

## **BACK COVER:**

Most people know that idolatry is a grave sin, but never think that it could have anything to do with them. They imagine that idolaters, defined as those who ascribe equals to Allah, are merely people who worship totems carved out of stone or wood, like the primitive pre-Islamic Arab pagans who worshipped idols in the Ka`bah (The Sacred House). However, idolatry is far more subtle and is actually widespread in many societies today.

In reality, idolatry comprises everything that people set up as a goal that does not involve seeking Allah's approval, in who or which they place their hopes or desire for approval, or every entity regarded as possessing true power and control other than Allah.

Given the subtlety of this definition, idolatry needs to be considered as something that may be very close at hand.

Ascribing equals to Allah is a most dangerous sin, one that cannot be forgiven and therefore will lead people to Hell. Thus, those who fear and respect Allah and hope for His Paradise must be on their guard against this threat. But people cannot do this if they do not know what idolatry is and what things fall under its scope.

This book has been written to illustrate how idolatry, as set out in the Qur'an, exists in contemporary society. We hope that it will achieve this aim, help people renounce all of their idols, and turn sincerely to and serve only Almighty Allah, the true Creator of all things.

## **About the Author**

Adnan Oktar, who writes under the pen-name Harun Yahya, was born in Ankara in 1956. Since the 1980s, the author has published many books on faith-related, scientific and political issues. He 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.

All of the author's works share one single goal: to convey the Qur'an's message, encourage readers to consider basic faith-related issues such as Allah's existence and unity and the Hereafter; and to expose irreligious systems' feeble foundations and perverted ideologies. His more than 300 works, translated into 63 different languages, enjoy a wide readership across the world. By the will of Allah, the books of Harun Yahya will be a means through which people in the twenty-first century will attain the peace, justice, and happiness promised in the Qur'an.

## **TO THE READER**

A special chapter is assigned to the collapse of the theory of evolution because this theory constitutes the basis of all anti-spiritual philosophies. Since Darwinism rejects the fact of creation—and therefore, Allah's existence—over the last 150 years it has caused many people to abandon their faith or fall into doubt. It is therefore an imperative service, a very important duty to show everyone that this theory is a deception. Since some readers may find the opportunity to read only one of our books, we think it appropriate to devote a chapter to summarize this subject.

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

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

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

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

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

# **THE WORST SLANDER: IDOLATRY**

***Allah does not forgive anything being  
associated with Him, but He forgives whoever  
He wills for anything other than that. Anyone  
who associates something with Allah has***

***committed a terrible sin.***  
***(Surat al-Nisa': 48)***

## **HARUN YAHYA (ADNAN OKTAR)**

### **ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

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

Harun Yahya's works, translated into 63 different languages, constitute a collection for a total of more than 55,000 pages with 40,000 illustrations.

His pen-name is a composite of the names Harun (Aaron) and Yahya (John), in memory of the two esteemed Prophets who fought against their peoples' lack of faith. The Prophet's seal on his books' covers is symbolic and is linked to their contents. It represents the Qur'an (the Final Scripture) and Prophet Muhammad (saas), last of the prophets. Under the guidance of the Qur'an and the Sunnah (teachings of the Prophet [saas]), the author makes it his purpose to disprove each fundamental tenet of irreligious ideologies and to have the "last word," so as to completely silence the objections raised against religion. He uses the seal of the final Prophet (saas), who attained ultimate 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 irreligious systems' feeble foundations and perverted ideologies.

Harun Yahya enjoys a wide readership in many countries, from India to America, England to Indonesia, Poland to Bosnia, Spain to Brazil, Malaysia to Italy, France to Bulgaria and Russia. Some of his books are available in English, French, German, Spanish, Italian, Portuguese, Urdu, Arabic, Albanian, Chinese, Swahili, Hausa, Dhivehi (spoken in Mauritius), Russian, Serbo-Croat (Bosnian), Polish, Malay, Uygur Turkish, Indonesian, Bengali, Danish and Swedish.

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

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

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

Meanwhile, it would only be a waste of time and energy to propagate other books that create confusion in people's minds, lead them into ideological confusion, and that clearly have no strong and precise effects in removing the doubts in people's hearts, as also verified from

previous experience. It is impossible for books devised to emphasize the author's literary power rather than the noble goal of saving people from loss of faith, to have such a great effect. Those who doubt this can readily see that the sole aim of Harun Yahya's books is to overcome disbelief and to disseminate the Qur'an's moral values. The success and impact of this service are manifested in the readers' conviction.

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

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

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## INTRODUCTION

Most people know that idolatry is a grave sin, but never think that it could have anything to do with them. They imagine that idolaters, defined as those who ascribe equals to Allah (God), are merely people who worship totems carved out of stone or wood, like the primitive pre-Islamic Arab pagans who worshipped idols in the Ka`bah (The Sacred House). However, idolatry is far more subtle and is actually widespread in many societies today.

In reality, idolatry comprises everything that people set up as a goal that does not involve seeking Allah's approval, in who or which they place their hopes or desire for approval, or every entity regarded as possessing true power and control other than Allah. Given the subtlety of this definition, idolatry needs to be considered as something that may be very close at hand.

Ascribing equals to Allah is a most dangerous sin, one that cannot be forgiven and therefore will lead people to Hell. Thus, those who fear and respect Allah and hope for His Paradise must be on their guard against this threat. But people cannot do this if they do not know what idolatry is and what things fall under its scope.

This book has been written to illustrate how idolatry, as set out in the Qur'an, exists in contemporary society. We hope that it will achieve this aim,

help people renounce all of their idols, and turn sincerely to and serve only Almighty Allah, the true Creator of all things.

In addition, idolatry heads the list of sins to be avoided, for those who ascribe equals to Allah are guilty of committing a grave sin against Him. In the Qur'an, Allah reveals that He will not forgive such a serious slander, a sin, and an act out of respect. That is why Allah tells that He will forgive anything but ascribing equals to Him and that this act is a grave perversion:

Allah does not forgive anything being associated with Him, but He forgives whomever He wills for anything other than that. Anyone who associates something with Allah has gone very far astray. (Surat al-Nisa': 116)

This is where the importance of avoiding idolatry lies. As Allah will never forgive such a major sin, He calls upon Muslims to avoid it at all costs by refusing to ascribe equals to Him. For example, Allah reveals in the Qur'an about the Hazrat Luqman (peace be upon him) advise to his son:

"O my son, do not associate anything with Allah. Associating others with Him is a terrible wrong" (Surah Luqman: 13).

