Life of the Next World

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The principle of belief in the eternal life of the next world is one of the important points of Islamic conception of cosmos and a fundamental tenet of Islam. A belief in the next world is an essential condition of being a Muslim and anyone who denies that is not a Muslim. Next to the confession of monotheism, this is the most important doctrine preached by all the Prophets without any exception. The scholastic theologians of Islam call it the doctrine of the Resurrection.

In the Holy Quran we come across hundreds of verses, which in some way or other deal with the Day of Judgement, the life after death, the resurrection of the dead, the great account, the deed-sheets, the heaven, the hell, the eternality of the next world and other questions relating to the world after death. In 12 verses a belief in the Last Day has been formally mentioned next to the belief in Allah.

The Holy Qur'an has used different expressions to denote the Day of Resurrection. Each one of these expressions is full of gnostic significance. The Last Day is one of them. By using this expression the Holy Quran wants to draw our attention to two points:

i. That human life, and for that matter the entire length of time of the existence of the world, is divided into two periods, each of which may be called a day. The First Day (the period of the duration of this world) will come to an end, but the Last Day (the period of the duration of the next world) is endless. The Qur'an has called this world life the first and the next world life the last. (Vide Surah al-Layl, 92:13 and az-Zuha, 93:4) ii. That even now when we are passing through the first period and have not reached the second period and the second day, our success during this day as well as that day depends on our faith, which draws our attention to good deeds and their reaction.

We must understand that like us our thoughts, words, deeds and habits also, from the slightest to the biggest, have the first day and the last day. It is not that our words and deeds vanish and are obliterated during the first day. They continue to exist and will have to be accounted for on the Day of Judgement. Therefore we must do our best to put right ourselves, our actions and our intentions, and abstain from bad thoughts and evil deeds. Thus we should always step forward on the way of righteousness and good behaviour, for on our faith depends our bliss on that day. It is man's conduct in this world that makes his life happy or miserable in the next. That is why the Qur'an regards the belief in the next world or the Last Day absolutely necessary

.for man's prosperity

Source of Belief in the Life of the Next World

The chief source of belief in the eternal life of the next world is the Divine revelation conveyed to mankind through the Prophets. Following his recognition of Allah, belief in the veracity of the Prophets and knowing for certain that what the Prophets convey as revelation has really come from Allah and is therefore true, man comes to believe in the Day of Resurrection and the eternal life of the next world. This doctrine has been described by the Prophets as the most important doctrine next to Monotheism.

As such, the degree of the faith a person has in the life of the next world depends, on the one hand, on the degree of his faith in Prophethood and the veracity of the Prophets, and on the other, on the degree of the correctness and rationality of his conception of the Hereafter, and its being free from vulgar and absurd ideas.

In addition to the Divine revelation conveyed by the Prophets, there are some other methods of acquiring belief in the Hereafter. Man through his intellectual and scientific efforts can get to, at least, some strong indications which support what the Prophets say about the next world. These methods are as under:

i. Through knowing Allah;

ii. Through knowing the World;

iii. Through knowing the spirit and mentality of man.

For the present we do not propose to enter into the discussion of these methods which requires lengthy philosophical and scientific arguments. We intend to confine our attention to considering the method of Prophethood and revelation only. But as the Qur'an itself has in some verses expressly mentioned these methods and in some other verses hinted at them, we will refer to them in a subsequent section under the heading, the Arguments of the Quran in Respect of the Next world. So that the question of eternal life in the next world may become clear from the viewpoint of Islam, it is necessary to consider the following questions:

i. Nature of death,

ii. Life after death,

iii. Purgatory or Barzakh,

iv. Resurrection,

v. Connection of this worldly life with the life after death, Eternal existence of human deeds in a corporeal form,

vii. Common and distinguishing features of the life of this world and the life of the next world,

.Arguments of the Quran in respect of the next world

Nature of Death

What is death? Is it destruction, annihilation, and non-existence or is it a change, a development and a shifting from one world to another? This is a question which has always engaged man's attention. Every one is keen either to find out an answer to it direct or to accept an answer already given.

By virtue of being Muslims we would like to draw the answer to this question from the Holy Qur'an and have faith in what the Qur'an has said in this respect.

The Qur'an has its own explanation regarding the nature of death. It has used the word, 'tawaffi' in this connection. This word means to receive in full. In 14 verses the Qur'an has used this expression. All these verses, show that from the Qur'anic point of view death means gathering and receiving into custody. In other words man at the time of his death gets into the custody of the Divine authorities, who receive him in full. From this expression the following points may be inferred:

(i) Death does not mean annihilation and obliteration. It is just a shifting from one world to another world and from one stage of life to another stage. Human life continues after death, though in a different form.

(ii) What actually constitutes man and his self is not his body and his physical and ancillary systems, which gradually decay and decompose in this very world. What really constitutes his personality and ego is that which has been described by the Qur'an as 'self' and occasionally as soul. (iii) Man's soul or his 'self' is the real constituent of his personality. Man is immortal because his soul is immortal. His soul rests and exists at a horizon above the horizon of matter and material things. Although it is an outcome of the evolution of the essence of natural phenomena which is transformed into the soul as the result of its evolution, its horizon is changed and it becomes a thing of another world which is extra-natural. With the death the soul shifts to a different category and class, that is the class of soul. In other words this extra-material reality is taken back and received into angelic custody.

