

الله
رسول
محمد

THE SOLUTION TO SECRET SORROWS

**Allah does not wrong people in any way;
rather it is people who wrong themselves.**

(Surah Yunus:44)

HARUN YAHYA

Whatever their circumstances may be, there is one significant feature that a great many people have in common: The great majority lead unhappy lives.

The goods and property they own, the jobs they perform, and their loved ones are not enough to make these people happy in any real sense.

The reason why they suffer from sorrow and feel unhappy even in the best of circumstances is because they live at a distance from Allah. Allah grants people happiness only through faith, and only in this way it is possible to take full pleasure in the beautiful things of life. So long as no sincere faith in accordance with the Qur'an exists, it is impossible to achieve true happiness by any means whatsoever.

This book highlights this important truth and calls on people to live out true and sincere faith. It explains that people really create with their own efforts the systems that prevent them from being happy and enjoying life's blessings, and which plunge them into sorrow. It makes it clear that the only way to be protected against secret unhappiness is to believe in Allah with a sincere heart. It reminds the readers that so long as people do not achieve this sincerity towards Allah, they cannot experience real happiness by any means whatsoever—and that the secret sorrows of this world may well turn to eternal torment in the Hereafter.



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 'alayhi wa sallam*): May Allah bless him and grant him peace (following a reference to the Prophet Muhammad)

(*as-'alayhi's-salam*): Peace be upon him (following a reference to the prophets or angels)

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HARUN YAHYA

November, 2006

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 books, we think it appropriate to devote a chapter to summarize this subject.

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

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

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

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

In these books, unlike some other books, you will not find the author's personal views, explanations based on dubious sources, styles that are 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.

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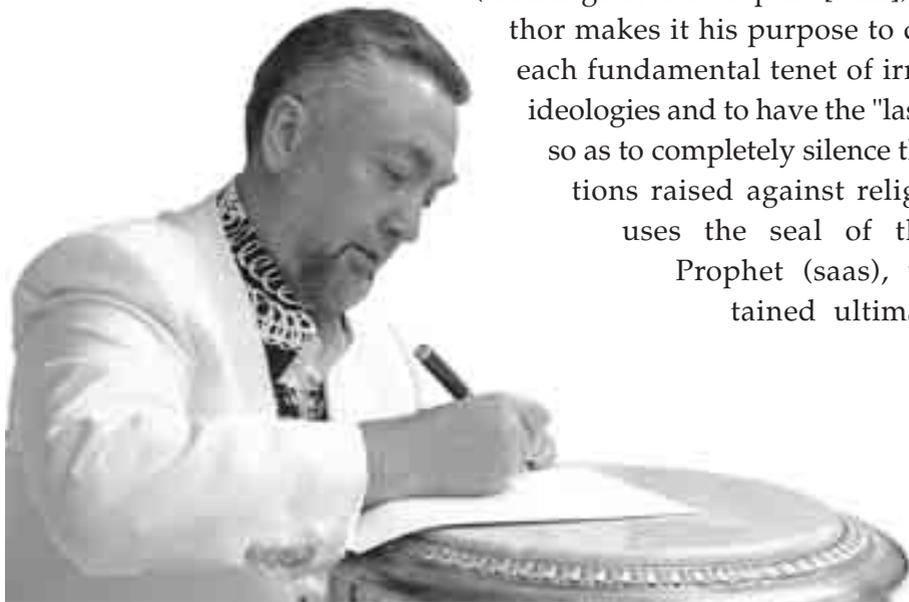
ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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.

Harun Yahya's works, translated into 57 different languages, constitute a collection for a total of more than 45,000 pages with 30,000 illustrations.

His pen-name is a composite of the names Harun (Aaron) and Yahya (John), in memory of the two esteemed prophets who fought against their peoples' lack of faith. The Prophet's seal on his books' covers is symbolic and is linked to their contents. It represents the Qur'an (the Final Scripture) and Prophet Muhammad (saas), last of the prophets. Under the guidance of the Qur'an and the Sunnah

(teachings of the Prophet [saas]), the author makes it his purpose to disprove each fundamental tenet of irreligious 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 (saas), who attained ultimate wis-



dom 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 irreligious 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, Spain to Brazil, Malaysia to Italy, France to Bulgaria and Russia. Some of his books are available in English, French, German, Spanish, Italian, Portuguese, Urdu, Arabic, Albanian, Chinese, Swahili, Hausa, Dhivehi (spoken in Mauritius), Russian, Serbo-Croat (Bosnian), Polish, Malay, Uygur Turkish, Indonesian, Bengali, Danish and Swedish.

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 twenty-first century will attain the peace, justice, and happiness promised in the Qur'an.

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Introduction

During the course of your life, you have met a great many people. As well as those you encounter every day in person—your family, friends and your colleagues at school and work—you see dozens of people from all over the world in the newspapers and magazines. And on your TV screen, you watch the behavior of hundreds more.

Think for a moment about these individuals you recall in your memory. Try to call to mind facial expressions and conversations you have grown accustomed to since your childhood... the comments some have made about their lives, their concerns and worries and the ways they express them... the remarks that colleagues repeat daily, and what others say amongst themselves about their families and financial problems.

Try to recall in your mind's eye the people you've seen in the street, waiting at a bus stop, trying to battle their way home through dense traffic, or being splashed with rainwater by passing cars.

Remember the images of actors in TV programs, those who act the part of happy people, seemingly enjoying themselves in front of the cameras and who claim to the press that they're friends but behind one another's backs, say unbelievably bad things. Think about their spiritual state and the state of those unable to protect themselves from jealousy, hatred, rivalry or other such emotions—and who, while trying to entertain others because it is their job to do so, betray their own unhappiness in everything they do off-stage and off-camera.

Examine the lives of people who have attained the highest possible worldly rank, who have enough money to buy whatever they want whenever they choose, who live in the finest houses and own the latest model cars, who wear the most expensive clothes and who—because of their achievements—are most respected and listened to in their community.

When you carefully consider all these people, you will come across a very important truth. Whatever their circumstances may be, there is one significant feature they have in common: *The great majority of people lead unhappy lives.*

The goods and property they own, the jobs they perform, and their loved ones are not enough to make these people happy in any real sense. These people's lives are ruled not by happiness, tranquility, pleasure and joy, but by negative emotions like melancholy, pessimism and hopelessness. A great part of most people's time is spent in this mood. When compared to true happiness, those moments when they are capable of being happy are fleeting and extremely shallow.

Sometimes, too, they may be driven to deceive both themselves and those around them. Yet deep inside, they are experiencing a secret sorrow that prevents them from taking pleasure in all the good they see around them.

So why are these people unhappy? Why do they suffer such deep inward sorrow and lead lives that lack tranquility?

The reason why they suffer from sorrow and feel unhappy even in the best of circumstances is because they live at a distance from Allah. Allah grants people happiness only through faith, and only in this way it is possible to take full pleasure in the beautiful things of life. So long as no sincere faith in accordance with the Qur'an exists, it is impossible to achieve true happiness by any means whatsoever.

This book will highlight this important truth and call on people to live out true and sincere faith. It will explain that people really create with their own efforts the systems that prevent them from being happy and enjoying life's blessings, and which plunge them into sorrow. It will make it clear that the only way to be protected against secret unhappiness is to believe in Allah with a sincere heart. It will remind the readers that so long as people do not achieve this sincerity towards Allah, they cannot experience real happiness by any means whatsoever—and that the secret sorrows of this world may well turn to eternal torment in the Hereafter.

In a verse of the Qur'an, Allah tells us that those who find happiness and salvation are the faithful:

It is the believers who are successful. (Surat al-Muminun: 1)

Why Do People Sorrow While They Could Be Happy?

Despite all their efforts, many cannot experience happiness in the true sense. To achieve this purpose, they try everything they can possibly imagine in the life of this world. They constantly pursue new ideals, believing that when they achieve these, they will find happiness as well. Some search for one good friend, some for wealth, some to attain their spiritual desires. Even if their wishes and expectations do become reality, still the results are never as they hoped. They cannot taste lasting happiness in the true sense. Mainly, they try not to reveal on their faces this dissatisfaction which they feel inside. But no matter how much they mimic happiness, they are living with a secret sorrow within.

In fact, they have every opportunity to be happy. In one verse of the Qur'an, Allah tells us about the blessings He grants people:

If you tried to number Allah's blessings, you could never count them. Allah is Ever-Forgiving, Most Merciful. (Surat an-Nahl: 18)

As Allah tells us in this verse, a person encounters remarkable blessings throughout his life. Allah has equipped the world with all manner of wonders for everyone to enjoy. However, for people to be happy in the true sense, neither these blessings they enjoy nor the ideals they pursue are adequate by themselves. The people's discontent arises from the incorrect belief systems on which they've based

their lives.

Unhappy People Have False Beliefs

There is a way of life that the great majority of people share. This way of life we call the "satanic system," prevails where there is no religious morality. This system is founded on an insincerity that is so deeply rooted in people's lives that even those who appear to be the most sincere, whose behavior which is assumed to be perfectly straightforward, may have fundamentally insincere motives.

Even though people fail to attribute any names to this system, they are naggingly aware of the error of the system under which they live. At every opportunity, they complain of the hypocrisy of others, because they have not experienced true friendship or true love and have no one they can trust in the full sense. Still, they themselves do not hesitate to display the same flawed morality towards all those around them.

In this system, everyone is damaged by his own actions. Even if such people try in every possible way, still they cannot find genuine internal joy, tranquility and happiness—yet they accept this as "a fact of life." In other words, according to them, Earthly life is not a place where true happiness and peace can be found on any lasting basis.

The truth is that unhappiness is not in any way a fact of life. On the contrary, it is extremely easy for people to find the solution for the internal troubles into which they fall. A verse in the Qur'an says, **"... Only in the remembrance of Allah can the heart find peace"** (Surat ar-Ra'd: 28). Here, Allah tells people that they can achieve true happiness only by finding faith. Only if they understand the mercy and protectiveness that Allah holds for them and live out their worldly lives in religious morality can people enjoy every mo-

ment. Only then can they praise the beauty of what they see around them as it should be appreciated and begin to experience happiness.

In the verse, "**Anyone who acts rightly, male or female, being a believer, We will give them a good life and We will recompense them according to the best of what they did**" (Surat an-Nahl: 97), Allah promises that He will allow the faithful who believe in Him to live the finest lives in this world and the Hereafter. Those who follow Allah experience the blessings He promises, both in this world and the next.

On this point, however, there is an important truth that people ignore. In order for people to experience the fine things of this life and enjoy the blessings of the world and the large number of beautiful things which Allah has created for them, then, faith in its true meaning must be lodged in their hearts. Otherwise, by paying the proverbial lip service to faith and by resembling the truly faithful only in certain limited ways, people cannot protect themselves from the unhappiness within. To know true happiness, people must bind their hearts to Allah in complete submission and live every moment in conformity to the Qur'an. Failing to do this, they will continue to suffer internal sorrow during every stage of their lives. No matter how much they want to be happy they cannot be. On the contrary, their lives will be ruled by such negative emotions as despair, pessimism and hopelessness.

As you can see, the road to happiness is an extremely simple one. With the Qur'an, the Divine Book that Allah has bestowed upon mankind as a mercy, He has shown people the secret of happiness. People can live a beautiful life only if they behave in accordance with their creation and the nature Allah has determined for them. People who turn aside from this path which Allah has shown them as a blessing, or who fail to follow the path as it should be followed,

are creating a world of unhappiness for themselves by their own efforts. As Allah tells us in the verse, "**Allah does not wrong people in any way; rather it is people who wrong themselves**" (Surah Yunus: 44), these people are only tormenting themselves.

The unhappiness experienced by these people leads to the reality described by Allah in the verse, "**Leave them then until they meet their Day when they will be struck down by the Blast: the Day their ploys will not profit them at all and they will not be helped. And those who do wrong will have a punishment besides that, but most of them do not know it**" (Surat at-Tur: 45-47). In the Hereafter, Allah gives people recompense for what they do on Earth, but He also warns people that a torment of which most are not even aware will begin in the life of this world.

Allah refers to the difficulties that people who turn away from the faith will experience in worldly life, and what they will receive in the Hereafter in this verse: "**... if anyone turns away from My reminder, his life will be a dark and narrow one, and on the Day of Resurrection We will gather him blind**" (Surah Ta Ha: 124). Allah has shown people the way to protect themselves from this trouble and, as we have noted before, it is possible to do so through genuine sincerity and a deep faith in Allah.

Some People Are Unhappy, Though They Say They Believe

The verse in the Qur'an, "**They have different ranks with Allah. Allah sees what they do**" (Surah Al 'Imran: 163), draws our attention to an important truth. Some refuse to accept the faith. But even the faithful vary in their fear of Allah and the faith in Him which they hold in their hearts. In the Qur'an, Allah refers to people who do not believe in the following verse, "**The desert Arabs say, 'We believe.' Say: 'You do not believe. Say rather, 'We have become Muslim,' for faith has not yet entered into your hearts'...**" (Surat al-Hujurat: 14). In another verse, Allah tells us that amongst believers, there may be those who remain behind, stay in the middle or forge ahead: "**Then We made Our chosen servants inherit the Book. But some of them wrong themselves; some are ambivalent; and some outdo each other in good by Allah's permission. That is the great favor**" (Surah Fatir: 32).

Amongst these people described in the Qur'an is another group: "those who mix up their faith with wrongdoing," which means failing to separate oneself fully from ignorant morality, despite realizing the superiority of the true faith and being aware that there is no other way to salvation in the Hereafter than by conforming to the Qur'an. These individuals may live with their faith, but at moments when their interests are challenged or when they are faced with problems, may also demonstrate the behavior of unbelievers

instead of behaving in accordance with the Qur'an.

When speaking of such people, not only those who openly reject the instructions of the faith and demonstrate irreligious behavior should come to mind. The people concerned may conform to most provisions of the Qur'an and behave like believers throughout a large portion of their lives. On certain matters, however, they may not like to be aware that according to the Qur'an, they are in the wrong. Or they may not be able to understand that such is the case. Some who live as Muslims may think that some of their beliefs and actions do not conflict with the Qur'an, and that they do not venture into what is described as forbidden and sinful.

For example, some people do not understand—or do not want to—that emotionalism is a character trait contrary to the morality of the Qur'an. This can be seen clearly in a number of verses. Upon the death of a relative, for instance, a Muslim realizes that the person has not perished but that for him eternal life is a new beginning. And if the relative was one of the faithful, he takes pleasure in hoping that he will enter Paradise. In addition, death is a part of one's destiny, predetermined by Allah. Like everything else, Allah brings death for a reason.

As a result, the believer knows that even in the case of a relative, there is a blessing in his death and behaves in such a way as to show his contentment. But despite being aware of this truth, many people show ignorant behavior when faced with death. They behave emotionally and react in an excessive manner.

Those who do not consider that such behavioral defects conflict with the morality of the Qur'an see no reason not to continue this behavior. At certain moments of their lives, they live like ignorant people, exhibiting the same characteristics, suffering the kind of troubles that believers do not suffer, prevalent amongst ignorant

people. And unlike believers, they are frequently unhappy.

Because of this, everyone who declares, "I believe" should consider whether "living a beautiful life in this world and the Hereafter"—which Allah has promised the faithful in the Qur'an—is apparent in himself in the light of this knowledge. If, at certain moments, his life still contains unhappiness, troubles and sorrows to even a small extent, he should take this warning to heed.

For a person who suffers trouble and sorrow throughout his life, the solution is simple. As we are told in the verse, "**... Allah desires ease for you; He does not desire difficulty for you...**" (Surat al-Baqara: 185).

For anyone who has any open or secret characteristic of ignorant morality remaining within him, the basic solution is to abandon this mode of living and behave in conformity to the Qur'an. Every person with faith in Allah and every believer who conforms to the Qur'an must approach the Book with greater sincerity and must be protected from any kind of act or thought that runs counter to the behavior of the faithful described in its verses. He should not regard the truths contained in the Qur'an as theoretical, but should apply them in practice in his life and feel and experience them at all times. He must not forget that Allah encompasses everything and that He knows all the secret emotions inside a person, including concealed insincerity.

A Muslim should not regard simply performing religious observances as sufficient and view the insincerity inside himself as insignificant. He should consider that Allah has the power to punish insincerity with severe torment at any moment and that sooner or later, he will be called upon for a reckoning and treated accordingly. Everything that occurs in the world is created by Allah. All living creatures bow to Allah and act according to His instructions.

Muslims should live in submission to their destiny without forgetting these truths and knowing that in every event, there is a goodness and a blessing.

When a person arrives at awareness of these truths, he will see a different, beautiful life begin for him. He will understand that, up to that time, he never tasted the full flavor of the blessings that he believed were giving him pleasure—and how ordinary are the things people believe bring them happiness, when compared to true happiness! He will realize that everything from the meals he eats to the sights he sees, to the very air he breathes can bring far greater joys than he ever thought. Loving, being loved, showing moral perfection, seeing the delicate beauty in people, laughing and enjoying himself, friendship and conversation will take on very different flavors. His life and his worldly circumstances will, in a sense, become reminiscent of life in Paradise.

