# The resurrection

Universal wisdom requires the Resurrection. God is absolutely free to do what He wills, and no one can call Him to account. Being All-Wise, He acts with absolute purposiveness and wisdom, and never does something that is in vain, futile, or pointless.

When we analyze ourselves, as well as our nature, physical and spiritual identity, structure and body, we realize that we were created for certain important purposes. Nothing in our body is superfluous. The same is true of the universe, a macro-human being if you will, for each part of it manifests great purposes and innumerable instances of wisdom.

We are unique, for we contain some aspect of all that exists in the universe. Our mental and spiritual faculties represent angelic and other spiritual worlds, such as that of symbols or immaterial forms. But because of our inborn capacity to learn and our free will, we can excel even the angels. Our physical or biological being represents plants and animals. Although contained in time and space, our spiritual faculties and such other powers as imagination allow us to transcend them. Despite our unique and priceless worth when compared with other members of creation, some of us die at birth and others when we are still quite young.

In addition, we long for eternity and desire eternal life-some of our senses or feelings cannot be satisfied with something less. If we could choose between eternal life with severe hardship during this life and eternal nonexistence after a short luxurious life, probably we would choose the former, maybe even preferring eternal existence in Hell to eternal nonexistence. The All-Merciful and All-Wise did not condemn us to eternal nonexistence or implant within us the desire for eternity so that we would suffer while trying to fulfill an impossible, yet heart-felt, desire. So Divine Wisdom requires the existence of an eternal world.

This world cannot judge our actual worth. Although we have a small physical body, our mental and spiritual faculties allow us to embrace the universe. Our acts are not restricted only to this world, and therefore cannot be bound by time and space. Our nature is so universal that even the first man's acts affects the last man's life and character and all of existence. Restricting us to a physical entity, a very short lifespan, and a limited part of space, as materialists do, shows a complete misunderstanding and lack of appreciation of what each of us really is.

This world's scales cannot weigh the intellectual and spiritual value of Prophets and their achievements, or the destruction caused by such monsters as Pharaoh, Nero, Hitler, and Stalin. Nor can they weigh the true value of sincere belief and moral qualities. What is the proper reward for a martyr who has sacrificed everything for the sake of God, of others, or for such universal human values as justice and truthfulness; or for a believing scientist whose dedicated research results in an invention that benefits all people until the Last Day?

Only the other world's scales, which weigh an atom's weight of good and evil, can weigh such deeds accurately:

*We set up a just balance for the Day of Resurrection. Thus, no soul will be treated unjustly. Even though it be the weight of one mustard seed, We shall bring it forth to be weighed; and Our reckoning will suffice (21:47).*

Even if nothing required the Resurrection, the necessity of weighing our deeds would require an infinitely just and sensitive balance to be established.

All of God's Acts have a purpose, and sometimes several purposes. Based on this fact, His universal Wisdom requires the Resurrection. If It did not, we would have to deal with the following issues, among others. The Majestic Being manifests the Sovereignty of His being Master via the universe's inclusive and perfect order and purposiveness, justice and balance. How could He not reward believers who seek His protection as Master and Sovereign, believe in His Wisdom and Justice, and obey them through worship? Would He allow those who deny His Wisdom and Justice, who rebel against or ignore Him, to remain unpunished? As this impermanent world contains hardly any of His Wisdom and Justice with respect to humanity, most unbelievers depart unpunished and most believers unrewarded. Thus, God's Justice is necessarily deferred to a Supreme Tribunal, where each individual will be rewarded or punished in full.

It is clear that the One administering this world does so in accordance with infinite wisdom. Just look at how everything's use and benefit is manifested. Every bodily limb, bone, and vein, as well as every brain cell and cellular particle, serves many wise purposes. These facts show that everything is arranged according to infinite wisdom. Look at the absolute orderliness in the fashioning of everything, another proof.

