INVESTIGATING AND ANALYZING THE THEORY OF THE CORPOREAL REINCARNATION AND ITS DIFFERENCE WITH METAMORPHOSIS BASED ON TRANSCENDENT THEOSOPHY

Sayyid Hasan Bathayi Gulpaygani*
Assistant Professor of Payam Nour University, the Department of Islamic Science.
Email: drbathayi@gmail.com

Received on 05-08-2016
Accepted on 28-08-2016

Abstract.

One of the topics of teleology is how human being reaches immortality in the sense that how quality human being’s immortality would have? Schools and religions have made different responses to it. One of them is the eternity and continued existence of human being in the form of reincarnation. Different constructions have been made of reincarnation one of which is to belong the human soul to another body in this world that it is impossible among Muslim’s philosophers. Ṣadr-Dīn Shīrāzī has rationally and traditionally explained and analyzed the corporeal reincarnation and its difference with metamorphosis according to the principles of transcendent theosophy as well. What this study says: «The conceptual definition of reincarnation and its kinds, rational and traditional evidences of the corporeal reincarnation, the difference of reincarnation and metamorphosis has been analyzed and investigated in various philosophical and interpretational works of Ṣadr-ol-Mote’allehin and transcendent theosophy’s disciples».

Keywords: Reincarnation, Metamorphosis, Resurrection, Substantial motion, Ṣadr-ol-Mote’allehin.

Introduction

The debate of eschatology is one of the most complicated and difficult scientific issues that may not be proved in mental preparations without the help of revelation particularly the quality of otherworldly life because it is excluded of the realm of reason, sense and experience; because the tools of reason is powerless of expressing the details of resurrection. As it has been said: apprehending the truth of resurrection is impossible except using the niche of prophecy of the last prophet (ṣ) and benefiting from the guidance of saints (Hakim Zunūzī, 1997: 680); and the surest way to know the truth of resurrection is to affirm the traditional reasons and believe in the facts that the Holy Prophet (PBUH) has brought through...
the revelation. (Tabataba’i, 2004, Vol. 1: 183 and 412; Javādī, 2007, Vol. 1: 463). On the one hand, a right understanding of how the otherworldly life is returns to anthropology which is a way difficult matter. Because the historical journey of the origin of the human generation is not available to the general epistemological tool; and it may not be possible to issue a dogmatic fatwa about it. (Javādī-Āmulī, 2003, Vol. 5: 152) MullaŠadrā has raised the issue of reincarnation as "مزال الاقفام, Muzulul-aqdām" and "مزالق الاقفام", Muxaliqu-afham\(^1\), moreover, he has mentioned the source of its origin is more in the speech of prophets and saints (Ṣadrad-Dīn Shīrāzī, 1992, Vol. 9: 2). Unlike Ghazālī who considers bodily resurrection as an actual example of reincarnation (Sabzavārī, 1987: 451; Ghazālī, 1993: 43) or some of theologians who have divided the reincarnation into permissible and impossible (Ṣadrad-Dīn Shīrāzī, 1984, Vol. 3: 636) he says: bodily resurrection is not an actual example of reincarnation and do not have the constraints of reincarnation. Furthermore, a true rapporteur never informs an impossible matter (Ṣadrad-Dīn Shīrāzī, 1992, Vol. 9: 820). In this paper along with the conceptual definition of reincarnation and its types, it has been dealt with the principles and evidences of corporeal reincarnation, then the issue of metamorphosis in the Qur’an and its difference with the void reincarnation has been in intellectual and traditional reasons analyzed and sifted through different philosophical and interpretational works of MullaŠadrā and disciples of the transcendent theosophy.

1. Conceptual Definition

Sayyid Hasan Bathayi Gulpaygani*et al. /International Journal of Pharmacy & Technology
3: 55; Ṭurayḥī, 1996, Vol. 2: 443; Muṣṭafawī, 1981, Vol. 11: 102; RaghibIṣfahani, 1994, Vol. 1: 768). Al-Tahqiq’s author writes: the principle of metamorphosis is the very spiritual one towards the punishment that causes the inner and outward form transformed and may be mild or severe. Mild metamorphosis: the acquisition of transmutation and change in the inner-purgatory form of human being is as the result of human being’s good or bad acts, however, the severe metamorphosis is the acquisition of transmutation in the heart and its perfect emergence in the body. As a result, metamorphosis is something other than the void reincarnation (Muṣṭafawī, 1981, vol. 11: 104).