At this point, however, another important matter needs to be understood. When we speak of "living a beautiful life," you should not take this to mean that people will experience no difficulty, for this world is a place where everyone is tested, and a person will be tested by various events until the end of his life. As Allah tells us in the verses of the Qur'an, everyone will suffer difficulties and problems. Some will be tested with hunger, some with fear, some with losses of property or loved ones. But none of these detract in the slightest from the internal tranquility or the happiness in the heart of a believer described here, because a believer submits to the destiny, seeing the benefits and blessings in events, or believes in them even if he cannot perceive them, and experiences the beauty in all this. Thinking positively about events and submitting to the will of Allah, the Possessor of boundless knowledge, brings lasting and genuine happiness.

This book is about showing people the path to the true, heartfelt happiness and internal tranquility that is experienced by believers—a blessing granted by Allah only to His sincere followers who have genuine faith.

Allah describes this matter as good news for believers in this world and the Hereafter:

Yes, the friends of Allah will feel no fear and will know no sorrow: Those who believe and have fear of Allah, there is good news for them in the life of this world and the Hereafter. There is no changing the words of Allah. That is the great victory! (Surah Yunus: 62-64)

In another verse, Allah tells us that security is again only for those believers who have sincere faith in their hearts and do not mix faith with wrongdoing:

Those who believe and do not mix up their faith with any wrongdoing, they are the ones who are safe; it is they who are guided. (Surat al-An'am: 82)

Failures of Belief and Behavior that Drive People to Secret Sorrow

Since the beginning of this book, we have stated that though some people say that they accept the faith, insincerity is the reason why many cannot experience true tranquility and happiness. As Allah tells us in the verse, **"They vacillate between the two—not joining these or joining those. If Allah misguides someone, you will not find any way for him to go"** (Surat an-Nisa': 143), these people know everything in their consciences, but deviate between ignorant morality and the morality of the Qur'an. Even though they believe, demonstrating this moral indecision causes such people to live in secret suffering.

Few are aware that the troubles and sorrows they experience is the recompense for the insincerity they conceal inside themselves. They believe that these are "facts of life"—that is, a part of life that almost everybody is apt to experience. However, none of the behavior which turns to sorrow for them is an inescapable fact of life.

People of this type suffer sorrow and torment either because they have set their faces against the religious morality that will protect them from darkness, as Allah tells us in the verse, **"Alif Lam Ra. This is a Book We have sent down to you so that you can bring mankind from the darkness to the light, by the permission of their Lord, to the Path of the Almighty, the Praiseworthy"** (Surah Ibrahim: 1), or because they do not live the way that religious moral-

ity requires.

In that case, what ideas, defective morality, attachments and beliefs are distancing people from religious morality and causing them to demonstrate ignorant behavior? In the following lines we will answer this question and refer to the ugly behavior that turns people away from happiness.

Inability to Fully Comprehend the Perfection of the Morality of the Qur'an

The principal reason why some people continue to suffer the secret sorrows of an ignorant life, even though they say they believe, is their failure to follow completely the path shown by the Qur'an. In the Qur'an, Allah brings the faithful the good news of a beautiful life in this world. But for this, people need to follow His instructions unconditionally and live out the perfection of the morality that He approves. While living out religious morality, if a person acts under the influence of even a single part of ignorant morality, he cannot fully achieve the beautiful life of which the Qur'an speaks. For people to be able to live the life of the world in the way the Qur'an promises, they must understand that there is no lifestyle suitable for the human character other than the morality of the Qur'an.

Pride Is a Cause of Sorrow and Trouble in This World and the Hereafter

Pride is a moral defect that Allah does not like. A proud person is suffering from the disease of conceit. The reason for that conceit is that the person assigns himself a separate identity and regards himself and those around him as creatures independent of Allah. (Surely Allah is beyond that!) Such a person believes that everything he does and everything he possesses is his and his alone. For example,

when he achieves any success, he shows off and views himself as a wonderful person. He wants to make those around him feel that he is superior under every circumstance.

In fact, such people can never achieve the true honors they pursue because respect is earned only by following the Qur'an. Allah informs us of this truth:

If the truth were to follow their whims and desires, the heavens and the Earth and everyone in them would have been brought to ruin. No indeed! We have given them their Reminder [that by which one is remembered, i.e., with praise], but they have turned away from it. (Surat al-Muminun: 71)

When a person does not conform to the Qur'an, everything is brought to ruin, as Allah tells us in this verse. In another verse, Allah points out that people often fall into this error and that they seek honor and respect for an illusion of superiority:

They say, "If we return to Madina, the more honorable will drive out the inferior." But all honor belongs to Allah and to His messenger and the believers. But the hypocrites do not know this. (Surat al-Munafiqun: 8)

As the verse tells us, honor and might belong to Allah, and Allah grants this superiority only to those of His followers who demonstrate high moral standards.

Although they say that they believe, some people still remain under the influence of suggestions they have received during their ignorant lives and cannot bear to abandon their pride. The truth is, pride and false superiority are among the foremost factors that drive people to torment.

At the same time, pride is a moral defect which drives people into sin and causes them to commit many immoralities and bad acts

which do not conform to the Qur'an:

When he is told to fear Allah, he is seized by pride which drives him to wrongdoing. Hell will be enough for him! What an evil resting-place! (Surat al-Baqara: 206)

A prideful person loves himself more than anybody else. Because of this, in everything that goes against his own advantage, he pushes his own passions and desires to the forefront rather than considering the approval of Allah or his own conscience. This inevitably directs him towards wickedness and low morality.

Though a prideful person sets himself above everyone else and always pursues his own interests, he can never find the happiness and tranquility he seeks.

Prideful people can never taste the many beautiful things experienced by the truly faithful. For example, they can never experience real love. Because they love themselves more than anyone or anything else in the world, they are unable to love others as they should. They cannot openly express the affection they feel for another, and cannot treat others with kindness or show them the warmth, sincerity and friendship that love requires. Because of the cold and formal character which they display, they cannot be loved by others either.

Prideful people cannot accept being defeated in any matter, and because their egos are dominant, they always damage friendships and display behavior that causes tension and unease. They cannot display an optimistic, patient, humble, forgiving and conciliatory character. They want whatever they say to always be accepted. When there is a disagreement, they behave in an obstinate, stiff-necked fashion and refuse to back down. When what they want is not done, they make trouble, which all causes them to be regarded as difficult and quarrelsome. It is very difficult for them to make friendships, to have a friendly chat or experience love, friendship

and superior morality. This causes them to become unloved by people around them. Their presence causes discomfort for others, and for them this is a great loss.

Within these people, inability to experience these beautiful feelings secretly turns into a great sorrow. Although they feel a need to love and be loved, make friendships and share superior morality with others, their own pride and conceit simply prevent them from doing so. They feel a deep longing for these things, but cannot attain them, which causes them to continually suffer from secret sorrow.

Another kind of sorrow that pride causes is the fear these people have of making mistakes. Because they claim to be flawless, they also claim to be immune to error. As a result, they feel very troubled whenever they do make a mistake. They aim to protect their prestige in the eyes of others, instead of earning Allah's approval.

Having another person point out their errors or defects is very hurtful to their pride. In such an event, they feel shaken, thinking they have demeaned themselves and lost face in the eyes of others. For this reason, they are constantly living in fear and tension inside themselves. They cannot act as they would like and live a normal life. Part of their minds is always calculating, so that they behave according to the calculation instead of sincerely and from the heart. Because of this, they are under stress and always compelled to act artificially.

For example, where everybody is enjoying themselves, in contrast to everyone else, proud people suffer sorrow. On the one hand, they feel a great desire to join in the entertainment, but on the other, they remain aloof out of fear that they will demean themselves if they demonstrate undignified behavior.

Because of their own approach, these people are forced to live with their obstinacy in a cold and lonely world. If they were able to

show a submissive character towards Allah and the faithful, all these troubles would be at an end.

With submission, they would acquire cheerfulness, tranquility and happiness in place of sorrow because a submissive person has no fear of making mistakes. When a mistake he's made is pointed out to him, he immediately turns towards Allah to ask for forgiveness and corrects his intentions and behavior. Moreover, through his devotion, he regards the correction as a blessing for him and is happy to think that it is a means of developing himself further. He sets store not on what others think of him, but on Allah's approval. Obviously the spiritual state and the life of a person who thinks like this are quite different from those of a person who suffers tension and discomfort because of his pride.

Never forget that pride is the basic characteristic of satan. It caused his expulsion from Paradise, his condemnation by Allah and has ensured his abode and torment in Hell. For this reason, people who forget their own feebleness with regards to the power of Allah and enter into competition with others out of unjustified pride should fear the same rewards as satan's. Indeed Allah has pointed out that bitter torment in the Hereafter awaits people who cannot rescue themselves from the value judgments of the society of the ignorant and persist in their obstinacy in the name of personal honor. Allah tells us how those who pretend to worldly greatness will be called upon on that day:

Taste that! You are the mighty one, the noble one! (Surat ad-Dukhan: 49)

True honor and superiority are for people who behave submissively, inoffensively and gently while on Earth. Allah gives the faithful this good news:

If you avoid the serious wrong actions you have been for-

bidden, We will erase your bad actions from you and admit you by a Gate of Honor. (Surat an-Nisa': 31)

Failure to Consider the Perfection of Destiny and that There Is Goodness in Everything

In one verse of the Qur'an, Allah tells us, "... **It may be that you hate something when it is good for you and it may be that you love something when it is bad for you. Allah knows and you do not know**" (Surat al-Baqara: 216). During their lives, people may encounter unexpected, unwanted and undesirable events. Every one of these is a special situation created to test them, as we are told in the verse, "**He Who created death and life to test which of you is best in action...**" (Surat al-Mulk: 2). What people need to do, no matter how difficult and negative what happens to them may seem, is to trust in Allah and be aware that our Lord predestines good for them in every event. The security and submission which a faithful person feels in his heart controls his morality. This is the kind of behavior by which a person puts his trust in Allah.

Putting trust in Allah is a blessing and a great consolation for people, provided by Allah. People who understand the truth declared by Allah in the verse, "... **What assailed you on the day the two armies met was by Allah's permission...**" (Surah Al 'Imran: 166) surrender themselves to Allah's wisdom, so they both see beauties and blessings at every moment of their lives and show their faith and trust in Allah through their morality. In return for this morality, Allah eases their paths, as we are told in the verse, "...**Whoever fears Allah—He will make matters easy for him**" (Surat at-Talaq: 4). As Allah informs us in the verse, "**It is He Who sent down serenity into the hearts of the believers thereby increasing their faith with more faith—the legions of the heavens**

and the Earth belong to Allah. Allah is All-Knowing, All-Wise" (Surat al-Fath: 4), in return for the submission which they display, Allah calms the hearts of the faithful and gives them feelings of tranquility and security.

The Qur'an tells us how believers, who know that Allah will transform all events that appear on the surface to be good or bad into something auspicious for His sincere servants, express their submission to Him:

"And why indeed shouldn't we put our trust in Allah when He has guided us to our ways? We will be steadfast however much you harm us. Those who trust put their trust in Allah." (Surah Ibrahim: 12)

A person who trusts in Allah and relies upon Him suffers no pain or grief. This is Allah's promise to His devoted followers. In the Qur'an, we are told this:

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

As we can see, if Allah wills, submitting to Him makes everything easier. In the absence of submission, every detail of one's life turns into an additional difficulty, trouble and sorrow. Every task becomes more complicated, even insoluble. The most ordinary and basic occurrences, and those that are easiest to resolve, grow to problematic proportions in the eyes of those who are not submissive. Even when they claim they believe in Allah, such people may forget how destiny is woven in a wonderful pattern or become trapped in the idea that events occur independently of Him. (Surely Allah is beyond that!) Because of this, they cannot look positively at events that happen to them and see the goodness in events. They live in continual fear and concern. They experience tension brought about by

their lack of submission by thinking up negative possibilities, even when these are not at all likely. In the same way, they find something to describe as a drawback, even in affairs that are running perfectly smoothly.

In addition, because they do not consider that every event they experience is from Allah, they get into terrible troubles by believing that they have to solve every difficulty or problem by themselves. In fact, no matter what they do, it is impossible to solve anything without Allah's willing it. For this reason, a submissive person will attempt every solution and make every effort he can. But because he knows that Allah will bring about the outcome, he does all this calmly and comfortably.

The problems suffered by people who lack submissiveness are frequently encountered in everyday life. For example, you will have often run across the rage and the angry words of a person who's missed his bus on the way to work. He cannot pull himself together for several minutes. Even if he finds another way of getting to work on time, he is upset by this incident throughout the day. He will become stressed and torment himself by thinking that everything will go wrong on a day that's begun badly. If instead of this, he considers the possible benefits that Allah may grant through this event, he would not become so troubled. He would go on hoping for Allah's approval because he surrenders himself to Allah even when everything appears to be going wrong.

In the same way, a person injured in an accident cannot be protected from the worry into which he falls when he behaves with a lack of trust in Allah towards what has befallen him. Because he has forgotten that it was Allah Who created this event, he looks for the fault in the driver of the vehicle or in himself and gets angry. In fact, all his worry is entirely groundless. In such a situation, thinking

about just one positive aspect of what happened is enough to rescue the person from this irreconcilable concern.

For example, considering that the outcome could have been not injury but death is a reason to be grateful to Allah and a source of calm and cheerfulness. Or the patient should take pleasure in thinking that injury is a means of feeling close to death and the Hereafter, and that this brings him very close to Allah and increases his fear of Allah. Perhaps because of this he will be rescued from pride and vanity, and his submission will make Allah pleased with him. This will bring him great blessings and benefits in the Hereafter. Thus a person who believes with certainty in Allah and the Day of Judgment can understand the benefits and blessings Allah has created in any situation.

People who have only a superficial faith may often behave with lack of submission. And because of this, in contrast with true believers, their lives may be filled with troubles and sorrows. If such people submit to Allah in the way the faithful are instructed to do in the verse, "**[Believers are] those to whom people said, 'The people have gathered against you, so fear them.' But that merely increased their faith and they said, 'Allah is enough for us and the Best of Guardians'**" (Surah Al 'Imran: 173), the sorrows they suffer will come to an end.

Ingratitude

In the Qur'an, Allah makes mention of a negative moral characteristic commonly found within man: "**... When We let a man taste mercy from Us, he exults in it. But if something bad strikes him for what he has done, he is ungrateful**" (Surat ash-Shura: 48). Certainly some people are ungrateful to Allah in spite of the countless blessings amongst which they live. Although they may never

have considered this, such poor moral behavior towards Allah is one of the principal reasons for their unhappiness. In the verse, **"Remember Me—I will remember you. Give thanks to Me and do not be ungrateful"** (Surat al-Baqara: 152), Allah orders people to avoid ingratitude. Despite having faith, their failure to appreciate Allah's mercy and all the fine things He has granted them will naturally grow into a torment for them.

The fundamental reason for these people's showing such poor moral behavior is that they have not fully grasped the essence of religion. Their inability to consider the perfect structure of destiny, or that there is goodness in everything whether it appears good or bad, causes them to regard events negatively. In every event, there are really hundreds of details in which a person can find a blessing and take pleasure. But because of their distorted vision, these people cannot see the blessings and be grateful as they should. Some see these beautiful things which have come to them from Allah and think they own them and hence, do not show the necessary gratitude—just as Qarun, who was given so much wealth that he could not even carry his keys, behaved ungratefully towards Allah.

As we are told, **"He [Qarun] said, 'I have only been given it because of knowledge I have...'"** (Surat al-Qasas: 78). Such people start thinking that they deserve the things they possess. For this reason, they do not regard them as blessings that bring joy and happiness. Because they have not completely purged worldly ambition from their hearts, what they do possess does not seem enough for them. They show a contrary character towards their blessings because they are conceited, yet dissatisfied.

These people also forget that it's Allah Who gives blessings and takes them away and Who increases or reduces them. For this reason, whenever they suffer a loss, they are plunged into deep disap-

pointment. In fact, this is one of Allah's tests—an important learning opportunity for people to understand the true value of whatever they have.

People should take advantage of the opportunities that Allah provides them and try to earn Allah's approval with a grateful approach. We are told in the Qur'an that people who are ungrateful to Allah while in the midst of His blessings may suffer the loss of those same blessings as a result. The verse which tells us this truth is:

Allah makes an example of a city which was safe and at peace, its provision coming to it plentifully from every side. Then it showed ingratitude for Allah's blessings, so Allah made it wear the robes of hunger and fear for what it did. (Surat an-Nahl: 112)

If people like those described in the verse show gratitude instead of ingratitude, Allah will increase their blessings. People who believe live with the tranquility and happiness this morality brings. Because they look at everything with the eyes of faith and wisdom, they immediately notice the blessings and the fine and beautiful things around them. Because they are not ambitious for worldly advantages, they know how to be satisfied with what they have. They maintain this morality even under the most difficult conditions and in the most troubling circumstances. Rather than seeing anything bad in an event and letting it make them unhappy, they know how to see that event's good aspects. In return for this superior morality, Allah rewards His sincere followers by increasing their blessings still further, as we are told in the verse:

... your Lord announced: "If you are grateful, I will certainly give you increase, but if you are ungrateful, My punishment is severe." (Surah Ibrahim: 7)

Egotism

In the Qur'an, Allah tells us of a weakness in people's natures with the verse, "... **people are prone to selfish greed...**" (Surat an-Nisa': 128). Indeed, man is prone to succumbing to selfish desires. He is ready to put himself first at every opportunity, look after his own selfish benefits and love himself above all others. If a person is not sufficiently strong-willed in his fear of Allah and in superior morality, this will prompt him to selfish desires such as "Let only me be loved," or "Let me be admired" and "Let me be praised." Such an immoral approach invariably puts the comfort, tranquility and happiness of others in second place. Instead of thinking such self-sacrificing thoughts as, "First, let me ensure the comfort of others," or "Let it be to their advantage and if necessary, I'll sacrifice my own benefits," and "Let others be happy and let me take pleasure from their happiness," he will come to act with the idea of "Me first, no matter what!"

