Some Definitions for Soul

Many words are used in Qur'an and Ahadith (traditions) for the Day of Judgement and the things related with it. Some of them are explained here:

Al-'Akhirah: The next (world), the (life) hereafter. Its opppsites are al-'ula (the first world) and ad-dunya (the nearer world), both of which refer to this world in which we presently live. Allah says: “All praise is due to Him in the first (life) and the hereafter, and His is the Judgement, and to Him you shall be brought back.” (Qur'an 28:70).

Qiyamah: Resurrection. 'Yaumul-Qiyamah: The Day of Resurrection.

“So Allah shall Judge between you on the Day of Resurrection” (Qur'an 4:141).

Yaumud-Din: The Day of Judgement.

“The Master of the Day of Judgement.” (Qur'an 1:4).

Yaumul-Hisab: The Day of Reckoning.

“And Musa said: Surely I take refuge with my Lord and your Lord from every proud one who does not believe in the day of reckoning.”(Qur'an 40:27).

As-Sa'ah: The Hour; the Time of Resurrection and Reckoning.

“And because the hour is coming, there is no doubt about it; and because Allah shall raise up those who are in the graves.”(Qur'an 22:7).

Yaumul-Fasi: The Day of Separation (between good and evil): the Day of decision.

“Surely the day of decision is (a day) appointed.” (Qur'an 78:17).

Al-Haqqah: The thing (or day) that verifies (the truth of what men doubted about); the sure thing: “The sure thing! What is the sure thing? And what would make you realize what the sure thing is!” (Qur'an 69:1-3).

Yaumul-Ba'th: The Day of Renaissance (coming to life again).

“So this is the Day of Resurrection, but you did not know”(Qur'an 30:56).

Al- Hashr: The Emigration; The gathering.

“The Day on which the earth shall cleave asunder under them, they will make haste; this is a gathering together easy to us.” (Qur'an 50:44).

An- Nushur: The Rising (the dead to life).

“Even so is the quickening (raising the dead)”(Qur'an 35:9).

All these names and words point to one or more aspects of the Islamic belief that life in this world is not an end in itself; that there is a life-hereafter; that all human beings will be resurrected one day, and brought together to account for their beliefs and deeds; that it will be

a day which will separate good from evil and all will be rewarded or punished according to their belief and deeds.

The beliefs in the Unity of Allah and in the Day of Judgement are the Foundations of True faith. All prophets, right from Hadhrat Adam (A) to the Last Prophet Hadhrat Muhammad Mustafa (S), inculcated these beliefs in their peoples.

The proof of life hereafter can be found in the books of Anthropology and archaeology. Scientists have discovered that almost all pre-historic societies and communities firmly believed that man, after his death in this world, lives in another world. And today even the most primitive tribes staunchly believe in the life-hereafter. In the ancient tombs throughout the world archaeologists do find household effects and even grains stocked and stacked 'for use by the dead man in his next life.'

The original American Indians reached America between 26,000 and 13,000 years ago, “wearing skin and moccasins, with domesticated dogs, a belief in the after-life (and) respect for the dead.”

This belief spanning the whole world, and reaching back to the very dawn of humanity, proves that Hadhrat Adam (A) had indeed taught this truth to all his children, and his teaching was preserved by all his descendants throughout the ages, though the passage of time and ignorance might have twisted the details in many cases.

The Belief in Reward and Punishment is Based Upon Reason

All the religions of the world, in spite of their differences, are agreed that a man does not always get, in this world, the rewards and/or punishments of his good and/or evil deeds.

The Creator has laid down some rules and laws for physical aspects of the world. And those laws never change. Whenever you mix two parts of hydrogen with one part of oxygen, you are sure to get water as a result. If you plant wheat, you will get wheat, at harvest time, and not paddy.

And the same Creator has decreed some rules and laws for the spiritual aspect of this world. If you were unjust to others, finally you would bring harm to yourself. If you showed mercy to others, in the end you would benefit from it yourself.

