

## The Problem of Death

Another important subject which creeps in when we think of our existence and God's justice is death.

If God is just how can death destruct our evolved and purified selves after the long and laborious school of our lives?

The answer is that it does not. The reasons are quite a few. First of all, God has told us through all of his prophets, that death is not the end of the story of our lives. Since I have assumed that you believe in God, this evidence is quite substantial. (You are aware that the problem of evil or suffering arises after assuming or knowing the existence of God)

There are many ways which we can prove our life after death. Apart from experiential proofs such as telepathy, prescience, dreams and contact with the dead, there are many rational ones; such as this one which argues on the basis of desires and satisfactions.

For every desire in us there is something in the world which will satisfy it. Our thirst can be satisfied with water. Our hunger with food. Our love with the beloved. Sexual desire is fulfilled by the opposite sex. Our desire for knowledge is satisfied with knowledge. So, every desire and ability is a proof that there is a perfection which our desires are aimed towards that perfection.

Now, we have this very powerful desire in us, namely the desire to be eternal. By a little introspection we can see that all of us have this desire to be conscious forever of what is happening in the universe. Now, what state or thing can satisfy this desire? Nothing of the material or psychological things we see around us. Isn't this the proof that there is a life after death where our desire for eternity will be satisfied? Rumi clarifies this with a nice analogy: "It is an elephant that dreams of India when it sleeps. No donkey dreams of India, since the donkey has never missed India."<sup>1</sup>

We, in fact, are like that elephant, and eternity is like India. The elephant belongs to India and that is why he dreams about it. Similarly, eternity is where we belong to, since we dream about it.

These hopes and spiritual desires are what has been called by gnostics the 'non-homogeneity' and 'homesickness' of man in this earthy life.

Somebody asked Aristotle that if life was better or death. He replied: "In my eyes they are the same." The man asked again: "Do you like to die now?" Aristotle replied: "I said they are the same, I did not say death was better. Since it is a light which you take from this house to the other."

Our condition after death is nothing, but our actions in objective and concrete form. To be more clear, we 'see' our actions. Rumi can help us again: "Death of every person, my friend, is like himself. For a friend it is a friend and for an enemy an enemy. O' you who are afraid of death, while running away, be aware that you yourself are the cause of this fear. It is your own ugly face, not death's. Your soul is like a tree and death its leaves. If you are tired of thorns, you have cultivated them; and if you are in fine silk you yourself' have spun."<sup>2</sup>

***"The death from which you shrink will surely meet you, and afterward you will be returned unto-the Knower of the invisible and the visible, and He will tell you what you used to do " (Qur'an, 62:8).***

"O' Allah, set our deaths into being killed in your way."<sup>3</sup>

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1. Mathnawi, Book 4.

2. Mathnawi, Book 3.

3. A prayer by Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq, from the Prophet.

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