Believers conquer this tendency in their natures and live out the morality which Allah approves. But some people fall into the error of thinking "I already fulfill certain religious obligations, what can be wrong if occasionally I look after my own interests?" and regard this as a harmless deficiency in their morality. They go further and view protecting their own advantages as "a fact of life." In other words, even though the Qur'an tells them this is wrong, they privately believe that to stay alive and prosper, they need to put their own interests first. They think that nobody else can look out for their interests and that others will suppress and harm them. Moreover, when everyone else demonstrates this morality and looks after his own interests, but one of them is generous and self-sacrificing, they believe this one is making a fool of himself. Because of these ideas, they cannot direct their thinking toward self-sacrifice. In fact, there

is only one Power Who can protect people's advantages, and that Power is Allah. Neither selfishness nor the pursuit of his own interests can bring a person any advantage.

Allah explains this in a verse:

If Allah afflicts you with harm, no one can remove it except Him. If He desires good for you, no one can avert His favor. He bestows it on whichever of His servants He wills. He is Ever-Forgiving, Most Merciful. (Surah Yunus: 107)

People's egotism emerges most clearly through their passion for life and property. For example, when a person is asked to lend something he owns, he may lie and say, "I don't have it with me," because he doesn't want to hand it over. This selfish tendency manifests itself at every stage of life. Such people want a fine meal to be served to them alone. To avoid sharing it with others, they take pains to ensure that they dine when nobody else is in the house. When sharing is unavoidable, they keep the choicest parts of the meal for themselves and offer the others what is left. In the same way, when there is a difficult job to be done, they use various excuses to escape doing it and try to arrange for someone else to do it. They regard their own selves as more important than anybody else's. For this reason they still seek ways of escaping work, even if they have nothing to do and others are very tired or busy.

This attitude that such people conceal in their hearts is not limited to property and food, but becomes apparent in many other subjects. One whose soul is not cleansed of egotism will stoop to many things. He always wants his own wishes to be carried out and his to be the last word. For example, when many others are present, he wants to listen to his choice of music and watch his choice of TV programs. He never regards the wishes of others as a priority. He rushes to grab the most comfortable seat. When work is being divided up,

he "volunteers" for the easiest tasks and dumps the most difficult on others. In situations that require effort or self-sacrifice, he acts slowly and is always one step behind. In conversation, he regards pushing himself forward as a talent, rather than behaving with humility.

The truth is, behaving in this way to obtain miniscule advantages pushes anyone who claims to be a believer and knows about the morality of the Qur'an into great hypocrisy. Insincerity always causes substantial uneasiness. A person who continually pursues his own interests must undertake massive efforts to deceive others around him. He lives with the fear that this ongoing secret hypocrisy will be discovered.

Sincere Muslims never experience such fears. We are told in the Qur'an that if need be, sincere Muslims put their lives and their goods in jeopardy to earn Allah's approval, act with no expectation of any return and put the needs of other Muslims ahead of their own:

Those who were already settled in the abode [Madina], and in faith, before they came, love those who have migrated to them and do not find in their hearts any need for what they have been given and prefer them to themselves even if they themselves are needy. It is the people who are safeguarded from the avarice of their own selves who are successful. (Surat al-Hashr: 9)

They [the believers] give food, despite their love for it, to the poor and orphans and captives. "We feed you only out of desire for the Face of Allah. We do not want any repayment from you or any thanks. Truly We fear from our Lord a glowering, calamitous Day." So Allah has safeguarded them from the evil of that Day and has made them meet

with radiance and pure joy. (Surat al-Insan: 8-11)

As we can see, Allah brings Muslims radiance and light because of their self-sacrificing morality. For the selfish, in contrast, Allah creates a secret torment. These selfish people believe that they are intelligent and are setting traps for others, but really fall into their own trap. This is one of the secrets the Qur'an reveals to us. One who displays self-sacrificing morality may seem to tire himself more because he accepts more responsibilities, expends his goods and money, and renounces his own rights and desires. But he lives a comfortable, happy and beautiful life with a clear conscience. A selfish and egocentric person lives a troubled, difficult life in the attempt to protect his own interests, the slightest threat to which is enough to make him uncomfortable and unhappy.

The Tension Created in People by Hatred and Anger

Among moral characteristics, hatred and anger play a very substantial role in causing people to fall into trouble and sorrow. In daily life, people may come across unpleasant behavior as well as many events which do not please them. In such circumstances, some immediately become angry and do not stop there, but turn their inner anger into hatred.

The faithful pay no attention to this tendency within themselves because Allah defines those of His followers who earn His approval and reach Paradise, as **"those who give in times of both ease and hardship, those who control their rage and pardon other people—Allah loves the good-doers"** (Surah Al 'Imran: 134). Because of this, the faithful take refuge in Allah from anger and hatred and pray like this:

... "Our Lord, forgive us and our brothers who preceded us in faith and do not put any rancor in our hearts towards

those who believe. Our Lord, You are All-Gentle, Most Merciful." (Surat al-Hashr: 10)

For the faithful, feelings of hatred or rage against other believers should really be feared and avoided because in the Qur'an, Allah tells us that the faithful are one another's guardians: "**Your friend is only Allah and His messenger and those who believe: those who perform prayer and give alms, and bow**" (Surat al-Ma'ida: 55). Faced with people who love Allah, seek His approval, live out the morality of the Qur'an and devote their lives to serving their religion, feeling such emotions as hatred or anger shows that faith has not fully taken root in a person's heart. Such insincerity towards Allah and His followers makes a person unable to live in the tranquility and happiness of faith as he should.

People like this cannot at all protect themselves against the effects of unexpected events, which, in fact, they could easily tolerate. A simple incident or somebody else's innocent mistake is enough to enrage them. Because sometimes they see only through the eyes of anger, they may perceive even perfectly normal behavior as infuriating. Under anger's influence, they cannot think clearly or evaluate events fairly and objectively. More important, their momentary desire to satisfy their anger take precedence before a great many other goals. Although they know that Allah wants for them to conquer their anger and behave charitably and forgivingly, being under the influence of their lower selves, they cannot keep themselves from growing angry. In the Qur'an, Allah tells people to "**make allowances for people, command what is right, and turn away from the ignorant**" (Surat al-A'raf: 199). Because of this, a believer seeking Allah's approval will forgive the faults of his brothers and sisters among the faithful, even if they made serious mistakes.

Moreover, these people shouldn't deceive themselves by hiding

their hatred and anger inside and not showing it outwardly. What Allah wants is for people not to feel these emotions, even secretly. They also forget that Allah knows what they conceal in their hearts. Allah tells us in a verse:

Or did those with sickness in their hearts imagine that Allah would not expose their malevolence? (Surah Muhammad: 29)

As with all moral defects, hatred and anger harm those who harbor them far more than they injure anyone else. Most of the time, others are not aware that they are feeling like this, though at the time, the people feeling so can think of nothing else. So long as they cannot cast out the anger in their hearts, they find it impossible to concentrate on any other matter, use their intelligence, do work or even hold a normal conversation with others.

Nor can the physical effects of anger be taken lightly. This type of moral defect is usually the root of such ailments as internal upsets, headaches, stomachaches and insomnia.

These moral defects arise from forgetfulness of Allah, their destiny, and of the fact that they are being tested and will be called upon to give an account in the Hereafter. Reflecting on these things, it is impossible to think for hours, days or even weeks about another's behavior and harbor anger in one's heart as a result. Anyone who fears Allah in the true sense is aware that his lower self deceives him on such matters and behaves as Allah instructs us:

As for those who guard against evil, when they are bothered by visitors from satan, they remember and immediately see clearly. (Surat al-A'raf: 201)

Hatred and anger prevent any true conception of friendship, love and togetherness from developing. Such people always remain friendless and alone; and it is impossible for a friendless, lonely per-

son to be happy and enjoy blessings. People have been created to derive pleasure from sharing friendship, love, affection and joy with others, and from being in the company of those they trust. Because loneliness and friendlessness are against human nature, they weary people and plunge them into sorrow. No matter how much people may claim, "I am happy to be alone. I love nobody except myself and take comfort from this," they are not sincere. They remain unhappy because of their hatred of others, or their inability to find anyone with whom they can form a friendship. They say such things only to make others believe they are happy.

People who cannot make friends often befriend dogs, cats and birds out of desperateness, which is the motive behind their becoming so devoted to them and even talking to these animal pets as if they were human. In short, hatred and anger are against human nature and inevitably drive people into loneliness, unhappiness and helplessness.

In Paradise, there is no place for hatred and anger, as we are told in these verses: **"Enter them in peace, in complete security! We will strip away any rancor in their hearts—brothers, resting on couches face-to-face"** (Surat al-Hijr: 46-47).

This being the case, a believer whose aim is Paradise needs to purge himself of these moral defects.

Affectation: A Characteristic that Wears and Discomforts People

The catalyst that drives people into affected behavior is their concealing any number of secret thoughts in their hearts. Because their internal and external behaviors are contradictory, these people find it extremely difficult to behave naturally and sincerely from within. They are always concealing and simulating, trying to de-

ceive others by putting on an act. For this reason their expressions are not authentic, their voices are not their natural tones, and what they say seldom reflects their true thoughts. Because of their pretended behavior, it is impossible for such people to form relationships. They cover up their real characters and try to keep secret their real opinions about others, their true interpretations of events, and their own weaknesses, ambitions and desires. Even when their affected behavior and the situation in which they find themselves is explained to them and they are asked to be sincere, still they respond with the same affected reactions. As a result, it's never possible to understand these people's true character and discover their real ideas. In consequence, it's hard to be comfortable around them because anyone who covers up his real self may behave unexpectedly and badly at any time.

By contrast, one of the main characteristics of a believer is trustworthiness. What affords him this trustworthiness is his fearing Allah, taking refuge in Him, and his sincere effort to correct any mistakes or defects instead of trying to hide them. Behavior contrary to this is first of all, insincerity towards Allah and secondly, hypocrisy toward other people.

Hypocrisy brings pain because it is as difficult and troublesome as sincerity is easy and comfortable. Insincerity requires that a person put on an act throughout life, without a moment's respite. Concentrating to maintain the unnecessary pose and continually planning and calculating are very difficult. In the same way, curbing the genuine desires that arise from within and never living a natural life drive people into serious suffering. To turn the bad thoughts in their hearts into positive thinking, adopt superior morality and ideas and as a result, be unhesitating in behaving sincerely, naturally and comfortably is much easier than to live that way.

Merely imitating a religious and moral life, while pretending genuine sincerity towards Allah, causes those who do so to suffer loss in this world and the Hereafter. Because of this, nothing should be left in a person's heart which is not in keeping with the Qur'an. One should behave with the utmost sincerity, directness and honesty towards Allah and His followers.

Envy

This is a serious behavioral defect that arises from devotion to worldly life. Allah tells us that such an emotion is lodged in the human soul in this verse of the Qur'an: "**Or do they in fact envy other people for the bounty Allah has granted them? ...**" (Surat an-Nisa': 54). We are told that for human salvation, it is necessary to cleanse the soul of such evil: "**He who purifies it has succeeded**" (Surat ash-Shams: 9). The contrary, that such an evil in the soul drives people to destruction, is made clear in the verse, "**He who covers it up has failed**" (Surat ash-Shams: 10). The damage and torment that envy brings down on people in this world clearly demonstrate the form which the failure referred to by the verse may take in this world.

Among the ignorant, the view of envy is very different from that given in the Qur'an. People assume that envy is a natural human characteristic, present in everybody to a greater or lesser degree. They regard as strange people who say, "I am not at all envious." As for themselves, they are jealous of almost everything possessed by the people they live near: their intelligence, appearance, goods, children, houses, jobs, and so on.

Instead of sharing in their pleasure, envious people feel uncomfortable at others' virtue, beauty and success. Their resentfulness leaves them deeply saddened by the blessings that others enjoy. This

inward emotion can even make them want to harm others. Because of this, in the Qur'an Allah warns the faithful:

Say: "I seek refuge with the Lord of Daybreak, from the evil of what He has created and from the evil of the darkness when it gathers and from the evil of women who blow on knots and from the evil of an envier when he envies."

(Surat al-Falaq: 1-5)

The faithful know that this characteristic, harbored by ignorant people, is basically bad. In contrast, they praise others' good characteristics and pray to Allah for the good and the benefit of one another. Actually, anyone who knows the Qur'an and lives out its morality cannot contemplate doing otherwise. But in spite of this, some people say they do believe, but cannot achieve this moral approach. Such people do not regard envy as natural, as in the community of the ignorant who defend it openly. Yet they are driven in this direction by the blandishments of their own lower selves. Some deceive themselves by thinking that in certain situations, feeling this emotion is natural and not contrary to the Qur'an.

For example, as a natural desire—and one which is in accordance with the Qur'an—they want to be foremost amongst the faithful in matters of affection, friendship and reliability. Of course, any believer wants to gain the affection, friendship and trust of Allah and His faithful followers, as much as possible. But to the same extent, he also wants other believers to acquire these blessings. If another can demonstrate morality superior to his own, then he should praise and admire him. Envy has no place in the morality of the faithful. But envious people may confuse admiring others with being jealous of them.

For every one of these people, becoming familiar with religious morality brings an understanding of the clear distinction between

good and evil and right and wrong. The verses of the Qur'an show people and their consciences what arises from envy, and what from natural desires. Despite this, some go on deceiving themselves by methods all based on their insincerity towards Allah. Although they could live in the tranquil morality of the believers, their insincerity forces them to secretly experience the torment of living out the morality of the ignorant. People who keep envy alive in their hearts live in a world that's perpetually unhappy. The very existence of others who are more attractive and more talented, and the praise and affection granted to those people by others, cause them sorrow and suffering—because they do not know how to be satisfied with the blessings Allah has given them, nor how to be grateful and consequently, happy.

The only way to be rescued from these secret torments is to cleanse one's soul of such bad characteristics and evaluate everything according to the verses of the Qur'an. Anyone who can do this knows that the real owner of all the good things of life, of all goods and property, is Allah; and that in the world, Allah tests people's morality by granting them these things in different measures. Because he acts in the light of this truth, every beautiful thing can become a pleasant blessing for him.

Falsehood

Falsehood is a bad moral characteristic, but widespread in communities of the ignorant. A great majority believes that there is no problem about telling a lie which they, to their own minds, have cleverly planned that others cannot detect it because such people regard themselves as being responsible solely to others. They believe that once they have deceived and convinced others, no problem remains. But in fact, the whole of human responsibility is to Allah. In

the Qur'an, Allah instructs people to avoid lying in the verse, "... **have done with telling lies**" (Surat al-Hajj: 30). No matter how clever a lie may be or how well it deceives others, Allah knows the truth and He sees that the person is lying.

Believers know that lying is a type of behavior which Allah has forbidden and they strongly abstain from telling falsehoods on even the most trivial matter. But some in their ignorant lives, influenced by their own selfish drives, persist in this moral defect which should be left behind. When asked, these people will naturally deny that they would ever do anything at all that is forbidden by Allah, but under pressure, their desires may still prompt them into lying.

A person telling a lie, who knows this is forbidden by Allah, may at first believe that he has protected himself or gained something, but this is not true. Lying troubles a person's conscience and makes him uncomfortable. Such a person always remains afraid that his lies will be discovered and that as a result, other people will demean him. He lives with this tension all the time. Deep inside, he feels uncomfortable because he knows he has done something forbidden by Allah. Furthermore, once a person tells a lie, he feels the need to tell more lies, one after another, in order not to let his first lie be discovered. Each time he is drawn deeper into the swamp of falsehoods and feels stress in his heart because he cannot escape from it.

In addition, liars are suspected right away by those around them and as a result, are neither trusted nor respected. This makes a liar feel even lower. People who tell lies to exalt and benefit themselves find that the reward they receive is exactly the opposite.

Allah tells us in the Qur'an that such people are acting under the influence of satan:

Shall I tell you upon whom the satans descend? They de-

scend on every evil liar. They give them a hearing, and most of them are liars. (Surat ash-Shu'ara': 221-223)

As with all forms of insincerity, the solution is to take refuge in Allah with sincere repentance and live out the morality of the Qur'an in full. If people do this, their worldly troubles will end and they will be able to hope for salvation from eternal torment in the Hereafter.

Emotionalism

Emotionalism is a significant factor that makes people lead troubled lives. It is not in conformity with the approach instructed by Allah in the Qur'an, but most people do not notice its danger. Indeed most of the time, being emotional attracts others' praise, admiration and encouragement. It is deemed to be a manifestation of affection, whereas in fact it creates torment within people who are distanced from the morality of the Qur'an. True affection is a genuine and sincere emotion which is shown with neither hesitation nor conceit. As for emotionalism, it springs from concealing affection or from directing toward people the love which ought to be felt for Allah. Those who behave in this way nurture feelings that border on the idolatrous toward those whom they love. Because of this, they live in constant anxiety.