The verses which deal with the genesis and are not concerned with the other worldly life, the Qur'an has advanced the 596 point that man is a reality belonging to an extra-material class. The Quran in respect of Adam, the first man says: "I have breathed into him of My spirit." (Surah al-Hijr 15:29).

The question of soul and its survival after death is one of the basic teachings of Islam. One half of the undeniable teachings of Islam is based on the doctrine that soul is independent of the body and that it continues to exist after death. All real human values are based on this truth, without which they will be nothing more than a figment of imagination.

All the verses that speak of life immediately after death, a few examples of which we propose to quote, prove that the soul is a reality independent of the body and that it continues to exist even when the body has been annihilated.

Some people think that from the viewpoint of the Quran there exists no soul or spirit. The existence of man comes to an end with his death, after which he neither possesses consciousness nor has he any feeling of joy or pain. At the time of Resurrection man will get a new life and it is at that time alone that he will rediscover himself and the world. But this theory is totally belied by the verses which mention life immediately following death.

The exponents of this theory think that those who believe in the existence of soul or spirit base their claim on the verse: "Say: The spirit is by command of my Lord." (Surah Bani Israil, 17:55). They say that although the word, 'ruh' has been repeatedly mentioned in the Quran, yet it means something different from what is called soul. In this verse also it signifies the same thing as meant in other verses.

These people do not know that those who believe in the existence of soul do not base their argument on this verse. There are about 20 other verses, in which soul has been mentioned either absolutely or in the form of a possessive case, an adjectival phase etc. such as Our spirit, My spirit, holy spirit, a spirit by Our Command. Concerning man it has been said: And I breathed into him of My spirit. This expression shows that from the viewpoint of the Qur'an there exists a reality superior to the angels and the men and it is this reality which is called the spirit. As a blessing of Allah the angels and the men have this reality described as "by My Command". The verse, I breathed into him of My spirit along with other verses shows that the spirit of man has an extraordinary reality.

Not only many verses of the Qur'an confirm the independent existence of human soul, but this view is also corroborated by numerous reports of uninterrupted chain of transmission in the books of Ahadith as well as by many passages in Nahjul Balaghah (See: Peak of Eloquence, I.S.P. 1984) and the supplications of the holy Imams.

The fact is that the denial of the existence of soul is a filthy Western idea inspired by the materialism of the West. Unfortunately some well-intentioned followers of the Quran have also adopted it.

Now we quote by the way of examples, three out of the four verses in which the word 'tawaffi' (to gather or receive in full) has been used in connection with death. In some of these verses such actions have been attributed to the people immediately after their death as are performed by living persons (such as speaking, wishing and demanding).

(i) "As for those whom the angels took (in death) while they wronged themselves, the angels

said to them: In what were you engaged? They said: We were oppressed in the land. The angels said: Was not Allah's earth spacious so that you would have migrated therein? The dwelling of such people will be Hell fire, a terrible destination." (Surah An Nisa', 4:97)

This verse is in respect of those people who succumb to the pressure of their circumstances because they live in an unfavourable environment controlled by their opponents. Their excuse is that their environment being unfavourable to them, they cannot do anything. Instead of trying to bring about a change in their atmosphere and if that was not possible, shift to a better environment, they continue to live in the same corrupt environment and submerge themselves in its quagmire. After extracting their souls the angels of Allah talk to them and say that their plea was unsatisfactory, for they failed to at least emigrate to another environment. The angels remind them that they themselves are responsible for their acts of omission and commision. The Holy Qur'an tells us in this verse that helplessness in a certain place cannot be a valid excuse unless the way of emigration from it to another place is also closed.

As we see, in this verse death, which is apparently annihilation and termination, has been expressed by the word, tawaffi which signifies receiving into custody. Further, this verse reports of a dialogue between the angels and a man after his death. Should the reality of man not continue after his death and should his reality become merely his insensitive and unconscious body, evidently this dialogue would be meaningless. This verse makes it clear that man after leaving this world and this life, can talk with the invisible creatures known as the angels, although with a different set of eyes, ears and tongue.

(ii) And they say: "When we are lost in the earth, how can we then be recreated? In fact, they have no faith in the Day of Judgement. Muhammad, say: 'The angel of death who has charge concerning you, will cause you to die and afterward to your Lord you will be returned." (Surah as-Sajdah, 32 : 10)

In this verse the Holy Qur'an removes the doubt of those who denied the Hereafter. They asked how they could be raised again when following their death every particle of them would have been totally decomposed and destroyed.

The Qur'an clearly says that the doubt expressed by them is a mere pretext to conceal their obstinacy. Anyhow, replying to their question the Qur'an says that contrary to what they assert, their real personality and their real 'self' are not the things which, as they allege, are lost. Actually they with their entire personality are gathered by the angel of death.

Those who raised this doubt meant by being lost in the earth that when all the parts of their body would have been scattered and every particle of their body would have been decomposed, how would it be possible to recreate and revive it?

The same doubt has been mentioned in some other verses also and there a different answer has been given to this question. There it has been pointed out that the dead body is lost from the viewpoint of man only. No doubt it is impossible for a human being to recollect all its particles, but for Allah Who is Omnipotent and Omniscient, it is not difficult to do so.

In the previous verse the argument of those who deny Resurrection was based on the impossibility of the recollection of the particles of the dead bodies. But here their argument is different and that is why it has been answered differently. Here it has been argued that with the loss of the particles of his body, the real personality of man is also lost and no question of 'I' or 'We' is left. The Qur'an says that contrary to what they think, the real personality of man is never lost, and hence there is no need of finding it again. On the contrary man as well as his personality are gathered by the angels at the time of his death.

