

# Quranic Case for Resurrection

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**Abstract**—Death has increasingly caused humans to investigate its reality and what lies after it, if something at all, with personal conviction and concern. Till date it remains a matter of speculation. We do not encounter arguments other than ‘faith’ from major world religions when justifying claims about life after death (LAD) as it is an unseen phenomenon. This paper attempts to analyse the Islamic idea of resurrection (after death) and its justification that is distinct from faith but instead contemplative in nature. To do this a legal lens was adopted which allowed the categorisation of selected Quranic arguments under the heading of direct evidence, indirect evidence and intuitive reasoning. *Results*: Four kinds of direct evidences are discussed under the themes of sleep, droughts, predictions and Quranic challenge. The section of indirect evidences narrows its scope only to two, out of many, broad possible signs that pointed towards the reality of resurrection. These include the signs found in nature such as sun and water as well as signs one finds within the human body such as the creation and function of human fingertips. Finally the last section tries to amalgamate Quran’s appeal to human rationality that facilitates the reader in accepting the possibility of resurrection and hence a final Day of Judgement. These include the notion of accountability, pleasure, pain and human agency.

**Keywords**— Islam, Life After Death, Quran, Resurrection

## I. INTRODUCTION

Despite innumerable differences among the human species, all human beings inevitably share a common reality, which is mortality. No creature on earth is exempted from being subjected to death, hence, it is an indispensable truth that is to be experienced by every living soul. Due to this imminent and daunting reality, humans have been trying to understand and discover death and that which lies after it as it is to date still a matter of speculation.

The three dominant ways in which major religions and ideologies attempt to grasp the idea of “*what will happen after death*” can be broadly categorised under the following headings: *resurrection*, *reincarnation* and *nothingness*. The followers of two of the largest religions in the world, Christianity and Islam, adhere to the concept of resurrection. It is the process of the human soul being brought back to life in the same body that it resided in before death. For both religions, resurrection implies that a person is first brought back to his original state, and then subsequently God judges his actions and intentions, which then decides whether he deserves to live eternally in heaven or hell. The advent of resurrection of Jesus in christianity is another topic that is not

the focus of this paper. The concept of *reincarnation* implies that after death a person will be reborn in this very earth as another material being. This notion stands on the pillar of Karma, which means every action has a consequent reaction in the life(s) on earth. Thus, ones past actions will decide whether his new life will be an upgrade or downgrade in comparison to his previous life. Hinduism and Buddhism are religions that understand Life After Death (LAD) through the lens of reincarnation. Lastly, *nothingness* denotes a belief that life ceases to exist at death with no further proceeding. Those who label themselves as nihilistic tend to share this view.

The common theme under resurrection and reincarnation is the motivation for a human to do good and avoid evil. For instance, reincarnation believers are motivated to perform good deeds due to the fear of repercussions, such as being reborn in undesirable conditions on earth. Where as the believers of resurrection would also be motivated to do good and avoid bad as every action they do will be weighed on a scale of Justice on the final Day of Judgement (DOJ). The heavier side of the scale will result in either eternal salvation (if right side of good deeds outweighs the left side of bad deeds) or eternal damnation (in hell) of the soul<sup>1</sup>.

### A. Meaning in Life

Ideologies like Nihilism believe that after death, life will cease to exist, whereas religions provide some sort of explanation regarding the idea of how the soul merely transitions after death. For nihilistic believers, such a view renders life devoid of an absolute meaning and purpose [29], [31], whereas for religious people this sole belief pours a robust meaning in their lives. The idea of whether one believes in a LAD or not “has generally a significant impact on the believer’s attitude to life and ways to lead it” (p.2) [29]. A study in Arizona state university recently found that the belief in LAD could act as a significant predictor of the sustainability of ones actions. Moreover, those who believe in a LAD are more likely to be seen as friendly, fun to interview and tend to foster pro-social and cooperative behaviors [14], [32]. Besides impacting a personal worldview, having a belief in LAD can also effect the way a society as a whole functions, depending on the religious guidelines and their implementation. Nihilistic beliefs rip every humans actions

<sup>1</sup> Although these religions broadly associate with either reincarnation or resurrection, there are still some differences regarding the intricate workings of these events. For instance the event of resurrection follows a different path for Islam and Christianity, while the underlying theme of being brought back to life and accountability remains same.

and existence of an ultimate meaning to fall back, and thus it is not a subject of this paper. However, this does not eradicate the presence of subjective personal meaning in a person's life as studies have shown that regardless of religious beliefs, people can still lead meaningful lives, in which their meaning is derived from subjective sources, and thus can vary from person to person [15], [19]. However, since death is an objective phenomenon, therefore, it implies that its bequeathed meaning must also be objective, which most religions have tried to explain. The way religions like Islam and Christianity attempt to give meaning to this worldly life is centred on the idea of associating its actions with the life to come (after death).

### B. Reincarnation versus Resurrection

The concept of reincarnation asserts that after death, a soul is reborn into this world in a new form. Its assigned status and shape depends on its past behaviours. Good behaviours lead to the soul's rebirth in a more desirable form and body, while bad behaviours will result in being born in a lower status or life form. On the face of it, this theory seems reasonable and just. It could act as an effective way of motivating people towards righteousness.

However, when analysing it more closely, the same theory tends to target the poor and unfortunates of the world, while praises the rich and lucky souls. The latter category could end up dwelling in pride as they understand their fortune as a result of all the good they did in their past lives. On the contrary, the destitute end up being seen as reaping the rewards of their past sins. The poor are told "better luck next time" as reported by an Indian Hindu student (A. Prasad, personal communication, September 12, 2021). Thus, for the unfortunate humans in this world, or any undesirable life form, the fate is a result of their actions. On top of this, there is nothing they can do to undo their past actions as they were committed in another life. They even remain unaware of the nature of their sins for which they are being punished for currently, let alone being able to rectify them. This takes away any kind of corrective human agency that an individual could have adopted. Therefore, such a claim does not readily appeal to the human *fitrah*<sup>2</sup> (natural disposition) as it leaves the suffering soul with helplessness and the fortunate soul with an unverifiable sense of pride. The injustice underlying such a system propels some thinking beings to reject the authenticity of this claim. Moreover, such an understanding of LAD has led to the creation of some inhumane institutions such as the caste system that is widely observed in countries like India, where the belief in reincarnation is prevalent.

Hence, the notion of reincarnation fails to satisfy the element of justice and fairness in the present. Thus, this

category is also not chosen for inspection in this paper. It can be a focus of research for further studies that can enlighten us about the logical underpinnings of this belief. Thus, the focus of this paper will primarily be on advent of resurrection, as claimed by Islam.

### C. Direct and Indirect Proof

Information like this begs the question that what makes people believe in all sorts of theories and explanations about something like a LAD? All these claims about LAD are always shoved under the rug of faith and not logically explained. This is also a reason why we have beliefs like Nihilism that reject a LAD due to the lack of proofs provided by religions to support their LAD claims. It is understandable that the reality of something that is unseen right now is difficult to verify using standards that humanity uses today; of logic and science. However, the underlying motivations of those who have vouched for the existence of a LAD is not any kind of materialistic gain but mostly it has been to motivate man to be good and protect himself from the evil inside and outside of him. The belief in such a phenomenon does not become important owing to its existence but owing to its vastly extensive and deeply personal implications. Some people have viewed this from a negative aspect as well, such that these beliefs are used to maintain control on people.

This paper tends to explore, regardless of the far reaching implications this belief can have on the life of a person, how does ***Islam as a religion try to convince its audience of realities that are imperceptible to the human senses, or precisely the indispensable reality of resurrection.***

The legal method applied on earth to convince the reality of a statement that cannot be empirically validated (sometimes due to moral reasons), to an audience is through the institution of law and thus a courtroom. The job of a lawyer is to present arguments and evidences that support his stance, upon which the jury makes a decision. These evidences can be direct or indirect. Direct evidence in court is the kind that is unfettered when proving an assertion. It directly proves a fact without the need for further inference. The best example of this is a witness testifying to directly hearing or seeing an event. Thus a claim in which the witness directly experienced something is considered direct proof in court. Indirect evidence, also known as circumstantial evidence, on the other hand involves careful interpretation of a collection of facts or proofs that lead to a desired conclusion. However such evidences do not stand alone like direct proofs, and therefore are dependent on the use of logical reasoning in order to prove a fact [13]. An example of such a proof could be a murder weapon with the suspect's fingerprints. Treating the earth as a courtroom and all humanity as its audience, this paper tries to analyse the Quranic justification for its claim on a final Day of Judgement (DOJ) and its subsidiary notions such as resurrection, accountability, heaven and hell. The impact of this profound

<sup>2</sup> In other words; Life After Death.

claim is life transforming, and therefore this paper will attempt to understand the evidences that Allah presents His audience with in order to give weight to a claim that science is unable to verify: of an inevitable resurrection of man and the DOJ<sup>3</sup>. Before dwelling in the evidences, it is important to mention the Islamic claim of resurrection and DOJ.