Emotionalism is contrary to religion. The Qur'an brings people the ability to observe events objectively and interpret them logically. Emotionalism, on the other hand, distances people from reality, pushes them into illogical thinking, and directs into making wrong decisions. For people who grasp faith and the morality of the Qur'an, there is no positive side to emotionalism. They realize that this mindset drives people into sorrow, disappointment and harm. Because of this, they permit no such weakness in their hearts, either

openly or secretly.

People of faith who are unaware that these aspects of emotionalism are contrary to the Qur'an or who place no importance on them may show weakness in this matter. Sometimes they merely keep it concealed inside themselves, and other times let it openly control their behavior.

One of its clearest indications is an uncontrollable tendency to cry, from sorrow over something a person cannot cope with and from failure to submit with heartfelt calm and gratification to whatever destiny Allah has created.

Under the influence of emotionalism, these people have a permanently sorrowful appearance. They will definitely find something in every event they experience to upset and discomfort them. Because of this, they live with a continual tendency towards weeping, but a person's tears should not be all that comes to mind. Sometimes they cry with genuine tears, but sometimes go on weeping even though not shedding tears physically. This is the wailing of the body. In this spiritual state, a person's eyes may moisten slightly. A certain pallor caused by sorrow shows itself on their faces. There is no strength or life in their voices. Their looks are stiff and grieving. There is a heaviness and weariness about them, and a deep hopelessness prevails in their speech. Their bodies cannot perform functions as they should because of intense stress. For this reason, such people suffer not only spiritual depression but serious physical problems as well. At times, when they are deep in this spiritual state, even were the world's greatest blessings offered to them, they would be unable to take any pleasure from them. None of them will be effective in rescuing them from their sorrow. While they could live in the calm and comfort of faith and submission, they create a world full of pain for themselves with their own efforts.

In the Qur'an Allah reveals the following with regard to unbelievers: **"Let them laugh little and weep much..."** (Surat at-Tawba: 82). That is, crying, grieving and feeling sorrow are characteristic of unbelievers. In the same way, verses of the Qur'an often refer to the unhappiness and miserable state of unbelievers and the trouble-filled lives they lead. In the Qur'an, the faithful are encouraged to be cheerful always; and a great many verses give them good news about matters that will bring them joy in this world and the Hereafter. This being the case, if a person who professes faith is continually filled with sorrow or is in a spiritual state tending towards the tearful, this indicates that he is superficially evaluating a number of matters, including submission to Allah, and is not in a truly religious state of mind.

For these reasons, a person who says he has faith should not regard grieving and being sorrowful as normal for any reason. Rather than give way to such feelings he should take refuge in Allah. He should not regard living a life of such torment as natural, when it is possible to be friends with Allah and live in tranquility by trusting in Him. As Allah points out in the Qur'an, **"They will say, 'Our Lord, our miserable destiny overpowered us. We were misguided people. Our Lord, remove us from it! Then if we revert again, we will definitely be wrongdoers'"** (Surat al-Muminun: 106-107), we should take warning from the situation of people, defeated by unhappiness in the life of this world, who enter the Hereafter in a state of regret. We should aim to attain a true and unshakable faith.

Irritability and Sulk

Another behavioral defect that causes people to suffer sorrow is irritability. Irritable people may become offended at any event they witness or anything they hear under the influence of the spiritual

state they are in, even though there is no justification for such a reaction. The words spoken may have nothing to do with them. Or because of their irritability, such people may completely misunderstand what is said to them. Instead of seeing the sense in what is said, they draw totally unwarranted conclusions and use these to fuel their resentment.

Those around them cannot understand why irritable people behave as they do because they seldom say openly what they are vexed about, what is upsetting them. Other bystanders try various methods of working out the problem, but most of the time they cannot figure out why these people have been offended.

One of the reasons for such people's irritability is that they do not regard those around them as friends and do not trust them. Invariably they interpret others' words and behavior as hostile. Another reason is these people's lack of tranquility and the insincerity inside. Because they are aware of their own unscrupulousness, they think others may notice it and throw it up to them at any moment.

Allah tells us of this characteristic of hypocritical people:

When you see them, their outward form appeals to you, and if they speak you listen to what they say. But they are like propped-up planks of wood. They imagine every cry to be against them. They are the enemy, so beware of them. May Allah destroy them! How they are perverted! (Surat al-Munafiqun: 4)

Some people who do not really take offense deliberately behave as though they did and from this, try to derive an undeserved advantage. By sulking, they want to make the person they are speaking with feel sorry and back down. Believers do not stoop to such methods. In the morality of the Qur'an, if the other person behaves igno-

rantly, wrongly or thoughtlessly, there is still no reason for irritability or sulk: A believer knows that every event, every act and every word has been created according to the destiny predetermined by Allah. Behaving badly in spite of this is a mistake committed against Allah. In addition, the faithful know that tolerant, forgiving and affectionate behavior is necessary for Allah's approval.

Allah indicates the importance of this in the Qur'an:

The repayment of a bad action is one equivalent to it. But if someone pardons and puts things right, his reward is with Allah. Certainly He does not love wrongdoers. (Surat ash-Shura: 40)

Irritable people cannot be friends with anybody. They cannot love anyone and cannot be loved. They live in continual trouble and sorrow. Because they take everything amiss, they are always lonely. It is very important for every Muslim to accept that irritability and vexation with others are not in harmony with the morality of the Qur'an. A Muslim, even when he is in the right, speaks openly to others about matters that upset him; and if he is in the wrong, he corrects his behavior. If somebody else is behaving incorrectly, he is not put out by that person, but instead warns him by reminding him of the verses of the Qur'an.

Avoiding Thoughts About Matters that Destroy Worldly Ambition

Despite having faith, one important reason why some are troubled at times is their great desire for worldly goods and their reluctance to think about matters that will remove this same desire.

From the Qur'an, we understand that the subjects which trap people in worldly life are always the same. Among the most important are the drive to accumulate property, fondness for one's life, the

desire to gain prestige and avoid losing respect in the eyes of other people.

Allah tells us about people who are trapped in worldly ambition by these matters in the following verse:

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

All these are surely the blessings of the life of this world. Allah has created people in a way for us to take pleasure from them. Aware that each of these worldly pleasures is a blessing from Allah, the right thing to do is to treat them with gratitude. It is wrong to attach more importance to these blessings than the life in the Hereafter and thus become trapped in a passion for them.

The principal ways that enable people to overcome worldly ambition are dealt with at length in the Qur'an. These are the subjects that most people do not care to think about. They can be listed as follows:

1. Consideration of the fleeting nature of life

Some avoid thinking about the temporary nature of worldly life—not, however, because of their inability to understand this truth. Almost every day, they meet with a great many incidents that make it clear. At various times they witness loved ones going bankrupt, having accidents, even losing their lives. Most importantly, they witness that everyone, including themselves, moves closer to death with every passing day. The loss of beauty that comes with aging, illnesses, incapacities and weaknesses are more than enough

to let people understand the transitory nature of this worldly life.

Despite all, some people avoid thinking about these matters, being aware that doing so will loosen their attachment to the world. Considering that life is very short; that one can lose it unexpectedly at any moment for any reason; and that prized qualities such as beauty, wealth and respect can be wiped out at any time will place on these worldly things only the value they deserve. As a result, one will understand the irrationality of desiring temporal possessions and direct himself towards gaining Allah's approval and eternal life in the Hereafter.

At times, this habit of avoidance from thought—common in ignorant societies—can be observed even in people who claim to be believers. Of course, their outlook on life differs greatly from those people of the ignorant societies. But in spite of understanding the true nature of the life of the world, they err in not living this truth as they should. They know perfectly well that they should not be ambitious in any matter concerning the life of the world and that their lives will end within 60 to 70 years, at most. They are also aware that they must make an effort towards the eternal life in the Hereafter and take every opportunity to tell this to others. However, they fail to adopt this realization into their daily lives.

An example will illustrate. One who buys a brand-new car may take every opportunity to admit that it is only one of the fleeting blessings of worldly life and thus, it's unreasonable to be passionate about this car. However, in case someone wants to borrow the car in an emergency, he may forget what he has said and succumb to a protective passion for his car. Though he has condemned such behaviors at every opportunity up till then, he fails to act correctly when faced with such a test in real life.

These people ignore these moral matters when they conflict

with their interests, despite their consciences' awareness. This causes serious trouble with their conscience, and a spiritual torment brought about by these people's failure to live what they know to be right. Therefore, they continually experience a troubled spiritual state.

Aging, illness, loss of property and others' respect are major causes of tension for anyone with worldly passions. A person who keeps in mind that he will die one day and can take none of his money and property with him cannot feel a passion for anything. He uses everything generously in the way Allah approves; he concentrates on the eternal life of the Hereafter rather than the fleeting life of this world and works towards this end.

2. Remembering that there is no deity but Allah

Every occurrence in the universe happens through Allah's power and will. There is no power other than Allah. In the Qur'an, Allah reveals this truth as follows:

Allah, there is no deity but Him, the Living, the Self-Sustaining. He is not subject to drowsiness or sleep. Everything in the heavens and the Earth belongs to Him. Who can intercede with Him except by His permission? He knows what is before them and what is behind them but they cannot grasp any of His knowledge save what He wills. His Footstool encompasses the heavens and the Earth, and their preservation does not tire Him. He is the Most High, the Magnificent. (Surat al-Baqara: 255)

Despite this fact, the vast majority fail to believe in Allah with a pure faith. As Allah tells us in the verse:

If you ask them, "Who created the heavens and the Earth?" they will say, "Allah." Say: "So what do you think? If Allah

desires harm for me, can those you call upon besides Allah remove His harm? Or if He desires mercy for me, can they withhold His mercy?" Say: "Allah is enough for me. All those who truly trust put their trust in Him." (Surat az-Zumar: 38)

Some accept the power of Allah, but also adopt deities other than Him. But these deities that people exalt and whose goodwill they try to earn are nothing but creations which have no power to do anything and cannot even bring themselves any benefit. In the Qur'an, Allah tells the impotence of deities other than Him as follows:

But they have adopted deities apart from Him which do not create anything but are themselves created. They have no power to harm or help themselves. They have no power over death or life or resurrection. (Surat al-Furqan: 3)

Those you call on besides Allah are servants just like yourselves. Call on them and let them respond to you if you are telling the truth. (Surat al-A'raf: 194)

But keep in mind that when asked, most people never refer to these beings they exalt as deities and do not accept that they regard them as such. Yet all their behaviors reveal that they do so. While they need only to ask for help from Allah and be grateful to Him, these people seek help and assistance from the false deities they believe to have power. One needs to fear only Him and seek only His approval, but they set the goodwill of these false deities above His approval.

Some, on the other hand, make deities of themselves—as we are told in the verse, "**Have you seen him who has taken his whims and desires to be his deity? Will you then be his guardian?"**" (Surat al-Furqan: 43). Despite their total impotence in the face of Allah's

power, these people believe they are independent beings. Their accomplishments, they believe, are of their own making, and their failures are the result of their own mistakes.

Of course, this is the result of people's failure to appreciate Allah's power as they should. The fact is that, there is no deity but Allah. As is the case with every occurrence in the universe, only by Allah's will and His order do these events take place. Only Allah can answer people's prayers, grant their aspirations, ease their troubles, bring peace and security to hearts and ensure them beautiful lives. As Allah tells us in the Qur'an, "**... All might belongs to Allah...**" (Surah Yunus: 65).

Some people's heedlessness on this subject prevents them from living the peace of faith as they should and cause them trouble in a number of ways. From others they expect love, respect, affection, friendship, self-sacrifice, patience, forgiveness and many other blessings. Likewise, they believe that they will achieve them by their own acts, efforts and their own will. However, only Allah can make an individual be loved, respected and admired. No matter how hard he tries, a person can never affect the hearts of others. Allah places love in a person's heart as a blessing resulting from his observance of the morality of the Qur'an. Likewise, no one can create love for another in his own heart. It is Allah Who gives him this emotion. Whatever people acquire materially or spiritually is created by Allah. Allah tells us this in the Qur'an:

... Say, "All favor is in Allah's Hand, and He gives it to whoever He wills. Allah is All-Encompassing, All-Knowing." He picks out for His mercy whoever He wills. Allah's favor is indeed immense. (Surah Al 'Imran: 73-74)

If Allah helps you, no one can vanquish you. If He forsakes you, who can help you after that? So the believers should

put their trust in Allah. (Surah Al 'Imran: 160)

Setting the approval of others above Allah's approval causes considerable trouble. Living according to others' rules and ideas rather than those of the Qur'an also has the same effect, for no one can please a large number of people at the same time. When a particular behavior pleases one person, it angers somebody else. This is a vicious circle, and such an individual is doomed to live an uneasy life. In the Qur'an, Allah reveals the following about people of this kind:

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

For a person who seeks only Allah's approval, everything is easy. The Qur'an informs him of all the deeds to which he should conform, and which he should avoid, during his life. What others think and how they behave towards him is of no importance. As long as he conforms to Allah's will, a sincere Muslim lives in the hope of finding salvation both in this world and the next. Consequently, he lives out a far more tranquil, simple and beautiful life than those who feel compelled to judge themselves against those around them and seek the approval of others.

Allah describes the situation of people who seek the approval of others in this verse: "**Most of them do not believe in Allah without associating others with Him**" (Surah Yusuf: 106). For this reason, without excepting himself, everyone should think carefully on the subject of idolatry and regulate his beliefs and his life according to this truth. As Allah tells us:

Allah does not forgive anything being associated with

Him, but He forgives whoever He wills for anything other than that. Anyone who associates something with Allah has committed a terrible crime. (Surat an-Nisa': 48)

Everybody should take a warning from this important truth which Allah reveals to us in the verse:

That is part of the wisdom your Lord has revealed to you. Do not set up another deity together with Allah and so be thrown into Hell, blamed and driven out. (Surat al-Isra': 39)

Conclusion

In this section, you have seen the various reasons behind the secret sorrows that people suffer. In times of trouble, true faith never creates feelings of distress or hopelessness. If a person succumbs to such feelings, he first needs to reconsider his faith and remind himself of the verses of the Qur'an and of the facts in the light of the Qur'an. Otherwise, no matter how much one claims to have faith in Allah, he will definitely suffer unless he lives as faith requires and regulates his life and attitudes according to the verses of the Qur'an. As Allah tells us, the hearts of those who do not live by the religion are always troubled:

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

How Do People Deceive Themselves?

One issue that draws people into trouble and unseen torment is their self-deception and belief in the world's falsehoods. By inculcation, a person can persuade himself that something he wants to be true, really is. Since he interprets events in a way as he wishes to view them, he comes to believe in his own interpretations—so much so that even when those offering a different opinion are clearly telling the truth, he thinks that they are committing an error.

For example, by one's own self-inculcation, a person may come to think that his friends do not love him enough. Through such interpretations of every incident, he may create plenty of evidence that he is right. Even if people make satisfactory explanations and perform acts that ought to prove the contrary, a person who has convinced himself that he is right respects none of them. He uses every detail to reinforce his own assumptions and even makes up imaginary evidence to convince himself of what he wants to believe. The fact is, however, that the person in question views the world as he wants to and interprets events as he likes. For this reason, he lives in continual torment.

This characteristic can be observed in most people in ignorant societies, but may also be seen in believers who have not fully established faith in their hearts and who fail to interpret every incident in their lives according to the Qur'an. Failure to interpret events in the

light of the Qur'an always drives people into error. Where they do not take the Qur'an as their guideline, people make decisions according to the ignorant society's viewpoint. That is to say, they will side with their selfish desires and the satan's. As a result, they view every event around them, including their perceptions about themselves, in a twisted way that arises principally from their own self-deception. For example, a person regarded to be heedless according to the morality of the Qur'an may consider himself to be very kind, according to his ignorant viewpoint. Alternatively, one who behaves arrogantly according to the Qur'an's definition may think himself to be very humble and submissive, since he fails to measure his behavior by the Qur'an and think in its terms. In the same way, those of weak faith may convince themselves they fear Allah, are wholly and purely committed to the morality of the Qur'an and are completely honest and sincere towards Him. However, at this stage, people have a number of irrational judgments contrary to the Qur'an that they employ to convince themselves and suppress their consciences. Rationalizing these flawed judgments within themselves, they convince themselves that they do not fall afoul of the religion and that their excuses will be accepted in the sight of Allah. Such an attitude distances people from sincerity.

The claims and attitudes of people who deceive themselves prove to be incompatible, for they also claim to be pious Muslims. But such an attitude always causes them trouble. Subconsciously aware of their true lack of moral perfection, they endure constant pangs of conscience. Nevertheless, instead of taking notice of these and correcting the flaws in their behavior, they prefer to deceive themselves and cover up their mistakes. This in turn causes them material and spiritual harm.

The following pages will deal with this harm which the world

experiences as torment.

The Damage Caused by Insincerity

Insincerity is a secret curse that not only makes people's lives difficult, leading them into misery, but also causes them swift physical and spiritual harm. Some may not be aware of the harm they suffer. Assuming that the insincerity they hold inside inflicts no harm on them, they make insincerity their way of life.

To anyone of pure faith, however, the harm these people suffer is obvious. Often believers try to explain their situation, call them to sincerity. However, some people's spiritual state causes them to approach with the same insincerity those who try to warn them. As a result, they cannot take advantage of the truths they are told.

