

Chapter 4: Resurrection and the Life After Death

Without Resurrection, Life Is Void

We believe that all men and women will be raised up on a certain day after death. They all will be judged, and those who are good and virtuous shall live in Paradise (the garden of bliss), and the sinners will join the fire in Hell.

"Allah, there is no God but He. Of a surety He will gather you all together in the resurrection day about which there is no doubt, and whose word can be truer than Allah?" (Holy Qur'an, 4:87)

"As for he who transgressed and chose this present life, his abode will be Hellfire. And as for those who feared to stand before their LORD, and restrained their souls from lusts, (low desires) their abode will be Paradise." (Holy Qur'an, 79:37)

We believe that this world is only a bridge that man should pass over so as to join an eternal life; or in other words it may be a farm, to sow here and to harvest in the hereafter or else it may be taken as a market to provide for the next life to come. About our life, Imam 'Ali (a.s) says: "This world is a place of truth for him who confronts it with truthfulness. It is a house (means) for being free of want, for him who gathers provisions from it and stores for his next life. It is a place of awareness for him who takes advice from it. It is the mosque of the friends of God, a place of worship for the angels; where God's inspiration is sent down, and a trade market for God's friends."

The Reasons for The Resurrection are Clear Enough

We believe that the reasons to prove the resurrection are very clear, because, it can easily be seen that this mortal life cannot be a reasonable object, and the final goal for such a creation; i.e. to come and live here for a short period, living with immense hardships and difficulties, and then end to nothing or to some dusts! Is that what is meant by our complex creation?

"Do you think that we have created you for nothing (in jest), and that you would not return to us?"

(Holy Qur'an, 23: 115)

Secondly, in this world the evildoers are usually in one line with the beneficent and some times higher than equity which doesn't agree with the great justice of God. So there must be a way to distinguish the bad from the good and the false from the truth.

"Do the evildoers think that they are equal in our sight, with the believer who does good works, so that their lives and deaths are alike? How bad they judge!" (Holy Qur'an, 45:21)

Thirdly; the Infinite Mercy of God necessitates that His Mercy and Bounties come not to an end by man's death.

"Say to him belongs all that heavens and the earth contain. Say Allah; He has inscribed Mercy for Himself and will gather you all on the day of resurrection. That day is sure to come. Those who have lost their own souls are those who will never have faith." (Holy Qur'an, 6: 12)

Addressing those who doubt about the resurrection asks: How do they doubt the Power of the Almighty to raise the dead? While they already have seen God's first creation, beginning by making them out of soil:

"Were we weary with the first creation that they should be in confused doubt about a new creation?" (Holy Qur'an, 50: 15)

"And he (the unbeliever) makes comparisons for us, and forgets his own creation. He asks: 'Who will give life to the rotten bones?' Say: He who created them for the first time will give them life again, He has knowledge of every creature." (Holy Qur'an, 36:78)

Besides that; is the creation of man important in comparison with that of heavens and the earth? He who was able to create such a vast, and strange world, is He not able to raise the dead?

"Do they not see that Allah who created the heavens and the earth, and was not wearied by their creation can raise the dead to life? Yes, He Has Power to do everything." (Holy Qur'an, 46:33)

Resurrection Is Corporeal

We believe that not only the soul, but the soul and body of man will both be raised to life on the day of resurrection. This is because whatever is done here is done by both the soul and the body; so the reward too should be given to both of them. Most of the Holy Qur'anic verses which refer to resurrection have put the stress on corporeal raise of the body as well as the soul. In answer to the amazed questioner, who asked the prophet: who raises the dead? The Holy Qur'an answers:

"He who gave them their first creation can easily raise them once again. Does man think that we cannot assemble his bones once again? Yes! We are able to remold the very Tips of his fingers."

(Holy Qur'an, 75:3)

Such verses also denote that the resurrection is corporeal too. There are also verses that report of getting out of our graves, proving the resurrection to be bodily.

The Strange World – After Death

We believe that whatever will happen after death, and in the Paradise, or Hell, is far above what we see here!

"No one knows what delights of the eyes, (the real bliss that gives most satisfaction) are kept hidden for them as a reward for their good deeds." (Holy Qur'an, 32: 17)

Through a famous tradition, God says: "I have prepared for my virtuous servants bliss that no eye has ever seen, no ear has ever heard and no heart has ever comprehended."

