

A person who has been raised in an unbelieving society can be rightly guided to Allah's path. However, this person might initially find it difficult to understand some of the attributes of the society of believers. Therefore, it is quite likely for new believers, who are doing their best to learn all they can about Islam, to ask questions based upon their former non-Islamic ways of thinking and reasoning when confronted with certain matters. The Qur'an answers all these questions, and replaces all the distorted logic and behavior of the society far away from religion with what is right and lawful. Therefore, rather than blaming newcomers to Islam for asking such questions or considering their thoughts unusual, we should do our best to answer them.

The purpose of this book is to provide answers from the Qur'an to the questions of those who have recently become acquainted with the Qur'an and believers and who are still, to a degree, under the influence of the morality practiced by their unbelieving societies. It is hoped that those who ask these questions out of a sincere desire to receive answers will be satisfied with these answers and obey Allah's commands, and that their pursuit of the truth will lead them to find the true answer in the Qur'an, which is the source of guidance for humanity.

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.

*In the Name of God,
Most Gracious,
Most Merciful*



To The Reader

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

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

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

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

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

In these books, you will not find, as in some other books, the personal views of the author, explanations based on dubious sources, styles that are unobservant of the respect and reverence due to sacred subjects, nor hopeless, doubt-creating, and pessimistic accounts that create deviations in the heart.

ANSWERS FROM THE QUR'AN

For Newcomers to Islam

**Every time they come to you with an argument,
We bring you the truth and
the best of explanations.
(Qur'an, 25:33)**



HARUN YAHYA

December, 2003

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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.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

One point should be kept in mind: The main reason for the continuing cruelty, conflict, and other ordeals endured by the vast majority of people is the ideological prevalence of disbelief. This can be ended only with the ideological defeat of disbelief and by conveying the wonders of creation and Qur'anic morality so that people can live by it. Considering the state of the world today, leading into a downward spiral of violence, corruption and conflict, clearly this service must be provided speedily and effectively, or it may be too late.

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

The works of the author include *The New Masonic Order, Judaism and Freemasonry, Global Freemasonry, The Kabbala and Freemasonry, The Knight Templars, Templars and Freemasonry, Israel's Policy of World Domination, Islam Denounces Terrorism, The Black Clan, Terrorism: The Ritual of the Devil, The Disasters Darwinism Brought to Humanity, Communism in Ambush, Fascism: The Bloody Ideology of Darwinism, The 'Secret Hand' in Bosnia, Holocaust Violence, Behind the Scenes of Terrorism, Israel's Kurdish Card, Communist China's Policy of Oppression in East Turkestan, Palestine, Solution: The Values of the Qur'an, The Winter of Islam and The Spring to Come, Islam and Buddhism, The Philosophy of Zionism, Articles 1-2-3, Romanticism: A Weapon of Satan, The Light of the Qur'an Has Destroyed Satanism, Signs From the Chapter of the Cave in the Qur'an to the Last Times, The End Times and the Mahdi, Signs From the Qur'an, Signs of the Last Day, The Last Times and The Beast of the Earth, Truths 1-2, Idealism The Philosophy of Matrix and the True Nature of Matter, The Western World Turns to God, The Evolution Deceit, The Perfect Design in the Universe Is Not by Chance, Why Darwinism Is Incompatible with the Qur'an, Darwinism Refuted, New Research Demolishes Evolution, A Definitive Reply to Evolutionist Propaganda, The Quandary of Evolution I-II (Encyclopedic), The Error of the Evolution of Species, The Blunders of Evolutionists, The Collapse of the Theory of Evolution in 50 Steps, The Errors of The NAS: A Reply to the National Academy of Sciences Booklet Science and Creationism, Confessions of Evolutionists, Perished Nations, For Men of Understanding, Love of Allah, Allah's Art of Affection, The Glad Tidings of the Messiah, The Prophet Musa (as), The Prophet Yusuf (as), The Prophet Muhammad (saas), The Prophet Sulayman (as), The Prophet Ibrahim (as) and the Prophet Lut (as), Maryam (as) The Exemplary Muslim Woman, The Golden Age, Allah Exists, Allah's Artistry in Colour, Magnificence Everywhere, The Importance of the Evidences of Creation, The Truth of the Life of This World, The Nightmare of Disbelief, Knowing the Truth, Eternity Has Already Begun, Timelessness and the Reality of Fate, Matter: Another Name for Illusion, The Little Man in the Tower, Islam and Karma, The Dark Magic of Darwinism, The Religion of Darwinism, The Collapse of the Theory of Evolution in 20*

Questions, Allah is Known Through Reason, The Qur'an Leads the Way to Science, Consciousness in the Cell, Biomimetics Technology Imitates Nature, The Engineering in Nature, A String of Miracles, The Creation of the Universe, Miracles of the Qur'an, The Design in Nature, Self-Sacrifice and Intelligent Behaviour Models in Animals, Deep Thinking, Never Plead Ignorance, The Green Miracle: Photosynthesis, The Miracle in the Cell, The Miracle in the Eye, The Miracle in the Spider, The Miracle in the Mosquito, The Miracle in the Ant, The Miracle of the Immune System, The Miracle of Creation in Plants, The Miracle in the Atom, The Miracle in the Honeybee, The Miracle of Seed, The Miracle of Hormones, The Miracle of the Termite, The Miracle of the Human Body, The Miracle of Human Creation, The Miracle of Protein, The Miracle of Smell and Taste, The Miracle of the Microworld, The Secrets of DNA, The Miracle in the Molecule, The Miracle of Creation in DNA, The Miracle of Talking Birds.

The author's childrens books are: *Wonders of Allah's Creation, The World of Animals, The Glory in the Heavens, Wonderful Creatures, Let's Learn Our Islam, The World of Our Little Friends: The Ants, Honeybees That Build Perfect Combs, Skillful Dam Constructors: Beavers, Tell Me About Creation, The Miracle in Our Body, A Day in the Life of a Muslim, Children This is for You I-II*

The author's other works on Quranic topics include: *The Basic Concepts in the Qur'an, The Moral Values of the Qur'an, Quick Grasp of Faith 1-2-3, Ever Thought About the Truth?, Crude Understanding of Disbelief, Devoted to Allah, Abandoning the Society of Ignorance, Paradise: The Believers' Real Home, Learning from the Qur'an, An Index to the Qur'an, Emigrating for the Cause of Allah, The Character of the Hypocrite in the Qur'an, The Secrets of the Hypocrite, Names of Allah, Communicating the Message and Disputing in the Qur'an, Answers from the Qur'an, Death Resurrection Hell, The Struggle of the Messengers, The Avowed Enemy of Man: Satan, The Greatest Slander: Idolatry, The Religion of the Ignorant, The Arrogance of Satan, Prayer in the Qur'an, The Theory of Evolution, The Importance of Conscience in the Qur'an, The Day of Resurrection, Never Forget, Commonly Disregarded Qur'anic Rulings, Human Characters in the Society of Ignorance, The Importance of Patience in the Qur'an, Perfected Faith, Before You Regret, Our Messengers Say, The Mercy of Believers, The Fear of Allah, Jesus Will Return, Beauties for Life in the Qur'an, A Bouquet of the Beauties of Allah 1-2-3-4, The Iniquity Called "Mockery," The Mystery of the Test, Real Wisdom Described in the Qur'an, The Struggle Against the Religion of Irreligion, The School of Yusuf, The Alliance of the Good, Slanders Spread Against Muslims Throughout History, The Importance of Following the Good Word, Why Do You Deceive Yourself?, Islam: The Religion of Ease, Zeal and Enthusiasm Described in the Qur'an, Seeing Good in All, How do the Unwise Interpret the Qur'an?, Some Secrets of the Qur'an, The Courage of Believers, Hopefulness in the Qur'an, Justice and Tolerance in the Qur'an, Basic Tenets of Islam, Those Who do not Heed the Qur'an, Taking the Qur'an as a Guide, A Lurking Threat: Heedlessness, Sincerity Described in the Qur'an, The Happiness of Believers, Those Who Exhaust Their Pleasures During Their Wordly Lives, A Sly Game of Satan, Passivism in Religion, The Religion of Worshipping People, Agonies of a Fake World, How a Muslim Speaks, The Silent Language of Evil, The Ruses of the Liar in the Qur'an, Loyalty in the Qur'an, The Solution to Secret Torments.*

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FOREWORD

There are considerable differences between believers, who truly believe in Allah and adhere to the Qur'an and the Prophet, peace be upon him (pbuh), as a guide to the righteous path, and unbelievers, who have no faith in Allah. These two groups are people of different worlds, for as the Qur'an informs us, just as they are separated here, they will be separated in the Hereafter: One group will be sent to Paradise while the other group will be sent to Hell.

However, this great gap can be bridged, for some unbelievers may, at some time in their life, comprehend the facts and, by Allah's guidance, seek forgiveness and repent of their errors. Mostly, what makes this possible is the believers' communication of Allah's message, which is an act of worship incumbent upon them. They do their best to inform all others, especially those who are ignorant of religion as well as those who have been deceived by the life of this world, of Allah's existence, unity, and way (the Qur'an and the Sunnah). People who have grown up in a society that is ignorant of religion, and yet possess wisdom and conscience, come to have faith in Allah thanks to believers' efforts and Allah's guidance.

However, this does not mean that people who confirm Allah's existence and the Qur'an as a guide to the true path can overcome their ignorance right away. Until they truly under-

stand the Qur'an and begin to judge everything from the Qur'anic stance, they may well retain some mistaken ideas. Furthermore, their former ignorance may make it hard for them to understand some of the attributes displayed by the believers with whom they have recently become acquainted.

Therefore, it is quite likely for new believers, who are doing their best to learn all they can about Islam, to ask questions based upon their former non-Islamic ways of thinking and reasoning when confronted with certain matters. As the Word of Allah, the Qur'an defeats all such distorted views and behaviors based upon ignorance, provides explicit answers, and brings the truth.

This book seeks to provide the Qur'an's answers to those questions and doubts that may be raised by new believers, and to remind believers of the correct behaviors and attitudes shown by the Qur'an.

INTRODUCTION

Societies all over the world have different social structures and values. As a result of their specific ideologies, traditions, and cultures, dissimilar and even contrasting opinions and behaviors, inevitably arise. Hence, what is accepted as true and right for one person might well be wrong for another.

However, beyond these cultural and ideological differences, there exists one distinction that is far more important and fundamental than the others. As the Qur'an informs us, humanity is divided into two groups: believers and unbelievers. The distinction between these two groups is so broad that, when compared to other differences, the ideological and cultural differences are insignificant.

Believers are fully aware of Allah's existence. They realize that Allah created them and everything surrounding them, that He controls everything in the universe, and that He possesses all wealth. They also are conscious of the facts that this world is transient and that Allah will hold them accountable for their actions. But unbelievers are totally unaware of these facts. In their eyes, all of the affairs in this world are random, and the world is its own master. In this chaotic setting, unbelievers seek to maintain their existence and pursue their interests. Thus, they may readily resort to fraud or dishonesty, for they are heedless of Allah's existence and their accountability to Him.

The outlook, and thereby the characteristics, moral values, and behaviors of these two groups of people, are mutually exclusive. The Qur'an provides detailed examples of these differences.

According to the Qur'an, an unbelieving society is made up of people who are unaware of Allah, who **"made Him into something to cast disdainfully behind their backs"** (Qur'an, 11:92) and **"do not measure Allah with His true measure."** (Qur'an, 6:91) The Qur'an refers to such a society as the "society of ignorance." A society may consider itself contemporary and civilized, but as long as its members fail to give Allah all of the respect due to Him and remain unaware of the Hereafter and the purpose of their existence, its people are, in actuality, ignorant (of religion).

In all societies ignorant of religion, believers are always in minority. As the accounts of the Prophets' lives related in the Qur'an indicate, throughout history, believers have always emerged within such societies.

However, just because believers have their own unique structure does not mean that they never associate with those who do not know Allah. On the contrary, in compliance with Allah's orders, believers maintain their bonds with unbelievers so that they can summon them to live by the values of true religion, for every unbelieving society contains people of intelligence and conscience who have remained ignorant because they have not yet received Allah's message. For this reason, believers communicate the values of the Qur'an to these people. This is also a recommendation of Allah's Messenger (pbuh) who said, "The best of you is he who has learnt the Qur'an and then taught it." (*Bukhari*)

When such unbelievers encounter Muslims for the first time, they are likely to have many questions, because devoted believers, who possess the morality of the Qur'an, are unlike all other

people they have ever known. Being used to living among self-ish, conceited, remorseless, and arrogant people, they may well feel amazed when meeting conscientious, self-sacrificing, modest, reliable, self-possessed, and tolerant people. They may even think that such people may not be what they appear to be.

Nevertheless, believers are sincere and honest people, for they follow Allah's guidance, which is the unique true guidance. How could it not be, since it was determined by humanity's Creator? All of the doubts and questions belonging to those who have only recently been introduced to the Qur'an's morality stem from the ignorant beliefs and concepts upon which they were raised.

This book seeks to clarify the probable questions likely to occur to people who are new to the Qur'an's morality.

Answer to those who ask "If religion is between Allah and His servant, why do we communicate Islam's message to other people?"

In the Qur'an, Allah commands Muslims to enjoin the good and remind people of the truth. Those believers who are aware of an unbeliever's vulnerability or of a new believer who does not practice Islam correctly, feel responsible and therefore warn that person. All conscientious believers are told to give such warnings and admonitions. The Qur'an refers to this as "**enjoining the right and forbidding the wrong.**" Allah's Messenger (pbuh), called attention to the same issue by saying: *"By Him in Whose hands my soul lies, you should enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong, otherwise He (Allah) will descend punishment upon you, and then you will ask Him but your supplications will never be answered."* (Tirmidhi)

Similar to other acts of worship (e.g., prayer, fasting, or giving alms) specified in the Qur'an, enjoining the right and forbidding the wrong is a religious obligation for every Muslim, and fulfilling it is one of the believers' basic attributes, for:

The male and female believers are friends of one another. They command what is right and forbid what is wrong, perform prayer and pay alms, and obey Allah and His Messenger. They are the people on whom Allah will have mercy. Allah is Almighty, All-Wise. (Qur'an, 9:71)

They believe in Allah and the Last Day, enjoin the right and forbid the wrong, and compete in doing good. They are among the righteous. (Qur'an, 3:114)

Those who repent, those who worship, those who praise,

those who fast, those who bow, those who prostrate, those who command the right, those who forbid the wrong, and those who preserve the limits of Allah: give good news to the believers. (Qur'an, 9:112)

In another verse, Allah informs us that attaining salvation is associated with enjoining good and forbidding evil:

Let there be a community among you who call to the good, enjoin the right, and forbid the wrong. They are the ones who have success. (Qur'an, 3:104)

No Muslim is entirely irrepensible, for all Muslims can sin or make mistakes. Making mistakes out of ignorance, forgetfulness, or giving in to one's lower-self is a means to attain perfected faith and spiritual maturity. However, what distinguishes believers from unbelievers in this matter is that once believers recognize their mistakes, they abandon them and adopt what is right. This is revealed in the Qur'an, as follows:

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. (Qur'an, 3:135)

Therefore, it is incumbent upon Muslims to advise other Muslims to abandon their mistakes or wrong actions. When a believer's rationale or attitude reveals any degree of incompatibility with the Qur'an, other believers must remind him or her of the truth immediately. This is the best service that one believer can offer another.