We can list some of insincerity's negative effects on people:

Lack of Wisdom

This is one obvious effect of the failure to live by the morality of the Qur'an. Allah grants wisdom to people only if they have sincere faith. Other than wisdom, all other talents can be displayed through intelligence alone. At first glance, an intelligent person may be assumed to have the same characteristics as of a wise one. Indeed, this is the main reason why so many people err in believing themselves to be wise. However wisdom is a superior characteristic ensued by conforming to the Qur'an. Allah speaks of a special type of comprehension granted only to those who fear and take refuge in Him:

You who believe! If you fear Allah, He will give you discrimination and erase your bad actions from you and forgive you. Allah's favor is indeed immense. (Surat al-Anfal: 29)

This comprehension allows people to distinguish right from

wrong in every matter relating to their lives, including those directly involving themselves.

People who become distanced from the morality of the Qur'an or who permit insincerity at certain points in their lives are weak in distinguishing right from wrong. The major sign of this deficiency is their inability to see the situation in which they find themselves and evaluate it according to the Qur'an—to such an extent that when their incomprehension is pointed out by others, it still persists.

These people lack the clarity, purity and simplicity that exist in sincere people's minds. On the contrary, turbidity and confusion dominate their minds. When compared with the clear signs of wisdom in pious believers, their state becomes especially obvious. For such people, their inability to achieve clarity of thought and decisiveness in making assessments is a form of torment. Due to the confusion in their minds, they may even not recognize this torment, but they can never attain the comfort of wisdom brought by sincere faith. The way they interpret events and others' behavior clearly reflects their lack of wisdom.

Spiritual and Physical Lethargy

Another harm brought by insincerity, this weariness results from the pressure they place upon themselves by knowingly ignoring their conscience. The spiritual torment produced by a troubled conscience deeply affects both their spiritual state and physical functions. Even if such people live in the most comfortable homes, acquire everything they want, live among people with moral perfection and possess the highest levels of health and beauty, they still cannot be rescued from this trouble. They cannot enjoy as they should any of the blessings around them.

Neither a delicious meal, nor candid talk of a friend, nor a beau-

tiful landscape give them any pleasure. Deep inside, they feel grief in environments where others laugh and enjoy themselves. No matter how they imitate the happiness and cheer of those around them, their inner spiritual torment never leaves them, not for a moment. Never can they experience the cheerfulness or tranquility that others feel. They can achieve these only through special efforts of will and concentration. As a result they always feel a weariness that causes them to live in a kind of stupor even when their bodies are awake. The way they look at things clearly express their weariness.

Their eyes are open, but have a dull and torpid look, and they are far from the signs of alertness apparent in a believer.

The weariness caused by this spiritual pressure also has major physical effects. Such people lack keen perception, speech, coordination and other skills. They are physically capable, but the pressure and dullness in their brains prevent them from leading a normal life. At a subconscious level, they always feel the discomfort stemming from a troubled conscience. As long as they fail to resolve this unrest, they cannot feel at ease.

In the Qur'an, Allah describes the troubled spiritual state of such people who have not fully placed faith in their hearts as follows:

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

Material and Spiritual Impurity

In this verse of the Qur'an, we are told of another form of harm that insincerity inflicts on people: "... **He casts uncleanness on those who do not use their intellect.**" (Surah Yunus: 100)

Allah repays those who do not exercise their consciences or re-

main sincere to Allah, with a curse described in the Qur'an as "uncleanness." In one verse, Allah reveals, **"But as for those with sickness in their hearts, it adds uncleanness to their uncleanness, and they die while they are unbelievers"** (Surat at-Tawba: 125). By Allah's will, this can be seen in people in the form of both physical and spiritual impurity. If He wishes, such people may indeed take on a dirty appearance. The lack of tranquility and stress they experience may cause their skin to deteriorate much faster than normal and also cause bad breath and body odors.

Meanwhile, even if these people take all physical precautions and take great care in their personal hygiene, they cannot save themselves from spiritual impurity, and always give the impression of being dirty. Of course, this is an impression created by Allah as a return for their insincerity. No matter how clean they may be, even sitting where they have sat, sharing their food and handling objects they have previously touched may disturb others. This can in turn become a source of inner distress for them. Such people have forgotten Allah and chosen to pursue the approval of others. But the very people whose goodwill they sought, now avoid them and look down on them. This is a secret curse with which Allah afflicts people who do not live in the true faith, even though their consciences tell them to do so.

Lack of Spiritual Light

Another aspect of the spiritual impurity referred to in the verse quoted above is a lack of illumination in the faces of insincere people. This lack does not manifest itself in the same way in everyone. In some faces, it makes itself known through the absence of the lively, eager and honest expressions that appear on the faces of the faithful. In others it appears as the impression of aimlessness and

emptiness. In still others, it takes the form of a darkening that comes about with no obvious reason. All these indicate the darkness of spirit these people experience inside.

What is striking is that this darkness has nothing to do with physical beauty. In case of insincerity towards Allah, the most beautiful face, the most flawless skin or the best-shaped eyes cannot compensate for a lack of light in the facial expression. That is because such light is a characteristic Allah grants only to those who believe with a sincere heart. Allah tells us this in a verse of the Qur'an:

Or they [the actions of those who do not believe] are like the darkness of a fathomless sea which is covered by waves above which are waves above which are clouds, layers of darkness, one upon the other. If he puts out his hand, he can scarcely see it. Those Allah gives no light to, they have no light. (Surat an-Nur: 40)

In the Qur'an, Allah draws attention to the impact of what the sincere and the insincere experience in their souls upon their bodies with the following comparison:

Those who do good will have the best and more! Neither dust nor debasement will darken their faces. They are the Companions of the Garden, remaining in it timelessly, for ever. But as for those who have earned bad actions—a bad action will be repaid with one the like of it. Debasement will darken them. They will have no one to protect them from Allah. It is as if their faces were covered by dark patches of the night... (Surah Yunus: 26-27)

Negative "Vibes"

To people who believe in Him with a sincere heart, Allah gives a beauty and health that these people bring to every environment

they enter. Looking in their faces, hearing their voices and witnessing their attitudes become a blessing for those around them. The Qur'an draws attention to this characteristic of the faithful and the "trace of prostration" that manifests itself on their faces:

Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah, and those who are with him are fierce to the disbelievers, merciful to one another. You see them bowing and prostrating, seeking Allah's good favor and His pleasure. Their mark is on their faces, the traces of prostration... (Surat al-Fath: 29)

In contrast to the faithful, people who behave insincerely present a negative appearance. The lack of faith these people have inside, their tormented, troubled and tense spiritual state and their pride cause a negative breeze in every environment they enter. Whatever they say or do, they spread negativity around them. Their tense spiritual conditions, their tormented faces and troubled voices make others perceive this clearly. So long as they are insincere and do not show steadfast honesty towards Allah, they cannot overcome this. They can do whatever they want to appear sympathetic to the people around them, but it will have no positive effect.

This is a miraculous situation which Allah creates. Some may not be able to describe this negative feeling at times, but most recognize such people and avoid them. This is one of the internal torments that afflict a person who harbors negative thoughts.

However, keep in mind that from the moment a person purifies his heart and acts with sincere intent towards Allah, by the will of Allah, this negative appearance melts away and is replaced by a bright and open visage.

These traits listed up to now are just some of the recompense that Allah may give for lack of true faith in Him. Allah's power is boundless. Despite all these clear signs, if one ignores how he suffers

and fails to take refuge in Allah, He may bring still more harm upon him.

Nobody should deceive himself saying, "I believe. I perform my worship." He should purify his heart for Allah and leave not a trace of insincerity. To avoid an outcome such as the one described in the verses, "**No indeed! Truly man is unbridled, seeing himself as self-sufficient**" (Surat al-'Alaq: 6-7), he must take refuge in Allah.

Sensing Insincerity: The Sixth Sense

People who harbor immorality in their hearts make every effort to conceal it from the faithful. Their apparent way of life, speech, behavior, the things they do and the way they lead their lives all resemble those of the pious. Indeed, they do not seem very different, for they conceal their immorality and secretly experience the suffering that it entails. Despite this, however, some of their attitudes reveal the different spiritual state they experience. Strikingly, it is not only the believers who notice this situation. Though lacking concrete evidence, within a short while, even a person who has adopted the ignorant society's beliefs can form an idea of whether someone is sincere or not. This is a truth known in every society. For instance, as well as using evidence, a judge bases his verdict about an accused on his behavior and his words, the way he speaks, his eyes and the opinion others form about him. In the same way, even if there exists no evidence against him, a guilty person's eyes, speech and behavior cause an ineffable discomfort in other people and make them believe he may be guilty.

While hiring employees, as well as considering applicants' backgrounds, companies also interview the candidates. During the course of these interviews, the answers they receive and their observations about an applicant's behavior provide the authorities with enough information to form an impression of the candidate's ap-

petite for work, his discipline and reliability. Thus the impression formed during the interview becomes influential in accepting or rejecting the candidate.

This is also the case with believers, who recognize a person who may display insincere attitudes in some particular situations. In fact, because they think according to the Qur'an, with the wisdom and perception granted to them by Allah, believers can form more accurate opinions. Trying to explain these judgments to others, they may fail to provide concrete evidence to prove their point, for these are matters that cannot be clearly expressed. This talent for discernment can be referred to as a "sixth sense." With it, people feel whether a person is sincere, merely by the inspiration of Allah.

Even if an insincere person is no different from believers in how he eats, drinks, laughs and talks, and exhibits no irritating behavior, still the faithful can sense the difference in him. Here, indeed, the term "negative vibes" widely used in society, finds its full impact. The faithful realize the negative spiritual state distanced from the morality of the Qur'an of these people from the negative impressions they give off—since unlike believers, they do not enjoy a tranquil, sincere, relaxed and comfortable spiritual state.

The difference in their speech is another sign that the sixth sense can detect. In insincere people's speech, there may be nothing out of the ordinary. They may say almost exactly the same things as believers, but in their manner of speaking, a difference still becomes discernible. There is a tension in their tone of voice, the way the words come out, their flow and modulation that creates serious discomfort in the hearts of the sincere. In addition, such behavior as trying to push themselves to the fore among speakers, using expressions that pander to their ego and speaking according to a negative plan in their heads give them away.

These people's negative aspects are felt by everyone in the room. When asked their opinions, these others seem to share the same opinion as everybody else. Common opinions about a person can be important in detecting insincerity.

People usually take the phrase "sixth sense" to mean seeing into the future, knowing about events before they happen, giving information about the unseen, and similar other things which are impossible without the will of Allah. As we are told in the verse, "**The keys of the Unseen are in His possession. No one knows them but Him...**" (Surat al-Anam: 59), no one other than Allah can know the unseen. What is meant by "the sixth sense" here is different: Felt by Allah's will, it makes one sense events that are happening at that moment, and not in the future.

For this reason, by Allah's will, it is impossible for a person to conceal his insincerity from the faithful. According to the Qur'an's morality, what befits a person in such a situation is to set forth honestly whatever is defective or mistaken in one's heart. This way, it is much easier to compensate for mistakes and attain sincerity by the support of the faithful. Otherwise, every concealed insincerity will bring yet another and further distance the sufferer from the morality of the Qur'an.

Another point deserves mention here. By their sixth sense, the faithful can sense the immorality and insincerity of others. However, the faithful remain aware that humans can always err and their hearts are in Allah's hands. They make no accusations against these people out of their consciences and sense of justice. A negative impression sensed is only a feeling, not evidence. In such a situation, a believer seized by such an impression takes any necessary measures to avoid possible harm. But he will never arrive at a judgment about someone's heart or accuses him of insincerity. For so long as a person does not openly confess, only Allah knows what is in his heart.

The Faithful Invite Also Those Around Them To Be Sincere

In this verse of the Qur'an, **"Let there be a community among you who call to the good, and enjoin the right, and forbid the wrong. They are the ones who have success"** (Surah Al 'Imran: 104), Allah announces that He has made the faithful responsible for summoning people to virtue and rescuing them from the errors in which they find themselves. Consider another verse:

The men and women of the believers are protectors of one another. They command what is right and forbid what is wrong, and perform prayer and give the alms, and obey Allah and His messenger. They are the people on whom Allah will have mercy. Allah is Almighty, All-Wise. (Surat at-Tawba: 71)

Here, Allah points out that they have the duty of protecting and watching over one another.

In line with this instruction of Allah, the faithful point out the defects they see in one another in the way laid down by the Qur'an, that is, by **"only saying the best"** (Surat al-Isra': 53). The believer who provides an invitation to virtue has no responsibility for the reaction of the other party or whether he agrees with the advice given. Allah points out this truth in the verse, **"You cannot guide those you would like to, but Allah guides those He wills. He has best knowledge of the guided"** (Surat al-Qasas: 56).

He reminds us that people can see the truth only through His will. For this reason, while the faithful try to instruct one another in virtue and protect each other from evil, they do this by asking it from Allah and submitting to Him in whatever the outcome may be. Even so, they wish most ardently for everyone to know and live the beauty and true happiness that sincerity brings.

The faithful know that a life lived in a contrary fashion may appear normal, but is truly filled with corrosive torments that ruin the human soul. They are aware, too that these insincere people bring great material and moral harm upon themselves by concealing the unseemly ideas and spiritual state they experience. For this reason, if a believer feels even a trace of insincerity in another, he simply invites that person to the morality of the Qur'an without judging him in any way. He reminds him that to all types of secret sorrow and trouble, lack of tranquility and unhappiness, the sole solution is to live out a morality approved by Allah.

People Who Answer with Insincerity When Called on To Be Sincere

We have mentioned how those who grasp how true submission to Allah should be, make every effort to explain this to others as well. But some who receive such advice do not approach it with equal good will and may even react in ways that do not accord with the Qur'an.

However, if a believer makes an effort on behalf of the other, determines his weaknesses for him, thinks about ways of overcoming them and presents these in an encouraging manner so as to make them seem easy, it can be of great benefit. Such judgments made by a believer who fears Allah always accord with the Qur'an: They are honest and sincere. Moreover, with an eye which can evaluate objectively, this believer can clearly identify defects of behavior and faith that the person himself has been unable to, and thus help his brother on this matter. Because a sincere Muslim gives warnings for encouragement, what he says is always extremely important and should be taken seriously.

Nevertheless some people, though well aware of these facts, do not accept criticism. But as we know from the verse, "**In fact, man will be clear proof against himself. In spite of any excuses he might offer**" (Surat al-Qiyama: 14), those who reject criticism and warnings by pretending not to understand them, in fact know the truth. Hence no matter how much a person wants to persuade and

deceive—first himself and then people around him—into believing the contrary, in his conscience he knows the truth. Not applying realities known by the conscience to life causes internal strife, and is definitely one of the secret torments given to people in the world who lack sincere intentions. But some fail to understand this truth. They feign ignorance that the lack of tranquility in their hearts arises from their own mistaken behavior and thinking. For this reason, they react to the warnings in ways that do not accord with the Qur'an—which, in fact, constitutes a second proof of the accuracy of what is said to them. That is because a sincere believer, when invited to an even better morality, accepts this invitation.

Allah tells us how sincere believers behave after noticing their errors:

[People who guard against evil are] those who, when they act indecently or wrong themselves, remember Allah and ask forgiveness for their bad actions (and who can forgive bad actions except Allah?) and do not knowingly persist in what they were doing. (Surah Al 'Imran: 135)

So if a person has achieved genuine sincerity as he claims, when he notes any error he should right away take refuge in Allah and not persist in his erroneous behavior. The aim of the sincere believer is always to try to gain Allah's approval and affection. One way of gaining Allah's affection is explained in a verse of the Qur'an with the words, "**Allah loves those who purify themselves**" (Surat at-Tawba: 108).

When invited to sincerity, these people's reactions that do not accord with the Qur'an arise basically from their not having understood the faith as they should. In the Qur'an, Allah tells us which people tend to take advice:

You can only warn those who act on the Reminder and fear

the All-Merciful in the Unseen. Give them the good news of forgiveness and a generous reward. (Surah Ya Sin: 11)

In the following pages, we will refer to behavioral defects shown by certain people who, given an admonition, deceive themselves that their insincerity can not be proven. These types of behavior are not in accordance with the Qur'an. Indeed, it will be possible for people to be rescued from these secret insincerities, only through their understanding that they are contrary to the Qur'an and that in the sight of Allah, they all amount to sins. Keep in mind that Allah's mercy and generosity are there for those who recognize this truth and sincerely change their behavior—as we are reminded in this verse:

But if anyone repents after his wrongdoing and puts things right, Allah will turn towards him. Allah is Ever-Forgiving, Most Merciful. (Surat al-Ma'ida: 39)

Failure to Think and Unwillingness to Think

Satan makes every effort he can to divert believers to his own path. One of the things he wants the least is for believers, by gaining true sincerity, to achieve a morality that Allah will approve. For this reason, when people are summoned to the true faith, satan will definitely try to influence them in the opposite direction.

One of satan's efforts towards this end is preventing people from thinking. For this purpose, satan does his best to steer people into defending themselves and finding excuses for their mistakes. A person who is under his influence begins to feel angry with believers who warn him and thinks he's suffering an injustice. In addition, since he realizes that when he thinks he will clearly see the realities and be forced to confess his insincerity, he completely shuts down his thinking process. A person whose mind is infected with this type of insincerity cannot correct his mistakes by thinking matters

through.

As a result of their condition, people in question pay attention only to those unhealthy thoughts that cross their minds. They form fixed ideas in compliance with their own opinions and for this reason, try not to listen to, hear or understand what is said to them. No matter how effective or striking another person's words may be, they do not change the thoughts in their closed minds. Satan intensifies their avoidance to such an extent that, even when things are pointed out to them with verses of the Qur'an, they do not think about them or even want to think about them. When reminded about Allah's existence, that they will be called on to account for their actions, that He sees everything and that the payback for their behavior may be the eternal torments of Hell, they arrive at a heedlessness and a mental vacuum that will not allow these truths to affect them.