The following verse also expressly mentions the continuation of the real personality of man (his soul) after his death, although his body ceases to exist then:

(iii) "Allah receives man's souls at the time of their death. Their souls do not die when they are sleeping. During people's sleep He withholds those souls which He has decreed to die and releases the others for an appointed time. In this, in fact, there is an evidence (of truth) for the thoughtful people." (Surah az Zumar, 39 : 42)

This verse describes the similarity of sleep and death, and inter alia the similarity of waking and resurrection. Sleep is a slight and weak form of death and death is an intense and strong form of sleep. In both these cases the human soul shifts from one state of life to another. The difference is that in the case of sleep man usually does not notice the change and when he wakes up he does not realize that he has actually returned from some journey. In contrast in the case of death everything becomes clear to him.

It may be gathered from all these three verses put together that from the Qur'anic point of view, the nature of death is not annihilation, termination and non-existence. It is only shifting from one state of life to another.

Incidentally the last verse throws light on the viewpoint of the Qur'an about the nature of sleep also. Although physically sleep is the suspension of certain natural faculties, from spiritual point of view it is an escape to the kingdom of heaven. Like the question of death, the question of sleep is also one of those things the true nature of which is not fully known. All that is known in this connection is merely a part of the physical developments that take place in the physical domain.

After Death

Does man immediately after death pass direct to the stage of resurrection and is his case

finally decided then and there? Or does he during the period between death and resurrection pass through a special world to be resurrected only on the Day of Resurrection? We know that it is known to Allah only when the Day of Resurrection will arrive. Even the Prophets have expressed their unawareness in that respect.

It is gathered from the Qur'an and numerous reliable reports which have come down to us from the Holy Prophet and the Imams, that no one reaches the stage of Resurrection immediately after death, because that stage will be accompanied by so many upheavals and revolutionary changes in everything known to us, such as the mountains, the oceans, the moon, the sun, the stars and the galaxies. At that time nothing will be left intact. Further, at the time of Resurrection all men of the past and the present will be gathered together. But we see that the world is still intact and probably will remain so for another billions of years. Meanwhile innumerable human beings are still to be born.

Similarly it is gathered from the foregoing and so many other verses of the Quran that no one during the period between death and Resurrection shall remain motionless and unconscious. In other words, man shall not be in a torpid state, feeling neither pleasure or joy nor grief or pain. Immediately after his death man enters a new stage of life, in which he feels everything. Certain things give him pleasure and certain other things give him pain. Anyhow, his pleasure and pain are related to his conduct in this world only. This stage will continue till the Resurrection takes place. At that time so many upheavals will overtake the whole world in a moment that from the farthest stars to our earth every thing will be revolutionized. With this that world which is the intermediary stage between this world and the Resurrection will come to an end.

Thus from the viewpoint of the Qur'an the post-death world has two stages or, to be more exact, after his death man passes through two worlds. The world which will come to an end like the present world is called the barzakh or purgatory. The other is the post-resurrection world which shall never come to an end. Now let us briefly discuss these two worlds.

Barzakh or Purgatory

A thing which lies between two other things as a barrier and separates them is called barzakh. The Qur'an has used this word to indicate the life between death and the Resurrection. The Qur'an says: "Until, when death comes to one of them, he says: My Lord, send me back, so that I may do some good I did not do (in the world). But nay! These are mere words which he utters and behind them is a barzakh until the day of their Resurrection." (Surah al Mu'minun 23:100)

This is the only verse that calls the interval between death and resurrection the barzakh. The Muslim scholars have borrowed this word from here and named the world between death and

resurrection the barzakh.

About the continuity of life after death this verse says only that men after their death repent and request their return to the world, but their request is turned down. This verse shows specifically that man after his death has a sort of life. That is why he asks for being sent back to the earthly world, although his request is not accepted. About the continuity of life after death this verse says only that men after their death repent and request their return to the world, but their request is turned down. This verse shows specifically that man after his death has a sort of life. That is why he asks for being sent back to the earthly world, although his request is not accepted.

There are many verses which indicate that man during the period, between his death and Resurrection is endowed with a sort of life in which he speaks, has feelings of pleasure and pain and can enjoy a sort of happy life. On the whole, there are about 15 verses in the Qur'an which in some way or other speak of a life process, from which it may be gathered that between the period of death and Resurrection man enjoys a full-fledged life. These verses may be divided into several categories.

(i) There are verses which quote some conversations between the righteous or the wicked men on the one hand and the angels on the other. These conversations took place immediately after death. Such verses are many. We have already cited the verse 97 of the surah an-Nisa' and the verse 100 of the surah al-Mu'minun. (ii) There are some other verses according to which the angels talk to the righteous and tell them to enjoy the bounties of Allah from that time onward. They do not keep them waiting for the Day of Resurrection. The following two verses contain this point: "They will be received by the angels of mercy with the greetings: Peace be on you! Enter the Garden as a reward for your good deeds." (Surah an-Nahl, 16 : 32)

It was said to him (after his death): Enter paradise. He said: "Would that my people knew that my Lord had pardoned me and made me of the honoured ones." (Surah Yasin, 36:26 - 27)

In the verses preceding to this verse a conversation of this believer with his people was quoted. He called upon his people to follow the Prophets who invited them towards monotheism in Antioch (Antakiyah). He announced his faith and asked others to listen to him and follow his example. But his people did not listen to him till he died, and went to the other world. When he saw that he was pardoned by Allah and honoured by Him he wished that his people who were still in the mundane world knew how happy he was in the other world. Evidently all this happened before Resurrection for after Resurrection none would be left on the earth.