But, strangely enough, these spiritual laws, unlike the physical ones, do not always hold their ground. More often than not, we see tyrants spending their lives in comfort and luxury, while their victims live in agony and die in ignominy

If the promulgator of both sets of laws is the one and same God, why this difference? While talking of physical laws, we are always sure that two and two make four. But in the sphere of

the spiritual laws, we are never sure of the result. Why?

This puzzle has only one solution. Reason says that the spiritual and moral laws must be fool-proof, like the physical laws. A good action must bring good result; and an evil must result in evil. And if that anticipated result does not become a reality in this life, then it must come out, as expected, in the next life.

Thus, the belief, that man must get full reward and/or punishment of his good and/or evil actions after his death, is based upon reason. Any sensible person could find out this Truth by himself, even if nobody were to guide him towards this conclusion.

But the same sensible person cannot find out by himself when, where and in which form that reward or punishment would be meted out. This rewarding or punishing is the prerogative of the Creator, and entirely depends upon His discretion. Therefore, the details of this Justice can not be understood without the guidance of the prophets. We Must accept these Truths, as described by the Holy Prophet of Islam (S), and mould our actions accordingly, if we want to get eternal bliss and save ourselves from everlasting disgrace.

What is Soul?

In the following chapters much will be said about soul and spirit. Therefore, it is necessary to explain before hand what we mean by these words.

There are two words in Arabic: 'Nafs' (soul) and 'Ruh' (spirit). Some scholars think that both are synonymous; others say that they represent two different things. But then they can not decide what those two things are. Every one defines them in his own way. For our purposes, the two words have been treated as synonymous, because in writings as well as in conversations both are frequently interchanged.

Anyhow, let us find out, 'what is soul?' Various people have tried to answer this question in various ways. According to the ancient Greek philosophers, the spirit is the steam produced in the heart, which flows in the body with the blood. In their view, the soul or spirit was a material thing. They called it 'Ruh-e-Hayawan' (the spirit of life); it was neither eternal nor everlasting. It just vanished when death came.

The same, more or less, is the view of the atheists. They believe that life is just a development of matter; soul or spirit has no independent identity and death means the final end of life. In 'God: An Islamic Perspective", it has been explained that if this view were correct then "the universe would have been without life" because "matter has no life" and "it could not give to universe what it did not possess itself"

According to Hinduism, the soul is eternal. It has not been created by God. They say that

matter and spirit both are self-existent and eternal like God. God's only function, according to them, is to transfer a soul from one body to another. Here the readers should be reminded that, according to the proofs given in 'God: An Islamic Perspective', nothing except God is eternal and self-existent: and to believe in more than one eternal is 'Shirk' (polytheism) which has been proved to be baseless and just a fantasy of idle minds.

We started this chapter with the question, “What is Soul?” But are still talking about 'what the Soul is not?' This process of elimination should gradually lead us to the true answer to our original question.

Soul According to the 'Sufiya'

Mystics of Islam, who are called 'Sufiya', had a belief which was borrowed from Hinduism and Christianity, and was gradually developed in succeeding centuries. They said that soul was a part of God. And not only soul, but every thing was a part of God. When a part separates from “the absolute existence” (i.e., God) it gets different names and labels. And as soon as it relinquishes its separate identity, it again joins God. They use the example of river and waves. The waves are part and parcel of a river, when they apparently assume a separate identity, they are called 'waves'; but even then they are no less a part of river. When same waves come down and lose their separate identity, they become, and are called, a part of river. But iri reality, they were river at all times and in every stage, though we failed to realize and appreciate this fact because of 'optic allusion' ('Maya' in Sanskirt).

This belief of theirs called “Wahdatul- Wujut” (oneness of existence), and its motto is “Home Uust” (Everything is He). They assert that Pharaoh and other people who claimed to be gods were telling the truth; their only crime was that they leaked the secret, and that is why they were condemned.

They claimed openly that every stone, every idol, every animal and, in short, every thing was a part of God. Once a Sufi was sitting in a mosque when a dog entered and passed urine inside the 'mehrab' (the niche). The Sufi exclaimed: “Lo! You come into your own house and make it unclean!”

With such generous distribution of godhead' it was to be expected that many of them would claim to be gods. And they did.

