



HARUN YAHYA

FAITH: the WAY to HAPPINESS

Those who believe and have done their duty,
there is good news for them in the life of this world and
in the Hereafter. There is no changing the words of
Allah. That is the great victory!

(Qur'an, 10:63-64)

In present day life almost all people complain because they have been totally unable to achieve true peace and because despite their efforts and their attempts at happiness, they are not happy at all.

The reason why people end up in such a predicament is because they try to find happiness in the wrong places and with the wrong people.

For some, happiness is the material wealth they obtain, being able to spend their money as they like, buy whatever they want and consume more and more each day. For some, happiness is being known and admired, someone whose favor or company is sought by everyone. Such people want to be admired and imitated in everything they do. For others, happiness is escape even for a short time from the troublesome and monotonous life they lead and its problems. However, the happiness achieved by all these people is false and fleeting. Achieving everything they want and reaching targets still do not change the end result: a melancholy life filled with unhappiness and the troubles it brings with it... except for the true believers, who seek Allah's approval and are aware that their true abode is in the Hereafter.

In this book we explain what the source of true happiness is and where and under what conditions it is possible to be truly happy and at peace in the light of the verses of the Qur'an.

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 political, faith-related and scientific issues. Greatly appreciated all around the world, these works have been instrumental in helping many to return their faith in Allah, and, in many others, to gain a deeper insight into their faith.

Harun Yahya's books appeal to all kinds of readers, regardless of their age, race, or nationality, for they focus on one objective: to broaden the reader's perspective by encouraging him or her to think about a number of critical issues, such as the existence of Allah and His unity, and to live by the values He prescribed for them.

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ



Published by

GLOBAL PUBLISHING

Talatpasa Mah. Emir Gazi Cad.
Ibrahim Elmas Ismerkezi A. Blok Kat 4
Okmeydani-Istanbul/Turkey
Phone: (+90 212) 222 00 88

By Harun Yahya

Translated by Keith Dearn

Edited by Uthman Ibrahim Morrison

Printed and bound by Secil Ofset in Istanbul
100 Yil Mah. MAS-SIT Matbaacilar Sitesi 4. Cadde No: 77
Bagcilar-Istanbul/Turkey
Phone: (+90 212) 629 06 15

All translations from the Qur'an are from *The Noble Qur'an: a New Rendering of its Meaning in English* by Hajj Abdalhaqq and Aisha Bewley, published by Bookwork, Norwich, UK. 1420 CE/1999 AH.

Abbreviations used:

(*saws-sall-Allahu 'alyahi wa sallam*) May Allah bless him and grant him peace (following a reference to Prophet Muhammad)
(*as-'alayhi's-salam*) Peace be upon him (following a reference to the prophets or angels)

w w w . h a r u n y a h y a . c o m

FAITH: THE WAY TO HAPPINESS

*Those who believe and have done their duty,
there is good news for them in the life of this
world and in the Hereafter. There is no changing
the words of Allah. That is the great victory!
(Qur'an, 10:63-64)*

HARUN YAHYA

June, 2005

TO THE READER

A special chapter is assigned to the collapse of the theory of evolution because this theory constitutes the basis of all anti-spiritual philosophies. Since Darwinism rejects the fact of creation—and therefore, Allah's Existence—over the last 140 years it has caused many people to abandon their faith or fall into doubt. It is therefore an imperative service, a very important duty to show everyone that this theory is a deception. Since some readers may find the chance to read only one of our book, we think it appropriate to devote a chapter to summarize this subject.

All the author's books explain faith-related issues in light of Qur'anic verses, and invite readers to learn Allah's words and to live by them. All the subjects concerning Allah's verses are explained so as to leave no doubt or room for questions in the reader's mind. The books' sincere, plain, and fluent style ensures that everyone of every age and from every social group can easily understand them. Thanks to their effective, lucid narrative, they can be read at one sitting. Even those who rigorously reject spirituality are influenced by the facts these books document and cannot refute the truthfulness of their contents.

This and all the other books by the author can be read individually, or discussed in a group. Readers eager to profit from the books will find discussion very useful, letting them relate their reflections and experiences to one another.

In addition, it will be a great service to Islam to contribute to the publication and reading of these books, written solely for the pleasure of Allah. The author's books are all extremely convincing. For this reason, to communicate true religion to others, one of the most effective methods is encouraging them to read these books.

We hope the reader will look through the reviews of his other books at the back of this book. His rich source material on faith-related issues is very useful, and a pleasure to read.

In these books, unlike some other books, you will not find the author's personal views, explanations based on dubious sources, styles that are unobscure of the respect and reverence due to sacred subjects, nor hopeless, pessimistic arguments that create doubts in the mind and deviations in the heart.

FAITH: THE WAY TO HAPPINESS

*Those who believe and have done their duty,
there is good news for them in the life of this
world and in the Hereafter. There is no changing
the words of Allah. That is the great victory!*

(Qur'an, 10:63-64)

HARUN YAHYA

June, 2005

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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

His penname is a composite of the names *Harun* (Aaron) and *Yahya* (John), in memory of the two esteemed Prophets who fought against their people's lack of faith. The Prophet's seal on his books' covers is symbolic and is linked to their contents. It represents the Qur'an (the final Scripture) and Prophet Muhammad (saws), last of the prophets. Under the guidance of the Qur'an and the Sunnah (teachings of the Prophet), the author makes it his purpose to disprove each fundamental tenet of godless ideologies and to have the "last word," so as to completely silence the objections raised against religion. He uses the seal of the final Prophet, who attained ultimate wisdom and moral perfection, as a sign of his intention to offer the last word.

All of Harun Yahya's works share one single goal: to convey the Qur'an's message, encourage readers to consider basic faith-related issues such as Allah's Existence and Unity and the Hereafter; and to expose godless systems' feeble foundations and perverted ideologies.

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, Uyгур Turkish, and Indonesian.

Greatly appreciated all around the world, these works have been instrumental in many people recovering faith in Allah and gaining deeper insights into their faith. His books' wisdom and sincerity, together with a distinct style that's easy to understand, directly affect anyone who reads them. Those who seriously consider these books, can no longer advocate atheism or any other perverted ideology or materialistic philosophy, since these books are characterized by rapid effectiveness, definite results, and irrefutability. Even if they continue to do so, it will be only a sentimental insistence, since these books refute such ideologies from their very foundations. All contemporary movements of denial are now ideologically defeated, thanks to the books written by Harun Yahya.

This is no doubt a result of the Qur'an's wisdom and lucidity. 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.

Those who encourage others to read these books, to open their minds and hearts and guide them to become more devoted servants of Allah, render an invaluable service.

Meanwhile, it would only be a waste of time and energy to propagate other books that create confusion in people's minds, lead them

into ideological chaos, and that clearly have no strong and precise effects in removing the doubts in people's hearts, as also verified from previous experience. 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 Qur'an's moral values. The success and impact of this service are manifested in the readers' conviction.

One point should be kept in mind: The main reason for the continuing cruelty, conflict, and other ordeals endured by the vast majority of people is the ideological prevalence of disbelief. This can be ended only 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, leading into a downward spiral of violence, corruption and conflict, clearly this service must be provided speedily and effectively, or it may be too late.

In this effort, the books of Harun Yahya assume a leading role. By the will of Allah, these books will be a means through which people in the twentyfirst century will attain the peace, justice, and happiness promised in the Qur'an.

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	10
THE UNHAPPINESS OF THE SOCIETY OF THE IGNORANT	14
SATAN, THE VOICE OF MISERY	52
THE SECRET OF HAPPINESS: ALLAH'S GOOD PLEASURE .	64
PERPETUAL HAPPINESS BELONGS TO BELIEVERS	71
THE HAPPIEST PEOPLE: THE PROPHETS	79
THE HAPPINESS AND BLESSINGS BROUGHT BY FAITH .	87
PARADISE, THE PLACE OF ENDLESS HAPPINESS	101
CONCLUSION	107
THE DECEPTION OF EVOLUTION	110

INTRODUCTION

During their lives, people have a variety of targets and plans they would like to fulfill. Although apparently different at first glance, these targets coincide at a basic level. At the basic level people wish to lead their lives in happiness and tranquility by obtaining as many advantages as they can; the happiness and comfort they enjoy being proportionate to the size of the advantages they obtain. In this sense, everyone aims to reach this common goal, following different paths and using different methods, and expending throughout their lives a great deal of effort in pursuit of this purpose. However, achieving everything they want and reaching targets still do not change the end result: a melancholy life filled with unhappiness and the troubles it brings with it... except for the true believers, who seek Allah's approval and are aware that their true abode is in the Hereafter.

In present day life a large number of people complain because they have been totally unable to achieve true peace and because despite their efforts and their attempts at happiness, they are not happy at all. The reason why people end up in such a predicament is because they try to find happiness in the wrong places and with the wrong people. For some, happiness is the material wealth they obtain, being able to spend their money as they like, buy whatever they want and consume more and more each day. For people like

this, consumption, experiencing every beauty and pleasure, is the greatest source of happiness in their lives. Such desires are like a bottomless well—they never come to an end. Because of their desires people emerge who are never satisfied with anything they obtain, who always want more and better and who believe that they will be able to live happier lives if they acquire more things, and better things. However, these efforts only gain them a temporary happiness.

The Qur'an states:

On the Day when those who disbelieved are exposed to the Fire: "You dissipated the good things you had in your worldly life and enjoyed yourself in it. So today you are being repaid with the punishment of humiliation for being arrogant in the Earth without any right and for being deviators." (Surat al-Ahqaf: 20)

In this verse Allah tells us that false happiness such as this which has been gained in the life of this world with greed and ingratitude, will become endless misery in the Hereafter.

For some, happiness is being known and admired, someone whose favor or company is sought by everyone. Such people want to be admired and imitated in everything they do. They are happy so long as they succeed in this, and manage to ingratiate themselves with others and remain the center of attention.

For others, happiness is escape even for a short time from the troublesome and monotonous life they lead and its problems. In order to be happy, they have to make a string of changes to their lives. They have to be unusual, dress differently, lead a "fringe" existence and try everything that is different. Or they have to see and explore different places and get to know new people. People such as

these derive great pleasure from being regarded as different and enjoy the attention they attract as a result of this. They believe that by acting in this way they will make their lives more colorful and protect themselves against the unhappiness they feel. To sum up, for people of this kind happiness means "change" or "being different."

However, the happiness achieved by all these people is false and fleeting. It only exists in the moment and when the moment is over the happiness they feel passes with it and the person again returns to his troubled and monotonous life. Nothing has changed; the person has been comforted only for a short time. Since these people do not know the secret of happiness, the end they come to, whether a day, a month or a year later, is invariably the same. We are told of the situation of such people who, during their lives, forget Allah and the Hereafter and live entirely according to their own desires and passions:

Their likeness is that of people who light a fire, and then when it has lit up all around them, Allah removes their light and leaves them in darkness, unable to see. (Surat al-Baqara: 17)

Allah tells us that people who distance themselves from His guidance, He "... leaves them in darkness, unable to see." People who do not submit to the commands of Allah Who created them and live forgetful of our Lord will, because of this, find themselves frustrated by Allah at every turn in their efforts to achieve happiness. Our Prophet (saws) has pointed out that gains in this world are temporary and that true gain means directing oneself towards the Hereafter:

"People! The world is a good given in advance. Both the good and evil takes its share from it. The Hereafter is, on the other hand, a de

Introduction

voted promise. There, the Malik, Who has power over all things, rules. The just always prevails and the unjust vanishes. People! Be the sons of the Hereafter, avoid being the servants of this world. The son is subject to his mother. (In other words, if you become a son of this world, you will deserve to be ruined like the world) Have fear in Allah while engaging in your deeds. Be aware that your deeds will encounter you. And again you will definitely meet Allah. Whoever does an atom's weight of good will see it and whoever does an atom's weight of evil will see it." (Ahmad Diya'al-Din al-Kamushkhanawi, Ramuz al-Ahadith, vol.1, 184/ 4)

In this book we will explain what the source of true happiness is and where and under what conditions it is possible to be truly happy and at peace in the light of the verses of the Qur'an.

However, let us first briefly examine the reasons why people who live in denial of the truths revealed by Allah in the Qur'an, who we will refer to as "the society of the ignorant," are continually troubled and unhappy.

THE UNHAPPINESS OF THE SOCIETY OF THE IGNORANT

The Life of This World Deceives Them

To provide a basis for their lack of faith, unbelievers use errant logic, saying, "Only this world exists—there is no Hereafter." In the light of this idea of theirs, they think they can do as they like in this world. However, Allah has told us that He will subject everybody to an inquiry into what they have done during their lives in this world on the Day of Judgment:

They say, "There is nothing but this life and we will not be raised again." If only you could see when they are standing before their Lord. He will say, "Is this not the Truth?" They will say, "Yes indeed, by our Lord!" He will say, "Then taste the punishment for your disbelief." (Surat al-An'am: 29-30)

But as Allah has pointed out, disbelievers ignore this truth and base their lives solely on what they can obtain for themselves in this world. Since they believe that in this world the advantage is always with the strong, they also think that for a happy and peaceful life they must definitely be strong in material terms. They believe this material strength can bring them everything they want. In fact, Allah created the life of this world as a testing ground for people. So in the life of this world everything may not come about as people

wish, as Allah has pointed out in the verse, "**Shall man then have whatever he covets?**" (Surat an-Najm: 24) People may at times fail to achieve something they want very much or something may happen suddenly which costs them everything they have gained.

Now consider a society in which all the people think in this way. In such an atmosphere, people can give one another nothing but unhappiness and trouble. Since everybody is just pursuing his own advantage, they cannot display moral excellence to one another or live together in harmony. They continually struggle against one another because they work for their own advantage at every opportunity. Allah says in the Qur'an:

... You consider them united but their hearts are scattered wide. That is because they are people who do not use their intellect. (Surat al-Hashr: 14)

Allah makes us aware that there can be no friendship amongst these people and, "**their hearts are scattered wide**" due to their clashes over individual advantage. As Allah tells us in the verse, the reason for this is that such people do not use their intellect. What is it then that these people fail to apply their intellect to? Allah answers that question in this verse:

The life of this world is nothing but a game and a diversion. The Hereafter is better for those who guard against evil. So will you not use your intellect? (Surat al-An'am: 32)

Allah has told us that the life of this world is a diversion and that true life will be lived in the next world. This is what unbelievers do not exercise their intellect about. These people do not even come close to accepting that their true abode is in the Hereafter. As a consequence, they enter into a struggle for gain in the life of this world, which they believe to be the true life, and because of this rivalry they constantly harm one another and make one another unhappy.

Allah has told us that the life of this world is "a game and a diversion." The fact that the unbelievers pursue every undertaking according to the dictates of their personal priorities instead of striving to earn the approval of Allah, makes all their efforts meaningless and valueless, just like a game. What they do and what they earn are very important for such people, but in reality what they do has no meaning whatsoever in the real sense because they do not do it with Allah's approval in mind. As a result, all of the energy they expend amounts to no more than a useless waste of time. In Allah's sight, however, only actions carried out with the sincere desire to gain His approval have value.

What makes something valuable is not the effort made to obtain it or the power or money used in doing so, it is only the consideration throughout of Allah's approval. For example, if a businessman has achieved great successes during his career, has made important investments and has even made himself world famous, there can be no question of what he has done having any value in the real sense if he did not do it to earn Allah's approval. The value of anything is bound up with whether or not it is pleasing to Allah and whether or not it is used in order to gain His approval. In other words, what a person does is not important. What is important is his motive for doing it. How much he spends is not important. What is important is his motive for spending it. Allah informs us that the important thing in worship is the intention of the worshipper:

... Their [the sacrificial animals'] flesh and blood does not reach Allah but your heedfulness does reach Him... (Surat al-Hajj: 37)

Only the task which is performed for His approval has validity and value in Allah's sight. No matter how important the tasks in

question, because ignorant people do not take Allah's pleasure as their main aim, all the effort they make is to no avail. Allah describes this situation in a verse of the Qur'an:

People whose efforts in the life of this world are misguided while they suppose that they are doing good. (Surat al-Kahf: 104)

They waste the opportunities given to them by Allah on empty and harmful things, since they are not motivated by the desire to earn Allah's good pleasure. People who are bound to their worldly goods live in constant fear of losing what they possess. Knowing that at any moment a completely unexpected occurrence may make them suffer loss and deprive them of what they possess makes them extremely uncomfortable. Consequently, no matter what good things they do or what benefits they gain for themselves, the fear of loss within them makes them continually unhappy and troubled.

Unbelievers are not aware of the real value of what they own or of the purpose for which it has been given to them. So, instead of using their opportunities for good works which will earn Allah's approval, they simply waste themselves thoughtlessly by taking the life of this world as their yardstick. For instance, by gambling they may in a single instant lose all their property, even their honor. Or, they may try to enrich themselves further by immoral means. However, they should not forget that the result of every mistaken or immoral act will ultimately be disappointment. By such means as these Allah shows people that those who do not meet with His approval will suffer harm and that for them everything in the life of this world may be a source of trouble and sorrow. The reason people who do not believe in the Hereafter experience such trouble and stress is that they set their faces against the religion of Allah and attach themselves passionately to the life of this world.

Everything They Do Is the Result of a Passion for "Diversion"

As is explained in the previous section, anybody who lives without taking Allah's approval as his aim makes life nothing but a deception. Thus, instead of making the eternal Hereafter their basic target and working towards it, such people stick to the short term passions and pleasures of the world.

In the life of this world, people who are heedless of reality involve themselves in various things which prevent them from earning Allah's approval and make them forgetful of Allah. In fact, all these things are blessings sent by Allah for the purpose of testing people, but these people turn them into pursuits in which to waste their time and to which they are passionately attached. In the Qur'an, Allah tells us which of His blessings have become a passion for people:

To mankind the love of worldly appetites is painted in glowing colors: women and children, and heaped-up mounds of gold and silver, and horses with fine markings, and livestock and fertile farmland. All that is merely the enjoyment of the life of this world. The best homecoming is in the presence of Allah. (Surah Al 'Imran: 14)

Since some people have adopted as their main aim not the approval of Allah but various worldly objectives, they become passionately attached to their earthly privileges. With every passing day, these drive them further from Allah and bind them even more tightly to the life of this world. They waste their time on vain things without considering the short span of life Allah has granted them on earth, for they are not engaged in striving for Allah's approval and do not imagine that they will have to give an accounting in the Hereafter.

For example, a person with nothing to do looks out of his window all day and watches people passing by, thumbs through magazines he has already read over and over again, gossips about the neighbors, watches trivial television programs or wastes his time with internet or computer games, or occupies his mind with his own insignificant issues or those of other people. Instead of using his precious time to gain the approval of Allah, he wastes it on meaningless things which are of no use to himself or those around him. When asked, he may say that he has nothing to do and that he does these things to pass the time or that he enjoys them but at bottom he knows that his life has already become nothing more than an endless diversion.

