REINCARNATION
AND
PREDESTRUCTION

by
MUMTAZ AHMAD FARUQUI
S.K., B.Sc., E.E.

www.aaiiil.org

AHMADIYYAH ANJUMAN ISHA‘AT ISLAM — LAHORE
FOREWORD

In olden times when human knowledge was yet elementary, some religious philosophers, not having derived any guidance from Divine revelations, began to explain the diversity in life, physical and mental, as due to the deeds committed in some earlier cycle of life. They presumed that matter (material substance) and souls were there and would remain all along and God could only play with them and create and break and create again in a cycle all things having any life; and that the diversities in life manifesting themselves in richness and poverty, happiness and sorrow, were obviously the fruits of the deeds committed in a previous life. But this theory lacked proof and substance as will be shown later.

The above-mentioned state of things was due to lack of faith in the unbounded and illimitable power of God, the Creator, the Sustainer and Indisputable Master of the universe. But when Divine revelation came down through the Prophets of God, many a people thought that God has preordained everything including the destinies of human beings; and that man has willy-nilly to follow what God has predestined him to do. Here the pandulum has swung to the other extreme. It
has, therefore, been found necessary to clarify the doctrine of *Kadza wa Qadr* (Pre-destination and free will) also.

I have borrowed liberally from the literature on these subjects, especially that written by the Mujaddid of this century as well as by the late Maulana Muhammad Ali and the late Dr. Basharat Ahmad, of revered memories. I hope this small booklet will prove of use and guidance to the readers in Pakistan and abroad.

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M. A. FARUQUI.
REINCARNATION (OR TRANSMIGRATION OF SOULS)

Finding diversity in life evidenced in wealth and poverty, health and sickness, sorrow and happiness, the atheists and even some religious sects — like the Arya Smajists amongst the Hindu people, thought out, what they considered in the olden days, a plausible explanation, that after a person dies, his soul comes back again in this world in the body of another living thing to be rewarded or punished as the case may be, for his deeds and misdeeds in the previous existence.

Since scientists have proved that there is some kind of life in plants also, so it would seem that according to this theory a man may transmigrate not necessarily into another human being, but into an animal or plant also which would signify punishment for some previous bad deeds. The trouble starts the moment we assume this, for,

(1) There can be no lower form of life like animals and plants if man does not commit some sin or some misdeed. Now animal food and products like meat and milk etc., and plant products like vegetables, grains etc. are essential to sustain and maintain life on earth. What kind of religion is this which considers sin and misdeeds
essential to maintain and sustain the cycle of life. It is absurd on the very face of it.

(2) This theory would assume that man was there first to live and act and as a result thereof animal life and plants and vegetables followed. But the question arises how man existed first when there were no food grains, vegetables, fruits, meat, fish and milk etc. to be had? Again the theory is proved absurd; for science has proved beyond doubt that before the human race was evolved, there was a cycle of evolution starting from water, with plants and vegetables and insects and animals coming next. Human race thus came last of all. This is what is called the Theory of Evolution, which holds out the origin of species by graduated development from earlier forms, not by special creation. It cannot be that man may revert to animal life in the process of evolution; but on the other hand it will evolve into a higher and better form of life.

The deeds done by a man in a life-time should and would affect his condition and personality in the next (spiritual) world; and these could be only rewards or punishment for his good or bad deeds with a view to reforming him. Thus his soul in a new frame marches onward and upward spiritually. He does not have to come back to this material world to reform himself. If some defect is found in a new-born child, the physician or
surgeon tries to put it right in this world, and the child does not have to be sent back to the womb of his mother to be cured of congenital deformities.

