


DEVOTED

TO ALLAH



**Say: " My prayer and my
rites, my living and my dying,
are for Allah alone, the Lord
of all the worlds."**

(Surat al-An'am: 162)



HARUN YAHYA

Muslim is actually the name Allah gives to those who adhere to His religion. The basic attribute, referred to in the Qur'an, that distinguishes Muslims from other people is their awareness of Allah's infinite might.

Grasping Allah's might is not only a matter of verbal confirmation. Believers are those who recognise Allah's existence and His greatness, "are steadfast in their duty" to Him and re-orient all their deeds and conduct in the light of this reality which has become apparent to them. This book provides an explicit picture of a believer devoted to Allah as described in the Qur'an. It must be remembered that Paradise is the abode of those who "believe with certainty" in Allah and the hereafter and then "strive with all due striving" in the way of Allah. The end of those who "worship Allah right on the fringe of true faith" and place their trivial interests on the same footing as the pleasure of Allah is

Among the people there are some who profess to serve Allah but who stand on the very fringe of good faith. If good befalls them, they are content, but if an ordeal befalls them, they revert to their former ways, losing both this world and the hereafter. That way true perdition lies. (Surat al-Hajj: 11)



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

The author, who writes under the pen-name Harun Yahya, was born in Ankara in 1956. He studied arts at Istanbul's Mimar Sinan University and philosophy at Istanbul University. Since the 1980s, the author has published many books on

Greatly appreciated all around the world, these works have been instrumental in many people recovering their faith in Allah and in many others gaining a deeper insight into their faith. Some of the books of the author have been translated into more than 20 languages and published in the countries concerned. Harun Yahya's books appeal to all people, Muslims and non-Muslims alike, regardless of their age, race, and nationality, as they center around one goal: to open the readers' mind by encouraging them to think about some critical issues such as the existence of Allah and His unity, and to display the decrepit foundations and perverted works of godless systems.

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TO THE READER

The reason why a special chapter is assigned to the collapse of the theory of evolution is that this theory constitutes the basis of all anti-spiritual philosophies. Since Darwinism rejects the fact of creation, and therefore the existence of Allah, during the last 140 years it has caused many people to abandon their faith or fall into doubt. Therefore, showing that this theory is a deception is a very important duty, which is strongly related to the religion. It is imperative that this important service be rendered to everyone. Some of our readers may find the chance to read only one of our books. Therefore, we think it appropriate to spare a chapter for a summary of this subject.

In all the books by the author, faith-related issues are explained in the light of Qur'anic verses, and people are invited to learn Allah's words and to live by them. All the subjects that concern Allah's verses are explained in such a way as to leave no room for doubt or question marks in the reader's mind. The sincere, plain and fluent style employed ensures that everyone of every age and from every social group can easily understand the books. This effective and lucid narrative makes it possible to read them in a single sitting. Even those who rigorously reject spirituality are influenced by the facts recounted in these books and cannot refute the truthfulness of their contents.

This book and all the other works by Harun Yahya can be read individually or discussed in a group. Those readers who are willing to profit from the books will find discussion very useful in that they will be able to relate their own reflections and experiences to one another.

In addition, it is a great service to the religion to contribute to the presentation and circulation of these books, which are written solely for the good pleasure of Allah. All the books of the author are extremely convincing, so, for those who want to communicate the religion to other people, one of the most effective methods is to encourage them to read these books.

It is hoped that the reader will take time to look through the review of other books on the final pages of the book, and appreciate the rich source of material on faith-related issues, which are very useful and a pleasure to read.

In them, one will not find, as in some other books, the personal views of the author, explanations based on dubious sources, styles unobservant of the respect and reverence due to sacred subjects, or hopeless, doubt-creating, and pessimistic accounts that create deviations in the heart.

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Say: "My prayer and my rites, my living and my dying, are for Allah alone, the Lord of all the worlds." (Surat al-An'am: 162)

HARUN YAHYA

January, 2003

About The Author

The author, who writes under the pen-name HARUN YAHYA, was born in Ankara in 1956. Having completed his primary and secondary education in Ankara, he then studied arts at Istanbul's Mimar Sinan University and philosophy at Istanbul University. Since the 1980s, the author has published many books on political, faith-related and scientific issues. Harun Yahya is well-known as an author who has written very important works disclosing the imposture of evolutionists, the invalidity of their claims and the dark liaisons between Darwinism and bloody ideologies such as fascism and communism.

His pen-name is made up of the names "Harun" (Aaron) and "Yahya" (John), in memory of the two esteemed prophets who fought against lack of faith. The Prophet's seal on the cover of the books is symbolic and is linked to the their contents. It represents the Qur'an (the final scripture) and the Prophet Muhammad, the last of the prophets. Under the guidance of the Qur'an and sunnah, the author makes it his purpose to disprove each one of the fundamental tenets of godless ideologies and to have the "last word", so as to completely silence the objections raised against religion. The seal of the final Prophet, who attained ultimate wisdom and moral perfection, is used as a sign of his intention of saying this last word.

All author's works center around one goal: to convey the Qur'an's message to people, encourage them to think about basic faith-related issues (such as the existence of Allah, His unity and the Hereafter), and to expose the feeble foundations and perverted ideologies of godless systems.

Harun Yahya enjoys a wide readership in many countries, from India to America, England to Indonesia, Poland to Bosnia, and Spain to Brazil. Some of his books are available in English, French, German, Spanish, Italian, Portuguese, Urdu, Arabic, Albanian, Russian, Serbo-Croat (Bosnian), Polish, Malay, Uygur Turkish, and Indonesian, and they are enjoyed by readers worldwide.

Greatly appreciated all around the world, these works have been instrumental in many people recovering their faith in Allah and in many others gaining a deeper insight into their faith. The wisdom, and the sincere and easy-to-understand style gives these books a distinct touch which directly effects any one who reads or studies them. Immune to objections, these works are characterized by their features of rapid effectiveness, definite results and irrefutability. It is unlikely that those who read these books and give serious thought to them can any longer sincerely advocate the materialistic philosophy, atheism or any other perverted ideology or philosophy. Even if they continue to do so, it will be only a sentimental insistence since these books refuted such ideologies from their very foundations. All contemporary movements of denial are now ideologically defeated, thanks to the collection of books written by Harun Yahya.

There is no doubt that these features result from the wisdom and lucidity of the Qur'an. The author modestly intends to serve as a means in humanity's search for Allah's right path. No material gain is sought in the publication of these works.

Considering these facts, those who encourage people to read these books, which open the "eyes" of the heart and guide them to become more devoted servants of Allah, render an invaluable service.

Meanwhile, it would just be a waste of time and energy to propagate other books which create confusion in peoples' minds, lead man into ideological chaos, and which, clearly have no strong and precise effects in removing the doubts in peoples' hearts, as also verified from previous experience. It is apparent that it is impossible for books devised to emphasize the author's literary power rather than the noble goal of saving people from loss of faith, to have such a great effect. Those who doubt this can readily see that the sole aim of Harun Yahya's books is to overcome disbelief and to disseminate the moral values of the Qur'an. The success and impact of this service are manifest in readers' conviction.

One point should be kept in mind: The main reason for the continuing cruelty, conflict, and all the ordeals the majority of people undergo is the ideological prevalence of disbelief. This state can only be ended with the ideological defeat of disbelief and by conveying the wonders of creation and Qur'anic morality so that people can live by it. Considering the state of the world today, which leads people into the downward spiral of violence, corruption and conflict, it is clear that this service has to be provided more speedily and effectively. Otherwise, it may be too late.

It is no exaggeration to say that the collection of books by Harun Yahya have assumed this leading role. By the will of Allah, these books will be a means through which people in the twenty-first century will attain the peace, justice and happiness promised in the Qur'an.

The works of the author include *The New Masonic Order, Judaism and Freemasonry, Global Freemasonry, Kabbalah and Freemasonry, Knight Templars, Islam Denounces Terrorism, Terrorism: The Ritual of the Devil, The Disasters Darwinism Brought to Humanity, Communism in Ambush, Fascism: The Bloody Ideology of Darwinism, The 'Secret Hand' in Bosnia, Behind the Scenes of The Holocaust, Behind the Scenes of Terrorism, Israel's Kurdish Card, The Oppression Policy of Communist China and Eastern Turkestan, Palestine, Solution: The Values of the Qur'an, The Winter of Islam and Its Expected Spring, Articles 1-2-3, A Weapon of Satan: Romanticism, The Light of the Qur' an Destroyed Satanism, Signs from the Chapter of the Cave to the Last Times, Signs of the Last Day, The Last Times and The Beast of the Earth, Truths 1-2, The Western World Turns to God, The Evolution Deceit, Precise Answers to Evolutionists, The Blunders of Evolutionists, Confessions of Evolutionists, The Misconception of the Evolution of the Species, The Qur'an Denies Darwinism, Perished Nations, For Men of Understanding, The Prophet Musa (as), The Prophet Yusuf (as), The Prophet Sulayman (as), The Prophet Muhammad (saas), The Golden Age, Allah's Artistry in Colour, Glory is Everywhere, The Importance of the Evidences of Creation, The Truth of the Life of This World, The Nightmare of Disbelief, Knowing the Truth, Eternity Has Already Begun, Timelessness and the Reality of Fate, Matter: Another Name for Illusion, The Little Man in the Tower, Islam and the Philosophy of Karma, The Dark Magic of Darwinism, The Religion of Darwinism, The Collapse of the Theory of Evolution in 20 Questions, Engineering in Nature, Technology Mimics Nature, The Impasse of Evolution I (Encyclopedic), The Impasse of Evolution II (Encyclopedic), Allah is Known Through Reason, The Qur'an Leads the Way to Science, The Real Origin of Life, Consciousness in the Cell, Technology Imitates Nature, A String of Miracles, The Creation of the Universe, Miracles of the Qur'an, The Design in Nature, Self-Sacrifice and Intelligent Behaviour Models in Animals, The End of Darwinism, Deep Thinking, Never Plead Ignorance, The Green Miracle: Photosynthesis, The Miracle in the Cell, The Miracle in the Eye, The Miracle in the Spider, The Miracle in the Gnat, The Miracle in the Ant, The Miracle of the Immune System, The Miracle of Creation in Plants, The Miracle in the Atom, The Miracle in the Honeybee, The Miracle of Seed, The Miracle of Hormone, The Miracle of the Termite, The Miracle of the Human Body, The Miracle of Man's Creation, The Miracle of Protein, The Miracle of Smell and Taste, The Miracle of Microworld, The Secrets of DNA.*

The author's childrens books are: *Wonders of Allah's Creation, The World of Animals, The Glory in the Heavens, Wonderful Creatures, Let's Learn Our Islam, The Miracles in Our Bodies, The World of Our Little Friends: The Ants, Honeybees That Build Perfect Combs, Skillful Dam Builders: Beavers.*

The author's other works on Quranic topics include *The Basic Concepts in the Qur'an, The Moral Values of the Qur'an, Quick Grasp of Faith 1-2-3, Ever Thought About the Truth?, Crude Understanding of Disbelief, Devoted to Allah, Abandoning the Society of Ignorance, The Real Home of Believers: Paradise, Knowledge of the Qur'an, Qur'an Index, Emigrating for the Cause of Allah, The Character of the Hypocrite in the Qur'an, The Secrets of the Hypocrite, The Names of Allah, Communicating the Message and Disputing in the Qur'an, Answers from the Qur'an, Death Resurrection Hell, The Struggle of the Messengers, The Avowed Enemy of Man: Satan, The Greatest Slander: Idolatry, The Religion of the Ignorant, The Arrogance of Satan, Prayer in the Qur'an, The Theory of Evolution, The Importance of Conscience in the Qur'an, The Day of Resurrection, Never Forget, Disregarded Judgements of the Qur'an, Human Characters in the Society of Ignorance, The Importance of Patience in the Qur'an, General Information from the Qur'an, The Mature Faith, Before You Regret, Our Messengers Say, The Mercy of Believers, The Fear of Allah, Jesus Will Return, Beauties Presented by the Qur'an for Life, A Bouquet of the Beauties of Allah 1-2-3-4, The Iniquity Called "Mockery," The Mystery of the Test, The True Wisdom According to the Qur'an, The Struggle Against the Religion of Irreligion, The School of Yusuf (as), The Alliance of the Good, Slanders Spread Against Muslims Throughout History, The Importance of Following the Good Word, Why Do You Deceive Yourself?, Islam: The Religion of Ease, Zeal and Enthusiasm Described in the Qur'an, Seeing Good in All, How do the Unwise Interpret the Qur'an?, Some Secrets of the Qur'an, The Courage of Believers, Being Hopeful in the Qur'an, Justice and Tolerance in the Qur'an, Basic Tenets of Islam, Those Who do not Listen to the Qur'an, Taking the Qur'an as a Guide, A Lurking Threat: Heedlessness, Sincerity in the Qur'an, The Religion of Worshipping People, The Methods of the Liar in the Qur' an.*

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THE PURPOSE OF A BELIEVER'S LIFE: THE APPROVAL OF ALLAH



... Allah will guide to the ways of peace those who follow what pleases Him. He will bring them by His will from darkness to the light, and will guide them to a straight path.

(Surat al-Ma'ida: 16)

What makes a Muslim different from other people? Non-Muslims may answer this question in a number of ways; They may talk about cultural and moral differences, about “different outlooks on the world” or values which they deny outright. Alternatively, some may say the difference has its roots in the different ideologies which Muslims embrace. However, all these answers relate to “visible” differences that appear to be the consequences of a more fundamental one. Often, they fail to grasp the reasons underlying

this difference. (In fact, if they are not Muslims, it is because they have failed to grasp this very difference.)

There is one point to be stressed before proceeding to explain the basic attribute that makes a Muslim different: When we talk about a "Muslim," we are not referring to someone whose ID card has the word "Muslim" written on it. Muslim is actually the name Allah gives to those who adhere to His religion. The basic attribute, referred to in the Qur'an, that distinguishes Muslims from other people is their being aware of Allah's infinite might. Awareness of Allah's infinite might does not in all cases mean affirmation of the existence of a Creator, however. The Qur'an underlines this fact as follows:

Say: "Who provides for you out of heaven and earth? Who controls hearing and sight? Who brings forth the living from the dead and the dead from the living? Who ordains all things?" They will reply, "Allah." Say, "Then will you not fear Allah? Such is Allah, your Lord, the Truth, and what is there after truth except misguidance? How then can you turn away from Him?" (Surah Yunus: 31-32)

In the verse above, the questions are put to somebody who acknowledges the existence of Allah, accepts His attributes yet, despite all these attributes, has no fear of Allah and thus turns away from Him. (In fact, Satan does not reject the existence of Allah either.)

Grasping Allah's might is not only a matter of verbal confirmation. Believers are those who recognise Allah's existence and His greatness, "are steadfast in their duty" to Him and re-orient all their deeds and conduct in the

light of this reality which has become apparent to them. Others, on the other hand, are either those who deny Allah, or, as in the case of the people depicted in the above verse, those who do not perform their duty to Allah, despite their awareness of His existence.

Throughout their lives, such people remain entirely oblivious of Allah, the Creator of man. To whom they owe their life and how and why they were granted a lifetime on earth are questions with which they do not care to concern themselves. They envision a kind of life entirely separate from Allah and His religion. However, the following comparison in the Qur'an makes it clear that such a life rests upon vain and rotten bases and is doomed to destruction:

Who is better: someone who founds his building on fear of Allah and His approval; or someone who founds his building on the brink of a crumbling precipice, so that it collapses with him into the Fire of Hell? Allah does not love wrongdoers. (Surat at Tawba: 109)

As the above verse also informs us, the lives of those who lack faith, as described in the Qur'an, are founded on the brink of a "crumbling precipice." The major goal to which unbelievers are committed is the attainment of happiness and peace "in this world." In this sense, what they most want is to become rich. They do their best to achieve this goal, making all-out physical and mental efforts. For others, on the other hand, becoming a respected and well-known person is the purpose of life; they will do anything and make any sacrifices to earn public respect.

However, these are nothing but worldly goals that will vanish once death comes upon them. Some of them may even elude their grasp right here in this world.

A believer, however, is fully aware of Allah's existence and might. He knows why Allah has created him and what His expectations are of him. For this reason, his basic aim in life is to be a servant with whom Allah is pleased. He employs all means to try to reach his goal, and strives to do so. This being the case, he resolves the mystery of death: for many it means nothing but the ultimate end but for him, death is not extinction, but a phase of transition to the real life.

Disbelievers assume death, which they take to be an incident that puts an end to their lives, to be a "self-generated accident," just as they assume life to have emerged coincidentally and spontaneously. The fact is, however, that Allah creates life and likewise takes it away. Death, which is by no means a coincidence or an accident, is an incident that takes place by the law of Allah at a predestined moment and place.