What should not be forgotten is that all the pastimes of worldly life are tests created for people by Allah. The situation of people who cannot see things from this point of view is, however, quite different. For such a person, the blessings of the world become preoccupations which prevent him from the pursuit of Allah's pleasure, increase his devotion to seeking earthly satisfactions, resulting in a waste of time which jeopardizes his chances of success in the eternal Hereafter. For this reason people should behave very carefully and moderately with regard to these matters. We are told in the verses of the Qur'an about the blessings which Allah created as tests for people in the life of this world and that we should be wary of them:

Wealth and sons are the embellishment of the life of this world. But, in your Lord's sight, right actions which are lasting bring a better reward and are a better basis for hope. (Surat al-Kahf: 46)

The metaphor of the life of this world is that of water which We send down from the sky, and which then mingles with the plants of the earth to provide food for both people

and animals. Then, when the earth is at its loveliest and takes on its fairest guise and its people think they have it under their control, Our command comes upon it by night or day and We reduce it to dried-out stubble, as though it had not been flourishing just the day before! In this way We make Our Signs clear for people who reflect. (Surah Yunus: 24)

Every self will taste death. You will be paid your wages in full on the Day of Rising. Anyone who is distanced from the Fire and admitted to the Garden has triumphed. The life of this world is just the enjoyment of delusion. (Surah Al 'Imran: 185)

As for those who do not believe in the Hereafter, We have made their actions appear good to them and they wander about blindly. Such people will receive an evil punishment and will be the greatest losers in the Hereafter. (Surat an-Naml: 4-5)

The ability of people to be happy and at peace depends upon their being able to make correct decisions during their experiences throughout their lives. For this a clear mind and the power of intelligence are necessary. The intelligence which can direct people to what is "correct" can be acquired only through faith in Allah and living according to the guidance of the Qur'an. In contrast, the actions described above, which become for people a matter of passion and addiction, prevent them from perceiving the truth for what it is. As a result, people such as these who throughout their lives do not submit to the guidance of the Qur'an are incapable of making correct and logical decisions on anything which happens to them. This causes them continually to make mistakes and to live in unhappiness and trouble.

The truth is that the life people live in this world is the only chance they have of earning the approval of Allah. This opportunity they have been given may at any unexpected moment be taken from them. There is no making up for the life we live, no further chance of gaining the approval of Allah after we die. People who ignore these truths will be plunged into great sorrow on the Day of Judgment and will want to be sent back to the world again to act rightly for the purpose of winning Allah's approval. That on the Day of Judgment people want this opportunity over again is a very clear indication of the insignificance of everything in the life of this world. However, their wish will not be granted. In the Qur'an, Allah tells us of the regret and sorrow which those who see this truth only on the Day of Judgment will experience:

If only you could see the evildoers hanging their heads in shame before their Lord: "Our Lord, we have seen and we have heard, so send us back again and we will act rightly. Truly we now have certainty."(Surat as-Sajda: 12)

In these terms, life is a very valuable asset which Allah has granted to people. Such heedless people waste this valuable time on empty and meaningless occupations which will bring them no benefit on the Day of Judgment because they are passionately attached to the worldly advantages which have been given to them as a test. Without even noticing, they waste this life which will never be given back to them. Since their efforts, their desires and their deeds are not directed towards Allah's approval and the Hereafter, they simply waste their time on earth with useless distractions. Allah describes their situation in a verse of the Qur'an:

Leave them to eat and enjoy themselves. Let false hope divert them. They will soon know. (Surat al-Hijr: 3)

What will save people in the afterlife are good deeds done to earn Allah's approval. In a verse of the Qur'an, Allah warns us that these are the only actions which will be rewarded:

But as for those who believe and do right actions, We will not let the wage of good-doers go to waste. (Surat al-Kahf: 30)

Allah will make everything people do come to nothing, if they do not act with the intention of gaining His approval; in other words, these people will toil away but their efforts will be of no avail. (Surat al-Ghashiyya: 3) Those who throughout their lives aim to gain Allah's approval and do not deviate from the guidance of the Qur'an will be happy. Allah makes this promise in the Qur'an as follows:

Those who believe and do right actions, happiness will be theirs and a wonderful Homecoming. (Surat ar-Ra'd: 29)

Everything on the Face of the Earth is "Adornment"

Before explaining that everything on the face of the earth is an adornment, let us make a comparison in order for the matter to be more easily understood.

Imagine two houses. In one there is no furniture at all, doors and windows have not been fitted, the walls have not been painted and no necessary repair or maintenance whatsoever has been carried out. In the other house there are fine armchairs and carpets and other furnishings. The walls have been painted in the most beautiful colors, repair and maintenance have been carried out fully, there is a wonderful view from the balcony and the house has every kind of comfort and luxury.

People who do not have more detailed information about the two houses may find the second more attractive at first sight. The decorations inside may momentarily fool people but if they are

aware that the decorations have been specially placed in this house to test people and that in reality they will harm them, they will make a more intelligent decision and will not exercise their preference in favor of this more attractive looking house. In the same way, if they know that with a little effort on their part the other house can be made more attractive to them and in time will take on a more permanent beauty, they will choose the first house.

Just as in the example of the houses, Allah has created this world with decorations which will be pleasing to people. But the truth is, this is one of Allah's tests. These decorations should not deceive people; they are all temporary and illusory. Allah explains one of His Divine purposes in the Qur'an as to why He has created this world in such a way as to be attractive to people:

**We made everything on the Earth adornment for it so that
We could test them to see whose actions are the best. (Surat
al-Kahf: 7)**

Everything existing in this world is created to test people and everything is a blessing which provides an opportunity for earning Allah's pleasure. Nobody should forget that the reason for setting before him all the things he sees and what he possesses is only one of Allah's tests. With everything he owns or will own in the future he should engage in good deeds so as to gain Allah's approval. A person's true life is in the next world and what are truly permanent are the blessings which Allah will give His sincere servants there. In another verse, Allah advises us that everything pertaining to the world is finery and that people should use their intellect to understand the truth:

**Anything you have been given is only the enjoyment of the
life of this world and its finery. What is with Allah is better
and longer lasting. So will you not use your intellect?
(Surat al-Qasas: 60)**

People who do not have the intellect to enable them to see the truth, because they do not use their consciences, are wrapped up in the material goods they see in the world and in their beauty. Their material goods and their children are at the head of the list of things whose attractiveness deceive such people. They think that when they achieve the wealth they desire or have healthy and beautiful children they will attain great peace and joy. However, when they achieve these aims what they experience is still unhappiness and trouble. Their lives become monotonous because they are performing the same tasks every day. The vicious circle they have fallen into makes them tired of life. They believe at the outset that everything will happen in a nice and enjoyable way but after a short time they begin to notice how much the things they wanted are tiring them out and taking up all their time.

The weariness, trouble and sorrow they feel manifest themselves in all their speech and behavior. Their unhappiness can be seen in every aspect of their beings. Neither does acquiring wealth make any difference. A person uses the money and goods he owns in ways he believes will bring him pleasure and enjoyment. He unwisely wastes all his money for such purposes. While he expects that all this will also bring him peace, he continually suffers disappointment and his trouble and misery increase all the time. The reason people fall into such a position is that they are attracted by the deceptions of worldly life and because of this strive only to capture these illusions. All these troubles come of their living in ignorance of the truth of which Allah informs us in this verse:

Wealth and sons are the embellishment of the life of this world. But, in your Lord's sight, right actions which are lasting bring a better reward and are a better basis for hope. (Surat al-Kahf: 46)

People like these see only the attractive, that is, the deceptive side of the blessings Allah has granted and so they deceive themselves. As a result they have difficulty in seeing the truth. Because they do not think about the eternal Hereafter they only **"desire the life of this world and its finery."** (Surat al-Ahzab: 28) They wander about in blindness and confusion because they are ignorant of their true purposes in life. Allah describes this in the Qur'an:

As for those who do not believe in the Hereafter, We have made their actions appear good to them and they wander about blindly. (Surat an-Naml: 4)

All the things people want during their lives and work for with great effort and determination are really life's ornaments. At first glance everything on earth may seem very beautiful and attractive to people and the truth is that everything is a blessing for them. However, it should not be forgotten that the life of this world is a test for people. The real purpose of life is to be a servant to our Lord Who provided all of these fine things and show gratitude to Him in the most sincere way. If, on the contrary, a person forgets this truth, chases after the world's ornaments and makes them the basic purpose of his life, he will be driven to great disappointment in this world and the next.

Everything They Own Is a Matter for Boasting

Allah has created the life of this world to test people to see whose actions are the best. With His manifold wisdom, Allah grants His mercy to those of His servants He chooses and withdraws it from those He chooses. People should be aware of this truth and know that in either case they should lose none of their attachment and devotion to Allah. For example, Allah tests some people with wealth. When a person who has been poor acquires wealth by some

means, this can radically change his psychology and in connection with this his behavior towards others and his ideas about them. The first thing that changes in such people is that they push themselves forward at every opportunity and try to make others around them praise them because they think that due to the wealth they have acquired, they possess a quality which most others do not have. They make the blessings which Allah has given them a matter of superiority and distinction when they compare themselves with other people. Beneath this misguided behavior lies the drive of the self to bring about its own desires.

A person who does not use what he owns to earn the approval of Allah uses it solely to satisfy his own lower self. The lower self wants to be admired and praised all the time. People who do not have the aim of pleasing Allah seek only the approval of others and because of this they boast and take pride in everything they acquire or own. People such as this who do not consider the Hereafter have no other course but to use what they have as best they can in the life of this world.

Boasting does not solely arise from the material wealth people possess. A person may make his appearance, his hair, his physique, his success, in short anything which makes him different to those around him and better off, a matter for boasting. For instance, when her child earns the right to enter a much sought after faculty of a top class university, this becomes a subject for bragging by the mother. She refers to this subject in every conversation and speaks with praise of the difficulties her child suffered and the great support she herself provided. She tries to make use of her child's success and grab a share of it for herself. Of course, she may have supported the child and provided help, but her reason for telling other people about it is usually to earn praise and admiration for herself. She de-

rives great pleasure from this.

In the community of the ignorant, this behavior, which is very widespread, goes by the name of "feeling proud." In this way people try to hide the unpleasantness of what they are doing for the real purpose of attracting praise. They try to present reasonable grounds for their incorrect behavior by sheltering behind phrases such as "I feel proud" or "I'm proud of him." In fact, all this behavior is driven by the motive of putting on a show for others.

Houses are another subject of boasting widespread amongst the community of the ignorant. A person who buys a new house and furnishes it beautifully invites his friends around because he has made his house suitable for display. By showing off the house to others, he creates a situation in which he will receive praise and attract admiration.

All the above are behavioral aberrations which occur because people do not think about how and for what purpose they should use what they own. In the Qur'an, Allah cites a person called Qarun from the tribe of Prophet Musa (as) as an example of the end which will be met by people who make worldly decorations the subject of boasting about themselves. Allah tells us that he gave Qarun great wealth but that in response, he gloated:

Qarun was one of the people of Musa but he lorded it over them. We gave him treasures, the keys alone to which were a heavy weight for a party of strong men. When his people said to him, "Do not gloat. Allah does not love people who gloat" (Surat al-Qasas: 76)

Qarun ignored the people's warnings and claimed that his wealth had been given him because of "**knowledge**" he has, (Surat al-Qasas: 78) and made this a subject of boasting about his superiority over his fellow people. The people coveted Qarun's wealth:

He went out among his people in his finery. Those who desired the life of this world said, "Oh! If only we had the same as Qarun has been given! What immense good fortune he possesses."(Surat al-Qasas: 79)

Qarun's end provides a warning which is extremely important with regard to how the boasting of people who think like him or who desire to be like him, who are ungrateful for the blessings which Allah has given them, are treated by Allah. Allah tells us of Qarun's end in this verse:

We caused the earth to swallow up both him and his house. There was no group to come to his aid, besides Allah, and he was not someone who is helped. (Surat al-Qasas: 81)

A group of people who saw what happened to Qarun fully realized that it is Allah Who provides sustenance and takes it away and understood what outcome is caused by behaving ungratefully towards Allah. We are told how these people reacted:

Those who had longed to take his place the day before woke up saying, "Allah expands the provision of any of His servants He wills or restricts it. If Allah had not shown great kindness to us, we would have been swallowed up as well. Ah! Truly the disbelievers are not successful."(Surat al-Qasas: 82)

As we can clearly see from the story of Qarun, if people make the blessings given them by Allah a matter for boasting and an object for the admiration of others, their end will be no different from Qarun's. People who behave ungratefully towards Allah may have His blessings withdrawn from them at any moment. For example, a child a person has boasted about may start getting bad marks at school or he may suddenly lose his beautiful house to an earthquake or have all his valuable property sequestered. However, at such

times people evaluate what has happened to them from different points of view. People who do not think correctly put everything that happens to them down to luck. According to the twisted logic they put forward, people suffering disasters have been affected by bad luck and have lost everything because of it. The pain they suffer and the discomfort they feel intensifies this superstitious belief. In fact, the truth is that there is no such thing as bad luck. The loss they have suffered may be Allah's warning to them that what they have done is wrong. In one verse Allah warns as follows:

Do they not see that they are tried once or twice in every year? But still they do not turn back. They do not pay heed. (Surat at-Tawba: 126)

However, because they are not aware of this truth, the troubles which befall them recur again and again. This causes them to live in a world of unhappiness. The fact that they stubbornly continue with the same behavior when they suffer loss reveals the magnitude of the desire to be praised and admired which persists within them. In the Qur'an, Allah tells us that the desire to boast about what they own is so powerful as to drive them out of their senses:

Fierce competition for this world distracted you until you went down to the graves. (Surat at-Takathur: 1-2)

This boastful psychology is so strong that in order to obtain admiration and praise people may tell lies about things they claim to have done but have not really done at all. Allah has warned these people by telling them that the return for such behavior is torment:

Those who exult in what they have done and love to be praised for what they have not done should not suppose that they have escaped the punishment. They will have a painful punishment. (Surah Al 'Imran: 188)

This misbehavior affects their relationships with others around

them as much as it affects themselves. In the main people are uncomfortable around those who continually sing their own praises and assert their own worth. In time this can cause a cooling of relations between a person and those around him or even cause him to become isolated. Because of this everybody should think twice about such behavior and never forget that everything they experience in this world comes from Allah. They should try to see the effects boasting has on them and on those around them and should thank Allah for the blessings He has granted and purify themselves of the kind of behavior which contradicts spirit of the Qur'an.

Everything Is Bound up in a Desire for More

It is possible for ignorant people to live a happy life, profit from their lives to the maximum and gain the greatest possible benefits. In the Qur'an, Allah tells us that ignorant people **"try to outdo one another in wealth and children."** (Surat al-Hadid: 20) This desire for increase springs from people's ambition that their advantages should continually grow both in quantity and in quality. They hope that they will be happy to the extent that they acquire more and more beautiful possessions. For example, a person starts driving a fine car with the greatest of pleasure and satisfaction. However, within a short time his pleasure and happiness give way to concern because he sees a more showy and more luxurious car and because of this ceases to be satisfied with his own. In time his sole aim will be to possess this new car. This pattern is valid not only for cars but for everything which gives people pleasure. In the community of the ignorant, people feel the urge to possess as much as possible of what they like and derive pleasure from. They can never be satisfied with less, believing that owning the most of everything can make them happy.

In fact, as we explained in the previous section, everything in

the world is merely an allurements. However, if a person believes these decorations to be real and competes to acquire them, he will depart by a great distance from the main purpose of his creation. At this point his main purpose will be solely to satisfy the desires of his lower self. Everything in the world is limited and defective so it is always possible to find something better, more beautiful or of higher quality. For this reason the desires of the lower self have no end and the person will never be happy with what he owns. Consequently, instead of making such a person happy, acting in this way will drive him into even greater unhappiness.

This unhappiness prevents ignorant people from being grateful to Allah because they behave ungratefully for the blessings given by Allah due to their ambition and passion. To them it is not important who gave them these blessings or for what purpose; they do not even consider this. What is important is to acquire everything they like as quickly as possible and continually to increase the number of their possessions. The situation of these people resembles a bucket with a hole in it which can never be filled. When water is poured in it escapes through the hole in the bottom. So long as the hole is not plugged, it is impossible to fill the bucket. So long as people are not grateful for what they own and do not know how to be satisfied with it, no matter what blessings are given them, there will be no change in their state. Even if they own the best of everything they will not notice the beauty of what they possess and will not appreciate it because they are still greedy for more. Allah points out the state of such people in the Qur'an:

Leave the person I created on his own to Me alone, him to whom I have given great wealth, and sons who stay with him, and whose way I have smoothed. Then he wants Me to add yet more! (Surat al-Muddaththir: 11-15)

As we are told in another verse:

He has given you everything you have asked Him for. If you tried to number Allah's blessings, you could never count them. Man is indeed wrongdoing, ungrateful. (Surah Ibrahim: 34)

Allah has given people everything, but the feeling of ingratitude within people prevents them from thanking Allah as they should. In the Qur'an, Allah tells us that He will only increase the blessings of His grateful followers and will repay the ungrateful with torment:

[Musa said to his people,] "And when your Lord announced: 'If you are grateful, I will certainly give you increase, but if you are ungrateful, My punishment is severe.'" (Surah Ibrahim: 7)

The desire of many people to possess the blessings of the world does great harm both to themselves and to the societies in which they live. Since they cannot satisfy their constant desire for newer and better, the trouble and sorrow felt by such people is very deep. Due to their attachment to this world, these people develop, "**an insatiable love of wealth.**" (Surat al-Fajr: 20) When they are asked for material help or asked to share what they possess people like this display very selfish and cruel behavior due to their excessive attachment to their possessions, as Allah points out in this verse: "**Truly he is fierce in his love of wealth.**" (Surat al-Adiyat: 8) Mostly they give something unimportant just for show while clinging on tightly to the rest of what they own. In connection with this, the rich in a community get richer and the poor get poorer. This constitutes a great obstacle to the achievement of peace and justice in society.

