

The Hereafter Life of Animals in Islamic Theology: A Comparative Study between Islamic Schools and Inter-Religious Teachings

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Abstract

The life after death and the Hereafter life of human beings are among the tenets of all Muslims. However, the question is set forth by the theologians as to whether animals' life will end by worldly death, or like humans, they will transfer to the other world and enjoy an immaterial life, too. The issue of animal Hereafter life is closely associated with the question if animals possess a rational soul or not. Since the Qur'ān has regarded animals as an *umma*, we are to accept that there has been a kind of identity and unity among the animals in understanding the world of being and the purpose of life, and this has prompted the application of the term *umma* to them. The two factors of consciousness and purposiveness in animals have caused the Qur'ān to identify them with the human beings and to speak of their otherworldly life. Accordingly, the resurrection of animals in the Hereafter, in addition to the pleading for justice from themselves, is also meant to plead justice from the human being. Thus, the principle of accepting the human's responsibility towards animals is open to discussion, one which denies any exploitation of them outside the essential purpose of their creation.

Keywords

Animal, Death Hereafter life, Islamic Theology, religious teachings.

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Introduction

Animals are among the wonders of the world of creation, and the Exalted God calls the humankind to deliberate on their creation so that, on the one hand, they may find out the subtleties of their existence, and on the other, acknowledge the greatness of their Creator (Qur'ān 88:17). Therefore, the animals, like human beings, enjoy a kind of status and position to the extent that, on the one hand, God accepts their request and prayer and withholds the punishment of the human beings for their indecent behaviors for animals' sake (Kulaynī, 1968, vol.8: 246, no. 344 & vol.2: 276, no. 31), and on the other hand, human beings are obliged to respect them, as the Holy Prophet (s) has also viewed the animals as deserving to be greeted (salām).¹

Bringing up the issue of animal's resurrection in the religious texts provided a suitable ground for rational endeavors, which are discussed in the best way possible by Muslim exegetes and theologians in exegetical and Theo-philosophical sources. The author hopes that the results achieved from this study may somehow clarify the viewpoints of Islam and Muslim scholars concerning the animals, their rights, as well as the proper behavior of human beings towards them.

Accordingly, This research project that is a descriptive-analytical study and uses library research method is not the first with an Islamic approach, because the Muslim scholars have studied the issue of animal's Hereafter life while interpreting the qur'ānic verses and explaining the issue of divine justice, but it is attempted to compare the viewpoint of Islamic theological schools to this issue as a foundation to explain Islam's stance toward animal rights.

Inter-religious study

The Qur'ān first brings up the similarity between humans and animals and then concludes that the animals also have resurrection (Qur'ān 6:38). Therefore, we can easily find out why the Qur'ān explicitly declares that animal's ḥaṣhr is among the definite signs of resurrection (Qur'ān 81:5). The word ḥaṣhr means gathering (mustering) in Arabic (Ibn Manzūr, 1985, vol.4: 190) and thus, the gathering place of people is called maḥshar (Ḥarbī, 1987, vol.1: 283). Since the gathering of people together requires their intermingling, the word ḥaṣhr can be translated as ikhtilāṭ (mixture), too, which is the concomitant of the lexical meaning (Ṭabarī, 1995, vol.30: 84). However, it should be noted that in Arabic, the word ḥaṣhr is used to imply the meaning of gathering when this action is carried out with a kind of force

1. A man went to the Holy Prophet (s) and greeted him. The Holy Prophet said, "Greetings to you two." The man said, "O Apostle of Allāh, I am alone." The Holy Prophet said, "Greetings to you and your horse." (Rāwandī, 1987:196)

and driving (Ṭurayḥī, 1988, vol.1: 516); thus, this word is also used to describe the forced migration of people from their inhabiting place (Ibn Athīr, 1997, vol.1: 374).

What is meant by ḥaşhr in religious texts is “to bring out the dead from the graves and to drive them toward the place of reckoning (judgment)” (‘Askarī, 1991: 189, no. 752). Some theologians, however, have applied this word to the first stage of the Resurrection Day, i.e. bringing the dead to life (Āmudī, 1992: 260).

