

الله
رسول
محمد

HARUN YAHYA

LOYALTY
DESCRIBED
IN THE
QUR'AN

Among the believers there are men
who have been true to the contract they ratified
with Allah. Some of them have fulfilled their pact,
while some are still waiting to do so, not
having faltered in any way at all.

(Qur'an, 33:23)



The notion of "loyalty," which is addressed in this book, is one that those distanced from the moral teaching of the Qur'an completely fail to understand; or worse still, will never understand. The loyalty of those who adopt ignorance as a way of life has emptied it of its real meaning, misrepresenting it to disguise the true nature of their actions.

On the contrary, believers employ the intelligence that Allah has given them to duly appreciate His power and infinite knowledge. They know that He alone is worthy of praise, and live their lives without compromise in their adherence to the moral teachings He has revealed in the Qur'an. They follow faithfully and without doubt the way shown by the messengers. Even in times of extreme duress, they are never unfaithful to Him. On the contrary, their closeness to Allah only becomes greater.

Our mighty Lord has promised the believers forgiveness and a great reward in His presence for their deeds.

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



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Abbreviations used:

(*saas-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)

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Loyalty Described in the Qur'an

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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 ensure 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 unobservant of the respect and reverence due to sacred subjects, nor hopeless, pessimistic arguments that create doubts in the mind and deviations in the heart.

Loyalty
Described
in the Qur'an

HARUN YAHYA

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 the his books' covers is symbolic and is linked to the their contents. It represents the Qur'an (the final scripture) and Prophet Muhammad (saas), 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, Uygur 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.

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INTRODUCTION

Many live lives far removed from the moral teachings expounded in the Qur'an; though they had been shown the right way, they turn their faces away. However, such heedlessness will prevent them from attaining that superior moral character called for by Allah in the Qur'an, harming them both materially and spiritually. Anxiety, pessimism, selfishness, belligerence, hypocrisy, arrogance, greed, and other such vices now prevailing in modern societies, are the result of this distance from the true religion and the morality it commands.

However, some are not even aware that they are in such a condition, having become so habituated to such vices that they no longer regard them as negative. The reason for them finding themselves in this condition is that they have turned their backs to the true religion of Allah. He refers to this human failing in the Qur'an:

The Messenger says, "My Lord, my people treat this Qur'an as something to be ignored." (Surat al-Furqan, 30)

The notion of "loyalty", which we are aiming to address in this book, is one that those distanced from the moral teaching of the Qur'an completely fail to understand; or worse still, will never understand. As in all matters, a great difference exists between the way believers understand the meaning of loyalty and how non-believers

do. In those societies where ignorance of the morality of the Qur'an is the norm, loyalty is understood as maintaining a bond between those who love each other, or who share some common relationship, taking full concern of one another's desires and aspirations. The loyalty of those who adopt ignorance as a way of life has emptied it of its real meaning, misrepresenting it to disguise the true nature of their actions.

Disbelievers, not having faith, for failing to appreciate His mighty power, cannot honor Allah with true loyalty. They mistakenly believe that living a life in faithfulness to Allah will rob them of all their worldly advantages. However, Allah has informed us that those who are sincerely faithful to Him will have all the pleasures they can imagine, in this world and the world to come. Disbelievers, however, are not aware of this truth.

Rather, disbelievers are faithful, but in a different way. They are faithful to their base natures, and, ultimately, to Satan. However, the reward awaiting them in the Hereafter for their devotion to their selfish desires and to Satan is eternal anguish.

On the contrary, believers employ the intelligence that Allah has given them to duly appreciate His power and infinite knowledge. They know that He alone is worthy of praise, and live their lives without compromise in their adherence to the moral teachings He has revealed in the Qur'an. They follow faithfully and without doubt the way shown by the messengers. They are patient through adversity, and always mindful of Allah in everything they do. They continually try to win His favor, not being overcome with fear and anxiety, but persistently seeking His good pleasure. Even in times of extreme duress, they are never unfaithful to Him. On the contrary,

their closeness to Allah only becomes greater. Our mighty Lord has promised the believers forgiveness and a great reward in His presence for their deeds:

Men and women who are Muslims, men and women who are believers, men and women who are obedient, men and women who are truthful, men and women who are steadfast, men and women who are humble, men and women who give charity, men and women who fast, men and women who guard their chastity, men and women who remember Allah much: Allah has prepared forgiveness for them and an immense reward. (Surat al-Ahzab, 35)

THE MISINTERPRETATION OF LOYALTY

They Do Not Keep Their Word

In societies ignorant of the morality of the Qur'an, faithfulness is understood in regard to personal gain. Those who understand its meaning in this way will happily show loyalty to whomever and whatever is necessary for the sake of profit. However, this is an insincere kind of faithfulness. Their degree of faithfulness is dependent on the value and size of the reward they are to obtain. If the only way to achieve their aim is to feign loyalty, they will willingly do so.

Moreover, the reason often for so much conflict between people is because of their failure to keep their promises to one another. The basic cause of this is their being opportunistic. Because they seek profit at every chance, disbelievers exploit others merely to get what they want, through trying to hide their real intentions. And, the best way to get what they want is, they think, to win the other person's trust. Having done so, they will then lead that person to think positively of them, and create the situation by which they can attain what they want without the other person knowing. In order to create such a "relationship of trust," and to achieve their aims, those so perverse have the tendency to make false promises, giving their

word without the intention of keeping it. The oath pronounced by Satan to Prophet Adam (as) was an important example presented in the Qur'an, to show how those who are ill-intentioned will do the same to deceive others by first winning their trust. Allah tells revealed this incident in the Qur'an:

Then Satan whispered to them, disclosing to them their private parts that had been concealed from them. He said, "Your Lord has only forbidden you this tree lest you become angels or among those who live for ever." He (Satan) swore to them, "I am one of those who give you good advice." (Surat al-A'raf, 20-21)

In order to convince Prophet Adam (as) that what he said was true, and thereby, to win his trust, Satan followed his speech with an oath. In many verses of the Qur'an, Allah informs us that people also do the same to achieve some personal benefit.

In the Qur'an, Allah also informs us that the hypocrites with sickness in their hearts offer oaths in this same way to hide their lack of faith, and to make the believers believe they are sincere. Only through strong faith in Allah and loyalty to Him is it possible to remain upright in the way of Allah, conform to the moral teachings of the Qur'an, and to be patient through the difficulties involved in inviting others to accept true religion. For this reason, it is not possible for those who exhibit the attributes of hypocrites, who are not sincere in faith, to expend veritable effort, and to follow the way of the prophets in the pursuit of Allah's good pleasure. The insincere, though, being aware of this fact, will swear an oath in the name of Allah to attempt to mislead the prophets and devout believers. But, when they experience the least adversity, they do not hesitate to

breach their oath, disregarding what they swore before Allah. The Qur'an describes the condition of those who promised to band together with believers, but then went back on their commitment when it came time to fight alongside the Prophet (saas):

They have sworn by Allah with their most earnest oaths that if you give them the command, they will go out. Say: "Do not swear. Honorable obedience is enough. Allah is aware of what you do." (Surat an-Nur, 53)

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

To hide their evil intentions, and to attempt to win the trust of the Prophet (saas), they swear in the name of Allah. In this way they thought they could disguise their unfaithfulness and the true intentions hidden in their hearts, that they might achieve what they wanted. However, their behavior inevitably reveals their true intentions. One of the most definite signs of sincere loyalty to Allah is a person's willingness to make sacrifices for the sake of gaining His favor. Those who have no conception of the significance of such faithfulness invent unfounded excuses to avoid self-sacrifice, swearing in the name of Allah to convince others otherwise.

One of the reasons why such people swear false oaths is because they want to exploit the loyalty of the believers for their own advantage. They think they assume the characteristics of a believer, who is self-sacrificing, generous and compassionate, and enjoy the

same benefits without putting forth the effort. But, when Allah revealed their real intentions, they feared they would be rejected, and so swore false oaths that they might continue to be accepted by the believers. Allah describes their insincerity in the Qur'an:

They will swear to you to make you pleased with them, but even if you are pleased with them, Allah is certainly not pleased with deviant people. (Surat at-Tawba, 96)

They swear by Allah that they are of your number, but they are not of your number. Rather, they are people who are scared. (Surat at-Tawba, 56)

The reason for their swearing of false oaths is not only to hide their desire for personal gain; they also want to divert the believers from following the way of Allah. Just as Satan swore an oath to Prophet Adam (as) and his wife to deceive them and prevent them from obeying the command of Allah, these people operate with the same satanic deviousness. In order to mislead the believers from the true way, or, at least, to cause them some harm, they swear oaths as did Satan. In the Qur'an, Allah describes that these people use oaths as a "shield":

They made their oaths into a cloak and barred the way of Allah, so they will have a humiliating punishment. (Surat al-Mujadala, 16)

But, as Allah announces in this verse, the evil designs of these sick-hearted individuals against the believers always comes to naught—by the will of Allah—resulting only in their own humiliation.

Their attempt to pit believers against one another, by breaking their word, is a clear indication of their lack of faithfulness. Those so

morally debased may even think they can make a positive impression on their associates, and, through their false promises, feign loyalty. But, their real intentions will be disclosed when they will be required to demonstrate that loyalty. Allah describes their false character in the Qur'an:

They swore by Allah with their most earnest oaths that if a warner came to them they would be better guided than any other community. But then when a warner did come to them, it only increased their aversion. (Surah Fatir, 42)

They swore to Allah that they would follow their messenger if He were to send them one. But, the hatred they felt for the messenger sent to them demonstrated clearly that they were not true to their promise.

As Allah revealed in the 77th verse of Surah Al 'Imran, they sold their promise "for a paltry price":

Those who sell Allah's contract and their own oaths for a paltry price, such people will have no portion in the hereafter and on the Day of Rising Allah will not speak to them or look at them or purify them. They will have a painful punishment. (Surah Al 'Imran, 77)

For that reason, Allah will remove them from His mercy on the Day of Judgment. Though, when they will come into His presence to be judged, they will again believe they can escape His punishment by the swearing of oaths. Allah reveals this case in the Qur'an:

On the Day Allah raises up all of them together they will swear to Him just as they have sworn to you and imagine they have something to stand upon. No indeed! It is they who are the liars. (Surat al-Mujadala, 18)

Those who are guilty of this manner of thinking behave similarly with regards to pledges they make to others. Their refusal to abide by their word, recognizing the rights of others, derives from the fact that they do not want the responsibility of loyalty expected of them to interfere with their personal gain. For this reason, agreements ratified with such people will usually end in betrayal. Allah tells us in the Qur'an that they do not abide by their word, but seize the first opportunity available to break an agreement:

We did not find many of them worthy of their contract. We found most of them deviators. (Surat al-A'raf, 102)

Allah describes their condition in the following words:

Those with whom you make a treaty and who then break it every time. They have no fear of Allah. (Surat al-Anfal, 56)

Moreover, Allah tells us that these hypocrites, in order to gain His favor, give Allah their word that they will not shrink from performing deeds of self-sacrifice, but fail to keep their promise:

Yet they had previously made a contract with Allah that they would never turn their backs. Contracts made with Allah will be asked about. (Surat al-Ahzab, 15)

Those fraught with such shortcomings are constantly betraying Allah, the messengers, their associates, and others. Satan's hypocrisy is an example of the poor morality of such individuals. Satan makes false promises only to later admit that those promises were lies. In the Qur'an, Allah tells us about Satan's hypocrisy:

When Satan made their actions appear good to them, saying, "No one will overcome you today for I am at your side." But when the two parties came in sight of one another, he turned right round on his heels saying, "I wash

my hands of you. I see what you do not see. I fear Allah. Allah is severe in retribution." (Surat al-Anfal, 48)

It is not possible for individuals of such base morality to feel a sincere bond with Allah and His messengers, or to be patient through difficulties. Rather, they use every opportunity in which they can swear an oath to hide their treachery, though associating with believers, so as to exploit them for their own advantage. But, their insincerity is so severe that they break every promise they make, even making known the hostility they harbor inside. However, no matter how hard they try to deceive believers with their false oaths and promises, Allah will bring their efforts to naught, and reveal their true intentions to those who are sincere.