This passion inside people for increasing their possessions leads to miserliness, a behavioral aberration whose wrongness is de-

scribed by Allah in a number of verses of the Qur'an. People such as these resort to miserliness because they have made the accumulation of property their principal aim in life. In spite of this unpleasant and selfish behavior they still regard everything they accumulate as a blessing for them. The truth is that in the life of this world Allah makes some people rich as a test so that by believing that their wealth is a gain, people who do not use it for good fall into a major error because on the Day of Judgment it will return to them as fire. Allah tells us of this truth in the Qur'an:

Those who are tight-fisted 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 tight-fisted 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)

As we are told by Allah in the verse, "**those who are tight-fisted and direct others [to it]...**" (Surat an-Nisa': 37), one characteristic of such people is that they encourage others to engage in the same unpleasant behavior. In addition to this, they hide what they own from those around them so that others will want nothing from them. Because their real desire is continually to increase their possessions and accumulate more, they do not want others to make use of them.

Their failure to understand the true nature of worldly life forces them into deviant misbehavior and constant preoccupation with their own advantage. They have convinced themselves that if they act according to this logic they will come out in profit. However, they gain nothing but trouble and anxiety. Despite this, they insist on such behavior with great determination and ambition. Because they are deceived by the life of this world, they expect to be happy and at peace with what they engage in, but what they obtain is just a

life of unhappiness and trouble. In order for people to understand the real nature of this life, Allah has compared what people acquire in the life of this world to falling rain and has warned people as follows:

Know that the life of this world is merely a game and a diversion and 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 forgiveness from Allah and His good pleasure. The life of this world is nothing but the enjoyment of delusion. (Surat al-Hadid: 20)

They Have Adopted Gods other than Allah

One of the most significant reasons for people's unhappiness is their ascribing partners to Allah. Some people are not fully aware of the meaning attached to ascribing partners to Allah in the Qur'anic sense. Ascribing partners to Allah means regarding other objects and creatures as having the same godlike qualities as Allah, giving them the respect which should be given to Allah and showing towards them the same behavior which should be shown to Allah. This is great disrespect and ingratitude to Allah, Who is the sole deity. Likewise, it is a big mistake to think that the slandering of Allah and disrespect towards Him will go unanswered. Ascribing partners to Allah is the greatest heedlessness and error a person can commit. In the Qur'an, Allah describes it as "a terrible wrong" which will never be forgiven. For this reason, it is a form of behavior which

should be very carefully and strenuously avoided:

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 gone very far astray. (Surat an-Nisa': 116)

One of the returns people who ascribe partners to Allah receive for this behavior in this life is unhappiness. Then, how does ascribing partners to Allah make one unhappy, or what happens if one directs the emotions and thoughts which should be directed towards Allah towards other beings instead?

The answer is clear. In such a situation thousands of false gods intervene in a person's life. For instance, if a person is fearful of another, he has attributed to that other a power and a will independent of Allah. Since under such circumstances he believes that the other person can harm him, he obeys him and in turn tries to gain his approval and goodwill. As can be seen, feeling such emotions towards another individual instead of towards Allah means attributing creative powers to that other individual. This in turn means that the person is making a god equivalent to Allah out of somebody no different from himself. The fact is, however, it is Allah alone Who deserves fear and obedience. In a verse of the Qur'an, our Lord advises us as follows:

Is Allah not enough for His servant? Yet they try to scare you with others apart from Him. If Allah misguides some one, he has no guide. (Surat az-Zumar: 36)

So, a person should conform only to the instructions and prohibitions of our Lord and should try to earn His approval. Otherwise he will experience great discomfort and difficulty. The fear of Allah is a "benevolent" fear which brings a person closer to Allah, brings

with it love of Allah and encourages the person to try harder to gain His approval. The fear produced by ascribing partners to Allah is a "malevolent" fear which discomforts a person and can send him to Hell. In the Qur'an, Allah states that He will spread fear in the hearts of these people who without authority from Him have associated others with Him:

We will cast terror into the hearts of those who disbelieve because they have associated others with Allah for which He has not sent down any authority. Their shelter will be the Fire. How evil is the abode of the wrongdoers! (Surah Al 'Imran: 151)

Another emotion which is wrongly directed in communities of the ignorant is love. Love is a splendid emotion which Allah has placed in people's hearts but if this emotion is not directed correctly it becomes nothing but a source of worry and pain. So much so that, because some people place their ambition for their own benefits above all moral values, they also make love a vehicle for their own advantage. They reach a point where they cannot love if their love is not requited. In such an atmosphere people love one another for the advantages they can obtain but because of this they suffer continual harm. So long as love is shown in an ignorant manner in the wrong places and to the wrong people, those who show it cannot be protected against disappointment.

The One Who deserves love and is to be loved is Allah, Who possesses infinite might. It is Allah Who created people from nothing, Who gives them everything, Who feeds, clothes and protects them and gives them a variety of beautiful things. Real love is that which reflects Allah and His manifestations, the love of those who adhere to the path to which they have been summoned by Him.

However, for a person who ascribes partners to Allah, this is impossible. The unconsciousness in which he remains becomes a source of blind love for beings which do not deserve to be loved. The Qur'an tells us about this aspect of disbelievers 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. If only you could see those who do wrong at the time when they see the punishment, and that truly all strength belongs to Allah, and that Allah is severe in punishment. (Surat al-Baqara: 165)

Another way of ascribing partners to Allah is a person's self love, his belief that he is the strongest, the most intelligent and the most handsome. Such a person claims that his own ideas are right and follows them. In short, he sees himself in a giant mirror. The deity of a person like this is his own self. He adopts himself as his own god. Allah informs us about the condition of such people in the following verse of the Qur'an:

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)

Because people who ascribe partners to Allah adopt other people and beings as their gods they naturally shape their lives according to the wishes of these others because they believe that in this way they will be happy and at peace. In addition, it is very important for them to gain the admiration, approval and goodwill of these false gods. Since their happiness is bound up with the goodwill of these false gods they set aside a different part of themselves for each of them. They develop a different personality for each of them because they have adopted more than one false god. Just as this causes

intolerable difficulties for a person, it also makes him do things he does not want to do. A person who, by contrast, accepts Allah as his only God conforms only to His Word and tries to gain only His approval and love. In the Qur'an, Allah gives a very wise example of the difference between these two types of person:

Allah has made a metaphor for them of a man owned by several partners in dispute with one another and another man wholly owned by a single man. Are they the same? Praise be to Allah! The fact is that most of them do not know. (Surat az-Zumar: 29)

Remember when he [Ibrahim] 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: 42)

As Allah tells us in the verse, a person who accepts other gods is compelled to live in psychological turmoil and will be unable to obtain the best result for anything he does or receive the attention and approval he expects. The reason for this is the desire of people to seek their own advantage and put themselves in first place in their relations with one another. People from whom a person expects help, whose every instruction he follows and whose goodwill he tries to obtain do not or cannot give him anything he wants because of their own interests and advantages. They may even change to the extent that when he visits them they become his enemies and want to do him harm. This is another factor which intensifies the trouble and lack of tranquility a person may feel. In order to protect ourselves against setting up false gods we need to think deeply about this behavior and direct ourselves towards Allah's approval in the knowledge that there is no power other than His.

Nothing and nobody a person adopts as a false god has any

power, beauty, ability or intelligence; it is Allah alone Who possesses all these qualities. Because of this, when the person is in trouble and when he wants help, Allah is the only One Who can help him. When he says, "I am thinking," Allah is the One Who inspires his thoughts. When he acts in any way, it is Allah Who really makes him perform the action. When he eats a tasty meal, it is Allah Who creates the food and the flavor. Again it is Allah Who ensures that the meal is prepared for him. When he falls sick, it is not really the germ which makes him ill but Allah. It is Allah, not the doctor, Who cures him and makes him well. When he sets fire to a piece of paper with a lighter, it is not the flame of the lighter which burns the paper but Allah. When one wears beautiful clothing, it is Allah Who makes one seem beautiful.

It is possible to multiply these examples a hundredfold. There is a point here which must not be misunderstood. Of course, when a person is ill he goes to the doctor, but he should understand very clearly that it is not the doctor who makes him well. It may be a person's mother who prepares a meal, but it is Allah Who causes the meal to be cooked and prepares the reasons for the person to be fed. There is a cause and effect relationship between events. However, Allah has created one by one the effects and the causes which give rise to the effect. People need to ponder over this fact and grasp it. Nobody has the power, ability or intelligence to do anything independently of Allah. Since Allah is the owner of everything, He is also the only One Who does everything and causes everything to be done. In a large number of verses, Allah warns us that in reality creatures set up as false gods have no power at all:

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? (Surat al-A'raf: 191-193)

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. Do they have legs they can walk with? Do they have hands they can grasp with? Do they have eyes they can see with? Do they have ears they can hear with? Say: "Call on your partner-gods and try all your wiles against me and grant me no reprieve." (Surat al-A'raf: 194-195)

In another verse, Allah tells us that on the Day of Judgment these people will admit the truth with their own voices:

Then they will be asked, "Where are those besides Allah you associated with Him?" and they will reply, "They have forsaken us. Or rather we were not calling to anything at all before." That is how Allah misguides the disbelievers. (Surah Ghafir: 73-74)

This is the greatest proof of the magnitude of the heedlessness and deception of a person who expects help from beings which have no power at all and gears his whole life to them by making an effort to meet their wishes and gain their approval and who is in reality setting up false gods. In that case, what are these people following and according to what do they behave? Allah gives us the answer to that question in the Qur'an:

Yes, indeed! Everyone in the Heavens and everyone on the earth belongs to Allah. Those who call on something other than Allah are not really following their partner-gods. They are only following conjecture. They are only guessing. (Surah Yunus: 66)

As we can see, such people conform not to reality but to their

own guesses and estimations and act according to these. What brings forth all these false gods is their own conjecture and imagination. Not only do these conjectures and estimations produce nothing right, they further increase the losses of those who make them and, as Allah tells us in the verse, **"It has been revealed to you and those before you: 'If you associate others with Allah, your actions will come to nothing and you will be among the losers.'" (Surat az-Zumar: 65)**, everything such people do and every effort they make is wasted. Our Prophet (saws) also informs us that their hopes of getting help from anyone and anything other than Allah will do them no good at all:

"... When you ask for anything ask it from Allah, and if you seek help, seek help in Allah. Know that if the people were to unite to do you some benefit they could benefit you only with what Allah had recorded for you, and that if they were to unite to do you some injury they could injure you only with what Allah had recorded for you..." (Tirmidhi Hadith)

But some people like this do not know what a great danger lies in setting up false gods and what a great deception it is. A person who throughout his life ascribes partners to Allah will realize on the Day of Judgment that the people or objects which he made his deities have abandoned him, and he will understand that they were nothing but a deception, possessing no power at all. In the Qur'an, Allah tells us of the regret and psychological collapse which these people will suffer in the Hereafter:

When those who were followed disown those who followed them, and they see the punishment, and the connection between them is cut, those who followed will say, "If only we could have another chance, we would disown them just as they have disowned us." In that way Allah will show

them their actions as a cause of anguish and remorse for them. They will never emerge from the Fire. (Surat al-Baqara: 166-167)

People who ascribe partners to Allah as their guardians have no real hope of happiness throughout their lives. Because they do not make Allah their guardian and friend they cannot experience tranquility and happiness in the real sense during their lifetimes. In return for their ungratefulness, Allah gives them unhappiness. This is an unchanging truth. The reason for a person's falling into such a state is himself alone. A person should seek the reason for his unhappiness in himself and should reflect upon it. Allah points out in a verse of the Qur'an that people are unhappy because of what they have done with their own hands:

Allah does not wrong people in any way; rather it is people who wrong themselves. (Surah Yunus: 44)

In order to be free from ascribing partners to Allah, people should turn towards Allah from the heart, listen to their conscience and praise Allah's power and omnipotence. Prophet Ibrahim (as) was an example for all of humanity in obeying his conscience, turning towards Allah and understanding the power and omnipotence of Allah. In the Qur'an, Prophet Ibrahim's (as) behavior is described as follows:

Because of that We showed Ibrahim the dominions of the Heavens and the earth so that he might be one of the people of certainty. When night covered him he saw a star and said, "This is my Lord!" Then when it set he said, "I do not love what sets." Then when he saw the moon come up he said, "This is my Lord!" Then when it set he said, "If my Lord does not guide me, I will be one of the misguided people." Then when he saw the sun come up he said, "This

is my Lord! This is greater!" Then when it set he said, "My people, I am free of what you associate with Allah!" "I have turned my face to Him Who brought the Heavens and earth into being, a pure natural believer. I am not one of the idol - aters." (Surat al-An'am: 75-79)

If a person works throughout his life to earn Allah's good pleasure, carries out his responsibilities with sincerity, and asks anything from Him, he will see clearly that Allah always helps him and protects him against troubles of every sort. In the Qur'an Allah gives this good news to believers:

**Say: "Allah rescues you from it, and from every plight. Then you associate others with Him." (Surat al-An'am: 64)
... Allah will certainly help those who help Him—Allah is All-Strong, Almighty. (Surat al-Hajj: 40)**

If Allah helps you, no one can vanquish you. If He forsakes you, who can help you after that? So the believers should put their trust in Allah. (Surah Al 'Imran: 160)

They Misunderstand the Concept of Fate

If you ask people nowadays what fate is, you will receive the correct answer from very few of them. This shows that people do not fully know what fate means. The fact that they do not learn the meaning of fate from the Qur'an, which guides to the truth in every matter, causes them to lose out on the comfort and peace which a proper understanding of fate can bring them.

Fate is Allah's knowledge down to the minutest detail and His control of what every living being He has created has done in the past and will do in the future; their every action, thought and word. Everything people see and experience in their lives has been planned by Allah before they are even born. We are told that Allah

created everything in accordance with its fate in the verse, "**We have created all things according to a fixed decree.**" (Surat al-Qamar: 49) Because throughout his life a person is confronted with the events which Allah wishes and desires for him, he lives his life entirely as Allah wishes. Allah reminds us of this in the Qur'an:

Everything they did is in the Books. Everything is recorded, big or small. (Surat al-Qamar: 52-53)

As Allah informs us in this verse, all people live their lives under His control and His command. In another verse, Allah uses these words to tell us that all people live according to the fate which He has determined for them:

You did not kill them; it was Allah Who killed them; and you did not throw, when you threw; it was Allah Who threw: so He might test the believers with this excellent trial from Him. Allah is All-Hearing, All-Knowing. (Surat al-Anfal: 17)

So it is impossible for a person to do what he wants, change or escape from his fate. People's fates, which include everything they encounter and their every reaction to these things, are ordained by Allah. Allah informs us of this fact in the verse, "**... Allah's command is a pre-ordained decree.**" (Surat al-Ahzab: 38) Because of this everybody is inescapably bound to their fate. All living beings, including mankind, live their lives according to the fate predetermined by Allah.

What we have explained plays a very important role in people's ability to be happy and in their achieving a balanced spiritual state in which they can behave comfortably and easily under all circumstances. In order to see more clearly the comfort and ease which submission to fate gives a person, let us compare the reactions to an

important event of a person who believes in fate and submits to it and one who does not believe in it. Let us say that the important event is the university entrance examination, considered a turning point in the life of every young person. Let us assume that the two people referred to enter this examination. Because these two people differ greatly in their view of fate their psychological approach to the examination and its effect on them will also be very different.

The person who submits to the fate created for him by Allah will not suffer the stress and tension an examination can cause because he knows that the mistakes he makes during it and their outcome are known in the sight of Allah before he enters the examination and have been created for him by Allah as a blessing because the examination has already taken place and ended within his fate. This person will simply wait to see the outcome of taking that examination. He is aware that there is no power other than Allah which can intervene in the result. The knowledge that his result has been created by Allah for his benefit, whether it is a pass or a failure, prevents him from succumbing to examination worries and stress. Because of his devotion and submission to Allah, he accepts any result, good or bad, because the result is what Allah wishes.

Because such a person does not become nervous or stressed, he avoids the damage and loss which this might cause him. A nervous, stressed person cannot be at ease, cannot collect his wits, cannot use what he knows and can easily make mistakes. It is obvious that being in such a mental state during an important examination will have a negative impact on a person's examination performance. Because of trust in fate, a person escapes from this negative burden which examination psychology imposes and increases his chance of

success in the examination.

When we look at the other person, we see something very different. Because this person does not submit to fate and trust in it, he thinks everything he does is under his own control and has developed according to his own plan. The burden imposed by such thinking in an important examination is extremely heavy, and so the person is unable to escape from this pressure and is highly nervous and stressed. According to his belief, whether he passes the examination or not is entirely in his own hands. Since he spent months of his time working to pass the examination, the fear that if he fails all this effort will have been in vain is another source of worry for him.

Having no belief in fate may cause stress and tension to have a negative effect on him. He may not be able to gather his thoughts and therefore fail to answer questions he understands very well or even if he can, he may accidentally select the wrong answer on the answer paper. He may fail an examination which has vital importance to him simply because of stress and tension. So long as a person who falls into this situation does not see events with the eyes of faith it is almost impossible for him not to be depressed and filled with apprehension. Indeed, such a person may even succumb to a serious clinical depression. Because he thinks that the reason everything happens is down to him, his worry and torment increase still further. Because he is not devoted to Allah, he is deprived of the comfort and security which Allah can give his heart. For this reason, as Allah tells us in the following verse, people who do not submit to His decree in the full sense can never experience a balanced and tranquil spiritual state:

That is so that you will not be grieved about the things that pass you by or exult about the things that come to you. Allah does not love any vain or boastful man. (Surat al- Hadid: 23)

Another error which people make is worry about failing to understand what is good and bad for themselves and suffering as a result. Since a person's intelligence and judgment are limited, so long as he does not depend on Allah's guidance he cannot fully understand what is good and what is bad for him. He may make the mistake of regarding an occurrence which appears negative as actually being negative. This is a mistake because Allah tests people with both good and evil. Allah tells believers this secret in the verse, "... **We test you with both good and evil as a trial. And you will be returned to Us.**" (Surat al-Anbiya: 35)

For a person who believes in this truth and acts in accordance with Allah's will, every event he meets with is an opportunity for a happy ending. In another verse, Allah points out to us that He has created every event with a great deal of wisdom whether people can see this or not:

... It may be that you hate something when it is good for you and it may be that you love something when it is bad for you. Allah knows and you do not know. (Surat al-Baqara: 216)

As we see in this verse, everything, whether a person likes it or not or enjoys it or not, conceals at bottom a benefit for them because whatever happens to people it has been planned by Allah Who knows everything. Of course, our Lord Who created humanity knows what is good and bad for people. Thinking contrary to this means failure to accept Allah's decree and causes people nothing but loss and unhappiness. Because of this what a person needs to do is direct himself always towards good and submit to the fate Allah has determined for him.

People who are incapable of grasping the fact that everything that happens to them is a test and that Allah has created everything

for their benefit will suffer a great loss. Since these people do not evaluate events in accordance with Qur'anic criteria, they approach everything they encounter from a negative point of view and so have a hopeless and pessimistic mindset. The only way to protect oneself from this is to surrender to fate in the full sense and try to find the divine wisdom in every event. This is a way to happiness which ignorant people cannot possibly know.