In this way, they willfully close their minds to admonitions. But deep inside, they certainly know that they are wrong. Because of this, they condemn their consciences to live in trouble and lack of tranquility. They want to live lives dictated by their selves' desires—which is surely a life far removed from the teachings of the Qur'an. Meanwhile, they are also aware that such a lifestyle may cause them great disappointment in this world and the Hereafter. As a result, they spend their lives in internal conflict, foreboding and worry.

Such a heedless attitude is not to be found in people of faith. Contrary to this behavior, the reaction of the faithful to a warning is to consider it and learn from it. This is pointed out in many verses of the Qur'an, and mentioned in the Surat al-A'la. In these verses, Allah tells us that thinking and taking advice are characteristics of people who fear Him in their hearts:

Remind, then, if the reminder benefits. He who has fear

will be reminded. But the most miserable will shun it, those who will roast in the Greatest Fire. And then neither die nor live in it. He who has purified himself will have success. (Surat al-A'la: 9-14)

Behavioral Defects

The reactions of those who cannot completely rescue themselves when invited to sincerity, even though they say they believe, make themselves evident to a large extent in defects of the voice, manner of speaking and expression. As we have mentioned, they may place great importance on their image in the eyes of others, though they know very well that what is most important is to earn the approval of Allah. Being the target of criticism and having their errors detected are among the things that damage this image the most. Because of this, when they find themselves in circles where this occurs, they display different voices, speech and expressions that are inappropriate to the morality of the faithful. To list these reactions when their insincerity is discovered:

Reactions apparent in the voice

No doubt, people's voices are one of the most important means by which they reflect their emotions and thoughts to the outside world. Most of the time, whether they want to or not, they make their joy, pleasure, affection, interest, fears and concerns—or their tranquility and comfort—apparent through their tone of voice.

Faced with a warning about his Afterlife, a person who lives the morality of the Qur'an tries to understand and implement what he is told with pleasure and eagerness. That pleasure can be easily recognized in his voice. But in the case of an insincere person, no matter how much he tries to hide the tension he feels because his insincer-

ity has been discovered, sometimes his voice reflects this. The natural, strong, lively, flowing, easy and healthy voice he uses in everyday life gives way to a tone which is uncomfortable, stiff, cold, choked, hoarse, strangled and troubled and is very difficult to understand. In such circumstances, the manner of speaking he uses is not the one normally adopted, and especially not during cheerful moments. The best way of judging this is to compare the person's voice with the tone he adopts when served a dish he likes very much, when a favorite piece of music is playing, or when he is given something he wants very much. In general, a person's normal tone is one he uses when he is cheerful and at peace. The loss of this tone when he is given advice or a warning—that is, when an environment places a strain on him—results from his harboring negative thoughts inside.

Of course, all these details in a person's voice have meaning and contain a message. He sends the impression that he is not happy about the criticism, wants the subject closed right away and otherwise, will put an end to his conversation with the other person and distance himself. By this means, he is implying that if the person he's talking with uncovers his defects and mistakes, his spiritual state will be disturbed and he will lose his normal peace of mind—so that the other should not go on talking about him in this way and should even take a step back.

No matter how much he may seem to be saying positive things, such a person using this voice may in fact be saying the exact opposite. This is the "rejection tone of voice." Although he may seem to agree, he is not of the same opinion in his heart. This is one of the most significant signs of the secret insincerity we have been discussing from the start. It can be realized very clearly from his tone of voice that he does not agree with what's being said to him, is not

convinced by the explanations and not pleased by the criticism. But because his words seem to be an acceptance of what he's being told, it's impossible to explain anything to him or persuade him that what he's done is wrong. The person already knows this and is applying this satanic tactic as a way of making a concealed protest.

However, someone who sincerely wants to correct his mistakes and desires to achieve moral perfection expresses his humility, submission and acceptance in the best possible way with his attitude and voice. By speaking in accordance with the Qur'an with a warm and sincere tone, he demonstrates behavior that inspires trust in the one he's talking to.

The negative behavior of people of the opposite sort springs from their desire to continue their immorality and make other people feel troubled. But never forget that someone who distances himself from the morality of the Qur'an causes the greatest harm to himself. If he is invited to faith, warned with verses from the Qur'an and can see for himself what is correct but still secretly persists in his insincerity, he deserves secret torment in the life of the world and the torment of Hell in the Hereafter.

In the Qur'an, Allah describes the state of people who think they are deceiving the faithful with their tactical maneuvers:

They think they deceive Allah and those who believe. They deceive no one but themselves but they are not aware of it. There is a sickness in their hearts and Allah has increased their sickness. They will have a painful punishment on account of their denial. (Surat al-Baqara: 9-10)

Manifestations of insincerity in speech

Defects of speech are also among the factors that most clearly betray people's insincerity. In contrast to believers who, when re-

minded of the verses of the Qur'an, immediately show their humility in their words and behavior, insincere people usually begin to speak in a manner that does not conform to the Qur'an's morality. Allah draws attention to their way of speaking, which is like a mirror in which their true spiritual state can be seen, in this verse of the Qur'an:

If We wished, We would show them to you and you would know them by their mark and know them by the burden of their speech. Allah knows your actions. (Surah Muhammad: 30)

The defects in these people's speech manifest themselves in a number of ways. The most common ones include:

- The collapse of logical speech:

Some exhibit serious defects in their chain of logic. Most of the time, they themselves are not aware of this collapse of logic, which is readily apparent to others. For example, while trying to prove that criticism directed at them is groundless, they put forth evidence to prove that it is incorrect. Every statement they make is based on more twisted logic than before. In every attempt to turn the situation in their favor, they become even more irrational.

- Speech incompatible with the Qur'an

One of believers' most important characteristics is that the morality of the Qur'an governs them at every moment; and that their every word conforms to the verses of the Qur'an.

Some insincere people who receive advice may avoid referring to the Qur'an or mentioning Allah's name, for if they did, they know that they would have to live what they say. For instance, when one of their defects is pointed out to them, if they express the attitude of

the faithful referred to in the verse, "**[People who guard against evil are] those who, when they act indecently or wrong themselves, remember Allah and ask forgiveness for their bad actions (and who can forgive bad actions except Allah?) and do not knowingly persist in what they were doing"** (Surah Al 'Imran: 135), then, in compliance with the Qur'an, they should immediately abandon their insincerity. In the same way, if even for a moment they remember and declare that there is no being other than Allah—that they are impotent in the face of the power of Allah, that everything proceeds according to the destiny Allah has determined, that He knows what is in the inmost depths of their hearts, that people are tormented in this world and the Hereafter in return for their insincerity, that Hell is eternal and that the pain there is real and lasting—then they can hardly demonstrate the courage to persist in their immorality. In such a situation, a person can no longer pursue his own selfish ideas or use a manner of speaking arising from ignorance. Everything is turned on its head and he can no longer satisfy his lower self's desires. All his behavior, his manner of speaking and his tone of voice return to normal. He cannot practice deception or become irritable or protest toward the other person. No matter how hard on his pride, no matter how contrary to the image he believes he has created, he must admit his mistakes and take the effort to overcoming them, wasting no time.

For people who avoid thinking in accordance with the Qur'an, Hell is one of the most important reminders to make them think. When asked a question like, "If you were on the edge of Hell and were to be thrown into it or rescued—according to your behavior—would you still persist in the same behavior?", these people are pushed into a corner because no one on the edge of the fire can show the courage to behave in a way contrary to the morality of the Qur'an.

Such an analogy dramatizes that most people's insincerity arises from their inability to foresee Allah's torment or their lack of a firm belief in the Hereafter. In a verse of the Qur'an, Allah warns such people:

What are they waiting for but for the angels to come to them or for your Lord Himself to come, or for one of your Lord's signs to come? On the day that one of your Lord's signs does come, no faith which a self professes will be of any use to it if it did not believe before and earn good in its faith. Say: "Wait, then; We too are waiting." (Surat al-Anam: 158)

In conclusion, keeping in mind the above verse, thinking sincerely that the return for what one has done may be the torment in Hell and so, abandoning insincerity can be the means to continue one's life as an honest person.

- Vehement defensiveness and protests

Another characteristic of some who are determined in their insincerity attracts attention: Sometimes, rather than trying to understand what is said to them, they react by protesting vehemently and defending themselves. A believer should listen to comments made about him or advice offered, ask questions and try to learn and understand. Later, such a person shows that he has understood the warning he's received and makes a sincere effort according to the Qur'an. But such an effort is seldom observed in the kind of character we are talking about.

Allah offers the exemplary behavior of the Prophet Yusuf (as) as an example to the faithful in the Qur'an. Despite being faced with a calumny, the Prophet Yusuf (as) knew that he should not defend his lower self. One verse quotes him as follows:

"I do not say my self was free from blame. The self indeed commands to evil acts—except for those my Lord has mercy on. My Lord, He is Forgiving, Merciful." (Surah Yusuf: 53)

- Silence

Another reaction that reveals insincerity is when people who normally display a lively, cheerful character and engage in sustained, warm conversations, are confronted with criticism. Suddenly they fall silent and seem unable to speak. Believers in the true faith lose none of their eager willpower, even under the most difficult circumstances. On the contrary, such circumstances make them more eager still and they show the strength of their faith by making even greater efforts.

In such circumstances, of course, people who prefer to remain silent rather than provide satisfactory explanations do so as a protest. In this way, they want to wear down the believer who is warning them. But when they are told that this behavior is unseemly, they offer the excuse that they said nothing because nothing crossed their minds.

Behavior of this type is carried out cunningly and cannot be proved. Again, it can be detected and recognized only with the sixth sense. An insincere person takes advantage of the lack of proof and continues his protest. But with this ugly obstinacy, he loses both Allah's approval and the trust, respect and affection of the faithful. Because of his crafty plans, the person in question has an extremely confused spiritual state. He lives with a troubled conscience, knowing that what he's done is insincere, and lives with continual tension and discomfort. This, too, is one of the torments given by Allah to people who practice insincerity.

- Affected speech

People who forget that Allah knows what is hidden in their hearts think it's enough if they can only convince the people around them. In this situation, they resort to affected speech and attitude to conceal what is inside and try to make others believe what is not in their hearts through affected behavior. They also use affected attitudes and speech to hide from people what they want to keep secret. Allah refers to people like this in a verse of the Qur'an:

... They please you with their mouths but their hearts belie their words. Most of them are deviators. (Surat at-Tawba: 8)

Of course, maintaining this hypocritical spiritual state consistently is extremely difficult. For a person to seem to feel things he does not experience requires a great expenditure of effort. People who maintain this extremely wearying behavior create troubles for themselves.

When advice is given them, they pretend—with exaggerated gestures and emphases and long and detailed explanations—to have accepted what has been said. Most of the time, they truly are thinking the exact opposite and appear to accept only because they want the subject closed. They calculate what sort of statements the other person wants to hear and—without thought, feeling or understanding—they say what they think will pacify the other. But while this takes place, their behavior usually does not change for the better. With the help of Allah, Muslims feel that the words of these people are deceitful.

People who practice this deceit believe that they have cleared and protected themselves at the time, but Allah knows the most carefully guarded secrets they keep inside. In the Qur'an, He reveals the following about people who believe they are concealing things in their hearts:

See how they wrap themselves round trying to conceal their feelings from Him! No, indeed! When they wrap their garments round themselves, He knows what they keep secret and what they make public. He knows what their hearts contain. (Surah Hud: 5)

- Using a contrary manner of speaking

To render advice given them ineffective, some resort to using a contrary manner of speaking. In this way they deceive themselves, believing that they can dissuade Muslims who enjoin the good and forbid evil. They deceive themselves because a pious Muslim is responsible only for revealing truths. Another's reaction cannot affect his behaving in accordance with Allah's approval.

These two-faced people use contrariness in the same cunning way as their other behavioral ploys. They try not to give away too many indications or too much evidence of what they really think.

Above all, there is a concealed obstinacy in their speech. With the support of barely perceptible gestures and emphases, they secretly defy the person they are talking with. At first hearing, their words may seem respectful and reasonable. However, their way of saying these words, the emphases they use, the toughness in their expressions and their inappropriate gestures give the impression that they're really contradicting those they're talking to.

In the morality of the Qur'an, there is no place for contrary behavior, whether open or secret. One of the most important characteristics distinguishing the faithful from the ignorant is their gentle, humble, submissive patience and compassion. The only power that can grant these qualities to people is the fear of Allah. For this reason, anyone who engages in secret contrariness should abandon this right away by fearing Allah to his utmost, taking refuge in Him, and

demonstrating a gentle and submissive morality.

Defects of expression in eyes

Another indicator of character, emotions, thoughts and level of sincerity is people's expressions in their eyes. Most of what a person experiences inside, what he hides in his heart and what passes through his mind is reflected in his expression. This is a truth well known by most people, for which reason, expressions hold an important place in people's ability to get to know and evaluate one another.

Allah tells us that expressions are an important measure of people's internal worlds. Some of the verses in the Qur'an drawing attention to this are these:

Those who do not believe all but strike you down with their evil looks when they hear the Reminder and say, "He is quite mad." (Surat al-Qalam: 51)

He knows the eyes' deceit and what people's breasts conceal. (Surah Ghafir: 19)

As you can see in the above verses, expressions in one's eyes give away the true thoughts and spiritual state. Such people try to give the impression that they are morally upright. But if anything conflicts with their interests, they give way to anger right away. But they know that anger is against the morality of the Qur'an, so they try to conceal it. By doing so, they both witness their own immorality and feel troubled by it, tormenting themselves unnecessarily with feelings of rage.

The expressions of a sincere person reflect his honesty. In contrast to people who wrong themselves, they live what they feel. Their tranquil and contented spiritual state reveals itself in their eyes as liveliness and depth.

Immediate Submission to Hopelessness

When met with criticism, people who do not live according to the requirements of the morality of the Qur'an immediately descend into hopelessness and defeatism. People who understand Allah's power and His mercy and generosity towards His faithful followers do not submit to hopelessness in any way.

In the Qur'an, Allah tells us of these words of the Prophet Ya'qub (as) on the subject of hopelessness:

"My sons! Seek news of Yusuf and his brother. Do not despair of solace from Allah. No one despairs of solace from Allah except for people who are disbelievers." (Surah Yusuf: 87)

Being aware of his own defective aspects is a great blessing and an opportunity for a person. In this way, he can cleanse himself of his errors. But when warned or caught out in mistaken behavior, some people immediately give way to hopelessness. This is an indication of their failure to place their trust in Allah. Lack of submission is one of the worst curses that can be suffered in this world, because anyone who believes that some events occur independently of Allah wants to always have them under his own control. But because he can never succeed in this, his life is continually spent in fear, worry, tension and stress. This spiritual state, experienced by people who forget Allah's boundless power and His supremacy over everything, is really one of the forms of torment created for people in worldly life.

The Psychology of Battling Injustice and Counterattacks

Those who cannot understand (as they should) Allah's justice, His compassion towards His faithful servants and, at the same time,

the moral perfection of a believer will interpret any warning they receive as an unjust personal attack. They cannot understand that the one giving the warning seeks no benefit for himself, but is making a sincere effort to improve another's life in this world and the Hereafter.

As Allah points out in the verse, "**Do they then seek the judgment of the Time of Ignorance? Who could be better at giving judgment than Allah for people with certainty?**" (Surat al-Ma'ida: 50), they assess the matter with ignorant criteria. In ignorant societies, criticism is made for the purpose of setting the critic above others and belittling others and making them ashamed by pointing out their weaknesses. Criticism, according to this thinking, is made to express to someone that the critic does not like him or approve of his behavior. It is not made to solve a problem or as a means to help the other person overcome his defects, become better and earn eternal life in the Hereafter. Since insincere people evaluate events not from the viewpoint of the Qur'an, but using the criteria of the ignorant, they interpret any positive criticism offered to them as detrimental.

People who do not behave in accordance with the Qur'an usually think that they are being forced to suffer an injustice when they encounter such a situation. They utter hurtful words to whoever warns them, become angry, and behave distantly and coldly.

However, it should be clear that none of this behavior conforms with the morality of the Qur'an. Above everything, Allah's justice definitely manifests itself on every person and Allah tells us that nobody will suffer injustice in the verse, "**Allah does not wrong anyone by so much as the smallest speck. And if there is a good deed Allah will multiply it and pay out an immense reward direct from Him**" (Surat an-Nisa': 40). A believer always hopes that Allah's justice will make itself apparent in every situation, and for this reason he exhibits calm and submissive behavior. Those who say they be-

lieve in Allah, but forget His justice and power, live lives of continual trouble and tension with their stance of battling against injustice.

Crafty Behavior on the "Limit Principle"

Some who share the morality that constitutes the subject of this book will say that they conform to the Qur'an, yet maintain their ignorant morality secretly and cunningly. However, all this is done within the "limit principle," meaning that the individual engages in all kinds of insincere acts that cannot be proven. He is also careful to do them in such a way that no one can claim that they are openly against the Qur'an. All his secret activities are kept within certain limits. In order to maintain these limits, the person may carry out both broad and fine tuning, as necessary. Broad tuning is determined from the outset; fine tuning is put into effect when the faithful discover his insincerities. For example, when he says something irritable and is told that speaking in such a way does not accord with the morality described in the Qur'an, he can immediately adjust between speaking crossly and normal speaking. At every warning, he reduces the dose of irritability in what he says, but still does this with fragments of satan inside. At no stage does he submit to advice given on the basis of the Qur'an. But he can refine and narrow the borderline between submission and not submitting. He uses concealed rudeness, concealed protest and concealed obstinacy in such limited doses that they cannot be proven.