Another reason to avoid this mistake is that it causes all of a person's efforts to become vain and inflicts a terrible disappointment upon those who have gone astray. Allah reveals in the Qur'an:

It has been revealed to you and those before you: "If you associate others with Allah, your actions will come to nothing and you will be among the losers." (Surat al-Zumar: 65)

Clearly, ascribing equals to Allah is a grievous sin that can drag a person down to Hell. Therefore, anyone who fears and respects Allah and hopes for His Paradise must guard against it.

This book has been written in the hope that having a clear understanding of the Qur'anic concept of idolatry will help the readers realize that much of what some people consider to be perfectly normal and regular behavior is, in fact, nothing more than idolatry. May it achieve this aim and may it be a means whereby this people will renounce their mistaken beliefs and worldview and serve only Almighty Allah, the Creator of all things.

Readers must also be informed that this danger may not be something that existed only a long time ago or in primitive societies. It is probably far closer to them than they think it is, and thus should be of great concern to them. Those who feel no need to reflect on this matter will fail to benefit from what is said herein. In other words, if they are idolaters they will remain so and face Allah after death in a state of great sin. No Muslim wants to meet the Lord in such a state.

**Therefore, read this book in all sincerity, as if it had been written**

**just for you. Reflect on it honestly and consider the examples and the verses in the Qur'an carefully, and then determine if your beliefs and actions are based on idolatry in any way. Since all people are helpless and prone to error, the important thing is to recognize one's errors and abandon them immediately.**

## **WHAT IS IDOLATRY?**

The Arabic word *shirk* implies *partnership*. The term is translated into English as *ascribing partners or equals to Allah*. The Qur'an uses *shirk* in the following sense: regarding, preferring, or attaching importance or worth to anything, anyone, or any concept in such a way that it is considered to be equal to or above Allah (Surely Allah is beyond that), and then acting according to that distorted perspective. This attitude means that one regards members of Allah's Creation as Divine, although only He can be divine.

The truth that is announced in the Qur'an is that there is no deity other than Allah. This truth is set out in the profession of faith, *la ilaha illa Allah*, and is reiterated throughout the Qur'an. However, Muslims need to understand this point fully and reflect upon it deeply. Given that all power and might belongs to Allah and that He is the Only God, this cannot be interpreted in a superficial manner. When we look at the Qur'an, we see that any other belief, attitude, or behavior that is not based upon this truth is actually idolatry. Thus, we may translate *shirk* in the general sense as the false conception and idea that any person, thing, or supposed deity has any actual power and might other than Allah (Surely Allah is beyond that).

According to the Qur'an, a *deity* is an entity that possesses the titles and attributes that Allah has revealed about Himself. The only true deity, therefore, is Allah. No other member of Creation has His titles, and to claim

otherwise means *taking entities other than Allah as one's deity or ascribing equals to Allah*.

A fine distinction needs to be drawn here. For example, one of Allah's titles, *al-Ghani (the Wealthy)*, can also refer to one's material situation. What leads to idolatry, however, is imagining that this wealth was acquired through personal effort. If this were the case, the fact that all wealth actually belongs to Allah would be forgotten. For whatever reason, Allah willed to give that person all that he or she owns, thereby manifesting this particular title *al-Ghani*. However, many people often forget or ignore the fact that Allah can remove whatever He wills from whoever He wills in a single moment. The failure to consider anyone apart from Allah as poor and helpless renders people unable to understand that He can manifest Himself by whatever titles and in whatever people He wills. As a result, one may think that the individual concerned is the true owner of such possessions as wealth, riches, property, and titles. But since such things were bestowed by Allah, instead of being acquired by individual effort, this misunderstanding may cause people to forget Allah and ascribe a false divine title to another human being (Surely Allah is beyond that). If they do this, they are guilty of idolatry.

The correct thing to do is to realize that Allah is the sole Possessor and Lord of all riches and wealth, regardless of their location and amount, and that He can withdraw His wealth from anyone whenever He wills. When evaluating materially rich people, the important thing is not their economic status but that they are thought of as Allah's servant. For example, if one's family members regard the father as the true owner of his wealth and thus place their hopes solely in him, thereby forgetting the wealth's true owner, they are committing a serious sin. Similarly, those who work alongside this person must realize that only Allah feeds, clothes, and shelters them. It would be highly irrational for them to regard their employer as the one who provides for them, because:

Instead of [worshipping] Allah, you worship only idols and invent falsehood. Those whom you worship besides Allah have no power to provide for you, so seek your provision from Allah, worship Him, and give thanks to Him. It is to Him that you will be returned. (Surat al-'Ankabut: 17)

In addition, Allah states in the Qur'an that there is no force and power other than Him (Surat al-Kahf: 39). Whatever resembles force and power in His created entities is actually a little reflection of His infinite might. Allah can remove these apparent attributes at any moment. Overestimating anyone because of these attributes bestowed on them by Allah in this world, temporarily and as a test, and to admire them in this respect as if that power was actually inherent in them, is a form of ascribing divine status to them (Surely Allah is beyond that). Allah reveals in the Qur'an:



They do not appreciate Allah with His true measure. Allah is All-Strong, Almighty. (Surat al-Hajj: 74)

This same logic applies to all of Allah's other titles that He manifests or causes to be reflected by members of His Creations. In considering these entities, one must be aware that these titles belong only to Allah and that what we see in other people are merely manifestations of them.

### The starting point of idolatry

The false approach of *attributing an identity* to Allah's Creations by regarding them as beings in their own right who are independent of Allah leads to idolatry. Allah's wealth, beauty, might, and glory do exist, but those upon whom He bestows them do not actually possess them and are not the originators of them; nor do they or their possessions exist in any way that is independent of His existence. People who do not understand this often admire or fear those who apparently possess such attributes, believing that they are somehow independent of Allah.

This mistaken view is the starting point of idolatry. As we will see in later chapters, such an attribution underlies all forms of *shirk* and idolatrous attitudes. True believers must build their faith on *monotheism* (the Oneness of Allah) and avoid ascribing any equals to Him. Therefore, all people must constantly remember that they are indebted to Allah for whatever they possess and have been brought into being only through Allah's will. He can keep them alive or not, as He wills, and bestows whatever attributes He wills upon any member of His Creation.