As this explanation suggests, enjoining the right and forbidding the wrong is one of the major acts of worship in Islam. People who are constantly under the supervision and control of other Muslims will purify themselves of all their mistakes, attain

the perfection of faith described in the Qur'an, and thereby draw nearer to Allah. For this reason, Allah praises the compassionate believers who duly fulfill this act of worship in the following terms:

You are the best nation ever to be produced before mankind. You enjoin the right, forbid the wrong, and believe in Allah. (Qur'an, 3:110)

Among those We have created is a community who guides by the Truth and acts justly according to it. (Qur'an, 7:181)

The scope of enjoining good and forbidding evil is quite broad, for communicating Islam's message to people who are far from it, summoning them to live by the values of true religion, and describing the Qur'an's values are essential acts of worship. Inviting people to the true path has been one of the major responsibilities of all Prophets and their followers. As the Qur'an tells us, the Prophets devoted their lives to carrying out this act of worship by inviting people to the truth and never yielding to any difficulty. The Qur'an quotes Prophet Nuh (Noah) (pbuh), as follows:

He said: "My Lord, I have called my people night and day, but my calling has only made them more evasive. Indeed, every time I called them to Your forgiveness, they put their fingers in their ears, wrapped themselves up in their clothes, and were overweeningly arrogant. Then I called them openly. Then I addressed them publicly and addressed them privately." (Qur'an, 71:5-9)

As stated in the Qur'an, there is no compulsion or oppression in religion, for faith is a matter of conscience that is left to people's preference after they have been provided with all of the relevant evidence and explanations. Those who convey this

information have done their duty, and in no way will be held accountable if the people reject faith. Many verses relate this fact, among them the following:

We are only responsible for clear transmission. (Qur'an, 36:17)

So remind them! You are only a reminder. You are not in control of them. (Qur'an, 88:21-22)

Calling people to Islam and conveying the Qur'an's message do not interfere with humanity's bond with Allah. On the contrary, conveying the message is a religious obligation that makes it possible for all people to become informed of Islam's values and observe Allah's orders and prohibitions.

Answer to those who ask "Religion is only a part of life. So, why do people need to live by the Qur'an's values in all aspects of life?"

Religion is not just one part of life; rather, it is a system that encompasses and regulates all aspects of it. Naturally, when we say "religion" here, we are referring to Islam, the true religion. Therefore, such fallacies as: "Religion is only a part of life" and "Devoting oneself entirely to religion is fanaticism" have no place in Islam. Muslims spend 24 hours a day in a manner that will be pleasing to Allah. When rising in the morning, eating, working, going to school, engaging in business or shopping, they abide by the moral values of the Qur'an commanded by Allah and strictly avoid any behavior which will not be pleasing to Him. The moral values of Islam cover not just part of life, but all of it, and even beyond.

Advocating an un-Islamic suggestion means accepting some parts of the Qur'an and disregarding the rest. Rejecting some part of the Qur'an, however, means rejecting the entire book, for:

Do you, then, believe in one part of the Book and reject the other? What repayment will there be for any of you who do that, except disgrace in the world? And on the Day of Resurrection, they will be driven off to the harshest of punishments. Allah is not unaware of what you do.
(Qur'an, 2:85)

The religion described in the Qur'an has no room for any doubts or unfounded concerns, given that it relies on having faith in Allah, which is displayed through each believer's unconditional submission to Him and scrupulous observance of His

commands and prohibitions. This unique attribute is related in many verses, some of which are given below:

The believers are only those who have believed in Allah and His Messenger, and then have had no doubt, and have struggled with their wealth and their selves in the Way of Allah. They are the ones who are true to their word. (Qur'an, 49:15)

Say: "My prayer and my rites, my living and my dying, are for Allah alone, the Lord of all the worlds." (Qur'an, 6:162)

... There are men who proclaim His glory morning and evening, not distracted by trade or commerce from the remembrance of Allah, the performance of prayers, and the payment of alms; fearing a day when all hearts and eyes will be in turmoil. (Qur'an, 24:36-37)

As these verses make clear, Muslims truly devote themselves to Allah by making it their sole goal to earn Allah's good pleasure at every instant of life, by seeking the goodness in everything that happens, and pondering about the Hereafter. The Qur'an refers to these Muslims, as follows:

Those who remember Allah, standing, sitting, and lying on their sides, and reflect on the creation of the heavens and Earth: "Our Lord, You have not created this for nothing. Glory be to You! So safeguard us from the punishment of the Fire." (Qur'an, 3:191)

We purified their sincerity through sincere remembrance of the Abode. (Qur'an, 38:46)

Such a noble morality is surely unimaginable for those who have no faith. According to their materialistic point of view, since death is a disappearance once and for all, one needs to make the most of this life. For those people who nurture such a

distorted outlook, every moment that does not bring them pleasure is a loss.

Here, however, we focus our attention on people who claim to have faith in Allah and yet take every opportunity to convey and enforce upon those around them the fallacy that "religion covers only a minor part of life." Under the guise of being contemporary, modern, or enlightened, which are enchanting yet vague terms, they spread their distorted ideas. Allah warns believers against the lies of such people:

Among the people is someone whose words about the life of the world excite your admiration, and he calls Allah to witness what is in his heart, while he is in fact the most hostile of adversaries. (Qur'an, 2:204)

Those who fall into this category probably get extremely upset about being called an unbeliever or an atheist. Now and then, they express their gratefulness for being a Muslim. However, their corrupted outlook on life, which manifests itself in such ignorant phrases as "Religion is important, but it should be limited to certain aspects of life" or "Do not ponder deeply about religion, or you may lose your mind," they turn their faces and act arrogantly when reminded of the Qur'an's morality. Allah explains the situation of such people, as follows:

But there are some people who trade in distracting tales to guide people away from Allah's Way, knowing nothing about it and to make a mockery of it. Such people will have a humiliating punishment. When Our Signs are recited to such a person, he turns away arrogantly as if he had not heard, as if there was a great weight in his ears. So give him news of a painful punishment. (Qur'an, 31:6-7)

The Qur'an refers to such people as hypocrites, for they are

assumed to have an Islamic identity, although they have nothing to do with Islam. Moreover, as they are aware of this fact, they act in ways that do not violate social norms and customs in order to avoid hostile reactions and to persuade people to follow their examples.

By claiming that they have faith, hypocrites seek to maintain their worldly interests. Furthermore, through distorted explanations, they try to alienate other people from the essence of Islam and the Qur'an. Their ultimate aim is to eliminate the people of sincere faith, who are likely to stir up pangs of conscience in them, for:

Among the people are some who say: "We believe in Allah and the Last Day," when they are not believers. 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. When they are told: "Do not cause corruption in the land," they say: We are only putting things right." No indeed! They are the corrupters, but they are not aware of it. (Qur'an, 2:8-12)

Rather than Allah, these people take their whims and desires as their deities and serve them. The Qur'an relates this situation, as follows:

Have you seen him who has taken his whims and desires to be his deity? Will you then be his guardian? Do you suppose that most of them hear or understand? They are just like cattle. Indeed they are even more astray! (Qur'an, 25:43-44)

Hypocrites will surely suffer the consequences of assuming that they can deceive Allah and believers by professing belief

and then concealing their efforts to harm believers and to divert them from the right path. The Qur'an informs us that their punishment will be even more severe than that of the unbelievers, atheists, and irreligious people, for they say lies in the name of Allah and show hypocrisy, insincerity, and dishonesty:

The hypocrites are in the lowest level of the Fire. You will not find any one to help them. (Qur'an, 4:145)

As for those people who remain under the influence of hypocrites and thereby develop a rationale of "managing both this world and the Hereafter," Allah relates the following verse:

Among the people there is one who worships Allah right on the edge. If good befalls him, he is content with it, but if a trial befalls him, he reverts to his former ways, losing both the world and the Hereafter. That is indeed sheer loss. (Qur'an, 22:11)

Answer to those who ask "Does the Qur'an, which was revealed in seventh-century Arabia, address today's needs?"

This is a rather common question. And, its underlying assumption is that either the Qur'an has to be set aside or that some of its "inconvenient" parts have to be amended.

First, we must ask these people whether they believe that Allah revealed the Qur'an as a book of guidance for humanity (Qur'an, 2:2). It should be noted that the Qur'an reveals a number of mathematical and historical miracles, as well as scientific truths that we have discovered only recently. The fact that these scientific truths which could not be known at the time of the Qur'an's revelation are in complete conformity with it strongly indicates that the Qur'an is the word of Allah. Those who have doubts about the Qur'an, despite these facts, are called out to, as follows:

If you have doubts about what We have sent down to Our servant, produce another sura equal to it, and call your witnesses, besides Allah, if you are telling the truth. If you do not do that—and you will not do it—then fear the Fire whose fuel is people and stones, made ready for the unbelievers. (Qur'an, 2:23-24)

Certainly, those who assert that the Qur'an is written by man are not Muslims, regardless of their professions of faith. What is interesting, however, is that there are also some who claim that "the Qur'an cannot address today's needs" yet assert that they are Muslims. If they persist in their claim, they can be placed in only two groups: those who are ignorant of religion and know

nothing about the Qur'an, or those who hesitate to declare their unbelief openly.

People who are somewhat conversant with the Qur'anic commands can never advocate such a fallacy. However, those who fail to notice that the Qur'an is the just Book revealed by Allah as the only accurate source of guidance applicable to all times and every society often advocate that very fallacy. People who read the Qur'an with an open mind recognize that the kind of people and societies described therein have existed throughout history as well as in our day. The Qur'an gives an account of all of the wrongs, misdeeds, and distortions committed by those societies that are far from religious morality. Their reactions to Allah's message and the detailed character descriptions instruct us today, which are further indications that the Qur'an addresses all times and all people. Those who are committed to reading the Qur'an and to living by it will witness, with an ever-deepening faith, that it permeates their lives, for the Qur'an gives a detailed account of what events they will face and the ideal behaviors expected of them.

The Qur'an also refers to one unreasonable judgment, "society is an ever-evolving system, and religion, with its static texture, falls short of its needs," and declares that this view is based upon a lack of comprehension unique to unbelievers. As the Qur'an informs us, unbelievers who lived thousands of years ago also referred to religion as "**myths and legends of previous peoples**" (Qur'an, 16:24) In the same manner, unbelievers who lived at the time of the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh), asked him to amend certain parts of the Qur'an. As we read:

When Our Clear Signs are recited to them, those who do not expect to meet Us say: "Bring a Qur'an other than this one or change it." Say: "It is not for me to change it of my

own accord. I follow nothing except what is revealed to me. I fear, were I to disobey my Lord, the punishment of a Dreadful Day." (Qur'an, 10:15)

The unbelievers to whom the above verse refers were living at the Prophet's (pbuh) time and actually witnessed the Qur'an's revelation. They objected only because adhering to the Qur'an's morality would, in their opinion, harm their interests.

This situation also is true for today. Those who benefit from the established system of ignorance inevitably oppose the morality and the lifestyle introduced by Islam. You frequently hear these people talk about reforming the Qur'an. In actuality, these are nothing but efforts to make the Qur'an conform to their own ignorant order.

However, these are all futile efforts, for in compliance with **"We have sent down the Reminder, and We will preserve it,"** (Qur'an, 15:9) each letter of the Qur'an is preserved exactly as it was revealed to the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh). The Qur'an is Allah's final message to humanity, and so divine revelation has ceased. Thus, the Qur'an is—and will remain—the only way to salvation for the rest of time.

Answer to those who say "I have a sound heart."

We are informed in the Qur'an that Allah considers people's hearts, as He reveals in **"But only he [will prosper] who brings to Allah a sound heart."** (Qur'an, 26:89)

But the Qur'an's concept of a "sound heart" is not the pureness of heart that some people understand it to be. People who believe themselves to possess moral excellence because "they do not mean any harm to people" or "now and then they help the needy" only deceive themselves, for the Qur'an defines a sound heart as turning to and submitting fully to Allah. Some people are believed to have a sound heart because they feed stray dogs, smile at neighbors, or sometimes help the needy. But being saved from Hell and earning Allah's good pleasure and mercy require far more than being known as a "good person": One must be the type of believer described in the Qur'an. An act or an attitude that is accepted as a good deed by a society ignorant of religion, although it is not based upon the Qur'an's values, may not be worthy in Allah's sight. The main criterion that renders a deed good and worthy in His sight is the degree of its conformity with the Qur'anic criteria. The following verses are quite explanatory:

Do you make the giving of water to the pilgrims and looking after the Masjid al-Haram the same as believing in Allah and the Last Day and struggling in the Way of Allah? They are not equal in the sight of Allah. Allah does not guide wrongdoing people. (Qur'an, 9:19)

It is not devoutness to turn your faces to the East or to the West. Rather, those with true devoutness are those who believe in Allah and the Last Day, the Angels, the Book

and the Prophets, and who, despite their love for it, give away their wealth to their relatives, to orphans and the very poor, to travellers and beggars, to set slaves free, and who establish prayer and pay alms; those who honor their contracts when they make them, and are steadfast in poverty and illness and in battle. Those are the people who are true. They are the people who have *taqwa* [consciousness of Allah]. (Qur'an, 2:177)

People with sound hearts, in the Qur'anic sense, have faith in Allah, observe the limits and prohibitions that He has established, and submit to Him fully. In the Islamic sense, there is no other form of a sound heart, for the Qur'an defines a person with a sound heart as someone who constantly brings Allah to mind and feels at peace with His remembrance. The following verse makes this quite clear:

Those who believe and whose hearts find peace in the remembrance of Allah. Only in the remembrance of Allah can the heart find peace. (Qur'an, 13:28)

In another verse, Allah describes believers as those "**whose hearts quake at the mention of Allah**" (Qur'an, 22:35). In yet another verse, He states: "**Has the time not arrived for the hearts of those who believe to yield to the remembrance of Allah and to the truth He has sent down?**" (Qur'an, 57:16)

This sensitivity of the heart is what enables believers to derive pleasure from the Qur'an's morality and to feel a great pleasure and peace in obeying Allah. Allah describes this sensitivity as "Allah's guidance":

Allah has sent down the Supreme Discourse, a Book consistent in its frequent repetitions. The skins of those who fear their Lord tremble at it, and then their skins and hearts yield softly to the remembrance of Allah. That is

**Allah's guidance, by which He guides whoever He wills...
(Qur'an, 39:23)**

Consequently, a sound heart in the Islamic context means a heart that is purified from all forms of impurity that draw one away from Allah. Such people stay away from worldly greed, selfishness, fears, and insecurity. As a result, they do not become attached to any person or thing other than Allah or feel a type of love for them that is independent of Allah.