One reason why such people act with such a lack of conscience is that Allah has hardened their hearts. Allah reveals in the Qur'an, that they are condemned because they break their promises, also warning believers of their intentions:

But because of their breaking of their covenant, We have cursed them and made their hearts hard. They distort the true meaning of words and have forgotten a good portion of what they were reminded of. You will never cease to come upon some act of treachery on their part, except for a few of them. Yet pardon them, and overlook. Allah loves good-doers. (Surat al-Ma'ida, 13)

From the above verse, we learn that those whose mindset is so distorted have no conception of faithfulness. We can clearly see the error in their perception of the meaning of faithfulness by their breached oaths, broken promises and failed agreements.

They Are Faithful to the Religion of Their Ancestors

A human being's personality is formed by what one learns from those around him, and from the customs, practiced in the society he lives in. Some choose to conform their beliefs and actions to these norms, even after their invalidity has been made known to them and though they had been shown the right way. This errant decision closes their minds to reform, and causes them to resist change. They realize that their traditional practices are groundless, but defend them nevertheless, being obstinate in their devotion to them. They convince themselves that the customs of their ancestors are still valid, or even more to be trusted. They regard any questioning of their belief system as an evil. For this reason, they are opposed to all such change, even if it is positive. Habitually, they are sentimental about the example of their ancestors, and determine their actions according to the past practices of their forebears. For this reason, they regard any idea contrary to their inherited traditions as a threat. Even if they were taught something that was more correct than what they believe, they would refuse to try to understand it, or even rejecting it outright without even giving it a chance. Their receiving every suggestion aggressively, and their adamant refusal to even consider them, shows how blindly attached they are to their traditional superstitions. The response offered by the leaders of the people to Prophet Ibrahim (as), when he called them to believe in Allah, is an example of their blind adherence to the cult of their ancestors. Allah tells us of this instance in the Qur'an as follows:

Recite to them the story of Ibrahim when he said to his father and his people, "What do you worship?" They said,

"We worship idols and will continue to cling to them." He said, "Do they hear you when you call or do they help you or do you harm?" They said, "No, but this is what we found our fathers doing." He said, "Have you really thought about what you worship, you and your fathers who came before?" (Surat ash-Shu'ara', 69-76)

This incident mentioned in the Qur'an shows that these people were faithful to their ancestors. But, this devotion was ill-formed. When the real nature of their gods was revealed to them, they objected, citing that the only reason they worshipped these things was because their ancestors had. This devotion to idols shows that their cult is but vanity.

We can see that an unfounded sense of loyalty causes these people to oppose the commands of Allah, to rebel against it, and even to be hostile to anyone who adheres to the principles of its morality and tries to inform others about it. They went to the point of asking our Prophet (saas) to change the Qur'an:

When Our Clear Signs are recited to them, those who do not expect to meet Us say, "Bring a Qur'an other than this one or change it." Say: "It is not for me to change it of my own accord. I follow nothing except what is revealed to me. I fear, were I to disobey my Lord, the punishment of a Dreadful Day." (Surah Yunus, 15)

Because it refuted their unjust beliefs, these people wanted our Prophet (saas) to revise or change the Qur'an. Their devotion to these systems prevented them from obeying the Word of Allah. For this reason, those messengers that Allah has sent throughout the centuries, to proclaim His religion, have persistently encountered

among their people such obstinacy to their superstitious beliefs. They were falsely accused and treated with hostility, just because they called others to what was good and true. This deliberate animosity against the messengers shows how determined were these people to their unjust faiths. As Allah informed us in the Qur'an, when these people were called to practice the religion, they said about the messenger:

"This is nothing but a man who wants to debar you from what your fathers used to worship." (Surah Saba', 43)

He further revealed that they have also turned their backs from the true way:

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

Another corrupt tendency, to be found among those who are committed to their deviant faith, is their claim that it is Allah Who has commanded them to remain true to the religion of their ancestors. They know what they believe is not correct, but they try to justify their adherence to the religion of their ancestors by saying that they are doing so by the command of Allah. Nevertheless, they are certainly aware of their lack of sincerity in this regard. Their basic aim is not to win the favor of Allah, but to seek personal gain and to fulfill the selfish desires of their lower-selves. This is their devious excuse, used to hide their lack of sincerity, and to promote their system contrary to the morality of the Qur'an. They surely know they are leading a life far removed from the morality commanded by Allah, and that what they do was not commanded by Him, but that

they simply practice by their own choice the religion enjoined by their ancestors.

The ideas of such people are convoluted, because they did not learn morality from its true source, and they use contradictory language, not having broken away from the practices of their ancestors. For this reason, they may approve of inappropriate behavior though Allah has forbidden it. In the Qur'an, Allah tells us about the insincerity of these people:

Whenever they commit an indecent act, they say, "We found our fathers doing it and Allah commanded us to do it too." Say: "Allah does not command indecency. Do you say things about Allah you do not know?" (Surat al-A'raf, 28)

Those who tend towards such behavior aim to determine their affairs by referring to the practices of their ancestors, and so, continually distance themselves from Allah and the true religion. In the Qur'an, Allah explains this error:

Then We gave them good in exchange for evil until they increased in number and said, "Our forefathers too underwent both hardship and ease." Then We seized them suddenly when they were not expecting it. (Surat al-A'raf, 95)

In order to test these people, Allah has alleviated their difficulties and given them this mercy. But instead of coming to understand their faults, and learning to be grateful to Allah, they remained ungrateful, continuing to evaluate their situations with regard to the experiences of their ancestors. They failed to appreciate that it was Allah Who removed their anxiety, Who had granted them His blessings; they asserted perversely that their current circumstance is

merely a perpetuation of the way things occurred in the past.

The reason why they are so confused in their understanding, and cannot act with a true comprehension of the meaning of loyalty, is because they do not reflect upon the words of the Qur'an, and so remain without the true intelligence that it can give rise to. Allah explains this truth in the Qur'an as follows:

Do they not ponder these words? Has anything come to them that did not come to their ancestors the previous peoples? (Surat al-Muminun, 68)

They Must First Discern What They Deem a Mark of Superiority in Another Before Being Faithful towards Them

In societies far removed from the moral teachings of the Qur'an, its people hold certain values which they strive their entire lives to live by. Foremost among these is career, prestige, fame and wealth. Because those benefited by these are celebrated for these very things, all others desire to have the same. The wealthiest is most popular; one with a successful career is the most intelligent; and the one most famous is the one most liked. As a result of erroneous tendencies, many people found their relationships, their comportment towards others, their criteria for respect and friendship on these same values. Therefore, when forming an opinion of another person, the first things they consider are how much money or wealth he has, or his level of prestige. So, in such societies, the person who is most endowed with these benefits will be the most esteemed. Such a person invites careful attention of everything he does, he is listened

to for his ideas, whether they are good or not. Many feel a peculiar sense of respect and affection for these people. If he were to be a scholar, all would read his writings, and accept what he says, without question. He is treated with respect, and is devoutly and even passionately supported. His supporters are very loyal to him, though there is nothing real to justify their devotion. The case is the same with those who are famous. Their fans are great in number; wherever they go, they are never left alone, always followed by their entourage.

Those who attain positions of leadership in such societies are those with money, property, fame, prestige, and numerous devotees, who support them constantly, never leaving them alone. The reason being that people want to identify a trait of superiority in another that will justify their being loyal towards them. This common attitude has persisted for centuries. Those respected for their wealth, or because they are members of the elite, become leaders in these societies, even though they may be soulless tyrants. For some, whose conception of the meaning of loyalty has been shaped by a mundane criteria, that which is important is not truth and true beauty, but the possession of materialistic values. Therefore, those who possess these things are regarded by all others as the most knowledgeable, intelligent, and talented—in short—ideal human beings.

And so, messengers who were sent by Allah, to guide and as a mercy, encountered obstinacy and rebelliousness when they summoned their people to follow the way of Allah. This response was due to the fact that those with a mindset from out of ignorance of the morality taught in the Qur'an, expected in one they would follow a false trait of superiority, such as wealth, property, prestige, that

would prove, to their ignorant minds, that these messengers had truly been entrusted with this great mission. Before they would believe the words of the messengers, and obey their call to accept true religion, they expected them to perform miracles, to make proof of their superiority. Allah tells us in the Qur'an about that which these disbelievers expected:

They say, "We will not believe you until you make a spring gush out from the earth for us; or have a garden of dates and grapes which you make rivers come pouring through; or make the sky, as you claim, fall down on us in lumps; or bring Allah and the angels here as a guarantee; or possess a house built out of gleaming gold; or ascend up into heaven—and even then we will not believe in your ascent unless you bring us down a book to read!" Say: "Glory be to my Lord! Am I anything but a human messenger?" (Surat al-Isra', 90-93)

Allah tells us in another part of the Qur'an that these insincere individuals, who were looking for excuses not to believe, wanted our Prophet (saas) to perform miracles. He answered:

**Say: "I do not say to you that I possess the treasures of Allah, nor do I know the Unseen, nor do I say to you that I am an angel. I only follow what has been revealed to me."
Say: "Are the blind the same as those who can see? So will you not reflect?" (Surat al-An'am, 50)**

We can see that the miracles they asked our Prophet (saas) to perform, in order to confirm what they had said, were beyond human capacity. According to their faulty reasoning, whoever they followed and listened to would have to be superior to them, but ac-

according to their distorted values. For this reason, as Allah reveals in verse 31 of Surat az-Zukhruf, they say, 'Why was this Qur'an not sent down to one of the great men of the two cities?', and were surprised that so great a mission should be imparted to the messengers sent to them. For that alone, they rejected Allah's prophets, and tried to impede their mission by preventing them from bringing people to the right way. In the Qur'an, Allah gives examples of this kind of behavior:

