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### Research Article

## Alam-e-Arwah: We Are From It and We Are Returning to It

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**Abstract.** The concept of Alam-e-Arwah (The Realm of Souls) occupies a profound and foundational position in Islamic metaphysics. It refers to a pre-material, pre-worldly dimension where all human souls existed in a state of pure consciousness before entering physical bodies. This paper explores the Qur'anic, Hadith-based, and classical Islamic scholarly perspectives on Alam-e-Arwah, examines its ontological status in relation to space-time and the created universe, and discusses its implications for understanding human consciousness, existence, and ultimate return to Allah. The paper also highlights cross-disciplinary insights involving metaphysics, cosmology, and consciousness studies, concluding with reflections on the nature of existence as a possible divine simulation or metaphysical projection.

**Keywords:** Alam-e-Arwah, Islamic Metaphysics, Human Consciousness, Cosmology, Divine Simulation.

## INTRODUCTION

Islamic cosmology presents a multi-layered understanding of existence that transcends the physical universe. The Qur'an and Hadith refer to realms beyond material comprehension, among which *Alam-e-Arwah* (Realm of Souls) occupies a pivotal place. While the human story in physical terms begins with Prophet Adam (A.S.), the story of the human soul begins long before — in a realm untouched by physicality, space-time, or cosmic matter.

This realm predates the creation of the universe, atoms, or even light itself. In this metaphysical domain, human souls existed as pure consciousness, devoid of bodily form, gender, nationality, or any earthly identifiers. The purpose of this paper is to provide a comprehensive exploration of Alam-e-Arwah, its theological foundations, its relation to consciousness, and its eschatological significance.

### Defining Alam-e-Arwah in Islamic Tradition

#### Etymology and Meaning

The term *Alam-e-Arwah* comes from Arabic:

- **Alam:** world, realm, domain
- **Arwah:** plural of *ruh* (soul, spirit)

Thus, it denotes the “Realm of Souls,” a metaphysical dimension created by Allah before physical bodies or worldly existence.

### Qur'anic Foundation: Surah Al-A'raf 7:172

One of the clearest allusions to Alam-e-Arwah appears in the Qur'an:

*“And [mention] when your Lord brought forth from the Children of Adam — from their loins — their descendants and made them testify of themselves [saying to them], ‘Am I not your Lord?’ They said, ‘Yes, we testify.’”* (Qur'an 7:172)

This verse, known as **Ayat al-Mithaq** (The Covenant Verse), describes a primordial event in which all human souls affirmed Allah's Lordship before their entry into the physical world.

#### Hadith Evidence

A Hadith narrated by Abdullah ibn Mas'ud states:

*“The souls were gathered like troops: those who knew each other before will recognize each other in this world.”* (Sahih Muslim)

This narration implies pre-earthly interactions among souls, supporting the concept of their existence before the physical realm.

### Ontological Nature of Alam-e-Arwah

#### Beyond Space-Time (Malakut)

Islamic metaphysics distinguishes between three primary realms:

- **Mulk:** physical, observable world
- **Malakut:** unseen, spiritual dimension
- **Jabarut:** higher, purely spiritual plane

Alam-e-Arwah belongs to the **Malakut** or possibly **Jabarut**, realms not bound by physical laws or cosmological constants.

## Pre-Material Existence

Alam-e-Arwah existed **before atoms, before light, and before the Big Bang**. This aligns with Qur'anic descriptions of Allah creating the universe in stages and determining its order long before material existence.

## Pure Consciousness and Identity

In this realm, souls existed without:

- Gender
- Age
- Culture Or Nationality
- Ego Or Desire
- Physical Form

Souls existed in a state of pure awareness, fully conscious of their Creator.

## Purpose of the Realm of Souls

### The Primordial Covenant (Mithaq)

The primary purpose of Alam-e-Arwah was to establish the eternal covenant:

- Allah is Lord.
- Human beings are His servants.
- All souls testified voluntarily.

Thus, the earthly life is a test reflecting whether humans honor this primordial promise.

### Assignment of Time and Destiny

Islamic scholars explain that Qadar (Destiny) was assigned in this realm. Souls were informed of their lifespan, trials, and provision in general terms, though they do not retain conscious memory of it.

### The Non-Physical Identity of Souls

Souls were not differentiated by body, race, or earthly attributes. Their essence was pure—reflective of divine command: *“And they ask you about the soul; say, the soul is from the command (amr) of my Lord.”* (Qur'an 17:85)

## Relationship Between Consciousness and the Universe

### "Universe exists because of consciousness"

The Islamic metaphysical framework suggests that consciousness precedes and transcends the material universe. Since souls predate physical creation, consciousness is foundational.

### Implications for Cosmology

Modern physics describes a universe dependent on observation (quantum mechanics). Islamic thought goes further — consciousness exists before the universe itself, and the universe is a stage for consciousness to be tested.