Besides it is an obvious common sense idea of reward and punishment that the recipient be told clearly and convincingly that he is being punished upto a certain degree for a particular offence, so that in future he may refrain from such acts and reform himself. In the case of reward, a citation is made of the good deed which deserved it. This would provide an incentive to the person to repeat it. But in the case of the transmigration of souls, no such information or knowledge is vouchsafed to the person at his birth or afterwards. He remains completely in the dark. It presents the awful contemplation that a man may become the husband of his own mother in the next cycle of births, while his own father may be his pet dog or donkey. You cannot tell who is who and what is what. This theory defeats the very aim and object of reward and punishment for human deeds. Ayra Samajists sometime trot out a story about a certain child saying that he or she used to live in an otherwise unknown or new place in the previous life, and was related to so and so and did this or that. These are usually make-believe fables or are at best the hallucinations of a diseased mind. Why should only one person claim this, if billions of people are similarly situated.
(3) Arya Samajists contend that matter is indestructible, so God could neither make it nor destroy it. As to souls there were a certain number of souls available all along and God cannot create any new souls or annihilate the old ones. In other words, they co-exist with God; and all that God could do is to play about with them, like a child who makes and unmakes toys from a lump of clay. What an utterly poor, unrealistic and in fact fantastic idea of a god who otherwise rules the Universe, has the power of Life and death, and who is sought for help and mercy in time of need and trouble.

But here again the theory is built on sand and has thus proved unstable like a sawdust doll. For in the past the scientists whose limited knowledge was based on certain imperfect experiments and observations, thought that matter was indestructible. However scientific knowledge marches on; and now Einstein’s Theory of Relativity has shown that matter is destructible. Einstein developed the formula (where ‘E’ is energy, ‘M’ is mass and ‘C’ is the speed of light) and it proved correct and was borne out by experiments. In fact Atom Bomb was a development of this. So Mass or Matter can be converted into Energy which after doing the work intended, gets dissipated.

There have been so many prophets of God in this world. They left behind millions of followers,
but their writings do not contain any reference to a handicapped god, playing with matter and souls, as the Arya Samajists believe.

*The philosophy of sorrow and pain*

Man lives in a world and is surrounded by pitfalls and dangers. God made him the roof of creation and a being with intelligence and a sense to distinguish between what do him good and what would do him harm. The man gradually developed his mind and intellect and found means to sustain his life and of those who depend on him. He produced food, clothes, a house to live in, tools to manufacture useful things for himself, weapons to defend himself with and medicines and drugs to cure his ills and ailments. For his spiritual guidance, God sent His prophets to show him the right path which would lead to the salvation of his immortal soul.

However there are still many a physical and physiological laws of Nature of which man knows nothing. If he happens to break any of those laws, he is bound to suffer the consequences, even though the sufferer may happen to be a child. But man is always trying to overcome the handicaps that block his path of progress, and many ills which were common and inevitable before, like smallpox, have been controlled and this process continues. Many once incurable diseases are now
successfully treated by antibiotics, injections, electronics and operations.

In fact if there was a world without occasional sorrow or pain and handicaps to be overcome, man would in that case have remained unprogressive, deficient in intellect and physical well-being; and would have lived a dull, unimaginative life of boredom. For it is obvious that one does not appreciate good food unless one has suffered pangs of hunger and occasional starvation; nor can he value good and comfortable clothes unless his body has been exposed to the rigours of wind and weather. You would not appreciate good health unless you fall ill occasionally. If people did not die, and new births continued, the human race would have soon crowded and starved itself out of this world.

Then again trials and tribulations, taught man to live a corporate life and work in human fraternity Living as they do, men teach, learn and help one another. It has fostered noble spirit of human sympathy, mercy, mutual help and sacrifice for others. A civilized human being is a product of this sensible human way of life. An hospital advertises that a particular rare type of blood is immediately required for a patient before he can be operated upon to save his life. What happens? Hundreds of offers by total strangers are made free of charge to save a human life.
Here an important question confronts the believers in the theory of transmigration of souls:

(1) Should the life of a suffering person be saved in the circumstances, when according to the theory of Transmigration he is being punished by God for some sin or other? I wonder if an Arya Samajist would let his only son die without medical treatment, taking the illness to be a just retribution from God visited on the son for some past sin of his? I would think not.

(2) Then again it might help the son to suffer the pain patiently and perhaps to die without protest, if he could be told clearly and in so many words as to his past sin for which he is being punished. If this is not possible, then the whole theory is an impious fiction. In fact it may become inhuman and illegal. For example 'A' murders 'B'; now a witness 'C' (a believer in the transmigration of souls) believing that 'A' suffered death because of his past sins and 'B' was only an instrument of God to effect that punishment, allows or may even help 'B' to escape. What would the police think of 'C'?