As a matter of fact, in this world we are similar to a foetus in the mother's womb! If the foetus could have a mind and wisdom he could certainly know nothing of whatever is outside the womb, such as the sun, the bright moon, the beautiful flowers and the roaring sea-waves. It is important to note that similarly, so is this world to the hereafter; it is comparable with the womb in relation to the next.

Resurrection and the Record of Our Deeds

We believe that on Doomsday, the 'Record Book' of whatever we have done, will be given to us. The record of those who are sanctified will be given to them in their right hand, and that of the wrongdoers shall be given to them in their left hand. By reading the book of their deeds the virtuous will be happy and the evildoers anxious:

"He who is given his record in his right hand will say: 'Take mine and read it! I knew that I would come to my account.' And he will be in a blissful life, in a lofty garden with clusters of fruit within his reach We shall say to him: Eat and drink to your happiness. Here is your reward for what you did in days gone by. And as for him whose book is given to his left hand, will say: 'Ah! Would that my record had not been given to me! Would that I knew nothing of my account. Would that death had made an end of me. My wealth has availed me nothing, and I am bereft of all my power.'" (Holy Qur'an, 69: 19)

As for the book; how it is written or read, no one knows enough, but nobody can deny its existence. The particularities of that day are such that we cannot know it in detail, but generally we know what is going to happen.

The Witnesses in the Final Judgement

We believe that in the final judgment, besides God who is controlling all the judgments, there are other witnesses too; such as the hands and feet; the skin and even the ground upon which we live. All of these will testify as to what we have done before!

"That Day, We should set a seal on their mouths(shut them up), and their hands will speak to us, and their feet shall bear witness to all that they did." (Holy Qur'an, 36:65)

"When they reach it, their ears and their skins will testify to their misdeeds! `Why did you speak against us?' they will say to their skins? And their skins will reply: 'Allah, who gives speech to all, has made us to speak'." (Holy Qur'an, 41:20)

"When the Earth is shaken to her utmost convulsion and man asks: `What may this mean?' On that day will she declare her reports, because your Lord has inspired her to do so?" (Holy Qur'an, 99:4)

The Passage Way (Bridge) and the Scale To Weigh Deeds

We believe that on Doomsday, the passageway (serat) and the scale for weighing our deeds do exist. By the 'passageway', a bridge is meant, which is laid over Hell, and every one must pass over that bridge to reach Paradise! Yes!

"There is not one of you who shall not pass through the confines of Hell! Such is the absolute decree of your Lord. We will deliver those who fear us, but the wrongdoers shall be left to endure its torments on their knees." (Holy Qur'an, 19:71)

Passing through that hard passageway, depends on what one had done before. We read a famous tradition thus: "Some people will pass the bridge as quick as a lightning! Some pass it over as fast as a speedy horse, others like the pedestrians. A group will go on, leaning on their hands and feet, and some are hung by their hands, trying to pass over the blaze of Hell. So Hell catches some and leaves some to go to the gardens of Bliss; as for the scale, it is a means by which the human deeds are measured and weighed so as to specify their values:

"We shall set up the scales of justice on the Day of Judgment, and not a soul will be dealt with unjustly in the least. And if there be the weight of a mustard seed, We will bring it to account; and enough are We as the accountant." (Holy Qur'an, 21:47)

"Then he whose scales (of good deeds) are heavy, shall dwell in bliss, but he whose balances (of good deeds) are light, the Abyss shall be his home." (Holy Qur'an, 101:6)

We believe that salvation in the next life depends only on one's deeds and acts and not on his fancies

and thoughts. There, nobody can be redeemed unless by piety and good deeds, and the Grace of God.

"Every soul will be held in pledge for its deeds." (Holy Qur'an, 74:38)

This is a brief description about the scale, the detail of which we know not, because the world to come is far above the lower world within which we are imprisoned.