A Muslim is a person who grasps that Allah has power over all things and that death is not an end but a transition to the real abode of man (the hereafter). Aware of these facts, he carefully avoids building his life on a "crumbling precipice." He turns to Allah, aware that He is the real Owner and Creator of life, death and what lies beyond. In this system created by Allah, he comprehends that wealth, social status or good looks are not the means that lead man to success; they are only "causes" operating under the rules laid down by Allah, which are effective

for only a brief period of time.

The key to the system that Allah has created is the consent of Allah. That is because Allah guides only those who seek His approval.

...Allah will guide to the ways of peace those who follow what pleases Him. He will bring them by His will from darkness to the light, and will guide them to a straight path. (Surat al-Ma'ida: 16)

A Muslim is a Muslim because he seeks Allah's approval. This is the most important trait that makes a Muslim different from all other people. Muslims see religion as a way to earn Allah's approval, whereas the majority of people consider it to be a system of beliefs which occupies an insignificant portion of their lives.

Indeed, at this very point there emerges the distinction between real Muslims and those who imitate them (hypocrites). Muslims embrace religion as a path of guidance to the approval of Allah. For hypocrites, however, it is something from which they derive benefits. That is why a hypocrite's prayers are of a "pretentious" nature (Surat al-Ma'un: 6) while Muslims pray in humility (Surat al-Mu'minun: 1-2). Similarly, while Muslims spend their money in Allah's cause, hypocrites spend to impress people rather than to earn Allah's approval.

You who believe! Do not nullify your almsgiving by demands for gratitude or insulting words, like him who spends his wealth, showing off to people and not having faith in Allah and the Last Day. He is like a smooth rock coated with soil, which, when heavy rain falls on it, is left stripped bare. They shall have

no power over anything they have earned. Allah does not guide the unbelievers. (Surat al-Baqara: 264)

Due striving for Allah's Approval

Man strives hard to attain worldly favours, on which he sets his mind as being the ultimate goal in life. He does his utmost to gain material prosperity, recognition of social status or some other worldly benefit. For "a paltry price" (Surat at-Tawba: 9) that will slip out of his hands in a very short while, he makes an all-out effort.

Muslims, who aspire to a much greater reward, that is, to the approval of Allah and His Garden, also strive hard for their cause. Of this attribute Allah says the following:

He who desires this fleeting existence shall soon receive in it whatever We will: We bestow Our gifts upon whoever We please. But then We will consign him to Hell where he will roast, reviled and helpless. But as for anyone who desires the hereafter, and strives for it as he ought to, being a believer, his endeavours will be gratefully acknowledged. (Surat al-Isra': 18-19)

A believer strives with "all due striving" for the approbation of Allah and for the hereafter. He "sells" his property and his life for the cause of Allah. In the Qur'an, this characteristic of believers is explained as follows:

Allah has bought from the believers their selves and their wealth in return for the Garden. They fight in the Way of Allah and they kill and are killed. It is a promise binding on Him in the Torah, the Injil and

the Qur'an and who is truer to his contract than Allah? Rejoice then in the bargain you have made. That is the great victory. (Surat at-Tawba: 111)

No difficulty a believer encounters in the way of Allah thwarts his commitment, provided that he has sold "his property and self" to Allah. Nothing but Allah's approbation has any attraction for him. Aware that he is not the "owner" of his body and property, he never follows the vain desires of the self (nafs). Allah is the owner of his body and everything he owns, and they will be put to service in compliance with Allah's Will.

This aside, whether one's determination is serious will also be tested by Allah. A believer must not avoid any struggle on Allah's path. That is because had been there any question of "easy gains," hypocrites might also perform any deed which has the appearance of being in compliance with Allah's Will—and not the actual deed with which Allah will be pleased—to attain this "easy gain":

If it had been a case of easy gains and a short journey, they would have followed you, but the distance was too great for them. They will swear by Allah: "Had we been able to, we would have gone out with you." They are destroying their own selves. Allah knows that they are lying. (Surat at-Tawba: 42)

Therefore, the only criterion for being a believer is to feel a sincere desire to seek Allah's approval and not to refrain from making any sacrifices on the way of Allah when circumstances call for such sacrifices. Believers are those who are "**purified with a pure thought, remembrance of the Home (of the Hereafter)**" (Surah Sad: 46).

A believer does not seek any benefit other than Allah's approbation. He hopes to please Allah, have His mercy and attain Paradise, because **"anyone, male or female, who does right actions and is a believer, will enter Paradise. They will not be wronged by so much as the tiniest speck."** (Surat an-Nisa': 124)

As we have seen, the Qur'an provides an explicit picture of a believer. Paradise is the abode of those who **"believe with certainty"** in Allah and the hereafter (Surah Luqman: 4) and then **"strive with all due striving"** in the way of Allah. The end of those who **"worship Allah right on the fringe of true faith"** and place their trivial worldly interests right next to the pleasure of Allah is described thus in the Qur'an:

Among the people there are some who profess to serve Allah but who stand on the very fringe of good faith. If good befalls them, they are content, but if an ordeal befalls them, they revert to their former ways, losing both this world and the hereafter. That way true perdition lies. (Surat al-Hajj: 11)

Believers are covetous of the hereafter. Allah promises believers a beautiful endless life in the hereafter. Our Lord promises believers that He will give a good life to His believing servants in this world, too. Yet this in no way means that they will not encounter any hardship and troubles in this world. The afflictions they encounter are devised to put them to the test and make them more mature.

The obstacles a believer encounters are ostensibly difficult situations; but once met with submission, Allah re-

lieves him of all difficulties. For instance, when his people attempted to cast the Prophet Ibrahim (as) into the fire because of his faith, his response was the one peculiar to a Muslim; he favoured being thrown into the fire over turning away from his faith or Allah's commands. Being cast into a fire is the most terrible physical suffering that might befall any human being in this world. However, Ibrahim (as), who faced this trial from Allah in the most submissive manner, was saved from this seemingly trying experience by the Will of Allah, and no harm came to him.

He said, "Do you then worship, instead of Allah, what cannot help or harm you in any way? Shame on you and what you worship besides Allah! Will you not use your intellect?" They said, "Burn him and avenge your gods if you are resolved to punish him!" We said, "Fire, be coolness and peace for Ibrahim!" They sought to trap him but We made them the losers. (Surat al-Anbiya': 66-70)

The fact that no harm will befall those who are not afraid to lose anything as they strive for the cause of Allah and that they will attain many material and spiritual rewards are underlined in the Qur'an in a passage which extols the faith of believers even when on the brink of defeat in battle:

People said, "Your enemies have gathered a great force against you, so fear them." But that merely increased their faith and they said, "Allah is enough for us and the Best of Guardians." So they returned with blessings and bounty from Allah and no evil

touched them. They pursued the pleasure of Allah. Allah's favour is indeed immense. It is Satan that prompts men to fear his followers. But do not fear them—fear Me if you are true believers. Do not lament for those who rush headlong into renouncing their faith. They do not harm Allah in any way. Allah intends to assign no portion to them in the hereafter. They will have a terrible punishment. Those who sell their faith for unbelief do not harm Allah in any way. They will have a painful punishment. (Surah Al 'Imran: 173-177)

Conclusively, no distress, difficulty or sorrow affect a believer who seeks Allah's consent and observes His commands. This is demonstrated in the course of events by which Allah puts a believer's determination, patience and submission to the test. These are outwardly troublesome and difficult events; but if met with patience and submission they allow the individual to discover Allah's mercy. This aside, Allah informs us in the Qur'an that He does not burden any soul with more than it can bear:

Allah does not impose on any self any more than it can stand. (Surat al-Baqara: 286)

Allah does not punish a believer who duly serves Him, neither in this world nor in the hereafter. On the contrary, He rewards him most bountifully both in this world and beyond:

When the righteous are asked, "What has your Lord sent down?" their reply is, "That which is best." There is good in the world for those who do good,

but far better is the reward of the life to come. How wonderful is the abode of the righteous: The Gardens of Eden which they enter, with rivers flowing under them, where they shall have whatever they desire. That is how Allah repays the righteous. (Surat an-Nahl: 30-31)

As a reminder from Allah, torment, difficulty and trouble are inflicted on those who fail to seek the approval of Allah, who do not demonstrate absolute submission to Him but rather observe the wishes of their own souls. When believers make a mistake, they consider the trouble and difficulties they suffer as a consequence as a merciful warning from Allah, carefully derive lessons from them, repent and amend their conduct. Disbelievers, however, never learn from the ordeals they undergo, thereby deserving eternal torment in the hereafter.

Knowing One's Soul

Another very important piece of information the Qur'an gives us about man concerns his "soul" (*an-nafs*). The "soul," as commonly used in the Qur'an, means "ego" or "one's personality."

In the Qur'an, Allah explains the two aspects of soul: the one inspiring evil and wicked deeds, and the other, guarding against every inculcation of evil. The Qur'an explains this in Surat ash-Shams:

By the Soul, and the proportion and order given to it; and its enlightenment as to its wrong and its right;

truly, he succeeds that purifies it, and he fails that corrupts it! (Surat ash-Shams: 7-10)

As is evident from the above verses, evil exists in every man's soul. However, he who purifies his soul will attain salvation. Believers do not surrender their selves to the evil in their soul; they simply avoid it with the guidance of Allah's inspiration. As the Prophet Yusuf (as) said: **"Not that I am free from sin: man's soul is prone to evil—except his to whom my Lord has shown mercy..."** (Surah Yusuf: 53), provides the right manner of thinking for a believer.

Since the soul "is prone to evil," a believer must always remain vigilant about his soul. As the Prophet Muhammad (saas) also said, *"the greatest struggle is the struggle against one's self (nafs)."* The soul unceasingly tempts a person and never earns him Allah's approval. As it does all these things it tries to present alluring alternatives. A believer, however, thanks to his fear of Allah, is not deceived by this "misleading" attribute of the soul. He always turns towards what is right to lead a life in compliance with Allah's Will. Such is the attitude of a wise person as opposed to a foolish one, as the Prophet (saas) said:

A wise person is one who keeps a watch over his bodily desires and passions, and checks himself from that which is harmful and strives for that which will benefit him after death; and a foolish person is one who subordinates himself to his cravings and desires and expects from Allah the fulfilment of his futile desires. (Tirmidhi)

Refraining From Idolatry

Very briefly, idolatry is associating other beings with Allah. Seeing this definition, some people may raise the objection, “We already do not associate a partner with Allah,” although it may actually be the case that they do. Their failure to grasp the meaning of idolatry accounts for such an objection. Indeed, the Qur’an relates the case of many people who associate partners with Allah—that is, who are idolaters—yet who never accept this situation:

On the Day We gather them all together, We will say to those who associated others with Allah, “Where are the partner-gods, for whom you made such claims?” Then they will have no recourse except to say, “By Allah, our Lord, We were not idolaters.” (Surat al-An’am: 22-23)

No one must take it for granted that he is totally free from idolatry, but must always pray Allah to keep him from it. That is because idolatry is a great sin. When the Prophet (saas) was asked what the greatest sin was, he answered “*To associate partners with Allah, while He has created you.*” In the Qur’an, Allah states that He may forgive all sins and crimes, except for idolatry:

Allah does not forgive anything being associated with Him, but He forgives whoever He wills for anything other than that. Anyone who associates something with Allah has committed a terrible crime. (Surat an-Nisa’: 48)

The initial point of idolatry, which is such a great “sin and slander,” is ascribing the attributes of Allah to some

other being in one's mind. The fact, however, is that, the attributes (power, intelligence, beauty and so on) which we ascribe to other beings do not actually belong to them; they are endowed with them by Allah for a temporary and specified period of time. Assuming these attributes to "belong" to beings other than Allah simply means taking them as gods. This, in turn, is defined as associating the beings in question as partners with Allah, in other words, setting up partners with Allah.

Regarding Allah's oneness and uniqueness, the Qur'an says the following:

Say: "He is Allah, Absolute Oneness, Allah, the Everlasting Sustainer of all. He has not given birth and was not born. And no one is comparable to Him." (Surat al-Ikhlās: 1-4)

As stated in the verse above, Allah is the Provider of everyone; every being is in need of Him to exist. Nothing equals Him. Once this fact is denied and people start thinking that some beings can exist of their own accord without Allah's sustenance, idolatry surfaces. With such a mindset, one forgets that every living thing is under the control of Allah. A false belief about the existence of some beings who do not need Allah emerges. The assumption that such beings can exist leads man to ask them for help, seek their consent and adopt their rules.

However, believers who do not associate partners with Allah turn towards only Him since they know that Allah has power over all things. The rationale of believers is stated in the Qur'an as follows:

**You alone we worship. You alone we ask for help.
(Surat al-Fatiha: 4)**

Those who associate partners with Allah in fact turn towards beings that are not capable of helping them. That is because the beings they take as deities are also feeble servants like themselves. Of this Allah states the following:

Do they make things into partner-gods which cannot create anything and are themselves created; which are not capable of helping them and cannot even help themselves? If you call them to the right path, they will not follow you. It makes no difference if you call them or stay silent. Those you call on besides Allah are servants just like yourselves. Call on them and let them respond to you if you are telling the truth. (Surat al-A'raf: 191-194)

Consequently, idolatry is a great slander, a great deception and a very unwise attitude. The unwise conduct of those who associate partners with Allah is described in the Qur'an as follows:

Mankind! An example has been made, so listen to it carefully. Those whom you call upon besides Allah are not even able to create a single fly, even if they were to join together to do it. And if a fly steals something from them, they cannot get it back. How feeble are both the seeker and the sought! They do not measure Allah with His true measure. Allah is All-Strong, Almighty. (Surat al-Hajj: 73-74)

Idolatry appears in different forms. Since people take beings other than Allah as deities, they seek their approval. People pin their hopes on these deities and accept

their judgements as true. This is how a man becomes subservient to millions of imaginary deities. He hopes to find relief in these beings, who are as impotent as himself. However, one who associates partners with Allah is at an impasse and his loss is, therefore, very great. This fact is related in the Qur'an as follows:

**... Associating others with Him is a terrible wrong.
(Surah Luqman: 13)**

Yet it must be said that such a man wrongs himself. That is because **"Allah does not wrong people in any way; rather it is people who wrong themselves."** (Surah Yunus: 44)

SEEKING THE MOST OF THE GOOD PLEASURE OF ALLAH



A believer is one who has been purified of idolatry and other forms of ignorance, such as placing his hopes on imaginary deities or seeking their approval, thereby becoming subservient to them. He serves Allah alone and seeks the approval of Allah alone. As mentioned earlier, he does this by “striving with all due striving.”

The key to “striving with all due striving” on Allah’s way is to seek what pleases Allah most. In the face of several choices, all of which are legitimate, a believer must choose the one that pleases Allah most.

This can be briefly described as follows:

- A believer must spend his entire life doing what is “lawful.” The Qur’an makes clear which actions are unlawful, and these are indeed very few in number. Anything other than these unlawful deeds is lawful.

- In addition to this, what a believer must do is attend to the deeds and thoughts that please Allah most. In this endeavour, his wisdom and “foresight” guide him.

The example of “spending in the way of Allah” (*infaq*) will make this concept clearer. A believer is a person who has sold his “property and self” to Allah. He should put whatever he has to use in the way that pleases Allah most. However, he may frequently encounter many choices. Let us assume that he has a considerable amount of money with which he could buy a new suit for himself. This is indeed a legitimate and lawful thing to do; being meticulous about one’s appearance is surely something in conformity with Allah’s will. However, there may be other things to do with this money which would please Allah better. Giving it to a needy person might well please Allah more. However, this is a decision that rests entirely with the person himself. Considering the specific conditions and environment he is in, he must establish his priorities by consulting his conscience.

Another example will lead to a better understanding of this concept: A believer is responsible for “enjoining good and forbidding evil,” communicating Allah’s religion and carrying out a struggle on intellectual grounds against the tyrants in the world. Shouldering this all-important responsibility is one way to earn the good pleasure of Allah. Such a responsibility means that certain duties always take precedence. Since there are so many duties demanded by such an important responsibility, it would be incorrect to give priority to any other deed, albeit a legitimate and lawful one. For instance, a man is re-

sponsible for taking care of his family; he is the one who provides security and sustenance for the family members. However, using this as an excuse to avoid the responsibility of “enjoining good and forbidding evil” would be conduct unbecoming to a believer.