Their Prophet said to them, "Allah has appointed Talut to be your king." They said, "How can he have kingship over us when we have much more right to kingship than he does? He has not even got much wealth!" He said, "Allah has chosen him over you and favored him greatly in knowledge and physical strength. Allah gives kingship to anyone He wills. Allah is All-Encompassing, All-Knowing." (Surat al-Baqara, 247)

They desire to see in the prophets a trait of superiority, corresponding to their own false expectations. But these same expectations prevent them from understanding the true superiority to be found in prophets, that is, superiority "in knowledge and physical strength," that Allah has granted them. They do not grasp the virtue and superiority of the prophets sent to them, and, therefore, persistently turn their backs to their call. In the verse quoted below, Allah tells us that this is the only reason for their not believing in the prophets:

Nothing prevents people from having faith when guidance comes to them but the fact that they say, "Has Allah sent a human being as messenger?" (Surat al-Isra', 94)

They do not believe in the prophets, or accept their way, but accuse them of pursuing some personal gain. According to their way of thinking, one who otherwise does not possess any traits of superiority, would seek only to gain a following. For this reason, the leaders of the disbelieving societies, who were wealthy and prestigious, tried to accuse the prophets of ulterior motives, and sought every opportunity to discredit them. Pharaoh's reaction to Prophet Musa (as), and his brother Harun (as), after he had called him to the service of Allah, is an example that demonstrates the behavior of those with this distorted opinion of Allah's messengers. The Qur'an recounts the conversation that took place between Pharaoh and Musa (as):

When the truth came to them from Us, they said, "This is downright magic!" Musa said, "Do you say to the truth when it comes to you, 'This is magic?' Magicians are not successful." They said, "Have you come to us to turn us from what we found our fathers doing, and to gain greatness in the land? We do not believe you." (Surah Yunus, 76-78)

In general, the way the disbelievers reacted to the prophets who invited them to accept what is good and true is no different from that of Pharaoh. The fact that they look for some false trait of superiority in someone before they grant him their loyalty clouds their intelligence, and prevents them from understanding the significance of the invitation to follow the right way that would lead them to salvation in this world and the next.

However, true superiority belongs only to Allah. He is the true possessor of all things. Ultimately, it is only to Allah that we

must be loyal to; we must be bound to Him by sincere love. He has bestowed in abundance upon the prophets from His mercy—whenever and however He pleased; He has endowed them with possessions, and made them superior to other men. Allah tells us that he made Prophet Dawud (as) and Prophet Sulayman (as) superior to other men:

We gave knowledge to Dawud and Sulayman who said, "Praise be to Allah Who has favored us over many of His servants who are believers." (Surat an-Naml, 15)

The corrupt notions of the disbelievers have for ages kept them from the way of Allah. But, true loyalty is only that which is felt towards Allah and His messengers. Those who think otherwise must immediately abandon all such ideas, try to appreciate the power and majesty of Allah, and to seek to understand the true meaning of loyalty.

Their Loyalty Is Conditional

When they consider their past, many remember various difficulties and anxieties they have experienced. Allah has created the life in this world, together with its difficulties, and better times, to determine whose actions will be most virtuous. Therefore, it is inevitable that all will encounter anxiety or setbacks in his or her life. But, those who are unaware of the purpose of Allah's creation regard all such difficulties merely as "life struggles." However, all such circumstances were foreordained and intended that human beings may find the true way, and see that there is no other power other than Allah, from Whom they may seek help and refuge.

Therefore, the variances in the way a person feels, thinks, and behaves, are demonstrated under two opposite conditions, namely, difficulty or prosperity. In difficult times, one has greater difficulty concealing what is hidden in his heart. When a person shows patience through adversity that may afflict him, he is demonstrating his sincere devotion and loyalty to Allah. As such, it is usually in times of difficulty and anxiety that the best aspects of an individual's character are most truly shown forth. In this way, the extent of a person's sense of determination, and the depth of his loyalty to what he believes are to be discerned according to the way he acts through such times.

A clear manifestation of this, in societies ignorant of the morality taught in the Qur'an, is in marriage. In spite of the fact that marriage is a holy union, some may resort to it as a means of profit. For such people, the extent of their loyalty and devotion in marriage is dependent on certain conditions. For this reason, the difficulties and problems that inevitably arise between a couple over time may eventually become cause for argumentation and distress. After a certain period, there is nothing left for each partner to derive from the other, and divorce becomes unavoidable.

This is a psychological condition that will effect those who live by the immorality of ignorance in many other situations. When an instance arises in which their patience is required, some choose the easy way out, and seek thereafter to avoid the situation completely. The difference between them and the believers, who are sincerely devoted to Allah, and feel a strong sense of loyalty towards Him, becomes evident in such situations. Because they do not believe in Allah or the Hereafter, disbelievers do not find the strength and pa-

tience within themselves to struggle against the difficulties they experience. They recoil from the least problem or obstacle; they will give up on something they had wanted to accomplish in favor of the easy way out. In the Qur'an, Allah relates to us the patience of Luqman (as) in the advice he gave to his son:

[Luqman said,] "My son, perform prayer and command what is right and forbid what is wrong and be steadfast in the face of all that happens to you. That is certainly the most resolute course to follow." (Surah Luqman, 17)

The reason disbelievers are so weak in character is that they do not have the real sense of the meaning of loyalty, nor of the strength and determination that this loyalty arouses. Throughout their lives, disbelievers ascribe partners to Allah, making other gods for themselves. They spend their lives devoted to these gods, and live according to the dictates of this devotion. But, because the gods they have fashioned cannot proffer them the strength they need to persevere in difficult times, they quickly lose their devotion and false loyalty for them. Therefore, difficult and troubling situations are important determining factors to reveal their true character.

People's reaction to trying situations reveals their sham devotion and loyalty to Allah in hypocrites and those with sickness in their heart. Because they do not have a real sense of the meaning of loyalty and devotion to Him, they cannot bear with patience in times of difficulty or anxiety. For this reason, in order to avoid situations that are troubling due to the weakness of their lower-selves, they are constantly offering excuses. In the Qur'an, Allah informs us about the insincerity of those who, when faced with such hard times, tried to avoid them by asking leave from our Prophet (saas).

In the following verse, Allah reveals the words and real intentions of these characters:

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

Because these people did not believe in Allah with certainty, when the time came for them to make a self-sacrifice, they were unable to be devoted or loyal to Allah and His messengers. They could not see that remaining faithful to Allah and His prophet, and working to earn Allah's favor, would bring them enormous gain both in this world and the world to come. They were deceived by the life of this world, and failed to earn Allah's favor through their lack of patience. In Surat an-Nisa', Allah tells us that those who, because they cannot be patient in time of difficulty or anxiety, do not live as faith dictates, prefer to dissociate themselves from believers:

Among you there are people who hang back and if you encounter a setback then they say, "Allah has blessed me in that I was not there with them." (Surat an-Nisa', 72)

In this verse, Allah tells us that these individuals cannot appreciate the importance and the gravity of the situation in which they find themselves. They regard it as a blessing to have been able to avoid an act of self-sacrifice, that would otherwise have earned them Allah's favor, showing clearly how little they understood.

Another form of insincerity evidenced in these people is that they are loyal and agreeable when they get what they want, how,

and when they want it. When they live a life of comfort and ease, having gained the things they want, they do not hesitate to show loyalty to Allah and His messengers. But, when they are required to do something they do not like, or is not to their advantage, their lack of sincerity immediately comes to light. In the Qur'an, Allah tells us about the behavior of such individuals:

When they are summoned to Allah and His Messenger, so that he can judge between them, a group of them immediately turn away. But if right is on their side, they come to him most submissively! (Surat an-Nur, 48-49)

The moral disposition of this hypocritical character is far from the self-sacrifice and patience that believers practice to gain Allah's favor. Because they do not believe sincerely in their hearts, they are unable to live in search of Allah's favor; they cannot submit unconditionally to His commands and prohibitions; and, they cannot believe and trust in the prophets. That is a disposition only those who are bound by true faith and loyalty to Allah can have. The insincere, on the other hand, will not always be able to hide their false loyalty. Allah will eventually distinguish between these hypocrites and the believers, who submit to Him with faithfulness, and He will create those situations in which believers will be able to recognize their true character.

THE IMPORTANCE OF LOYALTY

Loyalty is one of the highest virtues found among those who sincerely believe in Allah. The sincere faithfulness they demonstrate in the way of Allah proves they are truly sincere. It requires a great deal of patience, and heart-felt devotion, for one to profess faith in Allah, to live without expecting some profit, to seek throughout his life to earn Allah's favor, to make use of everything he owns and loves to gain His pleasure, and to be patient in times of difficulty. The strength of will to proceed in the way of Allah can only come to one through the love he feels towards Allah, and the strong sense of devotion and loyalty that this love incurs. Depending on how strong and sincere one's devotion and submission to Allah is, the greater he will be able to draw closer to Him, as the pleasure he derives in seeking to gain His favor increases. The source of this spiritual strength that believers possess is the trust and loyalty they feel towards Allah. For this reason, faithfulness and loyalty are among the essential characteristics that separate believers from others. When a believer spends his life conforming to the commands and prohibitions of Allah, he will, by His grace, receive

the reward of His mercy and Paradise.

In times of difficulty and distress, the believers' faithfulness towards Allah and His messengers will be revealed, while the insincerity and faithlessness of disbelievers will be uncovered. In times of difficulty, believers will say, "**This is what Allah and His Messenger promised us; Allah and His Messenger told us the truth**" (Surat al-Ahzab, 22), and express their submission and devotion to Allah. In the Qur'an, with the verse, "**[Believers are] those who are steadfast and put their trust in their Lord**" (Surat an-Nahl, 42), Allah praises this high morality that believers exhibit.

So, the bond of loyalty the believers feel makes itself known in the pleasure they derive and determination they exhibit when complying with the moral teachings of the Qur'an.

By his trust and submission to Allah in times of difficulty, our Prophet (saas) was an example to all Muslims; he told believers that they must be steadfast in their faithfulness to Allah at all times for He tests people with both good and evil as a trial:

"... When you ask for anything ask it from Allah, and if you 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)

Another important benefit of faithfulness is the fact that it unites the believers together. This renders it difficult for the evil-intentioned, who want to stir up strife among the believers, to prevent them from performing good deeds, destroy their solidarity to one another, and other destructive ploys, from insinuating themselves

into the community of believers. The sincere faithfulness and devotion that believers feel towards Allah and the prophets cannot be imitated; this is a sentiment that is shared only by believers. No matter how much they try to conceal that which is themselves, those who mingle with the believers, only to impugn their religion, cannot imitate a believer's submission to Allah; and, for this reason, they will never be able to achieve their aims. It is the strong sense of loyalty and submission to Allah that distinguishes devout believers from those with sickness in their hearts. This sense of loyalty also fosters a strong bond that will meld the believers together throughout their lives. By their profound loyalty to Allah, believers will be able to both recognize and protect themselves from the evil-intentioned who seek to cause them harm. As well, their love and trust in other believers will increase as they recognize each other's sincerity and determination in their cause. In this way, Allah will rid the believers of these evil-intentioned souls and confer upon them a profound faith with which to face any occasion.