In brief, people cannot have a sound heart if they do not obey Allah and do not fulfill the requirements of Islam. Those who claim to have a pure heart and thus consider it unimportant to comply with Islamic principles may assume that they deceive Allah and believers. But in fact, they only deceive themselves, and their self-proclaimed pure heart only indicates the insincerity of a person who avoids fulfilling his or her religious acts of worship and presents a flawed way of life as Islam. Such insincerity is not accepted either in Allah's sight or in the eyes of Muslims.

Answer to those who say "I am still young. I will become religious when I am old."

Indifference and apathy, two features that mark today's lifestyle, influence both the domain of religion and all other aspects of life. According to a prevalent understanding based upon people's observations of daily life, Islam is the religion of elderly people who come together every now and then to pray. Therefore, they consider religion to be a means of relief and tranquility when faced with grief and trouble, or when close to death. According to this distorted outlook, adhering to religion while still young and when one can make the most of life is somewhat like being buried before one dies. Under the influence of such thinking, those who still hold religious beliefs and respect religion should postpone living by it until they are old.

But, as with other issues, there is a problem here, one that arises from the fact that information about Islam is gathered not from the Qur'an but from unreliable resources, ignorant people, random relatives, or media outlets. First of all, the true Islam described in the Qur'an is not a religion only for elderly people; on the contrary, it holds everyone responsible for their deeds from the time they are able to distinguish right from wrong. Furthermore, elderly people may find it more difficult to observe many acts of worship due to physical weakness and sicknesses.

Indeed, youth is one of Allah's greatest blessings. It would be a great display of disrespect to turn away from Him at a time when people are at their mental and physical peaks. If people do not undertake their responsibilities of enjoining good and forbidding evil, communicating Allah's message, and glorifying

Him when they are young, strong, and healthy, how can they accomplish such duties when they are old and weak?

In fact, Allah praises the young people of faith who submit to Him wholeheartedly, as the verses below indicate:

When the youths took refuge in the cave and said: "Our Lord, give us mercy directly from You and open the way for us to right guidance in our situation." So We sealed their ears with sleep in the cave for a number of years. Then We woke them up again so that we might see which of the two groups would better calculate the time they had stayed there. We will relate their story to you with truth. They were young men who believed in their Lord, and We increased them in guidance. We fortified their hearts when they stood up and said: "Our Lord is the Lord of the heavens and Earth, and We will not call upon any deity apart from Him. We would, in that case, have uttered an abomination." (Qur'an, 18:10-14)

During the time of Prophet Musa (Moses) (pbuh), only a small group of young people followed him:

No one believed in Musa, except [some] offspring [i.e., youths] among his people, out of fear that Pharaoh and the elders would persecute them. Pharaoh was high and mighty in the land. He was one of the profligate. (Qur'an, 10:83)

Many of the Prophets undertook this important duty when they were young. Prophet Ibrahim (Abraham) (pbuh), one of these noble men who struggled against his idolatrous people, earned a reputation among them. Indeed, the prominent people of his tribe said: **"We heard a young man mentioning them (our deities). They call him Ibrahim."** (Qur'an, 21:60)

The Qur'an does not specify a certain age for assuming one's

religious responsibilities. However, people are held liable after they gain consciousness and attain mental maturity. As nothing can guarantee another five minutes of life to a person, how can someone decide to be irreligious while young and then fulfill his or her religious obligations when old? Noone has guaranteed that he or she will live so long. As stated in the Qur'an:

Truly Allah has knowledge of the Hour, sends down abundant rain, and knows what is in the womb. And no self knows what it will earn tomorrow, and no self knows in what land it will die. Allah is All-Knowing, All-Aware. (Qur'an, 31:34)

Do the people of the cities feel secure against Our violent force coming down on them in the night, while they are asleep? Or do the people of the cities feel secure against Our violent force coming down on them in the day, while they are playing games? Do they feel secure against Allah's devising? No one feels secure against Allah's devising except those who are lost. (Qur'an, 7:97-99)

The Qur'an describes the grievous end of those who turn a blind ear to Allah's call when they are young, strong, and healthy in the following verses:

On the Day when legs are bared and they are called upon to prostrate, they will not be able to do so. Their eyes will be downcast, darkened by debasement, for they were called upon to prostrate when they were in full possession of their faculties. (Qur'an, 68:42-43)

Some people hold a superstitious belief that they can make the most of life when young and then repent before death. Clearly, this mistaken idea stems from a lack of knowledge and a lifestyle that is far from religion, for it is sheer insincerity toward Allah. Actually, this is the same as saying: "I can commit all

forms of sins, engage in any evil, or transgress Allah's limits and then, toward the end of my life, repent and attain the afterlife." But Allah, Who knows what is concealed in hearts, informs us that such an insincere mentality can never succeed and that He will never accept the repentance of such people, for:

There is no repentance for people who persist in doing evil until death comes to them and who then say: "Now I repent," nor for people who die as unbelievers. We have prepared for them a painful punishment. (Qur'an, 4:18)

Those who are devoid of such wisdom and thus fail to appreciate the extent of Allah's knowledge take it for granted that once they repent, Allah will forgive them and let them enter Paradise. They assume that they can deceive Allah, just as they deceive people in this life. Yet such people only deceive themselves and eventually fall into a desperate situation. At an unexpected time, death will seize them and start them on a journey that has no end. Meanwhile, they still maintain that stealthy mentality. This impudent yet desperate struggle is related in the Qur'an, as follows:

If only you could see the evildoers hanging their heads in shame before their Lord: "Our Lord, we have seen and we have heard, so send us back again and we will act rightly. Truly we now have certainty." [Allah replies:] "Had We so willed, We could have given guidance to everyone, but now My Words are shown to be true: that I shall fill up Hell entirely with jinn and human beings. So taste it. Because you forgot the meeting of this Day, We have forgotten you. Taste the punishment of eternal timelessness for what you did." (Qur'an, 32:12-14)

When death comes to one of them, he says: "My Lord, send me back again so that perhaps I may act rightly re-

garding the things I failed to do!" No indeed! It is just words he utters. Before them there is a barrier until the Day they are raised up. (Qur'an, 23:99-100)

In the Qur'an, Allah provides guidance to believers so that they can avoid such an irreversible and irrecoverable end:

Give from what We have provided for you before death comes to one of you and he says: "My Lord, if only you would give me a little more time so that I can give alms and be one of the righteous!" Allah will not give anyone more time, once their time has come. Allah is aware of what you do. (Qur'an, 63:10-11)

O you who believe, heed Allah the way He should be heeded and do not die except as Muslims. (Qur'an, 3:102)

O you who believe, heed Allah and let each self look to what it has sent forward for tomorrow. Heed Allah. Allah is aware of what you do. (Qur'an, 59:18)

A close look at these verses reveal that the attitude that we have been discussing is not based upon the utter denial of Allah, but upon the failure to appreciate Him with the appreciation due to Him. In other words, those who employ this attitude fail to heed Allah and observe the limits that He has set as one should. People may accept Allah's being; however, being aware of His infinite power, wisdom, knowledge, as well as acknowledging that He controls all affairs at every moment, that no one is guaranteed security against His punishment, is wholly a different thing. Satan has firm faith in Allah's being, yet rebels against Him. The Qur'an refers to those who accept Allah's being and yet fail to appreciate Him with the appreciation due to Him and become rebellious, as follows:

Say: "Who provides for you out of heaven and Earth? Who controls hearing and sight? Who brings forth the

living from the dead and the dead from the living? Who directs the whole affair?" They will say: "Allah." Say: "So will you not then do your duty?" That is Allah, your Lord, the Truth, and what is there after truth except misguidance? So how have you been distracted? In that way the Word of your Lord is realized against those who are deviators, in that they do not believe. (Qur'an, 10:31-33)

If you asked them who created them, they would say: "Allah!" So how have they been perverted? (Qur'an, 43:87)

Answer to those who ask "What do you expect from me after I embrace the Qur'an's morality?"

Although this may appear to be an impromptu question, in reality the members of societies ignorant of religion always direct it toward those believers who communicate the message.

No doubt, the Prophets are the leaders of those who communicate Allah's religion and have such a high degree of moral excellence that they are most sincere toward Allah. Despite their exemplary character, however, the Qur'an relates that their people greeted them with suspicion and sought to relate their sincere efforts to their personal interests.

In response to these accusations, all Prophets have given the following answer:

If you turn your backs, I have not asked you for any wage.

My wage is the responsibility of Allah alone. I am commanded to be one of the Muslims. (Qur'an, 10:72)

I do not ask you for any wage for it. My wage is the responsibility of no one but the Lord of all the worlds. (Qur'an, 26:127)

Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) also faced such situations, for this is the law and test of Allah. When he was accused of abusing the religion to gain personal benefit, material wealth, status, and political power, Allah told him to give the following answer:

Say: "I do not ask you for any wage for it—only that anyone who wants to should make his way towards his Lord." (Qur'an, 25:57)

"I do not ask you for any wage for this—except for you to

love your near of kin." (Qur'an, 42:23)

Yet we need to remember that communicating the message is not the Prophets' duty alone. Summoning people to the right path, enjoining good and forbidding evil, calling people to Islam and the Qur'an are incumbent upon all Muslims, although it is sometimes perceived by the public as the responsibility of only Prophets and Messengers. Communicating Allah's message is an act of worship, such as performing one's prayers or fasting. As such, it is considered one of the believers' basic attributes:

The male and female believers are friends of one another. They command what is right and forbid what is wrong, establish prayer and pay alms, and obey Allah and His Messenger. They are the people on whom Allah will have mercy. Allah is Almighty, All-Wise. (Qur'an, 9:71)

The main intention behind calling people to Islam is to fulfill Allah's command and to save them from a woeful punishment (if Allah permits). Sincere Muslims surely do not need anyone's money, wealth, beauty, or status. Islam is Allah's true religion, and it is Allah Who best protects it. The Qur'an states that Allah will exalt His religion over others in the following verse:

It is He Who sent His Messenger with guidance and the Religion of Truth to exalt it over every other religion, even though the pagans detest it. (Qur'an, 9:33)

It is inconceivable that any believer would ask for a reward or a benefit in return for doing what Allah has told him or her to do. After all, Allah severely condemns those who seek to abuse religion for their own interests:

They have sold Allah's Signs for a paltry price, and they have barred access to His Way. What they have done is truly evil. (Qur'an, 9:9)

As is the case with all other acts of worship, believers convey

His message only to earn Allah's good pleasure. Muslims never condescend to simple material benefits. The Qur'an proclaims this attribute in the following words:

They do not sell Allah's Signs for a paltry price. Such people will have their reward with their Lord. (Qur'an, 3:199)

Allah informs us that adherence to these sincere people is essential:

Follow those who do not ask you for any wage and who have received guidance. (Qur'an, 36:21)

Answer to those who ask "Why do Muslims show great love for and interest in those people with whom they have only recently become acquainted?"

Love is not an emotion that one can attain by one's own willpower or something acquired by force; rather, Allah inspires it in one's heart. A believer does not need to possess sublime attributes or distinctive abilities to feel affection for someone else. A person of faith recognizes the beautiful things created by Allah, down to their most delicate features, and so can see a person's good and beautiful aspects, as well as his or her unrevealed features, more clearly and rapidly and therefore behaves accordingly.

Believers may show affection to someone who has not adopted the Islamic way of living, for some features that comply with the Qur'an's morality in that person (e.g., naturalness, sincerity, cleanliness, intelligence, beauty, intimacy, and sympathy) may arouse a natural affection in their hearts. That person may also have attributes of good character, although he or she is not fully aware of them. All of these characteristics are sufficient to develop a sincere affection for that person, for they are, in actuality, beauties created by Allah. For this reason, such affection is not directed toward that person; rather, it is directed toward Allah.

Allah inspires a profound love of beauty in all believers' hearts. While mentioning Prophet Yahya (John) (pbuh), Allah states: **"We gave him [Yahya] ... tenderness [for all creatures] and purity from Us."** (Qur'an, 19:13) All believers who follow in

the footsteps of the Prophets feel this tenderness for all creatures. In fact, Allah states: **"As for those who believe and do right actions, the All-Merciful will bestow His love upon them."** (Qur'an, 19:96) As an expression of this love, believers always honor other people and avoid offending or dishonoring them in any way. In brief, believers do not behave in an insincere or artificial manner with others. Provided that a person is sincere, his or her pursuit of the right path and curiosity indicate consciousness, which is a positive attribute. Even a person's frank inquiry about Islam, one that is divorced from any prejudice or ill intentions, is sufficient to earn the believers' sympathy.