#### D. Islamic Perspective on Life After Death

Islam is the fastest growing religion in the world [14]. Belief in LAD constitutes as one of the five basic pillars of Islamic faith. LAD entails within it the event of collective resurrection of all humanity, followed by the Day of Judgement, which eventually leads to an eternal life either in hell or heaven. Thus LAD can be broadly divided into resurrection, day of accountability, paradise and hell. According to Islamic faith the DOJ is the day when all mankind will be resurrected and a day for God “is equal to a thousand years as you reckon” (Quran, 22:47). The Muslim belief suggests that resurrection will be of every individual after the universe has been destroyed and rebuilt. Upon that rebuilding, every human soul shall be recreated to his very fingertips and then will be judged for every action it performed on earth. Those for whom the scale of good deeds is heavier than the bad deeds will enter paradise and those for whole the scale of bad deeds is heavier will enter hell. Allah says in Quran, chapter 23 regarding the beginning of last day as “Then when the trumpet will be blown, all (worldly) relations between them (humans) shall cease to function and they will not inquire about one another. Then only those whose scales will be heavy will attain success; and those, whose scales will be light, will be the people who made themselves liable to loss; they shall abide in Hell forever.” (Quran, 23:101-103).

The Quran gives a clear picture regarding the beginning of resurrection with an emphasis on accountability. The fear of a final day of accountability, which can last for 50,000 years or more, is meant to motivate people from not acting ignorantly or foolishly on earth.

In contemporary times, as well as when Muhammad (peace be upon him) brought this message, the concept of a DOJ and the event of being recreated after death was something unfathomable for most people. Many thinkers have tried rationalising life post death, which is why we are aware of concepts like reincarnation, karma, nihilism or near death experiences. However the logic and rationality of most of these concepts sometimes inhibits man from believing in them. The Quran is considered, as the verbatim word of God by Muslims and therefore it will be treated as such in this paper. It is important to note that resurrection comes prior to the DOJ as the purpose of bringing humans back to life is to hold them accountable for their worldly performance. Due to

this, the DOJ is not something any human should be looking forward to as everyone has sinned at some point in their lives. According to the Quran (74:9) “That Day will be a difficult day.” Quran also described the Last Day in the following words:

“And when the Last Hour dawns, those who were lost in sin will be broken in spirit for they will have no intercessors in the beings to whom they were wont to ascribe a share in Gods divinity, rather they will disown those whom they had set up as Allah's associates in His Divinity and when the Last Hour dawns – on that Day will all (men) be sorted out: as for those who attained to faith and did righteous deeds, they shall be made happy in the gardens of delight” (Quran, 30:12-15)

The paper is divided into three sections. Firstly it addresses the notion of resurrection from the perspective of direct evidences put forth by the Quran. The second section will discuss some indirect evidences that can lead man to conclude the reality of resurrection. The signs and past events that are directly and indirectly related to the Quranic message of resurrection are addressed to a specific type of audience; one that uses their reason and are willing to believe. Finally the paper will focus on how the Quranic justifications and motivations are in accordance with basic human functioning and therefore easily perceptible for the reader rather than being difficult. By analysing the notion of resurrection from these three lenses, the paper hopes to make clear and categorise the Quranic reasoning for resurrection that aims to assist its audience towards belief in the DOJ and an understanding of LAD.

This paper can be a point of reference for further research in religious texts and their contemplative proofs for unseen phenomena. In existing literature, cases in favour of notions like resurrection and LAD generally rest on the pillar of faith. However this paper attempts to contribute a religious explanation of the unseen events based on justifications that emanate and stand even without the existence of faith. Currently the focus is on how the Islamic scripture; Quran, justifies its claim of resurrection and a LAD. Further research is needed to explore the concept from other religious perspectives.

#### II. SECTION ONE: DIRECT EVIDENCE

*God creates (man) in the first instance, and then brings him forth anew: and, in the end, unto Him you all will be brought back” – Quran (30:11)*

In order for us, as individuals, to believe something as true we resort to the main source of personal experience and impersonal observation. These act as direct evidences in a humans personal life. Personal experience would allow person X to conclude that person Y is his mother because he personally experienced her performance as a mother, where as

an impersonal observation is something more objective such as a DNA test, which could also lead to the same conclusion. As humans we are easily deluded and influenced, which can sometimes distort the way we make sense of personal experience. This aspect is more subjective, however it has the potential to lead humans in exploring objective realities. This is the reason science has developed, which allowed humans to differentiate the subjective from the objective and explore subjective observation or a phenomenon more empirically. With the example of person X, through both pathways he will reach the same true conclusion that person Y is his mother.

When it comes to the Quran and how it describes resurrection, we can see that God asks us to ponder over certain personal experiences that are enough for us to conclude that resurrection and Judgement Day is inevitable. When it comes to finding impersonal observations of resurrection that can be held true regardless of personal experience, the Quran has a different stance. Revealing the reality of the unseen realms, which include God, Angels, His Books and Afterlife (resurrection, heaven & hell) would imply the test of man is no longer valid therefore, Quran in fact lets man know that indeed the essence of these realities are imperceptible to human senses, however if he wishes to know God he can do so by reflecting on the numerous signs that are placed around him and inside him. These signs can then be linked either directly or indirectly to the unseen world.

Therefore direct evidence in this paper would not imply something that is directly perceptible to the human senses, but **those visible signs that directly correlate to the notion of resurrection**. These will include the concept of *sleep, drought revivals, Quranic predictions* and the unchallenged *Quranic challenge*.

#### A. Sleep

*And among His wonders is your sleep, at night or in daytime, as well as your [ability to go about in] quest of some of His bounties: in this, behold there are messages indeed for people who [are willing to] listen! – Quran (30:23)*

The first direct sign found in the creation of man that will be discussed in this paper is sleep. Allah has mentioned sleep as a blessing for human kind and stated rest to be its inherent purpose such that one can let go of any kind of stress or fear during sleep period. The way God describes the process of sleep is as follows: “It is Allah Who takes away the souls of people at the hour of their death, and takes away at the time of sleep the souls of those that have not died. Then He retains the souls of those against whom He had decreed death and returns the souls of others till an appointed time. Surely there are Signs in this for a people who reflect.” (Quran 39:42)

Every night we go to sleep, while our souls leave our body. Every day we come back to consciousness completely unaware of the time we had spent sleeping. The process of sleeping and waking up everyday is a manifestation and

preparation of the final waking up that will take place after the final sleep of death.

In order to be able to comprehend the reality of resurrection day, God allows us to experience the state of being asleep every day and the act of waking up every day. Some souls who are ordained to die will not wake up, while the rest are returned to their bodies. While in the state of sleep, we are completely unaware of our surroundings or even our selves. Intuitively, that seems like how a person would be when he is dead: without consciousness. Interestingly, it is not too bizarre to imagine how an eternal sleep (death) could be like since we experience something similar to it everyday.

Furthermore, the idea of waking up after death and being held accountable is also not something too alien to our basic human functioning. If people are asked to recall their thoughts and feelings while dreaming, there is a high chance that they will report that while dreaming they believe the dream situation to be the reality at that moment. We can also be aware of some background information within a dream that was not experienced previously through our senses. For instance one can easily find himself spending time with an unknown person in their dream whom they never met in real life. However, during the dream that unknown person is not a stranger. A tacit understanding of a shared history exists between them and it seems completely normal. Moreover, upon waking, you realise that it was just a dream. You may sigh with relief if it was a nightmare or be sad if the dream was desirable. It is important to take note of three notions here towards which a dream points.

Firstly, upon waking you instantly realise, that this world is the real world and the dream was not. The innate tendency for a human to realise this realisation that the dream was “just a dream” and that this life is real, acts as a direct sign towards the waking we all will have after death. The second notion to which a dream points to is the impossibility of recalling our worldly reality while in the temporal world of dreams. Thus the claim that it is impossible to imagine waking up after death and realising that the renewed life is the ultimate truth is not a valid claim. We experience this phenomenon every day. And just like in our dreams we are unable to fully fathom what our real life is like until we wake up, similarly, the form of our ultimate reality is also something that we currently cannot grasp on our own.

The final point to ponder over is the physical impact a strong dream can have on humans. When experiencing a nightmare, it is common for most people to wake up sweating, breathing heavily and being in a state of horror for a certain amount of time. Henceforth, scary dreams tend to motivate conscious action. For example we tend to engage in some kind of self-soothing act after a nightmare to feel better. Children run to their parents for solace, adults turn on the lights or phone a friend. God repeatedly mentions His signs and

follows them with statements like “indeed in it are signs for people who think”. If a dream, which is considered not real, can affect the way we physically feel right after it, could there be a possibility that this life can also have an impact on how we feel when we wake up after death? How improbable is it to reflect on the verses where God explicitly informs us that our actions and intentions in this world will define our state in the next world?

Furthermore it is also known that the content of our dreams is dependent upon factors like sleep deprivation, subconscious thoughts or desires, stress, illness etc. In other words, some aspects of our life such as having very less sleep can greatly impact the vividness of our dreams. If our dreams today can be dictated by our thinking patterns or resting routine, then how hard can it be to imagine that our actions in life today can also dictate the state of our life upon waking after death?

Not surprisingly, the practice of prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) involved reciting these verses upon waking, which are now memorised and recited by millions of Muslims throughout the world. In the prayer the messenger of God advised his followers to associate the remembrance of resurrection to every waking moment in the following words; “Praise is due to Allah, Who gave us life after our death (sleep) and unto Thee is resurrection” [4].