Allah tells us in the Qur'an about the behavior of those who appear outwardly to be believers, but who reveal their lack of faith in Allah by abstaining from helping one another as they were required to:

As for those who believe and do right actions, He will pay them their wages in full and will give them increase from His favor. As for those who show disdain and grow arrogant, He will punish them with a painful punishment. They will not find any protector or helper for themselves besides Allah. (Surat an-Nisa', 173)

Because they have a strong feeling of submission to Allah, be-

lievers, even in very difficult situations, persistently formulate and act upon decisions in such a way as to earn His favor. As Allah says in the Qur'an, they know that under all circumstances it is best for them to remain faithful to Allah:

More fitting for them would be obedience and honorable words. Once the matter is resolved upon, being true to Allah would be better for them. (Surah Muhammad, 20-21)

In the above-quoted verses, Allah also informs us that a strong sense of loyalty arouses in an individual a conscientiousness that prevents him from procrastinating in conforming to what is right. If a person is strong in faith and submission to Allah, his inner sense of loyalty will keep him from being indecisive, and help him to resist giving in to the inclinations of his lower-self. So, armed with this loyalty and sense of submission, whatever the circumstances, he will easily overcome such urges.

Another important characteristic that faithfulness gives rise to in a believer is the love and trust they share between one another. These sentiments are formed through the sincere effort they put forth in the way of Allah. A believer, who makes use of everything he has as a means to earn Allah's favor, and remains on the straight path, will receive the love of his fellow Muslim brothers, while being a good example for them. So, the faithfulness that believers exhibit at all times on the way of Allah will increase the love, devotion and trust they feel towards one another.

Loyalty also endows a believer with a sense of determination in engaging in good deeds in the way of Allah, and the fine moral qualities he exhibits to win His favor. Hypocrites, however, who harbor sickness in their hearts, cannot possess this determination

in their worship and moral excellence because Satan has deceived them. They are likely to abandon a good deed as soon as the slightest difficulty arises, or if they have lost the energy to persist. Because their determination is weak, they cannot attain their goals. This is because they do not have the sense of loyalty or devotion in their hearts that ought to accompany what they are endeavoring. Therefore, they remain without the determination these qualities would have given rise to. But, because of the loyalty devoted believers feel towards Allah, they are able to exhibit this integrity throughout their lives, practicing the moral teachings of the Qur'an, ultimately winning His favor. In the Qur'an, Allah explains that what is best for believers is to seek to continually perform good deeds:

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 loyalty of believers is reflected in their actions, and is the means by which their determination and submission to Allah gains fervor and strength. On the other hand, Allah brings to light the sickness in the hearts of hypocrites. In the Qur'an, Allah tells us that these individuals of weak faith, who are inclined to disbelief, will place obstacles in the way of believers and Allah's messengers, in the hope of harming them and making their task difficult for them. Therefore, Allah advises believers that, unless hypocrites walk in His way, and openly show their sincere loyalty to Him and His mes-

The Importance of Loyalty

sengers, they must not make friends with them.

They would like you to disbelieve as they disbelieve so that you will all be the same. Do not take any of them as friends until they have migrated in the way of Allah... (Surat an-Nisa', 89)

THE KEY TO FAITHFULNESS: LOVE AND FEAR OF ALLAH

Love of Allah

One can be faithful to another person, and devote his entire life to his or her needs and desires, only if he feels a strong and sincere love for that person. Therefore, those whose bond of love is false can never experience the meaning of true faithfulness. It is important to notice here that, even if certain relationships are bound in love, those involved are far from understanding the true meaning of faithfulness and love that Allah describes in the Qur'an, because their bond is formed on criteria established by those ignorant of the morality of the Qur'an.

A person can experience real love and devotion only when he comes to believe and grasp the greatness of Allah. Basically, a person must feel sincere love and faithfulness towards our Lord Allah. Those who experience these deep feelings for Allah will also experience a deep sense of love for those who are also practicing the kind of morality that is pleasing to Him. Therefore, real love can be experienced only among those who fear Allah and feel a true love and respect towards Him. The way disbelievers understand love, however, is based

instead on a number of humanly-devised values, and is far from experiencing the depth and integrity of that of believers.

Believers and disbelievers are poles apart in their understanding of faithfulness. As Allah says in the Qur'an, "**They do not measure Allah with His true measure. Allah is All-Strong, Almighty,**" (Surat al-Hajj, 74) disbelievers cannot form a bond with Allah, because they cannot sufficiently understand His power and majesty, or the mercy He shows towards human beings. All those who fail to bind themselves to Him in love and faithfulness cannot be truly faithful towards others, nor can others be faithful to them. Therefore, in order for there to be a strong sense of faithfulness, there must be a strong sense of love towards Allah. And so, the only ones who can feel this strong love towards Allah are believers. In the Qur'an, Allah tells us about this characteristic of the believers:

... But those who believe have greater love for Allah...
(Surat al-Baqara, 165)

There are many reasons at work to allow believers to possess a strong sense of faithfulness and submission towards Allah. As Allah says in the verse, "**Say: 'Praise be to Allah. He will show you His Signs and you will recognize them.'** **Your Lord is not unaware of what you do,**" (Surat an-Naml, 93) believers are those who recognize Allah's help, protection and mercy during the events that occur in their lives. As Allah explains in the Qur'an, in order to strengthen their hearts, and increase their love and devotion to Him, He has promised to show them that everything they experience within themselves, and in the outside world, is "truth." The above verse informs us that believers behave with the knowledge that everything that happens to them in the course of their lives occurs in accordance

with the promise Allah has made to them. Their faith, love and consequent submission and faithfulness continually increase. They know that Allah is the constant friend and helper of believers, and that He answers all their prayers, and so do their best to win His favor with zeal and enthusiasm. No matter what happens to them, their devotion and faithfulness towards Him never diminish; in order to please Him, they are patient, and submit to Him in difficult times; He is their advocate and they take refuge in Him. This is one of the foremost proofs of the real strength of a believer's faithfulness. In the Qur'an, Allah tells us that believers have a strong sense of devotion and submission to Him:

... the poor of the emigrants who were driven from their homes and wealth desiring the favor and the pleasure of Allah and supporting Allah and His Messenger. Such people are the truly sincere. (Surat al-Hashr, 8)

Believers, who have a strong sense of love and faithfulness towards Allah, also show sincere love, respect and faithfulness to the messengers He has sent to be their guides. The source of this devotion is the love and faithfulness they feel towards Allah.

Explaining that love towards Allah will also give rise to sincere devotion and submission to Him, prophets called people to establish a sincere bond of love with Allah:

Say, "If you love Allah, then follow me and Allah will love you and forgive you for your wrong actions. Allah is Ever-Forgiving, Most Merciful." (Surah Al 'Imran, 31)

Because they have a sincere sense of love towards Allah and His messengers, believers are determined to live according to the moral teachings of the Qur'an, and take great pleasure in doing so.

Fear of Allah

Love towards Allah is a very important part of faithfulness, but it is not enough in itself. There must also be a sense of fear towards Him. Fear of Allah aids believers to be meticulous in obeying His commands and prohibitions, to avoid behavior that will not please Him, and to exercise "will-power" against the intimations of Satan and their lower-selves.

Human beings were created weak. Allah tells us this in the Qur'an:

Allah desires to make things lighter for you. Man was created weak. (Surat an-Nisa', 28)

The voice of our lower-selves and that of Satan continually urge us towards evil. Great determination or will-power is needed in order not to become entangled up in these satanic intimations. So, fear of Allah renders a person's sense of determination firm. In the Qur'an, Allah commands believers to fear Him:

You who believe! Fear Allah and let each self look to what it has sent forward for Tomorrow. Have fear of Allah. Allah is aware of what you do. (Surat al-Hashr, 18)

Fear of Allah urges an individual to try to live every moment of his life in a way that would please Allah, and to be awake to the desires of Satan and his own inner-self, and to be alert and prepared for the tricks and games that they play. This will vitiate the deceit of Satan and the inner voice of the lower-self that want to get him to do their unbounded will.

For this reason, Satan and the inner voice of the ego are particularly interested in removing the fear of Allah from people. They want to prevent them from fearing Allah by false intimations, such

as that, "the most important thing is to have a pure heart". However, a person who has read the Qur'an is aware that these kinds of satanic intimations have no validity; he will easily see that their purpose is to deceive and lead people astray. In the Qur'an, Allah has commanded believers to fear Him. This command appears in many verses, for example:

**Fear Allah and know that Allah is fierce in retribution.
(Surat al-Baqara, 196)**

**So fear Allah. And know that you will be gathered back to
Him. (Surat al-Baqara, 203)**

Fear of Allah allows a believer to be devoted to Him with a deep sense of faithfulness. Their desire to earn Allah's love and good pleasure, as best as they can, or otherwise the possibility of meeting His torment, makes the faithfulness of believers profound.

THE FAITHFULNESS OF BELIEVERS

Believers Are Faithful to Allah

Believers Spend of Their Wealth and Themselves to Win the Favor of Allah

In many verses of the Qur'an, it is commanded that an act of worship required of a believer is to spend in the way of Allah. Spending in the way of Allah, in the sense intended here, means to use all the blessings conferred by Allah in His way so as to win His favor.

It is possible to understand the meaning of "spending" in the way of Allah as a sign of the faithfulness that a believer feels towards Allah by comparing it to its perception by the faithless and hypocrites. For an insincere person, who has no certain faith, material wealth carries great importance. Such people would never consider spending of their valuable possessions towards something they did not really believe in. Because of their weak faith in Allah and the afterlife, it is not possible for them to feel loyalty toward Him and His messenger, nor to willingly contribute to the promotion of these truths. For that reason, when they are called upon to spend in the way of Allah, they recoil and become miserly. In the Qur'an, Allah describes this kind of insincerity shown by those who are sick in their hearts:

Here you are then: People who are called upon to spend in the way of Allah and then some of you are tight-fisted! But

whoever is tight-fisted is only tight-fisted to himself. Allah is Rich and you are poor. If you turn away, He will replace you with a people other than yourselves and they will not be like you. (Surah Muhammad, 38)

Another despicable form of behavior typical of these individuals, whose faith is corrupted, is that they try to prevent others from assisting the Muslims; they do this to harm the religion and to destroy the bond that exists between believers. In this regard, Allah says, "**They are the people who say, 'Do not spend on those who are with the Messenger of Allah, so that they may go away.' The treasuries of the heavens and earth belong to Allah. But the hypocrites do not understand this**" (Surat al-Munafiqun, 7). Because the sense of loyalty they feel towards one another is based only on money and property, they expect the bond between believers to be the same. Therefore, they believe that the community of believers will eventually falter and disappear in times of financial difficulty. However, the unity among the believers is not based on material things. What keeps them united is their loyalty, their faith and their fear of Allah. For this reason, these hypocrites will never succeed in their designs.