In fact, entering into so much trouble and confusion to hide insincerities and protect oneself is meaningless. It is to live such a life and feed corrosive troubles that torment the conscience. Sincerity is much easier, much finer and much more down-to-earth. Never forget that, as we are told in the verse, **"On that Day you will be exposed—no concealed act you did will stay concealed"** (Surat

al-Haqqa: 18). Even if fine tuning is carried out and their dosage reduced, all insincerities are clearly seen and known by Allah. And as He tells us in the verse, **"Whoever does an atom's weight of good will see it. Whoever does an atom's weight of evil will see it"** (Surat az-Zilzal: 7-8). Every act will definitely receive a return in the Hereafter. For this reason, in His verses, Allah instructs people to give up their sins, whether open or hidden, and warns them of the torment to come:

Abandon wrong action, outward and inward. Those who commit wrong action will be repaid for what they perpetrated. (Surat al-An'am: 120)

... that you do not approach indecency—outward or inward. (Surat al-An'am: 151)

The Psychology of Protest and Reaction

When the ignorant are upset by somebody's words or behavior, the great majority unhesitatingly react by slamming doors, behaving coldly towards other people, not talking to them, refusing to eat food prepared for them or not doing jobs that need to be done. People familiar with the morality of the Qur'an know that such behavior is not appropriate for believers and so do not resort to such protests.

Some who lack sincere faith have no hesitation in carrying out protest actions that do not conform to the morality of the Qur'an, but do not do so openly, mostly with indifferent, silent, cold behavior. When people in such a spiritual state is asked a question, they cannot give a plain, normal answer. Sometimes they give a short, belittling answer and sometimes secretly protest by giving curt answers like "Yes," "No," or "I don't know." This is an attempt to seem to be replying. If asked, "Why didn't you answer?", they put the other person in the wrong by saying, "I did." Sometimes they play for time by

giving very vague answers after a delay. When asked why they remained silent or answered late, they put forward which are obviously insincere excuses that cannot be proved as such—for example, "I was thinking," or "I couldn't think what I wanted to say." In an environment where all others are enjoying themselves, they cannot enjoy themselves as they would like and only content themselves with smiling and behaving wearily and coldly. But when asked why they are behaving like this and whether or not there's a problem, they give a false answer by saying, "Nothing is wrong." Sometimes they disguise their protest by offering excuses such as illness or sleeplessness. In this way, when they receive a complaint about their behavior, they claim that none of it is deliberate, but they are behaving that way because they are ill.

Those who exhibit such ugly behavior should know that the only ones who suffer from this situation are themselves. Even when others have no clear proof, most of them realize that such a person is behaving insincerely. In accordance with the morality of the Qur'an, a pious believer gives such a person a useful answer by inviting him to superior morality, and he himself lives in the peace of this superior morality. One who is determined to show secret immorality for the sake of protesting cannot enjoy himself, laugh or speak as he would really like to. Because he judges events or other people from a negative viewpoint, such people can find no pleasure. They interpret everything as a problem and live always in trouble and torment. The only solution is for a person to fear Allah and devote himself to the morality of the Qur'an. Only one who gives himself to Allah with a sincere heart and avoids everything that Allah will not approve of can find tranquility and happiness in this world and the Hereafter.

Allah May Increase Worldly Troubles for Those Who Persist in Insincerity

Our Lord explains the kind of repentance which will gain acceptance in His sight in the verse, "**Allah only accepts the repentance of those who do evil in ignorance and then quickly repent after doing it. Allah turns towards such people...**" (Surat an-Nisa': 17). In another verse, Allah describes sincere believers as "**those who, when they act indecently or wrong themselves, remember Allah and ask forgiveness for their bad actions (and who can forgive bad actions except Allah?) and do not knowingly persist in what they were doing**" (Surah Al 'Imran: 135).

Allah tells us that He will forgive mistakes made through ignorance or lack of knowledge, provided that people immediately give them up when they notice them and do not persist in the same errors. Thus a believer who wants to achieve true sincerity towards Allah should think in line with these verses and ask Allah's forgiveness for all the insincerities he hides inside himself.

However, the behavior for which Allah will call people to account on the Day of Judgment does not consist only of the insincerities they display openly. Allah also takes into account insincerities that people are consciously aware of, but try to hide from others. As we are reminded in the verse, "**... Allah knows what you divulge and what you conceal**" (Surat an-Nur: 29), Allah knows what is going on inside a person even though others cannot prove any in-

sincerity. Because of this, when evaluating himself, a person should measure not only his externally visible behavioral defects which can be proved, but also his secret insincerities. He should give up all these and ask Allah's forgiveness.

He should know that otherwise—if he does not accept warnings he is given, disdains those who give them and sets his face against them— he may fall into the situation of the people described in the Qur'an like this: **"No indeed! Truly man is unbridled, seeing himself as self-sufficient."** (Surat al-'Alaq: 6-7) In such a situation, because he has not come even close to sincerity and has not changed his behavior, even though he knows Allah's commandments and sees the true path, Allah may close down his comprehension completely. Allah warns His servants about this:

I will divert from My signs all those who are arrogant in the Earth without any right. If they see every sign, they will not believe in it. If they see the way of right guidance, they will not take it as a way. But if they see the way of error, they will take that as a way. That is because they denied Our signs and paid no attention to them. (Surat al-A'raf: 146)

If people persist in their insincerities despite being warned by the verses of the Qur'an, their own consciences and sincere believers, the outcome they may suffer while in the life of the world is not limited to this. Allah tells that He may blind the eyes of the conscience of those who take no notice of the advice given them:

Such are the people Allah has cursed, making them deaf and blinding their eyes. Will they not then ponder the Qur'an or are there locks upon their hearts? (Surah Muhammad: 23-24)

These are only a few of the things that Allah can do to people

who resist sincerity. Never forget that Allah is the Almighty Who created everything. If He wills, He can increase people's torment in the life of the world. He can bring the secret troubles that people suffer because of their insincerity to a level at which they take over their identities completely. If He wishes, Allah can make the world too small for people.

In the Qur'an, we are told that in the past, many peoples submitted to Allah and directed themselves towards sincerity in the face of such a torment.

It is He Who conveys you on both land and sea so that when some of you are on a boat, running before a fair wind, rejoicing at it, and then a violent squall comes upon them and the waves come at them from every side and they realize there is no way of escape, they call on Allah, making their religion sincerely His: "If You rescue us from this, we will truly be among the thankful." (Surah Yunus: 22)

In this verse, Allah tells us that when they are helplessly trapped amidst waves in the middle of the ocean, people devote themselves to Him, **"making their religion sincerely His."**

What makes these people adopt this sincerity is being in torment and, understanding Allah's power and might, seeking His help. Strikingly, at such a point, people are not forced to try for sincerity at all. At the moment they see the torment, they use their consciences and their wills to the maximum and make every sincere effort to achieve a morality that Allah will approve. This demonstrates that, even before they experience torment, people possess the power to be sincere. There is really no need for others to explain to them or try to prove their insincerities. They can take on characteristics that Allah will approve simply by referring to their consciences. If despite this, they still set their faces against those who warn them

and invite them to sincerity, they should seriously fear the torment that Allah can bring down on them in the life of the world.

Allah can repay people for insincerity with torment at any unexpected moment. He can take away all a person's goods, property and respect and leave him in helpless poverty. He can bring down unimaginable discomfort, unhappiness and inner affliction. While keeping the body alive, He can petrify the soul so that to the end of his life, the individual can take no pleasure from any blessing or anything beautiful. Allah can make him live until his death unable to love or be loved or experience the pleasure of friendship and sincerity. In addition to these spiritual torments, Allah can give people relentless diseases, as He points out in this verse, warning about His torment:

Say: "He possesses the power to send you punishment from above your heads or from beneath your feet, or to confuse you in sects and make you taste one another's violence." Look how We vary the signs so that hopefully they will understand. (Surat al-An'am : 65)

People should fear all these possibilities and avoid them by directing themselves towards sincerity without delay.

The time they are given should not deceive people either. Because of His compassion, forgiveness and generosity, Allah allows people a certain period to set themselves on the right path. If one does not use this period to his advantage, the outcome may be inescapable torment, as we are told in this verse of the Qur'an, "**How many wrongdoing cities I allowed time to and then I seized them. I am their final destination!**" (Surat al-Hajj: 48).

A person cannot know when the period granted him will come to an end. Because of this, and because he may die at any moment, he should make a sincere effort to strengthen his faith and improve

his morality. Until death, the way is open to everybody to start over, regain faith and deliver themselves to Allah. The way to be saved from insincerity is very simple: People should reconsider the verses of the Qur'an and, in the light of them, their own intentions and not allow insincerity, open or secret, at any point in their lives.

The Secret Sorrows of the World May Turn to Endless Torment in the Hereafter

From the start, this book has been explaining that those who do not fully abandon insincerity cannot be rescued from the unhappy lives they lead or the secret sorrows they suffer. Even though they are warned, people who persist in their insincerity and fail to even approach the life of the true faith will also be unhappy in the Hereafter. Never forget that a person is being tested in the life of the world. In the Hereafter, he will receive a reward to the extent that he struggles against his lower self and lives out the kind of morality and faith which Allah loves. Those who cleanse and purify their souls will be rewarded with Paradise; those who are wrapped in sin and evil, with Hell.

Those in the world who do not live in honesty and sincerity, who do not know humility and submission and who adopt unbelief and hypocrisy as their principles, will be repaid for this immorality in the Hereafter. Allah has purged Paradise of all ills and defects. People received into Paradise are those who have tried to purge their souls of all evil in the life of the world. Obviously, one who wants to be received into Paradise needs to purge himself of all evil, because those who retain any of their wickedness, who do not live superior morality and do not know the beauty of love and being loved certainly cannot reach the state in which they can share pleas-

ure in these things in the Hereafter. Worldly life is a learning place for them, but whatever characteristics their souls have taken on in the world will also be their characteristics in the Hereafter. If they have gained none, the repayment for their worldly morality will be the continuation of the same troubles, torments and unhappiness in the Hereafter.

In consequence, every person should fear this danger waiting for him, prepare for it while there is still time, live his life in complete sincerity and make every effort to attain the morality approved by Allah. In the following pages, the thought-provoking repayment those who display insincere morality in the life of the world will receive in the Hereafter will be shortly described.

People Who Grow Arrogant in This World Will Be Humbled and Brought Low in the Hereafter

Those who cannot be rescued from their prideful and egoistic emotions always make great efforts to convince others that they are superior. This effort causes them to live their worldly lives in unhappiness and trouble. The return for these people in the Hereafter is to be humbled, brought low and treated with contempt. Allah warns these people in the Qur'an:

Your God is One God. As for those who do not believe in the Hereafter, their hearts are in denial and they are puffed up with pride. There is no doubt that Allah knows what they keep secret and what they make public. He does not love people puffed up with pride. When they are asked, "What has your Lord sent down?" they say, "Myths and legends of previous peoples." So on the Day of Resurrection they will carry the full weight of their own burdens and some of the burdens of those they misguided without

knowledge. What an evil load they bear! Those before them also plotted, and Allah came at their building from the foundations and the roof caved in on top of them. The punishment came at them from where they did not expect. Then on the Day of Resurrection He will disgrace them, and say, "Where are My partner deities for whose sake you became so hostile?" Those given knowledge will say, "Today there is disgrace and evil for the disbelievers." As for those the angels take in death while they are wronging themselves, they will offer their submission: "We did not do any evil." Oh yes you did! Allah knows what you were doing. "Enter the gates of Hell, remaining in it timelessly, for ever. How evil is the abode of the arrogant!" (Surat an-Nahl: 22-29)

... If you could only see the wrongdoers in the throes of death when the angels are stretching out their hands, saying, "Disgorge your own selves! Today you will be repaid with the punishment of humiliation for saying something other than the truth about Allah, and being arrogant about His signs." (Surat al-An'am: 93)

People trapped in delusions of worldly grandeur will receive repayment for their immorality in the Hereafter by being driven into Hell in a demeaning manner:

The Day they are shoved roughly into the Fire of Hell.
(Surat at-Tur: 13)

We have made ready for the disbelievers shackles and chains and a Searing Blaze. (Surat al-Insan: 4)

... boiling water poured over their heads... (Surat al-Hajj: 19)

Those who are herded headlong into Hell, such people are in the worst position. They are the most misguided from the way. (Surat al-Furqan: 34)

People Who Demonstrate Argumentative Behavior Should Remember that Hell Is Filled with People Who Argue with One Another All the Time

People who do not pay the necessary heed to the calls made on them by Muslims and respond not politely, but with an argumentative manner should think about the treatment they may receive in the Hereafter. They will find themselves arguing in torment in the same way for all eternity. The torments that their insincere moral approach causes them to suffer in worldly life will turn into endless torment in the Hereafter. In the world, this approach makes such people unable to form friendships or to love and be loved, deprives them of the blessings these things bring. If Allah wills, He can make them live forever in the same discomfort. The Qur'an tells us that the people in Hell, because they are in a perpetual state of argument with one another, will also experience the spiritual torment produced by this uncomfortable atmosphere as well as experiencing the Fire:

All this is certainly true—the bickering of the people of the Fire. (Surah Sâd: 64)

Arguing in it with one another, they will say, "By Allah, we were plainly misguided." (Surat ash-Shu'ara': 96-97)

He will say, "Do not argue in My presence when I gave you advance warning of the Threat." (Surah Qaf: 28)

People who know Allah's Book are aware that argument is a characteristic of the denizens of Hell and strenuously avoid it.

Those Who Are Wretched and Unhappy in the World Should Remember that the People of Hell Are Also Miserable and Unhappy

People who regard continual unhappiness as normal, even though they have understood the faith, should not forget that wretchedness and unhappiness are also characteristics of Hell. Allah reveals this truth to us in this verse:

I have warned you of a Fire which rages in which only the most wretched will roast—those who denied and turned away. Those who most fear [and respect] Allah will be far removed from it. (Surat al-Layl: 14-17)

Those who do not heed the advice of the faithful should not forget that in the Hereafter, they will be plunged into regret and will say, "If only I had listened!"

Those who do not listen to advice given them in this world, who try to whitewash themselves by offering excuses, should not assume they have benefited from this behavior. Even if the world seems to accept their excuses, they will bring them no advantage in terms of salvation in the Hereafter. Allah warns us about this in the verses of the Qur'an:

On that Day the excuses of those who did wrong will not help them nor will they be able to appease Allah. (Surat ar-Rum: 57)

The Day when the excuses of the wrongdoers will not help them. The curse will be on them and they will have the most evil Home. (Surah Ghafir: 52)

Those whose excuses are not accepted will live eternally in the deepest regret because they did not pay attention to the advice given them and did not adopt morality of which Allah would approve:

They will say, "If only we had really listened and used our intellect, we would not have been Companions of the Blaze." (Surat al-Mulk: 10)

They will say on the Day their faces are rolled over in the Fire, "If only we had obeyed Allah and obeyed the Messenger!" (Surat al-Ahzab: 66)

Allah tells people like this—whom He has given countless opportunities for repentance during their lives—that He will not accept their repentance on the Day of Judgment. In the verses of the Qur'an, we are told that these people who set their faces against calls made on them in the world can expect no further help and that they will be repaid with eternal torment:

They will shout out in it, "Our Lord! Take us out! We will act rightly, differently from the way we used to act!" Did We not let you live long enough for anyone who was going to pay heed to pay heed? And did not the warner come to you? Taste it then! There is no helper for the wrongdoers. (Surah Fatir: 37)

The way to avoid such regrets is extremely easy: It is to regard as blessings pieces of advice given for one's salvation in the world and the Hereafter, and to accept them humbly in order to achieve a higher morality.

To protect themselves against torment in the Hereafter, selfish people may wish to surrender everything they own as a ransom. People who do not cleanse their souls of selfishness and egoism during their lives and who avoid self-sacrifice should consider that this approach will cause them harm in the Hereafter. Those who do not use their goods, time, lives and labor as Allah approves, but instead think first of their own comforts and interests will be plunged into deep regret in the Hereafter. Whatever these people have desired in

the world, wanted for themselves and refused to sacrifice by sharing, they will want to give up as a ransom to protect themselves against the torment:

Even though they can see each other. An evildoer will wish he could ransom himself from the punishment of that Day, by means of his sons, or his wife or his brother or his family who sheltered him or everyone else on Earth, if that only meant that he could save himself. But no! It is a raging blaze. (Surat al-Ma'arij: 11-15)

If every self that did wrong possessed everything on Earth, it would offer it as a ransom. They will show remorse when they see the punishment. Everything will be decided between them justly. They will not be wronged. (Surah Yunus: 54)

But Allah tells us that even if they give up everything they value, none of it will be accepted as a ransom:

Abandon those who have turned their religion into a game and a diversion and who have been deluded by the life of this world. Remind by it lest a person is delivered up to destruction for what he has earned with no protector or intercessor besides Allah. Were he to offer every kind of compensation, it would not be accepted from him. Such people are delivered up to destruction for what they have earned. They will have scalding water to drink and a painful punishment because they disbelieved. (Surat al-An'am: 70)

Because of this, if they feel even a little egoism in them, people who continue to set their own selfish needs and desires above those of other believers should consider how they will be repaid for this behavior in the Hereafter.

