

ISLAM

God reverses long life in creation

By Maulana Wahiduddin Khan

A human body has an average of about 100 trillion cells. Our body is composed of 78 organs and it is due to the functioning of these organs that a person is alive. Death is the result of multi-organ failure. Each organ begins to undergo the process of deterioration from a certain age. For example, as we get older, the number of nerve cells in the brain decreases. As people age, there are not enough new cells to replace the dying cells. This decrease in the number or decline in the function of cells is called biological ageing. The ageing process causes weakening in a person, which leads to ill health and finally death. In the end it appears that a Creator had given us our body and taken it away from us at the time of death. If this system had been created by a person himself, he could have made it continue forever so that it never experienced deterioration or death.

Every human being receives many biological gifts from nature, but after a certain age the process of deterioration sets in. This process continues until a person becomes old and then dies. It is this phenomenon that is mentioned in the Quran in these words: "He who, We bring to old age, We reverse him in creation. Will they not then understand?" (36:68) According to the commentators of the Quran, the basic meaning of this verse is: whom Gods grant long life He reverses him in creation, that is, in nature and constitution, so that he is made to go back to weakness after strength.

However, there is also an implied meaning of the verse – the ageing process reminds a person that what he has was not made by him, rather it was given to him by someone – He gave it when He wanted and also took it away when He wanted.

If a person reflects on this phenomenon, then on the one hand he will discover His All-powerful Creator and on the other hand he will discover his own self as all-powerless.