This morality of people with hypocritical character shows that it is important for believers to use their possessions to gain the favor of Allah. Spending in the way of Allah is an important act of worship that separates devout believers from hypocrites and those who reject Allah, and the fact that the latter use their wealth to obstruct the way of Allah shows again the mindlessness of their behavior. In the Qur'an, Allah says that these people will regret that they have spent their resources for such evil end:

Those who disbelieve spend their wealth barring access to

the way of Allah. They will spend it; then they will regret it; then they will be overthrown. Those who disbelieve will be gathered into Hell. (Surat al-Anfal, 36)

These people are not aware of the meaning or the value of spending in the way of Allah, or of the great gain it will bring them, both in this world and the next. They do not know that everything they have belongs to Allah and, for this reason, they refuse to spend anything of this in the way of Allah. Even if they were to spend of something, their gesture would not be to gain the favor of Allah, but to make a show and to further their own advantage. Instead of feeling love and devotion towards Allah and His prophet, they are inordinately devoted to the material objects that Allah has given them as a means to show their generosity. Their passion for wealth and possessions is so great that, when they are reminded that they should be generous, their reaction reveals their corrupted mentality. In the Qur'an, Allah describes how those who reject Him behave in this respect:

And when they are told, "Spend from the provision Allah has given you," those who disbelieve say to those who believe, "Why should we feed someone whom, if He wished, Allah would feed Himself? You are clearly in error." (Surah Ya Sin, 47)

This psychology of "material attainment" prevents the individual from spending what he has to further the way of Allah, otherwise a very important act of worship. For, spending in the way of Allah demonstrates the deep faithfulness and devotion that believers feel towards Allah. In the Qur'an, Allah speaks of the moral quality of certain believers, whose devotion to Him is so profound that they came back with tears streaming from their eyes when they were not able to find

something they could offer to further His way:

... those who, when they came to you for you to provide them with mounts and you said, "I cannot find anything on which to mount you," turned away with their eyes overflowing with tears, overcome by grief at having nothing to give. (Surat at-Tawba, 92)

One who feels sincere love and faithfulness towards Allah will gladly and willingly offer what he possesses, or will possess, to promote His way. What Allah describes in verse 35 of Surat al-Hajj is an important quality to be found in a believer:

... whose hearts quake at the mention of Allah, and who are steadfast in the face of all that happens to them, those who establish prayer and give of what We have provided for them. (Surat al-Hajj, 35)

Believers exploit every blessing Allah has given them to exercise a level of generosity that will win His favor, trying to the best of their ability to demonstrate their devotion and submission to Him.

Moreover, for believers, spending in the way of Allah is not an act of worship limited by the demands of a particular instance. A person with limited means is as much responsible to complete this act of worship as a rich person with much in goods and possessions at his disposal. But, in the following verse, Allah explains that those who can find nothing to give will not be held responsible so long as they are "true to Allah and His Messenger," and remain sincerely devoted to Him and exhort others to be generous:

Nothing is held against the weak and sick nor against those who find nothing to spend, provided they are true to Allah and His Messenger—there is no way open against good-

doers, Allah is Ever-Forgiving, Most Merciful. (Surat at-Tawba, 91)

No matter how trying a believer's circumstances may be, if he has something to offer he will gladly give it. No matter what his situation may be, he will willingly fulfill his obligation. For this reason, Allah refers to believers in a verse as, **"those who give in times of both ease and hardship"** (Surah Al 'Imran, 134). In another verse, Allah says that, no matter what conditions he finds himself in, a believer will show determination in the matter of giving, and will continually fulfill this obligation, either openly or in secret:

Those who give away their wealth by night and day, secretly and openly, will have their reward with their Lord. They will feel no fear and will know no sorrow. (Surat al-Baqara, 274)

Another advantage that comes to believers out of being generous is that this act of worship is a means by which he can draw nearer to Allah. In the Qur'an, Allah tells us that this is one of the hidden purposes of spending in the way of Allah:

And among the desert Arabs there are some who believe in Allah and the Last Day and regard what they give as something which will bring them nearer to Allah and to the prayers of the Messenger. It does indeed bring them near. Allah will admit them into His mercy. Allah is Ever-Forgiving, Most Merciful. (Surat at-Tawba, 99)

The fact that believers regard these acts of worship as a way to "bring them nearer to Allah and to the prayers of the Messenger," is an indication of how sincere and submissive they are to Him. Believers use their possessions to do good deeds by which they will win Allah's favor; in doing so, their desire is to show Him gratitude and draw

closer to Him. Therefore, spending in the way of Allah is a demonstration of the strength of their faithfulness towards Allah; at the same time, it both strengthens their faith, and increases their submission as they draw nearer to Him. In verse 265 of Surat al-Baqara, Allah praises the moral character of those believers who offer their goods for the purpose of "**desiring the pleasure of Allah and firmness for themselves**" (Surat al-Baqara, 265).

Worldly possessions, which are deemed of excessive value by the disbelievers, and to which they are actually passionately devoted, are, for believers, blessings which they hope will bring them Allah's favor. Because they know that everything they own belongs to Allah, they have no qualms about performing this act of worship. They happily make use any of their blessings to win Allah's favor, and regard spending in the way of Allah a way to draw closer to Him. Their devotion clearly shows their faithfulness towards Allah.

Believers Follow "Straight" on the Way of Allah

How people think, and the way they live, is determined by the goals they choose. Everyone has particular expectations of this life, and follows a way of living that will result in their fulfillment.

For example, a person who wants to fulfill his expectations of becoming the manager of a large firm, will have to enter university, and study in a field relative to the business, and gain all the knowledge and experience necessary to become that manager. Because he will remain in this field for the rest of his life, he will adopt the lifestyle that it will permit it. One who wants to become a university professor will have to work very hard, perhaps spending years abroad completing his edu-

cation and, if necessary, will sacrifice his youth and particular interests. In short, people choose a lifestyle that corresponds to their goals, organizing their lives towards their future fulfillment.

Certainly, there is nothing wrong with a person setting goals in his life and career goals and working hard to achieve them. What is wrong is limiting one's expectations only to this life, and not making apt consideration of the afterlife. If a person's attainments are limited to this life, his life will be no different from that of those outlined above. One who lives without faith, nor knows anything of the life of the world to come, will strive only to attain the transient worldly goals he has set for himself.

This is one of the most pronounced differences between believers and disbelievers. Believers are well aware of the transience and mundane nature of this world, and could never become excessively attached to it. Of course, they benefit from the blessings of this life, but the goal of the believers ultimately is to serve Allah, earn His mercy and favor, and attain Paradise. For this reason, they devote their lives to good works that will win the favor of Allah, and to living according to the moral teachings of the Qur'an. Allah says in the Qur'an that He directs them on His straight path because they are deeply devoted to Him:

Whoever holds fast to Allah has been guided to a straight path. (Surah Al 'Imran, 101)

Believers, who remain steadfast on the path that Allah has shown throughout their lives, say, "... Allah's guidance, that is true guidance. We are commanded to submit as Muslims to the Lord of all the worlds" (Surat al-An'am, 71). Remaining steadfast on the path of Allah means that a believer will never depart, at any time during his life,

from that which Allah has shown him. Indeed, the strong sense of faithfulness and devotion to Allah of a person who dedicates himself to winning His favor and love, without any desire for earthly gain, will be very definite. In the Qur'an, Allah has provided examples of the superior moral character of believers, and declares that the good news of Paradise will be announced to them 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)

Those who say, "Our Lord is Allah," and then go straight will feel no fear and will know no sorrow. (Surat al-Ahqaf, 13)

Believers put everything second to winning the favor of Allah, and so they—unless Allah wills otherwise—cannot depart from the right path, as the following verse reveals, **"Allah has inscribed faith upon such people's hearts and will reinforce them with a Spirit from Him"** (Surat al-Mujadala, 22). Believers do not make any compromises when on the way that Allah has revealed to them and, in this regard, live their lives with a strong sense of faithfulness and submission, with a view to winning Allah's favor:

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

They are mindful of Allah in everything they do, and do everything with the intention of gaining His pleasure. Moreover, believers exercise great patience throughout the difficulties they experience, and constantly pray for His assistance. They attribute great value to the need to remain throughout their life on His path, and to be able to do good deeds that will win Allah's favor. The strong sense of determina-

tion, as well as enthusiasm in their efforts on this path, demonstrate the sincere faithfulness and submission they feel towards Him.

They Are Determined in Their Worship of Allah

Steadfastness is the determination to make every effort necessary to achieve a certain goal, without any regard for the difficulties that might result along the way. Essentially, steadfastness is an important moral quality that a believer must possess to win Allah's favor. In the following verse, Allah warns believers that they must show determination in performing acts of worship:

He is Lord of the heavens and the earth and everything in between them, so worship Him and persevere in His worship. Do you know of any other with His Name? (Surah Maryam, 65)

In the Qur'an, Allah says that He has ordained all the commands and prohibitions, that sincere and devout believers must follow, and has revealed the faith and moral qualities according to which they must live in this world. Every believer knows he is responsible to Allah, and that he must win His approval. Therefore, he complies with every prescription and prohibition that Allah has revealed, in the attempt to attain the kind of moral perfection that will make him worthy of Paradise. Believers serve Allah as best as they can; their every thought and action is to win His favor.

In many verses of the Qur'an, Allah explains the kind of worship that believers must perform. Believers show no laxity in performing their acts of worship, and fulfill them with determination and willingly. In the Qur'an, Allah tells us about this determination:

[They are men] not distracted by trade or commerce from the remembrance of Allah and the establishment of prayers and the payment of alms; fearing a day when all hearts and eyes will be in turmoil. (Surat an-Nur, 37)

As Allah says in verse 37 of Surat al-Hajj, **"Their flesh and blood does not reach Allah but your heedfulness does reach Him. In this way He has subjected them to you so that you might proclaim Allah's greatness for the way that He has guided you. Give good news to the good-doers,"** believers know that what will make their acts of worship worthy in the sight of Allah are the intentions in their heart. For this reason, they are very careful to act with true sincerity.

Believers show this steadfastness in their worship in order to attain the high moral character that pleases Allah, and which He has described in the Qur'an. The struggle with their lower-selves to attain moral excellence also reveals their sense of determination in this regard.

In the test that is this earthly life, Allah has revealed two paths to human beings: the good and the evil. In order to retain good moral character throughout their lives, they must be careful not be diverted into the evil ways of their lower-selves. For example, in a situation that might incite anger, a believer restrains himself, and acts in a conciliatory fashion. When he meets an arrogant individual, he does not return arrogance for arrogance, but maintains a modest composure. In the Qur'an, our Lord says: **"People are prone to selfish greed"** (Surat an-Nisa', 128). He commands us to be cautious against the selfishness of our lower-selves, and to be steadfast in exhibiting good morals. One who pursues the kind of morality revealed by Allah is generous, and thinks of others before himself. He is composed under all situations

and always speaks best of other people.

