

Razi's Concept of an Afterlife

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Abstract

The major aspect of this paper aimed on analytical classification of Razi's metaphysical doctrine of human existence after death. Death is an undeniable fact and merely it's a movement from one world to another. Razi's concept of life after death is a belief in the continued existence of the soul and a transformed physical existence of a new life. Analytical study in this paper born historical evidence and facts which developed a bent of mind in observing the research problem. Evidently, belief in afterlife was found in golden age of Islam and in classical Greek historic figures. Research findings have shown that belief in afterlife of many religions connects Razi's concept of individual maintenance in afterlife. Death is the beginning of life and human existence is identified again after death. There are aspects in similar between golden age of Islamic philosophy and Greek historic figures in individual life after death, while sharing similar aspects in individual life after death, Razi's understanding of life after death is evidently classified on human existence.

Keywords

Islamic Philosophy, Razi, Human Existence, Greek History, Life and Death

1. Introduction

Abu Bakr Muhammad ibn Zakariya Al Razi (865-925 AD) is recognized as among Islamic Medievalists as a solid scholar, a comprehensive thinker and the great mind of Islamic golden age [1]. Abu bakr Muhammad Ibn Zakariya Al Razi known in the west as Razes was a Persian philosopher, physician, scientist and a universal scholar of 200 manuscripts that made an aspire and comparable achievement in golden era of Islamic philosophy and medicine [2]. At age 30, he began his medical and philosophical studies under Ali Ibn Rabban al-Tabari, a physician-philosopher from the ancient city of Merv in western Iran [3]. He had no recognized system of philosophy, but compared to his time, he must be recognized as the most vigorous and liberal thinker in Islam and perhaps in the

whole history of human thought, even for centuries, his writings became fundamental teaching texts in European medical and Philosophical schools [4] [5]. Overall, he was known as a prominent scientific writer and reckoned as the most vigorous and liberal thinker on various subjects of medicine and philosophy (Figure 1).

Razi's metaphysical doctrine derives from the theory of the five-eternal, according to which the world is produced out of interaction between God and four other eternal principles (soul, matter, time and place) [6] [7]. In the philosophical life, Razi defended his personal and philosophical life style that there is a life after death full of happiness not suffering and he stressed that man should pursue knowledge, utilize his intellect and apply justice in his life. He believed that this is what our merciful creature wants. Death is inevitable; therefore one should not pre-occupy the mind with it. A benevolent and good man who acts according to the ordinance of Islamic shari'ah, has after all nothing to fear because it indicates that he will have a comfort and permanent new life in the hereafter. The tenets which derived from the philosophical life state that there is a life after death which is either praiseworthy or blameworthy and which depends on how we live our life. The most virtuous thing for which we have been created and to which we have been guided is not the pursuit of bodily pleasures but the acquisition of knowledge and application of justice which is means to our salvation from this life to another life where there is neither death nor pain. The pleasure and pain of this life will come to an end and nature from whom will reward and punish in new life after death to those among us who cause pain and those who deserve punishment to the extent that they deserve. Man should be kind and gentle because there is a close relationship between spiritual integrity



Figure 1. Abu-Bakr Muhammad Ibn Zakaria Razi or Rhazes (865-925 AD).

and physical health and he states that psychological state cannot be avoided completely unless the soul will lead a better life after death. He focuses on the opinion of some people who think that the soul perishes when the body dies. Death is inevitable; therefore one should not pre-occupy the mind with it. A benevolent and good man who acts according to the ordinance of Islamic shari'ah has after all nothing to fear because it indicates that he will have comfort and permanent new life in the hereafter. Al-Razi insistence on the necessity of spiritual medicine that each soul needs some restoration and return to a new life [8]. Razi's heroes are Socrates and Plato even he calls Socrates as his Imam the prayer leader [9]. Razi states that human soul which is self subsisting scurvies death and may go through a series of transmigration before reaching its complete liberation from the body and its return to its own world Whereas Aristotle understanding of life after death understand that human soul cease to exist in a new life after the body dies. His theory of resurrection strictly understood says that this body will be resurrected and brought back after death [10]. Al-Kindi was another Muslim philosopher says that the soul is a simple and immaterial substance which is related to the material world only because of its faculties which operate through the physical body. He connects a Neo-Platonic idea by saying that our soul can be directed towards the pursuit of intellect; the former will tie it to the body so that when the body dies it will also die but later will free it from the body and allow it to survive in afterlife [11]. Belief in rebirth was held by Greek historic figures Pythagoras, Socrates and Plato [12]. It is also a common belief of various ancient and modern religions such as spiritism, theosophy and Eckankar and is found as well as in many tribal societies around the world, in places such as Australia, East Asia, Sibrai and South America [13]. The significance of Razi's Islamic philosophy teaches the continued existence of the soul and a transformed physical existence after death. A central doctrine of the Islamic book Quran gives warning about grievous punishment to those who do not believe in the afterlife [14]. Obviously Al-Razi has definite views on the way in which one should treat others and oneself but does not justify them and his incentive to the reader for adopting them is simply that they lead to a better afterlife.