Meanwhile, believers do not pretend to love somebody if they really feel no love for that person in their hearts. Under the guise of love, members of societies ignorant of religion establish bonds with people based upon mutual interests that are not always of a material nature. Provided that the person in question somehow satisfies that person's ego, this bond may turn into a habitual relation. The complicated emotions arising from such a bond differ greatly from the mutual love and interest among believers. Such relations are based upon mundane interests and therefore are doomed to failure, as the verse below states:

And he [Ibrahim] said: "For you, you have taken (for worship) idols besides Allah, out of mutual love and regard between yourselves in this life. But on the Day of Judgment you shall disown each other and curse each other. Your abode will be the Fire, and you shall have none to help." (Qur'an, 29:25)

The major feelings that impede love are pride and jealousy. These feelings, which are prevalent among societies ignorant of religion, often hinder people from seeing the good attributes in others and from taking pleasure from them. But those who have

faith, and thereby are free of jealousy and pride, find it easy to appreciate and praise people's good characteristics, all of which they attribute to Allah.

For this reason, those who have only recently become acquainted with believers will notice that they have entered an environment that is quite different from the one to which they are accustomed. At first, they may find this new environment rather unusual. While they were accustomed to impolite, indecent, rude, insensitive, derisive, insincere, self-seeking, and hypocritical people, they now find themselves surrounded by people who notice their good characteristics, (of which even they might be unaware), and who judge them according to these favorable traits. It is only natural for such surprises to engender some questions. However, they have to be aware that there is a great gap between the members of societies ignorant of religion and believers, and that they have to seek answers to these questions while bearing this fact in mind.

Answer to those who ask "Might some of the negative news spread about believers be true?"

In compliance with the verse "**Am I to desire someone other than Allah as a judge, when it is He Who has sent down the Book to you clarifying everything?**" (Qur'an, 6:114) believers resort to Allah's judgment for every issue. This also holds true for how they judge the news they gather from unbelievers. The Qur'an sets the related criteria, as follows:

O you who believe, if a deviator brings you a report, scrutinize it carefully in case you attack people in ignorance and so come to greatly regret what you have done. (Qur'an, 49:6)

In the Qur'an, Allah states that only believers are reliable and trustworthy people, and that everybody else is a "deviator," someone who disregards Allah's commands, has gone astray in belief, and has rebelled against Allah. As we learn from the above verse, Allah commands believers to scrutinize the news brought by such people. This being the case, believers must not believe immediately in such news and must be cautious, especially if such news seems to be built upon lies or slander.

A more important aspect of this issue is that throughout history, all believers have been subjected to slanderous accusations. The Qur'an relates, when discussing the lives of the Prophets, how many members of the society's elite class resorted to lowly forms of slander against them. All communities of believers have experienced such reactions from unbelievers. In this sense, we can say that these reactions are indicative of the person involved being a true believer.

There is another interesting feature of such assaults against believers. The leading unbelievers never say openly: "We do not believe in Allah and are against believers who summon to Allah's way." On the contrary, they proclaim their belief in Allah and consider themselves to be on the right path. Meanwhile, they claim that believers lie in Allah's name and abuse His religion to gain mundane interests. The Qur'an provides a detailed account of such slanders, as follows: Prophet Musa (pbuh) and his brother Prophet Harun (Aaron) (pbuh) were said to "**gain greatness in the land;**" (Qur'an, 10:78) Prophet Nuh (pbuh) was accused of "**wanting to gain ascendancy,**" (Qur'an, 23:24) and was said to be "**possessed;**" (Qur'an, 23:25) Prophet Salih (pbuh) sent to the Thamud was accused of being a "**liar and an insolent person;**" (Qur'an, 54:25) and Prophet Musa (pbuh) and Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) were called "**insane**" (Qur'an, 26:27 and Qur'an, 15:6). Many Prophets were called "**sorcerers,**" (Qur'an, 10:2 and Qur'an, 38:4) and Pharaoh called Prophet Musa (pbuh) "**a magician or a madman.**" (Qur'an, 51:38-39) Being a "**liar**" is another slander made up against believers throughout history. (Qur'an, 7:66 and Qur'an, 11:27)

History shows that such slander has always been hurled against believers in an attempt to blacken their names and to cause people to doubt their words. For this reason, upon hearing such slander, lies, or negative news about those who have faith in Allah, people who are unaware of the truth at least have to think positively.

By providing an event as an example, Allah warns Muslims not to be deceived when faced with such situations. The Qur'an clarifies the correct attitude that believers should assume when confronted with a slander made up against one of the Prophet's (pbuh) wives in the following verse:

Why, when you heard it, did you not, as believing men and women, instinctively think good thoughts and say: "This is obviously a lie?" (Qur'an, 24:12)

Answer to those who ask "If the Qur'an's morality promises such a good and perfect structure, then why does it have so many enemies?"

The Qur'an brings the easiest and most comfortable lifestyle, one that encompasses the most perfect moral and social structure. But the essence of religious morality relies on a heartfelt submission to Allah, scrupulous obedience to His commands, and awareness that He holds everything in His will and control. For this reason, no matter how perfect a lifestyle abounding with beauties, ease, and blessings Islam presents to humanity, those suffering from such personality disorders as arrogance, jealousy, and pride do not come close to having faith in Allah and being with believers, although their conscience tells them to do so. This situation is related in the Qur'an, as follows:

... and they repudiated them [Allah's Signs] wrongly and haughtily, in spite of their own certainty about them. See the final fate of the corrupters. (Qur'an, 27:14)

When he is told to heed Allah, he is seized by pride that drives him to wrongdoing. Hell will be enough for him! What an evil resting-place! (Qur'an, 2:206)

The Qur'an defines these people with such a distorted psychology as "idolaters" and reveals that they feel rage and hatred when summoned to Allah and His religion:

When they are told to prostrate to the All-Merciful, they ask: "And what is the All-Merciful? Are we to prostrate to something you command us to?" And it merely makes them run away all the more. (Qur'an, 25:60)

The unbelievers' rage and hatred for Allah's verses, and

thereby for Islam and all believers, is revealed in many other verses as well, such as the following:

Allah sent back those who were unbelievers in their rage without their achieving any good at all. Allah saved the believers from having to fight. Allah is Most Strong, Almighty. (Qur'an, 33:25)

When Allah is mentioned on His own, the hearts of those who do not believe in the Hereafter shrink back shuddering. But when others apart from Him are mentioned, they jump for joy. (Qur'an, 39:45)

This rage and hatred stemming from the unbelievers' arrogance and pride appears in the form of a relentless hostility toward believers. These people, who feel restless even in the presence of a single true believer, strive to divert believers from the right path and to impose upon them their own ignorant system. They hope for the worst for believers and wish that all adversities will befall them. The Qur'an tells about such efforts, as follows:

O you who believe, do not take any outside yourselves as intimates. They will do anything to harm you. They love what causes you distress. Hatred has appeared out of their mouths, but what their breasts hide is far worse. We have made the Signs clear to you, if you use your intellect. (Qur'an, 3:118)

If something good happens to you, it galls them. If something bad strikes you, they rejoice at it. But if you are steadfast and do your duty, their scheming will not harm you in any way. Allah encompasses what they do. (Qur'an, 3:120)

If they come upon you, they will be your enemies and stretch out their hands and tongues against you with evil

intent. They would dearly love you to become unbelievers. (Qur'an, 60:2)

It is obvious that some interest groups would feel uneasy at the establishment of a system based upon the Qur'an's morality. Those who make money on theft, usury, poverty, and by exploiting innocent people; those who hold certain positions and ranks although they lack the necessary expertise, knowledge, and experience essential for those positions and abuse them for their personal benefit; those who have adopted indecency and immorality as a lifestyle or profession; or those who serve some distorted ideologies are naturally unwilling to embrace the lifestyle brought by Islam—one that is based upon social justice, honesty, and equality. For this reason, they may resort to anything to hinder and even annihilate the spread of Islam's moral system.

Apart from this, some of the hypocrites we mentioned earlier join the believers' community in order to provoke unbelievers against believers, to collect information about them, and to instigate restlessness. They make a great effort to stir up sedition and distort religious commands, as the following verses state:

Among the people are some who say: "We believe in Allah and the Last Day," when they are not believers. They think that 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. When they are told: "Do not cause corruption in the land," they say: "We are only putting things right." No indeed! They are the corrupters, but they are not aware of it. (Qur'an, 2:8-12)

Hypocrites continue their stealthy struggle against believers by cooperating with unbelievers. The Qur'an provides a detailed account of their personality and character traits, as well as the way they look, speak, and act. Allah sent down Surat al-Munafiqun (Chapter of the Hypocrites), which is addressed especially to hypocrites. In this chapter, He states that they are truly the enemies of believers:

They are the enemies, so beware of them. The curse of Allah be upon them! How they are deluded [away from the Truth]! (Qur'an, 63:4)

Wrapped up in jealousy, these hypocrites follow the ever-growing blessings, power, authority, and beauty granted to believers. These people, consumed with their own inferiority complexes, are jealous of the respect shown to believers and thus feel rage and hatred against them. However, they also fear believers. The Qur'an reveals some of the hypocrites' character traits, as follows:

When they meet you, they say: "We believe." But when they leave, they bite their fingers out of rage against you. Say: "Die in your rage." Allah knows what your hearts contain. (Qur'an, 3:119)

They swear by Allah that they are of your number, but they are not of your number. Rather, they are people who are scared. (Qur'an, 9:56)

The Qur'an informs us that people who are ignorant of religion have shown these reactions and attacked the Prophets and believers in all ages. It is the unbelieving society's leaders who first recognize true believers. For example, Pharaoh first recognized Prophet Musa (pbuh) and Nimrod first recognized Prophet Ibrahim (pbuh). All Prophets spent their lives struggling against unbelief and its leaders, for this immutable law of

Allah applies to all ages:

In this way, We have assigned to every Prophet an enemy from among the evildoers. But your Lord is a sufficient guide and helper. (Qur'an, 25:31)

Consequently, according to the Qur'an, the existence of such enemies is one of the most substantial pieces of evidence of the believers' righteousness and sincerity.

Meanwhile, one point deserves special mention: No one can attempt such an act without Allah's will. In all ages, Allah creates various settings of struggle between believers and unbelievers in order to test the believers' patience and trust in Him, to raise them in rank, to show His help to them and the superiority of faith over unbelief, to give believers their Reminder, to disgrace unbelievers, and to reveal the hypocrites' true faces and the sickness in their hearts. Allah promises that whatever happens, His help is always with true believers and that they will always prevail, provided that they adopt and display the attributes of moral perfection described in the Qur'an. Allah informs believers that they will absolutely be the "uppermost," for:

Do not give up and do not be downhearted. You shall be uppermost if you are believers. (Qur'an, 3:139)

Allah will not give the disbelievers any way against the believers. (Qur'an, 4:141)

As for those who make Allah their friend, and His Messenger and those who believe: it is the party of Allah who is victorious! (Qur'an, 5:56)

Our Word was given before to Our servants, the Messengers, that they would certainly be helped. It is Our army that will be victorious. (Qur'an, 37:171-173)

Allah has written: "I will be victorious, I and My Messengers." Allah is Most Strong, Almighty. (Qur'an, 58:21)

Answer to those who ask "Is everyone other than you wrong?"

Those who raise such a question most probably think there are various ideologies, views, and lifestyles, and so assumes that the one embraced by believers is only one among countless others. This being the case, they have a hard time understanding why they have to set aside all other ideologies and systems and adhere to the believers' way.

This standpoint, however, rests upon a great mistake.

First, we need to say that all systems, ideologies, social orders, philosophies, or lifestyles, except for the one to which all believers adhere, have been developed by human beings or communities. Their followers accept that the founders of these ideologies and systems were able to guide them to the truth. For example, a Marxist believes that Karl Marx was a genius who resolved all of this world's mysteries, or at least paved the way for this, and that adherence to his teachings will lead them to the truth. Those who think that following the centuries-old traditions of their society is the best way to find the truth take for granted that their society, or in more accurate words their ancestors, had the wisdom, knowledge, and reasoning to guide them to the truth. No matter which system and ideology you adopt, you see that a being—in some cases this being is the person himself or herself—is adopted as a guide.

However, none of these so-called guides are able to do what their adherents claim, for all of their systems are built upon human wisdom, which is extremely inadequate, vulnerable, weak, and limited. No person can acquire all of the knowledge

found in the universe, not even one billionth of it. Nor can anyone resolve the many questions associated with this world. For instance, they cannot explain what happens after death, a question that has occupied people's minds since the beginning of time, unless they read the truth that Allah conveys in the Qur'an.

The power of human wisdom does not increase when people gather together in a society. When faced with the infinite information inherent in the universe, humanity's collective mental power is insignificant.

This being the case, assuming that the human mind can find the truth—unless otherwise willed by Allah—is a totally unfounded assumption, no more than a conjecture. Indeed, Allah stresses this fact many times in the Qur'an and relates that all disbelievers follow conjecture, for:

If you obeyed most of those on Earth, they would guide you away from Allah's Way. They follow nothing but conjecture. They are only guessing. (Qur'an, 6:116)

For instance, all materialists who assert that the only life is the life of this world and that death is a coincidental result of relations between materials, rather than a special creation of Allah, only follow conjecture. (None of those who claim that death is an end have seen its aftermath.) The Qur'an emphasizes the situation of such people, as follows:

They say: "There is nothing but our existence in the world. We die and we live, and nothing destroys us except for time." They have no knowledge of that. They are only conjecturing. (Qur'an, 45:24)

Other members of societies that are far from religion develop a blind attachment to their ancestors' traditions and adopt them as guides. Hearsay, customs, habits that find social acceptance, some rules to which people adhere blindly, and false teachings

make up such traditions. In this system, people do not need to employ or exercise their reason and wisdom, for following the herd is the predominant psychology, as well as the lifestyle and understanding to which the majority of its members adhere. In the Qur'an, Allah calls attention to those who adhere blindly to their ancestors despite His definitive judgments, and states that they are deaf, dumb, and blind and unable to exercise their intelligence:

When they are told: "Follow what Allah has sent down to you," they say: "We are following what we found our fathers doing." What, even though their fathers did not understand a thing and were not guided! The likeness of those who are unbelievers is that of someone who yells out to something which cannot hear—it is nothing but a cry and a call. Deaf–dumb–blind. They do not use their intellect. (Qur'an, 2:170-171)

Both adhering to ideologues and following in their ancestors' footsteps are ways of following conjecture. The Qur'an informs us that those who are attached to their ancestors' way, even when they know that their ancestors had no divinely revealed book, are on a false way:

Or did We give them a Book before which they are holding to? No, in fact they say: "We found our fathers following a religion, and we are simply guided in their footsteps." Similarly, We never sent any warner before you to any city without the affluent among them saying: "We found our fathers following a religion, and we are simply following in their footsteps." Say: "What if I have come with better guidance than what you found your fathers following?" They say" "We reject what you have been sent with." (Qur'an, 43:21-24)

Consequently, intelligent people do not place their trust in Karl Marx or other ideologues, or in their ancestors, or in the majority of people. The sole guide in whom they place their trust is the All-Mighty Allah, Who possesses infinite wisdom and all the knowledge in the universe. Indeed, the Qur'an frequently refers to Allah as *Al-Rabb*, an attribute of His which means the One and only Lord for all the universe, its Creator, Owner, Organizer, Provider, Master, Planner, Sustainer, Cherisher, and Giver of Security.