During the heyday of Sufism, this belief served as a screen to hide every type of immorality Quite young initiates were used for homosexuality. The explanation was that it was not the beauty of the flesh they were after, rather they were seeing in it the divine beauty!

There is no need to remind the readers that this idea of 'universality-of godhead' was

diametrically opposed to the belief of the Unity of God; which is the Foundation of Islam. According to the Muslim scholars, such belief was the worst type of polytheism It is in fact 'pan-theism' The idol-worshippers pay homage to a limited number of deities; these Sufis paid homage to every thing in this world, including their own self.

To counteract such belief, the Muslim scholars coined another phrase: “Hame Azusf (Everything is From Him) It showed, in a nut-shell, the Islamic belief that every thing in this world is created by Allah (and it is not a part of Allah). Many scholars, during the heyday of Sufism, felt compelled to use the phrases and language of the Sufis, to make their talks and writings intelligible to the masses. And, as the majority of those scholars remained aloof from the hocus-pocus of the worldly; affairs, spending their lives in pursuit of religious knowledge and seeking the pleasure of Allah, some people thought that those scholars also were followers of Sufism. But nothing could be further from truth. A person does not become a Sufı just by. renouncing the luxuries of the world, unless he believes in the theory of “Hame Uust”. And no Shi'a scholar was ever accused of such belief.

(it is surprising how with so much prevalence of pleasure and lust going on in the “Khanqahs”, (monasteries of Sufis), the masses still believed that “renouncement of world” was the .(Speciality”' of the Sufis

Soul, According to Qur'an

Leaving aside the theories invented by human minds, let us turn to the Qur'an for guidance. There is an 'ayah (verse) in the Qur'an: “They ask thee concerning the spirit (or soul). Say, the spirit is from the 'Amr” of my Lord; but you (people) have not been given knowledge but a little”. (Qur'an 17:85).

At First, glance, this answer seems vague. But it does not mean that Allah avoided, the explanation, it just means that those who asked the question were unable to understand the answer. When a 3-year old asks his mother whence his newly-born brother has come, she says that she had brought it from the hospital, or that a stork had brought him into the house. Such evasions are used because the child's mind is not mature enough to receive the facts.

But in any case, there is a difference between the Creator and the created: Parents may give a wrong answer, Allah cannot. Therefore, we should ponder upon this “vague” answer. Perhaps we may find some explanation behind this very vagueness.

The spirit (soul: Ruh) is from the Amr' of thy Lord.” Now, in various Ayats (verses), of the Qur'an, the word Amr has been used for three meanings:

· Order; Commandment;- Authority.

· Work; Task.

· To create without any matter'

Have mentioned in previous chapters the theories of atheists, polytheists and other groups about the soul. Reading them a person is bound to be puzzled about various aspects of soul He may wonder whether the soul is self-existent or a created thing. The answer is: It is the Amr i.e., the work of Allah. In other words'; it is a created thing, not self-existent. He may be puzzled whether it is a material thing, of is different from matter. Again 'the answer is: it is the Amr' of my Lord, Without any matter

He may be confused by some people's claim that it was equal to God. This Ayat will guide him to the: fact that it is the creation of my Lord' and as such can not be equal to the creator nor independent of Him. '

In this way this Ayat teaches us that the soul or spirit was created by the order of Allah without any matter. It does not go beyond that, it does not explain the nature of the soul. But we should not be perturbed by this veil of secrecy. After all. we do not know the nature of many things with which we come into contact everyday. We know how electric power has changed the face of the earth and our way of life. But nobody has yet discovered what electricity is. We know how it is produced, but we do not know the thing which is produced. Likewise, magnetism had not been identified yet.