### B. Droughts

*See, then, the signs of Allah's Grace: how He gives life to the earth after it had been lifeless. Verily He is The One who will bring the dead back to life. He has the power to will anything - Quran (30:50)*

The next evidence pertains to the notion of provision from the sky to give life to dead land. In geographical terminology we refer to it as droughts or barren lands. “A drought is a period of unusually persistent dry weather that continues long enough to cause serious problems such as crop damage and/or water supply shortages. Droughts are caused by low precipitation over an extended period of time.” [24]. It is also the second most costly weather events after hurricanes. For instance in 2011 China had to spend around \$2.4 billion in drought related damages[11].

People used to ask the Muhammad (peace be upon him) that how can a new world such as Heaven or Hell or the Day of resurrection come to be after this one is destroyed? The answer for this claim was simple i.e. If God was able to design and provide life to this planet once, then He can do so again as well. Quran asks us to look at this world as an indicator of the creation of a new one. Wouldn't it be easy to create another world when one has already been created?

Therefore, the sign where Allah says “*and in the provision that Allah sends down from the sky wherewith He gives life to the earth after it had been lifeless*” acts as a

source of direct data in reaching an inferential conclusion of resurrection from the seen phenomenon of drought revival.

Primarily the verse points to the actual phenomenon of how barren land is revived from what Allah sends down from the sky (rain). Not surprisingly, research has also found a negative correlation between the occurrence of rainfall and barren lands where among other factors, rainfall improvement is the “driving force of the...greening trend of the vegetation in” barren areas such as the Sahel [26]. The above-mentioned verse acts as direct evidence for the advent of resurrection. If humanity can observe the revival of dead land in this material world through something like rain, how difficult could it be to imagine the revival of humanity?

The most actionable solution for droughts is its prevention, which comes from preservation of water. The only action humans can take to avoid the harmful impact of the DOJ is also its prevention, which depends on peoples cumulated past behaviors. Once a drought is in motion, it is only rain that can revive it. Rain is not something humans can consciously set in motion on command, similarly dying and then being resurrected is also something that human agency cannot control. Even though there is no negation in Quran regarding the impact human efforts can have on curbing droughts, still research advises humans to act carefully and not waste water in the first place in order to avoid droughts and their harmful effects as no other way has proven effective enough. Similarly, in order to resurrect in a pleasurable state after death, humans must act consciously before the event of death even take place by doing good deeds.

### The impact of droughts:

Unlike the instantly visible effects of a sudden high-impact event (e.g. floods), the effects of drought tend to occur slowly and can last for a long term, just like the LAD can be foreseen but once it hits, like a drought, its impact can be as far reaching as an eternal life of salvation or damnation.

Droughts lack highly visible and structural impact as their effect tends to accumulate over an extended period of time. Although the undesirable effects of drought can be slow to develop, however they can last for years [11]. A systematic review goes into detail about the types and intensities of reported impacts droughts can have on health of individuals. They can cause “nutrition-related effects (including general malnutrition and mortality, micronutrient malnutrition, and anti-nutrient consumption); water-related disease (including E coli, cholera and algal bloom); airborne and dust-related disease (including silo gas exposure and coccidioidomycosis); vector borne disease (including malaria, dengue and West Nile Virus); mental health effects (including distress and other emotional consequences); and other health effects (including wildfire, effects of migration, and damage to infrastructure).” [26]. Droughts can thus also lead to widespread infectious diseases in a population due to a decrease in the drinking water quality as it did in the UK and Wales when people

resorted to private drinking water to compensate for the less access to clean water. 22% of Afghan population suffered from liver disease as a consequence of drought in 1970 as it forced them to cut corners on the kind of crops they consumed.

In parallel to this, the DOJ will be unpleasant for those who acted ignorantly on earth and will last for years. Just like a drought, the disaster of the DOJ does not happen immediately but after a long period of time. How difficult this day will be on someone will depend on how a person was on earth before death overtook him/her. Similarly, just like a drought revives with rain, a “droughtful” DOJ can also be made alive and pleasant for some soul through by Allah’s mercy. This parable is not hard to imagine as Quran repeatedly uses rain as a symbolic representation of Gods intervention.

### C. Predictions

Another direct evidence provided by Quran is making true predictions. The prediction that is worth mentioning is the one from surah Ar-Rum (Rome) where Allah foretold the eventual victory of the Roman Empire over the Persian Empire. At that moment the Roman Empire had suffered a horrible defeat at the hands of the Persian Empire. The Muslims at heart were siding with the Romans as they were people of the book (Christians), while the pagan Makkans were siding with the Persians as they were also polytheists. Upon this defeat the Makkans rejoiced while the Muslims were not happy. Then this verse was revealed in which God said:

“The Romans have been defeated in the [adna- nearest, lowest] land; but after their defeat they shall gain victory in a few years [bida’ sineen – three to nine years]. All power belongs to Allah both before and after. On that day will the believers rejoice at the victory granted by Allah. He grants victory to whomsoever He pleases. He is the Most Mighty, the Most Compassionate” (Quran 30:2-5). There are two evidences in this ayah; one direct and one indirect. The direct evidence was that indeed after almost seven years following the revelation of these verses, the Roman Empire finally defeated the Persian Empire, although the odds were unlikely.

The indirect evidence from this verse is how God describes the land where Romans were defeated. He used the word adna al ardh, which can be translated as nearest as well as lowest. Arabs at the time could relate to the meaning that it was a nearby piece of land, however now we, thanks to science and technology, can also relate to the other meaning. Recent geological studies have “shown that the lowest point on Earth (dry land) is indeed the region where the main battles took place – around the Dead Sea” (p.11) [1].

Hence the occurrence of such an unlikely prediction, which later proved true is a direct signal that promises of Quran are truthful. Similarly with regards to the resurrection of mankind Allah says “They solemnly swear by God with their most sacred oaths that ‘Allah will never raise him who once is

dead’. Why will He not raise? It is a promise He has made binding upon Himself, but most people do not know it” (Quran 16:38-39). Therefore the reality of resurrection is not just a claim by God, but a promise, which according to His nature can not go unfulfilled. We are also further told that it is only Allah who has the power over this day; “The imminent Hour has drawn near, and none but Allah can avert it.” (Quran 53: 57-58). Therefore attempts to somehow avert the day of accountability are futile.

### D. Challenge of Quran

This part will attempt to reflect over the Quranic challenge of producing a similar chapter and its claim that indeed those who tried would be unable to do so. Before we delve in to the reactions this claim elicited, it is important to primarily note the contextuality and role of poetic literacy in Arabia of the time.

#### Poetry in context

At the time of Quranic revelation, Arabs were generally well versed in the Arabic language and especially poetry. Poetry served not just an entertainment purpose but instead played a much functional role. It served “a definite social purpose, and [was] in many cases itself an essential part of the social system, to the extent that the society could scarcely function without it” (p.15) [21]. Further more being able to construct poetry was not restricted to the few exceptions but in fact the ability to compose was at that time a “skill as essential as the ability to handle a bow or ride a camel.” and was thus shared by many (p.15).

Reference [21] lists five of the main uses for poetry in pre-Islamic Arabia. Firstly it was used as a tool to boost morale at individual and societal levels. Secondly poetry tended to “reinforce the tribal structure” (p.17) and this was one of the reasons for hostility towards the spread of Early Islam. Thirdly “the poet(s) often performed the functions of propagandist and journalist” (p.17), which allowed them to influence public opinion. This is also one reason why Quran took the poetic shape it constitutes till date as at that time poetry was the key source of propagating a message. Being used as a substitute for bloodshed in conflict situations and acquiring status were the other two uses as described by McDonald.

It is also important to note what a big deal becoming a poet was in Arabia. When someone qualified as a poet, feasts were arranged in his honour just as today we would celebrate the graduation of a young adult from a prestigious university. This accomplishment signaled that this “poet was now a defence to the honour of [his tribe], a weapon<sup>[SEP]</sup> to ward off insult from their good name, and a means of perpetuating<sup>[SEP]</sup> their glorious deeds and of establishing their fame forever. And they used not to wish one another joy but for three things; the birth of<sup>[SEP]</sup> boy, the coming to light of a poet, and the foaling of a noble mare” (p.6)

Therefore when Muhammad (peace be upon him) began preaching, the role of Arabic poetry in society was not only common place but also highly functional and influential. When an illiterate man one day began reciting verses that seemed to surpass the eloquence of the best poetry in Arabic, his message created great curiosity as well as bewilderment. His words attracted the attention of every listener, which turned into either believing his message or retaliating against it.

#### *The Quranic Challenge*

For those who found it difficult to believe a common mans eloquent words, God put forth a falsification test for His theories, which could help the doubtful listeners in believing in the truthfulness of Muhammads (peace be upon him) message. So the Quran stated:

*"And if you all are in doubt about what I have revealed to My servant, bring a single chapter like it, and call your witnesses besides God if you are truthful. But if you fail to do this – and you will most certainly fail – then have fear of the Fire whose fuel is men and stones and which has been prepared for those who deny the Truth." - Quran (2:23-24)*

It would seem conventional that the expressive Arabs could have easily met such a challenge. Once a challenge of Quran was met, its whole ideology could have been put into question along with Muhammad's (peace be upon him) prophet hood and thus his call to Islam refuted altogether. However this was not the case. This section will now go over the reverberations of this challenge.