Indeed, upon reflection, we can see that the “soul” (*an-nafs*) is involved when one prefers what is less valuable in the presence of Allah. Preferring the less valuable to the more valuable in the presence of Allah is a consequence of setting aside a “share” for one’s soul. In this sense, what one needs to accomplish is not to be guided by one’s soul, but to go all-out to seek the total approval of Allah. Seeking Allah’s consent by a ninety nine percent effort and setting aside a one percent share for the soul may not be acceptable in the eyes of Allah. That is because the person in question has associated his soul with Allah. A mere one percent of idolatry may render his services unacceptable. The situation of those who ascribe partners to any being other than Allah is described as follows:

They assign to Allah a share of the crops and livestock He has created, saying, “This is for Allah,”—as they allege—“and this is for our idols.” Their idols’ share does not reach Allah, whereas Allah’s share reaches their idols! What an evil judgement they make! (Surat al-An’am: 136)

If a person risks his life to protect his family in the event of some injustice done to him, but remains heedless and involves himself with his own business when there is oppression and slander against other believers, we can say that he does not seek Allah’s approval. Such an atti-

tude indicates man's inclination towards and submission to his soul (*nafs*), which is entirely against the Islamic goal of "serving Allah alone." Furthermore, acting in compliance with the desires of the soul is defined in the Qur'an as setting up partners with Allah:

Have you seen him who has taken his whims and desires to be his god? Will you then be his guardian? (Surat al-Furqan: 43)

A believer, on the other hand, devotes all his possessions and his entire life to Allah. This superior attribute of believers is indicated in the Qur'an as follows:

Say: "My prayer and my rites, my living and my dying, are for Allah alone, the Lord of all the worlds." (Surat al-An'am: 162)

As for seeking what most pleases Allah, the attitude of believers in wartime in the days of the Prophet (saas) is related in the Qur'an. In the face of two groups of enemies, believers preferred to fight against the weaker of the two. Yet it was Allah's will that there should be a fight against the stronger. These events are related in the verses as follows:

When Allah promised you that one of the two parties would be yours, you would have preferred the unarmed one, whereas Allah sought to fulfill His promise and to rout the last remnant of the disbelievers. This was so that the Truth should triumph and falsehood be discomfited, even though the evil-doers hated that. (Surat al-Anfal: 7-8)

Finally, Allah made the believers confront the stronger party and led them to the one thing that would please

Him most. Ultimately, they triumphed with the help of Allah.

The example related above is an event shaped within the conditions of that period. Yet the fact remains that in every age Muslims are put to the test through different events. Today, for instance, Muslims must engage in a struggle on intellectual grounds against those who deny the Qur'an and the facts of creation and who strive to sow immorality in society. Muslims should determine the best course to follow in this struggle they take upon themselves and then carry it out with commitment. Yet, even if one has the strength to shoulder this responsibility, if one involves oneself with issues of no great urgency only to satisfy one's own desires, that will only incur the displeasure of Allah.

In any case, such a tendency does not conform to a Muslim's sense of right conduct. He is someone who has been chosen by Allah and to whom faith has been granted; he is held responsible for extirpating wrongdoing from society, replacing it with peace, and establishing an environment where everyone lives by Allah's religion. He is responsible for struggling for those men, women and children who are oppressed and who say: **"Our Lord, take us out of this city whose inhabitants are wrongdoers! Give us a protector from You! Give us a helper from You!..."** (Surat an-Nisa: 75)

This concept is not confined to an intellectual struggle only. Throughout his life, a Muslim must maintain this standpoint in his daily life, his worship and in all the events he encounters.

Meanwhile, we need to bear in mind that the expression, “doing what is most pleasing to Allah” is used to make the concept more comprehensible. **Turning away from what pleases Allah most and involving oneself with tasks of secondary importance is in fact displeasing to Allah.** Hence, that one thing that pleases Allah most is, under all circumstances, whatever is in accordance with His will. To put it another way, there is no alternative to what pleases Allah most.

Not seeking what will please Allah best, and being contented with less, is actually a consequence of a flawed outlook on the hereafter. Such an outlook is formed because one thinks one deserves paradise. However, nobody can be assured of such a reward. In the Qur’an, Allah warns even the Prophet (saas) with the verse, “...**If Allah willed, He could seal up your heart...**” (Surat ash-Shura: 24). This being the case, it is obvious that no one is guaranteed paradise.

In any case, a sincere believer, as described in the Qur’an, never thinks that he or she definitely deserves paradise or becomes carried away by this feeling. The true believer typically prays to Allah in “**fear and hope.**” (Surat al-A’raf: 56)

Those lacking real faith also think they deserve paradise because they do not fear Allah as they should and assume that the deeds they do are good. With their flawed rationale, they say, “We will be forgiven anyway.” However, this is an attitude peculiar to those who do not fear Allah as He should be feared. Of the situation of these people Allah states the following:

An evil generation has succeeded them, inheriting the Book, taking the goods of this lower world, and saying, "We will be forgiven." But if similar goods come to them again they still take them. Has not a covenant been made with them in the Book, that they should only tell the truth about Allah and have they not studied what is in it? The Final Abode is better for those who have fear of Allah. Will you not use your intellect? (Surat al-A'raf: 169)

There are also those who, deceived by the material wealth granted to them in this world, arrive at the erroneous conclusion that Allah loves them, thereby believing that they too will be welcomed into paradise—although they harbour doubts about its existence. The Qur'an gives us a relevant example:

Give them this parable. Once there were two men, to one of whom We gave two gardens of grape-vines and surrounded them with date-palms, putting between them some cultivated land. Both gardens yielded their crops and did not suffer any loss, and We made a river flow right through the middle of them. He was a man of wealth and property and he said to his companion, which conversing with him, "I have more wealth than you and my clan is mightier than yours." He entered his garden and wronged himself by saying, "I do not think that this will ever end. I do not think the Hour of Doom will ever come. But if I should be sent back to my Lord, I will definitely get something better in return." (Surat al-Kahf: 32-36)

A Muslim, contrary to people with such a mindset, fears “going astray after being guided to the right path.” The prayer of believers in the Qur’an is as follows:

Our Lord, do not cause our hearts to go astray after You have guided us. And grant us mercy. You are the Ever-Giving. (Surah Al ‘Imran: 8)

However, it is also worth mentioning that this is not the kind of fear that arouses dread or uneasiness in a believer’s heart. On the contrary, fear of Allah motivates believers to have zeal in striving to be servants who deserve to enter Paradise and ensures that they spend the life of this world in the best way possible.

A Muslim aims at earning the approval of Allah in the life of this world, which is inherently temporary and short. His thoughts concentrate on a single great event that will happen soon: He will certainly die one day and give an account of his deeds in the presence of Allah. This will lead him either to eternal terrible ruin or to eternal salvation. It would certainly be unwise to pursue some other course or to remain heedless while there is such a great event ahead of him.

For his salvation, a believer is responsible for seeking “what pleases Allah most.” Failing to do so means being unaware of the danger waiting ahead. In the face of the humiliation one will face in hell and in the presence of Allah, it is surely essential to seek “what pleases Allah most.”

A few examples of the attitude one displays in the face of dangers that one may encounter in this world and the efforts one makes to deal with them will lead to a better

understanding of how one seeks what pleases Allah most:

- Assume that you are face to face with a giant torrent and the water level is rising rapidly. In this situation, would you run to the top of a ten-storey building to save yourself, or remain on the fifth-floor and say, "This place is high enough to save me"?

- Let's assume that there is a lift that can take you to the top floor. This lift is not free of charge and it will operate only once. You have just the right amount of money to take you to the top floor. Would you give all the money you have to go to the top, or remain at a lower storey which is vulnerable to the torrent?

- Again, let's assume that there is a party being held on the sixth-floor, where you have taken refuge. Would you attend the party or strive to find a way to the top floor?

- As another example, let's assume that one of your close friends has had a heart attack and he or she should immediately be taken to the emergency room. In this situation, would you drive as fast as you can or not drive so fast and say, "This is fast enough, he or she must bear up."?

As is apparent from the examples above, in the face of danger, a man becomes vigilant and does his utmost to be saved from it. The biggest threat to man is hell. One of the most important goals of a person who seeks what pleases Allah most, is his inner inclination to avoid this danger.

For a moment, let's assume that you are on the edge of hell, around which people will be gathered on the Day of Judgement and witness its stunning images. Having

seen hell, would you not choose what pleases Allah most out of a number of alternatives?

Once a person is sent to hell, he will no longer have the opportunity to make choices but will only give an account of his deeds. This being the case, one must already start acting in that light. Indeed, a believer always acts in the light of the idea of the nearness of hell, considering that he can, at any moment, go to the hereafter. On numerous occasions the Qur'an draws attention to the fact that any regret felt in the hereafter will be in vain. One of the relevant verses is as follows:

There they will shout out: "Our Lord! Take us out! We will act rightly, differently from the way we used to act!" But He will answer: "Did We not let you live long enough for anyone who was going to pay heed? And did not the warner come to you? Have a taste of it then! There shall be no helper for the wrongdoers." (Surah Fatir: 37)

On the other hand, just as we strive to stay away from danger, we need to devote similar and even greater efforts to attaining blessings. It is surely unwise to feel contented with having less in paradise. When leaving an island abounding in gold, would you not take as much gold as possible with you? When the time comes to depart from this world, a Muslim should not feel regret and say, "I wish I had done such and such a thing" or "I wish I had gained the rewards of doing a particular righteous deed." To avoid this situation, he should be cautious to choose what pleases Allah most.

Disbelievers do their best to "make the most" of their

lives, which is nothing but “**a brief enjoyment**” (Surah Al ‘Imran: 197). While this “brief enjoyment” is doomed to a bitter end, Allah promises His approval, mercy and paradise for believers. A believer, who wishes to avail himself of these promises of Allah, must strive hard to seek what most pleases Him.

The Key to the Approval of Allah: Conscience

In the face of several choices, a believer must choose the one with which Allah will be pleased most. In this, conscience is the most important criterion that will guide him to the correct choice. Allah’s Messenger, the Prophet Muhammad (saas) drew attention to the importance of conscience during a conversation with a man:

A person asked Allah’s Messenger (peace be upon him): “What is faith?” He said: “When a good deed becomes a source of pleasure for you and an evil deed becomes a source of disgust for you, then you are a believer.” He again said to Allah’s Messenger: “What is a sin?” Whereupon he said: “When something pricks your conscience, give it up.” (Tirmidhi)

One of the most important differences between a believer and a disbeliever is that while the believer will adhere to his conscience, the disbeliever will comply with his soul which inspires evil deeds. Consequently, a believer displays his most natural state when he heeds his conscience.

However, it is by no means true that a believer is immune to the temptations of his self. As the Prophet Yusuf (as) said, “**The self indeed commands to evil acts.**”

(Surah Yusuf: 53) Accordingly, it will command the alternatives that are against Allah's Will.

A believer avoids the tricks of his soul by means of his conscience. Faced with a choice, a believer initially tends to select the one that first occurs to him, which is generally the one that pleases Allah most. Then, the self intervenes: it tries to make other alternatives seem more alluring and finds pretexts to legitimise them. A believer must disregard these pretexts and comply with the initial and absolutely correct choice to which his conscience leads him.

Loving for Allah's Sake

That is the good news (the promise of paradise) which Allah gives to His servants who believe and do right actions. Say: "I do not ask you for any recompense for this [but] only good will through kinship. If anyone does a good action, he shall be repaid many times over. Allah is Ever-Forgiving, Ever-Thankful." (Surat ash-Shura: 23)

A believer devotes his entire life to Allah. He lives for Allah, works for Allah and loves for Allah's sake.

"Loving for Allah's sake" might be an incomprehensible concept for someone who is not well acquainted with true Islam. One who has remained distant from Allah throughout his life, and who has therefore not known Him, will be unaware of how to love Allah intuitively.

However, a believer who knows Allah and witnesses His mercy to him, who recognises that everything he

loves is His blessing and that he owes his existence and life to His mercy, loves Allah and attains the noble spirit of loving for the sake of Allah. In the Qur'an, the great difference between believers and other people in this sense is stated as follows:

Some people set up equals to Allah, loving them as they should love Allah. But those who believe have greater love for Allah... (Surat al-Baqara: 165)

As is stated in the verse above, those who associate partners with Allah and who, in their minds, ascribe all attributes of Allah to other beings, love these beings as they should love Allah. This is the kind of love that is based on idolatry.

Aware that everything belongs to Allah and every being's existence is consequential upon Allah's creation, believers love Allah most. This great feature, which is a natural consequence of the believer's recognition of Allah as the One and Only Supreme Being, makes him completely different from other people. This quality of believers is stated in one of the saying of the Prophet (saas) thus:

Whoever has three things discovers the sweetness of faith: that Allah and His Messenger are more beloved to him than all else, that he love another only for the sake of Allah Most High, and that he hate to return to disbelief as he would hate to be thrown into fire."
(Muslim and Bukhari)

Those who associate partners with Allah, on the other hand, cannot stand the remembrance of Allah:

...When you mention your Lord alone in the Qur'an, they turn their backs and run away. (Surat al-Isra': 46)

However, it is worthy of mention that remembering Allah next to their idols does not disturb idolaters. The rationale thus expressed: "We are Muslims, but we can enjoy our day as well" is at the basis of their thinking. The believer, however, grasps the following fact:

- Nothing (be it a human being, a thing or an event, etc.) has a beauty of its own. Allah creates all things and endows them with beauty. Since a person, for example, has not designed and formed his or her face himself, that beauty is a beauty that belongs to Allah.

- Allah gives this beauty to man, whom he created from nothing, for a brief time only (since that person will soon grow old and die). Only Allah possesses the power to recreate that beauty in the hereafter, in an even more perfect form.

- As in the case of a human being, all creatures that deserve love are created by Allah and made "pretty." To remind people that the actual owner of this beauty is Allah, He destines the beauty of these beings to perish with death and ultimately with doomsday. In the hereafter, all beings will be recreated.

This being the case, a believer loves all the things he encounters in this world, aware that they all belong to Allah and that he will encounter the "original" form of their beauty in the hereafter. Consequently, his actual love is for Allah, the One Who provides him with everything he loves: He is the real Owner of every kind of beauty.

Contrary to the concept of love based upon faith in Allah that is enjoyed by believers, disbelievers' love is based on idolatry. In the Qur'an, this form of love is de-

scribed in the words of Prophet Ibrahim (as):

He said, "You have adopted idols apart from Allah as tokens of mutual affection in this world. But then on the Day of Rising you will reject one another and curse one another. The Fire will be your shelter. You will have no helpers." (Surat al-'Ankabut: 25)

Said Nursi, also known as Bediuzzaman (the Wonder of the Age), one of the greatest Islamic scholars of the twentieth century, likens this form of love to that of a man who looks at the sun through a mirror held in his hand. Once the mirror is broken into pieces and light is no longer reflected from it, the man feels profound distress at having lost a source of light. However, he is not intelligent enough to conceive that the light in the mirror does not actually originate from it. The light comes from the sun; mirrors only reflect it.

A believer shows all his love for Allah. Loving Allah is to love beings, aware that they reflect the attributes of Allah and that these attributes actually belong to Him, as in the case of the mirrors.

Consequently, a believer shows his love for Allah by loving believers who make "manifest" the attributes of Allah in their manner and conduct, and who display the moral values foreseen to be good by Allah. This form of love is not based on kinship, race or any kind of interest. Due to the love felt for Allah, it is solely a matter of loving those who love Allah. In the Qur'an, our Lord describes the love between believers by referring to the love between the companions of the Prophet (saas) in his time:

Those who were already settled in the abode, and in

faith, before they came, love those who have emigrated to them and do not find in their hearts any need for what they have been given, but prefer them to themselves, even if they themselves are needy. It is the people who are safe-guarded from the avarice of their own selves who are successful. (Surat al-Hashr: 9)

The Qur'an makes it clear that the love felt for believers has been specially granted to them by Allah:

As for those who believe and do right actions, the All-Merciful will bestow His love on them. (Surah Maryam: 96)

"Yahya, observe the Book with firm resolve." We gave him judgement, tenderness and purity while still a child, and he went in fear of Allah. (Surah Maryam: 12-13)

Believers love only Allah and those who place faith in Him. This being the case, they have no love for anybody who rebels against Allah. This subject is emphasised in the following verses of the Qur'an:

You who believe! Do not take My enemy and your enemy as friends, showing love for them when they have rejected the truth that has come to you, driving the Messenger and yourselves out of your city simply because you believe in Allah your Lord. If you go out to fight in My Way and seeking My pleasure, keeping secret the love you have for them, I know best what you conceal and what you make known. Any of you who do that have strayed from the right way. (Surat al-Mumtahana: 1)

You have an excellent example in Ibrahim and those with him, when they said to their people, “We wash our hands of you and all that you worship apart from Allah, and we reject you. Between us and you there will be enmity and hatred for ever unless and until you have faith in Allah alone...” (Surat al-Mumtahana: 4)

You who believe, do not befriend your fathers or your brothers if they prefer disbelief to faith. Those among you who do befriend them are wrongdoers. (Surat at-Tawba: 23)

You will not find people who believe in Allah and the Last Day on friendly terms with anyone who opposes Allah and His Messenger, even though they be their fathers, their sons, their brothers or their nearest kindred... (Surat al-Mujadala: 22)

As the verses above make it clear, the love of a believer rests on no criterion other than the “love felt for Allah.” Setting aside all factors such as kinship or material wealth, this love is deeply rooted in faith and noble values. A believer has love for those whose faith is assured rather than for those possessing fame, money or social status, which are only seemingly important.

