

Home > Eternity of Man > Part 2: Death or Another Birth > The type of connection between the world and the Hereafter > The Genetic and the Real Connection

The type of connection between the world and the Hereafter

In this part, up to now, the essence and the reality of death as viewed by Islam and also the fear of death, of a lot of people, were the object of discussion and to a certain extent have become clear. For the purpose of completion of the discussion, it is necessary to place under study and discussion the type of connection between the world and the hereafter.

Regarding the connection between the world and the hereafter, various theories existed and still exist, dwelling upon all of which does not appear to be very necessary. Hence the main aim of this discussion is to study of the various verses and elucidating the view of the Holy Qur'an with respect to the connection between the world and the hereafter.

However, before proceeding with the Qur'anic verses, we will refer to the fact that in the ancient times and between different nations, there persisted this belief that whosoever enjoyed the material benefits in this life, in other words, whosoever was lucky in this world, would also be lucky in the other world, especially he, whose material things of use were placed along with him, or in his grave, so that after becoming alive, could utilize them.

Thus, decorative articles, money, food and other things which could be needed in life were buried with the dead in their graves, a large number of which have been uncovered during various excavations. On the other hand, these very people were of the belief that if a person did not possess material wealth and was poor and unlucky in this world, he would be in the same condition in the hereafter.

The Holy Qur'an does not accept this superficial and irrational connection but instead is a proponent of the connection between man's voluntary actions in this world and his eternal life. That is, if the voluntary actions of man take place as a result of "belief and faith" and fall under the category of "righteous deeds", it shall be a reason for his happiness in the hereafter, while on the contrary, if the voluntary deeds and actions do not occur as a result of faith and belief and are also not categorized as "righteous deeds", the hereafter has trouble in store for him. However, the increase and the decrease in intensity

as well as magnitude, as also the time period of the pain and suffering of this person in the hereafter depends upon these two fundamental factors of his worldly life.

Thus, according to the Islamic and the Qur'anic insight, possession or non-possession of the material benefits and the worldly comfort in this world is not the criterion for the felicity or the wretchedness of the hereafter. But those which happen to be the actual basis and criterion are two things:

- 1) The correct belief and conviction.
- 2) Righteous and pious deeds.

The Holy Qur'an, very clearly states:

بَلَىٰ مَنْ كَسَبَ سَيِّئَةً وَأَحَاطَتْ بِهِ خَطِيئَتُهُ فَأُولَٰئِكَ أَصْحَابُ النَّارِ هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ
وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ أُولَٰئِكَ أَصْحَابُ الْجَنَّةِ هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ

“Yea! Whoever earns evil and his sins beset him on every side, these are the inmates of the fire; in it they shall abide. And (as for) those who believe and do good deeds, these are the dwellers of the garden: in it they shall abide.”¹

Up to here it was understood that according to the Holy Qur'an, the basis and the criterion for happiness and wretchedness in the hereafter is faith and righteous deeds of an individual in this world. However, this question still stands as to what is the type of this connection? In other words, is this connection imaginary and hypostatized or actual and real?

In the study of the Qur'anic verses, we encounter occasions whereby we can consider the connection between faith and righteous deed on the one hand and happiness of the hereafter on the other hand, to be imaginary and hypostatized. In addition, there exist other verses and occasions, wherein the connection is considered to be more than just imaginary and hypostatized, but one of actuality and reality. Before we embark upon mentioning examples of these two groups of verses, it is necessary to clarify the difference between these two connections.

The Subjective and Conventional Connection

This connection usually exists where, one group in its capacity of Legislator, governor and one with powers of discretion, for attaining its objectives and according to the good interests which it discerns in the matter, fixes certain rewards for some actions and certain punishment for some other actions, whereas previously, between these actions and their rewards and punishments, no real connection existed.

Another point, which is seen in this type of hypostatized connection, is that the Legislator or the same previous group can declare the connection to be null and void or even declare it to be just the opposite of what it previously was. That is, the same actions, which previously deserved rewards, would now be decreed to carry punishment.

Or would say that henceforth, this particular action neither carries any reward or any punishment. For example, the population in some of the countries is less and the government or the Legislative body of that country decides that a larger population for that country is necessary. As a result, prizes and rewards are ascertained for the fathers and mothers, who have many children.

With the ascertainment of the rewards the people are encouraged and thus the population of the country increases. With the irregular increase in the population, various cultural, financial and political difficulties surface. Thus, it is possible that the very same previous people would now decide that henceforth, not only possessing a large number of children would not be encouraged but would also entail punishments, or that they would just declare the previous rewards as null and void.

Anyway, from some of the verses, it can be understood that, Allah, being better and more aware, of the good and the bad for his servants, than anyone else, and for the purpose of their reaching their desired perfection, has ascertained certain rewards and punishments in the other world corresponding to their voluntary deeds in this world. In reality, the connection between the rewards and punishments with the deeds of man is purely imagined and hypostatized. For example, consider the verse mentioned below:

لَيْسَ بِأَمَانِيكُمْ وَلَا أَمَانِيَّ أَهْلَ الْكِتَابِ مَنْ يَعْمَلْ سُوءًا يُجْزَ بِهِ وَلَا يَجِدْ لَهُ مِنْ دُونِ
اللَّهِ وَلِيًّا وَلَا نَصِيرًا وَمَنْ يَعْمَلْ مِنَ الصَّالِحَاتِ مِنْ ذَكَرٍ أَوْ أَنْثَىٰ وَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ
فَأُولَٰئِكَ يَدْخُلُونَ الْجَنَّةَ وَلَا يُظَلَّمُونَ نَقِيرًا

“Whoever does evil shall be recompensed for it, nor will he find for himself, besides Allah, any guardian or a helper. And whoever does good deeds, whether male or female and be a believer, then these shall enter Heaven and they shall not be wronged (even) to the husk of a date-stone.”

