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تأملات ابن القيم في الأنفس والأفان

MEN AND THE UNIVERSE

Reflections of Ibn Al-Qayyem

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Ibn Al-Qayyem's propositions concerning man¹

1. That he was first created from clay, and that his seed was made from a draught of despised fluid.

2. That he was created from a handful that Allah collected from all parts of the earth, so that it contains the good and the evil, the easy-going and the intolerant, the liberal and the miserly. It was Jibreel (Gabriel) who took this handful, then it was fermented until it turned to mud, then Allah fashioned man as He deemed fit. Then He breathed into him of His spirit, so that he was a human of flesh and blood, talking and reasoning...Later on Allah had His angels prostrate themselves before man, and taught him the names of everything.

3. That he was blessed with intellect, knowledge, understanding, eloquence and speech.

4. That he was privileged with the quality of modesty.

5. That he was privileged with two means of expression, the oral and the written.

6. That he was endowed by Allah with the power of acquiring knowledge by several means.

7. That he was distinguished with certain motives and impulses that serve to accomplish what is good for man.

¹ Hasan Al-Hajjaji, "Ibn-al-Qayyem's Educational Thought"

8. That man was distinguished with strength, desire and will.

9. That Allah's commandments are to be permanently observed until the day man meets His Lord.

10. That man was not created without purpose.

11. That man is distinguished from the other creatures in appearance and shape.

12. That man is an indivisible whole: composite of soul, mind and body.

Stages of the Creation of Man

Ibn Al-Qayyem writes the following:

By considering the verses in the Qur'an in which Almighty Allah has urged His servants to reflect upon Him, one will indeed be led to learn about Allah, about His Oneness and attributes of perfection; to learn about aspects of His might as attested by the absoluteness of His power, the infinite nature of His wisdom; by His mercy, generosity, clemency, kindness, justice, grace, anger, reward and punishment – it is through reflection on these facts that He willed His servants to know Him, and it is for this reason that He exhorted them to reflect upon His signs.

It is with this in mind that I here mention a number of signs as referred to in the Qur'an, so that they may be a reminder of further signs. One set of such signs are related to the creation of man. It will be noticed that in numerous places in the Qur'an we have been exhorted to reflect on the creation of man, as for example in the following verses:

﴿فَلْيَنْظُرِ الْإِنْسَانُ مِمَّ خُلِقَ﴾ [الطارق: ٥]

"Let man, then, observe from what he has been created." (86:5)

﴿وَفِي أَنْفُسِكُمْ أَفَلَا تُبْصِرُونَ﴾ [الذاريات: ٢١]

"Just as there are signs within your own selves: can you not, then, see?" (51: 21)

﴿يَتَأْتِيَهَا النَّاسُ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ فِي رَيْبٍ مِّنَ الْبَعْثِ فَإِنَّا خَلَقْتُم مِّن نَّرَابٍ ثُمَّ مِن نُّطْفَةٍ ثُمَّ مِنْ عَلَقَةٍ ثُمَّ مِنْ مُّضْغَةٍ مُّخَلَّقَةٍ وَغَيْرِ مُخَلَّقَةٍ لِّنُبَيِّنَ لَكُمْ وَنُقَرُّ فِي الْأَرْحَامِ مَا نَشَاءُ

إِلَىٰ أَجَلٍ مُّسَمًّى ثُمَّ نُخْرِجُكُمْ طِفْلًا ثُمَّ لِتَبْلُغُوا أَشَدَّكُمْ وَمِنْكُمْ مَّنْ يُؤَفِّقُ وَمِنْكُمْ مَّنْ يُرَدِّ إِلَىٰ أَزْدَلِ الْعُمُرِ لِكَيْلَا يَعْلَمَ مِن بَعْدِ عِلْمٍ شَيْئًا﴾ [الحج: ٥]

"O men! If you are in doubt as to the truth of resurrection, remember that, verily, We have created every one of you out of dust, then out of a drop of sperm, then out of a germ-cell, then out of an embryonic lump complete in itself and yet incomplete, so that We might make your origin clear unto you.

"And whatever We will to be born We cause to rest in the mothers' wombs for a term set by Us, and then We bring you forth as infants and allow you to live so that some of you might attain to maturity: for among you are such as are caused to die in childhood, just as many a one of you is reduced in old age to a most abject state, ceasing to know anything of what he once knew so well." (21: 5)

﴿أَيَحْسَبُ الْإِنْسَانُ أَن يُتْرَكَ سُدًى ۚ أَلَمْ يَكُنْ نُطْفَةً مِّن مِّمِّي يَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَىٰ آلِهَةٍ مَّا دُونَِيَ ۚ فَأَنصَبُ إِلَيْهِ مِنْ دُونِهِ ۚ إِنَّهُ يَكُونُ مِنَ الْخَاسِرِينَ﴾ [القيامة: ٣٦-٤٠]

"Does man, then, think that he is to be left to himself, to go about at will?