Having purified his feelings of love of factors other than “the love felt for Allah,” a believer loves the one who fears Allah most and who is most attentive to seeking His pleasure. The more one has of the attributes peculiar to a believer, the more one is cherished by believers. In the Qur’an also, we witness believers holding most dear the Prophet (saas)—the one who is nearest to Allah and the

one who fears Allah most:

The Prophet has closer ties to the believers than they have to each other... (Surat al-Ahzab: 6)

Since a believer's understanding of love is based on faith, he will also establish his marriage on the same grounds. At this point, too, there emerges an all-important difference between believers and disbelievers: disbelievers often base their marriage on mutual material benefits. This is especially true of women, who try to find a "prosperous man" in the expectation of a high standard of living. For such a purpose, a young girl may easily agree to be the life-long spouse of someone for whom she has no affection. This is, in fact, similar to a commercial agreement from which both parties derive benefits. The only difference is that this agreement is purported to be a life-long one.

The examples of such marriages are legion. There are many young people who marry people who are rich or old or who are known for their immorality, solely because they are wealthy or famous.

Marriages of disbelievers are not always based on purely material benefits. There are also many young people who seek "good looks" or attractiveness in the person they want to marry. Such girls marry men who have nothing but physical charm, who they assume to be a "knight on a white horse."

Yet the rationale behind this viewpoint neglects one crucial fact: all these physical traits are eventually doomed to perish. All human beings will eventually grow old. Furthermore, Allah can take back the fortune, good

looks or health of a man in a moment. Similarly, it takes but a few seconds to have an accident and become paralysed, bed-ridden or to lose one's good looks. Under such conditions, what would become of such a marriage?

What would a woman do when her husband was blinded in an accident, for instance, if she married him because he had beautiful eyes? Most probably she would only then realise the unreasonable basis upon which her most important decision rested.

A believer aims at eternal paradise in the hereafter. His life is intended to gain the approval of Allah and to attain "salvation and happiness." Having devoted all his prayers and his entire life to Allah, he will surely also devote his marriage to Allah.

A marriage entered into to gain Allah's approval is surely entirely different from one based on "idolatry." In such a marriage, the criteria can by no means be money, fame or beauty. The sole purpose in marrying will be to gain Allah's approval. The true believer would like to marry someone who will be most instrumental in making him or her earn Allah's approval. Consequently, he or she only marries such person as displays a deep loyalty to Allah and is superior in faith and piety (*taqwa*).

For the reason described above, certain women who lived during the time of the Prophet Muhammad (saas), expressed a desire to marry the Prophet (saas). Those who preferred otherwise are described in the Qur'an as desiring "the life of the world and its finery":

Prophet, tell your wives: "If you desire the life of the world and its finery, come and I will give you all you

need and release you with kindness. But if you desire Allah and His Messenger and the abode of the hereafter, Allah has prepared an immense reward for those among you who do good works.” (Surat al-Ahzab: 28-29)

Attributes of Believers

One who lives by the Qur’an will also love those who live by the Qur’an, that is, the believers. Due to their faith in Allah, believers are granted some attributes that make them worthy of love. A believer will also seek these attributes in other believers and, witnessing these attributes in them, he will cherish them.

The following are the notable attributes of believers as explained in the Qur’an:

- Believers serve Allah only. There is no being that they have idolised in their minds but Him. (Surat al-Fatiha: 1-7; Surat an-Nisa’: 36)
- They fear Allah. They refrain from doing anything that Allah has forbidden or that is contrary to the will of Allah. (Surah Al ‘Imran: 102; Surah Ya Sin: 11; Surat at-Taghabun: 16; Surat az-Zumar: 23)
- They trust Allah alone. (Surat al-Baqara: 249; Surat at-Tawba: 25-26)
- They fear no one but Allah. (Surat al-Ahzab: 39)
- They always feel grateful to Allah. Prosperity or destitution does not lead them to be boastful or to feel sorry for themselves. (Surat al-Baqara: 172; Surat al-Isra’: 3; Surah Ibrahim: 7)
- They have certainty in their faith. The thought of

turning away from earning the approval of Allah does not even occur to them. They unceasingly render their services with ever-increasing zeal and ardour. (Surat al-Hujurat: 15; Surat al-Baqara: 4)

- They are committed to the Qur'an. They reorient all their deeds in compliance with the Qur'anic stance. They immediately disown an attitude once they realise it is not in conformance with the teachings of the Qur'an. (Surat al-A'raf: 170; Surat al-Ma'ida: 49; Surat al-Baqara: 121)

- They remember Allah continually. They know that Allah is ever the Hearer and Seer of everything, and always keep in mind the eternal might of Allah. (Surah Al 'Imran: 191; Surat ar-Ra'd: 28; Surat an-Nur: 37; Surat al-A'raf: 205; Surat al-'Ankabut: 45)

- They know their weakness before Allah. They are humble. (However, this does not mean they are weak and thus display unconfident attitudes towards people.) (Surat al-Baqara: 286; Surat al-A'raf: 188)

- They know nothing will happen to them, except what Allah has decreed. They do not become overwrought about anything and always remain calm and put their trust in Allah. (Surat at-Tawba: 51; Surat at-Taghabun: 11; Surah Yunus: 49; Surat al-Hadid: 22)

- They turn towards the hereafter; their main target is the hereafter. They also benefit from worldly blessings and aspire to an environment in this world very similar to paradise. (Surat an-Nisa': 74; Surah Sad: 46; Surat al-A'raf: 31-32)

- They take only Allah and believers as their friends and intimates. (Surat al-Ma'ida: 55-56; Surat al-Mujadala: 22)

- They are the people endued with understanding. Never losing their consciousness of worshipping, they remain cautious and vigilant at every moment. They always render services which are in the interests of believers and religion. (Surat al-Mu'min: 54; Surat az-Zumar: 18)

- They strive to the utmost in the way of Allah. They struggle with disbelievers on intellectual grounds, especially with the leaders of disbelief. They never feel frustrated or weak-hearted in this struggle. (Surat al-Anfal: 39; Surat al-Hajj: 78; Surat al-Hujurat: 15; Surat at-Tawba: 12)

- They do not hesitate to speak the truth. They do not refrain from telling the truth because of their fear of others. They do not mind rejecters' ridiculing and attacking them and are fearless of human censure. (Surat al-Ma'ida: 54, 67; Surat al-A'raf: 2)

- They resort to various methods to convey Allah's message and to summon people to Allah's religion. (Surah Nuh: 5-9)

- They do not oppress others. They are merciful and tender-hearted. (Surat an-Nahl: 125; Surat at-Tawba 128; Surah Hud: 75)

- They are not carried away by their anger; they are tolerant and forgiving. (Surah Al 'Imran: 134; Surat al-A'raf: 199; Surat ash-Shu'ara': 40-43)

- They are trustworthy people. They impress people with their strong personality and make them feel how trustworthy they are. (Surat ad-Dukhan: 17-18; Surat at-Takwir: 19-21; Surat al-Ma'ida: 12; Surat an-Nahl: 120)

- They are accused of being sorcerers or of being mad. (Surat al-A'raf: 132; Surah Yunus: 2; Surah Sad: 4; Surat al-Hijr: 6; Surat al-Qamar: 9)

- They are subjected to oppression. (Surat ash-Shu'ara': 49; 167; Surat al-'Ankabut: 24; Surah Ya Sin: 18; Surah Ibrahim: 6; Surat an-Naml: 49, 56; Surah Hud: 91)

- They persevere in the face of adversity. (Surat al-'Ankabut: 2-3; Surat al-Baqara: 156, 214; Surah Al 'Imran: 142, 146, 195; Surat al-Ahzab: 48; Surah Muhammad: 31; Surat al-An'am: 34)

- They have no fear of oppression or death. (Surat at-Tawba: 111; Surah Al 'Imran: 156-158, 169-171, 173; Surat ash-Shu'ara': 49-50; Surat as-Saffat: 97-99; Surat an-Nisa': 74)

- They are attacked and plotted against by disbelievers; they are mocked. (Surat al-Baqara: 14, 212)

- They are under the protection of Allah. All plots devised against them prove to be futile. Allah protects them against all slanders and plots and exalts them. (Surah Al 'Imran: 110-111, 120; Surah Ibrahim: 46; Surat an-Anfal: 30; Surat an-Nahl: 26; Surah Yusuf: 34; Surat al-Hajj: 38; Surat al-Ma'ida: 42, 105; Surat an-Nisa': 141)

- They are on their guard against disbelievers. (Surat an-Nisa': 71, 102; Surah Yusuf : 67)

- They treat Satan and his followers as enemies. (Surah Fatir: 6; Surat az-Zukhruf 62; Surat al-Mumtahana: 1; Surat an-Nisa': 101; Surat al-Ma'ida: 82)

- They struggle with hypocrites. They do not keep company with people displaying hypocritical attributes. (Surat at-Tawba: 83, 95, 123)

- They prevent the tyranny of rejecters. (Surat al-

Ahzab: 60-62; Surat al-Hashr: 6; Surat at-Tawba: 14-15, 52)

- They act by consulting each other. (Surat ash-Shura: 38)
- They do not long for the ostentatious lives of disbelievers. (Surat al-Kahf: 28; Surat at-Tawba: 55; Surah Ta Ha: 131)
- They are not impressed by wealth or status. (Surat al-Hajj: 41; Surat al-Qasas: 79-80; Surat an-Nahl: 123)
- They practise every act of worship in the best manner. (Surat al-Baqara: 238; Surat al-Anfal: 3; Surat al-Mu'minin: 1-2)
- They do not follow the majority, but rather the criteria that Allah has provided. (Surat al-An'am: 116)
- They strive to draw nearer to Allah, and to serve as good examples for those who believe. (Surat al-Ma'ida: 35; Surah Fatir: 32; Surat al-Waqi'a: 10-14; Surat al-Furqan: 74)
- They are not influenced by Satan. (Surat al-A'raf: 201; Surat al-Hijr: 39-42; Surat an-Nahl: 98-99)
- They do not follow their fathers blindly. They behave in compliance with Qur'anic teaching. (Surah Ibrahim: 10; Surah Hud: 62, 109)
- They do not let women be ill-treated. (Surat an-Nur: 4; Surat at-Talaq: 6; Surat al-Baqara: 231, 241; Surat an-Nisa': 19)
- They avoid extravagance. (Surat an-An'am: 141; Surat al-Furqan: 67)
- They guard their chastity, wed and conduct their married lives in the way Allah desires. (Surat al-Mu'minin: 5-6; Surat an-Nur: 3, 26, 30; Surat al-Baqara: 221; Surat al-Ma'ida: 5; Surat al-Mumtahana: 10)
- They are moderate while practising their worship.

(Surat al-Baqara: 143; Surat an-Nisa': 171)

- They are self-sacrificing people. (Surat al-Insan: 8; Surah Al 'Imran: 92, 134; Surat at-Tawba: 92)
- They are careful about being clean. (Surat al-Baqara: 125, 168; Surat al-Muddaththir: 1-5)
- They attach importance to aesthetics and art. (Surah Saba': 13; Surat an-Naml: 44)
- They do not spy on or backbite believers. (Surat al-Hujurat: 12)
- They avoid jealousy. (Surat an-Nisa': 128)
- They ask for forgiveness from Allah. (Surat al-Baqara: 286; Surah Al 'Imran: 16-17, 147, 193; Surat al-Hashr: 10; Surah Nuh: 28)

Oppression against Believers

The attributes of believers stated above are actually of two kinds:

The first kind are those which believers display of their own volition; being a servant to Allah, self-sacrifice, and modesty can be cited amongst these.

The second kind, however, are those which they evince in matters beyond their control, e.g. the plots devised against them or their being mocked by disbelievers. In fact, these are very important in enabling one to identify sincere believers. That is because many of the attributes displayed by believers are of an "imitable" nature. For instance, a hypocrite can also practise every act of worship or make sacrifices, provided that he gains from doing so. But the attributes displayed in situations beyond their control are "non-imitable," e.g. when disbe-

lievers subject sincere believers to oppression.

This being the case, these attributes gain great importance in one's evaluation of believers. To understand whether a community is one of sincere believers, these criteria, the immutable laws of Allah as explained in the Qur'an, have to be taken into consideration.

While evaluating verbal oppression and slanders against Muslims, the events that befell Muslims in the past should be our reference point. In this sense, the Qur'an gives an account of the difficulties and slanders encountered by the early Muslims:

Or did you suppose that you would enter the Garden without facing the same as those who came before you?... (Surat al-Baqara: 214)

In the verses in which "trials that came to those who passed away in the past" are related, we come across a noteworthy point. The enemies of prophets and believers did not say: "These people believe in Allah and seek His approval" or "These people are not immoral like us, they possess noble values." On the contrary, they tried to slander believers and accused them in the most unbecoming manner.

Certainly, they would not dare to say: "We are rebellious against Allah and we do not observe any moral limits; we just want to oppress these people who do not serve to benefit us." It would be unwise to expect these people to make confessions such as: "These are the people who observe Allah's commands, whereas we are transgressors." On the contrary, they would strive to legitimise their slanders by maligning believers and presenting

themselves as “decent and honest” people. In the stories related in the Qur’an, we see the very same method being employed against the believers of the past.

For example, the Prophet Nuh (as)—like all the other prophets—summoned his people to serve Allah alone. A system established on the basis of serving Allah alone surely hampered the advancement of the interests of the leaders of the society, who acquired wealth and status through a system of disbelief. Surely these leaders would not agree to say that what Nuh (as) demanded was not in their interests. On the contrary, they accused him of pursuing his own interests—“status and prestige.” The Qur’an gives an account of this situation as follows:

We sent Nuh to his people and he said, “My people, worship Allah. You have no deity other than Him. So will you not take heed?” The ruling circle of those of his people who were disbelievers said: “This is nothing but a human being like yourselves who simply wants to gain ascendancy over you...” (Surat al-Mu’minun: 23-24)

The Prophet Musa (as) and the Prophet Harun (as) were exposed to the same accusation. Pharaoh and his close circle said to them: **“Have you come to us to turn us away from what we found our fathers doing, and to gain greatness in the land? We do not believe you.”** (Surah Yunus: 78)

The slanders made against believers may reach an unimaginable scale. Throughout history, Allah’s messengers have been accused of “bewitching and deceiving” the believers around them:

They said, “These two magicians (Musa and Harun) desire by their magic to expel you from your land and abolish your most excellent way of life.” (Surah Ta Ha: 63)

... The disbelievers say, “This is a lying magician.” (Surah Sad: 4)

The main ambition of those who slander Muslims is to present an image of a Muslim who has the same vices that they themselves display. This went to such great lengths that they dared to say of the noble Prophet Nuh (as): **“He is an insolent liar!”** (Surat al-Qamar: 25).

Another slander believers are very often exposed to is that of “insanity.” In fact, disbelievers’ failure to grasp one important rationale of believers accounts for this slander. Having no concept of “earning the approval of Allah,” disbelievers have difficulty in understanding the acts of believers that are aimed at this goal alone. They fail to comprehend why believers, who obviously pursue no interests for the services they render, devote their lives to Allah. In their eyes, such an idealistic attitude can be nothing but “insanity.” Throughout history, they have often employed this slander. Of the Prophet Musa (as), Pharaoh said: **“This Messenger, who has been sent to you, is mad.”** (Surat ash-Shu’ara’: 27) Also, when denying the Prophet Nuh (as), his people said, **“He is a mad-man.”** (Surat al-Qamar: 9).

Leaving these aside, believers were also accused of adultery. The Prophet Yusuf (as) and Maryam (as), the role models to follow for all faithful men and women, are noble people who were exposed to this slander.

Furthermore, disbelievers accused many prophets of **“being in plain error.”** (Surat al-A’raf: 60).

But it would not be correct to assume that all these events pertain to the past. The Qur’an informs us that other believers may have the very same experiences. Accordingly, each believer advocating the true religion, thereby disturbing those who are far removed from the values of that religion, is vulnerable to the same accusations and slanders.