The statement “There is no animal on land or a bird that flies with its wings, but they are communities like yourselves” (Qur’ān 6:38) denotes that from the viewpoint of the Qur’ān, animals - like human beings - are communities (umam). In the qur’ānic terminology, umma is a group of people gathered by a single cause, such as religion, path, time, or place (Ṭabāṭabā’ī, 1973, vol.7: 72); thus, the people who believe in a prophet are regarded as that prophet’s umma (Farāhīdī, 1989, vol.8: 428). From the viewpoint of the Qur’ān, all people were a single, united community, who were separated from each other due to the differences arising among them, differences that can be resolved through obeying divine prophets (Qur’ān 10:19; 2:213).

Since the Qur’ān has regarded animals as umma, we are to accept that there has been a kind of identity and unity among the animals in understanding the world of being, reaction to the Creator of the world of being, the quality of life, and the end and purpose of life, and this has prompted the application of the term umma to them (Ṭūsī, 1989, vol.4: 129). It is implied by the phrase umamun amthālukum (communities like you) that the ḥaşhr of animals is the corollary of their similarity to human beings.¹

1. Although the term amthālukum suggests similarity of animals to humans, it is to be noted that this similarity is not in all aspects, for it is not possible to ignore the structural and behavioral differences of animals and humans. Therefore, we should look for a kind of likeness between them. In the explanation of the likeness between animals and humankind, some probabilities are set forth: (1) Being divine creatures and denoting their Creator; (2) Needing someone to manage them in different aspects of their life; (3) Enjoying the capability of recognizing God, accepting the His Oneness, and worshipping God; (4) The capability of categorization and having intra-group likeness and communication; (5) The enumeration of the different aspects of their lives in the Divine Scripture; (6) Resurrection on the Day of Judgment and gaining one’s rights; (7) God’s dispensing of justice onto them; (8) Tendency to accept inter-group training; (9) Existence of some ethical similarities between a group of human beings and animals (Rāzī, n.d, vol.12: 214-213; Ṭabrisī, 1960, vol.4: 129 & 48-49; Majlisī, 1982, vol.7: 255-256; Ṭūsī, 1989, vol.4: 127; Ibn Jawzī, 1986, vol.3: 26; Qurtubī, 1985, vol.6: 420). Although each of these probabilities per se can be true in explaining the likeness of animals to human beings, it does not seem necessary to translate this likeness as a specific behavior or

Using the word *umma* about animals as well as *amthāl* to explain the relationship between human and animal signifies two points. First, animals may be called *umma* only when a common goal in life can be found for them, whether they have chosen this goal (optional) or the laws of nature have imposed it on them (compulsory). Thus, simply having a proper name and being classified on that basis – as some have claimed (Ibn Kathīr, 1992, vol.2: 135) – is not sufficient for regarding animals as *umma*. Second, the likeness of animals and humans is to be viewed from this perspective that animals enjoy the same circumstances that lead to human resurrection. For this reason, the similarities of animals and humans cannot be summarized in their common biological characteristics; rather, we have to step beyond this and claim that the same criterion for human resurrection, namely, a kind of consciousness and the rational-inner perception that brings about felicity and wretchedness, is also found in animals. Thus, due to their availing of this blessing, their life will not end with death and upon departing from the material world, they will enter an immaterial world called Hereafter (Ṭabāṭabā'ī, 1973, vol.7: 73-74). This is the amazing aspect of animals' life that the Qur'ān enjoins us to comprehend (Qur'ān 4:45).

Theo-philosophical studies

As we noted, according to religious doctrines, animals have resurrection (*ḥashr*), that is, their life does not end with death and, like humans, they begin a new life in the world to come (the immaterial world after death). It is to be figured out whether we can prove it as true on the grounds of theo-philosophical fundamentals.

1. Rational possibility of animal resurrection

In the process of death – as we feel it – the physical life of a living being stops. That is to say, as soon as its physical activities come to an end, it gives no response to any of the external stimuli. But according to the religious doctrines, death is a gradual process, which is associated with the acceptance of an immaterial dimension (soul). For this reason, death means the disconnection of the soul from the body, which is either the result of the ceasing of physical activities or the cause of it.