Taking beings or things other than Allah as guides means taking them as lords or making them into idols. This attitude, which is defined as ascribing partners to Allah, is extremely dangerous, for the Qur'an reveals that such people will find themselves in the following situation:

O humanity, an example has been given, so listen to it carefully. Those whom you call upon besides Allah are not able to create even a single fly, even if they were to join together to do it. And if a fly steals something from them, they cannot get it back. How feeble are both the seeker and the sought! (Qur'an, 22:73)

As the verse maintains, both the person or thing from whom help is sought and the person who adheres to such false deities as sources of guidance are all weak and helpless. Another verse relates this fact, as follows:

They have taken deities besides Allah so that perhaps they may be helped. They cannot help them, even though they are an army mobilized in their support. (Qur'an, 36:74-75)

Such a rationale, that is, a system based on conjecture, is entirely distorted, vain, and false. Only Allah deserves obedience and recognition as one's Lord, for:

Say: "Can any of your partner-deities guide to the truth?"

Say: "Allah guides to the truth. Who has more right to be followed—He Who guides to the truth, or he who cannot guide unless he is guided? What is the matter with you? How do you reach your judgment?" (Qur'an, 10:35)

Following these explanations, we can now answer the question as to whether only believers are right. Everyone who is unaware of Allah's existence, or who fails to appreciate His infinite might and submit Him even if aware of His existence, is on the wrong path. This being the case, only those who fear Allah and seek His approval are on the right path.

Another evidence of this truth is that only believers adhere to a guide that is the sublime Word of Allah: the Qur'an—the sole book of guidance for all of humanity, a fact that Allah reveals in the following and many other verses:

This Qur'an guides to the most upright Way and gives good news to the believers who do right actions that they will have a large reward. (Qur'an, 17:9)

The month of Ramadan is the one in which the Qur'an was sent down as guidance for mankind, with Clear Signs containing guidance and discrimination... (Qur'an, 2:185)

This does not mean that believers are a faultless people. On the contrary, everyone makes mistakes. Yet, the source that guides them is immune to all errors, faults, defects, or flaws. Believers make mistakes when they fail to comply with the Qur'an. But once they are made aware of their mistakes, they abandon them immediately.

Answer to those who ask "Do believers always have to be together, or can they live by the religion on their own?"

Once people start to live by Islam, they must start to comply with the Qur'an's morality. Consequently, only the Qur'an can answer this question. The Qur'an frequently reminds us that believers always have to be together in order to support and help one another:

Hold fast to the rope of Allah all together, and do not separate. Remember Allah's blessing to you when you were enemies, and He joined your hearts together, so that you became brothers by His blessing. You were on the very brink of a pit of the Fire, and He rescued you from it. In this way Allah makes His Signs clear to you, so that hopefully you will be guided. (Qur'an, 3:103)

Allah loves those who fight in His Way in ranks like well-built walls. (Qur'an, 61:4)

Restrain yourself patiently with those who call upon their Lord morning and evening, desiring His face. Do not turn your eyes from them, desiring the attractions of this world. (Qur'an, 18:28)

Allah's Messenger (pbuh) mentions the same subject by saying that believers are each other's guardians: "Each of you is a guardian, and each of you will be asked about your guardianship." (*Bukhari, Muslim*)

Clearly, the expression "do not turn your eyes from them" stresses that, apart from being together, believers have to be very attentive to one another and be available to serve other believers

so that an Islamic society can be maintained. Another verse describes our Prophet's (pbuh) concern for believers, which is truly exemplary, in the following words:

A Messenger has come to you from among yourselves. Your suffering is distressing to him. He is deeply concerned for you, and is gentle and merciful to the believers. (Qur'an, 9:128)

As these verses make clear, "being alone" and "living by the religion" are incompatible concepts, and Islam does not support such a model of living. Someone who claims to be able to live by the religion on his or her own has a flawed understanding of Islam. As we said earlier, believers are responsible for enjoining good and forbidding evil and for summoning people to the truth. Believers must be together in order to obey this and other commands.

This aside, Islam is founded on the basis of love, for Allah inspires love in believers' hearts for other believers. A believer's love is first for Allah and then for the people who abide by the Qur'an's values. It is unthinkable that people who share such a love based upon Allah's consent, who strive to display the same moral perfection and intend to live together for all eternity, can remain apart and involve themselves in different affairs. Such a mindset is a clear manifestation of the absence of genuine love and faith. The fact is, however, as the verse maintains, that **"the believers are brothers..."** (Qur'an, 49:10), and brothers do not remain apart.

Answer to those who ask "Is there any class discrimination in Islam? Are people defined according to their wealth, status, and beauty? Do believers convey the message only to a particular section of society?"

As the Qur'an tells us, Islam does not assess people's worth according to their race, descent, family, social status, wealth, gender, appearance, beauty, or physical traits. In Allah's sight, all people are born equal and gain consciousness, after which they are held accountable for their acts and attitudes, and assessed accordingly. The Islamic concept of superiority rests entirely upon that person's awareness of Allah. Allah relates this fact in the following verse:

O humanity, We created you from a male and female, and made you into peoples and tribes so that you might come to know each other. The noblest among you in Allah's sight is that one of you who best performs his duty towards Allah. Allah is All-Knowing, All-Aware. (Qur'an, 49:13)

Consequently, while assessing a person's value, believers have no criterion other than the person's heedfulness of Allah. Indeed, the Prophet (pbuh) also said: "The most beloved to me among you is the one who has the best character and manners" (*Sahih Bukhari*). However, assessing people according to this criterion and employing the most appropriate and useful methods to spread of Islam's morality are two different concepts.

That is because believers convey Allah's message to an unbelieving society. The people of such a society do not assess people

according to their consciousness of Allah. On the contrary, they base their concept of superiority on such flawed measures as material wealth, race, or lineage. In all societies that are far from religion, the people who hold power and lead people—the Qur'an calls these people "the chiefs of the nation"—possess most of these attributes. In short, they are the wealthiest, the most famous and popular people who are often followed blindly by the rest of society. In their eyes, what they say is right and what they condemn is bad.

The Qur'an very concisely defines this unusual relation between leaders and their subordinates. Pharaoh and his people is a clear example: Due to his enormous material and military power, he became his people's leader and imposed his own outlook upon them. As the Qur'an informs us, he addressed his people with the following words:

Pharaoh said: "I only show you what I see myself, and I only guide you to the path of rectitude." (Qur'an, 40:29)

Pharaoh presented himself as the only guide, and his people, who were utterly ignorant of true religion, followed him. The Qur'anic account of this event is as follows:

In that way, he swayed his people and they succumbed to him. They were a people of deviators. (Qur'an, 43:54)

The people's submission to Pharaoh is a feature common to all societies that are far from religion. The prominent people lead the submitters, who make up the majority of the society. However, as the verse "**They followed Pharaoh's command, but Pharaoh's command was not rightly guided**" (Qur'an, 11:97) maintains, obedience to misguided leaders never leads people to the truth, for the majority of those who follow such prominent people often lack the faculty to see and obey the truth. As long as the prominent people present an appealing life that is far from religion, they can

never see the mistaken nature of their ignorant way of living. Or, it would be more accurate to say that they pretend not to see the truth.

For this reason, those who call a society that does not live by the religion to faith must convey the message primarily to its leading elite, for their seeing the truth and embracing the Qur'an's morality sets an example for the other sections of society and leads them to the true religion. Indeed, Allah commands all of His Messengers to warn this section of the society first.

The previous verse stated that Pharaoh's people submitted to him, and so Prophet Musa (pbuh) was sent to Pharaoh's ruling circle:

We sent Musa with Our Signs to Pharaoh and his nobles. He [Pharaoh] said: "I am the Messenger of the Lord of the worlds." (Qur'an, 43:46)

The Qur'an reveals that all of the Prophets followed the same path. Prophet Nuh (pbuh) (Qur'an, 23:23-24), Prophet Hud (pbuh) (Qur'an, 7:65-66), and Prophet Shu'ayb (pbuh) (Qur'an, 7:85-88) were always in contact with the leaders of their people.

The concept of "prominent people" is surely too broad. In a society that does not live by the religion, everyone or every stratum, ranging from the elite to artists, intellectuals, businessmen, scientists, or popular students, that has any degree of influence over the people is considered one of the prominent people. What sets them apart from the others is that they have some control over masses who hold them in esteem and take them as role models. If one or many of them embrace Islam, their act may pave the way for the masses.

But this does not mean that this mission should be limited to a certain social stratum. The reason why believers focus their attention mainly on the prominent people is that the majority of people

are unable to think freely, that is, without being led by the elites of their society.

However, this section of society also contains people of conscience and wisdom who incline toward faith. Believers do not neglect them; rather, they convey the message to them and take them as brothers and sisters. It goes without saying that, according to the Qur'an, believers have to communicate Allah's religion to anyone who asks for it.

Another important point is that being honored by Islam and adhering to the Qur'an enhances one's physical and spiritual quality. Concepts of attractiveness or unattractiveness cannot be limited to having certain bodily features, for it is known that some people who embrace faith become more beautiful, or the face of someone involved in wicked deeds is plunged into abasement. This is quite a metaphysical situation, for the spiritual beauty engendered by faith manifests itself in one's physical beauty. For instance, with regard to hypocrites, He says that **"you would know them by their mark."** (Qur'an, 47:30) In another verse, believers are also told to be recognized by their **"mark."** (Qur'an, 48:29) Indeed, a believer's face contains an expression of modesty, cleanliness, reliability, and honor, which Allah refers to as a "mark."

From the Qur'an, we learn that Prophet Yusuf (Joseph) (pbuh), who is praised for his sincerity and loyalty to Allah, was an extremely beautiful person:

When they saw him, they were amazed by him and cut their hands. They said: "Allah preserve us! This is no man. What can this be but a noble angel here!" (Qur'an, 12:31)

These verses reveal that Allah makes believers physically attractive, thanks to the light that He grants to them. As is in the example of Prophet Yusuf (pbuh), believers know that this is a blessing bestowed upon them by Allah.

Answer to those who ask "Is possessing power, wealth, and grandeur incompatible with the essence of Islam?"

Some circles identify being a Muslim with poverty, underdevelopment, rustic manners, passivity or the state of giving up all mundane interests. Many people believe that a contrary model is somehow against religion. However, such convictions stem from a totally incorrect understanding of the Qur'an. People develop such false ideas, which are then reinforced by hearsay and various myths, because they neither read nor ponder the Qur'an, although it is the main source of accurate knowledge about Islam.

As Allah reveals in **"The Messenger says: "My Lord, my people treat this Qur'an as something to be ignored,"** (Qur'an, 25:30) this flawed way of practicing the religion stems from people's failure to refer to the Qur'an. When people actually refer to the Qur'an, it immediately becomes clear that Islam does not suggest such a model. We can see this in the splendid wealth and possessions that Allah granted to many of the Prophets. Over the centuries, Prophet Sulayman's (Solomon) (pbuh) unprecedentedly glorious wealth has become legendary. Sulayman (pbuh), a Prophet praised by the Qur'an for his exemplary conduct, surely pursued nothing but earning Allah's good pleasure and had no guide other than His religion. Indeed, before being endowed with great wealth, he prayed the following prayer:

He said: "My Lord, forgive me and give me a kingdom the like of which will never be granted to anyone after me. Truly, You are the Ever-Giving." (Qur'an, 38:35)

If praying for wealth was a practice to be condemned, then a Prophet praised by Allah in the Qur'an would not have done so. Indeed, the Qur'an states that Allah answered his prayer. As the verse below indicates, Allah always mentions Prophet Sulayman (pbuh) with praise:

And to Dawud We gave Sulayman. What an excellent servant! He truly turned to his Lord. (Qur'an, 38:30)

Prophet Sulayman (pbuh) is not the sole example, for Allah also granted authority and power to his father, Prophet Dawud (David) (pbuh), as well as great wealth to Prophet Ibrahim (pbuh) and his family:

Or do they in fact envy other people for the bounty Allah that has granted them? We gave the family of Ibrahim the Book and Wisdom, and We gave them an immense kingdom. (Qur'an, 4:54)

As we see, Allah condemns any feelings of jealousy over the wealth He grants to Muslims as a blessing. The Qur'an reveals that the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) was also enriched by Allah, for:

Did He not find you impoverished and enrich you? (Qur'an, 93:8)

At this point, the difference between wealth as perceived by believers and unbelievers arises: believers are conscious that only Allah, the real owner of property, gives wealth, while unbelievers perceive wealth as claiming ownership over property, which is no less than rebellion against Allah, Who owns everything in the universe. This divergence also emerges when it comes to using property: believers spend their wealth for good causes, whereas unbelieving property owners commonly seek to "cause corruption in the land." (Qur'an, 28:77)

Wealth, glory, and authority are blessings that Allah bestows

upon His servants. The essential feature here is to use this wealth in the proper way in order to give due thanks to Allah for them, to constantly remember His favors, and thus to draw nearer to Him and seek ways to earn His good pleasure. Indeed, Prophet Sulayman's (pbuh) words below makes his intention clear:

And he said: "Truly do I love the love of good, with a view to the glory of my Lord". (Qur'an, 38:32)

However, we need to remember that this life is a test sent to us by Allah. The level of people's commitment and patience shows when they are confronted with hardships and difficulties, for their reaction reveals the profoundness of their faith. Thus, Allah may test people with such difficulties as death, fear, hunger, poverty, and so on both to reveal their steadfastness and other superior qualities and to reward them. However, while showing patience, Muslims must pray constantly to Allah for relief, increase, and an expansion of blessings. Furthermore, they have to ask for these blessings not only for themselves but for all believers, and ask for vast resources so as to glorify Allah's name. This is the attitude that most complies with the Qur'anic stance.