When people who do not submit to Allah and fate are confronted with undesirable events they take on an irritable state of mind. This increases their distress and discomfort even further. It is troubling to such people to come across events whose source they do not know and whose cause they do not understand. This trouble represents the consequences in this world for those who resist Allah. It is clear therefore, that the torment of those who resist Allah and avoid serving Him has its beginnings here on Earth. Allah points to this reality in the Qur'an:

We will give them a taste of lesser punishment before the greater punishment, so that hopefully they will turn back.

(Surat as-Sajda: 21)

The only things people who do not submit to fate as they should will meet in this world are unhappiness and problems. The comfort, tranquility and security a person feels are in direct proportion to the strength of his faith and trust in fate and his submission to Allah. By this means he will both achieve a balanced spiritual state and be able to see more clearly the good and divine purpose in the events he encounters.

They Have Adopted Insincerity as a Principle

To put it briefly, sincerity can be defined as behaving in a deter-

mined way according to what a person believes and feels. A person who is sincere in the true sense behaves comfortably and naturally in all surroundings because he feels no need to prove himself to others or make them accept him. For a person who lives like this, sincerity becomes a source of comfort and tranquility.

However, nowadays many people feel a lack of sincerity in their relations with others around them. Many people who live immoral and ignorant lives make a habit of lying, hypocrisy and cheating and base themselves wholly on these "principles." Everybody behaves insincerely towards everybody else because everybody is out for what they can get. No doubt, this is not a one-sided situation, it is mutual. One party uses the other and tries as far as possible to take advantage of them. In such an environment no concept of trust remains because there is no telling what anyone will do, how they will behave or what they are thinking. In fact, this insincerity is the reason for people's unhappiness in their relationships with one another, their depressions and the short duration of their love and devotion towards one another. Allah warns us that people who depart from the ways of belief will be unhappy in the verse, **"Let them laugh little and weep much, in repayment for what they have earned."** (Surat at-Tawba: 82)

Insincerity causes the development of other unpleasant forms of behavior in these people. One of these is behaving with ingratitude for help given them and kindnesses received. Because they live lives far removed from the guidance of the Qur'an, they invariably develop a character trait whereby they easily forget help and kindnesses but never forget the bad that is done to them. Upon the slightest difference or misunderstanding they immediately go for one another's weak spots and begin criticizing each other as much as

possible. They do not see, or do not want to see, one another's good sides. In short, they cannot take as much notice as they should of the kindnesses, the help and the good turns which are done to them.

People who demonstrate such a confrontational attitude also approach Allah and religion insincerely. The faith of these people in Allah is extremely weak and they tend to forget Him at the slightest hint of trouble or difficulty. In the verse of the Qur'an below, Allah warns us that people whose worship is held by the thinnest of strands will suffer great loss in this world and the Hereafter:

Among the people there is one who worships Allah right on the edge. If good befalls him, he is content with it, but if a trial befalls him, he reverts to his former ways, losing both this world and the Hereafter. That is indeed sheer loss. (Surat al-Hajj: 11)

Another verse in which Allah draws our attention to these people's insincerity in their faith is as follows:

When harm touches man, he calls on Us, lying on his side or sitting down or standing up. Then when We remove the harm from him he carries on as if he had never called on Us when the harm first touched him. In that way We make what they have done appear good to the profligate. (Surah Yunus: 12)

Another indication of the insincerity of these people is that they put forward a number of reasons and excuses for making their doing just exactly what they want to do seem reasonable. When they are reminded of their responsibility to Allah, they have countless excuses for evading this responsibility and wasting their lives according to their own greedy desires. In every situation they invent false reasons for their failure to worship and their failure to adhere to Allah's instructions. These excuses differ according to people's de-

sires and their plans for the future. Some say they have work which needs doing, some that they have no time and some that they will catch up with their worship when they get older.

Someone who knows that Allah surrounds everything, including himself, that He sees and hears everything and witnesses what is going through his mind when he makes an excuse never indulges in such behavior. He is aware of what torment awaits him if he acts in this way and that deception will bring him no advantage in this world or the next.

It is Allah's promise that people who are sincere towards Him and comply with His instructions and prohibitions to the letter will be brought together as his faithful servants and will live together in the finest possible way in the comfort, beauty and tranquility which their sincerity merits. This as a reward and a very special blessing for Allah's sincere followers in this world and the next. What a person needs to do is to show gratitude to Allah for the beautiful surroundings in which he finds himself.

SATAN, THE VOICE OF MISERY

How Satan Causes People Misgivings

From the day man was created to the present, Satan has been the most implacable and dangerous enemy of mankind. He deceives and corrupts people by distancing them from the love and will of Allah and from the Qur'an, and by provoking them and setting them against one another, in short by making them as much like himself as possible. Allah warns people that Satan is a clear and present enemy in the verse, **"Did I not make a contract with you, tribe of Adam, not to worship Satan, who truly is an outright enemy to you?"** (Surah Ya Sin: 60)

Despite being faced with such a dangerous and at the same time cunning enemy, some people live in complete heedlessness of this reality because they are unaware of Satan's existence and of just how cunning he really is. Some people regard Satan as a kind of symbol with no real existence. These incorrect ideas about Satan cause their failure to notice what serious trouble and strife he is capable of making people suffer and leave them defenseless against him. This gives him a simple opportunity of turning people who are heedless of him against Allah and His religion. There are millions of people who do not recognize Satan even when they are face to face with him. This in turn shows what serious danger these people are in.

What makes Satan dangerous is his determination to divert people from the path of Allah, this is his goal. He has sworn an oath to this effect. For this purpose he will make whatever effort he can and try every possible method. Allah tells us about Satan's determination in this matter in the Qur'an:

He [Satan] said, "By Your misguidance of me, I will lie in ambush for them on your straight path. Then I will come at them, from in front of them and behind them, from their right and from their left. You will not find most of them thankful." (Surat al-A'raf: 16-17)

Another dangerous aspect of Satan is that he acts with guile while doing all this. He approaches people differently using a variety of methods according to their weaknesses and defects. He has a different method, different tactics for each individual person. He carries out all his activities with provocations cunningly whispered in people's ears. He plunges them into doubt, drives them into empty fancies and makes them waste time by engaging in worthless pursuits. Allah warns us in the Qur'an that Satan will try to divert and deceive people:

[Satan said,] "I will lead them astray and fill them with false hopes. I will command them and they will cut off cattle's ears. I will command them and they will change Allah's creation." Anyone who takes Satan as his protector in place of Allah has clearly lost everything. He makes promises to them and fills them with false hopes. But what Satan promises them is nothing but delusion. (Surat an-Nisa': 119-120)

Satan always tries to bring people harm and loss. The source of people's never ending woes and troubles and the physical damage they suffer from these are the misgivings and empty fantasies which

Satan provokes in them because he wants them to be unhappy. In the Qur'an, Allah warns that people who follow Satan are disappearing into an eternal dark cul-de-sac:

Allah is the Protector of those who believe. He brings them out of the darkness into the light. But those who disbelieve have false gods [Satans] as protectors. They take them from the light into the darkness. Those are the Companions of the Fire remaining in it timelessly, for ever. (Surat al-Baqara: 257)

However, there is another important matter on which we need to spend some time. A lot of people adopt this psychology within themselves and accept it as a part of life. They believe their lives will be colorful and enjoyable if they live in this way. They go on living without considering the trouble and harm continually being in such a spiritual state will cause them. This is nothing but Satan's deception. By indicating that the situation into which he pushes people is pleasant and attractive, Satan prevents them from using their intelligence and seeing the truth. Allah tells us of this state into which people can fall in the Qur'an:

... Satan made their actions seem good to them and so debarred them from the Way, even though they were intelligent people. (Surat al-'Ankabut: 38)

As we can see, Satan assumes a major role in human unhappiness and in people's living troubled lives. The misgivings produced by Satan deceive people and get them in trouble. With the misery he brings, he distances people who follow him from Allah and His scriptures and makes them rebellious against religion.

Satan Inspires Hopelessness and Helplessness

As we pointed out in the previous section, Satan tries to use every opportunity as best he can to divert people from the way of Allah, to distance them from religion, to have them engage in worthless pursuits and prevent them from thinking about Allah and the Hereafter. One of the situations in which Satan finds an opportunity is the moment when a person sinks into hopelessness or pessimism.

During his life a person is faced with a large number of events, some which seem positive, some negative, and he does not know where, when or under what conditions he will be faced with these events. At any time he may contract a fatal disease, lose all his property due to a natural disaster, be thrown out of work, be forced to live on a restricted income for a long period or encounter other such major or minor events which are regarded as negative. People who do not consider that the world has been created as a test and do not believe that Allah has created everything on the basis of His wisdom become depressed when faced with such occurrences and lose hope. This arises from their lack of trust in Allah.

In fact nothing a person encounters in life is accidental, empty or meaningless. As Allah tells us in the verse, "**... And no fruit emerges from its husk, nor does any female get pregnant or give birth, without His knowledge...**" (Surah Fussilat: 47) Everything that happens takes place with His knowledge, at His wish and under His control. Nothing, therefore, is accidental or meaningless. On the contrary, everything contains meaning and divine wisdom. If, instead of seeing this truth, a person evaluates events through such superstitious concepts as "blind chance" or "coincidence," this will create in him discontent, worry and hopelessness. Of course, this is a situation which makes Satan's task easier because through the misgivings he causes people who live their lives unaware of this

secret, he lures them from Allah and religion and even makes them Their enemy. And, of course, the person's descent into pessimism and hopelessness at such a moment and the harm he does himself as a result shows at the same time that Satan has achieved another of his aims. Allah explains in the Qur'an the reason for the troubles and difficulties people face and describes their erroneous reaction to these:

We sent Messengers to nations before you, and afflicted those nations with hardship and distress so that hopefully they would humble themselves. If only they had humbled themselves when Our violent force came upon them! However, their hearts were hard and Satan made what they were doing seem attractive to them. (Surat al-An'am: 42-43)

Allah gives people trouble and difficulties so that they may realize that there is no power other than His in which to take refuge and so that they may find the true path. However, Satan prevents people from seeing this divine wisdom and damages them by leaving their hearts bereft of sensitivity. In fact, the troubles people face are blessings of Allah. In such circumstances, a person should act in a way which Allah will approve, remember Him right away, ask for His help and remain patient in the face of the trouble. Allah has told us that He will come to the aid of those who take refuge in Him.

When Prophet Muhammad (saws) and his companions hid in a cave to conceal themselves from disbelievers who were pursuing them, our Prophet's (saws) behavior provided an outstanding example for everybody in this regard. In the Qur'an Allah describes the behavior of the Prophet (saws) as follows:

If you do not help him, Allah did help him when those who disbelieved drove him out and there were two of them

in the Cave. He said to his companion, "Do not be despondent, Allah is with us." Then Allah sent down His serenity upon him and reinforced him with troops you could not see. He made the word of those who disbelieved undermost. It is the word of Allah which is uppermost. Allah is Almighty, All-Wise. (Surat at-Tawba: 40)

Prophet Muhammad (saws) understood that what had happened to him was one of Allah's tests and showed his submission and devotion to Allah in the best possible way. Even at the most dangerous moment he never lost hope of rescue but instead reminded his companions of Allah's mercy and His aid. In return for this superior behavior, Allah put peace and security in the heart of our Prophet (saws) and saved him.

On this subject, another striking example is the submissive behavior of Prophet Musa (as) when he was pursued by Pharaoh's army:

And when the two hosts came into sight of one another Musa's companions said, "We will surely be overtaken!" He [Musa] said, "Never! My Lord is with me and He will guide me." So We revealed to Musa, "Strike the sea with your staff." And it split in two, each part like a towering cliff. And We brought the others right up to it. We rescued Musa and all those who were with him. Then We drowned the rest. There is certainly a Sign in that yet most of them are not believers. (Surat ash-Shu'ara': 61-67)

As we can see from these verses, some of the people at Prophet Musa's (as) side gave up hope right away in this situation and said, "We're trapped." However, Prophet Musa (as) demonstrated exemplary devotion and loyalty to Allah and told those around him that

Allah would definitely help them. Immediately after this display of submission and sincerity, Allah sent a great miracle which rescued them from Pharaoh.

People who do not have faith in Allah from the heart are in the habit of giving way to despair. Because they do not live according to the guidance of the Qur'an, they also display a forgetful and ungrateful character. Allah points to the ingratitude of such people in the verse, **"If We let man taste mercy from Us, and then take it away from him, he is despairing, ungrateful."** (Surah Hud: 9)

Allah declares, **"... Do not despair of solace from Allah. No one despairs of solace from Allah except for people who are disbelievers."** (Surah Yusuf: 87) With this verse Allah warns people that they should definitely not lose their hopes of Him. Allah created everything in the world for people and offered them everything as a blessing. Humanity is indebted to Allah for everything. He tells us that He is the One Who gives and withholds sustenance in the verse, **"Do they not see that Allah expands provision for whoever He wills and also restricts it? There are certainly Signs in that for people who believe."** (Surat ar-Rum: 37)

What people are required to do is to trust Allah under any circumstances whatsoever and pray sincerely to Him in awareness of the verse, **"He Who responds to the oppressed when they call on Him and removes their distress..."** (Surat an-Naml: 62) Allah has promised that He will rescue believers who show this attitude when confronted with troubles. Allah also advises people not to lose hope of His mercy in this verse, **"... but you hope for something from Allah which they cannot hope for."** (Surat an-Nisa': 104)

The constancy of hopefulness depends on its source. Ignorant people lack a sound foundation which can constantly give them

hope. They may fall into despair at any moment because of this. The believers, however, nourish a powerful hope in their hearts even at the most difficult moments because of their trust in our Lord. A person who can always remain hopeful is also protected from the stress and troubles caused by hopelessness and pessimism and the health problems and physical damage which these can bring. Such people manage to avoid a weary and defeated state of mind and have a fresh and lively appearance. This fresh and lively spiritual state also reflects itself in their actions and gains them a cheerful, easy, normal and balanced personality.

A person whose source of hope is the Almighty Allah never, by Allah's will, loses hope or the peace and good cheer he feels because of it.

Satan Inspires Emotionalism

Another influence which makes people unhappy comes from a source from which nobody expects it, the person's own emotions. How can these feelings which are regarded as harmless become harmful instead?

In communities which are far from religion, it is very difficult for people to know what is true and what is false because all concepts are in conflict with one another. A person does whatever he regards as logical and correct and in this behaves with great will and determination. A large number of wrong ideas receive approval and are admired while in contrast correct ones are regarded as wrong, criticized and violently opposed.

Emotionalism is at the head of the list of these confused concepts. Emotionalism may be defined generally as the evaluation of everything on the basis of one's emotions and the shaping of one's

life accordingly. Someone who lives like this needs always to be directed by his emotions towards virtue and the truth in order to lead an intelligent, comfortable and tranquil life. However, this is nearly impossible because an emotional person usually has difficulty in evaluating events correctly. This is because he acts on the basis of his emotions rather than intelligence and logic. Because he acts with his emotions when making decisions he has difficulty in seeing the true face of events and people. Or, completely to the contrary, in a situation where it is necessary to avoid anger he may be unable to control himself and may easily harm both himself and others. Just as he can suddenly change a minor difference of opinion into a major row, a song he is listening to can make him burst into tears while he appears to be cheerfully and happily enjoying himself with friends. In some people emotionalism also manifests itself in such different forms as introversion and irritability.

Obviously far more examples like this can be given. But if you notice, they all have one point in common—loss of a person's ability to use his intelligence and the suppression of that intelligence. This is just what Satan, who is determined to pervert people, wants and is waiting for. By using this secret weapon well, Satan prevents people from using their intelligence and from seeing the truth without their realizing it. He drives people away from Allah's scriptures and their superior morality. It is as though he draws a veil across a person's intelligence.

To protect himself from such a situation a person needs to know Satan well. To be able to make a judgment on any subject from a correct point of view, he needs to possess correct and sound information. Only in this way can he know what is right and what is wrong, what is beneficial and what is harmful. A person can find the type of

information and intelligence that he will need throughout his life in the Qur'an, which is sent down by Allah to guide people and thereby can acquire real intelligence. The clear intelligence which Allah describes in the Qur'an as a characteristic of believers is a powerful weapon which protects them against Satan's guile. By contrast, if a person acts according to his desires and emotions, he will be unhappy.

In the verse, "... Say: **'I do not follow your whims and desires. If I did I would go astray and not be among the guided.'**" (Surat al-An'am: 56) Allah tells us that living according to the emotions of the lower self diverts people from His path. The inescapable result of this is that people suffer disappointment, long term depression, trouble and stress. In this world, this brings nothing but misery.

Satan's Deception Is Weak

In previous sections we examined the effects of Satan on people who are distanced from religion and consequently distanced throughout their lives from the knowledge brought by faith in Allah and how people are driven to sorrow by this means. However, in the face of these deceptions, traps and provocations of Satan, there is an important point which people should not forget. This is the degree to which Satan can have a formative effect on people. In the first place, Satan is not a power independent of Allah. Satan is also created by Allah and he is the enemy of humanity only because Allah wills it so. He can have no independent power over people unless Allah wills it. Allah created Satan as a test for people. Those who follow him will stray from the true path while those who listen to their consciences and act according to Allah's wishes will achieve salvation.

In addition to this, the effect of Satan on people is closely connected with their closeness to Allah and their devotion to Him, in short, with the sincerity of their faith. Satan can have no effect on Allah's sincere servants. His effect is only on people who resist Allah and ascribe partners to Him. In order to understand this better, we need to know why Allah created Satan. As we are told in the verse, "... **to enable Us to know those who believe in the Hereafter from those who are in doubt about it...**" (Surah Saba: 21) Allah created Satan to separate the believers from the unbelievers. On this point, it emerges clearly which people Satan will have a more powerful influence on and which he will be able to divert from the path of Allah.