2

From the apparent meaning of the above-mentioned verse, it can be understood that the reward and punishment is in relation to their actions, and this connection has been ascertained by Allah. As a result, from this verse and other similar verses, it can be concluded that Allah has established an imaginary and hypostatized connection between the actions and their rewards and punishments.

The Genetic and the Real Connection

In this type of connection, the same relation exists, as the one we observe between cause and effect.

That is, a connection, genetic and profound, which is higher than the imaginary and hypostatized one. This is because, in the hypostatized appointments, the legislator or the one possessing authority can alter it or delete it altogether. Whereas, these type of connections are not capable of accepting changes or deletions, like fire, which genetically, will burn other things, or water, which quenches thirst and like every cause which brings into existence its effect.

Indeed, sometimes, the fire does not burn but turns into a flower garden, or the water does not quench thirst. In such cases, it should be understood that the real and genetic connection has not been lifted, but another connection or another rule, which lies in the knowledge of Allah and about which, we have no knowledge, comes into play and overrules the previous connection and brings its influence to a naught. The reality and detailed explanation of this aspect should be followed in the topic of miracle and other related topics.

Nevertheless, it can be deduced from some of the verses that the connection between the actions and its rewards and punishments is not hypostatized or nominal but higher and more profound. That is, an actual and real connection does exist. The meaning of 'an actual and real connection' is that on the Day of Resurrection, the actual actions shall manifest themselves in the form of rewards or punishments, this being described as 'Embodiment of Deeds'.

Similar to a grain of wheat, which grows beneath the earth and later turns into an ear of wheat, or a seed of fruit, which becomes a fruit tree. This ear of wheat and the tree of the fruit are the same grain of wheat and the seed of the fruit, which have undergone a change of form and have manifested them in this form.

In the Embodiment of Deeds, and the actions possessing an actual and real connection with its rewards and punishments, the unjust usurpation of the property of an orphan, shall grow and shall be observed in the hereafter in the form of fire.

In a more lucid explanation, one who eats unjustly, the property of an orphan, right now is sending fire into his stomach, although he comprehends not, but the day when the curtains of negligence and ignorance shall move aside and the Universal Resurrection occurs, he shall witness the real outcome of his deeds, which shall be the fire.

Two verses from those under consideration, for the purpose of more elucidation of this aspect is being mentioned.

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَأْكُلُونَ أَمْوَالَ الْيَتَامَىٰ ظُلْمًا إِنَّمَا يَأْكُلُونَ فِي بُطُونِهِمْ نَارًا وَسَيَصْلَوْنَ
سَعِيرًا

“Verily, those who eat away the properties of the orphans unjustly, they swallow (only) fire into their bellies; and they shall enter into the blazing hell-fire.”³

From this verse, it can be easily deduced that the fire of hell is not just a hypostatized punishment for eating the property of an orphan, but the very property itself is a meanness, which shall manifest itself in this form.

يَوْمَ تَأْتِي كُلُّ نَفْسٍ تُجَادِلُ عَنْ نَفْسِهَا وَتُوَفَّىٰ كُلُّ نَفْسٍ مَّا عَمِلَتْ وَهُمْ لَا يُظْلَمُونَ

“(Remember) the day when every soul shall come, pleading for itself, and every soul shall be recompensed fully for what it has done and they will not be dealt with unjustly.”⁴

If the connection between actions and its rewards was hypostatized and nominal, then it is possible that the reward for it may not be granted in full or that they may be oppressed, but when the previous actions manifest themselves in the form of rewards and punishments, the probability of oppression and lessening of the rewards does not exist. It is because of this that the verse says: “All that which they have done, they shall take the returns for it in full and also shall not be wronged or oppressed in the very least.”

Indeed, it is possible that, we, in the present conditions, may be ignorant about the meaning and the type of the real connection of many of our actions, with that, which has been fixed for us in the form of rewards or punishments, and which shall be given to us on the Day of Judgement. However, our ignorance cannot cause us to judge the connection between the actions and the rewards of the hereafter as being only imaginary and hypostatized.

Anyway, it appears that, the best expression which could describe the type of this connection, is the famous sentence which says:

الدنيا مزرعة الآخرة

“The world is a farm for the hereafter.”⁵

Indeed, we are sowing the crops of our eternal lives. It is necessary that we strive to sow that which we

shall need in the spring of our lives and not just pay attention to those things, which we are cultivating presently.

We should not content ourselves with the sowing of one or a few trees. Only he, who is constantly involved in cultivating the best and the most harvest for the future shall attain salvation on the day of Resurrection. Of course, if man, with this conviction and hope, strives constantly, then Allah too shall provide an increase in it, an increase that could not be possibly imagined. (اللَّهُمَّ ارزُقْنَا)

1. Baqarah (2):81-82

2. Nisa'(4): 123-124

3. Nisa'(4): 10

4. Nahl (16):111

5. Bihar-ul-Anwar, Vol. 7, Pg., 353, Vol. 73, Pg. 148 (as quoted by some of the researchers).

Source URL: <https://www.al-islam.org/eternity-of-man/type-connection-between-world-and-hereafter>