#### *How the Makkans could have responded*

##### i. Falsify claim by taking the challenge.

The signs brought forth by prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) in the form of recitation of the Quran were as clear as day light to the Arab locals of that time, witnessed by all. **The easiest way the Arabs could have challenged the authenticity of Muhammad's (peace be upon him) prophet hood was if they falsified the Quran on its own terms, which were not that complex to begin with.**

The Quran has very boastfully challenged the doubtful readers that if they wish to falsify the claims of this book, they might as well do so by coming up with a similar book, which they will not be able to do so even if all of mankind came together.

(17:88) Say: "Surely, if mankind and jinn were to get together to produce the like of this Qur'an, they will never be able to produce the like of it, howsoever they might help one another"

Then the challenge is made easier by asking to devise 10 similar chapters:

(11:13) "Do they say: 'He has invented this Book himself?' Say: 'If that is so, bring ten chapters like it of your

composition, and call upon anyone you can other than Allah to your help. Do so if you are truthful."

Finally the challenge narrowed down to creating just one single chapter that matches a chapter in the Quran, which equals only three verses called surah al-Kauther.

*"And if you all are in doubt about what I have revealed to My servant, bring a single chapter like it, and call your witnesses besides God if you are truthful." (Quran 2:23)*

Therefore, all the Quraysh had to do at that time was to compose three verses that could match the complexity and eloquence of Quranic verses. The challenge was not to construct something better but *similar*, however even this open challenge was left unchallenged.

##### ii. Find the source.

It was well known that Muhammad (peace be upon him) could not read nor write, therefore, identifying the **source** of his teachings could have certainly helped the Quraysh in destroying Muhammad's (peace be upon him) claim that Quran was God's word, however the Quraysh were unable to do that as well. Similar to a village life today, the identities of people were not hidden in Arabia at the time, therefore it becomes a big question mark as to who after all was the teacher of this man? Which teacher or university did he secretly graduate from at the time? Where did the eloquence in verses come from along with facts of information that only the most learned would have known at the time?

If an uneducated person in our community one day starts publishing highly reliable and valid research articles, wouldn't we be motivated to investigate his schooling organisation? Especially if his claims are refuting everything we have ever learnt in university. Even if this person is hiding his source, wouldn't the source organisation itself endorse its most influential graduate? How come nobody till date ever took credit for teaching Muhammad (peace be upon him)?

The simple fact of history that Muhammad's (peace be upon him) firmest enemies refrained from adopting these nonviolent and achievable methods, puts into question the legitimacy of their opposition and strengthens the foundation for Muhammad and his words.

##### iii. Believe.

There is substantial research demonstrating the superiority of Quranic verses over the Arabic poetry of that time, however this is a topic too deep for this paper to dwell in. As mentioned earlier, appearing as a poet was considered a great accomplishment in Arabia at that time, which required years of practice and apprenticeship. Since knowing about each others reputation was also commonplace in the Arabia of the time, everyone thus knew Muhammad (peace be upon him) was never taught to read nor write. Mostly people were ascribed titles according to their reputation in the city, and Muhammad (peace be upon him) was give the title of "al

Sadiq” and “al- Ameen” meaning ‘The Truthful’ and ‘The Trustworthy’ respectively.

Thus when out of nowhere he suddenly began reciting verses that even the experts of the time were flabbergasted by, it created curiosity all around as well as hostility owing to the functional role of poetry in society, which in Quran’s case was openly refuting the most foundational beliefs and pillars of the Arabic culture at the time. Thus one reaction that the Makkans could have adopted to this element of surprise was to investigate and then believe or disbelieve in the message.

The Quran addresses this phenomena as:

“Say also, had not Allah willed that I should recite the Quran to you, I could not have recited it to you, nor could I have been able to give you any information about it: **already have I lived a lifetime among you before its revelation. Do you not use your common sense?**”

Thus here Allah is expecting the people of that time to reflect that why would an honest man conjure up lies that provide him with no worldly benefit?

*How Makkans responded in actuality*

The point that emanates eventually is the question that a) who taught Muhammad (peace be upon him) a level of poetry that to date has not been reached? B) How did the identity of such a teacher go unidentified in a place where every man is known not only by name but also a reputation? And c) if the Quranic verses were not from God, then why did the expert poets, who were also staunch enemies of Muhammad (peace be upon him), not simply over ride his claims with better or similar poetry? By simply devising a chapter of similar quality they could have easily falsified Muhammad (peace be upon him)’s claims and revoked his claims on prophet hood and the Last Day.

Instead they offered him vast amounts of wealth, the position of power in Makkah, and the most noble and beautiful of their women in exchange for his promise to stop inviting people to Islam. After Muhammad (peace be upon him) rejected these offers, they turned to torturing their slaves and relatives who had embraced Islam in hopes of reverting them to paganism. Moreover they also sanctioned economic boycotts against Muhammad (peace be upon him) and his clan to starve them into submission. When none of these worked they cleverly plotted to assassinate Muhammad (peace be upon him) by sending young killers from every tribe of Quraysh such that the blame of murder would befall on all tribes equally and thus prevent Muhammad’s (peace be upon him) clan from seeking revenge.

They went through all these efforts and lengths but the simple challenge of producing a chapter was never taken up by any Arab Bedouin regardless of how expert he/she may have been. One possible reason for this was that a challenge of such sorts could also fall backwards on the takers if they failed

and could have exposed the guilty party. The fact that the pagans did everything in their power to prevent Muhammad (peace be upon him) from spreading his message but only refrained from this one simple challenge is itself a historical evidence. It manifests the inner assurity of the pagans that indeed the word coming from an unlearned man is superior enough to ridicule them in a public display of poetic challenge, and thus this fear of public (or even internal) humiliation prevented them from doing so. For the people who think, whom Quran repeatedly refers to, this reactionary behaviour of the opposition to prophet hood is indeed a direct sign of their inner fear of defeat, stubbornness, animosity or apathy.

### III. SECTION TWO: INDIRECT EVIDENCE

When Muhammad (peace be upon him) began preaching to the idolatrous Bedouins about concepts such as God and resurrection, they put forth various questions in order to question the authenticity of Quranic claims. In response to them challenges the Quran provides us with a plethora of indirect evidences for a human mind to take heed of.

Indirect evidences are defined as *those signs that lead to concluding the existence of God and the onset of resurrection through the implementation of human logic, rationale and critical thinking*. It goes without saying that the audience for such proofs is not just any human being, but a thinking human being. By possibility these evidences are directed towards all humanity as everyone generally constitutes the ability to think deeply and critically. Therefore, whether this leads to the understanding of resurrection in such an audience again depends upon whether the human being is an actively thinking individual. Finally whether one adopts the belief of resurrection through these signs and then lives accordingly is dependent upon how much belief that human is willing to have. Since this paper distances itself from faith based arguments, the latter part lies beyond the scope of this paper. This paper will mainly focus on evidences for those who use their reason.

Therefore the indirect evidences provided in the Quran for resurrection can be understood by people who fulfil the condition of 1) being human and 2) possessing the mental capacity to think and use reason. We can see in the following verse how God expects us to use our reason when pondering over His creation and our ultimate judgement; “*It is God who has created the heavens and the earth and all that is between then in six aeons, and is established on the throne of His almightiness. You have none to intercede for you [on Judgement Day]; will you not then bethink yourselves?*” (Quran 32:04)

The Quran in numerous places encourages humankind to make use of their sight and hearing to observe the world around them as well as the world within them if they wish to

know God. Therefore this section will focus on some indirect evidences that we observe in the world around us such as the sun, atmosphere, water and oxygen as well as some signs we observe within us. The latter evidences will include reasonable arguments put forth by God, the unseen human development in the embryo and the human fingertips.

In chapter Al- Imran, God puts forth seven kinds of signs that can lead humans to the ultimate truth of God and hence LAD;

“Behold, for those who believe there are (myriad) Signs in the heavens and the earth and in your own creation; and in the animals which He spreads out over the earth too there are Signs for those endowed with sure faith and in the succession of night and day, and in the provision that Allah sends down from the sky wherewith He gives life to the earth after it had been lifeless, and in the change of the winds: (in all these) there are Signs for people who use reason.” (Quran 45:3-5)

Quran repeatedly asks man to use his reason and intellect in order to reach the truth. Infact, Quran is a unique scripture that encourages the reader to critically question and observe the signs of God around him. Therefore, Quran does not expect man to blindly follow and have faith, in fact true believers are not expected to have such an attitude towards life. The righteous believers are mentioned as those “who, when they are reminded of the revelations of their Lord, do not fall at them deaf and blind.” (Quran 25:73). Indicating that they do not totally ignore it as a deaf or blind person would, neither would they “fall at them” or follow the verses completely blindly without knowing the underlying essence which is being upheld. It should be kept in mind that this ayah<sup>4</sup> was placed in the section where God is describing people who repent and are true servants of God, therefore rejecting a revelation of God would be out of question for them.

Moreover, God puts forth certain pieces of information about man himself or the world around him that not only inform him of the realities but also guides him in concluding the truth about LAD. If humans want to know Allah they can do so through His signs, which act as indirect evidence for us to reach Him. In the previous section we explored some signs that directly correlated with the event of resurrection. This section will focus on the multitude of signs indirectly related to resurrection. In addition these evidences are only directed towards the people who “use their reason.”