To sum up, there is diversity in life in this world, and some so-called philosophers argued that this diversity in life is not according to Divine will, but is a result of our actions and deeds. This was a doctrine which lacked proofs, for neither did the Creator of the Universe reveal in so many words that
the diversity in life was due to your past deeds or misdeeds; nor did the conscience, instinct or the intellect of man have the knowledge that his present life is the result of his such and such acts or deeds, and that he lived before in this same world. Further as human knowledge and science progressed, no proof accrued to support this dogma. On the other hand, the Theory of Evolution and the Theory of Relativity proved this wrong and untenable. It goes beyond saying that diversity in the world in the shape of different gases, metals and minerals, vegetable and plants, insects and animals and finally amongst the human beings, is most essential for its very existence and survival.

Islamic conception of the diversity in life

Allāh says in the Holy Quran:

(1) "—And We have made of water every thing living—" (21:30). Almost 1400 years ago, this great truth about the source of all life was revealed, and it was only in recent times that science corroborated this statement.

(2) Through the ages living things evolved to a higher and higher state of life. Man was given intellect and the faculty of speech; and this gave him preference over the whole of creation on this earth (Also see 55:3, 4; 16:166).
(3) “And of everything We have created pairs that you may be mindful” (51 : 49). This denotes a “he” and a “she” amongst all things.

(4) Then came the election of those righteous servants of Allah from among men themselves who lead others along the right path.

(5) The relations between man and woman were regulated so that they live, love and help each other, and reproduce their species (4 : 1).

(6) The Holy Quran says further:

“O you men! surely We have created you of a male and a female, and made you tribes and families that you may know each other; surely the most honourable of you with Allah is the one among you most careful (of his duty); surely Allah is Knowing, Aware.” It does not make any difference if a person is a man or a woman, they will be treated and awarded alike (4 : 124). Similarly in 53 : 38-42, it says: “That no bearer of burden shall bear the burden of another; And that man shall have nothing but what he strives for; And that his striving shall soon be seen; Then shall he be rewarded for it with the fullest reward; And that to your Lord is the goal.” A reference may also be made to verses 4 : 26-33, in which God’s concern for the human beings and laying down certain rules for his conduct, is mentioned. God’s mercy is always forth-coming for those
who need it. The faithful are enjoined to be charitable to the others. See verses 76:7-11.

(7) But it is recognized that just like in separating pure gold from the dross, one has to heat and melt it in a crucible, similarly in order to bring out the best in the human nature and character, trials, and tribulations are visited upon him. Says the Holy Quran:

“And We will most certainly try you with somewhat of fear and hunger and loss of property and lives and fruits; but give good news to the patient, who, when a misfortune befalls them say: Surely we are Allah’s, and to Him we shall surely return. Those are they on whom are blessings and mercy from their Lord, and those are the followers of the right course” (2:155-157).

(8) That life on this earth shall not be repeated is amply borne out by the Holy Quran:

(i) “And it is forbidden to a town which We destroy they shall not return” (21:95).

(ii) “Until when death overtakes one of them, he says: Send me back, my Lord, send me back: Haply I may do good in that which I have left. By no means! it is a (mere) word that he speaks; and before them is a barrier until the day they are raised” (23:99, 100).

(iii) Verses (35:24-37) give the philosophy of the truth preached by the prophets of
God to all people. Those who accepted the truth and lived up to it are to be rewarded, those who denied the truth and misbehaved they would be punished. But all of this would take place in the life after death in a new spiritual world where human soul progresses on and on with thankfulness to God for his mercy and kindness. The punishment of the wicked would be long and painful, but would end finally, as verse (78:23) denotes a limited period. There are authentic traditions of the Holy Prophet which indicate that a time would come when Allah's mercy would release the sufferers in Hell; when their souls would start their striving for spiritual progress.

(iv) God has placed us in this world and has given us intellect and power to distinguish between right and wrong, so that even a poor man's son may, by virtue of education, intellect and effort rise to be a rich and powerful man. A humble man may by following the spiritual guidance given by God's messengers, rise to become a saint and a holy man and revered by thousands of his followers.