"Resurrection" means to go and return, nouns of time and place and an infinitive with a redundant letter of M[^1] (RaghibIṣfahani, 1994, Vol. 1: 593; Ṭurayḥī, 1996, Vol. 3: 111; IbnManẓūr, 1996, Vol. 3: 319) and idiomatically means life after death and the return of spirits to bodies after the separation which is the bodily resurrection. But absolute spiritual resurrection according to what philosophers believe is the main return of spirits to their origin stand which is the very state of detachment from the body and implementing its instruments "(Jurjānī, 1994, Vol. 8: 289).

2. Past history of Reincarnation

The theory of "transmigration of souls", "soul transmission" or "rebirth" has been acceptable among religions and nations and has also enthusiasts right now. Shahrastānī says: there is no clique wherein the reincarnation has no firm stand (Shahrastānī, 1988, Vol. 2: 255). At that, JohnNoss says: all religions of the world, from primitive and savage tribes to cultured supreme nations, more or less believe in reincarnation (John Noss, 1994: 155). Ṣadr-ol-Mote'allehin also believes that there is a belief in reincarnation in every religion (Ṣadrad-Dīn Shīrāzī, 1987, Vol. 3: 471; Ibid, 1983: 382). The origin of this theory is in doctrines of Buddhism, Sikhism, Jainism and Hindi religions (Ḥikmat, 1994: 155). Some western scholars have ascribe it to sages such as Pythagoras, Plato and Aristotle (Ibid: 91 and 95), although, it is not accepted by the philosophers of East; thus, MullaṢadrāḥas interpreted their speech as the sound reincarnation (Ṣadrad-Dīn Shīrāzī, 1983: 382).

Authentic Islamic sects, however, have discussed on reincarnation, nobody believes in it (Shia Encyclopedia, Vol. 5: 98; Mousavi-Bojnourdi, Vol. 16: 180), therefore, ‘AllāmahMajlesi has claimed on the abrogation of reincarnation consensually. Also among mystics, ibn al-Fārid of Egypt, Muhayyidīn‘Arabī and Qiyṣarī have explicitly invalid ate the reincarnation and believe that the soul of human will join the purgatory and ideal body after separation from the world body (Qiyṣarī, 2006, Chapter Shīsī: 125).
3. Reincarnation and Resurrection

Some theologians believe that the belief in reincarnation does not mean the absolute negation of resurrection, however, it challenges the principle of the promise of the Garden and threat; because the reward and penalty takes effect in this very life of world (Hilli, 1989: 432). Proponents of reincarnation believe that what makes reincarnation is impurity and sinfulness of human being that after death it incarnates into the body of another existent to be cleansed from sin and achieves the sublime world and God and rides of the cycle of reincarnation. Thus, the people of reincarnation maintain that the only way of the evolution of the soul of human is incarnation in various bodies. According to this doctrine, the current behavior of human being determines how the next life would be which is called the law of "Karma" (Hikmat, 1994: 155; Tahānawī, 1996; Shahristānī, 1988, Vol. 2: 55). It turns out to be that the abrogation of reincarnation is considered as the premises of ascertainment of the resurrection principle and immortality of punishment or some of its reasons (such as proof by Justice); for based on the theory of reincarnation there is not any judgment for human acts. Repentance, intercession and seeking forgiveness from God make no sense; because all pleasures and pains are the corollary conclusion and the effects of results of acts which are in the world (John Noss, 1994: 156).