Intercession on Doomsday

We believe that on doomsday the prophets and the innocent saints might intercede on behalf of some sinners with God, and plea for their forgiveness. We should not forget that such intercession is only permitted for those who have not entirely cut off their relation with God, and His Messengers. Therefore the intercession is not done unconditionally:

"He knows what is before them and what is after them, and they (i.e. the messengers) offer no intercession except for those who are conformed, to the will of God, and they (all) stand in awe and reverence of God's Glory." (Holy Qur'an, 21:28)

As we have already mentioned, intercession is a way to train man, a means of preventing him to drown in the sea of sins, while it may teach him to repent and return to his Merciful Lord from evil. Certainly the highest rank of intercession belongs to the Messengers, and then it lowers to the saints, to the learned, the martyrs, and true believers, to the extent of a few of their relatives. In a tradition narrated by Imam Sadiq (a.s) we have: "There are none among the first and the last, who are not in need of Muhammad's intercession in doomsday." And also in another tradition we have:

"There are five intercessors on Doomsday:

1. The Holy Qur'an
2. Observation of bonds of kinship
3. Trusteeship
4. Your prophet (Muhammad)
5. Your prophet's nearest kins (Ahlul-Bayt)"

We have also received another tradition from Imam Sadiq (a.s): "On the resurrection day God raises the Ascetic worshipper and the learned believer to life. He will say to the Ascetic worshipper: 'Go and live in my Paradise.' But He will say to the learned: 'Stay here, and intercede on behalf of the people.' This tradition contains a minutely fine point about the philosophy of intercession.

The World of the Dead (Barzakh)

We believe that between death and resurrection, there is a third world, called Barzakh, in which the souls of all the human beings who die will live until they are raised again:

"When death comes they say: `My Lord! Turn me back to life in order that I may do the good works which I have neglected.' No! BY NO MEANS! (is the answer to their request) This is what they ask, but over them is the Barzakh." (A world in which people shall live after death and before judgment.)" (Holy Qur'an, 23:94)

We do not know much about this world which is in between resurrection and death and is called Barzakh, but we know that therein the sanctified souls, like the martyrs and the pious live a blissful life:

"Do not think of those who are slain for the sake of God, as deeds. No! They are alive, and have their sustenance in the presence of their Lord They rejoice for what Allah gives them out of His bounty; and with regard to those left behind, (the believers who are not dead yet) who have not yet joined them, the martyrs give glad tidings, not to fear, nor have they any cause to grieve They give good news of the bounty of Allah, and that God will not leave the rewards of the faithful to be lost." (Holy Qur'an, 3:169)

On the other hand the souls of the oppressors and the rebels and their followers and evildoers are all under torture in their life in Barzakh. They are brought (i.e. The Pharaoh's Followers) in front the fire in the morning, and evening, and when they are raised for the final Judgment, the companion of Pharaoh are cast into the severest penalty." (Holy Qur'an, 40:46)

A third group with less guilt is neither among the first group nor among the second ones. In the world after death they are somehow like a sleeper who sleeps by death and awakes by resurrection.

"When the hour of doom overtakes them, the wrong doers will swear that they tarried not in (Barzakh) but an hour, and thus they are ever deceived But those who are endued with knowledge and faith will say: `You have stayed till the day of resurrection, as was decreed by Allah, and this is the day of resurrection yet you did not know it'." (Holy Qur'an, 30: 56)

In an Islamic tradition it is narrated by the prophet who said: "The grave is either a Garden of Bliss of the Paradise: or on Abyss of the Hell."

The Corporeal and Incorporeal Rewards

We believe that the rewards in the hereafter are corporeal as well as incorporeal; (i.e. spiritual) because the resurrection is spiritual as well as bodily. Whatever is written in the Holy Qur'an about the fruitful gardens in Paradise with streams flowing beneath its trees (9: 89) with perpetual foods and shades, (13:35) and the beautiful clean wives there in, with whom they marry (chapter 3:15), and also about the

penalty and punishments in hell, and that burning fire, are all evidences that the rewards there are corporeal.

And more important are the spiritual rewards that are promised to the faithful believer, such as being near to God, and seeing the manifestations of God's Glory and beauty. These are among the pleasures that no eyes has seen and no tongue can describe. The Holy Qur'an describes some of the verses in the material bounties and Graces of God in the Paradise, end with phrases such as: 'The pleasure of Allah.'

"But the greatest of all the blesses, is the PLEASURE of God which is the supreme felicity". (Holy Qur'an, 9:72)

There is not an enjoyment higher for a man to see that he is accepted by his Lord, and God is pleased with him!

A tradition is narrated by Imam Zain al-Abideen(a.s) saying: "God will say to those in Paradise: 'My love and pleasure for you is far above the bounties with which you live in felicity.'"

What a pleasure can be higher for a man who is addressed by his Lord that: "O You Serene Soul! Return to your LORD! Joyful and pleasing in his sight. Enter My Paradise and join My Servants." (Holy Qur'an, 89:27)

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