Allah tells us that Satan is the open enemy of humanity and that people should make Satan their enemy in the verse, "**Satan is your enemy so treat him as an enemy. He summons his party so they will be among the people of the Searing Blaze.**" (Surah Fatir: 6) A person's ability to succeed against an enemy and defeat him is connected to his knowledge of the enemy and of the methods and tactics he employs. In short, a person should know his enemy very well. Because of the Qur'an which Allah Himself sent down, believers know Satan very well and they know very well how to fight him. This is an indication of how weak and ineffective Satan's influence on believers is. Satan will try to corrupt sincere believers as he tries to corrupt all of humanity, but he will never be successful. Because believers base their lives on the facts communicated by Allah in the Qur'an which He sent down, they can see the traps of Satan and the best ways to avoid them. Allah describes this committed and sincere behavior of believers in the Qur'an:

If an evil impulse from Satan provokes you, seek refuge in Allah. He is All-Hearing, All-Seeing. As for those who guard against evil, when they are bothered by visitors from Satan,

they remember and immediately see clearly. (Surat al-'Araf: 200-201)

As Allah points out in the verse, "... **Satan's scheming is always feeble**" (Surat an-Nisa': 76), the scheming of Satan over believers is very weak, but the same is not true of those who set their faces against the Qur'an and live in heedlessness of Allah. Allah tells us in Surat ash-Shu'ara': 233 that, "**They give them [Satans] a hearing.**" Because they do not listen to the voice of their consciences, they do exactly what Satan tells them. These people have forgotten the power of Allah and fallen completely under the control of Satan. To put it another way, they have made Satan a deity. For this reason it is very easy for Satan to draw these people to his path and make them live completely disconnected from Allah and the Qur'an. Allah tells us that Satan perversely influences people who adopt him as their friend and guardian but that he has no compulsive power over the faithful:

He [Satan] has no authority over those who believe and put their trust in their Lord. He only has authority over those who take him as a friend and associate others with Allah. (Surat an-Nahl: 99-100)

THE SECRET OF HAPPINESS: ALLAH'S GOOD PLEASURE

Some people do not hesitate to look at the society in which they live from the viewpoint of their own advantage, including the people with whom they have relationships, even those closest to them, those they say they love very much, their friends, brothers and relatives. When there is a conflict of interest, no matter how great or small, they forget the relationship between them and the value they placed on it and suddenly drop these people. The ability of such people to be happy and to live comfortably and at ease depends on the advantages and benefits they can obtain. They expect a return on the smallest good deed they do. They regard doing anything without the expectation of a return as a waste of time and they slander and mock at well-intentioned people who do so at every opportunity, presenting themselves as superior and more intelligent.

When their own advantage is not at stake, they do not consider behaving generously and they never deviate from the principle of their own gain. Their only aim is to grab as much as they can from life and to live in happiness and peace as a result. At all times, in all places and under all circumstances they think only of themselves and try to protect their own privileges. There is a point here which must not be misunderstood. Of course, everybody wants to lead a

comfortable and happy life - what is wrong is the methods used by these people to achieve this desire.

The reason these people are so devoted to their own gain is that they do not adhere to the standards of the Qur'an which Allah sent down as a guidance and warning for people and they ignore the responsibilities the Qur'an places on them. They live their entire lives in ignorance of the Hereafter, as Allah tells us in the verse, "**They know an outward aspect of the life of this world but are heedless of the Hereafter.**" (Surat ar-Rum: 7) Death, what they will encounter after death, the accounting they will give to Allah for what they have done during their lives and whether they will wind up in Heaven or Hell are subjects which do not cross their minds or which they do not want to have cross their minds.

The most important factor which pushes these people into behaving in this heedless and unintelligent way is that they regard themselves as a long way from the Hereafter. They think they have plenty of life still ahead of them and they do not want to sacrifice their whole lives, their profits and the plans they have made, for something they never think about or whose likelihood they do not regard as very great even if they do think about it. They regard such thinking as a great loss. They regard the life of this world and worldly advantages as a lot closer and a lot easier than what they will gain in the Hereafter. They try to cram all their enjoyment into the life of this world. They pass their entire lives ignoring Allah and what is pleasing to Him, indifferent as to whether or not their behavior is acceptable to Him, and they spend their time in pursuit of their own worldly passions and ambitions.

As we have explained in previous sections, a passion for the life of this world makes people unhappy. Allah tells us in the Qur'an that people who set themselves against His word at every opportu-

nity will not be happy in the life of this world but will experience continual trouble:

"But if anyone turns away from My reminder, his life will be a dark and narrow one and on the Day of Rising We will gather him blind." (Surah Ta Ha: 124)

Reminding these people of Allah, reminding them that He will hold them responsible for their adherence to the Qur'an and that He will call for an accounting of what they have done in the life of this world on the Day of Judgment makes them very uncomfortable and even provokes them to anger. Allah points out this characteristic of the disbelievers as follows:

When Allah is mentioned on His own, the hearts of those who do not believe in the Hereafter shrink back shuddering, but when others apart from Him are mentioned, they jump for joy. (Surat az-Zumar: 45)

For Allah's true servants, the basic aim of their lives is Allah's good pleasure. Believers are people who know very well that it was Allah Who created them from nothing and Who is the giver of everything and the owner and sole controller of everything, that all events occur through Allah's will and that He is the bringer of both mercy and torment. Because of this the devotion and loyalty of the believers to Allah and their love of Him are very strong.

Throughout their lives believers worship only Allah, ask for help from Him alone (Surat al-Fatiha: 4) and fear none but Him. Due to this powerful love and devotion they feel for Allah they always behave gratefully towards Him and never slacken in serving Him. They show great enthusiasm and determination in their striving to earn His approval. They will give up the goals to which ignorant people devote their lives, all worldly profits and assets, in order to

gain Allah's pleasure and admission to Paradise. As Allah informs us in the Qur'an, **"There are some who give up everything, desiring the good pleasure of Allah..."** (Surat al-Baqara: 207), they feel no trouble or disturbance within themselves and maintain a perfectly correct attitude on the path of Allah, saying, **"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)

For example, the concept of property has a very important place in the lives of people who are ignorant of Allah's religion. All the efforts of these people are directed towards increasing their property and achieving a status which earns them the respect of others. Allah tells us in the Qur'an that a number of things have become passions with such people:

To mankind the love of worldly appetites is painted in glowing colors: women and children, and heaped-up mounds of gold and silver, and horses with fine markings, and livestock and fertile farmland. All that is merely the enjoyment of the life of this world. The best homecoming is in the presence of Allah. (Surah Al 'Imran: 14)

Property, which has become an end in itself for the community of the ignorant, is for believers only a means to be used for gaining Allah's good pleasure. For this reason believers do not long for the things listed in the above verse and do not make an aim of pursuing them. Increasing their property, enriching themselves or improving their status are never amongst the goals of believers. They know that everything is a blessing given to them by Allah and that they have to be grateful to Him. They never neglect what is pleasing to Allah for the sake of trivial and temporary worldly gains. If a person uses everything he possesses and all his resources and opportunities to

earn Allah's good pleasure, he will receive a fine reward in this world and the next as we are told by Allah in the verse, **"Anyone who acts rightly, male or female, being a believer, We will give them a good life and We will recompense them according to the best of what they did."** (Surat an-Nahl: 97)

The difficult times and the troubles they encounter also make people who are ignorant of Allah's religion unhappy because their happiness is entirely bound up with worldly profits and gains, which in times of difficulty are at risk of being lost. The loss of these things due to events completely beyond their grasp, plunges them into great sorrow because of their attachment to them. In this way they completely lose the happiness and joy which acquisitions can bring them. They inevitably sink into depression and hopelessness.

As for the happiness of believers, it takes on a more lasting form because in times of trouble and difficulty they hold to the wisdom which is described in the Qur'an. Since believers always take into consideration what is pleasing to Allah and apply their intelligence and their consciences exclusively to the task of achieving it, they are never affected negatively by adverse circumstances, as disbelievers are affected. On the contrary, because they hope to gain Allah's good pleasure with sincere and submissive behavior in times of trouble, nothing can lessen their happiness even at such times.

Rather than behaving in a way which will not meet with Allah's approval, believers will not hesitate to expose themselves to hardship if this is necessary in order for them to act according to Allah's will. We can see one of the finest examples of this moral excellence in the behavior of Prophet Yúsuif (as). Prophet Yúsuif's (as) brothers set a trap for him and abandoned him in a well. A group of travelers who found him later sold him to an Egyptian governor. Allah placed

Prophet Yusuf (as) in Egypt, taught him how to interpret the dreams of others and granted him mastery and wisdom.

In this way Allah put Prophet Yusuf (as) through an important test. The wife of the governor with whom Prophet Yusuf (as) was staying, desired him. Faced with her behavior, Prophet Yusuf (as) took refuge in Allah. In order to escape from the devious machinations which the woman had concocted, and conduct himself in conformity with Allah's guidance, he found it more "pleasant" to be imprisoned in a dark dungeon. Allah tells us how Prophet Yusuf (as) prayed to Him for rescue from the trap which had been set for him:

He [Yusuf] said, "My Lord, the prison is preferable to me than what they call on me to do. Unless You turn their guile away from me, it may well be that I will fall for them and so become a man of ignorance." His Lord replied to him (Yusuf) and turned away from him their female guile and deviousness. He is the One Who Hears, the One Who Knows. Then, after they had seen the Signs, they thought that they should still imprison him for a time. (Surah Yusuf: 33-35)

Prophet Yusuf (as) gave an example of moral excellence and opted for imprisonment in the dungeon rather than succumb to behavior which would have been displeasing to Allah. That Prophet Yusuf (as) found such a place as the dungeon "pleasant" is an expression of the happiness and peace brought him by acting in order to gain Allah's approval. This determination and zeal on the part of Prophet Yusuf (as) in his striving for the approval of Allah is an important example to all believers. Every sincere believer joyfully opts for trouble and difficulty if this will earn His approval and love. This moral excellence that the disbeliever can never grasp is also the secret of happiness which disbelievers fail to attain throughout their lives.

In the hearts of believers there is a joy and a tranquility which their hope of the approval of Allah and their directing all their efforts to earning it bring them. This cheerfulness and joy which they experience makes them happy and at peace in the life of this world, at the same time constitute an important source of the eagerness which will enable them to earn Allah's approval even more. So long as they have no faith, ignorant people cannot achieve this joy and happiness and cannot imitate it because it has a quality which Allah has made accessible only to the faithful and which comes from the hope He gives of His approval and mercy and of eternal Paradise. Allah announces in the Qur'an the good news that this is a blessing solely for believers:

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

Ignorant people are not aware that the approval of Allah is finer and of far greater value than any other reward they may obtain and any worldly profit. For this reason, throughout their lives they are deprived of the lasting happiness and joy which earning the approval of Allah can bring them.

PERPETUAL HAPPINESS BELONGS TO BELIEVERS

They are Given the Good News Here on Earth

People in the community of the ignorant carry within them an indescribable discomfort no matter how happy and cheerful they may appear to those around them and always give a false impression of happiness. No matter what they do, they cannot be rescued from their unhappiness. Their ingratitude for the blessings Allah has given, their rejection of the word of Allah and their living a life far removed from the guidance of the Qur'an drive them into unhappiness which begins in the life of this world and will be greatly intensified on the Day of Judgment.

Whatever the circumstances in which they find themselves, because they are people who trust in Allah, who always turn to Him, who think continually about what is pleasing to Him and never deviate from the guidance of the Qur'an, the boundless mercy, generosity and love of Allah are always with believers. Allah has promised that He will never leave them alone and without aid. For these devoted servants who make a sincere effort for His cause without giving way to doubt, and who joyfully devote their lives and their goods to gaining His good pleasure, Allah brings the good news that as the reward for what they have done they will live for

ever in a Paradise filled with blessings:

There is good news for them in the life of this world and in the Hereafter. There is no changing the words of Allah. That is the great victory! (Surah Yunus: 64)

Their Lord gives them the good news of His mercy and good pleasure and Gardens where they will enjoy everlasting delight. (Surat at-Tawba: 21)

As we can see from these verses, Allah has brought believers the good news of Paradise, describing the joy that will soon be theirs. Awareness that the boundless mercy and love of Allah are always with them and the hope that Allah will reward them with the Gardens of Paradise bring a great comfort and peace to the hearts of believers. In the Qur'an, Allah also informs believers that they will be brought good news by angels:

The angels descend on those who say, "Our Lord is Allah," and then go straight: "Do not fear and do not grieve but rejoice in the Garden you have been promised." (Surah Fussilat: 30)

This indescribable happiness of believers is not limited to being given the good news of the Garden. In addition to this, Allah blesses His true servants with the news of a beautiful worldly life in the verse, "... **There is good in this world for those who do good, and the abode of the Hereafter is even better...**" (Surat an-Nahl: 30)

Allah also promises believers that they will live an excellent life in this verse:

Anyone who acts rightly, male or female, being a believer , We will give them a good life and We will recompense them according to the best of what they did. (Surat an-Nahl: 97)

We can see in the Qur'an that this good news brought to believers by Allah is manifested in the lives of many of the prophets. For instance, the prayer of Prophet Sulayman (as): **"He [Sulayman] said, 'My Lord, forgive me and give me a kingdom the like of which will never be granted to anyone after me. Truly You are the Ever - Giving.'" (Surah Sad: 35)** This prayer was answered and he was given great worldly wealth. In the verse, **"Did He not find you impoverished and enrich you?" (Surat ad-Duha: 8),** Allah tells us that Prophet Muhammad (saws) was also given wealth. In addition, in various verses the Qur'an tells us that Prophets Dawud (as), Ibrahim (as) and Dhu'l-Qarnayn (as) were given great resources and openings.

As well as the endless wonders and rewards He has reserved for the believers in Paradise, Allah grants them blessings in this world and this increases their devotion to Him and their desire and eagerness to be united in the Garden.

In the Qur'an Allah promises that believers will always be happy and secure in this world and that by the guiding light of the Qur'an He will give them strength and power:

Allah has promised those of you who believe and do right actions that He will make them successors in the land as He made those before them successors, and will firmly establish for them their religion with which He is pleased and give them, in place of their fear, security. "They worship Me, not associating anything with Me." Any who disbelieve after that, such people are deviators. (Surat an-Nur: 55)

This is a pledge of Allah's to believers. What believers must do is show their gratitude to Allah and praise His name in exchange for this favor.

They are Pleased with Allah's Mercy and His people

As has been emphasized in previous sections, the happiness of people in the community of the ignorant is dependent on worldly life and the extent to which they can take advantage of it. All their affection and respect for one another as well as their relations with each other are based on materialistic criteria. They have convinced themselves that in this way they will lead a happy and tranquil life. However, there is one thing which they forget or ignore every time. Human happiness depends not on comfort in material terms but on spiritual comfort and tranquility. Whether a person is rich or poor, he cannot be happy unless he feels spiritual calm and comfort. In the community of the ignorant, this materialistic drive pushes people in the direction of a bottomless pit, for it is a source of trouble. Allah describes this situation in the Qur'an:

Do not let their wealth and children impress you. Allah merely wants to punish them by them during their life in this world and for them to expire while they are disbelievers. (Surat at-Tawba: 55)

As Allah tells us in the Qur'an, no matter how much property they acquire and accumulate and no matter how far they improve their status, unbelievers will gain nothing but torment and misery. Because they do not understand the beauty and the comfort which the guidance of the Qur'an can bring them, they try to fill their spiritual vacuum with fleeting worldly gains. Believers naturally experience spiritual contentment because they have faith in Allah and worship only Him. In a verse of the Qur'an, Allah defines believers as those who "humble themselves before their Lord" because this satisfies their hearts. He also brings them the good news of Paradise:

As for those who believe and do right actions and humble themselves before their Lord, they are the Companions of the Garden, remaining in it timelessly, for ever. (Surah Hud: 23)

In another verse of the Qur'an, Allah tells us that the hearts of believers are contented only through His remembrance and that it is only through His remembrance that any heart can find contentment:

Those who have faith and whose hearts find peace in the remembrance of Allah. Only in the remembrance of Allah can the heart find peace. (Surat ar-Ra'd: 28)

What makes believers happy and brings them peace and comfort is the deep devotion they feel towards Allah and being with Allah in their hearts at all times. This favor is a blessing and a mercy granted by Allah to His sincere believers in return for their sincere faith. They experience the happiness of knowing that when they pray Allah will answer their prayers, that when they make a mistake Allah will always forgive and help them if they confess it sincerely, that He will definitely show them a way out, that they will receive a full or even excessive reward for what they do and that they will attain Allah's boundless mercy. Thus the source of the joy and happiness of believers is the unlimited mercy and benevolence Allah shows them. Allah describes this joy of the believers in the Qur'an as follows:

Say: "It is the favor of Allah and His mercy that should be the cause of their rejoicing. That is better than anything they accumulate." (Surah Yunus: 58)

Allah's mercy and great benevolence manifest themselves unceasingly until the end of their lives. The Garden filled with blessings which Allah has prepared for the faithful will also be theirs eternally by Allah's permission.

The Strength of Their Devotion to Allah

Throughout their lives believers have faith together with the certain knowledge that everything takes place with Allah's knowledge and under His control. Every moment of a person's life, every word he says, his every thought, everything that happens to him and where and when he will die are determined before he even comes into the world. He lives out what Allah wants for him. It is this which gives believers great peace and comfort. They know that everything which happens to them has been planned by Allah and is definitely to their advantage. Because of this, in every circumstance believers take refuge in Allah. They are guided by Him and they ask for His help. Allah refers to this powerful devotion of the believers as follows:

Say: "Nothing can happen to us except what Allah has ordained for us. He is Our Master. It is in Allah that the believers should put their trust." (Surat at-Tawba: 51)

Believers put their trust in Allah in all matters and because they accept everything He creates for them they never give way to fear or concern under any circumstances. Their submission to Allah keeps them from worldly fears and concerns of any kind. People who live in the community of the ignorant have a great many fears and concerns because they do not trust in Allah. The most important of these are fear for the future, fear of poverty and fear of death. They worry about these all the time and, taking the whole burden on themselves, try to find solutions. It is impossible for a person to find a way out without Allah's help and mercy. Believers who sincerely believe in Allah and submit to Him from the heart stay away from these troubles caused by worldly stresses and fears and are always carefree, cheerful and optimistic.

Another important factor in making believers happy and tranquil is their knowledge that any event which happens to them that seems negative is in fact to their advantage. Faced with the problems they encounter, ignorant people feel great anxiety and discomfort and are crushed by them. When something occurs which seems disadvantageous, they cannot see the good and the benefit in it which Allah wants for them. For this reason, they always fall prey to a pessimistic and hopeless outlook. This in turn distances them further and further from Allah. This state into which such people sink increases their pain and dismay even more. Allah tells us that the hardships disbelievers suffer will continually increase:

But as for those who deny Our Signs, We will lead them, step by step, into destruction from where they do not know .
(Surat al-A'raf: 182)

With the expression "from where they do not know" in the verse, Allah is informing us that the deniers of the truth will experience anxiety and unhappiness in the life of this world in a way they do not expect at all. They are not aware of what really makes them unhappy and troubled. So long as they are not devoted to Allah and His Book they will be unable to identify the source of their unhappiness and will continue to be troubled.