4. Types of Reincarnation

Reincarnation, in common and general sense, so to speak, the actual and figurative meaning, may be divided into corporeal and celestial:

4-1-Corporeal reincarnation:

It means that the human soul gives up its material body and enters into another one. What has been reported of different schools of India is the witness for this meaning of reincarnation. This kind of reincarnation itself is divided into two types of descending and ascending ones:

4-1-1. Descending reincarnation

This kind of reincarnation, which is attributed to the orient, means that the soul leaves the physical body and is attached to a body lower than itself in this very material world; like the one whose human soul is transmigrated to the body of one of the animals after separation from its body (Ṣadrad-Dīn Shīrāzī, 1992, Vol. 9: 8; Sabzavarī, 2004: 377). According to this view, the first bodily being who is worthier that the lordly light – which is the very intellective soul – is attached to it in the world of nature is the human body, nonetheless, only the most perfect human beings who have followed the path of
prosperity, after the separation of the body, will be entered into the intellectual world and enjoyed the intelligible beatitude, still, the mode of wretched human being and medium one or imperfect is in such a way that after releasing of its body based on the differences they have, they are attached to another body and manage it. According to this view, every animal has the human eternal divine grace, and every plant has the animal eternal divine grace, but the point that the soul is attached to what animal’s body depends on the ethics and positive properties that has obtained in the worldly life; in that, if greed is its dominant attribute, it will be incarnated the body of the ants, and if the dominant attribute is injury and harassment, it will be incarnated the body of an animal like a snake called descending discrete reincarnation which is void among all sages. This kind of reincarnation is incompatible with the resurrection, besides, Islamic scholars have rejected it (Ṣadr-Dīn Shīrāzī, 1983: 382; Ibid, 1992, Vol. 4: 99; Lāhījā, 1372: 172; Sabzavarī, 2004: 374; Āshtīyanī, 2002: 69).

4-1-2-Ascending reincarnation

That is, the soul leaves its material body and is attached to a more honorable and perfect body than the previous one. Ascending reincarnationist maintain that the first being who takes the new soul is a plant and asks for a human nature that has passed by animal and vegetative degrees and after going through with different orders, it deserves well of ascending to the human rank and belongs to the body; then, every human being has animal and vegetative record (Ṣadr-Dīn Shīrāzī, 1992, Vol. 9: 8; Ibid, 1983: 384). This type of transformation and transition is called the ascending connective reincarnation which is a null matter (Sabzavarī, 2004: 374).

4-2-Celestial reincarnation

The attachment of the soul to the body in the otherworldly life is called the celestial reincarnation which is of two types:

A-The attachment the soul to other than this soul, it means that its oneness permeated in different forms; like the permeation of appearance of the real identity in the symbols of its names and attributes which is also right and applying the word reincarnation to these types is for being common verbally (Qiyṣarī, 2006, Chapter Shīṣī: 125; ḤasanṣūdihĀmūlī, 1992: 676).

B-The attachment of the soul to the otherworldly body is compatible with the worldly soul which is the body is epistolary compositions of this very soul and subsisting in it like the subsistence of an act in its doer, though, the body is different from the elemental body (ḤasanṣūdihĀmūlī, 1992: 677). The disciples of the transcendent theosophy has construed the reincarnation with this meaning as the embodiment of deeds.
5-Reasons for the impossibility of corporeal reincarnation

From the viewpoint of philosophers, discrete corporeal reincarnation “which is the transmission of the soul from the elemental or natural body to another body which is separate from the first one” is an intellectual impossibility. The first demonstration based on being united of the soul and body composition and the demonstration of potentiality and actuality has dealt with the nullification of corporeal reincarnation, meanwhile, the second demonstration is exposed according to the substantial motion which is as follows:

5-1- lack of coordination between the soul and body

Mulla Šadrāstressing on the principles of the transcendent theosophy including the substantial motion, bodily origination, spiritual immortality of the soul and his own special anthropology such argues to nullify the ascending and descending reincarnation as the empyreanproof: "the attachment of the soul to the body is not a mechanical composition of parts into a whole and artificial one but an inherent attachment, and its composition is natural and unitive which will actualize in different stages of life pro rata the body actuality; therefore, every soul during the bodily life turns from potentiality to actuality, besides, they actualize in beatitude and affliction as a result of acts and attributes – both good and bad. When the soul becomes an actual thing, it is impossible to go back to the mode of potentiality and aptitude; as it is impossible for an animal matured returns to the state of sperm and the clot of blood; because the movement of the soul and the body is a substantial and inherent motion. Hence, if the soul at the embryonic stage is attached to other body after separation, it should be the potential body and the actual soul and the unitive composition of potential thing with the actual thing, while it is impossible; requiring that an object at the same time would be both actual and potential which is an impossible matter”(Šadrad-Dīn Shīrāzī, 1992, Vol. 9: 2-3; Ibid, 1984: 559; Ibid, 1983: 385; Sabzavarī, 2004: 379; Lāhījī: 173; Āshtīyanī, 2002: 147) Of course, this argument is prevailing just in case that the human soul from the point of perfections is attached to a body lower than its own, however, if it is attached to a concordant body, the argument is not valid. This argument is based on several principles, including that there is an inherent attachment and unitive composition between the soul and the body, and the body and soul is a potential thing at the beginning of origination, accordingly, if the soul is separated from the body and attached to another body, the unity of the actual thing with the potential one would be essential, as such, the reincarnation which is the very transmission of the soul after death to the other is void as well. On the other hand, the attachment of the soul to the body from the view of its origination is based on existence and
individuation, because the soul philosophy is the philosophy of material natures at the beginning of origination that its existence is obscure, thus, the soul at the beginning of its existence belongs to a substance with an ambiguous existence which is the very body. Mulla Ṣadr ā speaks on the attachment of the soul to the body: the soul, so long as it is the soul, has an inherent attachment to the body and is in need of the body and constitutes and belongs to it, consequently, the dominance of the soul in the body is inherent, as the completion of the form of substance is the inherent attachment to it, furthermore, it is considered as a kind of its identity. (Ṣadrā-Dīn Shīrāzī, 1992, Vol. 8, p. 379)

Certainly, the base of the discourse is the very rule of the soul’s corporeality of origination and spirituality of its permanence, it means that the soul is material at the beginning of origination, then it turns abstract as the result of substantial motion, thus, they are two ontological realities independent from each other incarnated in a being by a unitive composition. According to Mulla Ṣadr ā, the soul is an independent essence that has passed different stages one after the other though the substantial motion in doubt after doubt and achieves eternity in the world of non-mixed intelligences (Ṣadrā-Dīn Shīrāzī, 1992, Vol. 8, p. 393)

5-2- The attachment of two souls to one body

The requisite for reincarnation is the attachment of two souls to one body and the union of two spirits in one body which is an impossible matter; for a body which is supposed to be taken over by a soul, it itself is of whether a soul or not. If it has the soul, it will necessitate that a body is of two souls, and if it is not of the soul but of merits, God the Almighty gives the soul to it; because God wills that every possible being achieves their own ideal perfection (Ḥillī, 1989: 190; Ṣadrā-Dīn Shīrāzī, 1987: 346; Sabzavar, 2004: 380; Ṭabataba’i, 1999, Vol. 1: 265).

Stressing on happening of motion in the category of substance says: movement flows in all things and even in the souls because their origination is corporeal until they are completely abstract. According to the substantial motion and gradation of being, human being has gradational orders from the physical body that enjoys it like all human beings in life, in addition, he has another body that makes it by his own arbitrary acts and thoughts and its end is celibacy. The soul is physical at the stage of origination that as the result of the substantial motion on the perfectibility path of natural body turns into an otherworldly and purgatory body that takes forms appropriate to acts and habits by the essential movement that it will be resurrected with the same acquired habit on the Last Day. This argument which is largely based on the substantial motion is that assuming impossible the soul after death is attached to another body, and because the material
world is of the substantial motion and the soul has also emerged out of this very substantial motion, then, the soul as the result of move in quantity and quality has gradually achieved perfectibility out of weakness and become stronger and will be independent from the body. Now if the soul attaches to another body after death, it requires a severe retrogrademotion to the weakness and from the perfectibility to the defect which is an impossible matter, hence, the reincarnation is something void and impossible. *MullaṢadrā* says in response to Ghazālī who is considered the bodily resurrection as the reincarnation and contingent: Some have thought the constraints of reincarnation is conceptual and verbal matter and/or just opposing the Sharia, whereas, the main problem of reincarnation is the rational one and that is the impossibility of union of two souls in one body and the return of perfectibility to the defect which is rationally speaking impossible. *(Ṣadrad-Dīn Shīrāzī, 1992, Vol. 9: 208).* *MullaṢadrā* has mentioned that the cause of death is in the intensity of the soul on the path of gradual evolution and its independence of the body, and he in this regard says: the soul is gradually separated from the body by its evolutionary motion and intensified in its essence from the weakness to strength in such a way that it would be needless of the body. According to the principles mentioned, each body has a soul that reaches a new degree of being through a gradual perfectibility, meanwhile, it is impossible that the developed soul incarnated in another body after leaving its own body *(Ṣadrad-Dīn Shīrāzī, 1992, Vol. 9: 1).* The disciples of transcendent theosophy such as SayyidJalāluddinĀshīyānī and ‘AllāmahJa‘far Subhānī has also asserted it. *(Āshīyānī, 2002: 149; Subhānī, 1990, Vol. 9: 202).*