So this transitory camp of worldly life is but
a testing ground for the human beings, where they act their voluntary parts and departing this world would be judged by God and be rewarded or punished in the eternal life to come. Out of Divine mercy Allah will award the minimum of punishment for an evil deed, while He would increase tenfold the reward for a good deed. (see 6:61)

(v) Man in his greed may desire beauty and strength of body, pelf and power, pretty mates and nice healthy children. But these are transitory things and prove illusions in the pursuit of happiness and contentment of mind. A poor man who is honest and hard-working and has a small cottage to live in, but has a loving and faithful wife with healthy children, may find more happiness and contentment of mind in rags than a rich man would in silk garments and marble palaces. A poor man is usually more sociable and sympathetic towards his neighbours and helpful to the needy people than a pride-ridden selfish, morose and usually unhealthy rich man. Verse 3:13 points to this very fact. But it is recognised that the lot of the poor can be bettered if the necessary funds are available. For this very reason Islam has enjoined that all such persons who accumulate wealth to
a certain extent, must pay $2\frac{1}{2}\%$ tax in the shape of Zakat (or alms-money) which is to be spent in the proper way on the poor and needy to better their lot. It becomes the concern of the Islamic state to attend to it. Muhammad, the Holy Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be on him) although he was in the latter part of his life, a virtual temporal ruler of Arabia in addition to being the spiritual head of the community, yet he lived a very simple life, almost bordering on poverty. Yet he insisted on his followers, both men and women, that they should gain knowledge and work hard to improve their lot, and help one another. He also enjoined on his followers to lead a righteous life. A Muslim must strive to better his lot, and when faced with difficulties he must pray to God for His Divine help and mercy. Muslims are enjoined to propagate the Divine Message of Islam to all the peoples of the world. There was to be no compulsion in religion (2:256); and permission to fight was given when defending themselves against aggression (22:39-41).
Conclusion

It will have become clear by now that the doctrine of Reincarnation or the Transmigration of souls is not only a flight of imagination of certain people like the Arya Samajists but is a flight from inescapable facts. It has been proved wrong and untenable on the ground of common-sense and the latest scientific knowledge; and is unsupported by authentic religious writings left by the prophets of God.

God Almighty does not create and destroy and create again like a child playing with a lump of clay. He is the Creator and Sustainer of the Universe and whatever it includes and much more. He creates living things, and new souls within human bodies, donated with intellect, in this transitory world; and had sent His messengers to guide them. Human beings are responsible for their actions and hence their immortal souls would be given new spiritual bodies in the next life; and the spiritual progress would continue on and on into eternity.
PREDESTINATION (QADZA WA QADAR)

In Islamic parlance the word qadza is generally associated with qadar, and these are spoken of together as qadza wa qadar of God. But while qadar means the Divine measure of things, qadza means the deciding of an affair whether it be by word or by deed. In other words, qadza is only the ordering of a thing to come to pass, while qadar signifies the creating of things subject to certain laws.

God's taqdir of things is in two ways, by granting power, or by making them in a particular measure and in a particular manner, as wisdom demands. An example of this is given in the taqdir of the date-stone, out of which it is the palm only that grows not an apple or olive tree; or in the sperm of man, out which grows man only, not any other animal. The Holy Quran speaks of a taqdir for each and every thing that has been created.

"Glorify the name of the Lord, the Most High, Who creates, then makes complete, and Who makes things according to a measure, then guides them to their goal" (87:1-3).
“Who created everything, then ordained for it a measure (taqdîr)” (25:2).

So that the law according to which foods, provisions and other things are provided in the earth; and the law according to which rain falls on the earth, and that according to which night and day follow each other, are all the taqdîr of God. Man himself is no exception to this taqdîr of God, says the Holy Quran:

“Of what thing did He create him? Of a small life-germ He created him, then He made him according to measure” (80:18, 19).

This universal law is fully explained in two short verses in 87:2-3: “Who creates, then makes complete, and Who makes according to a measure then guides.”

Taqdîr meaning the absolute decree of good and evil by God, an idea with which the word is now indissolubly connected by the popular mind as well as by thinking writers, is neither known to the Holy Quran nor even to the Arabic lexicology. The doctrine of predestination is of later growth, and seems to have been the result of the clash of Islam with Persian religious thought. All this was due only to a misunderstanding of the nature of good and evil. God created man with certain powers which he could exercise under certain limitations, and it is the exercise of these powers
in one way or another that produces good or evil. For example, God has endowed man with the power of speech, which he can use either to speak the truth and say a good word, or to utter falsehood and slander against another person. A blow struck in self-defence is right but a blow struck in aggression is wrong.

