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Part 5: Resurrection

Lesson 41: One Crucial Question: Is Death considered as One's End or Beginning?

Why Do Most People Fear Death?

Most people fear death. Why?

Death has always been imagined to be a great, frightening monster and just thinking about it takes away the sweetness of life.

Not only do they fear the word 'death' but they also hate the word 'cemetery' and they try to forget about its basic nature by lighting and brightening the graves and tombs.

The effects of this fear is clearly visible in the various literatures of the world where it is expressed as 'the monster of death', 'the jungle of death', 'the death knoll', etc.

When they want to mention the name of a dead person, so that the person addressed not panic, they use sentences like 'far from here', 'may I be struck dumb', 'there be seven mountains between', and 'may his dust give you life' in an attempt to create a wall between the person who is listening and death.

But we have to analyze how this fear developed the human being.

Why is there a group, as opposed to the understanding of the majority of the people, who not only do not fear death but thinking about it makes them smile and welcome an honorable death?

We read in history that whereas one group were looking for the elixir of life, another group lovingly moved towards the fronts of jihad, laughed at the image of death and they were in anticipation of the day

when they would join their Beloved and today, also, in the battlefronts of truth against falsehood, we see this very truth whereby they move with their life in their hands, towards martyrdom.

The Basic Reason for this Fear With research and study we reach this point that the basis for this fear is simply one of two things:

1. The Interpretation of Death as Annihilation

Human beings always flee from non-existence and from disease because it means the lack of good health; are afraid of darkness because it means a lack of light. They fear poverty because it means the destruction of wealth.

They even sometimes fear an empty home and an empty wilderness. Why? Because nobody is there!

They even fear a dead person. They are not prepared to spend the night in a room with a dead person whereas when that person was alive, they did not fear him.

Now let us see why human beings fear non-existence and non-being. The reason is clear. Existence is woven into existence. Being is familiar with being. Being is never familiar with non-being. Thus, our alienation with non-being is completely natural.

If we believe and know that death is the end of everything and assume that with death, everything ends, have a right to fear it and even be terribly frightened by the mention of the word. Why? Because death will take everything from us.

But if we believe death to be the beginning of a new and eternal life, we will not have that fear; rather, we congratulate those who, with dignity and nobility, move wards it.

2. Black Files

We all know of a group who do not interpret as being annihilation and non-being and they would deny life after death but in spite of this, they have great fear of death.

Why? Because the file of their deeds is so black they are afraid of the punishments after death; they have a right to fear death. They are like prisoners who fear the day they will be freed from prison because they know that when they are freed from prison, they will be executed.

He sticks to the prison bars, not that he is afraid freedom, he is afraid of the freedom whose result is punishment of execution. In this way, a person who does evil deeds, fears the freeing of his spirit from the ness of his body and knows this to be the beginning of his punishment and chastisement for his evil deeds and his oppression.

But those who neither see death to be annihilation nor do they have files of black deeds, why should they fear death?

They are also people who love being alive but to gain more benefits for their new life in a world after death for they welcome the death which comes upon the their goal which is well-pleasing to the Nourisher.

Two Different Points of View

We have said that people are of two kinds, one group of which forms the majority who fear and hate death.

But another group welcomes death if it is upon the way of their great goal like martyrdom upon the Way of God, or at least when they sense that their life is near the end, they never allow fear to enter their hearts. The reason is that they have two different points of view.

The first group: they either have absolutely no belief in life after death or if they believe in it, they have not really, as yet, accepted this belief, thus they believe the moment of death to be the moment to bid farewell to all things. Of course, to bid farewell to everything is most difficult; leaving the light and taking steps in the darkness of the absolute is most painful.

Also, being freed from a prison and going towards a trial for a criminal whose crimes are obvious is frightening and fearful.

But the second group believes death to be a new birth, moving beyond the limited and dark environment of this world, taking steps into an extensive world and one which is full of light.

Being freed from the narrow prison or cage of the body and flying in infinite space, leaving behind an environment in which the center of small mindedness, tensions, injustices evil opinions and wars and stepping into an environment which is cleansed of these corruptions. It is natural that they have no fear of such a death.

Just like Imam ‘Ali, peace be upon him, he said, “I swear that ‘Ali, the son of Abu Talib , looks forward to death with greater desire than a baby looks forward to its mother’s breast.”

It is not without reason that in the history of Islam, we encounter people like Imam Husayn and his faithful companions who, as the moment for their martyrdom comes, are overjoyed and they hurry towards their meeting with their Beloved.

And it is also for this reason that in the honorable life of Hadrat ‘Ali, peace be upon him, we read that when the sword struck his head, he cried out, “I swear by the God of the Ka’bah that I have been

relieved."

It is clear that the meaning of these words is not that a human being not appreciate the blessings of this world and overlook them, and not make use of them to attain great goals, but rather, what is meant is that in life, correct benefits be gained, but at the end, never allow room for fear, knowing that it is upon the way of great and sublime goals.

Think and Answer

1. Why do people fear death and what is the reason for it?
2. Why does one group smile at death and move unhesitatingly towards it with the love of martyrdom?
3. What can the moment of death be compared with? What feelings do those who are pure and good–doers have and what feelings do those have who are not?
4. Have you ever seen people who were not afraid of death? What memories of them do you have?
5. What was Hadrat 'Ali's logic about death?

Lesson 42: Belief in The Resurrection Gives Meaning to Life

If we take this world into consideration, without concerning ourselves with any other, it will be meaningless and empty.

It is similar to the time of life when a fetus is not in this world, but is in the womb.

A child who is within its mother's womb and who is imprisoned for months in this darkness and narrowness, if it was to have wisdom and intellect, and was to think about its being a fetus, it would be very surprised.

Why am I imprisoned in this dark prison?

Why do I have to move in water and blood?

What result will the end of my life have?

When did I come, why have I come?