#### A. Signs Around You

*He [it is who] created the skies without any supports that you can see and He placed firm mountains in the earth lest it sway with you, and has caused all manner of living creatures to multiply thereon - Quran (31:10)*

The first thing God directs our attention to in the aforementioned verse (45:3) is the myriad of “signs in the heavens and earth”. Lets have a look at some of the indirect

evidences God is referring to that we find in the heavens and earth.

#### i. Sun

According to [8], this universe is a killer universe as per its nature or fitrah. Reference [7] defined the sun as a “star around which Earth and the other components of the solar system revolve. It is the dominant body of the system, constituting more than 99% of its entire mass. The Sun is the source of an enormous amount of energy, a portion of which provides Earth with the light and heat necessary to support life.” It is one of the hottest stars, with a temperature so high that “no solid or liquid can exist there” [7]. By its very nature and size the sun holds the power to destroy any life that comes in its way, however when we see its functioning in respect of our planet, researchers tell us that inside the sun “The nuclei of atoms are completely stripped of their electrons, and at this high temperature they collide to produce the nuclear reactions that are responsible for generating the energy vital to life on Earth.” Not only is this humungous lamp 330,000 times the mass of the Earth, but “All the interesting planetary and interplanetary gravitational phenomena are negligible effects in comparison to the force exerted by the Sun.” [7]. (By its immense nuclear nature, the sun facilitates the destruction of life as it does in every other planet. However with our planet it seems to generate life. It stops at a precise distance, emits a certain level of heat and light that is exactly enough to sustain life on earth.

It is believed that if a planet similar to the earth orbits in a habitable zone around their stars, then life can exist on them. “Habitable zone is a region around a star with the right temperature for the presence of liquid water, a major prerequisite for the existence of life as we know it on Earth.” [28]. However a study in Italy (2021) recently discovered that this condition was not enough. They studied 10 planets on such habitable zones and found that although the stars were cool enough to sustain water but lacked enough heat to emit the right amount of photosynthetically active radiation (PAR) that enables the creation of oxygen. “Producing oxygen... requires the right amount of sunlight. Not all stars can provide that.” [12].

What is it that causes the sun to behave differently around the earth is not something science can decipher with certainty, however we can very well observe it happening. The creator of these entities on the other hand, offers a meaningful explanation for their existence. According to Quran, bodies like the sun have been made subservient to man. For instance we see forces of nature like the sun following their natural order perfectly, which then facilitates humankind to flourish. Science is silent on the exact purpose of existence for bodies like the sun, however the Quran tells us that they are there to serve the creation (humans, animals etc) and to Glorify God. In the verse below we are reminded about how the sun has

<sup>4</sup> A verse is referred to as ‘ayah’ meaning ‘sign’ in Quranic terminology.

been placed as a lamp for us (the reader of Quran) in this universe;

“Have We not spread the earth like a bed...and built above you seven strong firmaments, and placed therein a hot, shining lamp” (Quran 78:6,12-13)

Consequently the role of man on earth has been defined as that of a vicegerent when Quran says “Just think when your Lord said to the angels: “Lo! I am about to place a vicegerent on earth,” (Quran 2:30) This implies that humans are not expected to do as they please on earth but to carry out the will of their creator. A vicegerent (or Khalifah) is allowed to exercise his authority that has been delegated to him by his superior. They are endowed with resources and the autonomy to use them according to their own reason provided they do not stray away from the bigger responsibility endowed upon them by God. For example, rejecting Gods existence would qualify as rejecting your primal duty as a vicgererant and thus be susceptible to harsh accountability. Evidently, we see that humans are the only creation that is granted a free will and reasoning faculty due to which they are marked as Gods vicegerents on earth. For example, animals and other creations give birth as per their natural disposition, humans however can stray away from the natural painful way and devise other ways that suit their needs. This straying away for your own sake is a privilege only man enjoys.

#### ii. Oxygen

Similarly the amount of oxygen that exists on earth is exactly the amount that sustains life. A little too much of oxygen can easily destroy life as we know it. The maximum oxygen concentration in air required for human breathing is 19.5%. Prolonged exposure to too much oxygen can result in irreversible lung damages, high explosion risks and eventually death. Similarly too less oxygen can inhibit our mental functioning and proper respiration if it falls to 10% or 14%. “Humans won't survive with levels at 6% or lower.” (p.2) [20].

Apparently the hotness of a planet is not entirely incumbent upon its distance from the sun, as our logical understanding would suggest. Mercury is the closest planet to the sun, but Venus has a much higher temperature than any planet in our solar system. This is because of the immense pressure of its atmosphere, which leads to an intense greenhouse effect in the planet. Consequently enormous amounts of heat are trapped within Venus and this makes it much more hotter than its proximity to the sun would suggest. Right behind Venus we have Earth, where the atmospheric pressure is “coincidentally” ideal enough to put off the life threatening and take in the life giving aspects of sunrays. What is interesting is the fact that the planet with the most similar atmosphere to Earth is also Venus, but despite this similarity, Earths atmosphere manages to trap only a required amount of heat.

#### iii. Water

*And We send down water from the skies, and thus We cause every noble kind [of life] to grow on earth. – Quran (31:10)*

Just ponder over the oceans and seas for a while. Such huge bodies of water lying obediently in their places. Currently the world is going through climate change at a worrying level. According to National Geographic (2019), sea levels have risen to almost 8 inches since 1880, out of which three inches were gained only in the last 25 years. Sea level rise is a major concern because the consequences of sea levels rising above a certain level can translate into powerful storm surges, hurricanes and typhoons. Further more, even a small increase in sea levels can have “devastating effects on coastal habitats farther inland, it can cause destructive erosion, wetland flooding, aquifer and agricultural soil contamination with salt, and lost habitat for fish, birds, and plants.” [25]. When analysing the way water behaves in other planets, today we can, thanks to science and astronomy, confirm that there are planets that have water. However, for most planets the shape water takes is different. For instance almost all planets, besides Venus, within our solar system have water either in frozen form, vapour form or both. Mars and Earth contain liquid form, and Earth is the only planet with all three forms of water [9]. Fortunately for us, just like the sun stops at a certain distance from earth, the water bodies also become docile and even act as storage for sweet drinking water. Recently in 2019 researchers have also discovered surprisingly large reserves of fresh water under the ocean that are drinkable [10]. Although the knowledge of underlying pockets of water was already existent, however their sizes have recently been brought to light. Quran has also talked about this phenomenon; “And He is the One Who merges the two bodies of water: one fresh and palatable and the other salty and bitter, placing between them a barrier they cannot cross.” (Quran, ch 25 v 53).

As discussed above, simply having water in a certain form has not been proven to be enough to sustain life. From the data out there we can see that water has taken up forms that do not support life, and even when they do, they are not complimented with enough sunlight for photosynthesis to take place that can generate oxygen, which then needs to maintain a certain mass level, whose digression can possibly destroy life. Therefore, it is easy to believe as well as confirm that indeed the universe is a killer universe when it comes to life, however when it comes to the Earth, instead of destroying life, the celestial bodies start producing and supporting life. Why are the humongous sources of energy and power like the Sun, Water and Atmosphere suddenly working in such a systematic and harmonious way that tends

to support life and has been since billions of years is something what the Quran asks us to ponder over. And it is through this deep thinking that we are expected to develop a sense of responsibility to our creator. Section three discusses this notion in further detail under accountability (see section 3.1).

### B. Signs Within Your Creation

*They say: "Shall we be created afresh after we have become [dead and] lost in the earth?" Nay, but they deny the truth that they are destined to meet their Sustainer. – Quran (32:10)*

One of the claims that people of Arabia made to the prophet (peace be upon him) at that time was how can we be raised back to life again when we have never seen anyone come back from death? How is recreation possible? In order to answer such claims God puts forth a multitude of indirect evidences that point towards the reality of resurrection. To repeat, these evidences were meant only for those who carried the willingness to believe and use their reason rather than those who "deny the truth that they are destined to meet their Sustainer!" (Quran, 32:10).

When analysing signs of Allah *within* our own creation, the focus will lay mainly on arguments of reason provided by Quran, the Quranic explanation regarding the unseen process of creation of man and finally the Quranic claim of Gods capability of resurrecting man up till his very fingertips.

#### i. Argument of Reason

*[For Him], the creation of you all and the resurrection of you all is but like [the creation and resurrection of] a single soul; for verily, Allah is all- hearing, all-seeing - Quran (31:28)*

The second sign (or indirect evidence) that God brings our focus to in the aforementioned verse (45:3) lays in "your own creation". Therefore, lets have a look at how can our own creation point to the unseen advent of resurrection and accountability.

Firstly God makes known the fact that humans at some point in time did not exist at all. They were non-existent at first. And then it was Allah who brought them into existence. When the pagans would ask questions like "who can give life to decomposed bones?" (Quran 36:78); "who will cause us to return?" the Messenger of Allah would respond with "He who first created you." (Quran 17:51).

Therefore such claims are answered simply by pointing to the possibility that if God made you once, He can remake you again. The initial creation was from scratch, while resurrection

is based on an existing model of human form. Which creation could by default be easier to form? The one from scratch or the one with an existing blueprint?

The Quran asks: "Does man think that We cannot assemble his bones?" (75:3), God retorts, telling them that "if you are in doubt about the resurrection, [remember that] We created you from dust".