Believers feel a great sense of respect for the moral teachings of the Qur'an. Whether their lives are trying, filled with much anxiety, or prosperous and comfortable, they never compromise the moral teachings of the Qur'an. As Allah says in the Qur'an, "**Those who, when disaster strikes them, say, 'We belong to Allah and to Him we will return,'**" (Surat al-Baqara, 156) they never lose their sense of devotion and submission to Him. This way of practicing their faith gives believers strength of character, and, ultimately enhances their faith. In the Qur'an, Allah praises this superior moral character to be found in believers, as well as their faithfulness and submission to Him:

Who could have a better religion than someone who submits himself completely to Allah and is a good-doer, and follows the religion of Ibrahim, a man of pure natural belief? Allah took Ibrahim as an intimate friend. (Surat an-Nisa', 125)

In the Qur'an, Allah praises Prophet Ibrahim (as) for his submission to the religion, and reveals that He had made him His friend. He tells us that believers are those who are devoted to Him, and whose submission does not falter under any circumstance:

[Believers are] those who, if We establish them firmly on the earth, will perform prayer and give the alms, and command what is right and forbid what is wrong. The end result of all affairs is with Allah. (Surat al-Hajj, 41)

Another characteristic of the believers, which shows forth their steadfastness in complying to the moral teachings of the Qur'an, is the effort they expend to win Allah's favor. They continually think of pleasing Him, performing good works to this end. They sincerely desire to be a servant whom Allah loves, and upon whom He show-

ers His mercy. Throughout their lives, they make Allah their guardian, and worship Him, making the morality of the religion sincerely His. Believers are never lax in their efforts to strengthen their faith, demonstrating that their faithfulness to Allah has achieved for them true firmness.

They Make a Concerted Effort to Attain the Afterlife

In order to win Allah's favor, and attain Paradise, believers put forth great effort, this being a sign of their faithfulness towards Allah. In the Qur'an, our Lord says that believers are responsible to expend this great effort in order to win His favor and attain Paradise. They expend this effort in combating their lower-selves, to preserve their faith, to be among those most pleasing to Allah, and to tell others about the superior morality that Allah revealed in the Qur'an. This effort on the part of the believers is possible because of the willpower that derives from their submission to Allah. The zeal that Allah makes them feel in their hearts will be as strong as their faith in Him. In the Qur'an, Allah advises believers to put forth serious effort on His way:

But as for anyone who desires the Hereafter, and strives for it with the striving it deserves, being a believer, the striving of such people will be gratefully acknowledged. (Surat al-Isra', 19)

So, believers exert effort, first of all, to bring their lower-selves into a condition that will please Allah. It is not possible for a disbeliever—as long as he does not embrace faith—to struggle with his lower-self, or make a concerted effort in this struggle. Many live their lives far removed from the moral teaching of the Qur'an, completely

given to their desires and passions. And, because they can never relinquish these desires, they can never come near to living in a manner that is pleasing to Allah.

When we see the coercive influence their lower-selves exercise on disbelievers, we can understand the implications of the struggle believers themselves endure. While disbelievers are confounded by their lower-selves, believers have the strength and will to struggle successfully with their lower-selves, because of their faith in Allah, and their sincere devotion to Him. That an individual can expend the effort to act as Allah wills, and not according to his own passions and desires, is possible only because of this sincere devotion he feels towards our Lord.

As Allah says in verse 105 of Surat al-Ma'ida, believers are aware that one of the greatest responsibilities conferred upon them in this world is to restrain their lower-selves:

You who believe! You are only responsible for yourselves.

(Surat al-Ma'ida, 105)

Throughout their lives, they struggle with these inclinations that continually urge them towards evil, and which try to prevent them from gaining Allah's favor. They are awake to the deceptions of their lower-self, and carefully avoid all actions that would be displeasing to Allah. Because their goal is to win Allah's favor, they always put their personal urges second to conforming to that which will please Him. In this regard, Allah says this in the Qur'an, "**And among the people there are some who give up everything, desiring the good pleasure of Allah. Allah is Ever-Gentle with His servants**" (Surat al-Baqara, 207). The sincere and devoted effort of believers put forth to curb their inner urges, and win Allah's favor, is a good example of their persistent

faithfulness towards Him. They always succeed in their efforts; Allah supports them through His mercy, so that all they endeavor turns out for the best.

Along with this concerted effort believers put forth with regard to their inner-urges, they convey to others about the morality that Allah has been pleased to choose as a way of life for human beings; in so doing, they contribute greatly towards the eradication of conflict and corruption in the world.

Throughout history, non-believers have been hostile to the true religion, and opposed the believers and prophets. They have tried to degrade them in the eyes of others, by inhibiting their efforts and making certain false accusations. They have gone so far as to assault them physically, not refraining from violence. Believers tried to establish peace and order in the world, and to suppress the ideological and physical assault of non-believers. They have been subject to slander, and driven out of their cities. Yet, in spite of all such trials, they never abandoned the moral teaching of the Qur'an; they never feared criticism, and have not been adversely affected by the negative response of others.

Difficult times do not demoralize believers; on the contrary, they strengthen them, and make them still more determined. They are aware that, in order for peace, justice and order to reign on earth, there must be no confusion or corruption. Allah says in the Qur'an:

Do not corrupt the earth after it has been put right. Call on Him fearfully and eagerly. Allah's mercy is close to the good-doers. (Surat al-A'raf, 56)

They know that this can come about only by practicing the moral teachings of the Qur'an, and so convey these truths to others.

Our prophet (saas) has pointed out in his Sayings the importance of good moral character, and invited believers to undertake sincere efforts towards its attainment:

"By One in whose hand there is my life: None shall enter Paradise except one who has got good conduct." (Imam Ghazzali's Ihya Ulum-Id-Din)

Believers, who are aware of the recommendations communicated by Allah and our Prophet (saas), on how to live a moral life, stress the great importance of struggling against their own inner-urges, and conveying the moral teachings of the Qur'an to others. Their commitment to sacrificing their lives, and everything they have, becomes possible by embracing the teachings of the Qur'an, and feeling a deep sense of faithfulness and devotion towards Allah. In the Qur'an, Allah states that believers prove their faithfulness to Him by keeping their promises to Him:

Among the believers there are men who have been true to the contract they made with Allah. Some of them have fulfilled their pact by death and some are still waiting to do so, not having changed in any way at all. So that Allah might recompense the truthful for their truth and punish the hypocrites, if He wills, or turn towards them. Allah is Ever-Forgiving, Most Merciful. (Surat al-Ahzab, 23-24)

Faithfulness towards the Prophets

They Believe that the Prophets Are Allah's Messengers

Throughout the ages, Allah, in His mercy, has sent prophets to communicate the religion to human beings, to reveal to them what

they did not know, and to reform them and make them pure. What makes prophets different from other human beings is that Allah has given them a special mission, that is, He has chosen them. For this reason, believers regard prophets as honored individuals. Because they exercise sincere devotion to Allah, they also love and respect the prophets that Allah has sent to them as a mercy, as well as being deeply attached and faithful to them. They show profound respect and love towards the prophets in both word and deed.

Moreover, believers know that Allah has commanded them to have faith in and respect His messengers. Prophets are examples to those believers who proclaim Allah's religion. This responsibility entrusted upon them shows that their faith is superior. Because of this, believers obtain great benefit by remaining faithful to Allah's messenger (saas), and accepting his advice. In the Qur'an, Allah explains that those who obey His messengers will have a great reward in the world to come:

Those who believe in Allah and His messengers—such people are the truly sincere—and the martyrs who are with their Lord will receive their wages and their light. But those who disbelieve and deny Our Signs, will be Companions of the Blazing Fire. (Surat al-Hadid, 19)

In another verse, Allah announces this good news to those who show faithfulness to our Prophet (saas) and follow his path:

[Allah said, "Believers are] those who follow the Messenger, the Ummi, whom they find written down with them in the Torah and the Gospel, commanding them to do right and forbidding them to do wrong, making good things lawful for them and bad things forbidden for them, relieving them of

their heavy loads and the chains which were around them. Those who believe in him and honor him and help him, and follow the Light that has been sent down with him, they are the ones who are successful." (Surat al-A'raf, 157)

Believers, who are faithful to Allah's Prophet (saas), and follow his path, will find great inner-peace and happiness in this world. This will add to their strength and increase their faith, and—if Allah wills—it will be a means by which they will obtain Allah's mercy of Paradise.

They Obey the Prophets

One of the most decisive indications of how faithful are believers towards the prophets is their recognizing they are Allah's messengers, and being completely obedient to them. In many parts of the Qur'an, Allah calls believers to obey the prophets. Throughout history, and in every society, prophets have called people to heed their words and obey Allah, and reminded them that adopting this morality is the only way to salvation in this world and in the world to come.

The obedience that believers show to Allah and His messengers is a product of the faithfulness they have towards Him. Allah declares that believers demonstrate their submission to Him in accepting the authority of His messengers:

The reply of the believers when they are summoned to Allah and His Messenger so that he can judge between them, is to say, "We hear and we obey." They are ones who are successful. (Surat an-Nur, 51)

Therefore, such obedience is possible only through sincere faithfulness, and can only be found in the actions of believers. In many

verses of the Qur'an, Allah speaks of the importance of obedience, and the wonderful things it will bring to believers. In verse 132 of Surah Al 'Imran, Allah says that believers will win His mercy through their obedience: **"Obey Allah and the Messenger so that hopefully you will gain mercy"** (Surah Al 'Imran, 132). For this reason, believers regard this matter as being of the greatest importance. As Allah says in Verse 32 of Surah Al 'Imran, they know it will earn them Allah's favor and are meticulous in their obedience:

Say, "Obey Allah and the Messenger." Then if they turn away, Allah does not love the disbelievers. (Surah Al 'Imran, 32)

In the Qur'an, Allah refers to the determination exhibited by believers in their faithfulness and obedience towards His messengers:

The believers are those who believe in Allah and His Messenger and who, when they are with him on a matter of common concern, do not leave until they have asked him for permission. Those people who ask you for permission are the ones who truly believe in Allah and His Messenger. If they ask your permission to attend to their own affairs, give permission to any of them you please; and ask Allah's forgiveness for them. Allah is Ever-Forgiving, Most Merciful. (Surat an-Nur, 62)

Allah tells us in this verse of the fact that believers cannot undertake an endeavor without the permission of His Messenger. This is one of the clearest indications of the sincere devotion and faithfulness they feel towards him. This submission on the part of the believers shows the importance they attach to the opinion of our Prophet (saas), and their unquestioning obedience to his rulings, whatever they may be. In

another verse in the Qur'an, Allah advises believers to accept the invitations of our Prophet (saas) to things that will give them true life:

You who believe! Respond to Allah and to the Messenger when He calls you to what will bring you to life! Know that Allah intervenes between a man and his heart and that you will be gathered to Him. (Surat al-Anfal, 24)

Obedying Allah's messengers is an important act of worship, that will bring great benefit to believers in this world and the next. As our Prophet (saas) declares in his Sayings, the two most important guides for Muslims are the Qur'an and the Sunnah.