People Who Surrender to Hopelessness in This World Should Fear Joining Those Who Abandon All Hope of Salvation in the Hereafter for Eternity

When faced with even the slightest difficulty, those who are incapable of appreciating Allah's boundless power and mercy and His love for His servants and generosity towards them, immediately give way to hopelessness and abandon their hopes of Allah's mercy. Allah tells us that this is a characteristic of unbelievers in the verse, "... **Do not despair of solace from Allah. No one despairs of solace from Allah except for people who are disbelievers**" (Surah Yusuf: 87). For this reason, those who cannot overcome this weakness in their morality, despite knowing this provision of the Qur'an, should fear being left in such sorrow for all eternity and falling into a truly hopeless situation in the Hereafter.

In the Qur'an, Allah refers to the hopelessness of people in Hell: **It will not be eased for them. They will be crushed there by despair. (Surat az-Zukhruf: 75)**

On the Day the Hour arrives, the evildoers will be in despair. (Surat ar-Rum: 12)

People Ungrateful for the Blessings They Possess Should Remember that in the Hereafter, They May Be Deprived of All Blessings

Those who take no pleasure from the beautiful things around them, are ungrateful for the blessings they do possess and do not praise Allah's bounty as they should, will spend their worldly lives unhappily. Because they have not returned gratitude for the blessings Allah has given them, they will receive a life in Hell as repayment for their ingratitude. In the verses of the Qur'an, Allah tells us

that for these ungrateful people, His torment will be the most severe:

Hurl into Hell every ungrateful, rebellious one, impeder of good, doubt-causing aggressor, who set up another deity together with Allah. Hurl into the terrible punishment. (Surah Qaf: 24-26)

People Who Do Not Behave with Sincerity toward the Faithful Should Fear Being Placed with Unbelievers in the Hereafter

Those who do not appreciate believers who aim their lives at earning the approval of Allah, living out the morality of the Qur'an in the best possible way, and who demonstrate a heartfelt and humble morality filled with love, should fear being eternally deprived of their company in the Hereafter. People who cannot befriend the faithful or behave with sincerity towards them, even though they can see that they are the friends of Allah, may be forced to live amongst unbelievers in the Hereafter.

Those who posture around the faithful in world, feel uncomfortable and tense in their presence and behave unnaturally, unpleasantly and coldly towards them, reacting badly to their advice and warnings, should recall that in the Hereafter, they will regret not having this safe company around them. Obviously, showing such morality is repaid by being accompanied by others of similar morality. Those who become aware of this in the Hereafter will beg Allah one last time not to put them together with such people. But Allah tells us in the Qur'an that people who share the same morality will be brought together in Hell and will be forced to live together eternally:

Hell is the promised meeting-place for all of them. (Surat

al-Hijr: 43)

When these people realize they no longer have any friends, they will say with regret,

"And now we have no one to intercede for us. We do not have a single loyal friend. If only we could have another chance, then we would be among the believers!" (Surat ash-Shu'ara': 100-102)

One who has faith should know that in this world and the next, his only friends are Allah and then, His prophets and pious followers. He should not allow the slightest trace of rage against the faithful to remain in his heart and should love them with complete sincerity. Only in this way can he be together with these people in the eternal life of the Hereafter.

Those Who Believe They've Deceived People with Insincerities that Cannot Be Proven Should Know that Their Hands, Feet and Skin Will Confess All This in the Hereafter

People who think that by putting forward various excuses, they've deceived the ones who've advised them and summoned them to superior morality should know that in the Hereafter, they will be repaid for this insincerity. Things they think they have concealed inside themselves will be brought to light. When that day comes, their own hands, feet and skin will bear witness against them and bring all their insincerities to light. People who behave hypocritically will not be able to escape torment. We are told this truth in the Qur'an:

On the Day when their tongues and hands and feet will testify against them about what they were doing. On that Day Allah will pay them in full what is due to them, and they

will know that Allah is the Clear Truth. (Surat an-Nur: 24-25)

When they reach it, their hearing, sight and skin will testify against them concerning what they did. They will ask their skins, "Why did you testify against us?" and they will reply, "Allah gave us speech as He has given speech to everything. He created you in the first place and you will be returned to Him. You did not think to shield yourselves from your hearing, sight and skin testifying against you and you thought that Allah would never know much of what you did. It is that thought you had about your Lord that has destroyed you, so now you find yourselves among the lost." If they are steadfast, the Fire will still be their residence! If they ask for favor, no favor will be given. (Surah Fussilat: 20-24)

Those Who Express Their Insincerity to the Faithful with Silence Should Know that They Will Be Unable to Talk to Their Companions in Hell

People who can usually speak freely on any subject that comes up, but fall silent in protest against the faithful in situations that conflict with their selfish interests should consider that such insincerity will receive its repayment in the Hereafter, where Allah does not allow the companions of Hell to speak and does not talk to them Himself. The verses of the Qur'an describe their situation like this:

He will say, "Slink away into it and do not speak to Me." (Surat al-Muminun: 108)

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 Resurrection, Allah will not

Speak to them or look at them or purify them. They will have a painful punishment. (Surah Al 'Imran: 77)

Even an insincerity regarded as minor in the life of the world will definitely be held against a person in the Hereafter. Here on Earth, the faithful may forgive generously, but people should not be deceived by this. If insincerity is hidden in a person's heart, Allah knows it and will certainly repay it in the Hereafter. For this reason, everyone should be aware that silence used as a protest will receive its punishment from Allah and should fear and avoid such behavior.

People Who Cast Insincere Glances at the Faithful Should Fear Being Condemned to Blindness and Unable to See at all in the Hereafter

Those who, despite all advice and warnings, use glances to express their insincerity rather than their faith in and devotion to Allah should remember that in the Hereafter, they'll be called on to account for their behavior. Those who do not avoid insincerity in this world should fear being brought to a state where they cannot see at all, where their eyes cannot show a natural expression even if they wanted to. Their eyes will be blinded and their faces will become filled with terror, rigid. Allah describes what will happen on the Day of Judgment:

Do not consider Allah to be unaware of what the wrongdoers perpetrate. He is merely deferring them to a Day on which their sight will be transfixed. (Surah Ibrahim: 42)

On the Day the Trumpet is blown—and We will gather the evildoers sightless on that Day. (Surah Ta Ha: 102)

Eyes downcast, darkened by debasement, that will be the Day which they were promised. (Surat al-Ma'arij: 44)

Of course no one wants to receive such penalties. The only way

to be protected against them is to purge oneself of insincerity in this world and try to achieve honesty towards Allah and the faithful.

People Who Use Facial Expressions and Gestures to Express the Insincerities They Do Not Say Should Fear What State Their Faces May Take in the Hereafter

Those unable to behave in ways the Qur'an tells us are wrong openly, but do so covertly with their facial expressions or gestures should think about the repayment they will receive in the Hereafter. If Allah wills, they can be reduced to a state in which they cannot use their facial muscles when they want to. Even if they can, their faces may take on an appearance that conveys no honesty or sincerity. They should recall that in the verses of the Qur'an, one way in which Allah repays the companions of Hell is by discrediting such people with a torment targeting their faces:

We pursued them with a curse in this world and on the Day of Resurrection they will be hideous and spurned. (Surat al-Qasas: 42)

And faces that Day will be glowering. (Surat al-Qiyama: 24)

We will brand him on the snout! (Surat al-Qalam: 16)

Has news of the Overwhelmer reached you? Some faces on that Day will be downcast, laboring, toiling endlessly, roasting in a red-hot Fire. (Surat al-Ghashiyya: 1-4)

Everybody should think of this payback which Allah tells us of and make efforts to protect themselves from insincerity and acquire the straightforward behavior characteristic of pious believers. In addition, in order to avoid such a punishment in the Hereafter, it is everyone's responsibility to act as a believer in this world.

The Solution to Secret Worldly Sorrows

Throughout this book, it has been explained that some people have a depressed, unhappy, withdrawn and tense spiritual state. The purpose in writing this book was not only to tell why people are unhappy, which insincerities will return to them as torment and what dangers await them in this world and the Hereafter, but first and foremost to show them how to rescue themselves from troubled spiritual states and to achieve sincerity. Everyone should know that to live a comfortable, peaceful and happy life in this world and the next is extremely easy—and above all rational and correct.

For this, even if a person has some faith, he needs to sincerely intend to become "truly pious." In the Qur'an, Allah describes the characteristics of righteous believers. There is only one morality peculiar to the righteous. Allah has promised that those with the morality of the pious believer will find salvation both in this world and the Hereafter. To achieve this, it is a necessary priority to remember that every event takes place with Allah's permission and under Allah's control. Knowing this very important fact and acting at every moment in its knowledge are most important methods by which a person can rescue himself from secret sorrows in worldly life. One who grasps this fact in the full sense will know that everything is a blessing for him, no matter what befalls him, and thus greets everything with gladness.

Truly religious people believe in destiny and know that it is out

of the question for anybody to change his destiny. A person's fate is determined before he is even born. Allah explains this in the Qur'an:

Allah created you from dust and then from a drop of sperm and then made you into pairs. No female becomes pregnant or gives birth except with His knowledge. And no living thing lives long or has its life cut short without that being in a Book. That is easy for Allah. (Surah Fatir: 11)

You do not engage in any matter or recite any of the Qur'an or do any action without Our witnessing you while you are occupied with it. Not even the smallest speck eludes your Lord, either on Earth or in heaven. Nor is there anything smaller than that, or larger, which is not in a Clear Book.

(Surah Yunus: 61)

In the face of this truth, a person living out his destiny needs to be cheerful about every detail of every event and see the goodness in it. These are the conditions for being a righteous believer. For a person who has and understands this knowledge, it is out of the question to feel sad, be over-emotional, cry, believe that he has suffered an injustice, fall into jealousy, take offense, become angry, react to events with protests, fly into rages and despair. A believer is pleased with every moment of his life, can see every blessing created and lives in a spiritual state of feeling grateful for the comfort brought by living his life under Allah's control. Whether or not he understands His Divine wisdom, he feels pleased with everything which comes from Allah. No event in the world can make such a person give way to sorrow, tension or worry or cause him fear. Because he knows that he cannot step outside his destiny and because his intentions are clean and pure, he always hopes for goodness and benefits from Allah and does not allow any negative thinking into his life.

Another of the most important conditions that rescues a person from the sorrows of the world is his full intention to be sincere. This concept, as well as sincerity itself, embraces honesty, avoidance of selfish interests, remaining true to Allah and preferring the morality of the Qur'an or the comfort of the faithful over one's own interests.

In addition, it is necessary for a person to keep his heart devoted to Allah at all times and not give way to the blandishments of his lower self. He should always keep his heart pure, never forgetting that Allah hears and sees him at every moment and, furthermore, is closer to Him than his own jugular vein. Allah reveals this truth to us in the Qur'an:

We created man and We know what his own self whispers to him. We are nearer to him than his jugular vein. And the two recording angels are recording, sitting on the right and on the left. He does not utter a single word, without a watcher by him, pen in hand. (Surah Qaf: 16-18)

Understanding this is another of the basics for being a righteous believer. Such a person knows that he is under Allah's inspection at every moment. And because he is aiming to gain Allah's good will, he strenuously avoids any of the behaviors which give rise to insincerity. For anyone who knows that Allah sees and hears him, it is impossible to speak in a way that deliberately discomforts others, to adopt insincere expressions, display selfish behavior or behave deceitfully by concealing one's true character—because he has a sure faith that Allah is with him at all times. Because he knows that in the Hereafter he will definitely be called to account for any unconscionable behavior, he invariably displays a morality that will earn Allah's approval.

He does not at any time stoop to secret acts and treacheries which he thinks cannot be proven, because he is aware that Allah

possesses knowledge of all secrets. In the same way, he does not resort to self-deception by convincing himself that he is innocent. He knows Allah also sees such deceptions. He does not try to conceal from people any truth that Allah knows, because what is most important for him is Allah's approval.

As a result of all these factors, a pure, conscientious, honest and sincere person emerges. Such a person lives in the peace, security and internal cheerfulness of behaving as Allah approves. Just as a sincere individual lives a beautiful life in the world, he will also live in unparalleled eternal happiness in the boundless beauty prepared for the faithful in Paradise.

Conclusion

Allah calls on people to do what is easy. By adopting a morality that drives them into torment, some, however, choose what is difficult and thus wrong themselves. Although they can benefit from the beauties and blessings Allah creates for them in this world, in a full atmosphere of the love, sincerity and security which faith brings, still they spend their lives surrounded by concerns and anxieties of every type.

In fact the way to happiness is very easy and never too late for anybody. Allah shows people the solution in the verse, **"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). In another verse, Allah explains the solution to people's sorrows, afflictions and fears like this:

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)

People are responsible to follow the way Allah has shown. Those who demonstrate the morality approved by Allah will experience happiness, cheerfulness and joy in this world and the Hereafter and will receive eternal mercy. Whatever their causes for worry, all trouble and torment in their hearts will be removed and replaced by feelings of peace and security brought on by the manifestation of their faith in Allah.

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 miraculous order 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 fact of creation to account for the origin of life.

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

The Scientific Collapse of Darwinism

Although this doctrine goes back as far as ancient Greece, the theory of evolution was advanced extensively in the nineteenth century. The most important development that made it the top topic of the world of science was Charles Darwin's *The Origin of Species*, published in 1859. In this book, he denied that Allah created different living species on Earth separately, for he claimed that all living beings had a common ancestor and had diversified over time through small changes. Darwin's theory was not based on any concrete scientific finding; as he also accepted, it was just an "assumption." Moreover, as Darwin confessed in the long chapter of his book titled "Difficulties on Theory," the theory failed in the face of many critical questions.

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

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

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

The First Insurmountable Step: The Origin of Life

The theory of evolution posits that all living species evolved from a single living cell that emerged on the primitive Earth 3.8 billion years ago. How a single cell could generate millions of complex living species and, if such an evolution really occurred, why traces

of it cannot be observed in the fossil record are some of the questions that the theory cannot answer. However, first and foremost, we need to ask: How did this "first cell" originate?

Since the theory of evolution denies creation and any kind of supernatural intervention, it maintains that the "first cell" originated coincidentally within the laws of nature, without any design, plan or arrangement. According to the theory, inanimate matter must have produced a living cell as a result of coincidences. Such a claim, however, is inconsistent with the most unassailable rules of biology.

"Life Comes From Life"

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

Similarly, maggots developing in rotting meat was assumed to be evidence of spontaneous generation. However, it was later understood that worms did not appear on meat spontaneously, but were carried there by flies in the form of larvae, invisible to the naked eye.

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

However, five years after the publication of Darwin's book, Louis Pasteur announced his results after long studies and experi-

ments, that disproved spontaneous generation, a cornerstone of Darwin's theory. In his triumphal lecture at the Sorbonne in 1864, Pasteur said: "Never will the doctrine of spontaneous generation recover from the mortal blow struck by this simple experiment."¹

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

Inconclusive Efforts of the Twentieth Century

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

Unfortunately, however, the problem of the origin of the cell is perhaps the most obscure point in the whole study of the evolution of organisms.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 favourable 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 1930s. Neo-Darwinism added mutations, which are distortions formed in the genes of living beings due

to such external factors as radiation or replication errors, as the "cause of favorable variations" in addition to natural mutation.

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

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

First, genuine mutations are very rare in nature. Secondly, most mutations are harmful since they are random, rather than orderly changes in the structure of genes; any random change in a highly ordered system will be for the worse, not for the better. For example, if an earthquake were to shake a highly ordered structure such as a building, there would be a random change in the framework of the building which, in 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 neanderthalensis* and *Homo sapiens sapiens* (modern man) co-existed in the same region.¹⁶

This situation apparently indicates the invalidity of the claim that they are ancestors of one another. Stephen Jay Gould explained this deadlock of the theory of evolution, although he was himself one of the leading advocates of evolution in the twentieth century:

*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 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 op-

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

The brain is insulated from light. That means that its inside is completely dark, and that no light reaches the place where it is located. Thus, the "center of vision" is never touched by light and may even be the darkest place you have ever known. However, you observe a luminous, bright world in this pitch darkness.

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

For many years, tens of thousands of engineers have tried to make a three-dimensional TV and achieve the vision quality of the eye. Yes, they have made a three-dimensional television system, but it is not possible to watch it without putting on special 3-D glasses;

moreover, it is only an artificial three-dimension. The background is more blurred, the foreground appears like a paper setting. Never has it been possible to produce a sharp and distinct vision like that of the eye. In both the camera and the television, there is a loss of image quality.

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

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

The situation in the eye is also true for the ear. That is, the brain is insulated from sound just as it is from light. It does not let any sound in. Therefore, no matter how noisy is the outside, the inside of the brain is completely silent. Nevertheless, the sharpest sounds are perceived in the brain. In your completely silent brain, you listen to symphonies, and hear all of the noises in a crowded place. However, were the sound level in your brain 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 origi-

nal. 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 un-

derstand 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 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 verses, He reveals 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, who was an atheist defending evolution for some 60 years, but who subsequently realized the truth, reveals the position in which the theory of evolution would find itself in the near future in these terms:

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.

*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)*

NOTES

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