But if one is made aware of the fact that this is a Preliminary stage, that their organs are formed here, they gain strength and become prepared for movement in this great world.

After the passing of 9 months, it is freed, it moves into a world in which the sun shines, the moon reflects, green trees and streams of water flow and multiple benefits are attained; then it takes a deep breath and says, “Now I have understood the philosophy of my existence here.”

This is a preliminary stage; this is a place to fly from; this is a class to pass through in order to move towards a great university.

But if the life of a fetus is cut off from life in this world, everything will become dark and meaningless – a frightening prison with purposeless and harmful results.

This is exactly the point in the relation of life in this world with life after death.

What is the point in our living more or less 70 years in this world?

For a time, we are immature and inexperienced and by the time that we become mature, our life ends.

For a time, we must study and work and by the time that we study and learn, we have reached old age.

Why are we alive? To eat, wear clothes and sleep? And repeating this life day after day.
Is this extensive universe, this expansive world and the storing of all of this knowledge and experience, all of these teachers and instructors, all repeated for eating, drinking and putting on clothes?

It is here that the meaninglessness of this life will be clear to those who do not believe in the next world because they cannot reckon this small issue to be the goal of life and they do not believe in the next world either.

Thus, it can be seen that a group of them try to commit suicide and end this absurd life. But if we believe that this world is a pasture for the after life or that it is a field which must be planted and then be taken as eternal life, that the world is a university in which we must learn and prepare ourselves for life in an eternal world, and that the world is a bridge which we must cross over, in this case, the world will not appear to be absurd and futile Rather it will be the beginning for an eternal life and no matter what efforts we make towards it, are small.

Yes. Faith in the resurrection gives meaning to human life and frees a person from anxiety, worry and absurdity.

Faith in the Resurrection is an Important Factor in Training

In addition to this, belief in the existence of a Court of the Day of Judgment is most effective in our daily lives.

Assume that it were to be announced in a country that there will be no punishment for such and such a crime and no records will be kept, that people can, with a clear conscience, live the day as they so

desire. They give the day off to the police, the army and security forces. They lock the doors of the courts and until the next day when life will begin as normal, no crimes will be punished.

How do you think that society will spend that day? Belief in the resurrection, faith in the Day of Judgment, is in no way comparable to this world.

The details of this Court are as follows:

1. It is a trial, in which explanations are ineffective, nor can relations rule over norms nor can false statements be presented to change the decision.

2. It is a court which does not need the facilities of this world and because of this, it is not extended to take more time; it is studied like lightening and a decision is given immediately.

3. It is a court in which the file or record of people is their own deeds, that is, their deeds will themselves be present and made known by their actions in such a way that there is no way to deny them.

4. The witnesses in that court are his or her hands and feet, eyes and ears, tongue and skin and even the earth and the walls of a house in which there was sin or good deeds were committed will be there, witnesses which are like the effects of nature and cannot be denied.

5. This court is one whose Judge is God Almighty, God Who is Aware of all things, is Needless of all and Who is more Knowing than all others.

6. Beyond this, the punishments there are not contractual; it is our acts themselves which take form and will be alongside us and they will punish us or draw us into blessings.

Faith in such a court takes a person to the point that Hadrat ‘Ali says, “I swear to God that if I were to spend from night to the morning upon thorns and if my hands and feet were to be chained in the day and I were to be pulled through the streets and the bazaars, I am more willing to have this happen than to present myself to God’s Court if I have committed an oppression against one of God’s creatures or if I have usurped the rights of another.” (Nahj al-Balaghah, Sermon 224)

Can a Person with such Faith be Deceived?

It is faith in this Judgment that makes a human being place his brother’s hand near the fire to burn when he has extended it into the public treasury. And when the brother screams in pain, he advises him, “You are screaming from the flame of a toy fire which is in the hands of human beings whereas you take your brother to a fire which is extremely frightening and which is lit by the anger of the Creator?” (Nahj al-Balaghah, Sermon 224)

Can a person with such faith be deceived?

Can one buy his conscience with bribery?

Can he, with encouragement of threats, be made to deviate from the way of truth to the way of oppression?

The Holy Qur'an says when the scroll of deeds is shown to sinners, they cry out:

"Ah! Woe to us! What a book is this! It leaves out nothing small or great but takes account thereof!" (***18:49***)

In this way, powerful waves of the sense of responsibility grows towards the spirit of the human being which controls the human being from deviating, going astray, committing oppression and aggression.

Think and Answer

1. If there was nothing after this limited life and the situation of this world, what would happen?
2. Why does a group of those who deny the Resurrection deviate?
3. What are the differences between the Court of the Day of Judgment and the courts of this world?
4. What effects does faith in the Resurrection have upon the deeds of a human being?
5. What did Amir al-Mu'minin, 'Ali, peace be upon him, do to his brother Aqil? What did he want and what response did 'Ali give him?

Lesson 43: An Example of the Trial of the Day of Judgment is within You

Since the issue of the afterlife and the great court of the Resurrection would seem strange for someone who has lived inside the prison in this world, God has established a small court inside each one of us which is called the court of conscience.

To explain in more detail: A person will be tried in many courts for the crimes he has done the first court is the usual courts in this world with all its shortcomings.

Although the very presence of such courts would lessen the number of crimes, they are based on such feeble foundations that nobody expects them to act in complete accordance with justice.

If wrong laws are enforced in a court, if judges are busy taking bribes and are subject to nepotism and partisan influences, then we could not expect justice to prevail in such a court.

Even if some courts might be presided over by pious judges, there are still those clever criminals who could escape punishment.

The second type of court, which functions better than the first one, is the court of the consequences of our own deeds. Our acts have consequences which affect us sooner or later.

We have seen many governments that were engaged in tyranny and engaged in all forms of injustice, but were soon caught up in the traps they had made for themselves. They collapsed as a result of their wrong actions, caught in the consequences of what they had done earlier.