Believers, on the other hand, see good in everything and whatever the circumstances in which they find themselves, they never forget that what happens is what Allah wants for their own benefit. So there is nothing to sadden believers or trouble them. Even if they are in a very difficult and disadvantageous position, they turn to Allah and remain patient while asking for His help. This is a blessing for believers. By the same token in times of ease and plenty they turn to Allah nonetheless and show their gratitude to Him and try to

draw closer still to Him. This, too, is a blessing for believers.

Thus the submission of believers to Allah's decree and their attachment to Him make them happy and at peace under all circumstances and earn them His approval. Our Prophet Muhammad (saws) described this attitude of the believers as "strange" and praised it as follows:

"Strange are the ways of a believer for there is good in every affair of his and this is not the case with anyone else except in the case of a believer for if he has an occasion to feel delight he thanks [Allah], thus there is a good for him in it, and if he gets into trouble and shows resignation (and endures it patiently), there is a good for him in it." (Sahih Muslim, Book 41, Number 20)

As our Prophet (saws) said, for believers everything is a source of benefit. This privilege is exclusive to believers and is a manifestation of Allah's mercy towards them. Allah gives the good news of His mercy towards believers in the Qur'an:

As for those who believed and did right actions, their Lord will admit them into His mercy. That is the Clear Victory. (Surat al-Jathiyya: 30)

The powerful devotion of believers to Allah brings them closer to Him under all circumstances and causes them to be continually contented and at peace.

THE HAPPIEST PEOPLE: THE PROPHETS

The prophets were blessed people sent by Allah to transmit the good news of His religion and invite others to follow His true path. Allah sent the prophets to tell people about the faith, set them the finest example of good character and warn them by pointing out to them the existence of the Hereafter. For a human being, representing Allah on earth is a great and important responsibility. That the prophets were entrusted by Allah with special duties differentiates them from other people.

The prophets were people who lived out the faith they carried in their hearts in a very intense manner. This can be clearly seen from the fact that for the cause of Allah they demonstrated superior and exemplary behavior. The prophets were sent to a number of peoples and rulers whose backwardness, immorality and social degeneration knew no bounds. While explaining Allah's religion they warned the peoples they lived amongst to abandon their ugly behavior and immorality and invited them to have faith in Allah. In order to perform this duty, they remained patient and were not defeated by any force directed at them or by any difficulty, trouble, threats or slanders. In this way the behavior, moral standards and reasoning they exhibited provided the finest possible example to be-

lievers who believed and supported them. In the Qur'an, Allah says that there are fine examples for believers in the lives of the prophets:

You have an excellent model in the Messenger of Allah, for all who put their hope in Allah and the Last Day and remember Allah much. (Surat al-Ahzab: 21)

The prophets were exemplary people for all humanity. Allah tells us that the sending of our Prophet (saws) was a great mercy and favor to believers:

Allah showed great kindness to the believers when He sent a Messenger to them from among themselves to recite His Signs to them and purify them and teach them the Book and Wisdom, even though before that they were clearly misguided. (Surah Al 'Imran: 164)

Throughout their lives, pious believers take the prophets, as described by Allah in these verses of the Qur'an, as examples and in this way try to achieve excellence of character.

Although, throughout their own lives, the prophets were struggling against disbelievers, they were very contented and calm. Because they were leaders guiding people to the path of Islam, they were the people who experienced faith in its most intense and profound form. The happiness, tranquility and security which Allah made them feel in their hearts were as strong as their faith.

In the following paragraphs we will refer to some of the prophets mentioned by Allah in the Qur'an and to their steadfastness.

Prophet Ibrahim (as)

In a number of verses of the Qur'an, Allah gives examples from the life of Prophet Ibrahim (as) and the events which happened to him and speaks of him with praise.

Through his behavior, Prophet Ibrahim (as) showed in the clearest way that a believer needs to be intelligent and cautious, to act continually according to his conscience and to be very courageous in following the path of Allah. Prophet Ibrahim (as) was a wise example to believers with his devotion, submission and closeness to Allah. In Surat an-Nisa': 125, Allah tells believers what a valuable and superior position Prophet Ibrahim (as) holds in His sight by announcing that he has been adopted as an "intimate friend."

Without doubt the adoption by Allah of one of His servants as an intimate friend is amongst the highest distinctions a person can achieve. Of course, for a believer, knowing that Allah is so close to him as a friend and hence, that Allah's assistance, mercy and protection are with him at all times and in all places brings contentment, tranquility and security.

In Surah Maryam, Allah gives us Prophet Ibrahim's (as) warning to his idolater father to believe in Him. Allah tells us of the conversation between the prophet and his father:

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? Father, knowledge which never reached you has come to me, so follow me and I will guide you to the right path. Father, do not worship Satan. Satan was disobedient to the All-Merciful. Father, I am afraid that a punishment from the All-Merciful will afflict you, and turn you into a comrade of Satan." He said, "Do you forsake my gods, Ibrahim? If you do not stop, I will stone you. Keep away from me for a good long time." (Surah Maryam: 42-46)

While Prophet Ibrahim (as) was advising his father to abandon those things he had made into false gods, he employed a very calm

and respectful manner of speaking. However, the discomfort felt by his father in the face of his son's fine upstanding behavior was so great that he became unwilling to see him any more and capable even of killing him. His father's heedlessness prevented him from seeing the truth and closed off his mind and conscience. The aggressive, unpleasant behavior he displayed arose from his lack of faith in Allah and his failure to live according to His guidance.

Despite his father's unpleasant behavior, Prophet Ibrahim (as) left him in a friendly way, saying this:

**"I will separate myself from you and all you call upon besides Allah and I will call upon my Lord. It may well be that, in calling on my Lord, I will not be disappointed."
(Surah Maryam: 48)**

Of course leaving those one loves, especially one's mother and father, or damaging relations with them is not very pleasant for us. Leaving one's family, the people who are closest to us, is extremely difficult and upsetting. For this reason nobody wants to go against his mother or father or a close relative. However, if that person is somebody who does not recognize Allah or is a disbeliever and an enemy of Allah, then feeding one's love of him and accepting him as a friend and ally is completely contrary to the way of Allah.

Thus, in the face of the aggressive behavior of his father, Prophet Ibrahim (as) realized that he could not be his friend and followed his father's wish for him to leave. Since what was most important for Prophet Ibrahim (as) in this incident was behaving in accordance with Allah's guidance, he left his father without hesitation. After acting in this way he knew that, "in calling on His Lord, he had never been disappointed." Naturally, this is the tranquility and happiness brought about by action intended to gain Allah's approval.

Allah bestowed on Prophet Ibrahim (as) Prophets Ishaq (as)

and Ya'qub (as) and rewarded him out of His mercy:

When he had separated himself from them, and what they worshipped besides Allah, We gave him Ishaq and Ya'qub, making each of them a prophet. We endowed them with Our mercy and made them highly honored. (Surah Maryam: 49-50)

As Allah points out in this story, if a person behaves in accordance with His instructions, Allah will shelter him from all troubles no matter what the circumstances and will always fill his heart with contentment and peace.

Prophet Zakariyya (as)

Zakariyya (as) is amongst the prophets referred to in various chapters of the Qur'an. Like all the other prophets, during his life he never deviated in any way from trying to please Allah and striving to maintain the good conduct required for this. He was steadfast in his worship of Allah and always maintained his devotion and submission to Him. In the Qur'an, Allah tells us that when Prophet Zakariyya (as) became old, he wanted Allah to give him a pious child and prayed for this:

And [Zakariyya] said, "My Lord, my bones have lost their strength and my head is crowned with white, but in calling on You, My Lord, I have never been disappointed. I fear my relatives when I am gone and my wife is barren, so give me an heir from You to be my inheritor and the inheritor of the family of Ya'qub, and make him, my Lord, pleasing to You." (Surah Maryam: 4-6)

Allah answered the prayer of Prophet Zakariyya (as) and rewarded him with a son named Yahya. Allah made a woman who was unable to give birth fertile and relieved Prophet Zakariyya (as)

of the concern he was feeling in this miraculous way. Through this example Allah shows us that He will rescue His true servants from any hardship no matter how difficult or even impossible their circumstances may seem and will always bring them contentment.

Prophet Yusuf (as) and His Father Prophet Ya'qub (as)

In Surah Yusuf, Allah tells us about the life of Prophet Yusuf (as). Through all the difficulties he faced, the slanders which were directed at him and the traps set for him, Prophet Yusuf (as) always battled on by praying sincerely to Allah and sacrificed nothing of his faith in our Lord.

He resigned himself to being imprisoned in order to gain Allah's approval and avoid committing wrong actions. With his truthfulness, sincerity and honorable behavior he inspired affection and respect for himself in those around him. With the advice he gave those people, he summoned them to the true path. In Surah Yusuf, there is another person who is referred to and praised for his faith in Allah and his submission to Him at least as much as Prophet Yusuf (as); this was Prophet Ya'qub (as), who was Prophet Yusuf's (as) father.

Prophet Ya'qub (as) knew from a dream that his son, Prophet Yusuf (as), would become an important person in the future and he tried to protect him and support him to the best of his ability. However, Prophet Yusuf's (as) brothers were jealous of their father's love for him and the interest he took in him and they prepared a trap for him. They decided to rid themselves of Yusuf (as) by casting him into a well. After throwing him into the well, they claimed that a wolf had eaten him and as evidence produced his shirt, covered in fake blood. Faced with this distressing situation, Prophet Ya'qub

(as) demonstrated superior conduct. He conformed to the guidance of Allah and was able to give his sons the best advice while being patient in the knowledge that through perseverance and the help of Allah he would be rescued. In the Qur'an, Allah describes Prophet Ya'qub's (as) behavior as follows:

They then produced his shirt with false blood on it. He said, "It is merely that your lower selves have suggested something to you which you did; but beauty lies in showing steadfastness. It is Allah alone Who is my Help in face of the event that you describe." (Surah Yusuf: 18)

The trap set for Prophet Yusuf (as) by his brothers was, for Prophet Ya'qub (as), a test sent by Allah. Prophet Ya'qub (as) remained loyal to Allah in the hope that if he demonstrated the best conduct, Allah would turn his sorrow into joy and happiness.

Prophet Yusuf (as) was rescued from the well into which he had been thrown by a caravan of travelers and sold to an Egyptian governor. In this way Allah placed Prophet Yusuf (as) in Egypt and He gave him power, wisdom and taught him the interpretation of dreams.

As a result of a slander against him by the governor's wife, Prophet Yusuf (as) was later imprisoned in a dungeon and after remaining there for years he explained a dream of the ruler's which nobody else could understand through the knowledge which had been given him and thus attracted the ruler's attention. Allah supported him with His mercy and assistance, rescued him from the dungeon and set him at the head of the nation's treasury.

Then Prophet Yusuf's (as) brothers, without knowing who he was, came to him several times to buy food from him. Prophet Yusuf (as) prepared a plan to rescue his younger brother from the evil intentions of his other brothers and succeeded in taking him from

them. Allah describes in the Qur'an the submissive behavior of Prophet Ya'qub (as) when Prophet Yusuf's (as) brothers told him about this:

He said, "It's merely that your lower selves suggested something to you which you did. But beauty lies in having steadfastness. Perhaps Allah will bring them all together. He is indeed All-Knowing and All-Wise." (Surah Yusuf: 83)

Believing that he had lost his other son increased Prophet Ya'qub's (as) sorrow still further but he again acted in accordance with Allah's guidance. He did not deviate from his steadfast conduct and waited patiently in the hope of a reunion. In return for his high standard of behavior and submission, Allah rewarded Prophet Ya'qub (as) by reuniting him with both his sons. In return for his sincere faith and refusal to deviate from His teaching, Allah transformed the sorrow of the Prophet Ya'qub (as) into joy and happiness.

As in the example of Prophet Ya'qub (as), everybody who avoids deviating under any circumstances from his submission to Allah and the desire to earn His approval will definitely find contentment. This is our Lord's promise to us.

THE HAPPINESS AND BLESSINGS BROUGHT BY FAITH

Cheerfulness

Because they believe in Allah and accept His decree, the cheerfulness and joy of the faithful are perpetual. This also manifests itself in their daily lives and is the basic source of believers' character. By contrast, in return for their living in ignorance of Allah and His scriptures, disbelievers are always unhappy.

The love and devotion believers feel towards Allah and their submission to Him remove all cause for material and spiritual discomfort because for believers there is nothing in their lives which can be classified as "bad." Through the guidance of the Qur'an they are aware that things regarded as "bad" will be turned to their advantage and benefit by Allah. This ensures that believers always have a cheerfulness and joy which springs from their faith. In surroundings where everybody is unhappy and pessimistic, they never lose any of their cheerfulness because there is nothing which can make them unhappy.

People in the community of the ignorant can do whatever they like but because they do not have the joy of faith they will never know true contentment. Even though they want to do so very much they can never act with sincere and heartfelt cheerfulness. They can-

not be relaxed and at peace in the true sense because they have excluded themselves from the tranquility which faith would bring them. They also make those around them uncomfortable.

The reactions of believers are always heartfelt and sincere because they have the joy of faith. Their actions and behavior bring great calm and cheer to those around them because they always act on the basis of their devotion to Allah. For this reason everybody takes great pleasure from discussion and friendship with a believer because only believers possess sincerity, honesty and happiness in the true sense. Because of this incomparable blessing which Allah has given them, believers are the only people who take pleasure from life and enjoy themselves and celebrate in the full meaning of the word because they know that everything is by the decree of Allah. Allah explains this in the following verse of the Qur'an:

Say: "Nothing can happen to us except what Allah has ordained for us. He is Our Master. It is in Allah that the believers should put their trust." (Surat at-Tawba: 51)

People who suffer difficulty and anxiety because of the ignorance and immorality which govern their way of life, do not experience the pleasure of enjoying themselves in the real sense because of the deep spiritual unease which disturbs their inner beings. Even if a person seems to be laughing and enjoying himself, he only thinks he is doing so. He paints a false picture of fun and happiness because he cannot forget the troubles and problems he meets in daily life. Wherever he goes and whatever he does, he is unable to enjoy himself wholeheartedly because he is constantly plagued by worry and anxiety.

The unhappiness of such people is so deep that when they meet someone who is able to smile sincerely it causes them great discomfort because they cannot be like that themselves. The cheerfulness

and ease of others turns into a torture for them and increases their unhappiness still further. Because of this they do not hesitate to engage in all kinds of odd and contrary behavior in order to pass on their own unhappiness to those around them. They want everyone else to be just like them. This unbalanced behavior on the part of disbelievers makes it impossible for them to experience the blessings of happiness. No matter what they do or where they go, so long as they do not have sincere faith they will be deprived of the cheerfulness which faith brings and will spend their lives in spiritual torment.

The hearts of such people can be compared to a dark house whose interior is filled with smoke. Because they do not have faith in Allah this house has no doors or windows. Because they do not have faith in our Lord, the filthy and smoky air inside their houses never goes out and the clean air outside never gets in.

The believers have the capacity to experience the greatest degree of high spirits. They can truly have fun and enjoy themselves because Allah has rewarded them in this way for their sincere faith in Him. Our Lord gives us this good news in the Qur'an:

... Allah is pleased with them and they are pleased with Him. That is the Great Victory. (Surat ar-Ra'd: 119)

In another verse, Allah tells us that the hearts of believers are content with His remembrance and that the real source of the tranquility and happiness they experience is their faith in Him:

Those who have faith and whose hearts find peace in the remembrance of Allah. Only in the remembrance of Allah can the heart find peace. (Surat al-Ma'ida: 28)

Strength

To be strong and thus to be able to control people is regarded as very important in the community of the ignorant. People believe

they can hold a powerful position by becoming rich or achieving a status in which those around them will look up to them.

For example, a person who believes in the power of money to achieve anything he wants, does everything he can to acquire it. However, he continually ignores something very important; spiritual strength. Spiritual strength depends on the closeness of a person to Allah. People who live in the community of the ignorant can sink into a hopeless and pessimistic spiritual state at times of the slightest difficulty no matter how strong they are in material terms and because of this they lose whatever *joie de vivre* they possess.

As a result of losing their zest for life and the will to succeed, nothing remains of their strength and resistance when they face difficult situations. Naturally, this spiritual loss of strength is reflected in a negative way in their lives, their actions and their behavior. As they cannot find within themselves the strength and willpower to go anywhere or do anything, they develop a lazy and impotent nature. They avoid making any effort and always set their faces against any activity which could benefit them. In fact, they feel no desire to do anything very much even if it might be to their advantage because of this oppressive weariness and lethargy.

We can compare the state of these people to that of somebody very old. Even if they appear young, because of this lack of strength their low spirits cause them to behave like elderly people. They have aged not physically, but spiritually. For an elderly person, loss of strength, tiredness and the need to rest regularly are perfectly normal. Sometimes, though, we even see elderly people who are dynamic and active just like youngsters. This is because even though their bodies have aged, their spirits remain active and dynamic. The people we are talking about are the exact opposite. Although they may be young, they have fallen into the state described above and

are spiritually no different from the senile.

As we can see, these people live without the spiritual strength which Allah would give them because they have no faith in Him. In return for the immorality which such people display Allah removes the strength from their hearts. As a result, their spiritual state reduces them to a kind of living death. This unpleasant state of theirs is easily discernible in all of their behavior.

In contrast to disbelievers, the powerful faith of believers increases their happiness and spiritual strength. Those who always take Allah as their guardian and friend and accept His decree are always cheerful and strong because of the spiritual strength which Allah gives them in return. They never sink into a lazy or lethargic state, because they know it will bring them harm and loss. The spiritual strength they feel inspires them to strive even harder for Allah's approval, making ever more strenuous efforts.

In difficult situations they encounter on the path of Allah, this spiritual strength is also the source of their patience. Therefore, there is no challenge or circumstance which could ever cause them to behave in a way which Allah would not approve. They always opt to be vigorous and active in order to be always at the forefront, setting the best example. Their efforts ensure that they come a little closer to the prospect of the Garden each day. The strength brought by their hope of Allah's approval grows all the time so that they achieve the superior mode of conduct which Allah describes in the Qur'an.

The satisfaction they derive from doing good deeds creates in them a desire to look for further good actions to do. No matter how much effort they expend on this, it never tires them. Effort sincerely made to earn Allah's pleasure only increases their faith and adds to their strength. Allah tells the faithful in the Qur'an to continue their efforts unceasingly:

So when you have finished, work on. And make your Lord your goal! (Surat al-Inshirah: 7-8)

Believers who obey this command of Allah's and spend all their lives constantly striving to earn Allah's approval, live happy lives both in this world and the next. In the Qur'an, Allah tells us that He gives the blessing of happiness to believers in this world and the Hereafter:

Those who are steadfast in seeking the face of their Lord, and perform prayer and give from the provision We have given them, secretly and openly, and stave off evil with good, it is they who will have the Ultimate Abode. (Surat ar-Ra'd: 22)

Zeal

Zeal is the intense desire to accomplish a task or reach a goal. The zeal people feel towards any task is in proportion to their sincerity in performing it. As for disbelievers, it is almost impossible for them to act with eagerness in any task they perform so long as there is no benefit in it for them. They only feel eagerness to satisfy their own selfish desires, this is their only motivation. For them, the only important thing in what they do is personal gain. Otherwise, in tasks where they cannot gain any benefit for themselves, they are extremely unwilling and lacking in enthusiasm.