Was he not once a mere drop of sperm that had been spilt, and thereafter became a germ-cell – whereupon He created and formed it in accordance with what it was meant to be, and fashioned out of it the two sexes, the male and the female?

Is not He, then, able to bring the dead back to life?" (75: 36-40).

﴿أَلَمْ نَخْلُقْكُمْ مِّن مَّاءٍ مَّهِينٍ ۚ فَجَعَلْنَاهُ فِي قَرَارٍ مَّكِينٍ ۚ إِلَىٰ قَدَرٍ مَّعْلُومٍ ۚ فَقَدَرْنَا فَنِعْمَ الْقَدِيرُونَ﴾ [المرسلات: ٢٠-٢٣]

“Did We not create you out of a humble fluid, which We then allowed to remain in the womb’s firm keeping for a term pre-ordained?

Thus have We determined the nature of man’s creation: and excellent indeed is Our power to determine what is to be!” (77: 20-23)

﴿أَوَلَمْ يَرِ الْإِنْسَنُ أَنَّا خَلَقْنَاهُ مِنْ نُطْفَةٍ فَإِذَا هُوَ خَصِيمٌ مُبِينٌ﴾ [يس: ٧٧]

“Is man, then, not aware that it is We who create him out of a mere drop of sperm – whereupon, lo! he shows himself endowed with the power to think and to argue?” (36: 77)

﴿وَلَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا الْإِنْسَنَ مِنْ سُلَالَةٍ مِّن طِينٍ ۝ ثُمَّ جَعَلْنَاهُ نُطْفَةً فِي قَرَارٍ مَّكِينٍ ۝ ثُمَّ خَلَقْنَا النُّطْفَةَ عَلَقَةً فَخَلَقْنَا الْعَلَقَةَ مُضْغَةً فَخَلَقْنَا الْمُضْغَةَ عِظْمًا فَكَسَوْنَا الْعِظْمَ لَحْمًا ثُمَّ أَنشَأْنَاهُ خَلْقًا آخَرَ فَتَبَارَكَ اللَّهُ أَحْسَنُ الْخَالِقِينَ﴾

[المؤمنون: ١٢-١٤]

“Now, indeed, We create man out of the essence of clay, and then We cause him to remain as a drop of sperm in the womb’s firm keeping, and then We create out of the drop of sperm a germ-cell, and then We create out of the germ-cell an embryonic lump, and then We create within the embryonic lump bones, and then We clothe the bones with flesh – and then We bring all this into being as a new creation: hallowed, therefore, is Allâh, the best of artisans!” (23: 12-14)

In many places in the Qur’an a human is urged to reflect and ponder over the starting of his creation, the growth and the end.

Male reproductive cells swimming in the Spermatic Fluid

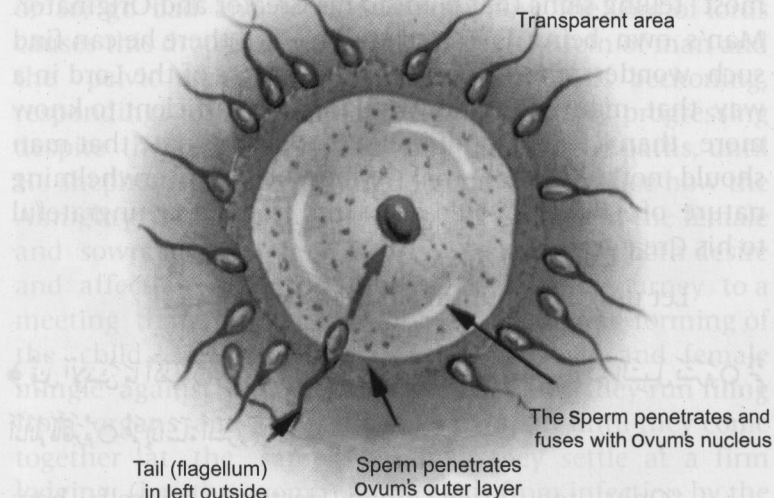


Figure "1"

1. The testes of the male are a kind of factory for sperm. There, sperm are produced on the inner surface of hollow tubes with a length of several kilometres. The cells mature there to be sperm, when each has a head 5 microns long and a tail 55 microns long. The sperm is considered to be a bearer of half a potential human. It may be noted that one ejaculation of semen from the male may carry 500 million sperm, or spermatozoa, although a human is created from just a single sperm. Even twins can be created from two sperm or spermatozoa that fertilize one egg. The sperm tubes in the testis are about 4000 in number (quoted from: "The Creation of Man, Between Medicine and the Qur'an")*

* The parts indented and in small script are modern material selected by Capt. Al-Qoz.