Such a court has the shortcoming that it is neither public nor universal. Therefore, it could not make us feel that we do not need the court of the resurrection.

The third court, which is more elaborate than the preceding one is the court of the conscience. In the same way that the solar system, with its wonderful system can be observed in the tiny structure of an atom, we could claim that the court of our conscience is a tiny example of the court of the resurrection.

This is because there is a mysterious force inside our inner self which is called "practical wisdom" by the philosophers, "the reproaching soul" by the Holy Qur'an and "conscience" by others.

As soon as man does a good or bad act, this court starts to operate immediately and issues its verdicts in the form of mental punishments or mental rewards.

This court of conscience at times beats the wrongdoer inside with such a force that he or she would prefer death to this life. Such a person would write in his will "if I commit suicide it was because I wanted to get rid of the tortures of my conscience."

This court of conscience at times encourages man for his good work to the extent that he becomes extremely delighted. He then feels at ease in his soul, and he could never find such a source of delight anywhere in the world.

Such a court has its own characteristics:

1. In this court, the judge, the witness, the officer to carry out the court's verdict, and the audience are the same person. It is the force of conscience that acts as a witness, that judges and finally carries out the verdict.

2. Contrary to normal judicial procedures which would sometimes take years to complete, the trial here at this court is momentary; it does not take time. Occasionally some time is needed to remove the obscurities from the eyes of the beholder, however, as soon as the documents are in, the verdict will be issued.

3. The verdict of such a court does not require one to go to a court of appeal; it only has one stage.

4. This court will not only punish; it will also reward those who perform their duties. In such a court, both the good-doers and the wrongdoers are tried and receive rewards or punishment accordingly.

5. The punishment of such a court does not have anything in common with ordinary punishment in the sense that they do not require prisons, whips, or executions. However, at times they are so torturous for a person's soul that no punishment could compare to it.

In sum, such a court does not resemble any worldly court; it rather resembles the court of the Resurrection. The greatness of the court of conscience is so tremendous that the Holy Qur'an swears by it, associating it with the court of the Resurrection:

Nay! I swear by the Day of Resurrection. Nay! I swear by the self-accusing self. Does man think that we shall not gather his bones? Yea! We are able to make complete his very fingertips.
(***Qur'an 75: 1-4***)

Naturally, such a court, due to its material nature, does not make us feel that we do not need the court of the Resurrection. This is because:

1. The sphere of human conscience is not all-inclusive; rather, it is based on one's way of thinking.

2. At times, a treacherous man could deceive even his own conscience.

3. At times, the call of a wrongdoer's conscience is so weak that he cannot hear it.

Here, the significance of the fourth court, i.e., the court of the Resurrection will become clear.

Think and Answer

1. In reality in how many courts is a person tried?
2. What are the particularities of the first court and what is it called?
3. What particularities does the third court have?
4. What are the particular characteristics of the second court?
5. Describe the merits and weaknesses of the court of the conscience.

Lesson 44: Belief in Resurrection is Manifested

in our Primordial Nature

We most often see that coming to know about God is within the primordiality and nature of a human being.

If we search into the awakened and non-awakened consciences of the human being, his faith and desire in a source which is metaphysical, we come upon a metaphysical source which is gained through knowledge, program and goal which created this world.

But this issue is not limited to monotheism and coming to know about God. All of the principles and practices which are basic to religion must be seen within this very primordial nature. Otherwise, the harmony which is necessary to exist between creation and the Divine Law will not be found. (Pay special attention here).

If we take a look at our heart and we discover the depths of the spirit and our soul, we hear these whisperings from the world that life does not end with death, but rather death is a window upon the world of survival.

In order to understand this truth, we must turn to the points below.

1. Love of Survival

If the human being has been created for annihilation and non-being, that person should desire non-being, and receive pleasure from death at the end of life whereas we see that this is not the case. Instead we see that death is in no time or era a pleasure and that many people flee from it with all of their being.

Looking for ways to lengthen one's life, looking for the Fountain of Youth, the Elixir of Life, the Water of Life are all signs of this truth.

This love for survival shows that the human being was created to survive and if we had been born for being and annihilation, this love would have no meaning.

All of the basic loves which are within our being are completed by it and the love for survival is a love which completes or perfects our being.

Note that we discuss the issue of the Resurrection after we have accepted the existence of God, the Wise, the Knower.

We believe that whatever He created in our bodies is based on a known measure and because of this, the love and desire of a human being for survival must also have an accounting and that can be nothing

other than the existence of a world after this one.

2. Resurrection Among the Tribes of the Past

The history of humanity, as it bears witness, in a general sense, in the tribes of the past, from the earliest of times shows clear proof of the clear belief of the human being to life after death.

The traces which have remained from the human beings of the past, even those who existed before written records, in particular, the method of making graves for the dead and how they buried the dead, all bear witness to this truth that they believed in life after death.

This rooted belief which has always existed in humanity, cannot be believed to be a simple idea or only a habit.

Whenever a belief is found in the form of something which has roots, and throughout history, we see it in human society, we should know that it is part of primordial nature because it is only primordial nature which can persevere with the passage of time and social and intellectual changes and remain in its place. Otherwise, customs will be forgotten.

The wearing of a special type of clothes is either a question of habit or a form of custom, which, over time, either changes or is destroyed.

But the love of a mother for her child is instinctive. It is a part of nature and a symbol. Thus, with the passing of time, the flame of love does not decrease in various environments. Whatever efforts are made in this way are reasons why this is part of the primordial nature of a human being.

When scholars say that careful study has shown that the earliest of people had a kind of religious belief because they buried their dead in a special way and they placed their tools of work beside them, and in their own way and with their particular belief, they showed that they believe in the existence of another world.

We can then well see that they had accepted life after death, even if they were in error. They thought that life there was just like life in this world and that they would need those very same tools.

3. The Existence of the Inner Trial

The existence of the inner trial or court called the Conscience is another reason for the resurrection being primordial.

