

Discover Islam

GOD AND THE LIFE HEREAFTER

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*In the name of Allah
The Merciful, the Compassionate*

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God and the Life Hereafter

Creation is in itself a proof of its Creator

The universe is such a highly meaningful phenomenon that it is unthinkable that it could have come into existence without having been created. The truth is that the choice for us is not between the universe with God or the universe without God. No, indeed. The real choice is between the universe with God or no universe at all. If we say that God does not exist, then we are also compelled to say that the universe does not exist. But the universe is too obvious a fact for us to deny its existence. So neither can we deny the existence of God.

The Meaningful Universe

Sir James Jeans once observed that the Creator of the universe was a mathematical mind. I have to say that the very meaningfulness of the universe is a proof in itself that its Creator has a deep sense of purpose. Such a purposeful Creator could never have created a world which was imperfect—and

therefore meaningless—as far as its objective was concerned. Yet despite all its meaningfulness, our world in its present state is incomplete. It requires the existence of another world for its completion. It is such a world that all of the prophets in turn have called the world of the Hereafter.

This world of the Hereafter is not just a matter of dogma. It is an entirely scientific fact. Indeed, the existence of the Hereafter can be proved academically in exactly the same way and by the same scientific standards as all other things are proved in the field of science.

Scientific Proof

First of all, we must define scientific proof. According to modern science, scientific proof does not mean that there can be any degree of absolute certainty about whatever is to be proved. This kind of undeniable certainty is not universally possible. According to the modern scientific stand, when we say that something has been scientifically proved, this statement only means that its probability has been established. In modern science, those concepts presented as established facts are generally accepted only because their probability has been established, rather than that there has been any definite knowledge of them acquired as a result of observing

them. An example of this nature is the acceptance of the structure of the atom.

We can, with confidence, apply this same scientific method to belief in the world Hereafter. Indeed, employing any other method would not in principle be appropriate. From the scientific viewpoint, we cannot refuse to apply to the case of the world Hereafter a method which we hold valid in other scientific matters. As we know, in this realm, there are three stages of the scientific method—*hypothesis*, *observation* and *verification*.

If we apply this three-point formula to the world Hereafter, we can certainly arrive at an understanding of its probability. And as explained above, certainty is only another name for this probability.

Out of all God's creatures, man, who is unlike any of His other creatures, is the one who has the greatest need of certainty, for he is exceptional in that the concept of 'tomorrow' is engrained in him. He must know what lies ahead of him. No other created entity, whether animate or inanimate, is possessed of such a concept. It is clear that the destination of all creatures, save man, is simply that of 'today', while man's destination pertains to 'tomorrow'.

Can man fulfil his desires

Every individual has desires deep within him. We would be right in saying that man is a 'fulfillment-seeking animal'. But experience shows that human desires are seldom if ever fulfilled. Every individual, driven by his desires, wants to build an ideal world for himself but, all too soon, he leaves the world without having achieved the 'tomorrow' of his dreams.

A Ray of Hope

Billy Graham, a well-known American missionary, writes that he once received an urgent message from an American billionaire who wanted to meet him without a moment's delay. On receiving this message, Billy Graham cancelled his other appointments and immediately set out. When he arrived at the billionaire's palatial home, he was immediately taken by him to a private room, where they sat on chairs facing one another. Then, with great seriousness, the billionaire said to Billy Graham, "You see, I am an old man and life has lost all meaning. I am going to take a fateful leap into the unknown... Young man, can you give me a ray of hope?"

An American billionaire is not the only person to be faced with this question. Every individual, man or woman, born into this world, is faced with this question at one time or the other. But it is solely the

concept of the world Hereafter which gives us a valid answer. If we do not believe in a world after death, then this universal question will forever remain unanswered.

The End of Contradiction

A careful study of the human condition shows that all men and women have two contradictory themes running through their lives right from birth. On the one hand, they are consumed by a limitless desire to establish a dream world for themselves—a world which is in keeping with their ideals and where they may lead their lives in future—‘tomorrow’—with all the sought-after pleasures and comforts. But, on the other hand, they are faced with this contradiction that, despite having apparently surrounded themselves with all the material things conceivable, they somehow fail to build their pictured world. Boredom, loss, illness, accident, the infirmities of old age and finally death within a period of even less than 100 years—that is the story of every individual born into this world.