Power, opportunity, intelligence, beauty, fame, and rank are all attributes created by Him. Since He created them, He can easily remove them whenever He wills to do so. Allah manifests Himself in different ways in all places and all people. It is these manifestations that one sees wherever he or she looks. Those who believe in Allah must place the realization that nothing exists independent of Allah firmly in their heart. Only when they believe, think, and behave in accordance with this truth can they stop ascribing equals to Allah.

### The Idolaters' Invalid Justifications

We can learn the most accurate meanings of idolatry, monotheism, service, and worship from the Qur'an and the hadiths of the Prophet Muhammad (May Allah bless him and grant him peace). Only by reading and understanding the Qur'an and the hadiths and seeking to implement them in our lives can we acquire an attitude, understanding, belief, and behavior that takes Allah as our Lord in all matters and thus avoid the error of idolatry. Therefore, someone who has faith and knows that the Qur'an is the truth must not adopt any other criteria when it comes to matters of faith, thought, moral understanding, lifestyle, and other value judgments. In

addition, trying to justify one's preference for alternatives to Allah's commands and thus abandoning His stipulations leads to idolatry.

No such justification is valid. For example, preferring someone's approval and seeking to please him or her instead of Allah means adopting a false deity. Fearing and respecting someone as much as or more than Allah, and thus abandoning His commands or behaving in a way does not please Him, means exactly the same thing. Loving another person as much as Allah means one is in shirk and sees that person as a false deity other than Almighty Allah. If someone who is aware of the requirement to live by faith points to his or her surroundings or environment as a justification for making concessions on religion so as not to attract criticism, this is a clear sign of idolatry – whose approval should be more important? A person's family or close circle may not understand Islam, in which case any departure from its requirements or making concessions is another sign of that same danger. No Muslim can make any concessions regarding Allah's approval, for only His approval matters. Of course nobody wants to lessen his or her love and respect for the family. But if family members call upon him or her to ascribe equals to Allah, He reveals the correct reaction:

We have instructed man to honor his parents. 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 you did. (Surat al-'Ankabut: 8)

The Prophet (May Allah bless him and grant him peace) is the best example of how to deal with non-Muslims. While he was preaching, many people realized that the Qur'an was Allah's word and had to be heeded. However, very few of them actually implemented the requirements of religious morality and followed him. For instance, the verses regarding Islamic clothing for women were revealed in the period after the Hijra: Safiyyah bint Shaybah said: "When we were with A'isha (may Allah be pleased with her), we mentioned the women of Quraysh and their virtues. A'isha said, 'The women of Quraysh are good, but by Allah (swt) I have never seen any better or more strict in their adherence to the Book of Allah (swt) than the women of the Ansar. When Surat al-Nur was revealed (...that they should draw their veils over their bosoms...) their menfolk went to them and recited to them the words that Allah (swt) had revealed. Each man recited it to his wife, his daughter, his sister and other family relatives. Every woman among them got up, took her decorated wrapper, and wrapped herself up in it out of faith and belief in what Allah (swt) had revealed. ..." (Tafsir Ibn Kathir, Surat an-Nur, "The Rulings of Hijab")

The following is also reported regarding the excellent behavior of Muslim women when the relevant verses were revealed:

A'isha (may Allah be pleased with her) said: "When Allah (swt) revealed the verse: 'and to draw their veils all over their bosoms,' they tore their aprons and covered themselves with them." (Tafsir Ibn Kathir, Surat an-Nur, "The Rulings of Hijab")

In the time of the Prophet (May Allah bless him and grant him peace), Muslim women immediately obeyed Almighty Allah's commandment, and experienced a great enthusiasm and desire to do so. The Muslims who came after them also fulfilled this commandment with the same enthusiasm and determination.

Some others, however, were fearful of the reaction of the community they lived in, were put off by their threats, were concerned about losing their position and prestige. They thought that following the Prophet (May Allah bless him and grant him peace) could affect their business and financial interests, and that they would lose out by devoting time to Muslims and serving Islam. Some were afraid of that bad things might happen if they converted, and others preferred their own ease and comfort to start off with the Prophet (May Allah bless him and grant him peace) in the heat of the desert.

In other words, they tried to justify their concessions. Based on what the Qur'an says, however, they were actually ascribing partners to Allah, for they were aware of the truth and yet preferred the approval other people, society, money, rank, or earthly desires over that of Allah. Thus, they placed their hopes in entities other than Him and tried to please them.

Many of these same people also made concessions because of their earthly passions or to satisfy their desires though they knew it was right. In order to avoid facing any threats or making any sacrifices, lazing about or to satisfy the desires of their lower-selves, some of them made concessions and preferred to abide by their lower selves. In the Qur'an, Allah relates the state of those who feigned excuses on behalf of their lower selves to evade being with our Prophet (May Allah bless him and grant him peace):

And a group of them said: "O People of Yathrib (Madinah), your position is untenable so turn back!" Some of them asked the Prophet to excuse them, saying: "Our houses are exposed," when they were not exposed; it was merely that they wanted to run away. (Surat al-Ahzab: 13)

As we have seen, such people made excuses so they would not have to accompany the Prophet (May Allah bless him and grant him peace) and the believers, and would not have to fully implement Islamic moral values in their lives. Maybe they told others how logical they were. However, these excuses were invalid in Allah's Sight and so they only deceived themselves. By preferring their worldly desires - over Allah's approval, they clearly *ascribed equals to Allah*.

People living at our Prophet's (May Allah bless him and grant him peace) time were tested under the conditions of the time; people today are also

being tested. Allah knows whether they are sincere when they have to choose between their own desires and His approval, or whether they make excuses like the idolaters in the past. Everyone will be appropriately rewarded or punished in the Hereafter for their actions in this world while no excuses can be made in the Presence of Allah. In the Qur'an Allah reveals this truth:

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

Given the above, people today should not distance themselves from the Qur'an and invent excuses for turning away from Islamic moral values.

First and foremost, someone who ascribes equals to Allah in an unwise manner has adopted as a law-giver some thing or person other than Allah. This supposed "equal" to Allah could be the person himself or herself, family members or ancestors, friends, employer, society, and even the founders and followers of various philosophies and ideologies. Looked at from this viewpoint, people who follow a path other than the revelations by Allah have chosen, either consciously or not, idolatry. Regardless of what they call themselves (e.g., agnostic, atheist, Christian, Jew, or Muslim), they are idolaters. Even if they perform the five daily prayers, fast, and perform many Islamic observances, they are still idolaters if even one of their thoughts or value judgments conflicts with the Qur'an, if they abandon Allah's commands, or if they try to please others instead of Him. Since they have adopted some other entity besides Allah as a law-maker.