Incidentally it may be noted that for the righteous after their death there are several paradises, not one single paradise. In the next world they vary according to degree of their inmates'

proximity to Allah. In addition to these paradises, there are some other paradises, as reported by the chosen descendants of the Holy Prophet which relate to the world of Barzakh, not to the Day of Judgement. Hence the paradise mentioned in the above quoted two verses should not give the wrong impression that it relates to the Day of Judgement.

(iii) The third group of verses do not report any conversation between the angels and the men. They only describe the happy life of the righteous and the miserable life of the wicked during the period between death and Resurrection. The following two verses belong to this category:

(i) "Think not of those who have been slain in the way of Allah as dead. Nay, they are living with their Lord and are being provided with the means of living. They are jubilant because of that which Allah has bestowed upon them of His bounty, and wish that those who have been left behind join them." (Surah Ale Imran, 3: 169 - 170)

(ii) "A dreadful doom encompassed Firawn's folk. They will be exposed to the Fire mornings and evenings and on the Day of Resurrection it will be said: People of Firawn's folk suffer the most awful doom." (Surah al-Mu'nim, 40:45-46)

This verse mentions two kinds of punishment in respect of the Fir'awn's followers. The first is the pre-Resurrection punishment described as a dreadful doom. Fir'awn's men are exposed to the Fire two times everyday. The other punishment is the Post-Resurrection punishment described as the most awful doom. On the Day of Judgement an order will be given to throw these people into the Hell. Only in respect of the first punishment the time of morning and evening has been specified.

Interpreting this verse Imam Ali has said that the first punishment is meted out in the Barzakh where the same system of morning, evening, year and month prevails as in this world. In contrast, the second punishment relates to the post-Resurrection world where there is no morning, evening, week, month or year.

In the reports which have come down to us from the Holy Prophet, Imam Ali and other Imams in respect of the Barzakh, much stress has been laid on the life of the believers and the sinners during their stay in the Barzakh. During the Battle of Badr a number of the Prominent leaders of Quraysh were killed. When fighting was over, the Holy Prophet ordered their bodies to be thrown into a well near Badr. Then the Holy Prophet himself went to that well, and putting his head inside the well and addressing the dead said: "We have found that what Allah had promised to us has come true. Have you also got what He had promised to you?" Some companions of the Holy Prophet said: "Prophet of Allah, do you talk with those who have been slain and are dead? Do they hear what you say?" The Holy Prophet said: "Now they hear better than you."

From this tradition and other similar traditions we can see that in spite of the separation between the body and the soul with death, the soul does not totally sever its relation with the body with which it was united for years. On the 10th Muharram Imam Husayn offered his morning prayers in congregation. Then he turned to his companions and delivered a short speech in which he said: "Be calm and patient for a little while. Death is nothing but a bridge by means of which you cross from the bank of pain and grief to the bank of happiness, honour and vast paradise."

There is a tradition which says that people are asleep. As soon as they die, they wake up. That means that the degree of life after death is higher than that before death. During sleep man's consciousness becomes weak. It is a state between life and death. When man is awake his life is more perfect. Similarly his life in the Barzakh is to some extent more perfect than that in this world. There are two points worth mentioning here:

(i) According to the reports from the Imams, in the Barzakh man is interrogated about his faith and belief only. Other questions are left to the Day of Resurrection.

(ii) The meritorious deeds performed by his relatives with the intention that their reward should go to the dead person, make the dead person happy and are to his advantage. If alms and charities whether in the form of endowments or otherwise, are given with the intention that their reward should go to one's departed father, mother, friend, teacher or anyone else, these charities may be regarded as a gift to the deceased person concerned. They make him blissful. The same is the case with the invocation, asking for Allah's forgiveness, circumambulation of the Ka'bah and the pilgrimage to Makkah and other Holy place if performed on behalf of a dead person. It is possible for the children who have displeased their parents during their lifetime to do something to please them after their death. The other way round is also possible.

Resurrection

The second stage of the eternal life is Resurrection which, unlike the Barzakh, is not an individual affair but shall involve the entire mankind and the whole world. With Resurrection the whole universe shall enter a new stage and a new phase of life. The entire system will be changed. Where the Qur'an has told us of this great event, it has said that at the time of the Resurrection the stars shall fade, the sun shall lose its brilliance, the oceans shall become dry, everything shall go flat, the mountains shall be obliterated and there shall be screams, yells and violent convulsions all over the world followed by unprecedented changes.

What is gathered from the Quran is that the whole world shall be devastated and everything shall be obliterated. Then a new world shall be born which shall be basically different from the existing world. The new world shall have absolutely different laws and different systems, and

shall continue to exist for ever.

In the Holy Quran Resurrection has been given various names, each name representing a certain characteristic of it. As it is the day of which the whole mankind will be gathered together, it is called the Day of Assemblage, the Day of Gathering and the Day of Meeting. As on that day all secrets will be disclosed and all realities will be laid bare it is called the day of unfolding and the day when the hidden thoughts will be searched out. As it is the day that will last for ever, it is called the day of eternity. As it is the day when men will be disillusioned and win be repenting and regretting, it is called the day of grief and the day of mutual disillusion. And as the Resurrection is the greatest event and the biggest piece of news, it is called the Great Tidings.