This attitude badly affects the results of their undertakings. Because they do not take the care which eagerness and desire bring, what they do is unproductive. Most of the time they abandon a task without completing it or do not even start it. For this reason, finishing what they start is a great success for them and even something praiseworthy. In the Qur'an, Allah tells us that the jobs such people

do without eagerness are all so much wasted effort and that as a result they will suffer disappointment:

Say: "Shall I inform you of the greatest losers in their actions? People whose efforts in the life of this world are misguided while they suppose that they are doing good." (Surat al-Kahf: 103-104)

Because of the happiness which their faith brings them, believers have boundless energy, eagerness and willingness. In order to earn more and more of Allah's approval with every passing day they want to be involved in more good deeds. When they finish a job, they are not satisfied. On the contrary, this just makes them all the more eager and causes them to become involved in still more good works. They pray to Allah to be able to perform the tasks required of them in the best possible way and the way which is most useful to other people. They consider carefully what they are doing and make a sincere effort to achieve the best outcomes. The result of all this is that the outcome is the best they can achieve. This is an important secret of the success which Allah gives believers.

Since they know that the reward they receive in the Hereafter will be proportionate to the number of good deeds they engage in to earn the approval of Allah in this short worldly life, they are never satisfied with less and are always looking for more. They pray to Allah as in the verse, "**keep me acting rightly, pleasing You...**" (Surat al-Ahqaf: 15) By way of reward for this sincere behavior on the part of believers, Allah sends their hearts security and peace and strengthens their faith still further with every day that passes. Allah describes this mercy towards believers in the Qur'an:

It is He Who sent down serenity into the hearts of the believers thereby increasing their faith with more faith—the legions of the Heavens and the earth belong to Allah... (Surat al-Fath: 4)

Physical Beauty and Health

There are great differences in every area between believers and disbelievers. Generally speaking, there is a very close connection between people's spiritual state and their outward appearance. In most cases it is very easy to understand what spiritual state they are in from their actions and behavior. People who have removed themselves from the guidance of the Qur'an reflect the resignation they feel towards their troubles with a weary and hopeless expression on their faces. Even at times when there is nothing to sadden or trouble their hearts, this troubled expression remains fixed. They complain about everything that happens to them and can never be easily satisfied with anything. They usually exhibit irritable and contrary behavior. Needless to say, it is out of the question for a person in such a spiritual state to smile, behave cheerfully or wear a clear and open facial expression. Because of this they live with darkened faces deprived of the light which cheerfulness and happiness provide. Allah describes the situation of disbelievers in a verse of the Qur'an:

"But if anyone turns away from My reminder, his life will be a dark and narrow one and on the Day of Rising We will gather him blind." (Surah Ta Ha: 124)

Because they have no faith, neither do they have the ability to separate right from wrong and good from evil. It follows in turn that they are incapable of seeing how much harm the state they are in does them. Although they should feel dissatisfied about this situation, and hence, make an effort to rescue themselves from it, they insist on the correctness of the life they lead and clearly show that they prefer that instead.

When told that the situation they are in is harmful and are given advice on how to correct it, they set their faces against this advice, as Allah tells us in the verses, **"He who has fear will be re-**

mind. But the most miserable will shun it [the reminder]."

(Surat al-A'la: 10-11) Even though they are aware of their unhappiness, they refuse to admit this and put forward various reasons for their situation. While trying to present their situation as reasonable, they deceive themselves because everything which contributes to their lifelong misery, everything which makes them unhappy, is a part of the test set for them by Allah.

Since they are not aware that all these things have been sent them by Allah in accordance with His own divine purpose, their inevitable reaction is to become sorrowful and unhappy. Their unhappiness increases still further so long as they remain ignorant of this truth.

Allah tells us that those who do not have faith in Him and therefore cannot comprehend Him are exposed to corruption:

**No self can believe except with Allah's permission. He places a blight on those who do not use their intellect.
(Surah Yunus: 100)**

As the state of corruption arising from their incomprehension makes them physically ugly, it also has an adverse effect on their mental and physical health. They cannot achieve a balanced mental state. The stress and anxiety they experience become an inseparable part of the psychology of such people. It is impossible to be sure of their moods; when they will get angry, when they will smile or how they will react to anything. This dark mental state makes itself apparent at every opportunity. Comfort and peace tend to make these people uneasy, which then causes them to seek alternatives which invariably bring further discomfort and unhappiness.

To overcome a problem they face, instead of being patient and praying to Allah for His help they try to solve it by means of their own intelligence. However, when they fail to find a solution their

unhappiness increases along with the trouble and stress that go with it. In order to find a little relief they end up resorting to methods which do them even more harm. The most widespread of these are alcohol, cigarettes and drugs. Their psychological state is so seriously disturbed and deep-rooted that they do not hesitate to use substances which harm their bodies and damage their internal organs. As a result of the endless unhappiness of their existence, they bury their heads in the sand and abandon the natural intelligence which they would normally regard as their main asset. Hence, they fail to acknowledge that all these things will only worsen the situation they are in.

It is impossible for a person who lives continually in such a psychological state to be robust and healthy. His body will age faster than normal and will signal this in various ways. Ailments starting with continual headaches, early hair loss and lack of appetite are the forerunners of more painful and serious illnesses which will emerge later. Their health, which is amongst the most important gifts we have as far as happiness is concerned, is dangerously undermined by the constant stress which pervades their lives. They are not even aware that their misguided efforts to ease their troubles a little are only opening the way to even greater danger, together with all of its consequences.

Believers are able to enjoy the peace of sincere reliance on Allah and taking only Him as their friend and guardian. They never behave in any way which will endanger their health which they regard as a blessing given them by Allah. As a result, they look after themselves to the best of their ability and so remain robust and healthy. They know what an important and wonderful thing health is and they are always grateful to Allah for it. They do not ignore every problem they encounter like the disbelievers but concern them-

selves with it right away and take precautions against complications which may arise later.

In return for this steadfastness on the part of the believers and their heartfelt devotion to Him, Allah rewards them with a beautiful life in this world. Of course, "beautiful life" refers to both the material and the spiritual. The spiritual happiness they feel is the greatest reason for their looking healthy and attractive. The beauty possessed by believers is the light which Allah gives them. Because of this light, the faces of believers are always open and clear. With the light which Allah gives believers He makes them different from and superior to disbelievers and provides them with a spiritual beauty and a striking air of faith. Allah describes the expression of faith on the faces of the believers and the impact it will have on those around them, "... **Their mark is on their faces, the traces of prostration...**"

(Surat al-Fath: 29)

Just as it exists in the life of this world, so this difference between deniers of the faith and the believers will also emerge on the Day of Judgment. Allah informs us of this in the following verses:

Faces that Day will be radiant, gazing at their Lord. And faces that Day will be glowering, realizing that a back-breaking blow has fallen. (Surat al-Qiyama: 22-25)

That Day some faces will be radiant, laughing, rejoicing. That Day some faces will be dust-covered, overcast with gloom. Those are the dissolute disbelievers. (Surah Abasa: 38-42)

Insight and Wisdom

In order to know Allah Who created all living creatures and the universe and to comprehend His power, a person should consider everything our Lord has created and try to appreciate the manifesta-

tions of His boundless knowledge and will. Only in this way can he understand that everything he sees was created and must definitely be the product of a power and an intelligence. By acknowledging the intelligence and creative power of Allah in this way he will come closer to Allah and realize that he needs to have faith in Him.

However, for a person to be able to see and understand all these things, he requires an insight which sees with wisdom. Seeing everything around him with wisdom is the best means of referring to Allah and remembering Him at every moment, as Allah tells us in the verse, **"an instruction and a reminder for every penitent human being."** (Surah Qaf: 8) A person can look at the proofs of the creation on the face of the earth as much as he wants to, he can investigate these for days, weeks or years and by doing so he can discover that they have astonishing characteristics but so long as he does not evaluate them with the eye of faith, he will be unable to understand their true meaning or what it is they are trying to tell him.

One reason for people's inability to see this meaning is that they cannot properly evaluate all these things with the eye of the heart, if they do not possess mental and spiritual ease. For a person to be able to be cautious, notice every detail and evaluate these things correctly, peace of mind is necessary. For reasons referred to above, the minds of people living in the community of the ignorant are perpetually filled with worldly concerns. They are worried about solving the problems they encounter. They believe the way to solve an uncomfortable situation and become happy is to think continually about their own daily affairs, calculate what profits they can obtain and snatch the maximum benefits from the life of this world. As a result, they direct all their attention to these things and are unable to see the proofs of the creation around them. Even if they see them they react to them as something ordinary because of their superficial

viewpoint. Even if the miraculous detail of creation is pointed out to them, the explanation will be meaningless to them because what really interests them is the profits they can obtain. In short, because they do not want to see, these people are blinder than the blind and because they do not want to hear they are deafer than the deaf. Allah describes such people in the following Qur'anic verse:

... 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)

They are incapable of seeing the divine wisdom in the signs of Allah's creation because as well as the imbalance in their mental state they are not at ease and tranquil in spiritual terms. In the following verse of the Qur'an, Allah describes the inability of disbelievers to see the proofs of the creation which are evident even in a small insect:

Allah is not ashamed to make an example of a gnat or of an even smaller thing. As for those who believe, they know it is the truth from their Lord. But as for those who disbelieve, they say, "What does Allah mean by this example?" He misguides many by it and guides many by it. But He only misguides the deviators. (Surat al-Baqara: 26)

Deniers of the faith do not consider the truths of the faith which are before their eyes every day because their intellects are obscured by depression, anxiety and stress. Since what is important for them is gaining the greatest advantage they can in the life of this world, they set little store by anything else. They cannot understand the need for and the importance of faith in Allah because they cannot, in the true sense, see His supremacy over all the living creatures which

He has created. Even if they seem to understand just a little, this understanding quickly loses its effect because they are not strong enough to put their consciences to work.

Allah tells us in the following verse of the Qur'an that even though He confronts them with proofs which point to Him, these have no effect on them:

How many Signs there are in the Heavens and earth! Yet they pass them by, turning away from them. (Surah Yusuf: 105)

They are not comfortable or tranquil in spiritual terms because of their unhappiness. This prevents them from looking at everything around them with insight and holds them back from faith in Allah. They lose the happiness sincere belief in Allah would bring them and lead miserable lives because of their own lack of intelligence.

Believers always feel happiness because they believe in Him, think about Him and try to earn His approval. In order to approach Allah more closely they think deeply about and investigate everything He has created. For example, for a believer, looking at the boundless Heavens is a way of appreciating the power and artistry of Allah. Or when he sees a beautiful view, he considers that this beauty has been shown him by Allah and is grateful to Him for it. For the faithful, regarding everything around them as an opportunity to praise Allah ensures that they gain His approval and experience happiness more fully.

PARADISE, THE PLACE OF ENDLESS HAPPINESS

Allah brings those who follow His guidance the good news of a Paradise filled with blessings where they will live eternally and warns them not to be deceived by the life of this world and place it above Paradise: "**The life of this world is nothing but a game and a diversion. The abode of the Hereafter—that is truly Life if they only knew.**" (Surat al-'Ankabut: 64) and "**... the best homecoming is in the presence of Allah.**" (Surah Al 'Imran: 14) Allah tells us that the Hereafter is more precious than the life of this world and superior to it and that people's real life is there. In that case, what kind of surroundings and existence await people in the Hereafter?

Our concern here is with Paradise and the happiness which will be experienced there, rather than Hell which is the place of torment which Allah has prepared for disbelievers.

In His verses, Allah tells us that the life of the Hereafter is the real life of the human being. In Paradise, the defects and shortcomings of the life of this world will no longer exist. There will be everything the human heart desires. Allah has informed us of the perfection of the Garden and the details of the life believers will live there in the Qur'an. He mentions the surroundings in which believers will live, what they will eat, the natural beauties of Paradise and

the spouses the believers will have there. A great deal of information concerning the Garden is contained in the Qur'an for us to reflect upon. In order to understand better life in Paradise and the limitless happiness which is promised there, let us briefly examine its wonders in the light of the verses of the Qur'an.

If we consider first the natural beauties of the Garden, we can say that Allah describes it as "**neither burning sun nor bitter cold**" (Surat al-Insan: 13), telling us that it has a climate so beautiful as to cause no discomfort at all to anybody. The heat which makes people sweat and stupefies them, and the freezing cold in this world do not exist there. This points to the perfection of the climate in Paradise. Amongst other natural beauties referred to in the Qur'an by Allah in connection with Paradise are "**outpouring water.**" (Surat al-Waqi'a: 31) Water which flows unceasingly gives people great pleasure and is at the same time soothing and restful. The pools and fountains which in the life of this world people build in the gardens of their houses and villas provide both an aesthetic view and a cooling environment. Allah tells us about this characteristic of Paradise in another verse: "**In them are two gushing springs.**" (Surat ar-Rahman: 66)

In addition, Allah informs us that believers will live in soothing, pleasant places: "**Those who guard against evil will be amid Gardens and Springs.**" (Surat al-Hijr: 45) and "**The heedful will be amid shade and fountains.**" (Surat al-Mursalat: 41) Amongst other things of great beauty which Allah mentions in the Qur'an are the flowers and plants of every type which are brought together in perfect harmony and from which people will take indescribable pleasure. As well as these, fruit trees described as "**thornless lote-trees**" (Surat al-Waqi'a: 28) and "**fruit-laden acacias,**" (Surat al-Waqi'a: 29) are another blessing. Allah adds to this that Paradise has an appear-

ance which is **"of deep viridian green."** (Surat ar-Rahman: 64)

Bringing all these together sets before people a vision of enchanting beauty. Neither is there any question of this vision fading or being lost with the passage of time. It will remain eternally untouched and unblemished. The beauties and blessings which await believers in Paradise are not limited to these. In addition to these natural wonders, Allah tells us in the Qur'an of the beauty of the places where believers will live:

But those who have fear of their Lord will have high-ceilinged Halls, and more such Halls built one above the other, and rivers flowing under them. That is Allah's promise. Allah does not break His promise. (Surat az-Zumar: 20)

As Allah informs us in this verse, believers will live in pavilions constructed on the heights of Paradise and looking out on inspiring views. As well as this Allah has created handsome servants for believers. He tells us that they will provide believers with continual and uninterrupted service in this verse:

Circulating among them there will be youths like hidden pearls. (Surat at-Tur: 24)

Furthermore, Allah tells us that the clothing of believers in Paradise will be beautiful: **"[Believers will be] wearing fine silk and rich brocade, face to face with one another."** (Surat ad-Dukhan: 53), and **"... they will be adorned with gold bracelets and pearls..."** (Surat al-Hajj: 23) As we know, silk and satin, gold and pearls are very valuable in this world. At the same time, this wealth and abundance are an expression of the high station of the believers. In the Garden, they will wear clothes made from silk and satin and jewelry of gold and pearls and their appearance will be aesthetically magnificent. Allah also brings us the good news in the Qur'an that in Paradise He will give believers spouses of unblemished and flaw-

less beauty for themselves alone:

In [the Gardens] are maidens with eyes for them alone, untouched before them by either man or jinn. (Surat ar-Rahman: 56)

With expressions such as "just like closely guarded pearls" (Surat as-Saffat: 49) and "dark-eyed maidens like hidden pearls" (Surat al-Waqi'a: 23), Allah describes the faultless beauty of these spouses created solely for believers. They are without any worldly defect and will never lose any of their beauty. All these are blessings which Allah will grant only to believers. Believers will be pleased with all these blessings and grateful to their Lord. Allah tells us that the eternal happiness believers will feel and their joy is reflected in the illumination of their faces in the verse, "**You will recognize in their faces the radiance of delight.**" (Surat al-Mutaffifin: 24)

Another cause of happiness for believers is the perfection of Allah's creation of everything in Paradise. In the Garden there will be none of the faults and flaws which annoy people in the life of this world and which make them uncomfortable, troubled and unhappy. Allah tells us in the Qur'an that in Paradise there will be no worldly discomforts such as tiredness, death, illness, pain, ageing, dirtiness, thirst, hunger and so forth:

You will not go hungry in it or suffer from nakedness. [We said to Adam,] "You will not go thirsty in it [the Garden] or burn in the sun." (Surah Ta Ha: 118-119)

Without doubt, a place where a person is cleansed of all the factors which trouble and discomfort him and make him unhappy, is also the source of the greatest comfort and luxury he can possibly experience.

In addition, in Paradise, there will be no such concept as "need" for believers. There they will do nothing out of necessity. Everything

will be at their service and everything their hearts desire will be theirs. Allah has created all these blessings so that believers can take pleasure from them and be happy. He has turned everything they do into a pleasure and an entertainment. They will never feel any annoyance or boredom with these things.

Another great blessing for believers which brings peace and happiness is that they will live together with other sincere believers. Without doubt, in Paradise believers will be cleansed of all moral characteristics which annoy, anger and discomfort people in the life of this world. In a verse of the Qur'an, Allah tells us that in Paradise there will be no anger or hatred in the hearts of believers:

We will strip away any rancor in their hearts. Rivers will flow under them and they will say, "Praise be to Allah Who has guided us to this! We would not have been guided, had Allah not guided us. The Messengers of our Lord came with the Truth." It will be proclaimed to them: "This is your Garden which you have inherited for what you did." (Surat al-A'raf: 43)

Of course, living in Paradise with perfectly pure people who have been purged of every low attribute and negative characteristic will be a great blessing for the true believers and a source of peace and happiness. Allah tells us that in Paradise believers will express their happiness as follows:

"Praise be to Allah Who has removed all sadness from us. Truly our Lord is Ever-Forgiving, Ever-Thankful. He Who has lodged us, out of His favor, in the Abode of Permanence where no weariness or fatigue affects us."(Surah Fatir: 34-35)

As we can see from these verses, in Paradise Allah will give people the greatest pleasure and happiness. The joy and happiness

they feel because they have earned the approval and love of Allah will be the source of the highest form of contentment. All the blessings of the Garden are the gift of Allah to His sincere followers. The greatest incentive for believers is the hope that Allah will have mercy on them and admit them to Paradise because of their striving to be pleasing to Him.