Just as we have previously said, we all well sense that there is a trial or a court within us which judges what we do. It gives rewards for good deeds. We feel satisfied and our spirit overflows with joy and happiness in such a way that the feeling is incapable of being described. In relation to evil deeds, and, in

particular, great sins, they are felt in such a way that life becomes bitter.

It has often been seen that individuals, after committing a great crime, like murder and trying to escape from the scales of justice, voluntarily give themselves up. They surrender to the hangman's noose and the reason is the torture which the conscience gives.

A human being, on bearing witness to this trial or court, asks himself or herself, "How can I, who am but a small creature, have such a conscience but the great universe and the world of creation not have a trial or court which it is worthy of?"

In this way, we can prove that the belief in the resurrection and life after death is primordial in three ways:

1. Through love of survival.

2. Because of the existence of this belief throughout history.

3. Through a small example of that in our own selves.

Think and Answer

1. How can one distinguish that which is primordial from that which is not primordial?
2. What is the reason why a human being has a love for survival and what reason can this be for the primordiality of the resurrection?
3. Did the early people believe in the resurrection? Why?
4. How does the condemnation by our conscience encourage or punish us? Give examples of that.
5. What relation is there between the trial by one's conscience and the great Day of Judgment?

Lesson 45: The Resurrection and the Scales of Justice

A cursory look at the system of creation will reveal to us that everything is systematic and governed by rules.

In the body of man, this system is so delicate that any imbalance would lead to either sickness or death.

For instance, in the structure of the eyes, heart, and brain this order is readily noticeable. The same order, systematization, and justice prevail over all of creation.

Through justice, the skies and the earth have been erected.

An atom is so tiny that millions of them could be located in the point of a needle. Such an atom must be extremely precise and ordered in its structure to allow it to exist for millions of years.

This happens because of the justice and exact calculations that are employed in the construction of an atom.

Is man such an exceptional being as to be free to do what he pleases? Is he free? Or is there something hidden here?

Free will and Freedom in Decision-Making

One distinctive feature that distinguishes man from all other creatures is that he possesses freedom of action. Why has He created him free and given him the freedom of will to carry out what he wants?

The reason rests in the fact that if he were not free he would never develop. This freedom has ensured man's spiritual and ethical development.

Suppose one is forced at gunpoint to help and assist the needy and carry out those acts which are beneficial to the community. Even though his acts would be naturally useful to everyone no ethical or human perfection or maturity would have taken place.

Whereas, if he had carried out these actions voluntarily and he only did one hundredth of what he could have done, he still would have taken a big stride towards his perfection and development.

Thus, the first condition for spiritual and ethical perfection is to have a free will; man should do good things on his own and not through force. This great asset has been given to man just for this purpose.

Of course, this great asset is like a beautiful flower which is accompanied with thorns which represent the misuse of this free will.

Naturally, it would be quite easy for God to punish a man for his unjust deeds, to inflict him with all sorts of miseries, to make him blind, or dumb, or paralyzed altogether.

Under such circumstances, nobody would dare to do wrong things. But this abstention and piety then would be by force and could never be counted as a point of honor for man, for this piety would have been due to his fear of a great punishment.

Thus, man should be free. He should be exposed to God's different trials and not be threatened by immediate punishment so that he could show his true worth.

But there remains one issue to be solved. If each person could be free to do whatever he desires, this

could negate God's Justice which governs the world.

That is why we become convinced that there should be a court for mankind in which everyone should be present and be tried to receive punishments if they had wronged others or given rewards if they have been just in their deeds.

Is it possible for Nimrods, Pharaohs, Genghis khans and korahs to commit atrocities carry out all sorts of unjust acts and then go away with no punishment whatsoever?

Could criminals and pious people be equal on God's scale of justice?

Regarding this, the Holy Qur'an says:

What! Shall We then make those who submit as the guilty? What has happened to you? How do you judge? (***68:35-36***)

and also:

Shall We make those who guard against evil like the wicked? (***38:28***)

It is a fact that some of the wrongdoers would be at least partially punished in this world for their devilish acts. It is also a fact that the court of conscience exists. It is also a fact that the consequences of one's unjust and devilish acts would inflict him later.

But if we consider the matter carefully, we will find out that no tyrant or sinner receives a punishment in this world proportional to the degree of his devilish acts. There are some who even escape the consequences of their wrongdoing.

So there should be a universal court in the other world to judge them justly and impartially or else the principle of justice would vanish forever.

Therefore, the acceptance of God and His system of Justice entails the acceptance of the Resurrection and the other world. These two are faces of the same coin.

Think and Answer

1. How is the heaven and the earth based upon justice?
2. Why has the human being been given free choice and will?
3. What would happen if a human being were to receive punishment immediately and directly for an evil deed in this world?
4. Why does the existence of the trial by conscience for our deeds not exempt us from the trial on the Day of Judgment?
5. What is the connection between the justice of the Creator and the Resurrection?

Lesson 46: We Have Seen the Resurrection Many Times in this World

The verses of the Holy Qur'an clearly show this truth that the idol-worshippers and also the other kufar, not only at the time of the Holy Prophet, but in other ages as well, were surprised or amazed by the issue of resurrection and life after death and they were frightened by it to the point that whoever mentioned it was considered to be insane and
they would say to each other:

"The kuffar say (***in ridicule***)***, 'Shall we point out to you a man that will tell you when you are scattered to Pieces in disintegration that you shall*** (***then be raised***) ***in a new creation?"*** (***34:7***)

Yes. In that age, because of a lack of knowledge and short-sightedness any mention of the belief in a life after death and a world after death was considered to be insanity or an insult to God and the belief that giving life to a dead body was considered to be insanity.

But it is interesting that opposed to this Way of thinking, the Holy Qur'an refers to various reasons of life which both a common average person can understand as well as scholars, each one to their own extent of ability Even though referring to all of the Qur'anic verses in this area requires a separate book, we have tried here to present some of them.