In short, we were created for universal purposes. This is even stated in the Qur'an:

*Did you reckon that We only created you in vain, and that to Us you would not be returned? So, exalted is God (from exerting Himself in what is vain), the Sovereign, the Truth. There is no god but He; Lord of the Noble Throne (23:115-16).*

We were not created for mere play or sport, and eternal nonexistence in the grave is not our ultimate destiny. Rather, we were created for an eternal life prepared for us by all of our actions, and for an eternal world full of eternal beauty and blessing (Paradise) or evil and wickedness (Hell).

Divine Mercy and Munificence require the Resurrection. We notice that the more needy and helpless a creature is, the better it is nourished. For example, during the first stages of human life, we are nourished in the best way and without effort on our part both before and immediately after birth. As we pass through childhood, youth, and adulthood, becoming ever more aware of our personal strength and willpower, we try to meet our own needs as well as those of our family members, often with great difficulty.

Similarly, foxes and other animals that rely on their power and cunning are barely nourished despite much effort and toil, while fruit-worms live on the best food and quite easily, and plants take their food without effort. Such examples clearly show that One absolutely Merciful and Munificent rules, sustains, and maintains all creatures.

God's Mercy and Munificence are eternal. An Eternal One manifests Himself eternally and requires the existence of eternal beings. His eternal Mercy and Munificence demand eternal manifestation and thus eternal beings on whom to confer eternal bounties. But our world is only temporary, and millions of its living creatures die each day. What can such a fact indicate, other than this world's final and complete death?

This world cannot receive the comprehensive manifestation of the Divine Names and Attributes. Nor can living beings, who experience great hardship and difficulty in maintaining themselves. For example, we cannot satisfy all our desires and appetites. Our youth, beauty, and strength, upon which we set our hearts, leave without a word and cause us great sorrow. Also, we have to exert ourselves even to obtain a cluster of grapes. If we were denied eternal nourishment after having tasted it, would this not be an insult and a mockery, a source of great pain? For a blessing to be real, it must be constant. Without an eternal life in which we can satisfy our desires eternally, all of God Almighty's bounties bestowed upon us would change into pain and sorrow. Therefore, after destroying this world, God will transform it into an eternal one that can receive the comprehensive manifestations of His Mercy and Munificence without obstruction, one in which we can satisfy all our desires eternally.

Divine Pity and Caring require the Resurrection. These heal wounds and wounded hearts and feelings, cause a patient to recover, end the pain of separation, and change pain and sorrow into joy and pleasure. They help human beings and animals throughout their lives, especially before and right after birth. Their mothers' wombs are well-protected homes in which they are nourished directly without any effort on their part. After birth, Divine Pity and Caring provide them with breast-milk, the best possible food, and their parents' feelings of pity and caring. All of these are a single manifestation of Divine Pity and Caring.

Although Divine Pity and Caring encompass the universe, here we encounter wounds, hurt feelings, incurable illness, hunger, thirst, and poverty. Why? As above, the answer is that this world cannot receive the comprehensive manifestation of Divine Pity and Caring. Our inability to do so, as well as our injustice to others and abuse of our innate abilities, intervenes between beings and the manifestations of Divine Pity and Caring. Above all, every living thing dies. This arouses great sorrow in the heart, a sorrow that can only be compensated for by belief in another, eternal world.

Once when God's Messenger, upon him be peace and blessings, was sitting in the mosque, some prisoners of war were brought to him. A woman looking for something with great anxiety caught his attention. Whichever boy the woman saw, she took him to her breast and then left him. When she finally found her son, she embraced him, pressed him to her breast, and caressed him with great affection. This caused the Messenger to burst into tears and, pointing to the woman, he asked his Companions:

*“Do you see that woman? Does she throw that child in her arms into Hell?” The Companions answered that she did not, and the Messenger, upon him be peace and blessings, added: “God is much more compassionate than that woman. He does not throw His servants into Hell [unless the servants absolutely deserve it].*”[[1]](#footnote-1)

Divine Pity and Caring will be manifested fully in the other world, for that world allows no intervention, sorrow, and pain.