We need to keep in mind that what disbelievers spread about Muslims may be part of such a slander campaign. As the Qur’an advises, prior to extensive investigation, we must avoid believing in such news spread by “deviators.” Of this Allah warns us as follows:

You who believe! If a deviator brings you a report, scrutinize it carefully in case you attack people in ignorance and so come to greatly regret what you have done. (Surat al-Hujurat: 6)

LIFE IN THE SOCIETY OF IGNORANCE



In the earlier sections, we mentioned that the main difference between believers and disbelievers is the former's awareness of Allah's infinite might. We also talked about how a believer, who is aware of Allah's existence, must and does orient his entire life to earn the approval of Allah.

One of the most significant characteristics of someone who can appreciate Allah's might and thus reorients all his deeds to earn Allah's blessing, is his liberating himself from all beings other than Allah. Having his life focused on earning His approval and being a servant to Him, he develops a different outlook on the universe, which he knows is created and controlled by Allah. Since he considers Allah as the only deity, the false deities surrounding him lose their meaning.

In the Qur'an, this subject is stressed in the story of the Prophet Ibrahim (as) as revealed to the Prophet Muhammad (sas):

...He was a saintly man and a Prophet. Remember when he said to his father, "Father, why do you worship what can neither hear nor see and is not of any use to you at all?" (Surah Maryam: 41-42)

Since a believer seeks the pleasure of Allah alone, prays to Him, and beseeches only Him, he has become "independent" of all created beings. He does not feel the need to seek other people's pleasure, and does not pin his hopes on anyone other than Allah. The attainment of true freedom is, in fact, possible only through having a full grasp of this fact and turning towards Allah.

The lives of those lacking true faith, unlike those of the believers, are subservient to countless false deities. Such people devote their entire lives to gaining the approval of countless people, and when they seek help, it is from other people. In reality, however, the creatures a disbeliever idolises in his mind are nothing but weak "servants," just like himself. Indeed, these beings are far from fulfilling his desires, much less saving him. Death is, no doubt, the most obvious fact, revealing that these idolised beings can by no means be of any help. However, it would be too late to wait for death to grasp the imaginary nature of these deities.

The deadlock these people face is related in the Qur'an as follows:

They have taken [other] gods besides Allah [Alone], hoping that they may be helped. They cannot help them, even though they are an army mobilised in their support. (Surah Ya Sin: 74-75)

Disbelievers base their entire lives on this very dis-

torted rationale. There emerges from this another important difference between believers and disbelievers: Believers adopt the criteria laid down by Allah as their only guidance. They observe the commands of the Qur'an, the just Book and the Sunnah of the Prophet (saas). Their religion is Islam, which is explained in detail in the Qur'an and is presented to us through the exemplary of the life of the Prophet (saas).

People who lead their lives in a state oblivious of Allah will surely accept the criteria laid down by the imaginary deities rather than the criteria set forth by Allah. Unlike Islam, the one and immutable law of Allah, theirs is a polytheistic religion. These people have various conflicting rules and goals imposed by society. This being the case, the polytheistic religions they abide by take various forms.

Some of them aim at money and power, while others desire a prestigious and influential status. Some aspire to find a "good spouse" and have a "happy family life." This diversity that engenders different life styles and accordingly different "religions" is, in fact, based on the failure to grasp Allah's existence and His limits.

However, man is, by nature, inclined to trust Allah and be a servant to Him. Unable to fulfil his infinite needs and desires by himself, by nature, he tends to turn to Allah alone. Accordingly, the nature of man is inclined to recognise Allah as his Lord:

So, as a pure and natural believer, set your face firmly towards the faith, Allah's natural pattern on which He made mankind. There is no changing

Allah's creation. That is the true faith—but most people do not know it. (Surat ar-Rum: 30)

A sincere believer, who is not seized by the evil desires of his soul but who has faith in Allah, learns how to conduct himself throughout his life from the book revealed by Allah, and follows the prophets as his role models. The life of a believer is entirely different from that of a disbeliever. This aside, from the Qur'an and the sunnah of the Prophet (saas) a believer learns the facts of which disbelievers are utterly unaware. For example, Allah has given the glad tidings that for whoever observes his duty to Allah, He will provide a means of salvation:

... Whoever goes in fear of Allah—He will give him a way out and provide for him from where he does not expect. Allah is all-sufficient for one who puts his trust in Him. Allah always achieves His aim. Allah has set a measure for all things. (Surat at-Talaq: 2-3)

A believer who duly acknowledges the power of Allah will dedicate his life to Him, because he knows that Allah will be enough for "whoever puts his trust in Him." This is expressed in the following Quranic verse:

He (Ya'qub) said, "My sons!... in no way can I save you from the might of Allah, for judgement comes from no one but Allah. In Him I put my trust, and in Him alone let the faithful put their trust." (Surah Yusuf: 67)

A believer who grasps this fact will see that his duty in this world is solely to fulfil Allah's commands. This is his duty and his "profession." He is merely responsible

for striving in the way of Allah. He asks Allah for everything, because it is Allah Who gives everything to him. Man's purpose of creation is thus recorded in the Qur'an:

I only created jinn and man to worship Me. I do not require any provision from them and I do not require them to nourish Me. Truly Allah, He is the Provider, the Possessor of Strength, the Sure. (Surat adh-Dhariyat: 56-58)

Consequently, it is unlikely that a believer, who displays the morals praised in the Qur'an, can have "fear of the future" in his heart. This fear is peculiar to those who perceive life as a struggle among millions of independent false deities. Unaware that all events take place under Allah's control, in compliance with destiny, they assume that they need to put up a struggle to survive. They believe that they will benefit by "stepping on others" and "abusing them" to achieve their own ends and satisfy their personal interests. Indeed, their thinking matches what they receive...

Said Nursi explains how man fails to understand that his real duty is to be a servant to Allah and adds:

"... They unwisely concluded that life is a struggle."

This rationale, subscribed to by those who do not live according to the values of the Qur'an, is one of the fundamental tenets of their religion. It is due to the rationale in question that these people always suffer feelings of distress and tension:

- The majority of these people, unlike believers, are selfish, self-seeking people whose only concern is to benefit themselves.

- They lack the delicate disposition that develops with self-sacrifice. Their love is based on gaining advantage; they love a person not because of his good values or attributes but because it is in their interest to love him.

- Those whom they consider to be their loved ones, too, approach them with the same rationale, which creates a relationship bereft of loyalty. They always feel concerned about the potential unfaithfulness of their partners, since they know that at any time they may find others who are wealthier or more beautiful...

- They are consumed by jealousy, a trait that prevents them from taking pleasure in beauties and blessings. For example, instead of taking pleasure in someone's beauty and saying "How beautifully Allah has created him or her," they feel restless and ask, "Why am I not as good looking and beautiful as him or her?"

- They do not feel grateful to Allah or are not contented with their blessings. With such a disposition, they always want to possess more. This insatiable desire becomes a constant source of uneasiness.

- Unable to accept their feebleness and weaknesses, they do not ask for help from Allah. They assume they will get rid of their weaknesses if they turn away from Allah haughtily without asking Him for help. However, this is not the way to get rid of their weaknesses. At this time too, they turn to others and pin their hopes on them. Yet those they turn to are also weak individuals who only think about their own benefit. Moreover, they are far from being merciful and compassionate. This being the case, they often feel "depressed," and lose their spirit through a failure to satisfy their expectations.

- They lack forgiveness and tolerance. For this reason, even a minor disagreement among them is likely to develop into a clash or conflict. Most of the time, each party makes it a matter of pride to refuse to accept being the one in the wrong. For this reason, they often feel distressed.

- They do not believe that they live in a world under Allah's protection and control, but rather in a ruthless jungle where they have to "defeat" others to survive. According to their misguided idea, they assume they have to develop a tough, aggressive and egoist character to be able to survive in this "jungle." Indeed, their attitude matches what they encounter. They are either, as the society of ignorance calls it, swallowed up, as in the example of the "small fish," or they grow into a "big and cruel" fish and swallow others.

These laws apply to almost all societies where people do not experience true faith, and behave according to the mistaken morality described above. The Qur'an calls these societies "ignorant and behavent," because they are entirely unaware of Allah and the hereafter.

The Qur'an tells us that the Prophet Musa (as) described the sons of Israel, a tribe that never exercised wisdom or submitted themselves to Allah, as ignorant:

We led the tribe of Israel across the sea and they came upon some people who were devoting themselves to some idols which they had. They said, "Musa, give us a god just as these people have gods." He said, "You are indeed an ignorant people. What these people are doing is destined for destruc-

tion. What they are doing is purposeless.” He said, “Should I seek something other than Allah as a deity for you when He has favoured you over all other beings?” (Surat al-A’raf: 138-140)

However, as mentioned earlier, “the society of ignorance” is not of a uniform nature. Though generally called “ignorant,” there may be different sections in a given society, all displaying varying characteristics. The society is commonly segmented according to the degree they have attained the criteria—economic power being the foremost—set by the society itself.

The Criterion by which to Appraise People in the Society of “Ignorance”

Muslims take “*taqwa*” (awe or fear of Allah which inspires the individual to be on guard against wrong actions and eager for ones which please Him) as the only criterion by which to appraise people. As the Prophet (saas) said, they know that “*the most perfect man in his faith among the believers is the one whose behaviour is most excellent.*” (Tirmidhi) In ignorant societies, however, which are made up of people with no faith, “money” is considered the main criterion by which to form an opinion of others:

This being the case, many distorted rationales appear in ignorant societies:

- A rich person, albeit indecent and corrupted, is paid respect.

- Due to this rule laid down by society, one who is “rich but indecent” believes himself actually to be an “estimable” person.

- Because society attaches so much importance to "money," the poor lack self-confidence. This attitude of the poor becomes most obvious when they are among the rich. A poor person may well recognise that he is superior to the rich man next to him because the latter is deprived. However, under the influence of ideas instilled by society, he is unable to overcome his feelings of inadequacy.

- In the society of ignorance, where the possession of "money" is a highly estimable criterion, moral degeneration prevails. Such corruption appears in various forms, such as bribery, abuse of authority or forgery, and is almost totally incorporated into daily life. Since the successful amassing of money is the most important value, all methods rendering the making of money possible, no matter how immoral and unjust they may be, are legitimised.

The story of Qarun in the Qur'an best describes the "money-oriented" stance of the society of ignorance:

Qarun was one of the people of Musa but he lorded it over them. We gave him such treasures that their very keys would have been too heavy a weight for a band of strong men. When his people said to him, "Do not gloat. Allah does not love people who gloat. Seek the abode of the hereafter with what Allah has given you, without forgetting your share in this world. And do good as Allah has been good to you. And do not seek to cause corruption in the land. Allah does not love corrupters." he said: "I have only been given these riches because of the knowledge I have." Did he not know that before him Allah

had destroyed generations with far greater strength than his and far more possessions? The evil-doers will not be questioned about their sins. He went out among his people in all his finery. Those who desired the life of the world said: "Oh! If only we had the same as Qarun has been given! What immense good fortune he possesses." But those who had been given knowledge said: "Woe to you! Allah's reward is better for those who have faith and act rightly. But only the steadfast will attain it." We caused the earth to swallow up both him and his house. There was no group to come to his aid, besides Allah, nor was he able to defend himself. Those who had longed to take his place the day before began to say: "Allah gives abundantly to whom He will, and sparingly to whom He pleases. If Allah had not shown great kindness to us, we would have been swallowed up as well. Ah! Truly the disbelievers are not successful." As for the abode of the hereafter, We shall grant it to those who do not seek to exalt themselves in this world or to cause corruption in it. The successful outcome is for those who fear Allah. (Surat al-Qasas: 76-83)

As can be understood from the verses, Qarun and those who envied him were representative of a typical society of ignorance. They failed to comprehend that Allah is the owner of everything and that Allah bestows possessions upon whoever He wishes. Qarun thought that the wealth he possessed had been given to him because of his superiority. But this was not so.

- Because Allah creates every being, He is the real

owner of everything. In this sense, one who owns something may be considered as a “trustee,” temporarily taking care of a possession which actually belongs to Allah.

- Blessings bestowed upon people are given to them not because they are superior or because they possess something important. These blessings are given to man as a favour or as a trial. What is expected of him in return is not to grow “arrogant” but to be “grateful” to Allah. If one fails to understand this, the property he owns brings him neither happiness nor salvation in this world and in the hereafter.

- Property is not given so that one can “hoard” it and be parsimonious. Allah gives property to man so that he may use it in Allah’s way. The end of those who do otherwise is stated in the Qur’an as follows:

Those who are miserly with the bounty Allah has given them should not suppose that that is better for them. No indeed, it is worse for them! What they were mean with will be hung around their necks on the Day of Rising. Allah is the inheritor of the heavens and the earth and Allah is aware of what you do. (Surah Al ‘Imran: 180)

- While spending the wealth bestowed upon him by Allah, the individual must use it wisely to attain the approval of Allah, without fearing the exhaustion of his resources. In the Qur’an, Allah draws attention to this danger and reminds us that Satan threatens man with “poverty” (Surat al-Baqara: 268) It is further stated that Allah repays whatever is spent in His way. The relevant verse about this issue is as follows:

Say: "My Lord gives abundantly to whom He wills or sparingly to whom He pleases. But anything you expend will be repaid by Him. He is the Best of Providers." (Surah Saba': 39)

The story of Qarun in fact reveals a general attribute of the society of ignorance. A closer examination of the story reveals that Qarun could actually be representative of a character in the society of ignorance that embodies rich and prestigious people.

In the relevant verses, reference is also made to those who envy Qarun. These people have the very same ignorant rationale as Qarun and fail to understand that the real owner of property is Allah. So, they attach great importance to Qarun and his wealth.

Those who can distance themselves from the inculcations of society are the true believers:

- Because the criterion of believers was not money but faith and because they knew all property belonged to Allah, they realised that it was unwise to envy Qarun. Furthermore, they understood that he was certainly in a pitiable position.

- Unlike the members of the society of ignorance, they did not say: "Allah gives abundantly to whom He wills, or sparingly to whom he pleases" after Qarun's death, but comprehended this fact right at the beginning.

A similar situation is related in the story of "the owners of the vineyards." The distinction between a man who is given plenty of blessings and property, as is in the case of Qarun, and a believer, who believes in Allah and observes his duty to Him, is related in the Qur'an as follows:

Give them this parable. Once there were two men, to one of whom We gave two gardens of grape-vines and surrounded them with date-palms, putting between them some cultivated land. Both gardens yielded their crops and did not suffer any loss, and We made a river flow right through the middle of them. He was a man of wealth and property and he said to his companion, which conversing with him, "I have more wealth than you and my clan is mightier than yours." He entered his garden and wronged himself by saying, "I do not think that this will ever end. I do not think the Hour of Doom will ever come. But if I should be sent back to my Lord, I will definitely get something better in return." His companion, with whom he was conversing, said to him, "Do you then disbelieve in Him Who created you from dust, then from a drop of sperm, and then formed you as a man? He is, however, Allah, my Lord, and I will not associate anyone with my Lord. Why, when you entered your garden, did you not say, "It is as Allah wills, there is no strength but in Allah"? Though you see me with less wealth and children than you possess, it may well be that my Lord will give me something better than your garden and send down on it a fireball from the sky so that morning finds it a shifting heap of dust, or morning finds its water drained into the earth so that you cannot get at it."

The fruits of his labour were completely destroyed and he woke up wringing his hands in grief, rueing

everything that he had spent on it. It was total ruin with all its trellises fallen in.

He said, "Oh, if only I had not associated anyone with my Lord!" There was no group to come to his aid, besides Allah, and he was unable to defend himself. In that situation the only protection is from Allah, the Truth. He gives the best reward and the best outcome. (Surat al-Kahf: 32-44)

The Leaders of the Societies in Which the Possession of Money is the Criterion

In almost every story in the Qur'an, Allah mentions a group of people to whom Muslims convey His message. However, instead of reforming them, the communication of the true religion makes these people grow arrogant and oppress believers. The Qur'an gives an account of the attributes of this group of people that appear in almost all stories of prophets.

In the Qur'an, this segment of society is defined with phrases such as "arrogant chiefs of the people," "those who led lives of ease," "those persisting in immense wrongdoing" and "those who were unjustly proud in the land." Their common quality is their employment of power and possessions to revolt against Allah and to make mischief on earth. In the Qur'an, "the leaders" are described in Surah Saba':

We never sent a warner into any city without the affluent people in it saying, "We reject what you have been sent with." They also said, "We have more

wealth and children. We are not going to be punished.” (Surah Saba’: 34-35)

- The “possessions and children” given to these people added to their arrogance and denial of Allah:

The ‘Ad were arrogant and unjust in the land, without any right, saying, “Who has greater strength than us?” Did they not see that Allah, Who created them, had greater strength than them? But they renounced Our Signs. (Surah Fussilat: 15)

- This segment of society harbour a deep-seated enmity against those who believe in Allah. Similarly, believers often receive the strongest reaction from these people “who lead lives of ease.” These people, averse to submitting to Allah and using their possessions in His way, nurture resentment and hatred of believers. Due to the hatred they felt for believers, some of them even tried to “do away with” them:

The ruling circle of those of his people who were arrogant said, “We will drive you out of our city, Shu’ayb, you and those who believe along with you, unless you return to our religion.” He said, “What, even though we detest it?” (Surat al-A’raf: 88)

Examples of such people, who are extensively referred to in the Qur’an, also exist in today’s societies.