As life is defined by the connection of the soul to the body, so also death is defined by the final and permanent disconnection of the spirit from the body (Rāzī, n.d, vol.26: 284). Such a belief about death is ascertained through the qur'ānic teachings. In describing death, the Qur'ān frequently

feature common among them; rather, we have to accept that this similarity can be in any area that can be realized in the real world (Shawkānī, n.d, vol.2: 114).

uses the word "*wafaya*" and its derivations, which includes such meanings as full grip (taking full hold of something) and a kind of separation (complete disunion), a separation that sometimes God directly ascribes to Himself (Qur'ān 39:42) and sometimes to the Angel of Death (*malik al-mawt*) (Qur'ān 32:11).

According to religious doctrines, when death happens and the worldly life ends, the eternal life of man starts in two stages of purgatory and resurrection. Purgatory or *barzakh*, which lexically means the buffer between two things, applies to a stage in the otherworldly eternal life which lies between the present world and the Resurrection. When gradual physical death occurs, human beings keep living in the world without their physical body but influenced by the physical world until the last of human beings dies and departs from this world. With the termination of human life on earth, the physical world is shattered and human beings are presented to God for reckoning; this stage is Resurrection.

In any case, if we accept that what the Qur'ān means by the Resurrection of animals and their equality with human beings in this respect is their presence in the Hereafter, we should be able to prove that the animals do have soul (*nafs*)¹, a soul that starts its journey toward the Hereafter after death and its departure from the physical world. Nevertheless, the question that raises is that "do animals have souls?" Two different answers are given to this question in theo-philosophical texts:

The first stance asserts that no creature except human has an immaterial soul. The proponents of this idea believe that although animals possess physical powers (faculties) like those of human beings, they do not have immaterial souls, because for them accepting such a dimension requires accepting the equality of man and animal in an immaterial reality (nature). This, in itself, is followed by equality in behavior, moral characteristics, and acquisition of knowledge, which is not acceptable (Taftāzānī, 1989, vol.3: 252). Although immateriality (*tajarrud*) is a negative concept and common between man and animal, it does not mean their equality in all essence (nature) (Ibid.), since it can be assumed as a hierarchical concept in which human beings and animals have been placed in two different ranks. The

1. Soul or the non-physical aspect of man has various names such as *qalb*, *'aql*, and *nafs*. The human soul is called *qalb* because it is transformed when it encounters different accidents. The soul is called *aql* because its duty is thinking (*ta'aqqul*) and the brain is the only tool for thinking; that is why although after death the brain is not able to function with the failure of the body, the soul keeps on enjoying perception in the purgatory world. Finally, the soul is called *nafs* when it is related to the material body because man per se is nothing but a "souled" body or a body possessing a soul.

second view states that like human beings, animals also possess immaterial souls.¹ The proponents of this theory have relied on rational reasons as well as some qur'ānic verses and sayings of the Holy Prophet (s) and the Infallible Imāms to prove the existence of the immaterial soul in animals.

a. Rational reasons (Extra-religious): The discovery of animal behavior indicates the dominance of a kind of rationality in them, as the animals cannot carry out certain well-thought-out and calculated tasks without availing rational perception. Animals' availing such a level of rational perception indicates that they possess an immaterial soul (rational soul) which controls (manages) their various material dimensions (body).

b. Narrative reasons (Inter-religious): Similarly, the religious texts also emphasize the animals' ability to establish verbal communication as well as their understanding and ability to reason and draw inferences. Although animals' degree of understanding and their ability to perceive is not comparable to that of the human beings, it does not mean that animals' understanding in all cases is lower than that of humans. Scientific evidence indicates that the difference between the physical structure of human beings and animals sometimes provides the ground for the animals to be more perceptive than humans. This scientific fact has not been neglected in religious texts, either. For instance, the barking of dogs and braying of donkeys at night show their awareness of some incidents that are going to take place. These texts warn against being heedless of them and emphasize that these reactions are the result of their perceiving something that the humans are not able to perceive (Bukhārī, 1981: 263-264, no. 1233-1235).