#### ii. The Unseen Human Development Process.

*Does man not see that We created him of a sperm drop, and lo! he is flagrantly contentious? He strikes for us a similitude and forgot his own creation. He says: "Who will quicken the bones when they have decayed?" Say: "He Who first brought them into being will quicken them; He knows well about every kind of creation" (Quran 36:77-79)*

Secondly, Allah goes further and explains how and with what He created man from because indeed "He knows well about every creation." (36:79). He tells us that He created man from dust, from water as well as from a drop of sperm. Not only this, He also explains the process in various places in the Quran. For instance, Quran informs us about the development process of man as "Then We turned the sperm-drop into a clot, then We turned the clot into a fetus-lump, then We turned the fetus-lump into bones, then We clothed the bones with flesh; thereafter We developed it into another creature. So, glorious is Allah, the Best of the creators." (23:14). Surprisingly, even the reality of bones preceding flesh, has only been recently confirmed in 2015, while the embryonic development process described in Quran dates back 1400 years.

Some further robust indirect evidences for resurrection via the process of human development in the womb are mentioned as "O mankind! If you have a doubt about the resurrection, then (consider) that we created you out of dust, then out of sperm, than out of a leach-like structure, than out of a morsel of flesh partly formed and partly unformed in order that we may manifest to you" (Quran 22:5), "And we created from water every living thing" (Quran 21:30).

Humans were able to confirm the process of our own creation only after 1950 when ultrasound made possible the chronology of human fetus. Perhaps another question to pose in todays time would be that how can an illiterate Arab Bedouin during the Jahilliya<sup>5</sup> period provide such an accurate description of human embryonic development? Was it chance or guidance from the one who created this process in the first place? Simply pondering over the sign of our own creation, and that coupled with the accuracy of Qurans explanation about it can make it easy for us to realise the possibility of

<sup>5</sup> A term used to denote the dark ages of Arabia characterised by inhuman practices like female infanticide and warfare.

being resurrected. Appendix A records some of the claims made by modern scientists with respect to the Quranic explanation of prenatal development.

### iii. Recreated till your very finger tips

Another point of reflection is the revelation that happened when a man came to Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) with dead bones and asked him how could Allah (God) bring him back to life after he had become like those bones? In response to this Allah revealed the following verse; **“Does man think that We will not assemble his bones? Yes Indeed, We are able to put together in perfect order the very tips of his fingers.”** In this verse we can see the subtle way in which God is again making us reflect back on our own creation. Not only is God able to put the human form together but also the intricate details of the tips of the fingers as well. This verse is also considered one of the miracles of the Quran as it was not until 1858 when William Herschel first alluded to the idea that every human has a unique finger print, which was later officialised in 1892 by Juan Vucetich as the way of identification [3]. A.B. Reference [1] reflects on this notion in his short book “Scientific Truths in the Quran” in the following words:

“The question is why did God choose to use the body part ‘fingertips’ as an example of His ability in resurrecting. A human being making the same point may have opted to say ‘proportion his face’ – for that would apparently seem to be of a greater difficulty and more visible differentiation – fingertips not being something one would traditionally associate with difficulty or uniqueness. God knows the uniqueness He has placed in each human being. The verse stresses that every detail of man shall be brought back to life even to the extent of the information that exists on a fingertip. Only the Creator would have said these words in this way.” [1].

Therefore, God not only reasons with man that if He created us once He can do so again, instead He also explains to man the original blue print of how he was initially created and till what extent man will be recreated. Therefore, the model of a human has been laid out, which is confirmed by science in today’s time, and by referring to that model God addresses the basic human intellect to help clear any doubts they may have about the resurrection. Indeed it is not difficult for the maker of humans to remake them, and by providing information about the authentic (unseen) process of human development, God provides humans with indirect evidence that points to the unseen event of man’s recreation.

## IV. SECTION THREE: INTUITION AND INNATE HUMAN RATIONALITY

*And so, turn your face steadfastly towards the true Faith, turning away from all that is false, in accordance with the*

*natural disposition (fitrah), which God has instilled into man - no change shall there be in God’s creation - this is the ever-true Faith although most people know it not - Quran (30: 30)*

This part of evidence is less likely used in the world of science but is more commonly applied in the daily human functioning. In Islamic terminology, anything that appeals to the “fitrah” of the human is considered a part of this kind of evidence.

### Fitrah: Natural Disposition

Fitrah is defined as a person’s innate reality or state with which one is born. It holds a bearing on one’s beliefs, actions, and interactions with the environment. Moreover fitrah cannot be seen in isolation from how one thinks (mind), acts (conduct) and interacts with the environment (institutions in the phenomenal world). Fitrah can also be defined as the innate programming to do good in every human that also inclines finite humans to the belief in an infinite God. Moreover the innate moral compass that propels us to do good can be considered one function/part of the fitrah [22].

According to [8], intuitive reasoning that we engage regularly are also part of the fitrah. For instance, would ones fitrah allow him to believe that the world is being run by an experimenter who causes us to constantly die and be born in a perpetual loop for an experiment? Perhaps not, and hence the claim would be rejected. Lets first analyse this concept from the lens of human reason. To reiterate; **humans tend to apply their rational and logical thinking in making sense of something, and anything that appeals to the innate nature of human (fitrah) is most likely to be of reason and thus accepted.** This part of fitrah can be attributed to the human intellect and thus the ability to judge between right and wrong.

Now lets have a look at the Quranic idea of LAD from this lens. This paper will attempt to understand resurrection from the lens of *accountability, human agency, pleasure and pain.*

### i. Accountability

*Woe to those who give short measure, who demand of other people full measure for themselves, but give less than they should when it is they who weigh or measure for others! Do these people not realise that they will be raised up on a mighty Day – a Day when everyone will stand before the Lord of the Worlds? – Quran (83:1-6)*

The first notion this paper will discuss is Accountability. It is defined as the ‘mechanism relating an account-giver to an account holder, which should have an impact on the decisions and behaviors of the account-giver’ [6]. In the case of this paper we can consider this **mechanism** to be of either a tangible form such as found in law or intangible form, which is self constructed mentally and the individual judges himself.

Quran addresses both kinds of mechanisms and how humans are expected to make use of them, however in depth discussion of this is beyond the scope of this paper.

There is a plethora of research that has attempted to understand accountability and its relationship with variables such as human behavior or decision-making. Regardless of what the research suggests, there is an implicit agreement among human society regarding the importance of accountability as it is rooted in moral reasons such as justice, fairness, deceit and cheating. Although humans are willing to be fair, they are also willing to be unfair and inflict injustice; therefore accountability mechanisms have naturally evolved in one form or another in human society to prevent such injustices.

Like all ideologies, the concept is met with desirable as well as undesirable consequences. Empirical studies that attempted to measure the effect of the presence of accountability mechanisms versus the absence of such mechanisms found that with regards to decision making, decision makers tended to “search for and remember more information than decision-makers not facing accountability. They also engaged in deeper information processing, used more analytical decision-making strategies and displayed higher integrative complexity in thinking than decision-makers who did not face accountability demands” (p.8)[2]. This is one of the many examples that corroborates with the common human understanding that the presence of accountability mechanisms can elicit more effort and time invested by people in making decisions.

Thus the concept of accountability is directly related to how a person decides his actions. We see above that expectation of accountability motivates people to engage in deeper information processing, and thus that is the one thing that God stresses humans to do repeatedly in various forms that range from thinking deeply to analyzing information to identifying objective truths over subjective ones and so on.

“Do not follow that of which you have no knowledge. Surely the hearing, the sight, the heart - each of these shall be called to account” (Quran 17:36).

We have thus been warned about following blindly something that we have no knowledge of because such an act will not go unaccounted. A reminder of accountability therefore can help us in making informed decisions, backed by reasoning. The whole idea of the day of resurrection is meant to impact how humans make use of the faculty of intellect and choice bestowed only upon them as a species. And since humans can choose to disobey God, this notion of accountability becomes a strong motivator for them to choose the good and right options in every path of their walking life.

This paper will discuss the basic concept of accountability that we find commonplace with regards to two aspects in light of Quran. Firstly how the past mandates one to act responsibly in the present and secondly, how the future mandates ones to

act responsibly in the present.

### *Past to Present: Responsibility and Gratitude*

“Taste now the torment of the Fire. That is in recompense for what you have done.”<sup>6</sup> Quran (3:181-182)

In order to understand this aspect let's take the example of an employee-employer relationship. We know very well that employers expect their employees to perform certain tasks in exchange for a salary and some fringe benefits. If workers enjoy all the perks from a company but do not fulfil their job descriptions for years and years, they would be laid off at some point, if not fined, while good workers would expect a good salary or even a raise. Both kinds of workers are to be made accountable of how they spent their working hours and benefits so their compensation can follow accordingly. Failure or success in providing an account for their time and efforts will dictate the pleasant or unpleasant consequence they will eventually face such as a promotion or a demotion. Thus, employees past performance will determine the accountability or consequence faced in the present. In regards to this phenomenon Quran also asks us “is then he who was a believer [in earth] to be compared with one who was iniquitous? Those two are not equal.” (Quran, 32:18). Here Quran makes it clear that indeed the one who obeyed his responsibilities on earth will not be equal in consequence as the one who was disobedient, just like they were not equal in their actions and intention on earth. The Quran also cites such a parable that helps us realise the past to present sense of accountability that we take for granted; “Allah cites another similitude of two men. One of them is dumb and deaf and cannot do any work, and has become a burden upon his master; wherever he despatches him, he does nothing useful. Then there is the other one, who enjoins justice and follows the Right Way. Are those two men equal?” (Quran, 16:76). In Quranic terminology deaf and dumb allures not to the literal deaf and dumb, but to a person who takes his masters commands as if he was deaf and ‘does nothing useful’. How would two such men be accounted for and ranked?