But this ignorance of the nature of the electricity or magnet has not prevented us from taking full advantage of these wonders of creation. Once we know the functions of electricity, the ignorance of its nature can not prevent us from making its full use. Likewise, functions of soul or spirit are known. We should try to improve our spiritual qualities by believing in Allah and obeying His commands. Let us appreciate that Allah has told us in this Ayat (verse) as much as was necessary for keeping us on the right path. Otherwise, we would have been confused by various claims about soul (which have been mentioned in previous chapters). Now we know that soul is not a development of matter; it is a creature of Allah and not His equal; it is not self-existent. In this way, our faith in the Unity of Creator has been safeguarded. Now we .should advance spiritually by taking full advantage of the functions of the soul

Creation of Souls

Shaykh As-Saduq in his book of creed writes:- “It is our belief about the 'Nafs' (soul) that it is the 'Ruh' (spirit) which is the cause of life; and that the spirits (or souls) are the first creations. As the Holy Prophet has said: “The first thing which Allah created out of nothing were the blessed and pure souls; then Allah made them declare His oneness (Tawheed); and after that

He brought into being other creatures.”.

This is in conformity with our belief that the Light of Muhammad (S) and Aale -Muhammad (A) were the First creation. The same idea has been conveyed here using the word 'Nafs'. So the 'Nafs' or 'Ruh' is the first thing created, that is the 'Nafs' of the

The other souls also were created long before the creation of Adam (A). Shaykh as-Saduq further writes: “And the Prophet has said, “The souls are like a collection of armed forces, whichever souls knew each other (in that world) are attracted towards each other (in this world) and whichever remained apart and aloof (there) are repulsed from each other (in this life).

“And Imam Ja'far as Sadiq (A) said: 'Verily, Allah established brotherhood between the Souls in the (world of) shadows, 2000 years before creating the bodies. For this reason, when the Qa'im of Ahlul-Bait (i.e., Imam Mahdi (A)) will appear, he will bestow inheritance of a man to his brother of that world of spirits, and not to the brother by birth'.”

He further writes:- “And it is our belief about the souls that they are not from the genus of body (i.e., not made of matter); and that they are 'another creation', as Allah has said: ” Then we made it into another creation”(Qur'an, 23:12-14).

Shaykh as-Saduq has referred to the following verses: “We formerly created man of a finer sort of clay; afterwards we placed him as semen in a sure receptacle, i.e., womb of mother; then we made the semen as coagulated blood; and we formed the coagulated blood into a piece of flesh; then we formed the piece of flesh into bones; and we clothed those bones with flesh; ”.then we made it into another creation. Therefore, blessed be Allah, the Most Excellent Creator

The First Covenant

Allah says in the Qur'an:- “And when thy Lord drew forth their posterity from the loins of the sons of Adam, and took them to witness against themselves (saying), 'Am I not your Lord?' They answered, 'Yes, we do bear witness,' (This was done) lest you should say, at the Day of Resurrection, Verily we were negligent as to this (matter), or lest you should say, Verily, our fathers were indeed joining other gods with our Lord, and we were but their seed after them: wilt thou destroy us for the doings of vain men? Thus make We our , signs clear: that haply they may return to God.”(Qur'an, 7:172-174).

This covenant was taken, according to the traditions of Islam, before the creation of Adam (A). The Sunni traditionalist, Daylami, narrates in his book, Firdaus-ul-Akhbar, Chapter 14, that the Messenger of Allah (S) said: “If the people were to realize when it was that 'Ali was named The Leader of the Faithful, they would not deny his superiority. He was named 'Leader of the

Faithful' when Adam was between soul and body (i.e., his creation was not completed). Allah has said: 'And when thy Lord drew forth their posterity from the loins of the sons of Adam, and took them to witness against themselves (saying), 'Am I not your Lord?" Then the angels said, 'Yes'; and Allah said, 'I am your Lord, and Muhammad is your Prophet, and 'Ali is your Leader'."

The two narratives mentioned in this and the previous chapters, throw light on some mysteries of human behaviour.

'Love at the first sight' is not just a poetic figure of speech. Neither is hate at first sight. All of us have experienced these inexplicable feelings at one time or the other. Some times we meet a person for the first time and instantly feel a sort of attraction towards him. And in other cases, an instant dislike occurs within our hearts. Many people try to explain this phenomenon by saying that our bodies emit electrical currents, accordingly, if someone else's electrical waves are in harmony with ours, we are attracted to him; and if on the other hand, the waves are not in harmony, we instantly dislike that person. Be it as it may. But the tradition of Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq (A) gives us the basic reason of this mystery; that theory of electrical currents may explain the secondary cause, but the primary cause is that attraction or repulsion of the spiritual world.