The following verse is sometimes quoted as showing that God determines the action of man: “And Allah has created you and what you make” (37:96). But here the Arabic word for “you make” is ta‘malūn, from ‘aml which means both doing and making. In the context of this verse, the latter meaning applies, as there is no mention there of the good and evil deeds of man, but of the idols and stones which were worshipped (37:91-93). No doubt, God is recognized by the Holy Quran as the first and ultimate cause of all things; but this does not mean that He is the Fashioner of the deeds of man. He has, of course, created man; He has also created the circumstances under which he lives and acts; but still He has endowed man with a discretion which he can exercise under certain limitations, just as all his other powers and faculties are exercised under limitations and only in accordance with certain laws. Thus in the Holy Quran: “The truth is from your Lord; so let him who pleases accept (it) and
let him who pleases reject (it)” (18: 29). And as he can exercise his discretion or his will in doing a thing or not doing it, he is responsible for his own deeds and is made to bear the consequences.

The argument that man does an evil deed because God wills it so and that the question of free will to exercise does not arise, is not true. In the Quran — verses 6: 149, 150 — this very argument is put into the mouth of the opponents of the Holy Prophet; but says the Lord in reply there: “Say, then Allah’s is the conclusive argument; if He has (so) willed, He would have guided you all”. Says the Holy Quran in another place: “It is naught but a reminder for the nations, for him among you who pleases to go straight. And you please not except that Allah please, the Lord of the worlds” (81: 27-29).

It is contended by some, that the doctrine of the decreeing of good and evil follows from the doctrine of the fore-knowledge of God. That is, if God knows what will happen in the future, whether a particular man will take a good or an evil course, it follows that man must take that particular course, for the knowledge of God cannot be untrue. However the fact of the matter is that the future is an open book to God. The limitations of space and time, which encompasses man, are nothing to God. So mere fore-knowledge of a thing
or event does not interfere with the choice of its agent or doer. Hence God’s fore-knowledge has nothing to do with predestination. In some places in the Holy Quran words like “God has written down” that such a thing should come to pass, are mentioned. For instance compare the following two verses: “No affliction befalls in the earth or in your own souls, but it is in a book before We bring it into existence” (57:22); “No affliction comes about but by Allah’s permission” (64:11). Thus what is mentioned as written down in a book (His knowledge) is called permission or order in the other.

The Holy Quran throws further light on this subject where it makes mention of the Divine intention to bring the faithful to perfection through adversities: “And We will certainly try you with somewhat of fear and hunger and loss of property and lives and fruits; and give good news to the patient, who, when a misfortune befalls them, say, we are Allah’s and to Him we shall return. These are they on whom are blessings and mercy from their Lord and these are the followers of the right course” (2:155-157).

Therefore when the faithful are made to say, “Nothing will afflict us save what Allah has written down for us” (9:51) it is in reference to the Divine will, as expressed above. This also endows the faithful with the virtue of resignation in adversities.
The mistaken idea that God leads people astray arises out of a misconception of the meaning of the word *iddāl* (going astray) when it is ascribed to God. It should be noted that wherever *iddāl* is attributed to God, it is only in connection with the transgressors (2:26), the unjust (14:27) and the extravagant (40:34), not the people generally. Since *iddāl* (going astray) can legitimately be applied in cases where a thing has itself gone astray from you, or when you judge a person to be in error or going astray; to the only significance that can be applied in the case in reference would be that of God’s judging them to be in error or finding them in error, or in some cases, God’s bringing them to destruction.