The Quran explains how past acts will be accounted for on the day of resurrection in the following words: “Then when the trumpet will be blown, all (worldly) relations between them shall cease to function and they will not inquire about one another. Then only those whose scales will be heavy will attain success; and those, whose scales will be light, will be the people who made themselves liable to loss; they shall abide in Hell forever.” (Quran, 23:101-103).

<sup>6</sup> The statement is from the Quranic depiction of a scene from the Day of Judgment when the wrong doers will be asked to taste now the torment of fire as a consequence of what they used to do in the past (earth).

This simple notion of being held accountable for one's actions is not something alien for us humans to understand. Therefore, Quran expects us to use this innate knowledge endowed to us and ponder over our responsibilities in exchange of the priceless facilities that God has provided us, some of which we have discussed in the previous subsection such as the Sun, Water or Atmosphere. Do we think that we get to enjoy our bodies, life and nature, that we received already programmed and suited to our needs, as we please or is there a responsibility upon our shoulders? Prophets have reminded us through time that we will be held accountable for our actions and time.

This perspective of accountability in the present based on past actions puts importance on what we already have in this world. It is rooted in gratitude for the facilities we enjoy in this world and the moral responsibility that comes with them. Quran also encourages gratitude and explains it in the following words: "Be grateful unto God – for he who is grateful [unto Him] is but grateful for the good of his own self; whereas he who chooses to be ungrateful (let him know that) Allah is All-Sufficient, Immensely Praiseworthy." (Quran, 31:12).

Like the infamous advice to Spiderman by his uncle that "with great power comes great responsibility", similarly humans have been entitled with power over all creatures on earth, therefore, the question arises as to whether they also hold responsibility and accountability attached to this power? The simple human way of functioning would point towards its presence because as per our fitrah, unfairness and slacking is not something we can innately condone. How can we humans ignore the reality of accountability of our deeds and life in general, when we as a species have always established it in our societies at both individual and societal levels? What makes us think it will not be established at a spiritual level after death?

"How would it be if a misfortune smote them because of that which their own hands have sent before (them)?" (Quran 4: 62)

These words of uncle Ben appeal easily to human fitrah as everyone seems instantly amenable to the concept being explained. It clicks rhythm within the brain of the audience. No evidence or research is needed for uncle Ben to convince Spiderman of this difficult reality. And therefore, we all witness Spiderman making tough choices all his life owing to the responsibility he owes to the special powers he has attained. It is this willingness to act responsibly and even sacrifice his own comfort, all because he owes to his assigned spider powers, that makes Spiderman such a honourable character for us.

*Present to Future: Responsibility and Fear*

Accountability from this perspective is more or less rooted in fear or apprehensiveness of the future. Since Quran makes it clear that every soul shall be held **accountable** for its deeds on the Day of Resurrection and shall taste the terrible consequences of their actions. This is also not a difficult notion for the human intellect to grasp. Today we humans have managed to set up systems of law and order that are functional and designed to instil fear in a human mind that may be planning to sin or commit a crime. Committing a murder today can result in a death penalty tomorrow if caught, and therefore the fear of this punishment stops one from committing such an act in the first place. Of course this fear only exists in the presence of an accountability mechanism that ensures not only the discovery of ones actions but also the execution of its punishment by a higher authority. God has warned humanity of such a day repeatedly in not only the Quran but also other religious scriptures.

When Allah warns man of a resurrection, He lets them know that every deed of theirs is under the surveillance of two angels assigned to every human being along with His own. Therefore there is no question regarding whether an act can go undetected and unaccounted for. Allah declares in Quran; "We are nearer to him than even his jugular vein. Moreover, there are two scribes, one each sitting on the right and the left, recording everything. He utters not a word, but there is a vigilant watcher at hand" (Quran, 50:16-19) A self righteous person will consequently be more motivated to do good and avoid bad in every situation possible as every situation is being observed and will be brought under scrutiny after death, regardless of the religion this person followed on earth. Therefore, intuitively speaking the idea of being raised from the coffins so that justice can prevail for every soul via the most efficient accounting mechanisms does not seem unperceivable especially when as humans we can readily observe the perfect order existing in natural forces (e.g. gravity, alteration of day and night etc.) that are beyond our human control. If everything else in nature is in a manner that seems like perfect order to our human rationality, then where does the natural order of justice fall to? Accountability for evil actions is the missing piece in the puzzle of order in this universe. Allah informs humans of this Himself as He makes it known that there are things that we cannot know except through Him. This is evident in the following verse, for example; "Recite: and your Lord is Most Generous, Who taught by the pen, taught man what he did not know." (Quran 96: 3-5). Resurrection day is one of the reality that He makes known to us through revelation. Indeed it is bound to happen in perfect accordance to the other order we see other natural entities conforming to.

In the systematic review on accountability, [2] found that "expecting to be held accountable for the decision prior to making it, as opposed to being held accountable for it

afterwards, has been found to increase decision quality (Schul & Mayo, 2003) and integrative complexity in thinking (Tetlock et al., 1989).” (p.10) [2]. It also reduced thinking biases such as primary and recency effects. Similarly humans have been informed of the test of this life before being sent to earth when they made the primordial pact and declaration of their faith in God and also while being on earth through Prophets, Messengers and Divine Books. With regards to the former, [16] writes: “The word human in Arabic translates to *insan*, which is derived from *nasiya* meaning forgetfulness. Humans, therefore, forget their covenant with God and this is the cause of disobedience to God in this world leading to all kinds of problems in life including certain kinds of psychological distress.” (p.5) [16]. The Quranic stance of warning humanity against a fearsome Day of Judgment, tends to tap into that part of human *fitrah* that adopts responsibility because of fear of punishment. Further in the case of God’s process of accountability there is no question of escaping arrest as Quran even goes to the extent of saying “Surely We have created man, and We know the whisperings of his (inner) self, and We are nearer to him than even his jugular vein. Moreover, there are two scribes, one each sitting on the right and the left, recording everything. He utters not a word, but there is a vigilant watcher at hand. Lo, the agony of death has indeed come with the Truth. That is what you had sought to avoid” (Quran, 50:16-19). Therefore the choice this leaves humans is with whether they are willing to commit the crime of disbelief or not and then face the consequences over which they have no control after death.

### ii. Pleasure

*The life of this world is but a play and a passing delight: but if you believe and are conscious of Him, He will grant you your deserts. And withal, He does not demand of you [a sacrifice of all of] your possessions. – Quran (47:36)*

In order to appeal to our very innate nature, the consequences of good behaviour and bad behaviour are put forth accordingly. For instance, as humans we are constantly attracted to beauty whether in ourselves, homes, in our spouses etc. Every man tries to build the most beautiful home for the most beautiful wife and family. The Quran states that clearance of this test translates in to inheriting the ultimate beauty in the next world, which is not temporary nor flawed as in this world and will be the source of eternal pleasure for man and woman. Humans have started treating age as a sickness and several researches have tried to somehow control or delay the aging process. Why do we humans do this, unlike any other creation? It’s part of our *fitrah*. And the Creator of this desire tells us that the life after death will be eternal where no one will age. In short the Quran simply puts forth the blue print of a Paradise that is filled with eternal youth, beauty and

riches; all the things humans work all their lives to achieve in this world as per their innate nature or ‘*fitrah*’, which is strangely only found in humans and not other life forms.

### iii. Pain

*O people, fear (the wrath) of your Lord, and dread the Day (of judgment) when no father will avail his child, nor any child will in the least avail his parent! Surely Allah’s promise [of resurrection] is true indeed; let not, then, the life of this world delude you, and let not deceptive thoughts about Allah delude you. – Quran (31:33)*

On the flip side, naturally we are also preparing ourselves and our offspring against the evils of this world in order to avoid the infliction of pain; whether emotional, physical or mental. We make special efforts to protect ourselves from harm. Things like insurance, safety gears, courts and police are all examples of human attempts to protect us from the unfortunate events of this world that lead to pain or suffering. The Quran equates failing the test of life with being admitted to hell, which is the worst kind of affliction a human can bear. Like paradise, this terrible abode of fire is also eternal. Once again, the Quran puts forth the most painful punishment as a consequence of failing in this life, which can act as a motivation to do good deeds for those who are driven by fear rather than pleasures.

Some sceptics blame religion for being a tool for controlling people. Religion is the opium for the masses – a very commonly used term nowadays that was first coined by Karl Marx, which basically criticises religion for being a card that elite or those in power play to keep the poor in their places. Indeed the underlying criticism that Marx was trying to make is valid, however over time people have become ignorant to the tacit understanding that comes with this statement. Why is religion opium for the masses? This is because religion has some pull in it that lets someone in a terrible situation remain content. According to Quran, the ultimate suffering is the one that comes after death and that is what every human should be wary of. Every suffering and pain of this world will seem to have lasted not more than a few seconds compared to the ultimate suffering in afterlife. Allah says in the Quran that “before the supreme suffering, We shall most certainly let them taste of a suffering closer at hand, so that they might [repent and] mend their ways” (Quran, 32:21). According to this verse it seems that painful moments should lead humans to ‘mended ways’ or in other words, towards God.