Once we consider the main qualities of “those who lead lives of ease,” as mentioned in the Qur’an, the subject becomes self-explanatory, because there are striking parallels between the qualities of “those who lead lives of ease” and of some members of a certain segment of society who have adopted the values of the ignorant. This

segment of society is called “high society” almost everywhere in the world

The life led by some of the members of this community who enjoy a standard of living far above the average, is quite degenerate. (Of course, there are those with good manners as well as those with bad manners in this section of society). Parties extending from private bars to homes, shows based on a crude understanding of entertainment, young people ruined by drug-abuse, moral failings that irreparably disqualify individuals from being decent and reliable, excessive drinking, extravagant spending, etc., are presented as “natural” in this unbridled social ambience... In this sense, in the guise of the sophisticated concepts of modernism or freedom, all forms of outrage, perversion and immorality are imposed upon people.

Some of the members of this community display all the characteristics of the perverted societies mentioned in the Qur’an: the homosexual practises of the people of Lut, cheating in measure, weight and calculation—a trait peculiar to the people of Madyan (Surah Hud: 84), mocking believers, as in the case of the people of Nuh (Surah Hud: 38), exploitation of people’s material wealth by usury, as practised by the sons of Israel. (Surat an-Nisa’: 161)

The members of this section of society, having no quality other than their love of luxury, display a life of moral deficiency, while average people can barely earn a living, although they work hard and decently. These people who spend huge sums of money, far above the salary of an average person, in a single night cause great spiritual harm to society at large.

At this point, we need to recall that the Qur'an informs us about the end of the "chiefs who lead their lives in ease," unless they repent and are resolute in their renunciation of such a life:

But then when We seize the affluent among them to punish them, they will suddenly start praying fervently We shall say: "Do not pray fervently today. You will not receive any help from Us. (Surat al-Mu'minun: 64-65)

Morals in the Society of Ignorance

The morality of believers described in the Qur'an is based on fear of Allah and His approval. Since the members of the society of "ignorance" do not establish their value judgments on piety, their moral values are also distorted.

Since the society of "ignorance" is unaware of the infinite power of Allah, its members base their moral understanding on the criterion best expressed in the words: "What will people think about it?" Such an understanding permits the commission of morally unacceptable acts in an environment where no one hears or witnesses them. Alternatively, this immoral understanding is legitimised under a new title and form.

For instance, many people in the society of "ignorance" consider adultery immoral. Some of the individuals who commit adultery hardly dare to admit it. However, they generally do not avoid committing it, provided that not a soul witnesses it.

It is possible to observe various forms of this conduct in the lives of ignorant people.

The Desire to Live Forever

Say: "Death, from which you are fleeing, will certainly catch up with you. Then you will be returned to the Knower of the Unseen and the Visible and He will inform you about what you did." (Surat al-Jumu'a: 8)

Unaware of the existence of Allah and the hereafter, the members of the society of "ignorance" behave "as if they will never die." In this society, death continues to be one of the words that is never pronounced. While making plans, death is ignored outright. They pile up fortunes as if the life of this world is perpetual. Since these plans pertain entirely to this world, those who recall death are labelled "killjoy."

This is one of the most evident indications of the distorted rationale upon which ignorant unbelievers base their lives. Since **"every soul shall taste death"** (Surah Al 'Imran: 185), a life based on feigning ignorance of death is surely established on a rotten foundation. However, man must employ his intellect:

- Since he is granted the desire to live forever, he must think why his life should be restricted to 60-70 years.

- He should recognise as an unwise rationale, the assumption that avoidance of the thought of death is a way to keep death at distance. This is behaving just like an ostrich with its head in the sand.

- He should grasp the fact that Allah, Who has shaped

him into a most perfect body out of a sperm, has the might to recreate him and to give him a new life.

- Finally, he must keep in mind that Allah, Who promised and asserted in hundreds of verses that He would recreate him after death, will surely keep His promise.

All of the above will lead him to comprehend that death is not a form of disappearance, but a transition to the hereafter.

- In this case, he may also understand that fear of death is senseless. In fact, fear of death will not avail him; death is inescapable. Everybody will die at a predestined time. Those who fear death are warned in the Qur'an as follows:

...They are concealing things inside themselves which they do not disclose to you, saying, "If we had only had a say in the affair, none of us would have been killed here in this place." Say, "Even if you had been inside your homes, those people for whom killing was decreed would have gone out to their place of death."... (Surah Al 'Imran: 154)

Death, which is a door to the hereafter, brings bliss and salvation only to those who have spent their lives in compliance with Allah's good pleasure. For those who turned away from Allah, on the other hand, death means utter destruction and the beginning of a horrible disaster. The Qur'an informs us that once death comes, the regret felt by those who have forgotten Allah—as if they would never die—will be of no avail:

There is no forgiveness for people who persist in doing evil until death comes to them and who then

say, "Now I repent," nor for people who die disbelievers. We have prepared for them a painful punishment. (Surat an-Nisa': 18)

When death comes to a wrongdoer, he says, "My Lord, send me back again, so that perhaps I may act rightly regarding the things I failed to do!" No indeed! It is just words he utters. Before them there shall stand a barrier until the Day they are raised up. (Surat al-Mu'minun: 99-100)

Everybody who has not devoted his life to Allah will live to suffer this regret unless Allah wills otherwise.

Consider that life is too short, that there is a real eternal life after the life of this world, and that one is entitled to attain eternal life, provided that he earns the approval of Allah in this world;

- We must concern ourselves with the real life, due to begin after death, more than with the life of this world, which is short and worthless next to the eternal abundance promised. That is why, believers who conceive of this fact are of those whose **"sincerity has been purified through earnest remembrance of the Abode."** (Surah Sad: 46)

- It is senseless to be deceived by the insignificance and deceptive allure of the world and become deeply attached to it. Neither possessions, nor beauty, neither power, family, nor fame can accompany a person to his grave. What is left in the grave is only a body wrapped in a shroud, which undergoes a rapid process of decay after burial.

- What will be taken to the hereafter are the good deeds and acts of worship done to earn the approval of

Allah. There, the temporary blessings of this world (health, beauty, wealth and so on) will, in their most perfect forms, be given back to man for all eternity.

- One who fails to comprehend this fact and, remaining niggardly avoids spending his wealth in Allah's way, eventually ruins his eternal life in the hereafter and does harm to his own soul:

Here you are then: people who are called upon to spend in the Way of Allah and then some of you are ungenerous! But whoever is ungenerous to the cause is ungenerous to himself. Allah is Rich and you are poor. If you turn away, He will replace you with a people other than yourselves and they will not be like you. (Surah Muhammad: 38)

Those who fail to grasp this and become deeply attached to this world strive to attain a so-called "immortality," for which reason they desire to "leave something in this world by which people may remember them." This desire appears in various forms:

- Some try to leave "works of art" behind, so that "their name may live on." About this attitude, the Qur'an says:

Will you build a tower on every hilltop, just to amuse yourselves, and construct great fortresses, hoping to live for ever? (Surat ash-Shu'ara': 128-129)

- This rationale best expresses itself in the desire to "raise children." Those who place no hope in the hereafter wish to have children who will carry the family name into the future. This is mainly the reason why families prefer sons.

It is stated in another verse that the desire to "have chil-

dren” is merely part of the temporal pomp of this world:

Know that the life of the world is merely a game and a diversion, ostentation and a cause of boasting among yourselves and trying to outdo one another in wealth and children: like the plant-growth after rain which delights the cultivators, but then it withers and you see it turning yellow, and then it becomes broken stubble. In the hereafter there is terrible punishment but also the forgiveness of Allah and His approval. The life of this world is nothing but the enjoyment of delusion. (Surat al-Hadid: 20)

Of course, it is most agreeable for people to desire to raise children with good morals. However, in the twisted system of the society of ignorance, the cause of this desire is not to please Allah but to satisfy their arrogance and to leave a permanent mark behind them in this world.

However, when we refer to the Qur’an, we witness the attitude of true believers; they ask for children from Allah only if this is necessary for the pleasure of Allah. Most of the prophets lived their lives without children since they did not have such an opportunity during their time and age and only asked for children from Allah when they grew too old and needed someone who would continue to communicate the message of Allah and advocate His religion.

Therefore, “having children” is necessary only if it complies with Allah’s good pleasure. It is a great mistake to do this simply out of an instinctive wish to “outdo one another” and to continue their family names in the way that unbelievers do.

The Understanding of Religion in the Society of Ignorance

Such people as are described above, who fail to give Allah due appreciation and thus are “ignorant,” have interpreted religion in accordance with their distorted rationale and beliefs. The resultant understanding of religion shows apparent deviations from the original religion as set forth in the Qur’an. The Qur’an defines the religion brought by the Prophet Muhammad (saas) as a religion that **“relieves people of their heavy loads and the chains which were around them.”** (Surat al-A’raf: 157) and as the religion that “contains no difficulties in it”:

...He has selected you and not placed any constraint upon you in the observance of your religion—the religion of your forefather Ibrahim. In this, as in former scriptures he named you Muslims... (Surat al-Hajj: 78)

In the Qur’an, Allah has summoned people to reflect and, recognising the erroneous beliefs and methods they hold, to turn to the lifestyle deemed to be appropriate by Allah.

The society of ignorance, however, feigning not to see the explicit and comprehensible message of the Qur’an, has, in the name of Islam, fabricated a religion bogged down in bigotry. Some of the characteristics of this distorted religion are as follows:

- The religion introduced in the Qur’an summons people to serve Allah alone and thus liberate themselves from the yoke of all other beings. Accordingly, since he is not obliged to seek other people’s pleasure, man is only re-

sponsible for seeking Allah's approval. The people of the society of ignorance, however, have developed an understanding of religion not as a way to seek Allah's pleasure and hence liberate themselves, but as a social institution. This conceives of religion as a factor applying social pressure to people. Owing to this perception, this false religion has lapsed into a form, which is primarily concerned with "what people would say,"—an understanding far removed from true religion.

- Having such misconceptions about religion, the society of ignorance has to a great extent identified religion with tradition. Local customs and beliefs and cultural factors have been incorporated into the religion, and "being pious" has deteriorated into "adherence to one's forefathers' customs." The religion brought by the Qur'an and embodied in the exemplary life of the Prophet (saas), however, bears no similarity whatsoever to these. In the Qur'an, Allah commands man to take His limits and the sunnah of the Prophet (saas) as a measure and nothing else. Throughout history, the prophets had to struggle with those who attempted to deny the truth by quoting the beliefs inherited from their forefathers. The morality they displayed is indicated in the verse below:

When they are told, "Follow what Allah has sent down to you," they say, "We are following what we found our fathers doing." What, even though their fathers did not understand a thing and were not guided! (Surat al-Baqara: 170)

The same theme is repeated in Surat al-Ma'ida: 104; Surat al-An'am: 91; Surat al-A'raf: 28 and in many other verses as well.

- The members of the society of ignorance, who perceive religion as a social institution and identify it with traditions, have in consequence distanced religion from rationality. However, as the Qur'an informs us, being a Muslim entails being wise. Believers are always summoned to think, to enquire and thus see the verses of Allah. Faith and wisdom are interrelated; as a consequence of exercising wisdom one attains faith, and faith grows ever more profound as one continues to exercise wisdom. The society of ignorance, however, believes faith to consist of "beliefs" alone. They perceive blind adherence to traditional knowledge as faith, whereas wisdom is the key to having a grasp of Allah's existence and His attributes. That is why faith in Allah in the society of ignorance is of a rather weak nature. In order not to shake this anti-Qura'anic, feeble faith, they have developed an irrational stance which implies that, "pondering too much over religious issues may be harmful to one's faith."

- This rationale, stemming from ignorance, sees no harm in introducing new principles to religion and making unlawful what is lawful.

The Qur'an frequently draws attention to this "prohibitive" rationale that disturbs many people:

Say: "Who has forbidden the fine clothing Allah has produced for His servants and the good kinds of provision?" Say: "On the Day of Rising such things will be exclusively for those who had faith during their life in the world." In this way We make the Signs clear for people who know.

Say: "My Lord has forbidden indecency, both open and hidden, and wrong action, and unrightful

tyranny, and associating anything with Allah for which He has sent down no authority, and saying things about Allah you do not know.” (Surat al-A’raf: 32-33)

What is the matter with you that you do not eat that which has been consecrated in the name of Allah, when He has made clear to you what He has made unlawful for you, except when you are forced to eat it? Many people lead others astray through their whims and desires unchecked by any knowledge. Your Lord knows best those who overstep the limits. (Surat al-An’am: 119)

You who believe! Do not make unlawful the good things Allah has made lawful for you, and do not overstep the limits. Allah does not love people who overstep the limits. (Surat al-Ma’ida: 87)

- As a result of this degeneration caused by the society of ignorance, Islam is being presented as “a religion peculiar to the Bedouins (nomadic Arabs).” Yet the facts are otherwise. Prophets have always been the most civilised people of their time. They were cultured and enlightened people with refined aesthetic values. With his palace, which is known to have been an architectural masterpiece abounding in many exquisite places, the Prophet Sulayman (as) is one of the most outstanding examples cited in the Qur’an.

Being a Muslim means not being attached to traditional culture or taking pleasure in nostalgic values. It is certainly not being “oriental” or being attached to only one culture, either. Being a Muslim is to be a servant to

Allah and to be grateful for the blessings granted by Him. It means striving to know Allah, drawing nearer to Him and becoming a human being with a noble character.

A true Muslim is one who seeks the approval of his Creator, Allah, the Almighty, and who has distanced himself from any material or spiritual expectation other than earning His approval.

This is the definition of a Muslim.

THE ETERNAL ABODE OF THOSE WHO HAVE TAKEN DEITIES OTHER THAN ALLAH: HELL



Is someone who seeks to please Allah the same as someone who incurs His displeasure and whose refuge is Hell? What an evil destination!
(Surah Al 'Imran: 162)

It is a place of humiliation and eternal punishment. (Surat at-Tawba: 63, 68; Surat al-Ma'ida: 80; Surat al-An'am: 128; Surah Hud: 107; Surat an-Nahl: 29; Surat al-Anbiya': 99; Surat an-Nisa': 14, 151)

Its blaze is terrible and searing. (Surat al-Ma'arij: 15-16; Surah Al 'Imran: 181; Surat al-Ahzab: 64; Surat al-Hajj: 72; Surat an-Nur: 57; Surat al-Furqan: 11)

It has a roaring and seething. (Surat al-Furqan: 12; Surat al-Mulk: 7-8)

It is the most evil destination that Allah has ever created. (Surah Al 'Imran: 162; Surat an-Nisa': 115)

The punishment is unceasing and will not be lightened. (Surah Mu'min: 46-47; Surat al-Ma'ida: 37; Surah Yunus: 52; Surat al-Bayyina: 6; Surat al-Hajj: 22; Surah Al 'Imran: 88; Surah Fatir: 36)

There is no possibility of being saved through dying. (Surah Ibrahim: 17)

There is no one from whom to get help. (Surah Al 'Imran: 91)

There is no way of escape. (Surat al-Ma'ida: 37; Surat al-Kahf: 53; Surat al-Balad: 19-20)

The custodians of Hell are angels. (Surat al-Muddaththir: 31)

The fuel of the fire is people and stones. (Surat al-Baqara: 24; Surat at-Tahrim: 6; Surah Al 'Imran: 10; Surat al-Anbiya': 98; Surah Hud: 119; Surat as-Sajda: 13)

There is branding in the fire of Hell. (Surat at-Tawba: 35)

There will be sighing for them in it. (Surat al-Anbiya': 100)

The evil-doers are yoked together in chains. (Surah Ibrahim: 49)

They will be given there boiling water and scalding pus to drink. (Surat an-Naba': 24-25; Surat al-Ghashiya: 5; Surat al-Waqi'a: 54-55; Surah Yunus: 4; Surah Sad: 57; Surah Ibrahim: 16-17)

Its food is the infernal tree (zaqqum) and the bitter thorny bush. (Surat ad-Dukhan: 43-46; Surat as-Saffat: 62-66; Surat al-Waqi'a: 52-53; Surat al-Muzzammil: 13; Surat al-Ghashiya: 6-7)