The existence of such an understanding in animals represents their possession of an immaterial soul. The Qur'ān points out this understanding in various instances, including the glorification (of Allāh Almighty) by the wise, the earthly and heavenly creatures (Qur'ān 24:41),² the possibility of understanding the birds' speech (Qur'ān 27:16), the perception of the birds (Qur'ān 27:17), and the innate intelligence in the honeybee (Qur'ān 16:68).

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1. Accepting a non-material and celestial dimension for animals in the Islamic thought system would entail a value and status for them which are referred to as "reverence of the soul" or "divine right", a status that is undoubtedly influential in the way man utilizes the animals (Ardabīlī, 1983, vol.10: 318; Najafī, 1988, vol.27: 111).
 2. There are two possibilities regarding what the glorification (of Allāh Almighty) by animals is meant to be: 1) Non-verbal glorification: according to this hypothesis, every living creature praises God and describes His characteristics in its own language based on its existential structure; 2) Verbal glorification: in this view, animals glorify God using their power of understanding and faculty of perception with the use of speech and sounds (Bahā'ī, n.d, 101).

2. The Objective of resurrection of the animals

Given the acceptance of the soul and resurrection of animals, the question remains to be answered as to what objective God is pursuing for the presence of animals in the Hereafter and their resurrection.

The easiest answer is that either like Ibn Ḥazm we say, “I do not know” (Ibn Ḥazm al-Ṭāhirī, n.d. vol.1: 74 & vol.3: 74.), or like Qāḍī ‘Aḍud Ḍjī we say, “God has no purpose in this” (Jurjānī, 1907, vol.8: 296.) However, if we seek to find a clear and convincing answer, we should notice that according to the principle of the similarity between man and animal regarding resurrection, the same reason or reasons that ascertain man’s resurrection would prove animal resurrection in the Hereafter, too.

Although taking this issue into consideration would pave the way to find the answer, it would create a new difficulty, too; because, according to the qur’ānic teachings, the human resurrection is aimed at receiving reward (thawāb) and punishment (‘iqāb) for the way he has acted in the world.

Although the world can be a place for rewarding or punishing human beings for their deeds, the material characteristics of the world create a kind of restriction that rules out the possibility to establish a balanced proportion between human deeds and the kind and degree of reward or punishment they receive. Therefore, because of its infinite time and space, the Hereafter is a proper place for judging human actions (Qur’ān 20:15).

The otherworldly reward or punishment is imaginable only if the person is obliged to follow or abandon something (Taklīf) and enjoy a kind of legal responsibility concerning his conduct. This is exclusive to humankind and animals do not have this responsibility. Thus, it is not possible to seek a justification for the necessity of animal resurrection through the principle of the similarity between human and animal (Ṭūsī, 1984: 313). Nevertheless, given the propounding of animal resurrection in religious texts, Muslim theologians have adopted various views to study its existence and the way it exists.

2.1. A Symbolic Move

Some theologians, such as Abū al-Ḥasan Ash‘arī perceive that the presence of animals in the world to come (Resurrection) is simply a symbolic move which is aimed at reminding the humankind of the extreme accuracy in reckoning and fulfillment of justice (*Rāzī, n.d, vol.31: 67-68*). Naturally, in such a state, the animals no longer need to receive any reward or punishment for their deeds because they do not have any obligations (*Māzandarānī, n.d., vol.10: 186*).

To prove this stance toward the resurrection of the animals, we might refer to this saying of the Noble Prophet (s), “On the Judgment Day, all the

rightful people will receive their rights, inasmuch as the horned sheep will be retaliated in *qiṣāṣ* for butting the hornless sheep” (Ṭabarānī, 1996, vol.2: 301). It can be assumed that the hornless sheep is a symbol of the oppressed since it cannot fend off oppression, and the horned sheep is a symbol of the oppressor as it has various means, including physical power, for harming others (Baḥrānī, 1985: 120).