6- Metamorphosis and reincarnation

Some verses in *The Qur’an* imply metamorphosis, it means that the outward face of some human beings in a period of history has been turned into apes. *(The Cow: 65; The Battlements: 166).* Metamorphosis, as passed, means changing the appearance shape of human being in an ugly form or changing the apparent form and esoteric ethics; therefore, verses of metamorphosis represent the change in the face of human beings like an animal face among nations of past which is different with the null reincarnation. Before expressing the difference between metamorphosis and corporeal reincarnation, it is necessary to answer the question that whether some people from the nation of Moses (‘a) whose form and behavior turned into an ape were metamorphosed outwardly or just inwardly with saving their human form? There are two opinions among commentators. *Muḥammad Jawad Mughniyāh* and ‘Allāmah Javādī-Āmūlī maintain that the appearance of the verse confirms the first assertion; because it is a possible matter, and when a verse and atrue narration
inform its happening, the meaning of the verse affirms its appearance, it is needless for anagogical interpretation (Mugniyah, 2006, vol. 1: 121; Javdi-Amali, 2003, Vol. 5: 131).

However, some other commentators, such as Mujahid and Muhammad Abduh, have only accepted the inner metamorphosis. Muhammad Abduh in this regard says: "God does not metamorphose any sinful man, so that he excludes him from the human kind. Moreover, the tradition of God has not changed towards all nations since the past and for the future" (Maraghi, Bi Ta, Vol. 1: 140; Tabarsi, 1993, Vol. 1: 265).