Another phenomenon is the readiness of the human soul to follow the path of truth, if left to itself. This may easily be understood if we look at even the primitive tribes and find out their beliefs about the Creator and the life -hereafter. We will surely find them believing in a Supreme Being, and as explained in the previous pages, in the life after death. This instinctive belief comes from the First Covenant, which has been mentioned in this chapter.

Functions of the Soul

The human soul performs various functions in the body, like growth, senses, digestion etc. According to a Muslim scholar, there are four 'souls' in a true believer. Actually, he means that there are four facets in the soul of a true believer: ·The Soul of Vegetation and Growth: It has five workers (or functions): It obtains the food, keeps it securely, digests it, removes the waste and turns the digested food into parts of the body. Also it has two properties: Growth and Decay.

·The Soul of Animation and Senses: This also has five workers (i.e., functions): Sight, hearing, smelling, taste and touch. And it has two properties: Love and Hate.

·The Soul of Reason and Purity: This aspect of human soul has five powers: Thinking, memory, knowledge, forbearance, and dignity. Also it has two properties: Purity and Wisdom.

·The Soul of Divinity: This also has five powers: To be immortal in mortality; to get bliss in

adversity; to find honour in apparent disgrace; to be poor in riches; and to have patience in hardships. And it has two properties: To accept the will of Allah and to submit to His decrees. And this soul is the one which, in this context, is called 'An-Nafs al-Mutma'innah' (The Tranquil Soul).

These different aspects of human soul have been given here in brief, to show that just as a diamond, when uncut, is valuable, but not as much as it would be after being cut; likewise, a human soul in the beginning, is honourable, but not as much as it would be after being put to test. And as we all know, there are various 'cuts' of a diamond: the one having the utmost number of facets, is considered the most valuable; and the value decreases if there are less facets. Likewise, if a soul has got all the above-mentioned facets, it is the most honoured one in the eyes of Allah. But if it loses its facets described in the last paragraph, i:e., the facet called 'the Soul of Divinity', then it is considered worthless.

From Another Angle

Looking from another angle, the soul has three other facets:

1. An-Nafs-al-Ammarah (The soul which urges man to do evil). If the individual fights against this urge successfully with his faith in God and his determination to do only good, the strength of the will is increased and the individual remains safe against the strongest temptations of satanic forces.

It was this aspect of the soul that the prophet Yusuf (A. S.) referred to when he said:- "And I boast not of the purity of my soul; verily the soul is wont to bid (one to) evil, except those on whom my Lord has mercy; for Gracious is my Lord, the Merciful."(Qur'an, 12:53).

1. An-Nafs-al-Lawwamah (The Reproaching Soul): We call it "conscience". It is the power of the soul which reproaches the man whenever he goes astray from right path. Allah has honoured this facet of soul by swearing by it in the 75th Sura: "Nay! I swear by the self-reproaching soul"(Qur'an, 75:2).

Repeated sins blunt the edge of this reproach, and gradually a time comes when the evil-doer does not feel the pang of conscience. If one has already reached that stage, nothing can save him from eternal disgrace.

1. An-Nafs-al-Mutma'innah (The Tranquil Soul): Its powers and properties have been mentioned in the last chapter. It is the soul which has conquered all desires and has completely surrendered itself to the Will of Allah. This is the highest stage of the perfection of the soul. Allah has referred to this aspect of the soul in the following verses:- "O thou Tranquil soul, return to thy Lord, well pleased, well pleasing (to Him)' enter thou amongst My servants,

.(and enter thou My paradise."(Qur'an, 89:27-30

From yet Another Angle

Shaykh as-Saduq has described the various facets of the soul in a very clear way. The example of the 'cuts' of diamond should be kept in mind when reading the following description taken from his book.