2.2. Receiving Recompense

What is meant by recompense is the valuable benefit that an animal would have obtained if it had undergone some maltreatments due to its possession of an understanding and knowing that it had no way to obtain that benefit except through undergoing those maltreatments (*Rāzī, n.d., vol.12: 219*).

Based on the rational rule of “*i‘ādatu man laḥū ‘iwaḍun aw ‘alayhi ‘iwaḍun*” (returning of the one who claims a recompense or upon whom is a recompense) (Mufīd, n.d, p.46), Mu‘tazilites and Shī‘as believe that animal resurrection is for the purpose of receiving the recompense for the hardships and sufferings that they undergo in the world (*Ṭūsī, 1989, vol.4: 129 & vol.10: 281*).

Projecting this concept concerning the animal resurrection is dependent on accepting two issues. First, maltreating animals (*iṣāl ālām*) without having committed any wrong is evil. Second, it is upon God to recompense animals for maltreatment and suffering they undergo in the world (*Rāzī, n.d, vol.12: 219*).

It is clearly understood that this argument can be used concerning the necessity of animal resurrection when the animal has not received the recompense for the pains and sufferings that it has undergone in the world; otherwise, intellectually viewed, there is no need for their resurrection. Similarly, if we assume that an animal has not undergone any pain and suffering for availing a desirable living condition, there remains no need for its resurrection, since it has not been entitled to receiving recompense (*Rāzī, n.d, vol.12: 219*).

Finally, it is upon God to recompense an animal only when He has a role in the maltreatment of the animal, like when He permits to kill (slaughter) an animal to use its meat, or to kill (murder) it for hurting human beings as in the case of the predators and harmful insects, or when he permits to use them in toilsome tasks such as transporting heavy loads. But, if man inflicts torment on an animal (and tyrannizes it) without having a rational or canonical (textual) permit, he is naturally responsible to recompense that animal in the Hereafter (Mar‘ashī Najafī, n.d., vol.16: 186).

The justification of the necessity of the resurrection of the animals to receive recompense, which is advocated by most of the Mu'tazilite and Shī'a theologians, is strongly opposed by the Ash'arite theologians. Although not denying the resurrection of the animals, the Ash'arites maintain that their resurrection can take place only by God's will (dispensation) without its being necessary for God. In other words, as religious texts emphasize the resurrection of the animals and there is no religious or rational evidence for being wrong, it is to be believed; however, it should be noted that this resurrection does not need to be solely for retribution (punishment) or receiving reward (recompense) (Nawawī, 1987, vol.16: 136).

They have relied on two issues to prove the necessity (incumbency) of paying recompense to the animals as false. First, if something is incumbent upon a person, he or she has to be reproached for not fulfilling it, whereas God cannot be reproached if the animals are not resurrected. Second, If hurting others is permitted because of the recompense they would receive later on, then it should be permissible to harm others without their wishing it and then undertake the recommendation. But, this act is not permissible and fair (Ghazālī, 1985, vol.1: 205).

2.3. Animals' Demanding Justice against Animals

The possibility is outlined in some exegetical texts that the resurrection of the animals takes place for the sake of judging animals' reciprocal conducts so that using retaliation (qīṣāṣ)¹ the oppressed animals can avenge the oppressive animals' deeds (intiṣāf = demanding justice) (Ḥakamī, 1971, vol.2: 831). Accordingly, the similarity between animals and human beings is in two things. The first is resurrection, which means that an animal is resurrected as a human being is resurrected. The second is qīṣāṣ (retaliated punishment), which means that as a human being will pay their penalties in the Hereafter, so will be an animal responsible for its tyrannical conducts (Ṭabarsī, 1960, vol.4: 50).

With this explanation, it is clear that what is meant by the qīṣāṣ of the tyrannical animals is a kind of retaliation and requiting in kind, rather than a punishment for disobeying the Divine commands, which is incompatible with the animals' non-obligation principle (Nawawī, 1987, vol.16: 137). Also, there is no room for saying that if the oppressive animal deserves receiving recompense from God, God would transfer it to the animal oppressed by that animal; otherwise, God would directly award this recompense to the oppressed animal (*Rāzī, n.d.*, vol.12: 220). Because the

1. *Qīṣāṣ* means the penalty which God as Divine Legislator has set for specific crimes (Fathullāh, 1995: 153).

reason is that, with the reciprocal treatment, the injustice of the oppressive animal to the oppressed animal would be compensated for and there would remain no need for recompense.