Relation Between This Life and the Next

A very basic point to which the revealed Books have drawn our attention is the relation between the life of these two worlds. The life of the next world is inseparable from the life of this world. The seed of the life after death is sown in this world by man himself, who determines in this life what is going to happen to him in the next life.

Pure faith, correct belief, realistic conception of the world, excellent human habits free from jealousy, cheating, malice, hatred and fraud, as well as the good deeds conducive to the development of the individual and society performed with sincerity of purpose, are the things which ensure happy eternal life. In contrast, disbelief, wrong conceptions, dirty habits, selfishness, self-importance, self-conceitedness, tyranny, oppression, hypocrisy, taking usury, telling lies, calumny, back-biting, fault-finding, creating rift, abstention from the worship of the Creator and other similar qualities and habits are the things which make one's life very miserable in the next world.

There is a beautiful saying of the Holy Prophet. He said: "This world is the cultivation field of the next world. As you sow in this world, so you will reap in the next."

AS it is not possible for anyone to sow barley and reap wheat, to sow thorns and pluck flowers, or to sow colocynth and pick dates, similarly it is also impossible for a man whose conduct is bad in this world, to be happy and comfortable in the next.

Embodiment and Eternity of Human Deeds

It is gathered from the Holy Quran and the sayings of the Imams that not only man continues to exist after his death, but his deeds and works are also so preserved that they do not disappear. In his post-Resurrection life man will see all his past deeds depicted and embodied. Good deeds will have very beautiful, attractive and pleasing forms. They will be a source of delight and enjoyment. The forms of the evil deeds will be very ugly, repulsive and horrible.

They will be a source of pain, suffering and torture.

Here we confine ourselves to the mention of three verses of the Quran and two sayings of the Holy Prophet in this connection: (i) "On the Day when every soul will find itself confronted with all that it has done of good and all that it has done of evil. Every soul will long that there might be a mighty space between it and that evil." (Surah Ale Imran, 3 : 30) This verse expressly says that man will find before him the actual good and bad deeds of his. The good deeds will be presented in pleasing and attractive forms, but the forms in which bad deeds will appear will be so repulsive and loathsome, that man would like to remove them from his sight or to run away from them. But he would not be able to do either, because in that world man's deeds are almost a part of his existence and cannot be separated from him.

(ii) "They will find before them whatever they did in this world." (Surah al-Kahf, 18 : 49) This verse says exactly the same thing as the previous one.

(iii) "That day mankind will issue forth in scattered groups to be shown their deeds (in the display centre of the deeds). And whosoever does an atom's weight of good will see it then, and whosoever does an atom's weight of evil will see it then." (Surah Zilzal, 99:6-8)

Man is immortal and eternal, and so are his deeds and works. In the next world he will be living with the deeds with which he has lived in this world. Man's deeds are his good or bad assets. It depends on them whether his everlasting life in the next world will be happy or miserable.

Traditions (Ahadith)

(i) Some Muslims who came from a distant place were received by the Holy Prophet. In the course of their conversation with him they asked the Holy Prophet to prescribe for them some useful rules of conduct. Among other things the Holy Prophet counselled them to take immediate action to choose good companions for the next world, where the living companions of everybody would be the embodiments of his own deeds.

A man who has a belief in the eternal life of the next world is always very particular about his thoughts, habits and actions, for he knows that these things should not be looked upon as transient affairs. They constitute his baggage which he sends to the next world in advance. He .will have to live with it

Common and Uncommon Points of This Life and the Next

A point common to the life of this world and to the life of the next is that both the lives are real and exist actually. In both the lives man is conscious of himself and whatever relates to him. In both the lives he feels pain and pleasure and is happy and miserable. In both the lives his actions are governed by his instincts, both animal and purely human. In both the lives he lives with his body and all his limbs and organs. Anyhow, there are some basic differences also.

In this world there is a system of procreation and reproduction as well as that of childhood, youth and old age followed by death. These systems do not exist in the next world. In this world it is necessary to work, to sow seeds and prepare the ground. In the next world that which was sown in this world will be reaped. This world is the place of doing work and the next world is the place of drawing results and giving account. In this world man can change his destiny by changing the course of his actions. In the next world there is no such possibility. In this world life is mixed with death. Every life is entwined with lifeless matter. In addition to that, the dead comes out of the living and the living comes out of the dead.

The lifeless matter under certain conditions turns into the living organism and the living organism turns into the lifeless matter. But in that world pure life prevails. The matter of that world is also living. The earth and the sky of that world are living. The gardens and their fruits are living as much as man's own embodied works.

The fire and its chastisement are also living and conscious. Here everything is governed by its causes and spatial and temporal conditions. This world is that of motion and development. In that world there exist only Divine Will and Divine sovereignty. There man's perception and his consciousness are stronger and his faculties of sight and hearing sharper than in this world. In other words, there the curtains will be lifted and man will see the inner truths far better. The Holy Quran says: "Now we have removed from you your covering and piercing is your sight this day." (Surah Qaf, 55:22)

Here in this world man always had a feeling of being dejected, tired and fed up, especially of monotony. It appears as if he has lost something and is looking for it. Anything he comes across he takes it to be his lost thing, and feels happy for a while. But soon he realizes that it is not what he wanted. He again begins to feel dejected and goes after something else. Man always wants something which he has not and is fed up with that which he has.

