

# ISLAM & REBIRTH

Our life on earth is preparation for eternal life after death, says MAULANA WAHIDUDDIN KHAN

Islam says God created man as an eternal being, but divided his lifespan into two: the worldly life and the postdeath life. While the predeath period is temporary, the postdeath one is eternal.

To illustrate this, let us compare human life with an iceberg. The iceberg is a huge mass of ice floating in the ocean, but only about 10 per cent of it is above the surface of water, and the rest of it is under water.

## Work And Reward

This division is not arbitrary; it is based on divine planning. God has created a world called paradise — an ideal world, a perfect world. According to the *Quran*, it is a place where man will find fulfilment of all his desires: *Therein, you shall have all that your soul desires* (41:31), and is a place



**LIFE ON EARTH IS A WORLD OF OPPORTUNITIES. THOSE WHO AVAIL OF THESE CHANCES AND PREPARE THEMSELVES ACCORDINGLY WILL BE SELECTED AND WILL BE SETTLED IN PARADISE AFTER DEATH**

*where people shall not fear, nor shall they grieve. (2:112)*

Our life on earth is just a preparation for the eternal afterlife. In this world, there are different kinds of situations and challenges. Man is here to face those challenges and prepare himself to be a deserving candidate for paradise. In this sense, our life on earth is a world of opportunities. Those who avail of these opportunities and prepare themselves accordingly will be chosen and will be settled in paradise after death.

In this life, there are all kinds of



problematic and unwanted situations. But they have a purpose. They constitute a training ground that gives us a chance to cope

with adversity, thus preparing us for eternal entry into paradise. The *Quran* introduces paradise thus: *God calls man to the home of peace. (10:25).*

*In paradise, there will be all kinds of activities that we see on earth (2:25), but, there is a difference. In the present world, activities are not free of problems: there are accidents, hardships, boredom...but in paradise, all activities will be joyful.*

Islam says the present world is a place of work, while the world hereafter is a place of reward. When one dies, life doesn't come to an end. One simply enters the second phase of life, that is, the world hereafter.

It is only in the present world that one can prove that one is deserving of paradise in the world hereafter. This opportunity ends at the time of death; after death, there is no opportunity to prepare oneself. Success and failure are both determined by one's deeds in this world, in the predeath period.

## The Divine Plan

Entry into paradise is not based on any kind of recommendation, and it is not anyone's birthright. It depends totally on one's deeds. The *Quran* is very clear on this point: *Man shall have only that for which he strives. (53:39)*

According to Islam, there are only two phases of human life: predeath and postdeath. There is no third or fourth phase. The divine plan gives everyone only one chance, that is, during the predeath period. No other chance will be provided. As per the divine plan, every man or woman is given only one chance and they can either avail of it or lose it. It is a question of now or never. ■

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