Razi was one of the solid Scholars in golden era of Islamic philosophy and medicine who made a contribution to the history of human thought. In this study we aimed to consider his concept of continuous human existence after death which is essential part of an individual identity which continues to manifest after the death of physical body.

2. Method

An analytical study was carried out using already available facts and information along the history and logic of the very study itself and then actively taken steps in stimulating the production of desired information. The process was born by collecting facts and information which brought the significance of research and

increased the progress possible. Approach to facts finding and gathering knowledge the researcher was engaged concerning scholarly books, journal and internet with a broad base of application and added the knowledge logically. Historical evidence and facts developed a discipline thinking and bent of mind objectively observing the research topic. The knowledge made the researcher able to evaluate and utilize the research findings confidently. History and logic behind the topic helped in evaluating research and made relational decisions. The nature of the researcher and the seeking of the knowledge was truthful in the theme of searching facts and information with possessing an alert mind. Scientific enquiry was pre-eminent and intellectual effort which fulfilled the moral quality of courage and steadfast endurance.

Thus principal objective of analytical research developed the concept of research topic and stimulated the production of desired information. The results obtained by using already existing facts and information considered the powerful evidence for the topic.

3. Discussion

This is an analytical study. The process aimed on facts and information along history and logic to understand Razi's concept of an afterlife. Belief in afterlife is the concept of Razi's Islamic philosophy and teaching of Islamic metaphysical aspects. Razi's metaphysical contributions in golden era of Islamic philosophy became fundamental teaching texts in European philosophical schools. Research findings interpreted on spiritual development process that involves improving spiritual skills. spiritual learning or understanding include a set of beliefs and thoughts on the afterlife and what purpose of life is. On the other hand it includes abilities used to perceive spirits, communication and spirits healing which are similar to spiritual beliefs. Ancient and modern religions in the world such as spiritism, theosophy Budhisim and Hinduism which are found in different societies of the world have common belief in an afterlife [13] [15] [16]. Based on philosophical and religious classification human soul is identified again after death of the body. With the exception of a handful of countries, such as the former East Germany and Slovenia, the majority of the population believes in a life after death [17].

Beliefs about afterlife were investigated for 270 healthcare workers and 414 university students. The extinction view was endorsed by 13.6 percent. The predominant view of 85.1 percent was a hope for an afterlife. Kelsey (1982). compared the results of a national survey carried out fifteen years ago (Der Spiegel, 1979) 53 percent of the adults in west Germany and even a stronger belief is reported for the United States: in 1968, 73 percent of adults believed on afterlife. (Gullp, 1972) [18]. The belief in an afterlife is obvious, as a French philosopher once said: one should always wager that there is an afterlife, because the believer has everything to win and nothing to lose, whereas the non-believer has nothing to win, but everything to lose.

No study conducted on Razi's concept of afterlife. This research was a design to further explore the concept of afterlife. Moreover, it is to classify that public commitment and philosophy to religion are crucial variables which influence change and belief in afterlife.

4. Conclusion

This study highlighted the idea of maintenance of individuality focusing on Razi's Islamic philosophical concept of afterlife. Ancient Greek and modern cultures' awarenesses of individual rebirth after physical death commonly connect Razi's concept of Islamic philosophy of afterlife. Razi's concept of afterlife seems undeniable to understand that human soul leaves the body upon physical death and appears into a new life. It is more important to say that belief in afterlife was a major teaching of many religions likely, Islam, Christianity, Hinduism and Buddhism. Razi and Al-Kindi, the scholars of Islamic Golden age while the prominent classical Greek writers pythagoras, socrates and plato believed in human rebirth. They understood self-subsisting and transmigration of human soul survival after body's death. Belief in an afterlife was an undeniable fact and the concept of life after death was a belief in the continued existence of the soul and a transformed physical existence of an afterlife. Belief in an afterlife had been here since the beginning of the time. Razi's approach for addressing the concept of an afterlife seemed too incredible that human soul leaves the body upon physical death and appears into a new life. Obviously, Razi was an Islamic philosopher and true religious believer whose thoughts on afterlife had been productive. Therefore, his metaphysics was based on doctrine of the Islamic philosophy. Moreover, Razi's thought of life once death could be a belief within the continuing existence of the soul and a reworked physical existence of a replacement life.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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