But in the next world, where man will get what he has wanted from the depth of his heart and what he has really missed, that is eternal life in the proximity of Allah, there will be no question of being tired, fed up or dejected. The Qur'an hints at this very point when it says: "They have no desire to be removed from there." (Surah al-Khaf, 18:108)

Unlike this world, in the next world people will not wish any change. In spite of abiding in Paradise for ever, its inmates will never be bored. As everything they may desire will be available to them, they will not be troubled by any unsatisfied craving.

Arguments of the Quran

Although our belief in Resurrection is a corollary of our belief in the Holy Quran and the teachings of the Prophets and hence it is not necessary to advance any arguments or to

produce any scientific evidence in respect of it, yet in view of the fact that the Qur'an itself in order to impress the point logically on our minds, has put forward some arguments, we propose to mention them here briefly.

The arguments of the Quran consist of a series of replies to those who denied Resurrection. Some of these replies have been given to show that there is nothing wrong with the idea of Resurrection. They have been given to those who claimed that Resurrection was impossible to take place. Some other verses go a step further and say that even in this world there exist certain phenomena resembling Resurrection and hence there is no reason why it should be regarded as impossible or improbable. Some verses go even further and declare that Resurrection is an inevitable and natural result of the judicious scheme of the creation of the universe. Thus these verses can be arranged into three groups. We mention them here one by one.

I. The Holy Quran says: "He has coined for Us a similitude and forgotten the fact of his creation, saying: 'Who will revive them bones when they have rotten away.' Say: 'He will revive them who produced them for the first time. He is the Knower of every creation." (Surah Yasin 36 : 78) This verse is in reply to that disbeliever who came to the Holy Prophet with a rotten bone in his hand. He pressed the bone and powdered it. Then he scattered the powder in the air. Thereafter he asked: 'Who will revive these scattered particles'. The Quran answers: 'He who created the bones at the first. '

Sometimes man judges the things by the standard of his own capacity and on this basis divides them into those that are possible and those that are impossible. When he finds a thing to be beyond his power he declares it to be impossible in itself. The Qur'an says that to accomplish a thing may be impossible for man, but that cannot be impossible for the Power that created life in the dead matter for the first time. For that Power it is possible to revive the dead also.

II. The second group of the verses which mention some instances of the revival is further divided into two sets of verses.

(i) There are verses which recount a particular event of the past when a dead body was revived, like the verses which narrate the story of Prophet Ibrahim, who said to Allah: "My Lord, show me how You give life to the dead. He said: 'Do you not believe? 'Ibrahim said: 'Yes, but I ask in order that my heart be at ease.' His Lord said: 'Take four of the birds, cut off their heads and cut their bodies into pieces. Then place a part of them on each hill. Then call those birds. You will see that the birds will come to life and will rush to you." (Surah al Baqarah 2 : 260)

(ii) There are other verses which are not based on any supernatural event. They cite the existing system known to everybody. The grass which withers and dies during autumn and winter, again comes to life during spring. As it is observed by everybody, the earth after being verdant and full of life loses its vitality and vigour and dies, and when the conditions change with the change of season, it once again comes to life and the plants, the trees and the grass begin to thrive and blossom. A time will come when the entire system of the world will shrivel and dry up. The sun and the stars will be blown up. The whole world will die, but not for ever. Everything will come to life again, though in a different form and under different conditions. At present we,

human beings live on the earth. We see that in 365 days the earth passes through a cycle of death and life. Normally we live up to 50, 60 or 70 and sometime even up to 100 years or more. During this period we see this cycle of life an death dozens of times. That is why it causes us no surprise that the earth dies and again comes to life. Suppose the duration of our life had been only a few months as is the case with some insects, and suppose we had not known how to read and were not aware of the annual revolution of the earth, we would not have believed that the dead earth comes to life again, because we would not have observed this phenomenon. Naturally for a mosquito that appears in the spring and dies in the autumn and winter the conception of the renewal of the life of a garden is unimaginable.

Can a worm living in a tree or a mosquito living in a garden, whose entire world is that tree or that garden, imagine that that tree or that garden is a subordinate part of a bigger system called farm, that farm in its turn is a part of another system called district, that district is a part of another system called province, that province is apart of another system called country, that country is a part of another system called the system of the earth and that the earth is a part of our solar system?

How can we be sure that our solar system, the stars and the galaxies of which we know are not a part of an overall bigger system? May be that millions and billions years of the existence of the universe known to us are equivalent to just a part or just a day of an overall season. May be that the present season of life is to be followed by another season of silence and dullness, and thereafter once again the entire system including our solar system, the stars and the galaxies will acquire a new lease of life in some other form.

The Prophets have told us on behalf of Allah of an all round destruction and silence followed by a new life and the Resurrection of the dead under a new system. As we are sure of their truthfulness, we believe what they have said is true, including what they have said about the universal renewal of life.