Accepting the intra-group pleading for justice to be applied to animals is imaginable only when their conducts are based on a kind of common sense and understanding (*Turayhī, 1988, vol.1: 517*), because, so far as it is not possible to imagine a conscious behavior and criminal intention for the animal, it would not be possible to accept pleading for justice for one side and incrimination for the other, and judge for the necessity of recompense.

2.4. Animal's Appealing for Justice against Man

Although in theo-exegetical texts its probability is not taken seriously, the result of the resurrection of animals may be viewed to be their pleading for justice against the cruel behaviors of human beings, and this pleading for justice may not need to be just for receiving recompense. Rather, it can be assumed that a sort of requirement or punishment will take place between man and animal, and this way, man will pay for their maltreatment of animals. On this basis, stating the equality of man and animals concerning the Resurrection, the Almighty God intends to say that human beings are not permitted to treat animals cruelly because God is their Creator and on the Resurrection Day will protect them by dispensing justice (*Ṭabrisī, 1960, vol.4: 49*).

There is also evidence in religious texts confirming such an impression of the objective for the resurrection of animals. This evidence is divided into two groups in terms of content. The first group, without referring to the punishment in the Hereafter world for maltreating the animals, just points out the animals' pleading for justice in the Hereafter. The second group, without mentioning the pleading for justice, just refers to the punishment for maltreating the animals.

In a tradition, the Holy Prophet (s) is quoted as describing the complaint of a sparrow as follows, "Anyone who kills a sparrow in vain, it will cry for help from God on the Resurrection day, saying, 'O Lord! This person killed me in vain without gaining any benefit from it and denied me of eating insects and reptiles of the earth'" (*Nūrī, 1987, vol.8: 304, no. 9507*). Similarly, he threatens the unjust camel-driver this way, "The Holy Prophet (s) saw a camel whose feet were fastened while its load was still on its back. He said, 'Where is its owner? He has no humanity; tomorrow [on the Day of Resurrection] he should be ready to face justice'" (*Arūsī Ḥuwayzī, 1991, vol.1: 715*).

On his heavenly journey (mi'rāj)¹, the Holy Prophet (s) described the

1. Mi'rāj means ladder; what it means in religious-philosophical terminology is the Holy Prophet's (s) journey from Masjid al-Aqṣā in Jerusalem to the Heaven (*Qur'ān 17:1; Ibn Sīna, 1987*).

condition of a woman who was being tormented in the Hell for her maltreatment of a cat, “On the night of mi‘rāj, I saw a woman in the fire; I asked the reason for it, it was said, ‘she had fastened a cat without giving it food and water and would not release it to eat the vermin of the earth until it died. Therefore, Allāh is punishing her because of that’” (Nawawī, n.d, vol.18: 319). In another description of the same story, the Holy Prophet (s) said that that woman would be punished in the Hell by the same cat: “I saw in the Fire an owner of a cat whose cat was biting her on her front and back. She was a woman who had fastened her cat, neither allowing it to feed nor releasing it to eat from the vermin of the earth” (Tamīmī, 1963, vol.2: 468, no. 1666).

3. The Degree of Animals’ Presence in the Hereafter

Let’s suppose that the resurrection of the animals is for the animals to receive recompense for the injustice they suffered in the world. If so, the question comes up as to whether their life will terminate (inqiṭā‘) in the Hereafter once they receive their recompense or they would live perpetually there to enjoy the Divine blessings as human beings do.

Three different answers are given to this question in theological texts.

3.1. Termination (Inqīṭā‘)

Some theologians believe that the necessity for the resurrection of the animals would terminate by the fulfillment of the recompense, and as there is no reason for them to be eternal, there remains no reason for the animals to continue to survive in the Hereafter (*Rāzī, n.d, vol.12: 219; Ṭūsī, 1989, vol.10: 281*).

