, 7:180; and S̄rah Sabaʔ 34:33.
- [55.](#) – S̄rah Nis̄ʔ 4:10.
- [56.](#) – S̄rah Anʔm 6:160.
- [57.](#) – S̄rah Q̄f 50:35.
- [58.](#) – S̄rah Humazah 104:4–7.
- [59.](#) – S̄rah Mulk 67:7–8.
- [60.](#) – S̄rah Ibr̄h̄m 14:17.
- [61.](#) – S̄rah Raʔm̄n 55:43–45.
- [62.](#) – S̄rah Raʔd 13:35.
- [63.](#) – S̄rah Fajr 89:27–30.
- [64.](#) – S̄rah Aʔr̄f 7:43.
- [65.](#) – S̄rah F̄q̄ir 35:34–35.

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