Someone who ascribes partners to Allah does not have to think "this is also a deity" or say "I have adopted this as a deity alongside Allah and worship this, too," (Surely Allah is beyond that), for idolatry is first of all in the heart and then reflected in deed. As the Qur'an makes clear, people's preference for any other entity than Allah causes them to become idolaters. However, such people generally do not deny Allah's existence; in fact, many of them refuse to admit that they are idolaters at all. Having smothered their consciences and deceived themselves, they even deny their idolatry in the Hereafter. Allah reveals in the Qur'an:

**On the Day We gather them all together, We will ask those who associated others with Allah: "Where are the partner-deities for whom you made such claims?" Then they will have no recourse except**

**to say: "By Allah, our Lord, We  
were not idolaters." See how they  
lie against themselves and how  
what they invented has forsaken  
them! (Surat al-An'am: 22-24)**

**CATEGORIES OF IDOLATERS IN THE  
QUR'AN**

Idolatry is referred from many points of view in the Qur'an. Although the general logic is the same, there are several ways of ascribing equals to Allah. Examining the relevant verses reveal that all idolaters share the trait of adopting false deities (e.g., spiritual guides, law-givers, organizers, friends, and helpers) other than Allah. But idolaters can also be classified according to the things they adopt as their supposed deities. The main varieties of idolaters are described below.

**Those who falsely deify "powerful" people**

The clearest example on this subject is the people of Pharaoh. Since, in their heedlessness they ascribed a false divine status to him. The idolatrous system established by Pharaoh's court and people, as well as its features, is a universal model that can be seen in all ages and in all societies. Pharaoh declared himself to be a god (Surely Allah is beyond that), and his people submitted to that. Allah reveals the perverse mentality of Pharaoh in the Qur'an:

But then he rallied and called out, saying: "I am your Lord Most High!" (Surat al-Nazi'at: 23-24)

Pharaoh's principal followers and supporters were the members of his court. As we can see from his words, "O Council, I do not know of any other deity for you apart from me. Haman, kindle a fire for me over the clay and build me a lofty tower so that perhaps I may be able to climb up to Moses' God! I consider him a blatant liar" (Surat al-Qasas: 38), Pharaoh established complete control over Egypt's leading people and forced them to accept his so-called divinity. Since they enjoyed popular respect, they imagined that this perverse system could benefit them and be made to work to their

advantage. This is why they accepted his so-called divine status (Surely Allah is beyond that). However, this approach was doomed to eventual disappointment because they faced a terrible retribution in this world and eternal chastisement in the Hereafter. Allah describes the position and fate of these leading figures in the Qur'an:

(We sent Moses) to Pharaoh and his ruling circle. They followed Pharaoh's command, but Pharaoh's command was not rightly guided. He (Pharaoh) will go ahead of his people on the Day of Rising and lead them down into the Fire. What an evil place to be led to! They are pursued by a curse in this world and on the Day of Rising. What an evil gift to be given! That is some of the news of the cities that We relate to you. Some of them are still standing, while others are now just rubble. We did not wrong them; rather, they wronged themselves. The deities they called upon besides Allah did not help them at all when Allah's command came upon them. They did nothing but increase their ruin. (Surah Hud: 97-101)

Egypt's army and people also bowed to Pharaoh; those who were poor, weak, and needy submitted to his command. Allah reveals in the Qur'an:

Pharaoh called to his people, saying: "O my people, does the kingdom of Egypt not belong to me? Do not all these rivers flow under my control? Do you not then see?" (Surat al-Zukhruf: 51 )

... In that way, he swayed his people and they succumbed to him. They were a people who had gone astray (Surat al-Zukhruf: 54)

A large part of the Israelite captives in Egypt at that time also existed in a state of fear and oppression stemming from idolatry. Like the Egyptians, they thought that Pharaoh possessed power independently of Allah (Surely Allah is beyond that) and feared him in the same way that they feared Allah (Surely Allah is beyond that). Thus, they mindlessly preferred to submit to Pharaoh rather than believe in the true faith that is revealed to them through His Prophets and Messengers:

No one believed in Moses, except for a few of his people, out of fear that Pharaoh and the elders would persecute them. Pharaoh was high and mighty in the land. He was one of the profligate. (Surah Yunus: 83)

As revealed in the verse only a few a group of youth followed the Prophet Moses (pbuh) due to the oppressive and cruel system of the Pharaoh. Most of the Egyptians wrongfully deified Pharaoh (Surely Allah is beyond that) for a variety of worldly reasons: oppression, cowardice, ignorance, and the desire to protect their own interests at whatever price. As a result, they preferred the perverse system of Pharaoh to Allah's revelations and descended into idolatry by either forgetting or conveniently ignoring that Allah is the Only God and that He alone is worthy of their fear and respect. Given this fact, they should have placed all of their faith and trust in Allah and followed the paths revealed to humanity through His Prophets and

Messengers in order to gain His approval. If they had realized that only Allah has real power, they would not have feared Pharaoh and his wrath.

Had they understood that Pharaoh was no more than a helpless entity completely under Allah's control, they might not have submitted to him. Since they failed to understand that all of Pharaoh's wealth and riches, glory, and military strength actually belonged to Allah, they could not evaluate His might properly and thus were deceived by Pharaoh's apparent power. Had they known that Allah could have taken away all that Pharaoh possessed whenever He willed, they would not have displayed such idolatrous moral values and suffered such humiliation. Indeed, Allah revealed His ability to do just that when He drowned Pharaoh at the very moment He willed to do so. This example, a source of deep disgrace for those who unwisely deified Pharaoh (Surely Allah is beyond that), remains an excellent example of the idolatrous model that has been – and continues to be – widespread among humanity.

### Those who worship idols

Previous sections have defined idol as any animate or inanimate object set up as an equal to Allah. In this section, we shall use this word in its classic sense: statues carved out of the stone, metal and wood and worshipped by people. At first sight, a person might think that worshipping idols was a custom of very ancient societies or of certain primitive tribes who have not yet been reached by modern-day science and technology. But such an assumption would be incorrect, because at the heart of this kind of idolatry lie the concepts that these totems represent. Therefore, idol worshippers generally adopt the concept represented by their idols, rather than the idols themselves. In other words, they try wrongfully to immortalize the entities they regard as equal to Allah (e.g., guides, law-givers, protectors, or saviors) by making statues of them

There is a perverse logic behind this activity.