3.2. Permanence (Durability)

Abū al-Qāsim al-Balkhī and his followers believe that since taking blessings back will hurt the animal again, Divine favor (tafaḍḍul) will be bestowed on the animals to keep on living in the Hereafter world. Besides, with the recompense being provided, death has to occur, and causing the animal to die again would, in turn, hurt it; this way we will encounter a chain of endless recompenses (*Ṭabrisī, 1960, vol.10: 277*).

3.3. Being Unclear

The third group of theologians also believe that deciding the continuation or cessation of blessings in the Hereafter world is subject to God’s will; if He deems it fair, He would do it, otherwise, He would prepare the way for their extinction (*Rāzī, n.d, vol.31: 67*).

Since the only source for examining this issue is the religious teachings and as there is no explicit explanation in the revealed verses and the sayings of Ahl al-Bayt in this respect, we will put off judging animal life in the Hereafter until some later time. If we accept the similarity of the human and

animal in the Hereafter life and claim that the phrase *communities like yourselves* concerns this similarity in all aspects, we will be able to proclaim with certainty that the life of animals in the Hereafter world is also eternal like that of the human. However, if we do not accept the overall similarity of the human and animal and claim that this similarity only concerns the principle of the existence of resurrection for animals, then there is no way for us to talk about the permanence or transience of enjoying the Hereafter blessings by animals (Ṭabāṭabā'ī, 1973, vol.20: 214).¹

4. The Type of Animals that will be resurrected

One of the important issues discussed in animal resurrection is to determine which types of animals will enjoy otherworldly life. Will all the living creatures have the chance to be present on the Resurrection Day or just a group of them will enjoy this blessing? To find an answer to this question, we have to refer to the Qur'ān. According to the statement *There is no animal on land, nor a bird that flies with its wings, but they are communities like yourselves*, the Qur'ān has mentioned two types of animals as *dābba* (beast) and *ṭā'ir* (bird) and regarded them communities (*umam*) like human beings. The concept of *ṭā'ir* has no ambiguity because it includes all living creatures that we call “birds” of the sky.

However, what type of animals is called *dābba*? It is a beast that moves on land (Fayḍ Kāshānī, n.d, 2: 118). According to the Qur'ān, these animals are divided into three general groups: those that creep upon their bellies, walk on two feet, and walk on four (Qur'ān 24:45). Therefore, we can conclude that all the birds of the sky and land animals have resurrection (Ṭabāṭabā'ī, 1973, vol.7: 72; Ṭūsī, 1989, vol.4: 127). However, no mention has been made of the aquatic creatures and the insects.

The silence of the Qur'ān about the resurrection of the aquatic creatures, despite their communal life, is perhaps because the Qur'ān has on three occasions viewed the merging of the seas and their being set afire and drying

1. Nevertheless, it is implied from the sayings of the religious dignitaries and the Infallible Imāms that at least some animals would enjoy kind of eternal otherworldly life: 1) There is no camel having stayed seven times in 'Arafa during Ḥajj pilgrimage except that Allāh has rated it among the animals of the Paradise and blessed its progeny (Barqī, n.d, 2: 635-636, no. 133); 2) Any camel with which people go on Ḥajj three (or seven) times is rated as among the animals of Paradise (Ibn Bābawayh, 1984, vol.2: 216, no. 2207); 3) Choose healthy and strong animals for sacrificing, as they will be your riding mount on the *Ṣirāṭ* (the bridge over Hell leading to Paradise) (Ibn Bābawayh, 1966, vol.2: 438, chap. 179); 4) The horses of the soldiers in the world are considered as their horses in the paradise (Kulaynī, 1968, vol.5: 3, no. 3).

up as signs of resurrection: when the seas are set afire (Qur'ān 81:6), when the seas are merged (Qur'ān 82:3), by the surging sea (Qur'ān 52:6).