"It is our belief that there are five spirits in the prophets, and Imams: The Holy Spirit, The Spirit of Faith, The Spirit of Strength, The Spirit of Desire, and The Spirit of Animation (or Life); "And the believers have four spirits: The Spirit of Faith, The Spirit of Strength, The Spirit of Desire, and The Spirit of Life; "And the unbelievers and animals have three spirits. The Spirit of Strength, the Spirit of Desire, and The Spirit of Life"

Thus, the more the facets to be found in a soul, the more prestige it acquires in the eyes of .Allah

Whoever Knew his Soul

In the previous chapters, we have tried to describe some known functions and aspects of soul. The readers would have realized by now that even without telling us the 'nature' of soul, Allah and His chosen ones have told us enough about its functions.

In this back-ground, we should look at the saying of our first Imam, 'Ali bin Abi Talib (A) "Whoever knew his soul, knew his Lord."

If we ponder over this short sentence, we will realize that: As mentioned above, it is not possible to know the soul. Likewise, we should realize that it is not possible to know God. When we do not have ability to know the creation, how can we expect to know the Creator? Though we do not know the nature of soul, we are forced to admit that there is something which is the source of life and of all our powers and abilities. Scientists admit that they do not know what life is; but they know that there is life. Likewise, our intelligence and instinct both compel us to admit that there is a Creator, though we do not know Him.

We know that the soul is the ruler of our body. Likewise, we know that God is the ruler of this Universe.

If one of our limbs refuses to obey the commands of soul, it is not a reflection on the strength of the soul. It is considered the defect of the limb itself. In the same way, if one refuses to obey the commands of God, it should be deemed as one's own defect. This disobedience will not weaken the authority of God. Instead, the disobedient person will be rated as spiritually sick.

We know that soul is connected with our body; but we do not know where it is. We know that

life is everywhere in our body. But if a limb of a man is severed, we do not say that so much portion of his soul has been cut off. Thus, we say that life is everywhere in the body, and at the same time do not say that 'It is here', or 'It is therfe'; in fact, we may as easily say that it is nowhere. Likewise, we know that God is everywhere; but we can not say, 'He is here', or 'He is there'. We can not point towards Him. We can not connect him with any place.

Whenever we want to do any work, our limbs at once do it without any need on the part of our soul or spirit to tell that limb to do this or that. Likewise, whenever God wishes anything to happen it just happens without any need on the part of God to say, 'Be this' or 'Be that'. There is a verse in the Qur'an: “His command, whenever He wills a thing, is only that He says unto it 'Be' and it is.” (Qur'an, 36:82)

According to the explanations of our Imams, it is a way of expressing the idea that as soon as God wills something, it happens.

We know that God has decreed that once created, the soul does not die. Likewise, we know that God is eternal and ever-living. We can not see the soul. We can not see God. Thus, even without knowing the nature of the soul, we are able to reach Allah through its functions.

Now we come back to our original topic of Reward and Punishment of our actions. First, let us examine the theory of “transmigration of souls” and see whether it satisfies the demands of Justice, as it is supposed to.

Transmigration of Souls

Those people who believe that the soul is eternal and not created by God say that the souls are transmigrated from one body to another for ever. According to them, the body is changed according to the deeds of the previous life. FOT instance, if a man is virtuous, he will be rewarded in the next life by being born in a family of Brahmins or Kings. If he was a thief, he would reappear in the next life as a monkey or a mouse. If he was a murderer, he might become a tiger in the next life, and so on.

What is the reason behind this belief? These people accept the need for reward and punishment of our deeds. Let us see whether all the requirements of reward or punishment arc satisfied by this theory. The punishments are justified for any of the three following reasons:

To satisfy the victim of the crime;

To help the wrong-doer to mend his way and thus become a useful member of the society;

To make the wrong-doer an example for others to deter them from committing such crimes.

For example, if someone murdered an innocent person, and in consequence thereof was killed by the order of the judicial authorities, two of the above benefits would be obtained: The

relatives of the victim would be satisfied that the blood of their innocent relative had been avenged; and other potential murderers would realize that it does not pay to kill.

Of course, the third benefit (reform of the criminal) is absent here; but it does not matter. Even if only one of the benefits could be obtained, the punishment would be justified.