However, it goes without saying that the criteria used to judge people in Islam is not wealth, for poverty or wealth does not determine a person's worth in Allah's sight. What matters is that believers spend their means, whether abundant or scarce, in compliance with Allah's good pleasure and ask for wealth only to spend for His cause. Believers do not hoard possessions, for they avoid the fate awaiting those who do, which the Qur'an describes in the following verse:

As for those who hoard up gold and silver and do not spend it in the Way of Allah, give them the news of a painful punishment. (Qur'an, 9:34)

Believers enjoy spending in Allah's cause just as they enjoy

benefiting from His blessings. From this stance, praying for wealth, possessions, and fortune is an act of worship that brings rewards to sincere believers. Allah promises to increase the believers' property provided that they thank Him for them and spend it in His cause.

True believers who comply with the Qur'an are the servants of Allah on Earth. They represent Allah. While stating that the real owners of Earth will be believers, Allah mentions the attributes of those who will attain this blessing, as follows:

Allah has promised those of you who believe and do right actions that He will make them successors in the land, as He made those before them successors, and will firmly establish for them their religion, with which He is pleased, and give them, in place of their fear, security. "They worship Me, not associating anything with Me." Any who are unbelievers after that, such people are deviators. (Qur'an, 24:55)

Answer to those who ask "Do new Muslims have to abandon their former pleasures and activities?"

When we talk about a religious way of life, what generally comes to mind first is a lifestyle divorced from all mundane pursuits. Contrary to this flawed thinking, however, Allah wants His servants to lead the most beautiful life. In the Qur'an, Allah gives the news that believers will lead a beautiful life, for:

Anyone who acts rightly, male or female, being a believer, We will give them a good life and will recompense them according to the best of what they did. (Qur'an, 16:97)

Despite the good news declared in this verse, people do not receive many of Allah's blessings due to an understanding of religion that is based on hearsay. However, the Qur'an encourages believers to use lawful and clean things and warns those who bring prohibitive systems:

O you who believe. Do not make unlawful the good things that Allah has made lawful for you, and do not overstep the limits. Allah does not love people who overstep the limits. (Qur'an, 5:87)

As long as people observe the limits set by Allah, the Qur'an does not prohibit them from socializing and enjoying themselves. The things considered to be unlawful by the Qur'an are obvious, as are the Prophet's (pbuh) exemplary life and advice. Apart from these, the Qur'an severely condemns the laying down of new judgments and attempting to do this in the name of religion, as the following verses indicate:

Do not say about what your lying tongues describe: "This

is lawful and this is unlawful," inventing lies against Allah. Those who invent lies against Allah are not successful. (Qur'an, 16:116)

Wear fine clothing in every mosque and eat and drink, but do not be profligate. He does not love the profligate. Say: "Who has forbidden the fine clothing that Allah has produced for His servants and the good kinds of provision?" Say: "On the Day of Resurrection, such things will be exclusively for those who had faith during their life in the world." In this way, We make the Signs clear for people who know. (Qur'an, 7:31-32)

As we mentioned earlier, the Qur'an relates that the Prophets asked for Allah's blessings. This aside, those who lack true faith in Allah also benefit from them. This is the point where the differences between believers and unbelievers emerge. Unbelievers feel a strong attachment to favors bestowed upon them (e.g., money or property), forget to remember Allah, and feel ungrateful for His blessings. On the other hand, believers, who are aware that they are from Allah, use these blessings for Allah's cause in the best way and draw nearer to Him. The Qur'an sets the following criterion for this issue:

Seek the abode of the Hereafter with what Allah has given you, without forgetting your portion of the world. And do good, as Allah has been good to you. And do not seek to cause corruption in the land, for Allah does not love corrupters. (Qur'an, 28:77)

However, apart from all of these, remember that as people adopt the Qur'an's values and make them an integral part of their lives and assume more of the believers' attributes, they will acknowledge the existence of very different tastes and pleasures. For members of a society that does not live by the religion, for in-

stance, the greatest pleasure in life is to enjoy themselves. Believers however, have more noble and permanent pleasures, such as striving to earn Allah's good pleasure, conveying Allah's message to people, communicating the beauties of the Qur'an's morality to people, and carrying out an intellectual struggle against unbelievers.

As people draw nearer to the model of a believer described in the Qur'an, they see that the real pleasures attained through sincere faith are incomparably superior to those enjoyed by unbelievers.

Answer to those who ask "Once people embrace faith, can they still befriend the people with whom they used to associate?"

A person cannot hold two opposing views simultaneously. Given that faith and unbelief are two distinct concepts, it is unlikely that a person can share the views, thoughts, and feelings of both believers and unbelievers.

The basic element underlying relations between people, such as friendship and fellowship, is love. The believers' most important attribute is their strong love for Allah, which the Qur'an relates in the following verse:

Some people set up equals to Allah, loving them as they should love Allah. But those who believe have greater love for Allah. If only you could see those who do wrong at the time when they see the punishment, and that truly all strength belongs to Allah, and that Allah is severe in punishment. (Qur'an, 2:165)

Believers direct the love they feel for Allah to His servants, who seek to earn His good pleasure. For this reason, those who have faith in Allah and the Qur'an and have grasped Islam's essence cannot possibly feel any attachment to those who have no love for Allah. If someone does not acknowledge or appreciate Allah—Whom believers love more than their own selves; for Whose cause they spend whatever they have; Who shows them the right path, gives them abundant blessings and the good news of Paradise, as well as infinite rewards in the afterlife; and in Whom they have profound faith—a bond of love cannot form between that person and a believer. As a result, there can be no

true friendship between them. One verse states that:

You will not find people who believe in Allah and the Last Day having love for anyone who opposes Allah and His Messenger, though they be their fathers, their sons, their brothers, or their kindred. (Qur'an, 58:22)

Despite this, however, some people, especially those who are in the process of learning the Qur'an's values, may still feel close to their former friends or their acquaintances before they embraced Islam. But as the Qur'an makes clear, a believer's sole friends are Allah and other believers:

Your friend is only Allah, His Messenger, and those who believe: those who establish prayers, pay alms, and bow. As for those who make Allah their friend, and His Messenger and those who believe: it is the party of Allah who is victorious! (Qur'an, 5:55-56)

In these verses, Allah indicates that making friends only with believers is also the key to the success of the good deeds performed only to gain Allah's good pleasure. Likewise, many verses relate that associating with true believers and supporting one another is essential for success. To the contrary, however, the Qur'an also expounds that non-compliance with Allah's commands and recommendations will result in difficulty and hardship for believers, for:

Those who are unbelievers are the friends and protectors of one another. If you do not act in this way [protect each other], there will be turmoil in the land and great corruption. (Qur'an, 8:73)

Obey Allah and His Messenger and do not quarrel among yourselves, lest you lose heart and your momentum disappears. And be steadfast. Allah is with the steadfast. (Qur'an, 8:46)

Despite all of this clear evidence and information, the hypocrisy of those who try to be on good terms with both sides and approach the faithful under the guise of being true Muslims to draw personal benefits will be disclosed:

Or did you suppose that you would be left without Allah knowing those of you who have struggled and who have not taken anyone as their intimate friends besides Allah and His Messenger and the believers? Allah is aware of what you do. (Qur'an, 9:16)

But as long as the limits established by Allah are observed, there is not a drawback for Muslims to maintain their social, economic, and cultural relations with other people. The Qur'an sets the following criterion about this issue:

Allah does not forbid you from being good to those who have not fought you in the religion, or driven you from your homes, or from being just toward them. Allah loves those who are just. (Qur'an, 60:8)

Answer to those who say "I want to live as a Muslim, but I am worried about my family's reactions."

Before embracing Islam, people live according to some social rules and codes outside of the criteria that Allah has laid out in the Qur'an. Many traditions and rituals formed in a society that is heedless of religion define the relations of its members with other people.

However, the only guidance for humanity is Allah and His Book. Those people who grasp this fact have to leave the period of ignorance behind, abandon all behaviors related to ignorance, and be guided only by the Qur'an. This surely also applies to one's relations with his or her family.

In all countries, including some Muslim ones, some families may react negatively to family members who want to live by the Qur'an's values. Some families might have severe reactions if their children display even a small amount of interest in religion. Moreover, in order to keep their children away from religion, they distort some religious commands. Trying to draw them back to ignorance, they tell their children that "The rights of the parents upon their children are above anything else," "It is the greatest sin to oppose parents," and similar unfounded assertions. The resulting psychological pressure may well engender feelings of guilt in children who are not well informed about Islam.

However, as is the case with every other issue, the right thing to do is to resort to the Qur'an. In the Qur'an, Allah reveals the ideal attitude that believers must assume toward their parents,

as follows:

We have instructed man to honor his parents ... (Qur'an, 29:8)

However, this does not mean that children must fulfill or obey all of their parents' wishes unconditionally. Rather, they are to assume a respectful, measured, tolerant, and kind attitude, and to avoid doing anything that will hurt or bother them. But this does not extend to making concessions in matters concerning Allah's commands and prohibitions. In the latter part of the above verse, Allah defines the limits of this respect and understanding in the following terms:

... but if they endeavor to make you associate with Me something about which you have no knowledge, do not obey them. It is to Me that you will return, and I will inform you about the things that you did. (Qur'an, 29:8)

Children have to obey their parents as long as this obedience does not cause them to transgress the limits set by Allah. For example, if parents say that: "You have to comply with my wish rather than Allah's," which clearly means, "Your deity is not Allah but me," their children should disobey them, for adopting such an attitude means associating partners to Allah, which is forbidden.

However, along with disobeying one's parents if and when they encourage rebellion against Allah, He encourages believers to be kind to them, although they are unbelievers, and to be tolerant toward them in mundane matters:

We have instructed man concerning his parents. Bearing him caused his mother great debility, and the period of his weaning was two years. "Give thanks to Me and to your parents. I am your final destination. But if they try to make you associate something with Me about which you

have no knowledge, do not obey them. Keep company with them correctly and courteously in this world, but follow the Way of him who turns to Me. Then you will return to Me, and I will inform you about the things that you did." (Qur'an, 31:14-15)

When discussing one's parents, Allah especially calls upon believers not to ascribe partners to Him and not to serve anyone or anything other than Him. As the verse above also makes clear, believers must not obey their parents if they ask them to return to their old ways; rather, they must remain among those who turn to Allah.

When we examine the Qur'an, we see that some believers, including the Prophets, were tested through their families or close relatives. Prophet Ibrahim (pbuh), for instance, employed the Qur'an's method of "not obeying yet getting along well" against his father, who called him to the ignorant way of living:

Mention Ibrahim in the Book. He was a true man and a Prophet. Remember when he said to his father: "Father, why do you worship what can neither hear nor see and is not of any use to you at all? Father, knowledge that never reached you has come to me, so follow me and I will guide you to the right path. Father, do not worship Satan. Satan was disobedient to the All-Merciful. Father, I am afraid that a punishment from the All-Merciful will afflict you, and turn you into a comrade of Satan." He [his father] said: "Do you forsake my gods, Ibrahim? If you do not stop, I will stone you. Keep away from me for a good long time." He [Ibrahim] said: "Peace be upon you. I will ask my Lord to forgive you. He has always honored me." (Qur'an, 19:41-47)

The wives of Prophet Lut (Lot) (pbuh) and Prophet Nuh

(pbuh) also became unbelievers, and thus Allah punished them. Allah warned Prophet Nuh (pbuh) that his son was an unbeliever: **"Nuh, he is definitely not of your family. He is someone whose action was not righteous. Do not, therefore, ask Me for something about which you have no knowledge."** (Qur'an, 11:46)

While fulfilling his duty of communicating Islam's message, our Prophet (pbuh) also faced the severe reactions of his close relatives, reactions that extended to the point of hostility. His uncle Abu Lahab, who had a great aversion toward and grudge against our Prophet (pbuh), made propaganda against him and tried to impede his efforts by placing various difficulties and hardships in his path. Indeed, Allah devoted a special chapter in the Qur'an to denouncing this man. During the first years of Islam's spread, many Muslims endured similar reactions and torments from their own families, yet never swerved from the true path. Later, many parents who had been influenced by their children's resoluteness and sincerity embraced Islam.

The relentless commitment of Muslims in this matter stems from the Qur'an's encouragement of rationalism, as opposed to sentimentality. Being a religion based upon pure reason, people who have an emotional, romantic state of mind find it difficult to live by Islam's principles. Muslims are sensitive people. But once Islam's interests are concerned, they show not the slightest emotional sentiment and never swerve from following Allah's guidance. Since their main goal is to earn His good pleasure, they harbor no prejudice or fixed ideas about any issue, person, or thing. This is the only state of mind that allows people to attain genuine faith. What lies at the bottom of sentimentalism is channeling love to the wrong people. Real believers show their love only to Allah and to those with whom He is pleased. Any love

nourished by something other than Allah's good pleasure is associating partners with Allah. In the Qur'an, Prophet Ibrahim (pbuh) explains this situation in the following words:

He [Ibrahim] said: "You have adopted idols apart from Allah as tokens of mutual affection in this world. But then on the Day of Resurrection you will reject one another and curse one another. The Fire will be your shelter. You will have no helpers." (Qur'an, 29:25)

Loving someone who displays a hostile attitude toward Allah and His religion is the same as the situation described in the above verse. Whether this be one's family, parents, children, siblings, spouse, or any other relatives or close associates, this situation never changes. The Qur'an makes this issue explicit:

O you who believe, do not befriend your fathers and brothers if they prefer unbelief to faith. Those among you who do befriend them are wrongdoers. Say: "If your fathers or your sons or your brothers or your wives or your tribe, or any wealth you have acquired, or any business you fear may slump, or any house which pleases you, are dearer to you than Allah and His Messenger and striving for His sake, then wait until Allah brings about His command. Allah does not guide people who are deviators." (Qur'an, 9:23-24)

The Qur'an refers to believers who had to abandon their homes and families in order to fulfill Allah's commands. One of these people was Maryam (Mary) (pbuh), a young and unprotected woman, who trusted only in Allah and took refuge in Him. She abandoned her family and people in order to attain His good pleasure. The Qur'an refers to her in the following terms:

Mention Maryam in the Book, how she withdrew from her people to an eastern place. (Qur'an, 19:16)

Another example is a group of young people called "the Companions of the Cave." Since their people rebelled against Allah, they abandoned their people and took refuge in a cave. The Qur'an provides the following account:

Our people have taken deities apart from Him. Why do they not produce a clear authority concerning them? Who could do greater wrong than someone who invents a lie against Allah? When you have separated yourselves from them and everything they worship except Allah, take refuge in the cave, and your Lord will unfold His mercy to you and open the way to the best for you in your situation. (Qur'an, 18:15-16)

In brief, new Muslims who have abandoned their former ignorance need to communicate the true path to their parents if they are bereft of the Qur'an's values and try to block their children from earning Allah's good pleasure. If this communication is ineffective, then the correct attitude is to employ the Qur'anic principle.