Paradise is the gift of Allah, our Lord, and is beyond comparison for that reason. Paradise will unite those people who sincerely believe in Him and who are worthy of the eternal gift of joy and happiness. Thus, the greatest happiness and salvation for a person is earning the approval of Allah and being united with His mercy in Paradise.

CONCLUSION

Whether they are young or old, what most people expect of the world is not just a successful, secure, comfortable and luxurious life, although everybody would enjoy a life of this kind. Above all, people want their lives to have a meaning and a purpose. On this important point, believers and disbelievers part company. Because they know this life is their only chance of earning the good will of Allah, believers make winning His approval their aim right up to the end of their lives.

Disbelievers, on the other hand, pursue various purposes in order to take maximum advantage of this valueless world and live as long as they can driven by the desire to possess the world. Because of this there are major differences between the true happiness of believers and the false happiness of the community of the ignorant. Believers are aware of the true nature of this world and the reason for its creation. They know that Allah is testing them and that it is their duty to serve Him. For this reason, they hope throughout their lives for Paradise which is their real home and try to gain Paradise by working to become more deserving of Allah's generosity and reward.

Happiness is a great blessing both in this world and the next which Allah grants His pious followers for their sincere belief and

devotion. The only source of the happiness and tranquility of believers is their faith. Allah makes sincere believers feel happiness and tranquility as a blessing in their hearts. What believers experience is not a happiness dependent on circumstances but the spiritual happiness which their faith brings them. As for disbelievers, so long as they do not believe they will be unhappy. Allah tells us that in return for their disbelief He makes their hearts unhappy and troubled:

When Allah desires to guide someone, He expands his breast to Islam. When He desires to misguide someone, He makes his breast narrow and constricted as if he were climbing up into the sky. That is how Allah defiles those who have no faith. (Surat al-An'am: 125)

As long as they do not abandon their passion for the things of this world, disbelievers can never know or experience the peace and happiness which faith brings. Allah expresses the regret they will feel on the Day of Judgment with the words, **"They will say, 'If only we had really listened and used our intellect, we would not have been Companions of the Blaze.'" (Surat al-Mulk: 10)** Allah also tells us that unhappiness is their lot in the life of this world by reason of their disbelief:

"Were My Signs not recited to you and did you not deny them?" They will say, "Our Lord, our miserable destiny overpowered us. We were misguided people." (Surat al-Muminun: 106)

Because they live in accordance with Allah's guidance, on the Day of Judgment, Allah will send believers to a Paradise filled with blessings where they will remain for all eternity and they will be received by its guardians as follows:

Conclusion

And those who have fear of their Lord will be driven to the Garden in companies and when they arrive there, finding its gates open, its custodians will say to them, Peace be upon you! You have done well so enter it timelessly, for ever." (Surat az-Zumar: 73)

With their entry into Paradise, the believers, whose happiness will already have begun in the life of this world, will find the greatest joy and salvation. In the Garden Allah has prepared for them, they will experience eternally the boundless blessings of Paradise; the joy and happiness which earning the approval, love and mercy of our Lord has brought them...

THE DECEPTION OF EVOLUTION

Darwinism, in other words the theory of evolution, was put forward with the aim of denying the fact of creation, but is in truth nothing but failed, unscientific nonsense. This theory, which claims that life emerged by chance from inanimate matter, was invalidated by the scientific evidence of clear "design" in the universe and in living things. In this way, science confirmed the fact that Allah created the universe and the living things in it. The propaganda carried out today in order to keep the theory of evolution alive is based solely on the distortion of the scientific facts, biased interpretation, and lies and falsehoods disguised as science.

Yet this propaganda cannot conceal the truth. The fact that the theory of evolution is the greatest deception in the history of science has been expressed more and more in the scientific world over the last 20-30 years. Research carried out after the 1980s in particular has revealed that the claims of Darwinism are totally unfounded, something that has been stated by a large number of scientists. In the United States in particular, many scientists from such different fields as biology, biochemistry and paleontology recognize the invalidity of Darwinism and employ the concept of intelligent design to account for the origin of life. This "intelligent design" is a scientific expression of the fact that Allah created all living things.

We have examined the collapse of the theory of evolution and the proofs of creation in great scientific detail in many of our works, and are still continuing to do so. Given the enormous importance of this subject, it will be of great benefit to summarize it here.

The Scientific Collapse of Darwinism

Although this doctrine goes back as far as ancient Greece, the theory of evolution was advanced extensively in the nineteenth century. The most important development that made it the top topic of the world of science was Charles Darwin's *The Origin of Species* published in 1859. In this book, he denied that Allah created different living species on Earth separately, for he claimed that all living beings had a common ancestor and had 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 on Theory," the theory failed in the face of many critical questions.

Darwin invested all of his hopes in new scientific discoveries, which he expected to solve these difficulties. However, contrary to his expectations, scientific findings expanded the dimensions of these difficulties. The defeat of Darwinism in the face of science can be reviewed under three basic topics:

- 1) The theory cannot explain how life originated on Earth.
- 2) No scientific finding shows that the "evolutionary mechanisms" proposed by the theory have any evolutionary power at all.
- 3) The fossil record proves the exact opposite of what the theory suggests.

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 that the theory cannot answer. However, first and foremost, we need to ask: How did this "first cell" originate?

Since the theory of evolution denies creation and 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. Such a claim, however, is inconsistent with 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, which asserts 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, maggots developing in rotting meat was assumed to be evidence of spontaneous generation. However, it was later 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 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, that 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."¹

For a long time, advocates of the theory of evolution resisted these findings. 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 of 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 1930s, he tried to prove that a living cell 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.

Evolutionist followers of Oparin tried to carry out experiments to solve this problem. The best known experiment was carried out by the American chemist Stanley Miller in 1953. Combining the gases he alleged to have existed in the primordial Earth's atmos-

phere 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, for the atmosphere used in the experiment was very different from the real Earth conditions.³

After a long silence, Miller confessed that the atmosphere medium he used was unrealistic.⁴

All the evolutionists' efforts throughout the twentieth century to explain the origin of life ended in failure. The geochemist Jeffrey Bada, from the 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?

The Complex Structure of Life

The primary reason why the theory of evolution ended up in such a great impasse regarding the origin of life is that even those living organisms deemed to be the simplest have incredibly complex structures. The cell of a living thing is more complex than all of our man-made technological products. Today, even in the most developed laboratories of the world, a living cell cannot be produced by bringing organic chemicals 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 a 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 considered

to be impossible in practical terms.

The DNA molecule, which is located in the nucleus of a cell and which stores genetic information, is an incredible databank. If the information coded in DNA were written down, it would make a giant library consisting of an estimated 900 volumes of encyclopedias consisting of 500 pages each.

A very interesting dilemma emerges at this point: DNA can replicate itself only with the help of some specialized proteins (enzymes). However, the synthesis of these enzymes can be realized only 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.

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 Mechanism 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

Lamarck's Impact

So, how could these "favorable variations" occur? Darwin tried to answer this question from the standpoint of the primitive understanding of science at that time. According to the French biologist Chevalier de Lamarck (1744-1829), who lived before Darwin, living creatures passed on the traits they acquired during their lifetime to the next generation. He asserted that these traits, which accumulated from one generation to another, caused new species to be formed. For instance, he claimed that 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. In his book *The Origin of Species* for instance, he said that some bears going into water to find food transformed themselves into whales over time.⁸

However, the laws of inheritance discovered by Gregor Mendel (1822-84) and verified by the science of genetics, which flourished in the twentieth century, utterly demolished the legend that acquired traits were passed on to subsequent generations. Thus, natural selection fell out of favor 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 due to such external factors as radiation or replication errors, as the "cause of favorable 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 formed as a result of a process whereby numerous complex organs of these organisms (e.g., 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 are always harmful.

The reason for this is very simple: DNA has a very complex structure, and random effects can only harm it. The 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 total, would not be an improvement.

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 things, and leaves them disabled. (The most common effect of mutation on human beings is cancer.) Of course, 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, no such any imaginary process called "evolution" could 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 this theory, every living species has sprung from a predecessor. A previously existing species turned into something else over time and all species have come into being in this way. In other words, this transformation proceeds gradually over millions of years.

Had this been the case, 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 ever 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.

Darwin's Hopes Shattered

However, although evolutionists have been making strenuous efforts to find fossils since the middle of the nineteenth century all over the world, no transitional forms have yet been uncovered. All of the fossils, contrary to the evolutionists' expectations, show that life appeared on Earth all of a sudden and fully-formed.

One 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 another¹¹

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, this is very strong evidence that all living things are created. The only explanation of a living species emerging suddenly and complete in every detail without any evolutionary ancestor is that it 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.

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

The Tale of Human Evolution

The subject most often brought up by advocates of the theory of evolution is the subject of the origin of man. The Darwinist claim holds that modern man evolved from ape-like creatures. During this alleged evolutionary process, which is supposed to have started 4-5 million years ago, some "transitional forms" between modern man and his ancestors are supposed to have existed. According to this completely imaginary scenario, four basic "categories" are listed:

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

Evolutionists call man's so-called first ape-like ancestors

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, shows that these apes belonged to an ordinary ape species that became extinct and bore no resemblance to humans.¹³

Evolutionists classify the next stage of human evolution as "homo," that is "man." According to their 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 twentieth century's most important evolutionists, 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."¹⁴

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 paleo-anthropologists have revealed that *Australopithecus*, *Homo habilis* and *Homo erectus* lived at different parts of the world at the same time.¹⁵

Moreover, a certain segment of humans classified as *Homo erectus* have lived up until very modern times. *Homo sapiens neanderthalensis* and *Homo sapiens sapiens* (modern man) co-existed in the same region.¹⁶

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.

Put briefly, the scenario of human evolution, which is "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 foundation.

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 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" 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.

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.

Darwinian Formula!

Besides all the technical evidence we have dealt with so far, let us now for once, examine what kind of a superstition the evolutionists have with an example so simple as to be understood even by children:

The theory of evolution asserts that life is formed by chance. According to this claim, lifeless and unconscious atoms came together to form the cell and then they somehow formed other living things, including man. Let us think about that. When we bring together the elements that are the building-blocks of life such as carbon, phosphorus, nitrogen and potassium, only a heap is formed. No matter what treatments it undergoes, this atomic heap cannot form even a single living being. If you like, let us formulate an "experiment" on this subject and let us examine on the behalf of evolutionists what they really claim without pronouncing loudly under the name "Darwinian formula":

Let evolutionists put plenty of materials present in the composition of living things such as phosphorus, nitrogen, carbon, oxygen, iron, and magnesium into big barrels. Moreover, let them add in these barrels any material that does not exist under normal conditions, but they think as necessary. Let them add in this mixture as many amino acids—which have no possibility of forming under natural conditions—and as many proteins—a single one of which has a formation probability of 10^{-950} —as they like. Let them expose these mixtures to as much heat and moisture as they like. Let them stir

these with whatever technologically developed device they like. Let them put the foremost scientists beside these barrels. Let these experts wait in turn beside these barrels for billions, and even trillions of years. Let them be free to use all kinds of conditions they believe to be necessary for a human's formation. No matter what they do, they cannot produce from these barrels a human, say a professor that examines his cell structure under the electron microscope. They cannot produce giraffes, lions, bees, canaries, horses, dolphins, roses, orchids, lilies, carnations, bananas, oranges, apples, dates, tomatoes, melons, watermelons, figs, olives, grapes, peaches, peafowls, pheasants, multicoloured butterflies, or millions of other living beings such as these. Indeed, they could not obtain even a single cell of any one of them.

Briefly, unconscious atoms cannot form the cell by coming together. They cannot take a new decision and divide this cell into two, then take other decisions and create the professors who first invent the electron microscope and then examine their own cell structure under that microscope. Matter is an unconscious, lifeless heap, and it comes to life with Allah's superior creation.

The theory of evolution, which claims the opposite, is a total fallacy completely contrary to reason. Thinking even a little bit on the claims of tevolutionists discloses this reality, just as in the above example.

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 eye's retina. Here, these light rays are transmitted

into electric signals by cells and reach a tiny spot at the back of the brain, the "center of vision." These electric signals are perceived in this center 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 its inside is completely dark, and that no light reaches the place where it is located. Thus, the "center of vision" is never touched by light and 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 are reading, your hands with which you are holding it, and 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, colored, 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-dimensional image, whereas with your eyes, you watch a three-dimensional perspective with depth.

For many years, tens of thousands of engineers have tried to make a three-dimensional TV and achieve 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 special 3-D 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 of 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, and the inner ear sends these vibrations to the brain by translating them into electric signals. Just as with the eye, the act of hearing finalizes in the center 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 as 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 completely silent brain, you listen to symphonies, and hear all of the noises in a crowded place. However, were the sound level in your brain was measured by a precise device at that moment, complete silence would be found to be 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 of this technology and the thousands of engineers and experts who have been working on this endeavor, 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 largest 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 human body's technology are extremely sharp and clear. A human ear never perceives a sound accompanied by a hissing sound or with atmospherics as does a hi-fi; rather, 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 man-made visual or recording apparatus 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 truth lies beyond all this.

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

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

The stimulations coming from a person's eyes, ears, and nose travel to the brain as electro-chemical nerve 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: Who perceives these electro-

chemical nerve impulses as images, sounds, odors, and sensory events in the brain? There is a consciousness in the brain that perceives all this without feeling any need for an eye, an ear, and a nose. To whom does this consciousness belong? Of course it 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 answer these questions.

For this consciousness is the spirit created by Allah, which needs neither the eye to watch the images nor the ear to hear the sounds. Furthermore, it does not need the brain to think.

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

A Materialist Faith

The information we have presented so far shows us that the theory of evolution is incompatible with scientific findings. The theory's claim regarding the origin of life is inconsistent with science, the evolutionary mechanisms it proposes have no evolutionary power, and fossils demonstrate that the required intermediate forms have 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 kept on the agenda of science. Some people even try to represent criticisms directed against it as an "attack on science." Why?

The reason is that this theory is an indispensable dogmatic be-

lief 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 to explain 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 ~~to~~ 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

These are explicit statements that Darwinism is a dogma kept alive just for the sake of adherence to materialism. 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 (e.g., birds, fish, giraffes, tigers, insects, trees, flowers, whales, and human beings) originated as a result of the interactions between matter such as pouring rain, lightning flashes, and so on, 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: The Most Potent Spell in the World

Anyone free of prejudice and the influence of any particular ideology, who uses only his or her 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 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 and university students; such scientists as Einstein and Galileo; such artists as Humphrey Bogart, Frank Sinatra and Luciano Pavarotti; as well as antelopes, lemon trees, and carnations. Moreover, as the scientists and professors who believe in this nonsense are educated people, it is quite justifiable to speak of this theory 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 Prophet Ibrahim (as) worshipping idols they had made with their own hands, or the people of Prophet Musa (as) worshipping the Golden Calf.

In fact, Allah has pointed to this lack of reason in the Qur'an. In many verse, 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 do not believe, 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 with which they do not understand. They have eyes with which they do not see. They have ears with which they do not hear. 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; a planet named Earth with all of its features so perfectly suited to life; and living things full of countless complex systems.

In fact, the Qur'an relates the incident of Prophet Musa (as) and Pharaoh to show that some people who support atheistic philosophies actually influence others by magic. When Pharaoh was told about the true religion, he told Prophet 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, his evidence broke the 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, 117-118)

As we can see, when people realized that a spell had been cast upon them and that what they saw was just an illusion, Pharaoh's magicians 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 their superstitious beliefs, they also will be humiliated when the full truth emerges and the spell is broken. In fact, world-renowned British writer and philosopher Malcolm Muggeridge also stated this:

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.

That future is not far off: On the contrary, people will soon see that "chance" is not a deity, and will look back on the theory of evolution as the worst deceit and the most terrible spell in the world.

The Deception of Evolution

That spell is already rapidly beginning to be lifted from the shoulders of people all over the world. Many people who see its true face are wondering with amazement how they could ever have been taken in by it.

NOTES

1. Sidney Fox, Klaus Dose, *Chemical Selection, The Modern Molecular Evolution and The Library*, New York, p. 127.
2. Alexander I. Oparin, *Origin of Life* Dover Publications, New York, 1936, 1953 (reprint), p. 196.
3. "New Evidence on Evolution of Early Atmosphere and Life", *Bulletin of the American Meteorological Society* vol 63, November 1982, p. 1328-1330.
4. Stanley Miller, *Molecular Evolution of Life: Current Status Proceedings of the British Geological Association* vol 87, 1976, p. 133.
5. Jeffrey Bada, *Earth*, February 1998, p. 40.
6. Leslie E. Orgel, "The Origin of Life on Earth", *Scientific American* vol. 271, October 1994, p. 78.
7. Charles Darwin, *The Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection*, The Modern Library, New York, p. 127.
8. Charles Darwin, *The Origin of Species: A Facsimile of the First Edition* Harvard University Press, 1964, p. 184.
9. B. G. Ranganathan, *Origins?*, Pennsylvania: The Banner Of Truth Trust, 1988, p. 7.
10. Charles Darwin, *The Origin of Species: A Facsimile of the First Edition* Harvard University Press, 1964, p. 179.
11. Derek A. Ager, "The Nature of the Fossil Record", *Proceedings of the British Geological Association* vol 87, 1976, p. 133.
12. Douglas J. Futuyma, *Science on Trial*, Pantheon Books, New York, 1983. p. 197.
13. Solly Zuckerman, *Beyond The Ivory Tower*, Toplinger Publications, New York, 1970, pp. 75-14; Charles E. Oxnard, "The Place of Australopithecids"

nes in Human Evolution: Grounds for Doubt", *Nature*, vol 258, p. 389.

14. "Could science be brought to an end by scientists' belief that they have final answers or by society's reluctance to pay the bills?" *Scientific American* December 1992, p. 20.

15. Alan Walker, *Science*, vol. 207, 7 March 1980, p. 1103; A. J. Kelso, *Physical Anthropology* 1st ed., J. B. Lipincott Co., New York, 1970, p. 221; M. D. Leakey, *Olduvai Gorge* vol. 3, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1971, p. 272.

16. Jeffrey Kluger, "Not So Extinct After All: The Primitive Homo Erectus May Have Survived Long Enough To Coexist With Modern Humans", *Time*, 23 December 1996.

17. S. J. Gould, *Natural History* vol. 85, 1976, p. 30.

18. Solly Zuckerman, *Beyond The Ivory Tower* p. 19.

19. Richard Lewontin, "The Demon-Haunted World," *The New York Review of Books* January 9, 1997, p. 28.

20. Malcolm Muggeridge, *The End of Christendom* Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980, p. 43.

*They said, "Glory be to You!
We have no knowledge except
what You have taught us. You are
the All-Knowing, the All-Wise."*

(Qur'an, 2:32)