Now let us see what is the benefit of giving punishment by transferring a soul from one body to another. Nobody knows why he has been given a human body. Therefore, he is deprived of the satisfaction of receiving the reward for his past good deeds; he does not even know what they were. And we may assume safely that, likewise, no monkey or snake knows why he has been re-bom as a monkey or a snake. Therefore, the benefit of reform is out of question here.

The second benefit (to satisfy the victims of the crime) also is out of the question; because uptil now nobody has been informed that the thief who had broken his safe 10 years ago is now a mouse in his garden.

By the same reasoning, the reform of the society is not achieved by this system. As no potential debauchee knows that the bitch in his house was a debauchee in its previous incarnation, he can feel no deterrent against his immoralities.

On the other hand, it may be claimed that the transmigration of soul is a reward of the crimes and encouragement of sins. A man breaks into a shop, and in the next re-birth he is turned into a mouse. What happens to him now? He, in this new life, breaks, or can break, into hundreds of houses and shops; and can steal hundreds of items. A man steals a fruit from a garden, and he becomes a monkey in the next life. It means that now he has been given liberty to steal fruits all his life from hundreds of trees.

Obviously this theory has no logic behind it, to say the least.

Further, let us look at this theory from the practical point of view. Everyone agrees that moral standards nowadays have become very low; that all values of humanity have lost their meaning. Now, according to the theory of transmigration of souls, the population of human beings should be decreasing day by day. Why? Because very few people can truthfully claim that they have done nothing to warrant degradation in the next life. Therefore, the majority of the people dying should be reborn not as human beings but as brutes. But we see that human population is increasing at an alarming rate. Does it mean that the more a man becomes immoral the more are his chances of being reborn as a human being?

Also, this theory pre-supposes the existence of the caste-system. What would the believers in this theory say in a society where there is no caste, like in Islam? Obviously, this theory was invented to justify the system which was existing at that time.

Sometimes, one sees in newspapers some un-verified reports designed to support this belief.

For example, recently there was a report of a young lady (in her teens) who, it was said, could speak in various foreign languages, including Arabic, at the age of 3 years. But how could you check this report when she had already passed that age? Why such reports are not published ?at a time when they could be verified

Immediate Assessment of Reward/Punishment not Possible

The effects of the good and/or bad deed of a man do not necessarily end with his death. A man establishes a seat of learning. He dies, but the school remains; and hundreds of thousands of people benefit from it after the death of the founder. A man, or a group of men, invent hydrogen bomb. And with the invention thousands of innocent people may be killed long-after the death of the inventors. Common sense says that the former should be rewarded for making it possible for so many people to get knowledge. And the reward of teaching ten persons can not be the same as that of teaching ten million. Likewise, the people who created the means of killing thousands of people in one instant must share the responsibility of that massacre, though the victims might have been killed long after the death of the inventors. And the sin of killing ten million persons cannot be the same as that of killing one person.

So, it is evident that the good or bad acts of a person do not end with his death. The account must remain open so long as there are people to follow and imitate him. Therefore, it is simply not possible to judge a man immediately after his death.

Reason guides us that judgements cannot be passed until the accounts of the deeds of each and every individual are closed finally. Only then the true picture of his deeds may emerge clearly.

And this is what Islam believes. According to this belief, a day will come when everybody will die; and then all of them will be resurrected by Allah; their beliefs and deeds will be judged by Allah; and all of them will be rewarded (or punished) accordingly.

This belief of Qiyamat has one advantage which is lacking in the theory of transmigration of souls. Even if we forget all the defects of the theory of transmigration, then at its best it has the ability of showing only one aspect of the attributes of Allah, and that is Justice. It cannot show the Mercy of Allah. On the other hand, in Qiyamat there will be as much chance of showing Mercy as that of Justice. There, also, will be opportunities of forgiveness and reconciliation, because all the parties concerned will be present at one place. Also, there will be chances of intercession by the Prophets, Imams, and other virtuous servants of Allah.

.All these advantages are conspicuous by their absence in rival theories