Inherent in the psyche of all men and women there is the concept of the ideal. But all are destined to die before the realization of their beautiful wishes.

We can come to grips with this seeming paradox by examining the clearly observable phenomenon of

the principle of pairs, which is universally operative in this world. Everything here comes in pairs; everything becomes complete only when it is along with its pair—the negative and positive particles in an atom, the male and female in animals and humans and even in plants. The answer to what we can hope for in the future is to be found in the application of this universal principle. In accordance with it, the entire world is a ‘pair’ world. That is, along with this world there exists another world, and by joining that world, our present world completes itself.

The Completion of the Beginning

Now, looked at in the light of the above observations, it becomes very clear that the concept of the world of the Hereafter is a valid one. The world of the Hereafter is the “pair” world by joining which the present world completes itself. Without joining it, our present world remains incomplete, just as other things of this universe remain incomplete in the absence of their opposite numbers.

The existence of our world as one of a pair is extremely meaningful. It follows that human existence becomes complete after accepting this other world. Everything becomes meaningful. Everything falls into place.

The Right Framework

This concept gives us the framework by which everything in life and in the universe can be satisfactorily explained. It also makes it clear what paradise and hell are. Paradise is a resting place for sincere and truth-loving people, while hell is a place for the insolent and the false.

The picture we form is that of the present world having been made by its Creator to serve as a *testing ground* for mankind, whereas the next world has been created as a place where we shall reap the rewards of (or punishments for) our actions in this world.

Man has been created as an eternal creature. Every man and woman has been granted an eternal personality. But although the mind is eternal, the body is transient. The study of human physiology shows that the human body is composed of living cells which keep transforming themselves. In this way the body is renewed at regular intervals. It is regenerated just like the water in a running stream. The body eventually dies and is resurrected, but the spiritual personality, or the soul, remains unchanged and lives on. This is because the human personality, being eternal, has an existence independent of the human body. To put it in another way human life can

be likened to an iceberg, a very tiny part of which is visible, while the rest remains submerged. By analogy, the human lifespan is divided into two parts: the first, the infinitesimal part runs its course in this world, while by far the greater part unfolds in the Hereafter.

While everything in this world is so designed as to permit man to develop his personality, we must remember that everything in the present world more importantly serves as a test paper for man. For instance, the present world is filled with all kinds of bitterness and animosity. This had all been devised so that, by undergoing these experiences, man might prove that he could lead his life with positive feelings even in negative situations. It is only those who are capable of such positivism who will gain admission to the ideal world of Paradise. On the contrary, those who fall a prey to reaction and respond negatively to bad experiences will be held undeserving of entry into Paradise. Instead, they will be thrown into Hell from where they will never be able to extricate themselves.

In modern times, the acceptance of the concept of organic evolution as a scientific fact is not based on the evidence of observation. The sole reason for its acceptance is that the scientists can find an understandable explanation of biological facts. Thus

the concept of evolution is a workable theory rather than an established theory, as is generally believed.

A Satisfactory Explanation

Belief in the world Hereafter gives us a satisfactory explanation of all known facts. Refusal to accept the world Hereafter makes the present world appear incomplete, whereas its acceptance confirms its completeness. In the former case, it is incomprehensible that a great number of good and truth-loving people should leave the world without ever having been rewarded for leading honest upright lives. This issue can become fully resolved only with the acceptance of the next world.

Similarly, in the case of denial of the Hereafter, it remains totally incomprehensible that man should be born into this world with the concept of an ideal world, while all of us leave this world without finding this ideal world. This riddle is also solved by acceptance of the Hereafter; man may then live in this present world with the conviction that the objects of his desire, which he failed to find in this world, will be given to him in the world after death.