Divine Justice and Honor require the Resurrection. God's Names and Attributes are absolute and eternal. Therefore, He is absolutely and eternally Merciful, Relenting, and Forgiving, as well as absolutely and eternally Mighty, Just, and Dignified. Although His Mercy embraces all things (7:156) and, as stated in a hadith, “exceeds His Wrath,” some people's sins are so serious (e.g., unbelief and associating partners with God) that they deserve eternal punishment. Besides, the verse: whoever kills a human being unjustly, it is as if he (or she) has killed humanity (5:32) cannot be ignored. This is especially true today, where might is right, thousands of innocent people are killed daily, and many others are wronged and deprived of their basic human rights. Even worse, many of the most serious sins and injustices go unpunished.

Death does not discriminate between oppressed and oppressor, innocent and guilty, sinless and sinful. This only can mean that while minor sins may or may not be punished here, major sins (e.g., unbelief, associating partners with God, murder, and oppression) are referred to the Hereafter's Supreme Tribunal, where God will dispense absolute Justice.

One day, those who thanked God will be welcomed with:

*Eat and drink to your hearts content because of what you did in days gone by (69:24) and Peace be upon you! You have done well. Enter here to dwell forever (39:73).*

In this place, God has prepared for us things we cannot even begin to imagine. Meanwhile, those who engaged in bloodshed, sin, and other prohibited activities will be thrown into Hell with the shout: Enter (through) the gates of Hell to dwell therein forever:

*what an evil abode for the arrogant! (39:72).*

Divine Grace and Generosity require the Resurrection. A saint once asked Harun al-Rashid, an 'Abbasid caliph, the following:

*“If you desperately needed a glass of water, would you abandon your kingdom in return for it?”* The caliph answers that he would. *“If you could not discharge it from your body, would you again give up kingdom in order to be able to discharge it?”* The caliph answers that he would. The saint concludes: *“Then all of your wealth and kingdom consist of a glass of water.”*

We are provided with whatever we need for almost nothing. The more necessary for life an item is, the more abundant and cheaper it is in nature. Our most pressing need is air, which we receive free of charge. Then comes water, which is almost free. God sends both of these from His infinite Mercy, and we make absolutely no contribution. Then come heat and light, which we receive from the sun for nothing. When we look at the rest of His bounties, we see that they are extremely cheap. And yet we still demand that He perform a miracle so that we might believe in Him! Our effort to procure these blessings is minuscule when compared to how they were produced. However, if these bounties or blessings were only temporary and imperfect, our fear of death would change them into poison.

Thanks to God's being eternal, He will provide for us eternal and ever-better forms of bounties, through His Names and Attributes, free of charge. As these will be eternal, they will not become a source of pain engendered by our fear of death. For believers, death is a changing of worlds, a discharge from worldly duty, an invitation to the eternal abode He has prepared for them, and a passport to that abode.

Divine Beauty requires the Resurrection. Listen to a birds singing on a spring morning, the murmur of a brook flowing through green fields or deep valleys. Look at the beauty of spectacular green plains and trees in blossom. Watch the sun rise or set, or the full moon on a cloudless, clear night. All of these, and many more that God presents to our senses, are but a single gleam of His absolute and eternal Beauty manifested through many veils. By observing such manifestations, through which He makes Himself known, we are enraptured.

Temporary blessings leave unbearable pain in our heart when they disappear. If spring came only once, we would sigh over it until we died. So, a true blessing must necessarily be eternal. In this world, the Eternally Beautiful One shows us only shadows of His Beauty in order to arouse our desire to see Its eternal and perfect manifestation. Moreover, He will allow us to see Him in Paradise in a manner free of any qualitative and quantitative measure or dimension:

*On that day there will be shining faces, gazing upon their Master (75:22-23).*

The relation between things and humanity indicates the Resurrection. There is a basic relation between humanity and this world. We are born into an amiable environment and equipped with the required senses. We have feelings like compassion and pity, as well as caring and love, for there are many things here to which we can apply them. We feel hunger and thirst, cold and heat. Fortunately, these feelings can be satisfied with that which was prepared before or with only a slight exertion on our part.