"Verily, I have left amongst you the Book of Allah and the Sunnah of His Apostle which if you hold fast, you shall never go astray." (Prophet Muhammad's [saas] Last Sermon)

Today, obedience to our Prophet (saas) means following the example of his moral virtue and walking in his path.

They Are Faithful to the Qur'an

Throughout the ages, Allah has sent prophets and messengers to many peoples, and revealed books from His presence. He sent the Psalms to Prophet Dawud (as), the Torah to Prophet Musa (as), the Gospel to Isa (as) and, finally, the Qur'an to Prophet Muhammad (saas). When those books which had been revealed before the Qur'an became corrupted, Allah revealed the Qur'an, and promised that He would preserve it unchanged. The Qur'an is the only book those who believe in Allah and His Prophet (saas) may take as their guide.

Believers comply with the teachings of the Qur'an, though they

also believe in and honor the books revealed before it. Allah states in the Qur'an that these early books also bore witness to the truth:

He has sent down the Book to you with truth, confirming what was there before it. And He sent down the Torah and the Gospel. (Surah Al 'Imran, 3)

In this regard, a believer accepts all the messengers that have been sent, and does not discriminate between one and another: **"You who believe! Believe in Allah and His Messenger and in the Book He sent down to His Messenger, and the Books He sent down before..."** (Surat an-Nisa', 136). But, believers know that the Qur'an is under the protection of Allah, and take only it as their guide. Allah declares that the Qur'an has never undergone any alteration, and that it will be protected until the Day of Judgment. In the Qur'an, our Lord says:

It is We Who have sent down the Reminder and We Who will preserve it. (Surat al-Hijr, 9)

As the message from our Lord, the Qur'an holds great importance for believers. From it, believers learn of the religion that Allah has been pleased to choose for them, and the responsibilities it entails. The guide to wisdom a believer requires is the Qur'an. In every situation he encounters, throughout his life, he will direct his actions according to the commands and advice that Allah provides in the Qur'an. Allah reveals that the Qur'an is the one guide believers should follow:

We have sent down the Book to you making all things clear and as guidance and mercy and good news for the Muslims. (Surat an-Nahl, 89)

This is a communication to be transmitted to mankind so

that they may be warned by it and so that they will know that He is One God and so that people of intelligence will pay heed. (Surah Ibrahim, 52)

It is only from the Qur'an that believers can learn the commands and the moral teachings that Allah ordained, and to discover details of the Day of Judgment and the Afterlife. As Allah states in the verse 54 of the Surat al-Kahf, **"We have variegated throughout this Qur'an all kinds of examples for people,"** all the knowledge a believer needs throughout his life is to be found in the Qur'an. Therefore, believers always read the Qur'an, believe what Allah declared in its verses, and assess everything that happens to them according to it. Everything Allah stated in the Qur'an is **"consummate wisdom"** (Surat al-Qamar, 5) for believers... For this reason, believers "hold fast to" the Qur'an, and try to practice as best as they can all the precepts that Allah has revealed in it. In the Qur'an, Allah tells us of this strong devotion of the believers to the Qur'an:

Those to whom We have given the Book, who recite it in the way it should be recited, such people believe in it. As for those who reject it, they are the losers. (Surat al-Baqara, 121)

As for those who hold fast to the Book and perform prayer, We will not let the wage of the righteous be wasted. (Surat al-A'raf, 170)

With regard to issues of righteousness and justice, the Qur'an is complete:

The words of your Lord are perfect in truthfulness and justice. No one can change His Words. He is the All-Hearing, the All-Knowing. (Surat al-An'am, 115)

For this reason, believers, who take the Qur'an as their guide, live

every moment of their lives in the best and most fulfilling way.

Allah revealed the Qur'an to believers as the path of truth, as well as for advice and as a healing. Their devotion to it strengthens their faith and fear towards Him, and draws them closer to Him. Allah reveals this truth to us in the Qur'an:

Say: "Believe in it or do not believe in it." Certainly, when it is recited to them, those who were given knowledge before it fall on their faces in prostration, saying, "Glory be to our Lord! The promise of our Lord is truly fulfilled!" Weeping, they fall to the ground in prostration, and it increases them in humility. (Surat al-Isra', 107-109)

They Are Faithful to their Nation and Its People

As with believers everywhere, the faithfulness and obedience of people of faith in certain parts of the world is due to their acceptance of the moral teachings that Allah has revealed in the Qur'an. But, the reason for their devotion to a state lies in their definition of a state.

In a society that shares life and common objectives, the state is an institution whose goal is to ensure order, security, prosperity and well-being, and uses those methods most just to attain that goal. From this definition of the role of the state it can be understood that the possibility for a state to achieve order and security; for it to enjoy unity and cooperation, with the peace and stability resulting from it, the state must possess certain powers and authorities. The state is the most important and most crucial of institutions for the existence of a people. Whether it is for collective defense, ensuring peace or for economic security, the role of the state is critical.

This is the reason why every group that wants to do harm to a country attacks first the state and its authority. Throughout history, separatist organizations and individuals who have felt dissatisfied with the existing authority in a particular state, have engaged in various activities designed to diminish or destroy its power.

These individuals and groups have disapproved of the intervention of the state and its operations in various spheres. But, when we examine their ideologies, we find that they all share a certain point in common: they want to destroy religion and the true morality it fosters. These opponents of the state work to destroy the unity of its structure, and to put in its place a system shaped by their own anti-religious ideology. And, because they have no religion, they resort to belligerence and violence in the attempt to attain their goals. Their goal is the destruction of the peace and order of the country. Surely, this condition poses a danger and a threat, not only to the state but also to its citizens. Therefore, in order to prevent the danger, to remove it and maintain peace in a country, every individual must be a part of the state, and respect it and obey it.

Outside of that though, there is another point we must consider seriously. Obedience to the state is dependent on the way it enforces morality. If a state regards profiteering, insubordination, conflict and other such forms of corruption in public life as legitimate, and rejects mutual respect, compassion, self-sacrifice, justice, tolerance and other such virtues, it is inconceivable that its members should feel any sense of belonging to that state. Therefore, the basis of this sense of belonging lies in proper morality. Those who practice the moral teachings of the Qur'an are aware of this truth. They know that devotion to Islamic values, and living according to the moral teaching of the Qur'an, will

bring unity to both the state and its citizens; and they realize that, as a result of this, the country's standard of living will be enhanced.

With this truth in mind, believers are eager to tell others about the moral teachings of the Qur'an, and to invite them to implement them in their lives. The main source of this zeal is their awareness that their efforts are for the good of all.

There is another virtue the teachings of the Qur'an fosters among the believers, and human beings in general: obedience. The moral lessons of the Qur'an play a very important role in an Islamic society because it makes them obedient. The practice of this morality, and the communicating of it to others, play an important role in strengthening the state and establishing prosperity and well-being among its people. And, therefore, the communication of this morality exercises a profound impact on the existence of the state and the unity of its citizens. As such, a society composed of individuals living according to the moral teachings of the Qur'an, will both ensure unity and co-operation, through the practice of this morality, and foster an environment in which citizens will remain obedient to the state. People will be more compassionate, merciful, just and tolerant, while their collective unity and sense of cooperation will be strengthened. The dissemination of the moral teachings of the Qur'an, until every individual learns to follow its precepts, will eradicate the degradation that gives rise to anarchy, terrorism and immorality, and usher in peace, order and well-being. In many verses of the Qur'an, Allah describes the moral chaos and corruption that human beings create, of which He commands all people to beware:

... Eat and drink of Allah's provision and do not go about the earth corrupting it. (Surat al-Baqara, 60)

Whenever he holds the upperhand, he goes about the earth corrupting it, destroying crops and animals. Allah does not love corruption. (Surat al-Baqara, 205)

Give full measure and full weight. Do not diminish people's goods. Do not cause corruption in the land after it has been put right. That is better for you if you are believers. (Surat al-A'raf , 85)

As can be seen, those individuals who are faithful, because they live according to the moral precepts of the Qur'an, would feel great respect and devotion to their state. The morality of the Qur'an is needed to create the foundation of the state, as well as to establish unity and co-operation; and believers who communicate the meaning of this morality to others, call them to comply their lives according to it, experience a great sense of honor and personal contentment.

EXAMPLES OF FAITHFULNESS IN THE QUR'AN

The Companions of the Cave

In the story in the Surat al-Kahf in the Qur'an, Allah tells us about the young people who were determined in their worship of Allah, and separated themselves from non-believers; they left their homes, preferring to live in caves, only to be His servants. The two important characteristics, of being devout and faithful to Allah, was apparent in this group of young people, called the "Companions of the Cave": the first one of these characteristics is being young.

Many consider youth to be a period of life during which they can do anything; it is a time when they have a good appearance, are more physically able and healthier. Nevertheless, the Companions of the Cave, though they themselves were young, devoted that period of their life, despite all the possibilities it afforded them, to the attainment of Allah's favor. The fact that these young people gladly consecrated the most important period of their lives to win Allah's favor is evidence of the depth of their faith. That they showed such determination, in their choice of abandoning everything they possessed, and live in caves, just to be able to worship Allah, can be accounted for only through the strong sense of love, devotion and faithfulness they felt to-

wards Him. In the Qur'an, Allah describes the virtues of the companions of the Cave:

Do you consider that the Companions of the Cave and Ar-Raqim were one of the most remarkable of Our Signs? When the young men took refuge in the cave and said, "Our Lord, give us mercy directly from You and open the way for us to right guidance in our situation." (Surat al-Kahf, 9-10)

We fortified their hearts when they stood up and said, "Our Lord is the Lord of the heavens and the earth and We will not call on any god apart from Him. We would in that case have uttered an abomination." (Surat al-Kahf, 14)

[We said to them,] "When you have separated yourselves from them and everything they worship except Allah, take refuge in the cave and your Lord will unfold His mercy to you and open the way to the best for you in your situation." (Surat al-Kahf, 16)

With the words in the Qur'an, "**We fortified their hearts**," Allah informs us of how determined and patient they were in putting their faith in our Lord.

In another verse, Allah shows the faithfulness of certain young people who, despite the oppression of Pharaoh, were submissive to Allah and believed in Prophet Musa (as):

No one believed in Musa except [some] offspring [i.e., youths] among his people, out of fear that Pharaoh, and the elders, would persecute them. Pharaoh was high and mighty in the land. He was one of the profligate. (Surah Yunus, 83)

The fact that such young people chose a life of difficulty, living in caves in order to defy the oppression of the non-believers, and win the

favor of Allah, is another aspect that shows their faithfulness towards Allah. Their strong sense of devotion and faithfulness towards Allah gave them this strength and courage, and was also the foundation of their patience through the trials and adversity they confronted. The same can be said of the young people who, despite Pharaoh's cruel tyranny, believed in Musa (as). They were not afraid of Pharaoh, and showed their faithfulness to Allah in following Musa (as).