1. Sometimes the Qur'an says to them:

"It is God Who sends forth the winds so that they raise up the clouds and We drive them to a land that is dead and revive the earth therewith after its death; even so (***will be***) ***the Resurrection."*** (***35:9***)

We look at the visage of nature in the winter time.

Every place smells of death. The trees all lack leaves, fruit and blossoms and the only thing remaining of it is dry branches. Neither do the flowers laugh nor blossoms blossom nor is any movement of life to be seen.

The spring season arrives. The weather grows warmer, life-giving drops of rain fall. Suddenly a movement is seen in all of nature: flowers bloom, trees grow leaves, blossoms and flowers appear, birds find their places upon the branches of trees and it is glorious to see.

If life after death had no meaning, we would not see this scene every year before our eyes. If life after death was something which was absolutely impossible, and words of the insane, we would not be able to sense it every year before our eyes.

What difference is there between the life of the earth after death and the life of human beings after death?

2. Sometimes, the Qur'an also grips their hands and takes them to the beginning of creation and recalls it to them and refers to that Arab Bedouin who picks up a rotten bone and goes to the Prophet of Islam and says, "O Muhammad, who will be able to enliven this rotten bone? Tell me who?"

And he thinks that he has found the final proof for disproving the Resurrection.
The Holy Qur'an says:

"Say, 'He will give them life Who created them for the first time. For He is well-versed in every kind of creation!" (***36:79***)

What is the difference between initiating creation and a new creation?

And the answer is found in another verse.

"Even as We produced the first creation shall We Produce a new one." (***21:104***)

3. Sometimes the great Creation of God of the heavens and the earth is mentioned:

"Is not He Who created the heavens and the earth able to create the like thereof? Yea, indeed! For He is the Creator Supreme of skill and knowledge. Verily, when He intends a thing, His Command is, 'Be,' and it is.,, (***36:81-82***)

Those who doubted this issue were individuals who had short-sightedness and never saw beyond their own environment. Otherwise, they would know that a new creation or a recreation is easier than initiating of creation and the new life given by .God with all of His strength is not a difficult issue, and new creation is not a difficult task.

4. Sometimes the Resurrection energies have been mentioned whereby it says:

"The same Who produces for you fire out of the green tree, when behold! you kindle therewith (***your Own fires***)***."*** (***36:80***)

When we study this wondrous verse of the holy Qur'an with care and we seek aid from today's science, science tells us that only green trees can store the energy of light of the sun and that when we burn a piece of wood and we make a fire, that is the same heat and energy which is similar to the heat of the sun which has been stored in it for years and we thought that that light and heat had died and had been destroyed but we see today that it has found new life.

For God Who has all of this power, who can store tens of years of the energy of light from the sun within a tree and in one moment bring all of it forward, and it receives new life, it is not a difficult task.

At any rate, we see with what logic and clarity the Holy Qur'an explains the issue of the resurrection to those who have doubts about it and they even thought that anyone who believed such a thing was insane. It clearly proves the existence of the resurrection, only a small part of which we have been able to mention here.

Think and Answer

1. Why are the multi-theists surprised by the issue of the Resurrection?
2. How is the Resurrection created each year for us in nature?
3. The Qur'an in a part of its verses shows that the life of a fetus is similar to the Resurrection Why?
4. What is the energy of the Resurrection?
5. Why has the Holy Qur'an emphasized the green tree?

Lesson 47: The Resurrection ad The Philosophy of Creation

Many ask the question, "Why did God create us?"
And sometimes they go further than this and ask, "What is the philosophy of Creation of this great universe?"

A gardener plants a tree for its fruit and he plows the earth for seeds and spreads the seeds, why did the Great Gardner of Creation create us?

Was God lacking something that He created us?

If so, He will be in need of something and this does not suit the fact that He is in the station of the Creator and is Infinite in Existence.

There are many words which have been written in response to this question but it can be summarized in a few sentences.

It is a great mistake to compare God's Qualities with our own. As we are limited creature, everything we do is in order to eliminate a need. We study in order to make up for the deficiency we have in learning.

We work in order to make up for the economic deficiency we have.

We seek after health centers and treatment in order to meet our health requirements.

In relation to God Who is Needless from all points of view, if we do something we must seek Him in other than His Existence. He does not create in order to benefit from His Creation, rather His goal is to Be for His creatures.

He is like a sun which is full of radiance and is Infinite without Him having any need, He illuminates so that all may gain advantage from it. This is what His Infinite Essence is and His special blessing where He has taken the hands of His creatures and moves them towards transformation and perfection.

Our creation from non-being was itself an outstanding step of transformation. The sending of the prophets and the descent of a heavenly Book and the formulation of laws and programs are each to be reckoned to be a basis for us.

“This universe is a great university and we are students in this university”.

“This world is a readied pasture and we are the farmers of this land”.

“This world is a beneficial, commercial center and we are merchants in this bazaar.” (Nahj al-Balaghah)

How can we, for the creation of humanity, be the purpose of a goal? When we look around ourselves and we look at each and every creature, each one has a goal.

In the wondrous system or factory of our body, there is nothing which is without a goal including our eyelashes and the arches in our feet.

How is it possible that the structure of our body, each particle of it, have a goal but the totality of our being lack one?

We leave aside our own bodies and we look at the great world; we see that every system has a separate goal, the goal of the shining of the sun, the goal of rain falling, the goal of the special characteristics of the air that breathe, but it is possible that the totality of this then, lack a goal?

The truth is that within the heart of this expansive universe, it is as if these where a painting showing the final goal which we cannot always see at the first moment but it says, “Education and transformation.”

Now that we have briefly become familiar with the goal of creation, words are about whether or not our life of a relative few days with all of its difficulties, problems and deficiencies can be the goal of creation?