Answer to those who ask "Am I responsible for my previous actions after I start to live by Islam?"

People are not held responsible for what they did before embracing Islam. According to the Qur'an, people who do not know about Islam are "ignorant" and cannot distinguish between what is right and what is wrong. Once they embrace Islam, however, they obtain this knowledge, leave their former un-Islamic ways behind, ask for Allah's forgiveness, and repent. As a manifestation of Allah's infinite mercy, He promises to accept all people's repentance and transform their wrong actions into good, provided that they sincerely turn to Him, repent for their sins, and follow the righteous path:

... [E]xcept for those who repent and believe and act rightly: Allah will transform the wrong actions of such people into good—Allah is Ever-Forgiving, Most Merciful (Qur'an, 25:70)

But I am Ever-Forgiving to anyone who repents and has faith and acts rightly and then is guided. (Qur'an, 20:82)

Repentance is an act of worship that is not unique to new Muslims. In reality, it is a lifetime worship performed by all Muslims, one that guides them to Allah's infinite mercy and forgiveness, for no believer is immune to committing sins and making mistakes.

In Allah's presence, believers strive to maintain a balance between hope and fear. Given that they cannot know their situation until they die and face Allah on the Day of Judgment, there is no way for them to feel secure against Allah's punishment.

This aside, no matter how desperate their situation or how great their sin, they do not despair of Allah's mercy.

One of Satan's greatest tricks is to infect people with hopelessness by causing them to believe such things as: "It is too late," "No one can save you now," or "You have already immersed yourself in sin." By insinuating such false claims, Satan and his followers seek to distance people from Allah's mercy. Allah warns people against this trap in many verses and calls them to ask for repentance and forgiveness:

Say: "My servants, you who have transgressed against yourselves, do not despair of the mercy of Allah. Truly Allah forgives all wrong actions. He is the Ever-Forgiving, the Most Merciful." Turn to your Lord and submit to Him before punishment comes upon you, for then you cannot be helped. Follow the best that has been sent down to you from your Lord before the punishment comes upon you suddenly, when you are not expecting it. (Qur'an, 39:53-55)

Allah desires to turn toward you, but those who pursue their lower appetites desire to make you deviate completely. (Qur'an, 4:27)

Anyone who does evil or wrongs himself and then asks Allah's forgiveness will find Allah Ever-Forgiving, Most Merciful. (Qur'an, 4:110)

Seeing these verses, those who have true faith in the Qur'an can escape the trap of hopelessness.

However, those who insist upon their sins and continue to disobey Allah's commands and prohibitions on the grounds that "Allah forgives in any case" fall into another trap of Satan. As long as they do not regret what they have done and turn to the right path, their repentance will have no worth, for Allah makes

clear in the following verse what type of repentance He accepts:

Allah only accepts the repentance of those who do evil in ignorance and then quickly repent after doing it. Allah turns toward such people. Allah is All-Knowing, All-Wise. (Qur'an, 4:17)

To conclude, those who forsake their former actions and resolutely turn toward Islam are not held responsible for what they did in the past, no matter how sinful their activities were. In the Qur'an, this is expressed as "**what is past is past**" (Qur'an, 4:22). This assessment also holds true for believers. In other words, believers pay no attention to what people might have done before embracing Islam, for from then on, the Qur'an will regulate their days and they will be held responsible for this in Allah's sight.

Answer to those who say "I want to live by the religion, but I cannot find the internal strength to do so."

This sentence is truly an expression of insincerity. People who utter such words actually know that they are seeking a way to avoid complying with Islam's regulations so that they can continue to follow their selfish desires and passions. Religion does not impose a burdensome way of living upon anybody. Moreover, since Allah created humanity to serve Him, doing so is each person's main duty and is inherent in his or her very nature. In the Qur'an, Allah relates that He created humanity to serve Him, as follows:

I only created jinn and man to worship Me. (Qur'an, 51:56)

Claiming that one does not have enough willpower, self-discipline, and self-control to live by Islam's regulations is nothing but an insincere way of evading one's obligations, for:

We do not impose on any self any more than it can stand. With Us there is a Book that speaks the truth. They will not be wronged. However, their hearts are overwhelmed by ignorance about this matter, and they do other things as well. (Qur'an, 23:62-63)

As for those who believe and do right actions—We impose upon no self any more than it can bear—they are the Companions of the Garden, remaining in it timelessly, forever. (Qur'an, 7:42)

If, after being made aware of this truth, people still find it difficult to live by religious morality, it means that they have taken

Qur'an, the lower self will try to infect each new Muslim with many unfounded concerns and doubts. While their conscience and intelligence will command them to be with believers, their lower self will encourage them to remain with their former acquaintances.

For this reason, new Muslims who are seeking to learn the religion have to control their attitudes and examine their wishes to see whether their acts and attitudes are commanded by personal whims or conscience.

Pretexts of the Lower Self

Adopting some basic criteria as to "whether certain acts and attitudes stem from one's lower self or conscience" will enable us to distinguish these two sources more clearly. One verse provides us with some important criteria, as follows:

Restrain yourself patiently with those who call on their Lord morning and evening, desiring His face. Do not turn your eyes from them, desiring the attractions of this world. And do not obey someone whose heart We have made neglectful of Our remembrance, and who follows his own whims and desires, and whose life has transgressed all bounds. (Qur'an, 18:28)

This verse informs believers about those acts that comply with Allah's good pleasure and those that stem from one's lower self. "Restraining oneself patiently with those who call on their Lord morning and evening" complies with Allah's good pleasure. On the contrary, turning one's attention to the one who "follows his own whims and desires," and "whose heart Allah has made neglectful of His remembrance" is an attitude that emanates from one's self. And, moreover, it is disobedience to Allah.

This is a very important criterion, and one of the issues to

the popular understanding of Islam, which is mixed with superstition and myths, as the true religion. In fact, Islam gives no room to hearsay or any of the senseless codes that make up the foundation of popular religion. As the verse **"Struggle for Allah with the struggle due to Him. He has selected you and not placed any constraint upon you in the religion—the religion of your forefather Ibrahim..."** (Qur'an, 22:78) stresses, Islam does not place any unbearable burden upon anyone. Its acts of worship, which are very easy to perform, pose no physical difficulties. Its structure relieves and liberates people within the borders established by Allah in the Qur'an. Accordingly, Qur'an proclaims that Allah's Messenger (pbuh) **"relieves them [his followers] of their heavy loads and the chains that were around them"** (Qur'an, 7:157). This is also apparent in the Prophet Muhammad's (pbuh) words: "Make thing easy, and do not make them difficult, and give good tidings and do not make people run away." (*Bukhari*)

Consequently, it is senseless to say: "I have no strength to live by the religion." Only one thing explains the state of those who, even after all of the truths explained above, still assert such weakness: Under the influence of their selfish desires, they are looking for a pretext that will allow them to evade the Qur'an's morality. The Qur'an points out that "those with a sickness in their hearts" make up such excuses to evade the ordeals that believers sometimes undergo.

The verse below explains the state of those who display a similar mentality by claiming that: "Allah does not want me to become a Muslim; this is the way He created me":

Those who associate others with Allah will say: "If Allah had willed, we would not have associated anything with Him, nor would our fathers; nor would we have made

anything unlawful." In the same way, the people before them also lied until they felt Our violent force. Say: "Do you have some knowledge that you can produce for us? You are following nothing but conjecture. You are only guessing." (Qur'an, 6:148)

The greatest mistake of insincere, hypocritical people who offer such excuses is their assumption that they can deceive Allah and believers. However, they can never deceive Allah, Who knows "**what the hearts contain**" (Qur'an, 35:38) or believers, to whom Allah grants "**a standard [by which to judge between truth and falsehood].**" (Qur'an, 8:29)

*Conclusion: Being able to say:
"We hear and obey."*

The kind of questions we have tackled above are just some of the questions that may occur to new Muslims who are still, to a degree, under the influence of the morality practiced by their unbelieving societies. Rather than blaming them for asking such questions or considering their thoughts unusual, we should do our best to answer them.

Of course, Allah answers of all these questions in the Qur'an. Throughout this book, we have related some of these answers. In compliance with the judgment: **"Every time they come to you with an argument, We bring you the truth and the best of explanations,"** (Qur'an, 25:33) all of the answers provided by the Qur'an are definite and explicit so that no room is left for questions and hesitation.

Those who ask these and other questions out of a sincere desire to receive answers will be satisfied with these answers and obey Allah's commands, and their pursuit of the truth will lead them to find the true answer in the Qur'an, which is the source of guidance for humanity. When they find the answer they will accept it and do their best to adhere to it. In the Qur'an, this sincerity is related, as follows:

The reply of the believers when they are summoned to Allah and His Messenger so that He can judge between them is to say: "We hear and obey." They are the ones who are successful. All who obey Allah and His Messenger, and have awe of Allah and heed Him, are the ones who are victorious. (Qur'an, 24:51-52)

Yet, if those who are told about these truths from the Qur'an acknowledge them to be true by their consciences but still insist upon disobeying Allah and His judgments, this attitude proves that they are insincere. Their behavior shows that they deny a system that they have acknowledged to be right and insist upon following one that they know to be wrong. Such people cannot talk about their sincerity, personality, or willpower, for they are on the path of becoming typical unbelievers, and unbelievers, as the Qur'an informs us, have lost the ability to think and cannot see or hear. In fact, the Qur'an asks:

Have you seen him who takes his whims and desires to be his deity—whom Allah has misguided knowingly, sealing up his hearing and his heart and placing a blindfold over his eyes? Who then will guide him after Allah? So will you not pay heed? (Qur'an, 45:23)

The end of such an obstinate attitude is Hell, an everlasting abode. However, what is expected from people of understanding is for them to say "**We hear and obey**" as the verse relates.

This being the case, people of wisdom must be very cautious against those factors that hinder them from saying: "I hear and obey." The most important of these factors is, as the verse maintains, one's whims and desires, which stem from one's lower self. In the words of Prophet Yusuf (pbuh): "**the self indeed commands to evil acts**" (Qur'an, 12:53). And because the self commands to evil acts, people have to be vigilant against its commands.

New Muslims will surely be more inclined to listen to the commands from their lower selves that will lead them to evil. This lower self draws one towards obeying personal whims and desires and draws one away from religion. Against all of the rights communicated by Muslims and the ones related in the

which a person who has already embraced Islam must pay the utmost attention.

Meanwhile, those who are bereft of this sincerity or remain under the influence of the lower self do not make any effort to be with believers. They find some excuses and try to keep away from believers in an attempt to deceive them. However, these excuses have no validity in either Allah's sight or in the eyes of believers.

In daily life, people encounter many examples of such excuses, some of which are listed below:

"Family matters" is among the foremost excuses put forward by the lower self to hinder people from fulfilling their acts of worship, observing religious requirements, and being together with believers. Those who listen to the whisperings of the lower self and are not so careful about obeying Allah often make up such excuses as: "My family takes all of my time" or "I cannot observe my religious duties, for my parents do not allow me to do so." Such excuses may have no validity in Allah's sight, for although people need time to deal with their families, such a duty does not impede them from observing the Qur'an's commands. Consequently, such excuses are not sincere.

Such people may well be deceiving themselves with these useless excuses, but they surely cannot deceive Allah and believers. Indeed, Allah calls our attention to this matter and makes it clear that this pretext is completely invalid. The Qur'an mentions that a group of people who stayed behind while struggling in Allah's cause came to the Prophet (pbuh) and excused themselves, saying: "**Our wealth and families kept us occupied**". But Allah revealed that "**they say with their tongues what is not in their hearts.**" (Qur'an, 48:11) Yet in another verse, Allah gives the example of those who, in our Prophet's (pbuh) time, tried to

avoid fighting by saying: **"Our houses are exposed,' when they were not exposed; it was merely that they wanted to run away."** (Qur'an, 33:13)

Another excuse put forward by the lower self is that matters related to business or school hinder one from observing Allah's commands. According to them, business or school take so much time that there is no time left for performing the regular prayers, fasting, enjoining the good, living by the Qur'an's morality, and being with believers.

In fact, those who put forward this excuse have an important misconception: They think that their school or profession is the most important thing in life, and so prefer to reserve the rest of their time for religion. But it is not possible to make such a distinction, for according to **"Say: 'My prayer and my rites, my living and my dying, are for Allah alone, the Lord of all the worlds,'" (Qur'an, 6:162)** believers lead their lives in a way designed to pursue His approval. Setting apart some time for mundane matters and the remaining for religion is the same as associating partners with Allah.

Thus, believers practice their professions or go to school only to earn Allah's good pleasure; they spend what they earn in Allah's way and place their knowledge at the service of His religion. Since observing one of His commands does not hinder one from observing another command, the excuse of "not finding time to practice one's religion," and others like it, are completely unacceptable.

Otherwise, this would mean that such people fear what might happen in the future and thus are concerned about some mundane issues. The Qur'an calls this "preferring the life of this world to Allah's good pleasure and the Hereafter." But next to the Hereafter, the life of this world is extremely worthless, as the

Qur'an tells us:

The life of the world is nothing but a game and a diversion. The Hereafter is better for those who do their duty.

So will you not use your intellect? (Qur'an, 6:32)

The end of those who are enslaved to the lower self will be as follows:

As for those who desire the life of the world and its finery, We will give them full payment in it for their actions.