All such examples reveal that a strong sense of loyalty and devotion felt for Allah constitute an important factor for a believer for him to act so as to win Allah's favor.

A Man from Pharaoh's Household Who Kept His Faith Secret

In a story in Surah Ghafir of the Qur'an, Allah shows us how faithfulness, and a strong sense of devotion to Him, can bring about moral excellence in an individual. In this story, Prophet Musa (as) conveys the message of Allah to Pharaoh and, in doing so, a certain man comes forward to support Musa (as) and oppose Pharaoh's oppression. Allah tells us that the Pharaoh became arrogant when he heard Musa's (as) message, and objected:

Pharaoh said, "Let me kill Musa and let him call upon his Lord! I am afraid that he may change your religion and bring about corruption in the land." Musa said, "I seek refuge in my Lord and your Lord from every proud man who does not have faith in the Day of Reckoning." (Surah Ghafir, 26-27)

While Musa (as) was relating Allah's religion to Pharaoh, a person from his household came forward; he addressed Pharaoh and his peo-

ple, telling them to believe in Prophet Musa (as):

A man among Pharaoh's people who had faith, but kept his faith concealed, said, "Are you going to kill a man for saying 'My Lord is Allah' when he has brought you Clear Signs from your Lord? If he is telling a lie, be it on his own head. But if he is telling the truth, then some of what he is promising you will certainly happen to you. Allah does not guide any unbridled inveterate liar." (Surah Ghafir, 28)

This believer appeared at a moment when Pharaoh was angry and threatening to kill the prophets, yet he defended Prophet Musa (as). That this man stood up against such an excessively cruel man such as the Pharaoh, shows the extent of his faith and faithfulness towards Allah. As Musa (as) had done, this man also opposed Pharaoh, as well as exhorted his people to follow the way of Allah. His actions show that he was of high moral character; he was a believer, and the strong faith he carried in his heart gave him the courage to stand up against Pharaoh. This story also shows the depth of his faithfulness towards Allah, and that he was undaunted by any obstacle put in the way to his winning His favor.

Just how faithful and devoted he was to Allah can be determined by the cleverness and care that had enabled him to keep his faith secret, even though he lived in Pharaoh's household. The Pharaoh was an enemy of the religion; and in spite of his threats and violence, this individual was able to preserve his faith intact. There is another point we must not fail to notice here: as Allah says in the Qur'an, obeying the words of a non-believer will only harm a person's faith:

You who believe! If you obey those who disbelieve, they will turn you round on your heels and you will be transformed into

losers. (Surah Al 'Imran, 149)

This man was in danger. But, in spite of that fact, he was able to protect his faith and keep it secret without being obedient to non-believers. This shows the power of his cunning, his astounding devotion to Allah, and his strong sense of faithfulness to Him.

We can see from this example, which Allah has related in the Qur'an, that winning Allah's favor is possible only through profound faithfulness towards Him, no matter how difficult the circumstances.

A Believer's Migration (*Hijra*)

Believers are deeply motivated and expend every effort to convey to others the moral teachings of the Qur'an, and invite them to follow what it is good and true. Some may feel uneasy with such principles of justice and equality fostered by the morality of the Qur'an, because for them these notions are not "profitable." For this reason, these people seek various means to hinder believers who are determined to propagate the morality of the Qur'an.

One method they employ is to force the believers to leave those places where they live. By these means, they expect to break the believers' resolve, and render them weak. But, they forget two very important matters: the determination of the believers in following the true path that Allah has shown them, and their strong sense of devotion to Him. No matter what difficulties they inflict upon them, non-believers will never be able to divert believers from their path; they are sincere in faith and loyalty towards Allah. For them, being expelled from their cities is a form of migration, and one of the circumstances that demonstrates their submission to Allah. In such a case, believers do not hesitate to

leave their communities, their homes, possessions and the lives they had established. If necessary, without planning or preparations, they set out on their difficult journey, hoping only to win Allah's favor. Therefore, for a believer, migration is setting out, leaving every possession behind, and without the slightest hesitation, in order to win Allah's favor, and lead a life in accordance with the moral precepts of the Qur'an. This shows the great sincerity and determination of believers. In many verses of the Qur'an, Allah informs us that setting out on migration, leaving behind everything one owns for that purpose, is characteristic of a believer.

Essentially, taking on a migration means that a person sets out to follow the true path that Allah has revealed, and to leave behind the false ways he been accustomed to. Prophet Lut (as) speaks of this meaning of migration:

And Lut believed in him. He said, "I am leaving this place to follow the pleasure of my Lord. He is the Almighty, the All Wise." (Surat al-Ankabut, 26)

When we consider the migrations made by believers in this light, we see that they have never departed, at any point in their lives, from the true path to which Allah had guided and directed them, but have founded their lives solely upon seeking the pleasure of Allah and winning His favor. Believers filled with the "spirit of migration," live faithfully towards Allah throughout their entire lives. In the Qur'an, Allah states that believers, who maintain such determination on His path, will receive a great reward, both in this world and the world to come:

As for those who migrate for Allah's sake after being wronged, We shall give them good lodging in this world, and the reward of the Hereafter is greater still if they only knew. (Surat an-Nahl, 41)

CONCLUSION

Jn the Qur'an, Allah warns believers about becoming overwhelmed with fear and despondence through the difficulties they encounter, and falling into anxiety and laxity:

Be patient. But your patience is only by Allah. Do not be grieved by them and do not be constricted by the plots they hatch. (Surat an-Nahl, 127)

So be steadfast. Allah's promise is true. Do not let those who have no certainty make you impatient and shake your firmness. (Surat ar-Rum, 60)

It is the responsibility of believers never to forget the significance of these verses that Allah has revealed, and to serve Him with determination, patience and faithfulness.

A strong sense of faithfulness will bring about strong faith, and will provide a believer the strength and true patience to face the many difficulties that may occur. It will also make of him a devoted servant, who always turns to Allah, remembers Him, fears Him, loves Him, and takes only Him as his protector. His strong devotion to Allah will direct him to earn His favor, by constantly performing good deeds on His path, and make him one worthy of attaining a high moral character and mature faith. Therefore, "the loyalty and devotion felt for Allah

Conclusion

and His messenger" are the qualities that separate believers from others; they demonstrate their sincerity, and are the essential characteristics of a believer, and grant him strength in every stage of his life. In the Qur'an, Allah speaks of this strong bond that believers feel:

[People of intelligence are] those who fulfill Allah's contract and do not break their agreement. (Surat ar-Ra'd, 20)

One of the clearest indications of the faithfulness and devotion believers feel towards Allah is their concern to comply with the moral precepts of the Qur'an, and to tell others of them; and, in doing this, they are not deterred in any way by the obstacles they may encounter on the way of Allah. In return for their sincere submission and unwavering dedication to Him, Allah makes them this promise:

As for those who make Allah their friend, and His Messenger and those who believe: it is the party of Allah who are victorious! (Surat al-Ma'ida, 56)

In order to test them, Allah may impose on them difficulties in the course of their lives, but they never forget Allah's ultimate promise, being, "it is the party of Allah who are victorious." The reason why believers are able to attain such courage, patience, determination, the willingness to perform self-sacrifices, and never compromise their high moral character, is because they firmly embrace the teachings of the Qur'an, feeling also a strong sense of obedience and loyalty towards Allah. In the Qur'an, Allah refers to Prophet Nuh (as) as an example of faithfulness, and praises him for his determination in calling others to this superior morality:

He said, "My Lord, I have called my people night and day but my calling has only made them more evasive. Indeed, every time I called them to Your forgiveness, they put their fingers

in their ears, wrapped themselves up in their clothes and were overweeningly arrogant. Then I called them openly. Then I addressed them publicly and addressed them privately. I said, 'Ask forgiveness of your Lord. Truly He is Endlessly Forgiving.'" (Surah Nuh, 5-10)

As is the case with Prophet Nuh (as), one who believes in Allah must have in his heart a deep sense of this faithfulness, that he may win Allah's favor and eternal life of Paradise. In order to follow the true path that will win them that favor, all believers must strive continually and throughout their lives, no matter what difficulties they may encounter, to be His true servants. As Allah says in the Qur'an:

It was not for people of Madina, and the desert Arabs around them, to remain behind the Messenger of Allah nor to prefer themselves to him. That is because no thirst or weariness or hunger will afflict them in the way of Allah, nor will they take a single step to infuriate the disbelievers, nor secure any gain from the enemy, without a right action being written down for them because of it. Allah does not let the wage of the good-doers go to waste. Nor will they give away any amount, whether large or small, nor will they cross any valley, without it being written down for them so that Allah can recompense them for the best of what they did. (Surat at-Tawba, 120-121)

In the verse 114 of the Surah Al 'Imran, Allah describes believers as devout individuals who warn others against evil, urge them towards what is good, and take every opportunity to call them to live good moral lives.

They believe in Allah and the Last Day, and enjoin the right

Conclusion

and forbid the wrong, and compete in doing good. They are among the righteous. (Surah Al 'Imran, 114)

By living according to these high moral standards, believers will foster peace and order and ensure the survival of moral values, by encouraging unity and co-operation among people. In this way, every individual will gain greater strength, higher morals, greater sincerity and become more industrious. As long as a believer exercises sincere devotion towards Allah and His messengers, all his difficulties will become alleviated. Believers, who remain faithful to Allah throughout their lives, will always enjoy His help, protection and mercy:

Those who submit themselves completely to Allah and do good have grasped the Firmest Handhold. The end result of all affairs is with Allah. (Surah Luqman, 22)

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 unsailable 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 in the Twentieth Century

The first evolutionist who took up the subject of the origin of life in the twentieth century was the renowned Russian biologist Alexander Oparin. With various theses he advanced in the 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.²

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 atmosphere in an experiment set-up, and adding energy to the mixture, Miller synthesized several organic molecules (amino acids) present in the structure of proteins.

Barely a few years had passed before it was revealed that this experiment, which was then presented as an important step in the name of evolution, was invalid, 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?⁵

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.⁶

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 favorable individual differences or variations occur.⁷

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 or-

ganisms (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 all probability, would not be an improvement.⁹

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.¹⁰

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 another.¹¹

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.¹²

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 paleoanthropologists 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 neandarthalensis* 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.¹⁷

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.¹⁸

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 de-

vice 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 belief for some circles. These circles are blindly devoted to materialist philosophy and adopt Darwinism because it is the only materialist explanation that can be put forward 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 that produce material explanations, no matter how counter-intuitive, no matter how mystifying to the uninitiated. Moreover, that materialism is absolute, so we cannot allow a Divine Foot in the door.¹⁹

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 under-

stand 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.²⁰

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. 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

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

(Surat al-Baqara, 32)