The Qur'an has cited an example of the system of life and death on the face of the earth so that we may regard it as a small specimen of the universal system of life and may not think that Resurrection is improbable and inconsistent with the total system of creation. The Qur'an says that Resurrection is a renewal of life and the renewal of life is a thing of which a small specimen we see on the face of the earth. The Holy Prophet has said: "When you see the spring, think much of Resurrection." In other words the spring is a specimen of Resurrection. Rumi says:

"Spring time after the falling of leaves from the trees is a proof of the Resurrection. Fire, air, clouds, water and sun dispel many illusions. In the spring season many mysteries are unveiled. The earth springs up what it has absorbed." There are so many Qur'anic verses which cite the existing system of life and death as an evidence: "Allah it is who sends the winds and they raise a cloud; then We lead it to a dead land and revive therewith the earth after its death. Such is the Resurrection." (Surah Fatir 35 : 9)

"You see the earth barren, but when We send down water thereon, it does thrill and swell and put forth every lovely kind of growth. That is because only Allah is the Truth. He brings the dead to life. Surely He is Able to do everything. And surely the Hour will come. There is no doubt about that. And Allah will surely raise those who are in the graves." (Surah al-Hajj 22:5-7)

There are many other verses which consider Resurrection a part of the system of life and death prevailing in the universe. We see a small specimen of Resurrection ourselves on the face of the earth. Here we confine ourselves to quoting two verses only. These verses differ from the verses of the first set in as much as these verses do not exclusively rely on Allah's ability. They also cite a specimen resembling Resurrection to show that in the perceptible world also Allah's Power has been manifesting itself on the same pattern.

The third group of verses describe the Resurrection as inevitable. Should there be no Resurrection, that would amount to something improper on Allah's part. This point has been elaborated in two ways:

(i) On the Basis of Divine Justice - Allah bestows on every creation of His what that creation deserves and what is befitting of that creation;

(ii) On the basis of Infinite Divine Wisdom - Allah has created everything for a purpose. The Divine wisdom requires that everything should be led to its appropriate perfection and target.

The Qur'an says that it would be a sort of injustice if there were no Resurrection, eternal life, ever-lasting bliss and Divine retribution, and injustice cannot be imputed to Allah because that would be contrary to the principle of Divine justice. It also says that if there was no eternal life

the creation would be futile, and it is wrong to say that Allah does anything in vain. There are so many verses in which return to Allah and eternal life have been described as inevitable and unfailing either because of Divine justice or because of Divine wisdom. Here we quote verses from two surahs of the Qur'an in which the argument has been based either on Divine justice or Divine wisdom or both.

(i) The Holy Quran, after declaring that those who deviate from the right path and forget the Day of Reckoning will be severely punished, says:

"We created not the heavens and the earth and all that is between them in vain. That is the opinion of those who disbelieve. And woe unto those who disbelieve from the Fire. Shall We regard those who believe and do good works as those who spread corruption in the earth or shall we treat the pious as the wicked?" (Surah Sad, 38:27-28)

As we see, in the first one of these two verses the argument is based on Divine wisdom and sensibility of the creation and in the second verse it is based on Divine justice.

III. "Do those who commit evil deeds suppose that We shall make them as those who believe and do good deeds, while their life and death is just the same? Bad is their judgement! And Allah has created the heavens and the earth with truth, and that everyone may be repaid what he has earned. And they will not be wronged." (Surah al Jathiyah, 45:21 - 22)

In the first of these two verse a reference has been made to the principle of justice and in the second to the principle of wisdom. Then in the second verse also Divine justice has been mentioned once again and described as the ultimate aim of the Resurrection. Explanation: Here it is necessary to give an explanation as to how the two principles of Divine justice and Divine wisdom necessitate eternal life, and how it is that if we presume that the limited life of this world is not going to be followed by an eternal life, the creation of man cannot be justified, neither from the angle of Divine justice nor from that of Divine wisdom. Let us begin with Divine justice.

Divine Justice: Justice in its wider sense means to render everyone his due without any discrimination. As it is against justice not to give anyone his due, it is also against justice to make a discrimination in this regard and to give what is their due to some and not to give it to some others. It would be injustice if a teacher at the time of examination gives to the students less marks than they deserve or gives to some of them as many as they deserve but gives to some other less.

Justice is in a way concomitant with equality, which means to treat all equally and not to believe in discrimination. Such an equality results in justice, that is giving everyone as much as is his due. But equality in giving in disregard of what is due and how much is due is tantamount

to injustice. Similarly equality in withholding is also contrary to justice. It is also objectionable to deprive all of what is due to them without any discrimination.

As such Divine justice means that the blessing of Allah is extended to every existing thing in accordance with the degree of its potential capacity and ability to receive it.

If any existing thing lacks some quality, that means that under the existing conditions it has not the capacity of possessing it. We may further say that it would have been contrary to Divine justice if favours befitting their potential capacity were permanently withheld from any existing things. Justice requires that favours appropriate to and commensurate with their ability and merit should be conferred on all existing things without any discrimination.

Among existing things man has been furnished with a specially high degree of capacity and potentiality. Man is not motivated merely by his animal instincts and propensities. Animals have only those instincts which are related to their material life. On the other hand, man has, as we explained earlier, certain higher instincts also, which are of the level of eternity and not of this world.

Man has moral, scientific, aesthetic and religious motives. He accomplishes so many things under the impact of these motives, and sometimes even sacrifices his material and animal life for the sake of his high human objectives.

It is man who sets up, in the words of the Qur'an, his system of actions' on the basis of faith and good deeds, and aims at attaining eternal life and Allah's good pleasure. The idea of eternity and a desire to achieve it. His instincts push him in that direction.

All this indicates that man is capable of being eternal, and that his soul is not material. This means that in this world man is like an embryo. A foetus in the mother's womb is furnished with certain systems and faculties, such as respiratory system, circulatory system, nervous system, reproductive system, hearing system and the system of vision. But all these systems are in keeping only with the requirements of the post-natal world. They are not consistent with the temporary nine-month life of the womb.