Aware that such statues represent the entity or concept regarded as Allah's equal, they are shown the respect and adoration to which He alone is entitled. What is actually being put forward as an equal of Allah is the meaning and mentality the idol in question represents. Allah mentions in the Qur'an about the Prophet Abraham's (pbuh) people in this context:

When he asked his father and his people: "What are these statues to which you are clinging?" they replied: "We found our fathers worshipping them."  
(Surat al-Anbiya': 52-53)

As can be seen from these verses, such forms of worship are an ancestral legacy. No matter how illogical it may be, idol worship may become a form of "correct" and "rational" behavior in even the most modern societies due to the worldview with which people are raised from childhood.

One characteristic of carved statues is that they gradually come to be equated with the concept that they represented. For example, the Buddha was first deified wrongfully as an individual in many countries of Eastern Asia (Surely Allah is beyond that). Statues representing him were then made to keep his memory and thoughts alive. Today, these statues have been made as false deities and have become idols that people worship and respect, to which they pray, and from which they seek help. Other forms of idol worship are based on a similar logic.

Historical records and the Qur'an refer to the Arabs of the Prophet's (May Allah bless him and grant him peace) time as having a wide variety of idols. When we examine the relevant historical documents, we clearly see that these idols actually represented specific concepts and had a symbolic nature. In other words, these Arabs did not actually worship shapes or statues made from stone or wood; rather, they worshipped the significance embodied in them in an unwise way (e.g., power, money, women, or abundance). Given this reality, those idols are not so very different to the values worshipped in our own day and preferred falsely over Allah's religion by many people. Thus, it is mistaken to think of ancient tribes or people when referring to idolaters or idol worshippers, for their counterparts are alive and well today. Those people were aware of Allah's existence, but had descended into idolatry because they had wrongfully deified various concepts by attaching greater importance to them (Surely Allah is beyond that) than they did to Allah.

Another example concerns some of the Israelites. Freed from Pharaoh's control, they encountered an idol-worshipping people on their journey and some of them asked the Prophet Moses (pbuh) to make one for them. In the Qur'an Allah reveals:

We conveyed the tribe of Israel across the sea, and they came upon some people who were devoting themselves to some idols that they had. They said: "O Moses, give us a deity just as these people have deities." He said: "You are indeed an ignorant people. What these people are doing is destined for destruction. What they are doing is in vain." (Surat al-A'raf: 138-139)

Such ignorant behavior shows that these group of Israelites could not appreciate and comprehend Allah's might. Instead, they wanted a false deity that they could see with their own eyes, bow down to, and perhaps "persuade" to fulfill their desires with showy rituals. Although the Prophet Moses (pbuh) explained the truth to them, they immediately adopted their own supposed deities once he had left for Mt. Sinai. In the Qur'an Allah states that they later regretted this heinous sin:

After he left, Moses' people adopted a calf made from their ornaments, a form that made a lowing sound. Did they not see that it could not speak to them or guide them to any way? They adopted it and so they were wrongdoers. When



they took full stock of what they had done and saw they had been misled, they said: "If our Lord does not have mercy on us and forgive us, we will certainly be among the lost." (Surat al-A'raf: 148-149)

However, Allah reveals in the Qur'an about the people falsely adopting a calf as a so called deity:

As for those who adopted the calf [as their Lord], anger from their Lord will overtake them, together with abasement, in the life of this world. That is how We repay the purveyors of falsehood. But as for those who do evil actions and then subsequently repent and believe, in that case your Lord is Ever-Forgiving, Most Merciful. (Surat al-A'raf: 152-153)

As is stated in the verse, when He wills, Allah does not forgive those who associate partners to Him. Given the evident fact that Allah is the One and Only, they take false deities for themselves and thus fabricate lies. Devoting themselves to these false deities, on the other hand, is a very wicked crime committed against Allah.

### Those who worship jinns

People sometimes consider jinns as equals to Allah (Surely Allah is beyond that). These beings were created out of fire, not out of earth like humanity (Surat al-Rahman: 15). Since they are invisible and possess different powers and attributes than humanity, some misguided people who have dealings with them begin to magnify them and place their hopes in them. They imagine that the jinns' existence and powers are somehow independent of Allah (Surely Allah is beyond that). In short, they foolishly seek their help and power instead of Allah's (Surely Allah is beyond that). In the Qur'an Allah reveals:

Certain men from among mankind used to seek refuge with certain men from among the jinn but they (jinns) only increased them (people) in wickedness. (Surat al-Jinn: 6)

Yet they make the jinn co-partners with Allah when He created them! And they attribute sons and daughters to Him without any knowledge. Glory be to Him! He is far above what they describe! (Surat al-An'am: 100)

In reality, however, jinns are the same as every other member of Creation in the sense that they are Allah's servants and have no power or knowledge apart from what He has bestowed upon them. As with human beings, they may be believers or unbelievers, are tested in this world, and sent to Paradise or Hell based on what they have earned for themselves. Several verses contain important information about them, such as:

I only created jinn and humanity to worship Me. (Surat al-Dharyat: 56)

Since jinns were created to serve and worship Allah, they owe their existence to Him and thus stand in need of Him at every moment. Given this, how can anyone wrongfully deify and obey them by falling under the

spell of one or more of their physical attributes? And yet many people do just that and end up considering them as Allah's equals and thereby seek to satisfy their own arrogance. However, those who impute an independent power and identity to them, as well as those who regard them as equal to Allah, will suffer terrible disappointment when the jinns fail to answer their prayers. In the Hereafter, they will realize that they were, in reality, idolaters. Allah reveals in the Qur'an:

They claim that there is a blood-tie between Him and the jinns, but the jinns know very well that they will be arraigned. Glory be to Allah, [Who is far] above what they describe. (Surat al-Saffat: 158-159)

In the Qur'an Allah reveals both the situations of the jinns who are disbelievers and the people whom they cause to pick the wrong path:

On the Day We gather them all together [He will say]: "O Company of jinn, you gained many followers among humanity." And their friends among humanity will say: "Our Lord, we benefited from one another, and now we have reached the term that You determined for us." He will say: "The Fire is your home. You will be in it timelessly, forever, except as Allah wills. Your Lord is All-Wise, All-Knowing." (Surat al-An'am: 128)

### Those who unwisely deify their own fancies

People also ignorantly deify (Surely Allah is beyond that) their own *fancies*, defined as one's passions, desires, whims, and caprices. Placing their own worldly wishes above Allah's commands and wishes by worshipping statues, jinns, or other people or entities, their final goal is to satisfy their own caprices and desires. Such people are very numerous in society.