Consider an apple. Its color and beauty appeal to our eyes and our sense of beauty. Its taste addresses our sense of taste, and its vitamins nourish our bodies. Despite our need of its nutriments, we might refuse to eat it if it were ugly and tasteless, and thereby deprive ourselves of its nourishment. This, as well as many other natural facts, shows that One with infinite Knowledge and Power created us and prepared a suitable environment for us. He knows all of our needs, capacities, and qualities, just as He knows nature down to its smallest building blocks.

Another example is reproduction, which depends on mutual love and attraction between a man and a woman. If our Creator had not placed such things in us, if He had not allowed us to enjoy the process of reproduction, and if He had not implanted a great love and caring for our resulting children, we would never have reproduced. The first and final members of our species would have been Adam and Eve.

Death ends all pleasure and makes everything as if it had never been. Given this, if there were no Resurrection our life would be a meaningless existence of suffering and pain. However, this world is a shadowy miniature of the other, eternal one. The bounties God bestows here are only examples of their eternal and much better forms in the eternal world, and are displayed here to encourage us to act in order to deserve them:

*Give glad tidings to those who believe and do good deeds. For them there will be Gardens beneath which rivers flow. Every time they are served with the fruits therein, they will say: “This is what was given to us aforetime.” They shall be given in perfect semblance. And there will be pure spouses for them, and they will abide there forever. (2:25)*

All joy and beauty, reward and happiness in this world point to their perfect and eternal forms in Paradise; all pain and punishment, ugliness and unhappiness point to their likes in Hell. God will use the debris from this world, after He destroys it, to build the other world. Thus, the interrelations among things here and between this world and the other point to the Resurrection.

Recording and preservation point to the Resurrection. Nothing disappears completely from this world. While our every word and act is recorded and preserved, why should we not be able to understand that God records all of humanity's words and deeds in a way unknown to us? Advances in science and technology constantly provide new evidence for His Existence and Unity and affirm, with the Divine origin of the Qur'an, the truth of Islamic beliefs. The Qur'an declared centuries ago that:

*We shall show them Our signs in the outer world and within themselves until it will be manifest to them that (the Qur'an) is the truth. Does not your Lord suffice, since He is witness over all things? (41:53).*

If people sincerely search for the truth and are not blinded by prejudice, ignorance, and worldly ambition and desire, every new scientific advance displays the truth of the Qur'an. We see that God enfolds everything in small things like seeds. For example, each human being is enfolded in a sperm or in his or her 46 chromosomes. If we had 44 or 48 chromosomes, we would be something completely different. Similarly, when we die and disappear into the soil, our most essential part does not disappear, as discussed earlier, for God will use it rebuild us on the Day of Resurrection. God preserves everything, and so nothing can disappear forever. For example, a plant that dies in autumn or winter continues to live in innumerable memories as well as in its seeds that will bring it back in an almost identical form next spring.

Just as God preserves things in their seeds, He preserves sounds and voices, as well as appearances and sights to display them in another world. Maybe one day these sounds and sights will be discovered.

One time I heard of an experiment carried out by a scientist trying to find a killer. The suspects were brought singly under the tree where the crime was committed. The tree showed nothing unusual until the guilty person was brought close to it, at which time it began to show something. Somehow, the tree had recorded the killer's voice, manner, posture, or whatever he had displayed during the crime. God preserves a human being in a sperm, a plant in a seed, a hen in an egg, and shows us that He records everything by enabling us to record and preserve sounds and images. Given this, would He leave us, the noblest and perfect pattern of existence, to our own devices or allow our record to disappear? Of course not; rather, He will resurrect us in a different, eternal world.

Divine Power proves the Resurrection. Consider an atom. How it is formed and maintains its relationships with other atoms are astounding miracles. Creating a solar system or an atom, both of which have orbiting bodies, and then regulating their movements and establishing their relationships are equally easy for God. Similarly, a cell is like an autonomous government. It has its own departments, each of which is interrelated with others and ruled by a center, as well as a “ministry of finance” that manages its income and expenditure. It is as if each cell were as smart as the smartest person on the planet. In addition, there are very close and substantial relations between these cells, all of which are ruled by a center: the brain.