Another misconception which must be removed in this connection is that God sets seals on hearts of certain people. A verse occurs in the beginning of the Holy Quran: “Those who disbelieve, it being alike to them whether thou warn them or do not warn them, will not believe, Allah has set a seal upon their hearts and upon their hearing, and there is a covering over their eyes” (2:6, 7). This is in connection with those who do not pay any heed to the holy Prophet’s warning. They refuse to open their hearts to receive the truth. It is about them that in another place, the Holy Quran says: “They have hearts but they do not (try to) understand with them, and they have eyes
but they do not (try to) see with them, and they have ears but do not (try to) hear with them; they are as cattle” (7:179). It is always the reprobate whose heart is said to be sealed: “Thus does Allah set a seal over the heart of every proud, haughty one” (40:35). The seal, therefore being the consequence of a man’s own deeds, has nothing to do with the doctrine of predestination. On the other hand, God says in the Holy Quran: “Then set thy face upright for religion in the right state—the nature made by Allah in which He has made all men; there is no altering of Allah’s creation; that is the right religion, but most people do not know” (30:30).

The Holy Prophet stated in one Hadith that “every child is born in the fitra (the right state or the condition of Islam), and that it is his parents who later on “makes him a Jew or a Christian or a Magian” (Bukhari, 23:80, 93). In another Hadith it is related that the Holy Prophet saw in a vision an old man at the foot of a large tree and around him were children, and in the vision he was told that the old man was Prophet Abraham and the children that were around him were the children who died before attaining to the age of discretion. “At this some of the Muslims asked him: “And the children of polytheists too, O Messenger of Allah!” The Prophet replied: “The children of polytheists as well” (Bukhari, 91:48).
Being with Abraham clearly meant being in paradise.

It may be noted that though the Holy Quran speaks of qadr or taqdir, these words by no means carry the significance of predestination or of a decree of good and evil for man. Further in the Holy Quran or in the most reliable hadith, no mention is made of imān or faith in qadr or taqdir. It is never mentioned as one of the fundamentals of religion like faith in God and His angels and His books and His apostles and a life after death. Some hadith do mention something about faith in qadr or taqdir, but an analysis of such traditions shows that the inclusion of faith in qadr among the fundamentals of faith, is an addition at the time of about the end of the first century of Hijra (the Muslim era). But even then Sahih Bukhari (the most authentic book of traditions) does not contain any hadith mentioning faith in qadr as an article of faith. It must also be clearly understood that the fundamentals of religion are all fully explained in the Holy Quran itself; while Hadith is only a secondary source of the religion of Islam and some of its details. Even here the narrators of Hadith may unwittingly make a slip or miss when reporting a saying or tradition of the Holy Prophet. So the basic rule is that traditions to be true and complete, must agree with the basic principles laid down by the Holy Quran. Even
when we carefully think over or analyse the few traditions bearing on faith in *qadr*, we find that the real sense of what is meant to be conveyed is that whatever of good or evil fortune comes to man, it must be accepted as coming from God; in other words a man must surrender himself to God.

This much is certain that belief in *qadr* does not mean belief in predestination, for which the Arabic word is *Jabr*; and is no part of the belief of the Muslim community. For to believe so would imply that man has no control at all over his actions, which would deny the very basic principle of the religion of Islam, that is, the responsibility of man for his actions.

In this connection certain misinformed Muslims, believing in *taqdir* rigidly, come to practise *tawakkul* (*i.e.*, leaving things to shape or happen as God has willed them) and thus fail to strive to improve matters for themselves. They overlook the Quranic injunctions: “That no bearer of burden shall bear the burden of another; and that man shall have nothing but what he strives for, and that his striving shall soon be seen; then shall he be rewarded for it with the fullest reward” (53: 38-41).

Once a companion of the Holy Prophet asked him about the true significance of *tawakkul*. The Holy Prophet replied in a pithy and meaningful
sentence: "a‘qal wa tawakkal!"; that is when you have to leave your camel to graze, then hobble front two knes loosely with a piece of rope and then leave it in God’s keeping.

As has been explained before qadr is the measure, while qadza is the decision or bringing of it into action. A story is told about Caliph Umar (on whom be peace) when visiting the battle-front in Syria, he ordered the Muslim Commander, Abu Ubaida to give up a plague-stricken place to which Umar refused to go, and to remove his troops to a healthier spot, he was met with the objection: “Dost thou fly from the qadza of Allah i.e., from what God has ordered. Umar’s reply was: “I fly from the qadza of Allah to the qadr of Allah.” What he meant evidently was that if God had brought about plague by his qadza in one place, another place was free from it, and it was his qadr i.e. a Divine law, that they should betake themselves to a place of safety.

It is only in this sense that a Muslim can be said to have faith in qadr.