As worldly desires are unlimited, these people seek to satisfy all of them. As a result, they find themselves compelled to exceed the bounds Allah has established for humanity and to violate His commands and prohibitions. In the Qur'an Allah reveals the Prophet Joseph's (pbuh) speaking about this:

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

Worldly desires may be a wish for wealth, boundless property, and fortune. To achieve their desires, many people resort to improper means (e.g., theft and fraud) if lawful and legitimate ones are not available. Even though Allah has forbidden such actions, worldly desires encourage people to ignore acts of observance such as taking care of others and giving alms in order to purify their wealth. Believers abide by Allah's commands and avoid what He has forbidden. On the other hand, those who unwisely deify their own desires obey their worldly cravings and so violate the commands and prohibitions of Allah.

Lust is a major worldly desire and passion. Those who follow their desires see no harm in adultery and even encourage people to indulge in it, although Allah has forbidden it. Some people who deliberately go ahead in the full knowledge that Allah has forbidden it, who see no harm and feel no regret in such activity, and who do not repent sincerely have clearly and ignorantly deified their desires and thus ascribe equals to Allah. By definition, they are idolaters. Allah reveals in the Qur'an:

A man who has fornicated may only marry a woman who has fornicated or a woman of the idolaters. A woman who has fornicated may only marry a man who has fornicated or a man of the idolaters. Doing such a thing is forbidden for the believers. (Surat al-Nur: 3)

There is no end to worldly desires. Thus, if people are driven by their desires and do nothing to free themselves from their control, these desires can lead them to exceed the bounds set by Allah for humanity. In other words, in a great perversity such people will deify their desires and become idolaters, for they will forget about pleasing Allah. It means that he worships his false deity, that is his lower-self, complies with whatever it demands and does not step out of its commands. As in the case of other idolaters, some time later such a person loses his wisdom and foresight and blunts his conscience due to being a slave to his lower-self. Their reason and foresight will gradually disappear, their conscience will atrophy, and soon they will find themselves in a position lower than the animals. Allah reveals the situation of these people ignorantly worshipping their own desires in the Qur'an:

Have you seen the one who has taken his whims and desires to be his deities? 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! (Surat al-Furqan: 43-44)

This is the most widespread form of idolatry in present-day societies. Today, many societies around the world involve individuals who are largely unaware of Allah and religious moral values. As a result, and unaware of any bounds when it comes to satisfying their passions, desires, and wants, they spend a large part of their lives pursuing that which they think will make them happy: social rank and status and the wealth accruing from the acquisition of a great deal of money and property. While possessing material and wealth is not an evil in itself, we must be aware of the following fact: in order to fulfill their craving and passion, people often make concessions when confronted with what Allah requires of them. In other words, they become idolaters because they prefer to satisfy their earthly desires over adhering to Allah's commands and prohibitions. It is as if there were a veil over their eyes that somehow prevents them from thinking about our

Creator, why they have been created, or the Hereafter. Allah reveals this truth in the Qur'an:

Have you seen the one 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? (Surat al-Jathiyyah: 23)

Since idolaters do not use their reason and conscience, they cannot make sound judgments about certain fundamental truths. Their insensitivity to Allah's might and the existence of the Hereafter resembles that of the orchard owner described in Surat al-Kahf. This account is a very significant example of the idolaters' weakness of mind and logic at all times. In the Qur'an Allah reveals:

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

This is a very accurate portrayal of people who have strayed far from religious moral values, fail to appreciate Allah as they ought, and do not believe in the Hereafter. When faced with the terrible mistake of ceasing to exist for all eternity, such people console themselves by *admitting the possibility* of a Hereafter in which they hope to be happy and contented although they do not believe it in a certain way. Yet since they do not truly believe in life after death, that is Hereafter, they make no preparations for it.

It is useful to mention one important effect here: All people, whether believers or unbelievers, have unlimited worldly desires and passions, for Allah uses them to test people and reveal their true nature. Those who are faithful to Him control their passions and observe only His commands and prohibitions; those who are faithful only to their whims and desires wrongfully ignore the bounds established by Him for humanity so that they can satisfy their desires. Since the members of the latter group prefer their desires over His approval, they will be condemned to eternal punishment. Allah reveals their situation in the Surat al-Ahqaf:

On the Day when those who did not believe are exposed to the Fire [He will say]: "You dissipated the good things you had in your worldly life and enjoyed yourself in it. So today you are being repaid with the punishment of humiliation for being arrogant in the land without any right, and for being deviators." (Surat al-Ahqaf: 20)

In the Hereafter, the believers who do not obey their worldly desires and do value Allah's commands above anything will attain both His mercy and His Paradise, where they will be able to satisfy all their desires in a legitimate manner. Allah states this good news in the Qur'an:

Platters and cups of gold will be passed around among them, and they will have there all that their hearts desire and in which their eyes find delight. You will remain in it timelessly, forever. (Surat al-Zukhruf: 71)

### Those who foolishly deify themselves

Another unwise and common form of idolatry is self-deification. One might imagine at first glance that such a model would be quite rare. However, this is not the case. Many people do not, perhaps, name this dangerous state in which they live, but when evaluated in a sincere manner, such a diagnosis proves to be quite accurate.

For example, most people believe that their successes, superior features, intelligence, attractiveness, lineage, wealth, property, rank, station, and many similar things are the result of their own work. As a result, they become proud. If they have more than one of these features, their pride increases even further. Convinced that all of these things originate in themselves and that they are the source of their own success, they may belittle or underestimate other people and regard themselves superior to them.

Such people draw attention to themselves by arrogance. This is, in essence, a sin against Allah, because only He can endow a person with anything. For example, beauty is a manifestation of Allah. Thus, since beauty belongs to Him, He is the One Who should be praised for having it. We all know that only the artist of a painting deserves to be praised for its beauty, since the painting did not come into being of its own accord.