These are only a few examples of the Creator's Power. Everything is equally easy for Him. Creating and administering the universe is as easy as creating and administering an atom. If all people worked together, we could not create even one atom. So, if the absolutely Powerful One says He will destroy the universe and rebuild it in a different form, He will do so. As God does not lie and is without defect, His promises can be believed. As stated in the Qur'an:

*The Day of Final Decision and Judgment is a fixed time, a day when the Trumpet is blown, and you come in multitudes, and the heaven is opened and becomes as gates (78:17-19).*

Death and revival indicate the Resurrection. An overall death and revival is repeated every year. In winter, a white “shroud” covers the soil, whose yearly life cycle ends in autumn. Nature has already turned pale and shows fewer traces of life. The shell has fallen in and, ultimately, trees become like lifeless, hard bones; grass has rotted away and flowers have withered; migrating birds have left; and insects and reptiles have disappeared.

Winter, which is only temporary, is followed by a general revival. Warm weather causes trees to bud and, wearing their finery, present themselves to the Eternal Witness. The soil swells, and grass and flowers start to bloom everywhere. Seeds that fell into ground during the previous autumn have germinated and, having annihilated themselves, are transformed into new forms of life. Migrating birds return, and the planet hosts countless insects and reptiles. In short, nature appears before us with all its splendor and finery.

Consider the phenomenon of photosynthesis. A tree's leaves are lungs that, in the presence of sunlight, separate carbon dioxide into carbon and oxygen by giving off oxygen and retaining carbon, which it combines with the hydrogen of the water brought up through its roots. Out of such “magical” chemistry, God makes sugar, cellulose, various other chemicals, and fruits and flowers [all having a different smell, taste, color, and shape]. This same carbon dioxide and water help innumerable kinds of fruit, each of which has a unique taste, to grow. However simple a process this seems, the collective wisdom of humanity cannot produce a single fruit.

This process of respiration causes a tree to spend a great deal of energy, but also brings it much greater benefits. During the night, this process is reversed: the tree takes in oxygen and gives off carbon dioxide.

Consider what deliberate results these unconscious actions produce. Then ask yourself if something so completely ignorant and unconscious of its own existence, and totally devoid of any power of choice, could do such comprehensive things that obviously require an all-comprehensive knowledge, power, and choice. So, the Power that gives a tree such significant purposes and makes it bear many deliberate results certainly will not abandon the fruit to its own devices. Humanity is the fruit of the tree of creation. Would God abandon us and condemn us to eternal annihilation? It would be illogical for God to create us for many deliberate purposes and then let us remain eternally mixed in the soil. He preserves a fruit in memories and through its seeds, just as He returns the like of it next summer after promoting it to a higher level of life in an animal or human body. Given that, He will promote us to a higher level of life in another world following the total destruction of this one.

God created the world and humanity when nothing of either thing existed. He brought our body's building blocks together from soil, air, and water, and made them into a conscious, intelligent being. Is there any doubt that the person who made a machine can tear it apart and reassemble it, or that an army commander can gather his dispersed soldiers through a trumpet-call?

Similarly, while reconstructing the world, God Almighty will gather our atoms and grant them a higher, eternal form of life:

*Say: “Travel in the land and see how He originated creation, then God brings forth the later growth. Assuredly, God is able to do all things” (29:20); and Look at the imprints of God's mercy (in creation): how He gives life to the earth after its death. He surely is the reviver of the dead (in the same way), and He is able to do all things (30:50).*

Many other phenomena point to the Resurrection. Great care and many purposes are attached to even the most insignificant-seeming things. For example, cellulose is the structural tissue forming the chief part of all plants and trees. Its elasticity allows plants to bend, and thus protects them from breaking. It is also important in making paper.

Cellulose is hard to digest; only enzymes secreted by cud-chewing animals can dissolve it. However, cellulose aids excretion, for it accelerates the bowel workings and prevents constipation. Thus cud-chewing animals are like factories that change substances with cellulose into useful matter. Their manure makes an excellent fertilizer, for innumerable bacteria in the soil consume it. This process increases the soil's productivity and rids it of foul-smelling things.