The people of the fire wear shirts of tar there. (Surah Ibrahim: 50)

THE ETERNAL ABODE OF THOSE WHO SEEK ONLY THE APPROVAL OF ALLAH: PARADISE



*They will have there everything they want and
with Us there is still more.
(Surah Qaf: 35)*

There will be everything from which a man derives pleasure and there will be still more. (Surah Qaf: 35; Surat az-Zukhruf: 71; Surat al-Anbiya': 102)

There is a great kingdom there. (Surat al-Insan: 20)

There are blessings all around. (Surat as-Saffat: 43; Surat al-Insan: 20)

Having died once, they (the righteous) shall die no more. (Surat ad-Dukhan: 56)

They (the righteous) shall abide therein forever. (Surat al-Baqara: 25)

No weariness or fatigue is experienced there. (Surah Fatir: 35)

There is unlimited happiness there. (Surah Ya Sin: 55)

There is total comfort there. (Surat al-Waqi'a: 89)

It is incredibly vast. (Surat al-Hadid: 21)

There is a very pleasant life there. (Surat al-Haqqa: 21)

There is no sorrow or fear. (Surat al-Baqara: 62; Surah Al 'Imran: 170; Surah Fatir: 34; Surat al-A'raf: 35)

The people of the gardens are shown honour there. (Surat as-Saffat: 42)

There are pure, virgin, dark-eyed maidens who have been created perfectly anew, with eyes for their spouses alone. (Surat al-Baqara: 25; Surat as-Saffat: 48-49; Surat ad-Dukhan: 54; Surat al-Waqi'a: 22-23; 36-37; Surat ar-Rahman: 56, 58, 70, 72; Surat an-Naba': 33; Surat al-Waqi'a: 35-37)

There are high-ceilinged halls and fine dwellings there. (Surat al-Furqan: 10, 75; Surat al-'Ankabut: 58; Surat as-Saff: 12)

There is no cold or heat that would disturb one. There is cool and everlasting shade. (Surat al-Insan: 13; Surat ar-Ra'd: 35; Surat al-Mursalat: 41; Surat an-Nisa': 57)

The gardens are watered by rivers. (Surat al-Baqara: 25)

There are rivers of water and rivers of milk there. (Surah Muhammad: 15)

There are elevated and sumptuous woven couches. (Surat al-Waqi'a: 15, 34, Surat al-Ghashiya: 13; Surat as-Saffat: 44)

There are cushions ranged in order, and exquisite rugs spread out. (Surat al-Ghashiya: 15-16; Surat ar-Rahman: 76)

There is abundant provision. (Surah Sad: 54; Surat al-Mu'min: 40)

The blessings there are unending. (Surat al-Insan: 13, Surat al-Waqi'a: 33)

There are sweet fruits hanging close to hand. (Surat al-Waqi'a: 28, 29, 32; Surat an-Naba': 32; Surat al-Haqqa: 23; Surat ar-Rahman: 68; Surat al-Insan: 14)

There are pure water springs. (Surat al-Mutaffifin: 28; Surat al-Ghashiya: 12; Surat ar-Rahman: 50; Surat al-Insan: 6, 18)

There are various beauties and blessings. (Surat ar-Rahman: 48)

There are couches lined with rich brocade. (Surat ar-Rahman: 54)

There are pure youths serving the people of the gardens. (Surat at-Tur: 24)

There are ageless youths like scattered pearls. (Surat al-Insan: 19)

There is a spring as white as the driven snow that does not intoxicate those who drink from it. (Surat al-Mutaffifin: 25, 26; Surat al-Insan: 5; Surat as-Saffat: 46-47; Surat al-Waqi'a: 19; Surat at-Tur: 23)

There are garments of fine silk and rich brocade, ornamented with gold, silver and pearls. (Surat al-Insan: 21, Surat al-Hajj: 23)

Food and drink are served on platters and in cups of gold and silver. (Surat az-Zukhruf: 71; Surat al-Insan: 15-16)

The taste of food there is similar to that found in the world. (Surat al-Baqara: 25)

THE EVOLUTION MISCONCEPTION



Every detail in this universe points to a superior creation. By contrast, materialism, which seeks to deny the fact of creation in the universe, is nothing but an unscientific fallacy.

Once materialism is invalidated, all other theories based on this philosophy are rendered baseless. Foremost of them is Darwinism, that is, the theory of evolution. This theory, which argues that life originated from inanimate matter through coincidences, has been demolished with the recognition that the universe was created by Allah. American astrophysicist Hugh Ross explains this as follows:

Atheism, Darwinism, and virtually all the “isms” emanating from the eighteenth to the twentieth century philosophies are built upon the assumption, the incorrect assumption, that the universe is infinite. The singularity has brought us face to face with the cause—or causer—beyond/behind/before the universe and all that it contains, including life itself.¹

It is Allah Who created the universe and Who designed it down to its smallest detail. Therefore, it is impossible for the theory of evolution, which holds that living beings are not created by Allah, but are products of coincidences, to be true.

Unsurprisingly, when we look at the theory of evolution, we see that this theory is denounced by scientific findings. The design in life is extremely complex and striking. In the inanimate world, for instance, we can explore how sensitive are the balances which atoms rest upon, and further, in the animate world, we can observe in what complex designs these atoms were brought together, and how extraordinary are the mechanisms and structures such as proteins, enzymes, and cells, which are manufactured with them.

This extraordinary design in life invalidated Darwinism at the end of the twentieth century.

We have dealt with this subject in great detail in some of our other studies, and shall continue to do so. However, we think that, considering its importance, it will be helpful to make a short summary here as well.

The Scientific Collapse of Darwinism

Although a doctrine going back as far as ancient Greece, the theory of evolution was advanced extensively in the 19th century. The most important development that made the theory the top topic of the world of science was the book by Charles Darwin titled *The Origin of Species* published in 1859. In this book, Darwin denied that different living species on the earth were created separately

by Allah. According to Darwin, all living beings had a common ancestor and they diversified over time through small changes.

Darwin's theory was not based on any concrete scientific finding; as he also accepted, it was just an "assumption." Moreover, as Darwin confessed in the long chapter of his book titled "Difficulties of the Theory," the theory was failing in the face of many critical questions.

Darwin invested all his hopes in new scientific discoveries, which he expected to solve the "Difficulties of the Theory." However, contrary to his expectations, scientific findings expanded the dimensions of these difficulties.

The defeat of Darwinism against science can be reviewed under three basic topics:

1) The theory can by no means explain how life originated on the earth.

2) There is no scientific finding showing that the "evolutionary mechanisms" proposed by the theory have any power to evolve at all.

3) The fossil record proves completely the contrary of the suggestions of the theory of evolution.

In this section, we will examine these three basic points in general outlines:

The First Insurmountable Step: The Origin of Life

The theory of evolution posits that all living species evolved from a single living cell that emerged on the primitive earth 3.8 billion years ago. How a single cell

could generate millions of complex living species and, if such an evolution really occurred, why traces of it cannot be observed in the fossil record are some of the questions the theory cannot answer. However, first and foremost, of the first step of the alleged evolutionary process it has to be inquired: How did this “first cell” originate?

Since the theory of evolution denies creation and does not accept any kind of supernatural intervention, it maintains that the “first cell” originated coincidentally within the laws of nature, without any design, plan, or arrangement. According to the theory, inanimate matter must have produced a living cell as a result of coincidences. This, however, is a claim inconsistent with even the most unassailable rules of biology.

“Life Comes from Life”

In his book, Darwin never referred to the origin of life. The primitive understanding of science in his time rested on the assumption that living beings had a very simple structure. Since medieval times, spontaneous generation, the theory asserting that non-living materials came together to form living organisms, had been widely accepted. It was commonly believed that insects came into being from food leftovers, and mice from wheat. Interesting experiments were conducted to prove this theory. Some wheat was placed on a dirty piece of cloth, and it was believed that mice would originate from it after a while.

Similarly, worms developing in meat was assumed to be evidence of spontaneous generation. However, only

some time later was it understood that worms did not appear on meat spontaneously, but were carried there by flies in the form of larvae, invisible to the naked eye.

Even in the period when Darwin wrote *The Origin of Species*, the belief that bacteria could come into existence from non-living matter was widely accepted in the world of science.

However, five years after the publication of Darwin's book, Louis Pasteur announced his results after long studies and experiments, which disproved spontaneous generation, a cornerstone of Darwin's theory. In his triumphal lecture at the Sorbonne in 1864, Pasteur said, "*Never will the doctrine of spontaneous generation recover from the mortal blow struck by this simple experiment.*"²

Advocates of the theory of evolution resisted the findings of Pasteur for a long time. However, as the development of science unraveled the complex structure of the cell of a living being, the idea that life could come into being coincidentally faced an even greater impasse.

Inconclusive Efforts in the Twentieth Century

The first evolutionist who took up the subject of the origin of life in the twentieth century was the renowned Russian biologist Alexander Oparin. With various theses he advanced in the 1930's, he tried to prove that the cell of a living being could originate by coincidence. These studies, however, were doomed to failure, and Oparin had to make the following confession: "*Unfortunately, however, the problem of the origin of the cell is perhaps the most obscure*

point in the whole study of the evolution of organisms.”³

Evolutionist followers of Oparin tried to carry out experiments to solve the problem of the origin of life. The best known of these experiments was carried out by American chemist Stanley Miller in 1953. Combining the gases he alleged to have existed in the primordial earth's atmosphere in an experiment set-up, and adding energy to the mixture, Miller synthesized several organic molecules (amino acids) present in the structure of proteins.

Barely a few years had passed before it was revealed that this experiment, which was then presented as an important step in the name of evolution, was invalid, the atmosphere used in the experiment having been very different from real earth conditions.⁴

After a long silence, Miller confessed that the atmosphere medium he used was unrealistic.⁵

All the evolutionist efforts put forth throughout the twentieth century to explain the origin of life ended with failure. The geochemist Jeffrey Bada from San Diego Scripps Institute accepts this fact in an article published in *Earth Magazine* in 1998:

Today as we leave the twentieth century, we still face the biggest unsolved problem that we had when we entered the twentieth century: How did life originate on Earth?⁶

The Complex Structure of Life

The primary reason why the theory of evolution ended up in such a big impasse about the origin of life is that even the living organisms deemed the simplest have incredibly complex structures. The cell of a living being is

more complex than all of the technological products produced by man. Today, even in the most developed laboratories of the world, a living cell cannot be produced by bringing inorganic materials together.

The conditions required for the formation of a cell are too great in quantity to be explained away by coincidences. The probability of proteins, the building blocks of cell, being synthesized coincidentally, is 1 in 10^{950} for an average protein made up of 500 amino acids. In mathematics, a probability smaller than 1 over 10^{50} is practically considered to be impossible.

The DNA molecule, which is located in the nucleus of the cell and which stores genetic information, is an incredible databank. It is calculated that if the information coded in DNA were written down, this would make a giant library consisting of 900 volumes of encyclopaedias of 500 pages each.

A very interesting dilemma emerges at this point: the DNA can only replicate with the help of some specialized proteins (enzymes). However, the synthesis of these enzymes can only be realized by the information coded in DNA. As they both depend on each other, they have to exist at the same time for replication. This brings the scenario that life originated by itself to a deadlock. Prof. Leslie Orgel, an evolutionist of repute from the University of San Diego, California, confesses this fact in the September 1994 issue of the *Scientific American* magazine:

It is extremely improbable that proteins and nucleic acids, both of which are structurally complex, arose spontaneously in the same place at the same time. Yet it also seems impossible to have

one without the other. And so, at first glance, one might have to conclude that life could never, in fact, have originated by chemical means. ⁷

No doubt, if it is impossible for life to have originated from natural causes, then it has to be accepted that life was “created” in a supernatural way. This fact explicitly invalidates the theory of evolution, whose main purpose is to deny creation.

Imaginary Mechanisms of Evolution

The second important point that negates Darwin's theory is that both concepts put forward by the theory as “evolutionary mechanisms” were understood to have, in reality, no evolutionary power.

Darwin based his evolution allegation entirely on the mechanism of “natural selection”. The importance he placed on this mechanism was evident in the name of his book: *The Origin of Species, By Means Of Natural Selection...*

Natural selection holds that those living things that are stronger and more suited to the natural conditions of their habitats will survive in the struggle for life. For example, in a deer herd under the threat of attack by wild animals, those that can run faster will survive. Therefore, the deer herd will be comprised of faster and stronger individuals. However, unquestionably, this mechanism will not cause deer to evolve and transform themselves into another living species, for instance, horses.

Therefore, the mechanism of natural selection has no evolutionary power. Darwin was also aware of this fact

and had to state this in his book *The Origin of Species*:

*Natural selection can do nothing until favourable individual differences or variations occur.*⁸

Lamarck's Impact

So, how could these “favourable variations” occur? Darwin tried to answer this question from the standpoint of the primitive understanding of science in his age. According to the French biologist Lamarck, who lived before Darwin, living creatures passed on the traits they acquired during their lifetime to the next generation and these traits, accumulating from one generation to another, caused new species to be formed. For instance, according to Lamarck, giraffes evolved from antelopes; as they struggled to eat the leaves of high trees, their necks were extended from generation to generation.

Darwin also gave similar examples, and in his book *The Origin of Species*, for instance, said that some bears going into water to find food transformed themselves into whales over time.⁹

However, the laws of inheritance discovered by Mendel and verified by the science of genetics that flourished in the twentieth century, utterly demolished the legend that acquired traits were passed on to subsequent generations. Thus, natural selection fell out of favour as an evolutionary mechanism.

Neo-Darwinism and Mutations

In order to find a solution, Darwinists advanced the “Modern Synthetic Theory”, or as it is more commonly

known, Neo-Darwinism, at the end of the 1930's. Neo-Darwinism added mutations, which are distortions formed in the genes of living beings because of external factors such as radiation or replication errors, as the "cause of favourable variations" in addition to natural mutation.

Today, the model that stands for evolution in the world is Neo-Darwinism. The theory maintains that millions of living beings present on the earth formed as a result of a process whereby numerous complex organs of these organisms such as the ears, eyes, lungs, and wings, underwent "mutations," that is, genetic disorders. Yet, there is an outright scientific fact that totally undermines this theory: Mutations do not cause living beings to develop; on the contrary, they always cause harm to them.

The reason for this is very simple: the DNA has a very complex structure and random effects can only cause harm to it. American geneticist B.G. Ranganathan explains this as follows:

First, genuine mutations are very rare in nature. Secondly, most mutations are harmful since they are random, rather than orderly changes in the structure of genes; any random change in a highly ordered system will be for the worse, not for the better. For example, if an earthquake were to shake a highly ordered structure such as a building, there would be a random change in the framework of the building which, in all probability, would not be an improvement.¹⁰

Not surprisingly, no mutation example, which is useful, that is, which is observed to develop the genetic code, has been observed so far. All mutations have proved to be

harmful. It was understood that mutation, which is presented as an “evolutionary mechanism,” is actually a genetic occurrence that harms living beings, and leaves them disabled. (The most common effect of mutation on human beings is cancer). No doubt, a destructive mechanism cannot be an “evolutionary mechanism.” Natural selection, on the other hand, “can do nothing by itself” as Darwin also accepted. This fact shows us that there is no “evolutionary mechanism” in nature. Since no evolutionary mechanism exists, neither could any imaginary process called evolution have taken place.

The Fossil Record: No Sign of Intermediate Forms

The clearest evidence that the scenario suggested by the theory of evolution did not take place is the fossil record.

According to the theory of evolution, every living species has sprung from a predecessor. A previously existing species turned into something else in time and all species have come into being in this way. According to the theory, this transformation proceeds gradually over millions of years.

Had this been the case, then numerous intermediary species should have existed and lived within this long transformation period.

For instance, some half-fish/half-reptiles should have lived in the past which had acquired some reptilian traits in addition to the fish traits they already had. Or there should have existed some reptile-birds, which acquired

some bird traits in addition to the reptilian traits they already had. Since these would be in a transitional phase, they should be disabled, defective, crippled living beings. Evolutionists refer to these imaginary creatures, which they believe to have lived in the past, as “transitional forms.”

If such animals had really existed, there should be millions and even billions of them in number and variety. More importantly, the remains of these strange creatures should be present in the fossil record. In *The Origin of Species*, Darwin explained:

*If my theory be true, numberless intermediate varieties, linking most closely all of the species of the same group together must assuredly have existed... Consequently, evidence of their former existence could be found only amongst fossil remains.*¹¹

Darwin's Hopes Shattered

However, although evolutionists have been making strenuous efforts to find fossils since the middle of the 19th century all over the world, no transitional forms have yet been uncovered. All the fossils unearthed in excavations showed that, contrary to the expectations of evolutionists, life appeared on earth all of a sudden and fully-formed.