A study of this subject shows that in this world nothing has been created in vain. Right from the sun and the moon to the tiniest insects—all have been created to serve some purpose and that is exactly

what they are doing. Given this state of affairs, there is only one thing in this world which appears to be purposeless and that is that all men and women are born with beautiful desires. When everything in this world has been created with some specific purpose, it also seems logical that human desires should eventually fructify. In a universe where everything is created with some purpose, it can never turn out that human desires have been created in vain.

These desires are certainly a well-considered creation. Their existence has a specific purpose. However, this purpose cannot be fulfilled in this present limited world. These desires, being unlimited, can be fulfilled only in an unlimited world. That is where good people will be rewarded with eternal Paradise, full of all kinds of happiness and comforts. On the other hand, bad people will be sent to Hell where they will be compelled to taste the fruits of their evil deeds for all eternity.

The Reality of Paradise

What is Paradise? Paradise is the ultimate answer to the human quest. Man finds himself in a world where he has the distinction of being a unique exception. That is to say that every part of this vast, zero-defect universe is complete in itself, unlike man, who is the only creature who is not complete in himself. Certainty prevails all over the universe,

but the human world is marred by uncertainty. Fear is nowhere to be found in the universe, but man continually suffers from fear and apprehension. The rest of the universe, receiving everything that it wants, is in a state of equilibrium, while human beings, the only creatures in this world to suffer from the painful thought that they have not received what they wanted, are in a state of imbalance. Moreover, the rest of the universe is evil-free, while human beings continually suffer from the problem of evil.

Paradise is the answer to all these problems. The concept of Paradise shows that man too will find everything that the rest of the universe has found, the only difference being that the rest of the universe is receiving what it wants today itself, while man will receive what he wants tomorrow. The rest of the universe has no concept of futurity. It is only man who possesses this concept.

Part of Nature

God and the Hereafter relate apparently to the unseen world. But the truth is that they are an essential part of human life. God and the Hereafter are known truths innate in man.

The truth is that there are two levels of God realization—the rational and the natural. Believing in the existence of God and the Hereafter at a rational

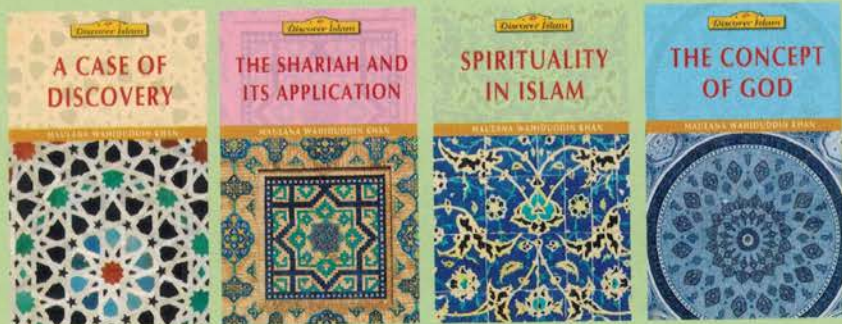
level is the only the initial stage of this realization, whereas believing in God and the Hereafter at a natural level is its ultimate stage. The purpose of using rational arguments on the subject of God and the Hereafter is only to remove the veil of doubt from man, who needs to be brought to the point where he accepts the reality of God and the Hereafter at least as a probable truth.

The use of argument and logic on the question of God and the Hereafter is meant to assist man to reach the intellectual level where he is willing to accept the existence of God and the Hereafter as an ideology. When man reaches this state, the door of his nature is opened to such acceptance. He comes to recognize it as natural truth and adopts it.

Every human being has the vision to comprehend God and the Hereafter, but these matters are obscured by conditioning. The task of logical argument is to break down this conditioning, or mental block, and thus remove the artificial screen from the eye of nature. Then nothing can come in the way of “seeing” God and the Hereafter. Now man is fully convinced of the invisible existence of God, just as a child is fully convinced of the existence of his mother, although he has never seen himself being born of his mother.

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In this series, Maulana Wahiduddin Khan presents the fundamental teachings of Islam in a simple way. The series provides the general reader with an accurate and comprehensive picture of Islam—the true religion of submission to God.



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