If such bacteria did not exist, living beings could not survive. For example, if all the flies born in spring did not disappear into the soil, they would form a thick cover over the entire planet. Through the manifestation of His Name All-Purifying, God Almighty uses bacteria to clean the soil. Have you ever considered why forests are so clean although many animals die in them every day? They are so clean because carnivorous animals and bacteria consume animal corpses. Would God, Who employs the most insignificant-seeming creatures for many great purposes, allow us to rot in the ground and thereby reduce our existence to utter futility?

Again, a healed wound shows the body's vigor. A fruit reminds us of the tree that bore it, footprints point to the one who has passed by, and water leakage indicates a water source. Similarly, our innate feeling of and desire for eternity are signs of an eternal One and the eternal world. Moreover, this world and its contents cannot satisfy us. We overflow with subtle, refined feelings and aspire to lofty ideals that could not have originated in matter and the material world. These are reflections of the infinite, immaterial dimensions of existence.

Philosophers, especially Muslim ones, call the universe a macro human and humanity a norm cosmos or a microcosms. Like us, the universe is a whole entity consisting of innumerable interrelated parts. Maybe an angel has been assigned to represent it by serving as its spirit. Who knows? Like us, the universe also can be injured and have, as Einstein puts it, new bodies formed in its remote corners. It also has an appointed time of death, just as we do.

We have so little knowledge about existence. As we increase in such knowledge, we also increase, paradoxically, in our ignorance of it. Existence is in a process of continuous flux, and we are little more than ignorant bystanders. Prophet Muhammad, God's Last Messenger, upon him be peace and blessings, used to pray: *“O God, show me the reality of things.”*

Everything in the universe has a purpose. The universe's ecological system is so complex, and its parts are so interrelated, that the lack or removal of one part would cause the entire universe to be destroyed. To express this reality, God's Messenger, upon him be peace and blessings, declared: If dogs were not a community like you, I would order their killing. If a tree's bacteria were killed, we could not obtain fruit.

Every species and thing has an important and unique place in the universe's structure. Such a magnificent uni-verse cannot be purposeless. It functions according to a moving timeline: seconds point to minutes, minutes to hours, and hours to the end of today and the coming of tomorrow; days point to weeks, weeks to months, months to years, and years to the end of our lifespan. Existence has its own days in every sphere and dimension, and its appointed lifespan one day will cause it to end.

Also, time goes in cycles. For example, a scientist has established that corn is abundantly produced every 7 years, and that fish are abundant every 14 years. The Qur'an points to this in Sura Yusuf. The *“life”* of existence has certain terms or cycles: the life of this world and of the grave, for example. The afterlife, the last cycle, has many cycles or terms of its own. The Qur'an refers to them as days, for a day is the shortest time cycle unit. It corresponds to the entire life of existence. Daytime reminds us of this world's divisions of dawn, morning, noon, afternoon, and evening, which have their counterparts in our lives: birth and infancy, childhood, youth, old age, and death, respectively. Night, on the other hand, resembles the intermediate life of the grave and the next morning: the Resurrection.

Almost all previous people believed in the Resurrection. Even the self-proclaimed divine Pharaohs of ancient Egypt believed in it, and so wanted to be buried with their most precious things and slaves. We read in the inscriptions found in their tombs: *“After death, the sinful will take on ugly forms and remain under the ground forever until eternity, while pure souls will join angels and live among exalted ones.”*

On the sheets buried together with the dead, we also read petitions like the following:

Greetings to You, O Divine Being Exalted! I have come to Your presence in order to observe Your infinitely beautiful Face. Please favor me with this observation. I wronged no one, nor betrayed anyone. I caused no one to weep, nor killed anyone. I oppressed no one, either. I am here in Your presence to present my situation to You. I only desire to observe Your Face.