Consequently, Religious Coping is a term used to represent the human tendency for using religion in times of adversity and uncertainty. Unfortunate events like terminal illnesses or natural disasters indicate a higher number of people declaring a religious affinity than in not stressful situations and this

religiosity tends to last for generations [5]. A study (2021) was conducted to check the impact of Covid-19 pandemic and its related Google searches. It reported that “during the early months of the pandemic, Google searches for prayer relative to all Google searches rose by 30%” and that this “increase in prayer search...[is] the largest ever recorded” (p.10) [5]. This result was consistent across all continents regardless of whether a country was actually hit by the pandemic or not at the time of data collection. The point to note here is that even though we are in the 21<sup>st</sup> century where the role of God seems to have diminished exponentially, findings like this show that the same population of this century will hurry to “pray” or “make amends” when struck with ‘a suffering closer at hand’. If one needs and goes back to God when faced with pain in this world, whom does he think can you turn to on the Day when there is no turning back? Of course God also makes pretty clear the human nature of begging God for help in desperate times, and then forgetting Him when the problem has been alleviated or crediting powers other than God. However, this tendency does not suffice man from accountability as he must act responsibly, but all such parables are directed only for people who reflect and are willing to believe.

#### *iv. Agency*

Furthermore, unlike the notion of Karma, the resurrection blueprint gives humans complete control over their actions. Because humans are endowed with the will to obey or disobey God, and thus pass or fail the test of life on earth, therefore their Creator endows them with a trust. A trust that can lead to the fulfilment of a human’s inner desires in the most eternally beautiful manner if we respect it or to the most painful eternal consequence if violated. Thus humans not only have choice, but also the power to act any way they please in this earth since they have complete control over their actions. The consequences of our LAD are also under our own volition and control, which can be as high as the attainment of paradise or as low as the burning pits of hell. Just like the rules of accountability we humans have adopted in this world, the same method applies to the next world. The question arises here that ‘Is it not our responsibility to act in a certain prescribed manner in exchange for the life facilitating services we use every day? Which human or earthly phenomenon has convinced us of the idea that we can access the worlds most priceless commodities, use them to our hearts content but not expect any accountability for the actions we commit?’

One may wonder about the humans who have already committed tons of sins and breached this trust on numerous occasions. Should not such individuals be expecting the worst? Nay, in fact the creator repeatedly promises forgiveness to humans provided they seek it with a true intention, regardless of how big or small their transgression was. He says in chapter seven:

“As for those who do evil, and later repent and have faith, such shall find their Lord All-Forgiving, All-Compassionate after” and also in chapter 25 to those who have sinned in the past “unless he repents and believes and does righteous works. For such, Allah will change their evil deeds into good deeds. Allah is Ever Forgiving, Most Compassionate.” (Quran 7:153, 25:70).

As long as a human is endowed with life, he holds the power to earn forgiveness and eternal happiness. The ability to repent allows humans to be forgiven of their sins. True repentance however requires three main conditions; firstly one should acknowledge his action as wrong. Secondly, he should actively and sincerely seek Gods forgiveness and thirdly, he should plan out his future actions in a manner that can actively aid him to avoid repeating the sin. If one, being human, falls on the sin again, then he can repeat this process again. There is no upper limit to the number of times one can repent. The only time when repentance is not granted to a soul is when it is faced with death. In the instance of death without repentance, a painful punishment could follow, which may or may not be eternal depending on how one lived his life.

#### V.DISCUSSION

One thing that every human shares is the common destination of death. However preparation for this ultimate end cannot be dictated by any one other than the One who created death itself. Throughout time various religions and philosophers have tried predicting what could lay after death; another life or nothingness? Major religions of the world provide their own understanding of what comes after death.

This paper tried to understand how the worlds fastest growing religion, Islam, explains death and the life that comes after it. In order to justify its claim about resurrection and a final Day of Judgement, the Quran puts forth three kinds of evidences. Firstly, Quran reminds the reader about certain worldly phenomenon that directly correlate to the event of resurrection such as sleep or droughts. Secondly, the paper puts forth some signs that Quran uses as indirect evidence to the reality of being raised after death. These include pondering over the magnificent but daily occurring shows of nature such as the sun, water or oxygen. Finally, the Quran tries to convince its audience of the reality of resurrection by adopting the common sense narrative that is shared by all humans, which includes ideas like accountability and pain.

The task of writing this paper highlighted an important point of concern for the target audience; reflection and pondering over the ordinary. The Quran through its repeated requests to observe and reflect is actually motivating and directing us to the realisation of magnificent that is in the ordinary. To make this clear we can go back to the sun example. Even though we know today how massive, powerful and unimitable the sun is, yet due to reasons like consistent

exposure and free benefit from it, we humans tend to forget about the awe and inspiration that comes with it. We are no longer amazed by the most amazing and mighty phenomenon around us, because we are not “reflecting” “using reason” or “willing to believe”. It seems from the narrative that Quran has tried to build with its arguments is that, as thinking individuals, we can come to conclude that there is indeed an absolute truth and that our lives are not meaningless.

There are many ways of understanding the Quran. One way is to use the human devised tools to make sense of what Quran says. Similarly this paper tried using the tools of direct and indirect proof used in the human institution of law, and attempted to map this on (some) Quranic claims about resurrection. As a result we found that indeed the arguments put forth were neither too complex nor unreachable. Therefore by possibility all of humanity can judge the truth in these claims, however according to Quran, even then its only a small portion of people who could benefit from these claims, who are those who are willing to use their intellect, reason and then believe.

#### VI. LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

One limitation of this paper is that Life after death (LAD) is an expansive phenomenon, which was dealt with in a broad way. According to the Quran, the depictions and explanations of that day are manifold. For instance the most obvious constituents of LAD that this paper has tried to focus on are resurrection, where as the DOJ and heaven/hell are topics that are inevitably linked but not attended to in much detail owing to space and time constraints. Therefore, further research can polish and narrow down how the Quran builds its case solely for the advent of resurrection, DOJ or the concept of eternal life in heaven or hell.

Another limitation of this paper was the selective process of choosing which particular sign of Quran to chose. As a result of this methodology, a lot of other signs that God has put forth and requested pondering over are not a part of this paper that could also lead to conclusions like the existence of God or a DOJ. For instance in surah Rome, in support for the claim of Judgment Day, Allah gives several examples of His creations that are signs to wonder about such as the love between two partners, the diversity of human languages and skin colours, lightening and how it can instil fear or hope simultaneously (30:21-24). Similarly signs like these and others mentioned all over Quran were excluded from this paper.

Besides Islam, how do other major religious and secular traditions justify their claims of an afterlife is also something that future research can take into account.

#### APPENDIX

##### *Scientists' claim about prenatal development*

- **Professor Joe Leigh Simpson** stood and made

the following statement at a press conference:

“It is quite possible for religion to steer science successfully, which is what proves that the Qur'an is the speech of God.”

##### • **Professor Keith Moore**

“These proofs couldn't have come to Muhammad from anywhere other than God, which confirms to me that Muhammad is a messenger of God.”

##### • **Professor E marshal Johnson**

“The first part contains some body parts that have been formed; regarding the second part, nothing has been formed in it. From this, it's clear that it would be unscientific to describe this ‘lump of chewed flesh’ as completely formed or completely unformed. Therefore, it is impossible for me to describe it accurately according to science, except in the way Allaah described it in the Qur'an: ‘then, a little lump of flesh, some formed, some unformed.’ \*Qur'an, Al-Hajj: 5]. For this reason, there is nothing left for me to say except: Muhammad (salutations and peace of Allaah be upon him) is a messenger from God.”

##### • **Professor Yoshihide Kozai:**

“I am very shocked to find these astronomical facts in the Qur'an. The narrator of the Qur'an has knowledge of everything, in precise detail. Through reading the Qur'an and answering questions, I believe I may have found my future course in discovering the universe.”

##### • **Professor Gerald G. Goeringer:**

“The Qur'anic verses consist of a comprehensive description of human growth, and never before it has there been such a distinguished index of such clarity and perfection concerning human growth in terms of classification, technical terms and description.”

##### • **Professor Kroner:**

“It is now possible for advanced scientific methods to unmistakably confirm what Muhammad has said; and, I believe that what Muhammad informed us of could not be anything other than revelation from Allaah, Glorified and Exalted.”

##### • **Professor Tejatat Tejasen**

“This confirms to for me with certainty that the verses of the Qur’an came to Muhammad from a Creator most Knowledgeable of all things, and I see that it is time I announce: There is no deity worthy of worship except Allaah, and Muhammad is the messenger of Allaah; I am now a muslim... after all these proofs we have seen in the Noble Qur’an, especially the scientific miracles, let us ask ourselves the following questions:

Could it be that the scientific information regarding the many different fields of science, and that have only been recently discovered, though present in the Noble Qur’an – revealed over fourteen centuries ago – is there by mere coincidence? Is it possible that Muhammad or any other person could have authored the Qur’an?! The only possible answer is that the Noble Qur’an must be the revealed speech of Allaah, Glorified and Exalted.”

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