Property and assets should be considered in exactly the same way, for all assets really belong to Allah and He can easily take them back whenever He wills. It is, therefore, a grave error for people to boast of, and thus take pride in, possessing something that does not actually belong to them. Rather, they should understand that all of their assets, whether physical or otherwise, belong to Allah and thank Him accordingly. For example, Allah reveals in the Qur'an the Prophet Solomon's (pbuh) love for his horses and possessions:

We gave David [a son,] Solomon. What an excellent servant! He truly turned to his Lord. When swift horses, champing at the bit, were displayed before him in the afternoon, he (Solomon) said: "Truly do I love the love of good, with a view to the glory of my Lord" until (the Sun) disappeared behind its veil. (Surah Sad: 30-32)

Dhu'l Qarnayn (pbuh), upon whom Allah bestowed power, means, and blessings, helped a people against the threat from Gog and Magog. Although

he achieved something very difficult and prevented the spread of corruption, he asked nothing for himself. On the contrary, he turned to Allah. In the Qur'an Allah reveals:

He (Dhu'l Qarnayn) said: "This is a mercy from my Lord. But when my Lord's promise comes about, He will crush it (the barrier) flat. The promise of my Lord is surely true." (Surat al-Kahf: 98)

Clearly, such submission to Allah is a living model of the believers' attitude, for they are always turning to Him due to their knowledge that they are completely helpless before Him and that all things belong to Him.

Based on what has been said above, thinking of idolatry solely in terms of prostrating before hand-made statues is a very narrow and superficial perspective. Only idolaters themselves employ such logic in order to rid themselves of any guilt. Such people imagine that the concept of idolatry disappeared forever after the Prophet (May Allah bless him and grant him peace) destroyed the idols in the Ka`bah. The fact is, however, that many verses describe idolatry in great detail and strongly warn believers against it. And since the Qur'an's provisions apply for all times these verses have been revealed to impart wisdom.

**In the Qur'an Allah also refers to  
the idolaters who imposed  
provisions, rules, prohibitions, and  
injunctions upon their people on  
the grounds that they are part of  
His religion.  
THOSE WHO ASCRIBE EQUALS TO  
ALLAH IN HIS NAME AND IN THE  
NAME OF RELIGION**

At the end of the previous chapter, we mentioned those idolaters who claiming to be religious ascribe equals to Allah by inventing and imposing, in His name, various provisions and rules, as well as restrictions and injunctions, that have nothing to do with Islam. Such people attempts to

change religion so that it accords with their own wishes and desires, interests and advantages, and turn it away from its true essence. They thus witlessly create false religion that they call also "Islam"; however, its contents are totally different from those of the true religion revealed by Allah.

In this way, they lead not only themselves but also large numbers of other people into idolatry. They impose their perverse religion to people. Ignorant people who are unaware of the essence of true Islamic moral values and of the Qur'an and the hadith's true teachings adopt this new distorted religion. These were the real idolaters that we mention in this chapter. As a result, these people have put themselves into the same situation as earlier communities have done. Allah reveals the situation of these people in the earlier communities who deviated into ascribing equals to Him :

They have taken their rabbis and monks as lords besides Allah, and also the Messiah, the son of Maryam. Yet they were commanded to worship the Only One God. There is no deity but Him! Glory be to Him above anything they associate with Him! (Surat al-Tawba: 31)

Allah reveals in the following verses about this idolatrous community's general logic and mindset.

In the same way, their idols have made killing their children appear good to many of the idolaters in order to destroy them and confuse them in their religion. If Allah had willed, they would not have done it; so abandon them and what they fabricate. They say: "These animals and crops are sacrosanct. No one may eat them, except those we wish"-as they allege-and animals on whose backs it is forbidden to ride, and animals over which they do not mention Allah's name, inventing a falsehood against Him. He will repay them for the things they have invented. They say: "What is in the wombs of these animals is exclusively for our men and forbidden for our wives. But if it is stillborn, they can share in it." He will repay them for their false depiction. He is All-Wise, All-Knowing. [As for] those who kill their children foolishly [and] without any knowledge and make what Allah has provided for them forbidden, inventing lies against Allah, such people are lost. They are misguided. They are not guided. (Surat al-An'am: 137-140)

As the above verses show, idolaters have a great tendency to forbid Allah's blessings and what He has made lawful by proclaiming their own rules in His name. Their generally prohibitive mentality distorts religion. Allah reveals in the Qur'an those of their slanders and lies that are directed toward Him. As can be seen from this, these people appear in Allah's name. In the first verse Allah tells us that they engender confusion in religious matters. In the following verse Allah says that they establish a completely different religion, one that He has not permitted and of which He does not approve:

Or do they have partners who have laid down a religion for them for which Allah has not given any authority? Were it not for the prior Word of Decision, the judgment between them would already have been made. The wrongdoers will have a painful punishment. (Surat al-Shura: 21)

No matter how religious they may see themselves to be, they are no more than idolaters in Allah's Sight. Allah reveals in the Qur'an how idolaters have adhered to the same deviant conception and passed it on from one generation to another:

Those who associate others with Allah will say: "If Allah had willed, we would not have associated anything with Him, nor would our fathers [have done so], and we would not have made anything forbidden." The people before them also lied in the same way until they felt Our violent force. Say: "Do you have some knowledge you can produce for us? You are following nothing but conjecture. You are only guessing." (Surat al-An'am: 148)

Allah states in this verse that idolaters follow their own conjectures and speculations, thereby leaving to one side the definitive facts that come from Him. Other verses describe how the idolaters prefer their distorted ancestral religion that they learned from their ancestors; that is from their fathers or grandfathers to true Islam which Allah reveals in the Qur'an:

No, in fact they say: "We found our fathers following a religion, and we are simply guided [by following] in their footsteps." Similarly, We never sent any warner before you [O Muhammad] to any city without the affluent among them saying: "We found our fathers following a religion, and we are simply following in their footsteps." Ask: "What if I have come with better guidance than what you found your fathers following?" They reply: "We reject that with which you have been sent." (Surat al-Zukhruf: 22-24)

Blindly determined to persist in their ancestral religion, idolaters refuse to listen to reason. This, as well as their conservative and biased mindset, is described in several verses, some of which read as follows:

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

When they are told: "Come to what Allah has sent down and to the Messenger," they say: "What we found our fathers doing is enough for us." What! Even if their fathers did not know anything and were not guided! (Surat al-Ma'ida: 104)

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



So far, we have seen that these idolaters deviate from the true path because they do not take the Qur'an and the hadith as their foundation. Instead of the Book revealed by Allah and the hadith of our Prophet (May Allah bless him and grant him peace), they prefer to implement their ancestors' false legacy, works, and handed-down knowledge. If their ancestors banned things that Allah made lawful, then they regard them as forbidden. But following the way of one's ancestors has nothing to do with true religion. Those who fear and respect Allah and seek His approval are responsible only for abiding by the commands issued by the Qur'an and our Prophet (May Allah bless him and grant him peace), not for preserving their ancestral traditions.