With the disappearance of the seas, no chance is left for the aquatic creatures to survive; thus, talking about their resurrection will lead nowhere. That is why the phrase “There is no animal on land” is interpreted as “There moves no animal over the face of Earth” (Ṭabrisī, 1960, vol.4: 48), though the contrast between the sky and the earth and using *fī* (in, on) instead of *‘alā* (over) in Qur'ān 6:38 could in itself indicate the presence of the aquatic creatures as well. However, we cannot deny that the justice – the orientedness of the Hereafter - necessitates that man should be called to account for doing injustice to the aquatic creatures, too.

The resurrection of the insects, however, has not received much attention from the interpreters, although Qatāda and Ibn ‘Abbās have related it simply as a possibility (*Rāzī, n.d.*, vol.31: 67), and we have no evidence for the inclusiveness of the resurrection of the non-human creatures, including insects.

Following the footsteps of Plotinus, Ṣadr al-Dīn Shīrāzī has divided the animals into two groups: those that enjoy only sensual perception and the others that - besides sensual perception - enjoy faculty of imagination and the ability to remember images. He believes that only the second group of animals will be resurrected and can be present in the lower levels of the Barzakh (purgatory) after their death and the destruction of their bodies while retaining their individual distinction. Losing their idiosyncratic advantage, however, the first group will transform into a single creature and return to their lord of species (*rabb al-naw‘*) and the rational sagacious (Shīrāzī, 1999, vol.9: 248-250).

What is meant by the “lord of species” in this theory is what has been outlined in philosophy by Plato onwards as the Theory of Forms (*muthul*). Stemmed from the root “*mathala*”, the word *muthul* means similar and parallel and in Plato’s terminology, it applies to the creatures similar to the material creatures. To Plato, everything has two existences: material and immaterial, because, according to the principle of the inconsistency of matter, the material creatures are exposed to change, transformation, decadence, and destruction. However, unlike this type of existence, the typical nature of every species would sustain to survive.

The survival of any creature is dependent upon that which protects its species and may not undergo any change and transformation. Therefore, any material object has an immaterial existence, which manages the individuals of that species and our cognition belongs to it (q.v. Plato, book six). Although the theory of Forms was severely criticized by Aristotle and his Muslim followers such as Avicenna, mystics like Suhrawardī and

philosophers such as Mīrdāmād, Mīrfindiriskī, and Ṣadr al-Dīn Shīrāzī made great attempts to prove this theory with justifications (q.v. Ibn Sīna, 1960: 310-324; Suhrawardī, 2001: 92-93; Shīrāzī, 2003: 256-263; Shīrāzī, 1378, vol.5: 214; vol.2: 77; vol.3: 504-505).

Such a comment on the resurrection of animals results from his viewpoint that the Hereafter world is an immaterial world whose pleasures and torments are the outcome of the perceiving and imagining the pleasant and unpleasant forms that are created in man due to his worldly acts. It is with this consideration that in philosophical texts, perception is regarded to be involved in creating pleasure and pain and is defined as follows, “Pleasure is the perception of the desirable because it is desirable and pain is the perception of undesirable because it is undesirable” (Taftāzānī, 1989, 2: 364). Normally, according to this type of approach to the Hereafter, so long as an animal does not enjoy the faculty of imagination (khīyāl), it cannot enjoy its presence in the Hereafter world (Shīrāzī, 2001: 524-526).

Conclusion

1. The examination of animals’ behavior indicates the presence of a kind of rationality in them, as the animals cannot carry out certain well-thought-out and calculated tasks without availing rational perception. Animals’ availing such a level of rational perception indicates that they possess an immaterial soul (i.e. rational soul) which controls their various material dimensions (i.e. body).
2. Accepting a non-material and celestial dimension for animals would entail a value and status for them which are referred to as the “reverence of the soul” or “divine right”, a status that is undoubtedly influential in the way man utilizes the animals.
3. The otherworldly reward or punishment in the Hereafter world is imaginable only if the person is obliged to follow or to abandon something and enjoy a kind of legal responsibility concerning his conduct. This is exclusive to humankind, and animals do not have this responsibility.
4. The theory of animal resurrection is dependent on accepting two issues: maltreating animals (īṣāl ālām) without having committed any wrong is evil, and it is upon God to recompense animals for all treatment and suffering they undergo in the world.

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