Let us assume that I will live 60 years in this world and everyday from morning until night, I struggle to earn a living and at night, exhausted, I return home and the conclusion or result is that throughout my life, several tons of food and water are consumed and with difficulty, I purchase a house and then die and leave this world. Does this goal have the value to call me to live with all of these difficulties?

In truth, if an architect builds an enormous building in the wilderness and he spends many years completing it and he provides it with all of the necessary facilities and when he is asked, “What is your

purpose?" He says, "My goal is that all of my life I build this building for passer-bys to spend an hour in it!

Will we not be surprised and will we not say, "Does one hour of rest of a passer-by need all of this effort?"

Because of this, those who do not believe in life after death, think that life in this world is absurd and this perspective is often repeated in the words of the materialists, to whom living in this world is purposeless. Often, among these individuals there are people who commit suicide because they are tired of this life.

That which gives purpose to life and makes it logical is because it is the preliminary for another life and the bearing of the difficulties of this life is preparatory for making use of the way towards an eternal life.

Here we had previously presented an interesting example, and that is that if a fetus which is in its mother's womb had sufficient intelligence and if they were to say to it, "There is nothing after this life for you," the fetus would most certainly object to this and would ask, "What purpose is there in my being imprisoned in this environment? To go through all this and then nothing?"

The Creator had a purpose in this creation!

But if we are assured that these several months are but a quickly passing phase and the preparatory stage for a relatively long life in this world, a world which in relation to the world of a fetus, is extensive and full of light and in relation to that it has several stages, the fetus will be assured that the period of gestation makes sense and that it has a goal and because of that, it is bearable.

The Holy Qur'an says:

"And you certainly know already the first form of creation. Why then do you not celebrate praises?" (***56:62***)

In summary, this world cries out with all of its being that there is another world after this world, otherwise it would be useless.
Listen to the words of the Holy Qur'an,

"Did you then think that We had created You in jest and that you would not be brought back to Ifs (***for account***)***?"*** (***23:115***)

This refers to the fact that if there were no return to God, as mentioned in the Holy Qur'an, through the resurrection, the creation of human beings would be equivalent to being useless.

The conclusion is that the philosophy of creation says that after this world, another world must exist.

Think and Answer

1. Why can the Qualities of God not be compared to the qualities of a human being?
2. What was the purpose behind our creation?
3. Can life in this world be a goal for the creation of the human being?
4. A comparison of the life of a fetus with life in this world teaches us what?
5. What reasoning does the Holy Qur'an give for the creation of this world for the existence of the hereafter?

Lesson 48: The Survival of the Spirit, a Sign of the Resurrection

When the philosophers began to express the philosophy of humanity, they mentioned the spirit as being an important element in relation to other elements.

From then on, all philosophies presented a point of view about it to the point where some of the Islamic scholars have presented a thousand reasons for the truth of the presence of the spirit and issues relating to it. Much has been stated in this area but the most important issue which should be noted is that the answer to this question is:

Is the spirit material or not? And in other words, is it independent or not? Or does it have special chemical and physical properties like the brain and nerves?

Some of the materialist philosophers have said that the spirit and spiritual phenomena are both material and non-material and it is like the special cells of the brain and when the human being dies, the spirit disappears just like a watch which when broken, no longer works.

Alongside these philosophies are the philosophers of the divinely revealed traditions and even some of the materialist philosophers who believe in the originality of the spirit, believe that at the death of the body, the spirit does not die and continues to live.

In order to prove this, that is, the originality, independence and subsistence of the spirit, there are many complicated reasons. Here we will present some of the clearer ones in clear and simple terms.

1. A Great World Cannot be Placed Within a Small One

Assume that you are seated beside the sea and behind it are extremely high mountains. The roaring

waves and the shaking of the water against the shore and with great strength, return to the sea.

We look at this scene for a moment. Then we close our eyes and see this scene in our minds with all of its greatness.

This shows that other than a body and cells of the brain, another jewel exists which can reflect any design no matter how great and at any scale. Clearly, this jewel must be something which is beyond the material world because we find nothing like it in the material world.

2. The External Particularity of the Spirit

We have many chemical and physical properties in our bodies, the motion of the heart has a physical quality but the effects on food is a chemical substance and examples like this are many in our body.

If the spirit, thought and reflection were all material and had physical and chemical quantities of the brain cells then why among them and our other physical properties is there a great deal of difference?

Our thoughts, ideas and spirit relate and correct us to the external world and make us aware of that which passes outside but the chemical particularities of the stomach and the physical motion of our eyes and tongue and heart never has such a state.

3. Experienced Proof of the Originality and Independence of the Spirit

Fortunately, today scholars by various scientific and experimental means have proven the originality and independence of the spirit and permanently answered those who deny the truth of the independence of the spirit and all people who believe it to be material.

Hypnotism is among the clear reasons for this which the experiments have proven this.

We see dreams and scenes appear in our dreams which sometimes speak of the future and sometimes they clarify something which had been ambiguous in such a way that it cannot be called chance or accident which is a further proof for the independence of the spirit.

These examples show that the spirit is not material and that it is not the result of special physical or chemical properties of the human brain but rather it is a metaphysical truth which does not end when the body dies but, instead, prepares itself for the Day of Resurrection and the Hereafter.

Think and Answer

1. What is the difference of opinion between the Divine philosophers and the materialists as to the spirit?
2. What is the meaning of the non-conformity of something large with something small? Which is among

the major reasons for the spirit?

3. How can truthful dreams be proof of the authenticity and independence of the spirit?

Lesson 49: The Physical-Spiritual Resurrection

Among the important questions which relates to the discussion of the Resurrection is, “Is the Resurrection only spiritual?” or does the body of an individual also appear in another world? and the human being take on the very form that he or she had in this world but in a higher and more elevated level? Continuing life in a new life?