Mulla Sadrā writes on the difference between metamorphosis and corporeal reincarnation: the metamorphosis of face is of two types: one, the transmission of the soul from the body of human being at death to the body of the other animal at birth which is the very void reincarnation, and the other, the change of form and behavior into an animal, as it was happened in the nation of Children of Israel. Elsewhere he writes: because the constituent of reincarnation is in two factors: one, the union of two souls in one body, and the other, resurrection of the soul to the proper perfectibility of the body from an animal or fetus and/or human being; these two conditions are not in metamorphosis (Sadrad-Din Shīrāzī, 1987, Vol. 347: 472). Mulla Sadrā has interpreted verses represent the metamorphosis of some nations as "celestial reincarnation" and "embodiment of the deed" and writes: the souls of human beings in the Hereafter are gathered based on the acts and intentions. (Sadrad-Din Shīrāzī, 1987, Vol. 3: 471). He writes according to the substantial motion: human being is not a subsistent identity who becomes afflicted with childhood and aging modes, but he is a mobile being with ranks that it is feasible for him to progress to perfectibility and retrograde to animal stage. And because the bodies depends on the souls, it is possible that animal attributes penetrate in some souls in such a way that make changes in their bodies; so that the bodies have cognition with that attributes; so if metamorphosis is happened in appearance, it depends on the non-manifest metamorphosis, furthermore, the metamorphosis of appearance is in the previous body (Sadrad-Din Shīrāzī, 1987, vol. 3: 272) Hence, it may be said that the metamorphosis, from the viewpoint of Mulla Sadrā, is the very celestial reincarnation that he has considered it as the accepted reincarnation. And since the body is depends on the spirit, the outward form is also metamorphosed in consequence of the soul. At that, The disciples of transcendent theosophy have interpreted the verses of metamorphosis as the inner becoming and celestial metamorphosis including Allamah Tabataba’i who writes: the verses of metamorphosis represent the metamorphosis of heart and the frame of aggressors on the day of Saturday not their only qualification to animal attributes and special metamorphosis of their heart, it is like executing a member of human
being and creating an individual out of an ape or penetrating the human spirit into the body of an ape, but in this metamorphosis the humanity of human being is metamorphosed not nullified, yet, he is the ape human. This kind of metamorphosis is along with saving the knowledge and perception of human ipseity; as a result, the feeling of shame, humiliation and punishment is rejected for apes not normal apes (Tabataba’i, 1999, Vol. 1: 209). ‘Allāmah Javādī-Āmūlī writes about the collation of soul and body and the journey of evolution of celestial metamorphosis of human being to an ape which is the very celestial reincarnation from the viewpoint of Ṣadr-ol-Mote’allehin: that the heart and format both of them are nonhuman like what happened as the penalty to the illegal game of Sabbath, then he has ascribed this view to Ibn Kathīr of Damascus; another point is that the heart is nonhuman but the frame is human, as Mujāhid maintains that the people of Sabbath are among such an incarnation, besides, some have also confirmed it (Qurtubī, 1985, Vol. 1: 240; Rāzī, 2002, vol. 3: 541; Ibn ‘Arabī, 2004, vol. 1: 38). The other point is that the heart is human and the frame is nonhuman which is affirmatively possible and is considered as a type of punishment. In order to explain it based on the substantial motion and transcendent-theosophy-oriented anthropology and pursuant to some verses in this ground, he writes: a normal person is an actual animal and a human being in potency at birth. If he obeys the reason and canonical law, he will be a human being in potency; meanwhile, if he crosses a path which is forbidden by the reason and canonical law, he has trekked an animal disposition, at the start of path he is like an animal (The Battlements: 179) and at the end of it he will be more astray than animal, at the beginning of the vanity path he is an actual example of an ass carrying books (Congregation: 5) or dogs (The Battlements: 176) and at the end of the path, he will be an actual example of apes (The Cow: 65); so to speak, although the appearance form of a criminal human being which is an accidental quality is the human form, his immaterial soul which forms his reality and essence is the ape (Javādī-Āmūlī, 2003, Vol. 5: 144). As ḤasanzādīhĀmūlī has asserted this issue (HasanzādīhĀmūlī, 2006, p. 691).

7- Final conclusion

Different views have been expressed on the immortality of human being that one of them is the theory of reincarnation. Mulla Ṣadrā believes the source of its origin is in the speech of the divine prophets that has emerged in reincarnation. The absolute separation of the soul and body is rejected from the point of Islamic philosophers and theologians especially Mulla Ṣadrā. He unlike theologians who have counted the resurrection among reincarnation and considered it contingent maintains that bodily resurrection is not the reincarnation and does not have constraints of reincarnation; for it, as well as
religious constraints and incompatibility with the nextlife, entails lack of coordination between the soul and body and the attachment of two souls to one body which is rationally impossible. On the other hand, The Qur’an has spoken in some verses on the metamorphosis and transforming a group of human beings into the shape of an ape. Unlike some commentators who have considered it as a divine miracle, Sadr-ol-Mote’allehin and transcendent theosophy’s disciples, or al-hikmat al-muta’li, including MullaHadiSabzavārī, AllāmahTabataba’i, ḤasanzādihĀmūlī, Javādī-Āmūlīand Ja’far Subhānī, maintain that these verses are concerning embodiment of deeds, habits and its emergence in the other-worldly emanation and considered them as an actual example of celestial reincarnation and bodily resurrection, and they have explained it philosophically on the basis of substantial motion. MullaṢadrāhas proven that metamorphosis is the very celestial reincarnation based on the substantial motion and transcendent theosophy-oriented anthropology for the reason that the body depends on the spirit and the outward forms of human being is transformed and metamorphosed in consequence of the soul. According to this commentary, the metamorphosis is not an individual’s non-existences and forming another one but a new form on the face of human being which is mentioned as an ape human being.

References
Sayyid Hasan Bathayi Gulpaygani* et al. / International Journal of Pharmacy & Technology 
   First printing. 1998.