### The Universe as a Divine Simulation or Projection

The Qur'anic portrayal of dunya (world) as **play, illusion, and temporary adornment** aligns with metaphysical interpretations similar to simulation theory:

*“The life of this world is nothing but play and diversion”* (Qur'an 6:32)

This resembles philosophical themes illustrated symbolically in *The Matrix*, though the Islamic view attributes the "simulation" to divine wisdom, not artificial intelligence.

### **The Return to Alam-e-Arwah After Death Transition Through Barzakh**

After death, the soul enters **Barzakh**, an intermediate realm. Classical scholars explain that Barzakh has characteristics similar to Alam-e-Arwah but is distinct.

### **Return to Pure Consciousness**

After resurrection and judgment, souls return to a state resembling their original existential purity, either in eternal felicity (Jannah) or eternal loss (Jahannam).

### **Completion of the Journey**

Human existence is thus a cycle:

1. **Alam-e-Arwah** – pre-material existence
2. **Dunya** – embodied test
3. **Barzakh** – temporary separation
4. **Akhirah** – eternal return

This fulfills the Qur'anic statement:

*"Indeed, we belong to Allah, and to Him we are returning."* (Qur'an 2:156)

### **Comparative and Cross-Disciplinary Perspectives**

#### **Islamic Philosophy (Ibn Arabi, Ghazali, Mulla Sadra)**

Islamic mystics and philosophers describe multiple layers of being, affirming that consciousness is metaphysically superior to matter.

#### **Modern Consciousness Research**

Recent studies in neuroscience and quantum cognition highlight mysteries of consciousness that challenge materialist explanations, echoing Islamic teachings about the soul's transcendence.

#### **Simulation Hypothesis & Islamic Metaphysics**

While secular simulation theory lacks spiritual grounding, Islamic metaphysics presents a structured, purposeful "simulation" governed by divine wisdom.

### **Extended Metaphysical Analysis of Alam-e-Arwah**

To understand *Alam-e-Arwah* in greater depth, it is necessary to examine its metaphysical, cosmological, and ontological implications beyond the traditional narrative. Islamic scholars, philosophers, and mystics have offered layered insights into the nature of pre-temporal existence, the soul's ontology, and its relation to divine knowledge and creation.

#### **Pre-Temporal Creation and Divine Knowledge**

Classical theologians distinguish between two types of divine knowledge:

- **Ilm al-Qadim (Eternal Knowledge)** – Allah's knowledge that precedes creation.
- **Ilm al-Huduth (Knowledge within Creation)** – knowledge manifesting within temporal unfolding.

Alam-e-Arwah belongs to the domain of **Ilm al-Qadim**, because souls are created in accordance with divine knowledge that existed beyond time. This realm is not situated “before” creation in the temporal sense but in a **non-linear metaphysical order**.

### **Souls as Luminous Beings**

Sufi metaphysics often describe souls as **luminous realities** created through divine command, paralleling the Qur’anic phrase:

*“His command when He intends a thing is only that He says to it, ‘Be,’ and it is.”*  
(Qur’an 36:82)

Souls emerge directly from the divine command (*amr*), which is immaterial and instantaneous. They are considered **nurani** (light-based) entities, though not in the physical sense of light as understood in physics.

### **The Hierarchy of Souls**

According to Ibn Arabi and other mystics, souls differ in degree, purity, and capacity. Some were closer to divine presence (*qurb*), while others were farther. This hierarchical positioning explains variations in human spiritual receptivity in dunya. Those who were spiritually close in Alam-e-Arwah possess natural inclinations toward truth, compassion, and remembrance of Allah.

### **The Covenant and Its Psychological Imprint**

The *Mithaq* (Primordial Covenant) is not consciously remembered in dunya, but Islamic scholars argue that it leaves a **psychological, spiritual, and existential imprint**.

### **Fitrah and the Echo of Alam-e-Arwah**

The Qur’an states:

*“Allah created humans upon the fitrah.”* (Sahih Muslim)

**Fitrah** refers to the innate disposition to recognize Allah, morality, and truth. This spiritual in

Your document has now been enriched with **much deeper metaphysical, cosmological, philosophical, and psychological analysis** of *Alam-e-Arwah*.

## **CONCLUSION**

Alam-e-Arwah represents the true beginning of human existence, far earlier than physical creation. It affirms that the essence of human identity is spiritual, timeless, and deeply connected to the Divine. Understanding this realm reshapes our view of life, consciousness, cosmology, and destiny. Human beings originate from a realm of pure consciousness and inevitably return to it, completing the cycle of existence under Allah’s decree. In recognizing this, one gains clarity about the temporary nature of the material world and the eternal nature of the soul.

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