Some of the ancient philosophers only believed in the spiritual Resurrection. They believed the body to be a composite, which is only with the human being in this world, and after death, becomes needless of that, and it is released and hurries towards the world of the spirit.

But in the view of the great Ulama of Islam, and many of the philosophers, is that Resurrection in both aspects, that is, spiritual and physical, takes place is correct that this body becomes dust and this dust spreads itself over the earth and will be lost but God is powerful enough to gather up all of these particles and at the Resurrection gather them together and put the clothes of a new life upon them. They interpret this as being a physical Resurrection because the return of the spirit is assured and as they are only referring to the return of the body, they have called it this.

At any rate, all of the verses of the Qur’an about the Resurrection — and these verses are many and varied — stress the physical Resurrection.

Qur’anic Proof of the Physical Resurrection

We have previously seen how a Bedouin came to the prophet with a rotten bone and asked the Prophet who would be able to enliven it. The Holy Prophet answered as God had answered, “That very person who on the first day created them, that same person who brought the heavens and the earth into being, and Who sends out flames from the inner part of a tree. “This can be found at the end of Surah Ya Sin.

The Holy Qur’an, in another verse, says:

“You will leave your tombs at the time of the Resurrection. “(***Sura Ya Sin, 36: 51 and Sura al-Qamar, 54: 7***)

And we know that the grave is the place of bodies which have become dust, not the place of the spirits.

Essentially all of the surprise of those who deny the Resurrection is in this that: Once we have become

dust, how is it possible that all of this dust, which has dispersed throughout the world, be gathered together and once again receive life (Sura as-Sajdah, 32:10) and the Holy Qur'an answers them that God Who created the first time has the power to do this (Sura al-'Ankabut, 29: 19)

The Bedouin had said, "Who will enliven this rotten gone?

All of these interpretations of the Qur'an and the verses show that the Prophet of Islam speaks everywhere about the physical Resurrection. The Holy Qur'an gives examples of this very physical Resurrection which takes place in world of plants and other kinds which we see. It explains it for them and brings the first creation as a witness.

Thus it is not possible that a person be a Muslim and not have the slightest knowledge of the Qur'an and the physical Resurrection and deny it because to deny the physical Resurrection from the perspective of the Qur'an, is to deny the principle of Resurrection.

Intellectual Proof

Beyond this, the intellect says that the spirit and body are two truths which are not separate from each other.

At the time of independence, the connection with each other finds nourishment with each other and they find completion and clearly require each other for the continuation of the eternal life.

Even though in the time of the intermediate world (the period between this world and the Resurrection), they are separate from each other, this is not always acceptable, just as the spirit without the body is not complete, the body without the spirit is not complete. The spirit gives the commands and is the factor for movement and without the command, and tools, there would be no command to follow or tools.

But because the spirit is at a higher level at the time of the Resurrection, its body must also be transformed and this will be. That is, the body of the human being at the time of the Resurrection will be empty of all imperfections of this world and deficiencies.

At any rate, the body and the spirit are born together and are transformed together. The Resurrection cannot have a physical or a spiritual quality.

In other words, the finding of the spirit and the body and the relation between the two of them with each other is another clear reason why the Resurrection must take place in both forms.

On the other hand, the law of justice says that the Resurrection must take place in both forms because if a human being is a sinner and the sins were committed with this body and spirit and if he or she did good deeds, it was with this body and spirit. Thus for the punishment or reward, both must be present for if only the body is present or only the spirit, justice will not be implemented.

Questions Concerning the Physical Resurrection

Scholars have expressed multiple questions on this issue which should be presented and considered.

1. According to the research undertaken by the natural scientists, the body of the human being in their lifetime takes on many changes or changes many times or goes through many changes. This happens every seven years in the human body. Thus throughout our lifetime, several times we change!

Now this question arises, among these changes, which form will be recreated and enlivened?

In response we say the last form. Just as we read in the above verse of the Holy Qur'an, God will transform those very bones which have rotted and become dust and this means that the last body will be returned.

But the important point is here that the last body contains all of the effects and particularities of the bodies which over time the human being has changed.

In other words, the bodies which gradually were changed will disappear, all of the special effects and particularities which exist are transferred to the next body.

Thus the last body inherits all of the qualities of this body and can, according to justice, accept punishment or rewards.

2. Some say that when we become dust and our dust becomes mixed with dust or fruit or trees, and as a result, we become part of the body of others, on the Day of Resurrection, what will happen.

Even though the answer to this question is very extensive, we will attempt to describe it very briefly here.

In answer to this question, we say that it is clearly the atoms which came from the dust of a person and entered the body of another which will return to the first form.

The only problem which remains is that the second body will be misshaped.

But it must be said that it will not be misshaped; it will be made smaller because all of these particles have been spread throughout the body and when taken from it, it will become smaller and thinner.

Thus neither does the first body no longer exist nor the second. The only thing which exists here is the smallness of the second body and this will not cause any problems because we know that at the time of the Resurrection, bodies of human beings will be completed and all deficiencies will be made up for in the form of new means and one's personality will not be altered. Bodies which are smaller at the Day of Judgment in the world of perfection will be considered to be perfect.

Think and Answer

1. Is the life of the human being at the time of the Resurrection similar to life in this world?
2. Can we clearly understand the rewards and punishments of the Resurrection in this world?
3. Do the punishments of hell and the rewards of heaven only have a physical quality?
4. What is meant by the embodiment of the deeds? What does the Holy Qur'an say about this?
5. What difficulties does the belief in the embodiment of the deeds in the discussion of Resurrection answer?

Lesson 50: Paradise and Hell are the Embodiment of our Deeds

Many people ask themselves, "Is the world after death similar to this world? Or does it have differences?"

Its rewards, its punishments, and, finally, the laws and system which rule it, are they like this world? In response, it must be clearly stated that: We have many witnesses in hand which show that this world and that world are very different from each other, so that that which we know in this world is like a mirage that we see from a distance.