If we search through the tombs, epitaphs, documents, and art of bygone peoples, we hear humanity's sighs for eternity echoing throughout time. Despite the alterations and distortions that have crept in over time, we find clear evidence of a belief in eternity in ancient India, China, and Greece, as well as in most Western philosophies.

For example Shahristani, a Muslim historian and theologian, writes that Zarathustra said: *“Humanity has a duty in the world. Those who do their duties satisfactorily will gain purity and join the dwellers of the higher abodes. However, those who fail to do their duties will be condemned to stay under the ground until eternity.”*

India has always been home to many religions, although it is highly probable that they are all distorted versions one true religion. Despite this, however, almost all contain a belief in the Resurrection and eternity. In many of them, belief in eternity has led to belief in reincarnation. One exception is Buddhism. Buddha did not believe in eternal cycles of reincarnation, but rather that souls would ultimately return to the Absolute Being and find eternal peace and contentment. Souls that enter other bodies are evil ones, and do so in order to be purified. When they are purified, they also return to the Absolute Being and find peace and happiness.

Homeros, an ancient Greek poet, writes about a soul's shelter. He believed that souls, which manifest themselves here in bodies, have shelters in another place. Pythagoras, a Greek mathematician, believed in the Resurrection and argued that purified souls would join the exalted dwellers of higher worlds, while evil ones would remain imprisoned on the Earth, which would be enveloped in fire. Plato attributes to Socrates many arguments for the Resurrection and eternal life, some of which are as follows:

Man should be virtuous. To become virtuous requires resistance against carnal desires. This means a deprivation on the part of man. This deprivation will be compensated with an eternal, happy life.

Opposites follow each other in the world. Light and darkness, spring and winter, day and night follow each other. Death follows life, so another life will follow death. However, this second life will be eternal.

Everyone sometimes feels as if he experienced something before which is just happening to him now. This means that we live this life in another world, the world of the spirits, before we come here. So, this life is the result of a previous life and a *“rehearsal”* of another life which is to come.

Although it is highly questionable whether this last argument is correct, and although it suggests reincarnation, it is an undeniable fact that Socrates and his student Plato believed in an afterlife.

Aristotle diluted the idealism of his teacher, Plato, with some elements of materialistic philosophy. However, he also believed in the spirit's existence and immortality, as he said: *“Apart from man's material body, something immaterial exists in him, which is immortal.”*

Xenophanes and Heraclitus, both ancient Greek philosophers, believed in an afterlife. The former held that, apart from our body, we have a soul that continues to live after we die. Among the principles of good morality he argued was: It is impossible for the One Who has created the universe so beautifully and adorned it because of His love for man, that He will not bring him back to life again after he has made him die. Heraclitus argued: *“During the Last Day, stars will fall onto the earth and envelop it as a circle of fire. Evil souls will remain in this fire as a punishment, while pure ones will escape it and rise to higher abodes.”*

Except for a few materialists like Epicurus and Democritus, all ancient philosophers in the East and West believed in the afterlife. Most Western rationalists who prepared the ground for the Renaissance believed in the Resurrection and the afterlife. Among them, Descartes argued convincingly for the soul's immortality and analyzed issues pertaining to the afterlife.

Leibniz and Spinoza also believed in another life. The former resembled Plato in that, corresponding to Plato's ideas, he spoke of monads as the immaterial parts of beings that must develop infinitely. As this cannot occur in this time limited world, there must be an eternal world in which they can realize their infinite development. Spinoza, a pantheist, believed in an eternal, collective life of beings. Pascal and Bergson also believed in an afterlife.

In the Muslim world, almost all philosophers believed in eternal life. Even the irreligious Abu al-A'la al-Ma'arri tried to describe, in his Risala al-Ghufran, the Day of the Resurrection according to Qur'anic verses. Dante appears to have adapted this scholar's writings for his descriptions of Paradise, Hell, and Purgatory.

To sum up: Except for a few materialists, the long history of Eastern and Western philosophy witnesses to belief in the Resurrection and an afterlife.

1. Bukhari, Adab, 18; Muslim, Tawba, 22 [↑](#footnote-ref-1)