They will not be deprived here of their due. But such people will have nothing in the Hereafter but the Fire. What they achieved here will come to nothing. What they did will prove to be null and void. (Qur'an, 11:15-16)

Another excuse is the "reactions of other people." Some people worry that their commitment to the Qur'an's morality will cause other people to treat them in a negative manner.

We need to make it clear that people who are committed to following Allah's religion and rejecting any other guidance have to take the risk of facing some difficulties. Those who claim to have faith should not be surprised to receive negative reactions from the people surrounding them. Furthermore, those who do not face such reactions should consider this an amazing situation. Since new Muslims come from a society that is divorced from the values of the true religion, people who have until then surrounded them, as well as all their society in general, has been following the wrong path, as the verse below maintains:

Allah alone is qualified to judge. His order is to worship none but Him. That is in truth the straight and upright religion, but most of mankind simply do not know. (Qur'an, 12:40)

Another verse reads:

That is Allah's promise. Allah does not break His prom-

ise. But most people do not know it. They know an outward aspect of the life of the world, but are heedless of the Hereafter. (Qur'an, 30:6-7)

A lack of faith, as the above verse maintains, stems from the weakness of one's ability to think and understand. They only know the outward aspect of the life of the world, and so fail to grasp what is hidden. Meanwhile, they are entirely heedless of the Hereafter. And so expecting the majority of the people to be on the true path is a great mistake. In compliance with the verse **"But most people, for all your eagerness, are not believers,"** (Qur'an, 12:103) the majority of the people would insist on following the wrong path.

In this case, believer must never adopt the thoughts of the majority as a criteria. Indeed, Allah draws our attention to this fact in the Qur'an, saying:

If you obeyed most of those on Earth, they would guide you away from Allah's Way. They follow nothing but conjecture. (Qur'an, 6:116)

The people surrounding a person, as well as the majority of people in the world, are not entitled to a believer's obedience. Once people start to believe and comply with the Qur'an's commands, they will go against this majority and their former unbelieving circle. However, believers are never afraid of countering these people, or of being frowned upon or condemned by them. That believers do not fear condemnation is especially stressed in the Qur'an:

O you who believe! If any of you renounce your religion, Allah will bring forward a people whom He loves and who love Him, humble to the believers, fierce to the unbelievers, who strive in the Way of Allah and do not fear reproach from any critic. That is the unbounded favor of

Allah, which He gives to whoever He wills. Allah is Boundless, All-Knowing. (Qur'an, 5:54)

Believers seek Allah's good pleasure; whether people are pleased with them or not is of no importance. Indeed, if they please Allah, this will, if necessary and if Allah wills, also earn them other people's admiration.

Consequently, such thoughts as "my family keeps me busy," "my school or my job consumes all my time," or "this will attract the negative reaction of other people" are nothing but excuses. People who offer them in order to avoid believers and not to perform acts of worship are not sincere.

In this case, if people make no serious effort to be with believers, to keep themselves occupied with the remembrance of Allah, and to perform the appropriate acts of worship, and yet still try to be accepted by them, for such behavior might mean the following: They are seeking some personal interests from believers. Some of the opportunities that such behavior opens to them may seem attractive, and they may want to benefit from them. While doing this, however, they refrain from any physical or spiritual difficulty.

However, believers understand such people's real intentions very well. Yet they often do not mention it, for such insincere people may realize their mistake later on and turn to Allah in repentance for it. Indeed, believers can never be deceived by insincere people.

Unbelievers and hypocrites have some attributes in common. The most salient one is their reluctance to remember Allah. The Qur'an refers to unbelievers, as follows:

When Allah is mentioned on His own, the hearts of those who do not believe in the afterlife shrink back shuddering; but when others apart from Him are mentioned, they

jump for joy. (Qur'an, 39:45)

This is exactly the attitude of those who strive to be with believers in order to derive some benefit. They do not like to be reminded of Allah's remembrance and His commands, but rejoice at anything that furthers their personal interests.

Believers are very compassionate and merciful people; they never treat people unkindly. However, insincere people can never grasp this attitude. Being used to conflicts and quarrels in their own unbelieving societies, they attempt to abuse this leniency and behave arrogantly toward them. In fact, this attitude only causes them to humiliate themselves. Indeed, believers give the appropriate response to such simple manners.

Insincere people soon realize that they cannot gain any benefits from believers and so yearn to distance themselves from them and return to their former life. They find a new pretext that allows them to revert to the ignorant life that they really never left. The verse below relates what will happen to them in the Hereafter:

But if anyone opposes the Messenger after the guidance has become clear to him, and follows other than the path of the believers, We will hand him over to whatever he has turned to, and We will roast him in Hell. What an evil destination! (Qur'an, 4:115)

In fact, separating such insincere people from believers is a great mercy for believers, for by doing so Allah purifies believers and makes them into a society whose members "**worship Him, not associating anything with Him.**" (Qur'an, 24:55)

Allah does not let believers and hypocrites remain together. In compliance with the verse "**We will test you until We know those who strive among you and those who are steadfast and test what is reported of you,**" (Qur'an, 47:31) those who have

real faith will be tested and made known by Allah. In return, insincere hypocrites will also be made known. Allah gives the good news that He will sort out the bad from the good, as follows:

So that Allah can sift the bad out from the good, and pile the bad on top of one another, heaping them all together, and tip them into Hell. They are the lost. (Qur'an, 8:37)

If believers remain sincere, Allah opens their hearts to Islam. Saying "I hear and obey" is the greatest pleasure such a person can have in life. Obedience to Allah, the Creator, guides humanity to the right path and promises Paradise. This is the greatest source of peace, happiness, and joy. As the verse "[Have We not] shown him the two highways?" (Qur'an, 90:10) indicates, each person is faced with a choice: the way of faith, which leads to Allah's good pleasure, mercy, and Paradise, and which is based upon obedience to Allah; and the other way, which is based upon taking one's personal whims and desires as idols, and which may lead the person to abasement and disgrace in this world and to Hell in the Hereafter.

The choice rests with each person, for as the Qur'an tells us, **"This truly is a reminder, so let anyone who wills take the Way toward his Lord."** (Qur'an, 73:19)

THE DECEPTION OF EVOLUTION

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

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

We have examined the collapse of the theory of evolution and the proofs of creation in great scientific detail in many of our works, and are still continuing to do so. Given the enormous im-

portance 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 of the Theory," the theory failed in the face of many critical questions.

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

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

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

THE FIRST INSURMOUNTABLE STEP: THE ORIGIN OF LIFE

The theory of evolution posits that all living species evolved from a single living cell that emerged on the primitive Earth 3.8 billion years ago. How a single cell could generate millions of complex living species and, if such an evolution really occurred, why traces of it cannot be observed in the fossil record are some of the questions that the theory cannot answer. However, first and foremost, we need to ask: How did this "first cell" originate?

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

"LIFE COMES FROM LIFE"

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

Similarly, maggots developing in rotting meat was assumed to be evidence of spontaneous generation. However, it was later understood that worms did not appear on meat spontaneously,

but were carried there by flies in the form of larvae, invisible to the naked eye.

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

However, five years after the publication of Darwin's book, Louis Pasteur announced his results after long studies and experiments, that disproved spontaneous generation, a cornerstone of Darwin's theory. In his triumphal lecture at the Sorbonne in 1864, Pasteur said: "Never will the doctrine of spontaneous generation recover from the mortal blow struck by this simple experiment."¹

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

INCONCLUSIVE EFFORTS IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

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

Unfortunately, however, the problem of the origin of the cell is perhaps the most obscure point in the whole study of the evolution of organisms.²

Evolutionist followers of Oparin tried to carry out experiments to solve this problem. The best known experiment was carried out by the American chemist Stanley Miller in 1953. Combining the

gases he alleged to have existed in the primordial Earth's atmosphere in an experiment set-up, and adding energy to the mixture, Miller synthesized several organic molecules (amino acids) present in the structure of proteins.

Barely a few years had passed before it was revealed that this experiment, which was then presented as an important step in the name of evolution, was invalid, for the atmosphere used in the experiment was very different from the real Earth conditions.³

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

All the evolutionists' efforts throughout the twentieth century to explain the origin of life ended in failure. The geochemist Jeffrey Bada, from the San Diego Scripps Institute accepts this fact in an article published in *Earth* magazine in 1998:

Today as we leave the twentieth century, we still face the biggest unsolved problem that we had when we entered the twentieth century: How did life originate on Earth?⁵

THE COMPLEX STRUCTURE OF LIFE

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

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

acids. In mathematics, a probability smaller than 1 over 10^{50} is considered to be impossible in practical terms.

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

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

It is extremely improbable that proteins and nucleic acids, both of which are structurally complex, arose spontaneously in the same place at the same time. Yet it also seems impossible to have one without the other. And so, at first glance, one might have to conclude that life could never, in fact, have originated by chemical means.⁶

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

IMAGINARY MECHANISM OF EVOLUTION

The second important point that negates Darwin's theory is that both concepts put forward by the theory as "evolutionary mecha-

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

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

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

First, genuine mutations are very rare in nature. Secondly, most mutations are harmful since they are random, rather than orderly changes in the structure of genes; any random change in a highly ordered system will be for the worse, not for the better.

For example, if an earthquake were to shake a highly ordered structure such as a building, there would be a random change in the framework of the building which, in 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 rep-

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

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

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

What has become of our ladder if there are three coexisting line-

ages of hominids (*A. africanus*, the robust australopithecines, and *H. habilis*), none clearly derived from another? Moreover, none of the three display any evolutionary trends during their tenure on earth.¹⁷

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

Lord Solly Zuckerman, one of the most famous and respected scientists in the U.K., who carried out research on this subject for years and studied *Australopithecus* fossils for 15 years, finally concluded, despite being an evolutionist himself, that there is, in fact, no such family tree branching out from ape-like creatures to man.

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

We then move right off the register of objective truth into those fields of presumed biological science, like extrasensory perception or the interpretation of man's fossil history, where to the faithful [evolutionist] anything is possible—and where the ardent believer [in evolution] is sometimes able to believe several contradictory things at the same time.¹⁸

The tale of human evolution boils down to nothing but the prejudiced interpretations of some fossils unearthed by certain people,

who blindly adhere to their theory.

DARWINIAN FORMULA!

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

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

Let evolutionists put plenty of materials present in the composition of living things such as phosphorus, nitrogen, carbon, oxygen, iron, and magnesium into big barrels. Moreover, let them add in these barrels any material that does not exist under normal conditions, but they think as necessary. Let them add in this mixture as many amino acids—which have no possibility of forming under natural conditions—and as many proteins—a single one of which has a formation probability of 10^{-950} —as they like. Let them expose these mixtures to as much heat and moisture as they like. Let them stir these with whatever technologically developed device they like. Let them put the foremost scientists beside these barrels. Let these experts wait in turn beside these barrels for billions, and even trillions of years. Let them be free to use all kinds of condi-

tions they believe to be necessary for a human's formation. No matter what they do, they cannot produce from these barrels a human, say a professor that examines his cell structure under the electron microscope. They cannot produce giraffes, lions, bees, canaries, horses, dolphins, roses, orchids, lilies, carnations, bananas, oranges, apples, dates, tomatoes, melons, watermelons, figs, olives, grapes, peaches, peafowls, pheasants, multicoloured butterflies, or millions of other living beings such as these. Indeed, they could not obtain even a single cell of any one of them.

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

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

TECHNOLOGY IN THE EYE AND THE EAR

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

Before passing on to the subject of the eye, let us briefly answer the question of how we see. Light rays coming from an object fall oppositely on the eye's retina. Here, these light rays are transmitted into electric signals by cells and reach a tiny spot at the back of the brain, the "center of vision." These electric signals are perceived in this center as an image after a series of processes. With this technical background, let us do some thinking.

The brain is insulated from light. That means that its inside is

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

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

For many years, tens of thousands of engineers have tried to make a three-dimensional TV and achieve the vision quality of the eye. Yes, they have made a three-dimensional television system, but it is not possible to watch it without putting on special 3-D glasses; moreover, it is only an artificial three-dimension. The background is more blurred, the foreground appears like a paper setting. Never has it been possible to produce a sharp and distinct vision like that of the eye. In both the camera and the television, there is a loss of image quality.

Evolutionists claim that the mechanism producing this sharp

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

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

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

As is the case with imagery, decades of effort have been spent in trying to generate and reproduce sound that is faithful to the original. The results of these efforts are sound recorders, high-fidelity systems, and systems for sensing sound. Despite all of this technology and the thousands of engineers and experts who have been working on this endeavor, no sound has yet been obtained that has the same sharpness and clarity as the sound perceived by the ear. Think of the highest-quality hi-fi systems produced by the largest

company in the music industry. Even in these devices, when sound is recorded some of it is lost; or when you turn on a hi-fi you always hear a hissing sound before the music starts. However, the sounds that are the products of the human body's technology are extremely sharp and clear. A human ear never perceives a sound accompanied by a hissing sound or with atmospheric sounds 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 IS THE MOST POTENT SPELL IN THE WORLD

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

As explained above, those who believe in the theory of evolu-

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

In fact, Allah has pointed to this lack of reason in the Qur'an. In many verse, He reveals in many verses that some peoples' minds will be closed and that they will be powerless to see the truth. Some of these verses are as follows:

As for those who do not believe, it makes no difference to them whether you warn them or do not warn them, they will not believe. Allah has sealed up their hearts and hearing and over their eyes is a blindfold. They will have a terrible punishment. (Qur'an, 2: 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. (Qur'an, 7: 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!" (Qur'an, 15: 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 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 to meet with his own magicians. When Musa 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. (Qur'an, 7: 116)

As we have seen, Pharaoh's magicians were able to deceive everyone, apart from Musa 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. (Qur'an, 7: 117-118)

As we can see, when people realized that a spell had been cast upon them and that what they saw was just an illusion, Pharaoh's magicians lost all credibility. In the present day too, unless those who, under the influence of a similar spell, believe in these ridiculous claims under their scientific disguise and spend their lives defending them, abandon their superstitious beliefs, they also will be humiliated when the full truth emerges and the spell is broken. In fact, world-renowned British writer and philosopher Malcolm Muggeridge also stated this:

I myself am convinced that the theory of evolution, especially the extent to which it's been applied, will be one of the great jokes in the history books in the future. Posterity will marvel that so very flimsy and dubious an hypothesis could be accepted with the incredible credulity that it has.²⁰

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

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

(Qur'an, 2: 32)

NOTES

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