It is best if we explain it with the example of the fetus — like the difference which exists between the world of the fetus and this world, the separation between this world and the next exists, or it is greater.

If a child who lives in the world of the fetus had intelligence and wished to have a correct image about the external world, heaven and earth, the sun and moon and stars, the mountains and jungles and seas, most certainly, it could not.

For a child who lives in the world of the fetus and who has seen nothing but the small world within its mother's womb, concepts of the moon and sun and seas and waves and thunder storms and breezes and flowers and the beauties of this world would not exist.

All of its vocabulary is summarized in a few words. And if someone outside of its mother's womb could speak with it, it would never be able to understand its language.

The limitations of this world with the extensiveness of another world is this much or more. Thus, we do not have nor will we ever have the power neither to know about the blessings of another world nor to know what Paradise is.

Thus, we read in a Tradition, “There are blessings in heaven which no eyes have seen, no ears have heard and have entered no one’s brains.”

The Holy Qur’an expresses this same idea in different words:

“Now no person knows what delights of the eye are kept hidden (***in reserve***) ***for them — as a reward for their good Deeds.”*** (***32:17***)

The powers and systems ruling that world also have great differences with this world. For instance, in the trial of the Day of Judgment, the witnesses for the deeds of a human being will be his or her hands and feet, skin and body and even the earth upon which a sin or a good deed was performed will bear witness.

“That Day shall We set a seal on their mouths their hands will speak to Us and their feet bear witness to all that they did.” (***36:65***)

“They, will say to their skins: ‘Why do you bear witness against us?’ They will say, ‘God has given us speech — (***He***) ***Who gives speech to everything: He created you for the first time and unto Him were you to return,”*** (***41:21***)

Of course, one day conceptualizing this was extremely difficult but with examples gained from the progress of science, there is no longer room for amazement.

At any rate, even though we only know the benefits of the next world as a mirage and even though we cannot come to know the extensiveness and importance and particulars of the Hereafter, but we know this much that the blessings of the world as well as its punishments are both physical and spiritual because the Resurrection contains both aspects, and, naturally, its rewards and punishments must have both aspects.

“And give glad tidings to those who believed and did good deeds that for them are gardens underneath which rivers shall flow. Wherever they are provided with a fruit from there as a provision, they shall say, ‘This is what we had been provided with before and shall be brought of it similarities and there, for them, are purified mates; and they are therein forever.” (***2:25***)

“God has promised to believers, men and women, gardens under which rivers shall flow to dwell therein and beautiful mansions in gardens of everlasting bliss. But the greatest bliss is the good pleasure of God: that is the supreme felicity. “(***9:72***)

Those who are to go to Paradise because God is satisfied with them, and their Creator has accepted them, are so happy and full of pleasure which is incomparable to anything else.

As to those who are going to go to Hell, in addition to the fire and harsh physical punishments, the anger of the Creator is awaiting them, and that is greater than any kind of torture.

Embodiment of Deeds

It is worth noting that many verses of the Holy Qur'an can be used to show that at the Resurrection, our deeds will be enlivened and will be present for us in various ways and one of the important areas of rewards and punishments is this very embodiment of deeds.
Oppression and injustice will appear in the form of black tools and will surround us as a Tradition from the Holy Prophet tells us, "Injustice is darkness on the Day of Resurrection."

"They will soon be enduring a blazing fire." (***4:10***)

"One Day shall you see the believing men and the believing women, how their light runs forward before them and by their right hands (***their greeting will be***)***, 'Good News for you this Day! Gardens beneath which flows rivers! To dwell therein forever. This is indeed the highest achievement."*** (***57:12***)

"And let not those who covetously withhold of the gifts which God has given them of His Grace, think that it is good for them. Nay, it will be the worse for them. Soon shall the things which they covetously withheld be tied to their necks like a twisted collar on the Day of Judgment to God belongs the heritage of the heavens and the earth." (***3:180***)

We know that knowledge and science today tells us that nothing in the world is destroyed; material and energy are continuously changing form without them ever disappearing. Our deeds and acts are no different and according to this rule, they remain eternally, The Holy Qur'an, in a short and strong sentence, says about the Resurrection,

"And the Book (***of Deeds***) ***will be placed*** (***before you***)***; and you will see the sinful in great terror because of what is*** (***recorded***) ***therein; they will say, 'O! Woe be upon us! What a book this is! It, leaves out nothing, small or great, but takes account thereof!' They will find all that they did, placed before them; and not one will your Lord treat with injustice.***

"Behold! We said to the angels, 'Bow down to Adam, they bowed except Iblis. He was one of the jinns and he broke the command of his Lord. Will you then take him and his progeny as protectors rather than Me? And they are enemies to you!" (***I8:49-50***)

"On that Day will men proceed in companies sorted out to be shown the deeds that they (***had done***)***."*** (***99:6***)

"So, he who has done an atom's weight of good shall see it…And he who has done an atom's weight of evil shall see it." (***99:7***)

Notice that it says you will see that very deed.

The fact that our deeds, large and small, good and bad, will remain guarded and permanent in this world and will not be destroyed and at the Day of Judgment, they will be with us, can be a warning to all so that we stand up before ugliness and evil and a corrupt environment and be loyal and desirous of good deeds.

The amazing thing is that today, things have been invented which can help us envision this fact in this world.

At any rate, many of the questions which relate to the Resurrection and the eternality of rewards for good deeds and punishments for evil deeds in the Holy Qur'an refers to good or bad deeds in our spirit and body which leave effects and these effects will always remain with us.

Think and Answer

1. Is the life of the human being at the Resurrection exactly similar to life in this world?
2. Can we really conceive of rewards and punishments of the Resurrection?
3. Do the rewards for good deeds and punishments f or evil deeds only have a physical quality?
4. What does embodiment of deeds mean and how does the Holy Qur'an refer to it?
5. At the Resurrection, what difficulty does 'embodiment of deeds' solve?

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