It is true that in this world also man is benefitted by the system of faith and good deeds. But this benefit is of secondary importance. Actually this system is tantamount to a seed which can grow and bear fruit only in the happy eternal life. In other words, the real significance of this system is only in relation with the life of the other world.

Not only in the system of faith and good deeds man soars above nature and scatters the seeds of supernatural relations but also in the opposite system called by the Quran the system of disbelief and wickedness his actions go outside the domain of natural calculations and physical needs, and acquire spiritual and eternal aspect, although in a devious way. Thus the

disbelievers and the wicked also in a way become fit to attain eternal life, but unfortunately their eternal life brings to them pain and grief and in religious terms, consigns them to Hell. If man does not move in the orbit of faith and good deeds, it is not that he confines himself to the orbit of the animals, but he falls below zero. In the words of the Qur'an such people are lower in rank and more erroneous than the animals.

Should there be no eternal life, those who work under the system of faith and good deeds and those who work under the opposite system will be like the students some of whom did their duty well and some of whom wasted their time in joking and gossip, but the teacher treated them all alike and gave no marks to anyone of them. This whole-sale depriving obviously is bad and against the principle of justice.

To explain this point in simpler terms it may be said that Allah has called people to faith and piety. Some people have accepted this call and modified their conduct, their way of thinking and their moral system accordingly. Some others have not responded to the call and have taken to evil-doing and corruption. But in this world we see no such system wherein all good deeds be rewarded and all wicked men be punished. Therefore there must be another world where the righteous and the wicked could be retributed according to their deeds. Otherwise, there can be no Divine justice.

Divine Wisdom: Our acts that is the acts of the human beings are of two kinds:

(i) Frivolous Acts, which are of no real advantage to us and are ineffectual in helping us attain the virtues latent in us; and

(ii) Wise and Rational Acts, which produce good results and help us attain the befitting virtues.

The first kind of acts are futile and meaningless and the second kind of acts are wise and judicious. As such our wise acts are those which lead us to a perfection befitting us. Now what about the wise acts of Allah? Are His wise acts also those which lead Him to perfection and His frivolous acts those which do not lead Him to perfection? No, that is not valid in the case of Allah, who is above all needs, wants and imperfections. Whatever He does is His favour, blessing and benevolence. He does not do anything to meet any need of His or to gain anything for Himself. His wise acts are those which lead any of His creation to a perfection befitting it. A futile act may be imputed to Him only in the sense that He may create something And may not lead it to a perfection befitting it. Thus the conception of wisdom in respect of Allah is different from that which applies to man.

Wisdom of man consists in his sagacity and his taking steps to advance towards human perfection. Wisdom of Allah consists in leading His creation to perfection befitting it or, in other words, creating things on the basis of pushing them to a goal befitting them.

As wisdom in so far as it concerns man, means his doing things with a view to achieve his own betterment, it is not necessary that there should be any real relationship between what he does and the result that he desires. In other words, it is not necessary that the desired result should be a natural consequence of his actions or that it should be regarded as the merit of his actions. For example, man makes so many useful things of clay, wood, stone, metal, leather, wool, cotton etc. and obtains sensible results. For instance, he makes a chair, a house, a motor car or some cloth. But a chair cannot be considered a merit of wood, nor a house a merit of stones, bricks and mortar, nor a motor car of a number of different metals used in its manufacture, for these stuffs themselves do not move towards their final forms and shapes. Of course, the results which man obtains from these products such as sitting on the chair, living in the house, moving in the car or wearing the clothes may be regarded as his merit or at least something useful to him.

In the case of Allah, on the other hand, there exists a real and natural relationship between His action and the results which they produce. In other words, the result of every action of His is really a merit of that action. As we see, every seed and every grain in this world moves itself to its goal and its best form.

Now the position is that this world and everything in it is unstable and liable to a change. Any final shape of anything which we may take into consideration is not final, and is liable to a change in its turn. In other words, everything is temporary, transient and will come to an end.

All stages of nature are halting places on the way and none of them is the final destination. From here some people have got the idea that the creation has no definite purpose or plan. The world is a caravan which is always on the move, going from one stage to another. Obviously a journey can be meaningful only if it has some destination in view. A journey can have no meaning if all destinations are no more than halting places and there is no possibility of finally reaching anywhere. As every existence in the world is followed by its non-existence and every construction is followed by its destruction, the whole system governing the world is nothing but a bewilderment and a repetition of what has already been repeated. Thus the whole system of life and existence is based on frivolity.

The Qur'an's reply is that this specious argument would have been correct if there had been this world alone, all births had ended in death and the fate of all that grew and bloomed had been to dry up and vanish. But such a view is short sighted and based on the presumption that life is confined to this world, while the fact is that life is not so confined. This world is the First Day. It will be followed by the Last Day. As Imam Ali has put it, this world is the abode of passing and the next world will be the abode of staying. It is the next world which gives a

meaning to the present world. It is the next world which is the destination and which gives a meaning to the motion and the hustle and bustle of this world.

Had not there been the next world, which is eternal, there would have been no final destination, this world would have been a sort of labyrinth, and the creation, in the words of the Qur'an, would have been in vain, futile and a mere pastime. But the Prophets have come to remove any doubts in this respect and to acquaint us with the truth, the ignorance of which would have made the entire world meaningless in our eyes. With the fixation of this idea of frivolity in our minds, our own existence becomes meaningless and to no purpose. One effect of the belief in the next world is that it delivers us from thinking that our existence has no purpose and gives a meaning to our selves, our thinking and our life.