A famous British paleontologist, Derek V. Ager, admits this fact, even though he is an evolutionist:

*The point emerges that if we examine the fossil record in detail, whether at the level of orders or of species, we find—over and over again—not gradual evolution, but the sudden explosion of one group at the expense of another.*¹²

This means that in the fossil record, all living species suddenly emerge as fully formed, without any intermediate forms in between. This is just the opposite of Darwin's assumptions. Also, it is very strong evidence that living beings are created. The only explanation of a living species emerging suddenly and complete in every detail without any evolutionary ancestor can be that this species was created. This fact is admitted also by the widely known evolutionist biologist Douglas Futuyma:

Creation and evolution, between them, exhaust the possible explanations for the origin of living things. Organisms either appeared on the earth fully developed or they did not. If they did not, they must have developed from pre-existing species by some process of modification. If they did appear in a fully developed state, they must indeed have been created by some omnipotent intelligence.¹³

Fossils show that living beings emerged fully developed and in a perfect state on the earth. That means that "the origin of species" is, contrary to Darwin's supposition, not evolution but creation.

The Tale of Human Evolution

The subject most often brought up by the advocates of the theory of evolution is the subject of the origin of man. The Darwinist claim holds that the modern men of today evolved from some kind of ape-like creatures. During this alleged evolutionary process, which is supposed to have started 4-5 million years ago, it is claimed that there existed some "transitional forms" between modern man and his ancestors. According to this completely imagi-

nary scenario, four basic “categories” are listed:

1. *Australopithecus*
2. *Homo habilis*
3. *Homo erectus*
4. *Homo sapiens*

Evolutionists call the so-called first ape-like ancestors of men “*Australopithecus*” which means “South African ape.” These living beings are actually nothing but an old ape species that has become extinct. Extensive research done on various *Australopithecus* specimens by two world famous anatomists from England and the USA, namely, Lord Solly Zuckerman and Prof. Charles Oxnard, has shown that these belonged to an ordinary ape species that became extinct and bore no resemblance to humans.¹⁴

Evolutionists classify the next stage of human evolution as “homo,” that is “man.” According to the evolutionist claim, the living beings in the *Homo* series are more developed than *Australopithecus*. Evolutionists devise a fanciful evolution scheme by arranging different fossils of these creatures in a particular order. This scheme is imaginary because it has never been proved that there is an evolutionary relation between these different classes. Ernst Mayr, one of the most important proponents of the theory of evolution in the 20th century, contends in his book *One Long Argument* that “particularly historical [puzzles] such as the origin of life or of *Homo sapiens*, are extremely difficult and may even resist a final, satisfying explanation.”¹⁵

By outlining the link chain as “*Australopithecus* > *Homo habilis* > *Homo erectus* > *Homo sapiens*,” evolutionists

imply that each of these species is one another's ancestor. However, recent findings of paleoanthropologists have revealed that Australopithecus, Homo habilis and Homo erectus lived at different parts of the world at the same time.¹⁶

Moreover, a certain segment of humans classified as Homo erectus have lived up until very modern times. Homo sapiens neandarthalensis and Homo sapiens sapiens (modern man) co-existed in the same region.¹⁷

This situation apparently indicates the invalidity of the claim that they are ancestors of one another. A paleontologist from Harvard University, Stephen Jay Gould, explains this deadlock of the theory of evolution although he is an evolutionist himself:

*What has become of our ladder if there are three coexisting lineages of hominids (A. africanus, the robust australopithecines, and H. habilis), none clearly derived from another? Moreover, none of the three display any evolutionary trends during their tenure on earth.*¹⁸

Put briefly, the scenario of human evolution, which is sought to be upheld with the help of various drawings of some "half ape, half human" creatures appearing in the media and course books, that is, frankly, by means of propaganda, is nothing but a tale with no scientific ground.

Lord Solly Zuckerman, one of the most famous and respected scientists in the U.K., who carried out research on this subject for years, and particularly studied Australopithecus fossils for 15 years, finally concluded, despite being an evolutionist himself, that there is, in fact,

no such family tree branching out from ape-like creatures to man.

Zuckerman also made an interesting “spectrum of science.” He formed a spectrum of sciences ranging from those he considered scientific to those he considered unscientific. According to Zuckerman's spectrum, the most “scientific”—that is, depending on concrete data—fields of science are chemistry and physics. After them come the biological sciences and then the social sciences. At the far end of the spectrum, which is the part considered to be most “unscientific,” are “extra-sensory perception”—concepts such as telepathy and sixth sense—and finally “human evolution.” Zuckerman explains his reasoning:

We then move right off the register of objective truth into those fields of presumed biological science, like extrasensory perception or the interpretation of man's fossil history, where to the faithful [evolutionist] anything is possible—and where the ardent believer [in evolution] is sometimes able to believe several contradictory things at the same time.¹⁹

The tale of human evolution boils down to nothing but the prejudiced interpretations of some fossils unearthed by certain people, who blindly adhere to their theory.

Technology In The Eye and The Ear

Another subject that remains unanswered by evolutionary theory is the excellent quality of perception in the eye and the ear.

Before passing on to the subject of the eye, let us briefly answer the question of “how we see”. Light rays coming from an object fall oppositely on the retina of the

eye. Here, these light rays are transmitted into electric signals by cells and they reach a tiny spot at the back of the brain called the centre of vision. These electric signals are perceived in this centre of the brain as an image after a series of processes. With this technical background, let us do some thinking.

The brain is insulated from light. That means that the inside of the brain is solid dark, and light does not reach the location where the brain is situated. The place called the centre of vision is a solid dark place where no light ever reaches; it may even be the darkest place you have ever known. However, you observe a luminous, bright world in this pitch darkness.

The image formed in the eye is so sharp and distinct that even the technology of the twentieth century has not been able to attain it. For instance, look at the book you read, your hands with which you hold it, then lift your head and look around you. Have you ever seen such a sharp and distinct image as this one at any other place? Even the most developed television screen produced by the greatest television producer in the world cannot provide such a sharp image for you. This is a three-dimensional, coloured, and extremely sharp image. For more than 100 years, thousands of engineers have been trying to achieve this sharpness. Factories, huge premises were established, much research has been done, plans and designs have been made for this purpose. Again, look at a TV screen and the book you hold in your hands. You will see that there is a big difference in sharpness and distinction. Moreover, the TV screen shows you a two-dimen-

sional image, whereas with your eyes, you watch a three-dimensional perspective having depth.

For many years, tens of thousands of engineers have tried to make a three-dimensional TV, and reach the vision quality of the eye. Yes, they have made a three-dimensional television system but it is not possible to watch it without putting on glasses; moreover, it is only an artificial three-dimension. The background is more blurred, the foreground appears like a paper setting. Never has it been possible to produce a sharp and distinct vision like that of the eye. In both the camera and the television, there is a loss of image quality.

Evolutionists claim that the mechanism producing this sharp and distinct image has been formed by chance. Now, if somebody told you that the television in your room was formed as a result of chance, that all its atoms just happened to come together and make up this device that produces an image, what would you think? How can atoms do what thousands of people cannot?

If a device producing a more primitive image than the eye could not have been formed by chance, then it is very evident that the eye and the image seen by the eye could not have been formed by chance. The same situation applies to the ear. The outer ear picks up the available sounds by the auricle and directs them to the middle ear; the middle ear transmits the sound vibrations by intensifying them; the inner ear sends these vibrations to the brain by translating them into electric signals. Just as with the eye, the act of hearing finalises in the centre of hearing in the brain.

The situation in the eye is also true for the ear. That is, the brain is insulated from sound just like it is from light: it does not let any sound in. Therefore, no matter how noisy is the outside, the inside of the brain is completely silent. Nevertheless, the sharpest sounds are perceived in the brain. In your brain, which is insulated from sound, you listen to the symphonies of an orchestra, and hear all the noises in a crowded place. However, if the sound level in your brain was measured by a precise device at that moment, it would be seen that a complete silence is prevailing there.

As is the case with imagery, decades of effort have been spent in trying to generate and reproduce sound that is faithful to the original. The results of these efforts are sound recorders, high-fidelity systems, and systems for sensing sound. Despite all this technology and the thousands of engineers and experts who have been working on this endeavour, no sound has yet been obtained that has the same sharpness and clarity as the sound perceived by the ear. Think of the highest-quality HI-FI systems produced by the biggest company in the music industry. Even in these devices, when sound is recorded some of it is lost; or when you turn on a HI-FI you always hear a hissing sound before the music starts. However, the sounds that are the products of the technology of the human body are extremely sharp and clear. A human ear never perceives a sound accompanied by a hissing sound or with atmospherics as does HI-FI; it perceives sound exactly as it is, sharp and clear. This is the way it has been since the creation of man.

So far, no visual or recording apparatus produced by man has been as sensitive and successful in perceiving sensory data as are the eye and the ear.

However, as far as seeing and hearing are concerned, a far greater fact lies beyond all this.

To Whom Does the Consciousness that Sees and Hears Within the Brain Belong?

Who is it that watches an alluring world in its brain, listens to symphonies and the twittering of birds, and smells the rose?

The stimulations coming from the eyes, ears, and nose of a human being travel to the brain as electro-chemical nervous impulses. In biology, physiology, and biochemistry books, you can find many details about how this image forms in the brain. However, you will never come across the most important fact about this subject: Who is it that perceives these electro-chemical nervous impulses as images, sounds, odours and sensory events in the brain? There is a consciousness in the brain that perceives all this without feeling any need for eye, ear, and nose. To whom does this consciousness belong? There is no doubt that this consciousness does not belong to the nerves, the fat layer and neurons comprising the brain. This is why Darwinist-materialists, who believe that everything is comprised of matter, cannot give any answer to these questions.

For this consciousness is the spirit created by Allah. The spirit needs neither the eye to watch the images, nor the ear to hear the sounds. Furthermore, nor does it need

the brain to think.

Everyone who reads this explicit and scientific fact should ponder on Almighty Allah, should fear Him and seek refuge in Him, He Who squeezes the entire universe in a pitch-dark place of a few cubic centimetres in a three-dimensional, coloured, shadowy, and luminous form.

A Materialist Faith

The information we have presented so far shows us that the theory of evolution is a claim evidently at variance with scientific findings. The theory's claim on the origin of life is inconsistent with science, the evolutionary mechanisms it proposes have no evolutionary power, and fossils demonstrate that the intermediate forms required by the theory never existed. So, it certainly follows that the theory of evolution should be pushed aside as an unscientific idea. This is how many ideas such as the earth-centered universe model have been taken out of the agenda of science throughout history.

However, the theory of evolution is pressingly kept on the agenda of science. Some people even try to represent criticisms directed against the theory as an "attack on science." Why?

The reason is that the theory of evolution is an indispensable dogmatic belief for some circles. These circles are blindly devoted to materialist philosophy and adopt Darwinism because it is the only materialist explanation that can be put forward for the workings of nature.

Interestingly enough, they also confess this fact from time to time. A well known geneticist and an outspoken

evolutionist, Richard C. Lewontin from Harvard University, confesses that he is “first and foremost a materialist and then a scientist”:

It is not that the methods and institutions of science somehow compel us accept a material explanation of the phenomenal world, but, on the contrary, that we are forced by our a priori adherence to material causes to create an apparatus of investigation and a set of concepts that produce material explanations, no matter how counter-intuitive, no matter how mystifying to the uninitiated. Moreover, that materialism is absolute, so we cannot allow a Divine Foot in the door. ²⁰

These are explicit statements that Darwinism is a dogma kept alive just for the sake of adherence to the materialist philosophy. This dogma maintains that there is no being save matter. Therefore, it argues that inanimate, unconscious matter created life. It insists that millions of different living species; for instance, birds, fish, giraffes, tigers, insects, trees, flowers, whales and human beings originated as a result of the interactions between matter such as the pouring rain, the lightning flash, etc., out of inanimate matter. This is a precept contrary both to reason and science. Yet Darwinists continue to defend it just so as “not to allow a Divine Foot in the door.”

Anyone who does not look at the origin of living beings with a materialist prejudice will see this evident truth: All living beings are works of a Creator, Who is All-Powerful, All-Wise and All-Knowing. This Creator is Allah, Who created the whole universe from non-existence, designed it in the most perfect form, and fashioned all living beings.

The Theory of Evolution is the Most Potent Spell in the World

It needs to be made clear that anyone free of prejudice and the influence of any particular ideology, who uses only his reason and logic, will clearly understand that belief in the theory of evolution, which brings to mind the superstitions of societies with no knowledge of science or civilization, is quite impossible.

As has been explained above, those who believe in the theory of evolution think that a few atoms and molecules thrown into a huge vat could produce thinking, reasoning professors, university students, scientists such as Einstein and Galileo, artists such as Humphrey Bogart, Frank Sinatra and Pavarotti, as well as antelopes, lemon trees and carnations. Moreover, the scientists and professors who believe in this nonsense are educated people. That is why it is quite justifiable to speak of the theory of evolution as "the most potent spell in history." Never before has any other belief or idea so taken away peoples' powers of reason, refused to allow them to think intelligently and logically and hidden the truth from them as if they had been blindfolded. This is an even worse and unbelievable blindness than the Egyptians worshipping the Sun God Ra, totem worship in some parts of Africa, the people of Saba worshipping the Sun, the tribe of the Prophet Ibrahim worshipping idols they had made with their own hands or the people of the Prophet Musa worshipping the Golden Calf.

In fact, this situation is a lack of reason pointed to by Allah in the Qur'an. He reveals in many verses that some

peoples' minds will be closed and that they will be powerless to see the truth. Some of these verses are as follows:

As for those who disbelieve, it makes no difference to them whether you warn them or do not warn them, they will not believe. Allah has sealed up their hearts and hearing and over their eyes is a blindfold. They will have a terrible punishment. (Surat al-Baqara: 6-7)

...They have hearts they do not understand with. They have eyes they do not see with. They have ears they do not hear with. Such people are like cattle. No, they are even further astray! They are the unaware. (Surat al-A'raf: 179)

Even if We opened up to them a door into heaven, and they spent the day ascending through it, they would only say, "Our eyesight is befuddled! Or rather we have been put under a spell!" (Surat al-Hijr: 14-15)

Words cannot express just how astonishing it is that this spell should hold such a wide community in thrall, keep people from the truth, and not be broken for 150 years. It is understandable that one or a few people might believe in impossible scenarios and claims full of stupidity and illogicality. However, "magic" is the only possible explanation for people from all over the world believing that unconscious and lifeless atoms suddenly decided to come together and form a universe that functions with a flawless system of organization, discipline, reason and consciousness, the planet Earth with all its features so perfectly suited to life, and living things full of countless

complex systems.

In fact, Allah reveals in the Qur'an in the incident of the Prophet Musa (as) and Pharaoh that some people who support atheistic philosophies actually influence others by magic. When Pharaoh was told about the true religion, he told Musa (as) to meet with his own magicians. When Musa (as) did so, he told them to demonstrate their abilities first. The verses continue:

He said, "You throw." And when they threw, they cast a spell on the people's eyes and caused them to feel great fear of them. They produced an extremely powerful magic. (Surat al-A'raf: 116)

As we have seen, Pharaoh's magicians were able to deceive everyone, apart from Musa (as) and those who believed in him. However, the evidence put forward by Musa (as) broke that spell, or "swallowed up what they had forged" as the verse puts it.

We revealed to Musa, "Throw down your staff." And it immediately swallowed up what they had forged. So the Truth took place and what they did was shown to be false. (Surat al-A'raf: 117-119)

As we can see from that verse, when it was realised that what these people who had first cast a spell over others had done was just an illusion, they lost all credibility. In the present day too, unless those who under the influence of a similar spell believe in these ridiculous claims under their scientific disguise and spend their lives defending them abandon them, they too will be humiliated when the full truth emerges and the spell is broken. In fact, Malcolm Muggeridge, an atheist philosopher and

supporter of evolution admitted he was worried by just that prospect:

I myself am convinced that the theory of evolution, especially the extent to which it's been applied, will be one of the great jokes in the history books in the future. Posterity will marvel that so very flimsy and dubious an hypothesis could be accepted with the incredible credulity that it has.²¹

That future is not far off: On the contrary, people will soon see that “chance” is not a god, and will look back on the theory of evolution as the worst deceit and the most terrible spell in the world. That spell is already rapidly beginning to be lifted from the shoulders of people all over the world. Many people who see the true face of the theory of evolution are wondering with amazement how it was that they were ever taken in by it.

***They said, “Glory be to You! We have no
knowledge except what You have taught us.
You are the All-Knowing, the All-Wise.”
(Surat al-Baqara: 32)***

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Also by Harun Yahya