### Idolaters who are members of a social class

A close examination of the Qur'an verses dealing with idolaters reveals that some of these people constitute a social grouping with shared characteristics, beliefs, and structures and are distinct from the idolaters of other faiths. Allah reveals this in the Qur'an:

As for the believers and those who are Jews, Sabaeans, Christians, Magians, and idolaters, Allah will distinguish between them on the Day of Rising. Allah is witness of all things. (Surat al-Hajj: 17)

When we review the time of our Prophet Muhammad (May Allah bless him and grant him peace), we can easily comprehend the characters and corrupted morality of these idolaters. Arab societies in that period had adopted a system of belief and worship that deviated from the true faith which Allah revealed to them by means of the Prophet Abraham (pbuh); they worshipped idols and yet did not deny Allah's existence. Even though they knew of His existence, they unwisely regarded their various fabricated idols as His equals (Surely Allah is beyond that) and thus descended into idolatry. They even had a false belief that these idols could intercede on their behalf in His Sight. Allah reveals the perverted belief of these people in the Qur'an:

Instead of Allah, they worship that which can neither harm them nor help them, saying: "These are our intercessors with Allah." Ask: "Would you inform Allah of something about which He does not know either in the heavens or on earth?" May He be glorified and exalted above what they associate with Him! (Surah Yunus: 18)

Allah tells in the Qur'an that these idolaters went on pilgrimage, welcomed pilgrims, visited the Ka`bah, prayed, and spent money for His sake. In other words, they introduced themselves as devout, law-abiding individuals in His Sight. However, since they did not worship Allah alone and since they performed these actions within an idolatrous framework, they derived no benefit from them. No matter how devout, superior, or close to Allah they may have regarded themselves, Allah forbade them to enter the

Masjid al-Haram (the Sacred Mosque). Allah reveals this in the Surat al-Tawba:

O you who believe, the idolaters are unclean, so after this year they should not come near the Sacred Mosque (Masjid al-Haram). If you fear impoverishment, Allah will enrich you from His bounty if He wills. Allah is All-Knowing, All-Wise. (Surat al-Tawba: 28)

Since the Qur'an is addressed to people living at all times and all ages, we have to see how its wisdom can be applied in our own day. The verses concerned with the idolaters, the attitudes and mindsets of those who attempted to devise a new faith in the name of Islam, and of those who followed them and summoned others to do so, clearly describe such people. Therefore, those of our contemporaries who have a similar attitude and mindset, as well as those who practice an invented religion, match the verses' general description. Indeed, when distorted beliefs proclaimed in religion's name are widespread in some societies, those who impose rules and obligations, define what is lawful and prohibited, and those who follow such people constitute a idolatrous group that "slanders Allah", "abides by the ancestral religion instead of Allah's religion", and "say things about Him that they do not actually know".

In addition, these people proclaim that their religion is the true one and that they are the true believers. For that reason, they have tried to distort the true faith and turned to idolatry. Regardless of time and place, such people have always rejected the messengers sent to return them to the true path and the true faith, and have regarded themselves as being devout and steadfast in faith. Some of them have even witlessly accused Allah's messengers of inventing lies against Allah. (Surah Al'Imran: 78 and Surah Saba': 8). The same accusation was also hurled at our Prophet (May Allah bless him and grant him peace), as recorded in Surat al-Shura: 24.

Allah also reveals in more verses of the Qur'an about these idolaters who claim to "maintain the religion" and in this way slander His Messengers:

They are surprised that a warner should come to them from among themselves. The unbelievers exclaim: "This is a lying magician. Has he turned all the deities into One God? That is truly astonishing!" Their leaders went off, saying: "Carry on as you are! Hold fast to your deities. This is clearly something planned. We have not heard of this in the old religion. This is merely something contrived. Has the Reminder been sent down to him out of all of us?" They are in doubt about My Reminder. They have yet to taste My punishment. (Surah Sad: 4-8)

Having convinced themselves that they are on the true path, even on the Day of Judgment they will be unwilling to accept the fact that they were actually idolaters, ascribing equals to Allah. Allah reveals their situation in the Qur'an:

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

As Allah shows in these verses, what lies at the heart of these people ascribing equals to Allah is their adherence to the rules that they themselves have invented in the name of religion, as opposed to those revealed by Allah. This is not the only reason why those who follow something other than the Qur'an and the hadith of our Prophet (May Allah bless him and grant him peace) as their guide, fall into idolatry. Above all else, they go astray because they fail to recognize and appreciate Allah properly and thus have a false belief depending on superstitious tales. They make their beliefs equal to Allah. In addition, their love and conception of Allah has nothing to do with what is described in the Qur'an. Therefore, the only way to appreciate Allah and understand His religion properly and correctly is to take the Qur'an and the hadith as one's guide. Allah reveals that everything is explained in the Qur'an and that Qur'an is a blessing to believers:

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

## **THE CHARACTERISTICS OF IDOLATERS**

One of the idolatrous community's main characteristics is bigotry, which the Qur'an defines as limiting and regulating a person's life via man-made prohibitions, principles, and sanctions that are not based upon valid, logical, and rational evidence. In the case of religion, this term refers to those who cast aside religion's true and valid sources and adopt rules and principles based on *speculation and conjecture*. Such a misguided undertaking is often (and inaccurately) attributed to devout Muslims, although it actually describes idolaters who live by the stipulations, rules, and prohibitions of their distorted faith while proclaiming that they are following the true Islam. Indeed, bigotry is one of the main factors that encourage idolaters to adopt such a superstitious religion, for earthly desires tend toward bigotry as well as many other negative traits.

Idolaters might find it far more attractive to live by and defend such bigotry than to adopt the true path. In their own foolishness they derive an arbitrary mystical pleasure from this.

Idolaters fill their bigotry-based religions with odd symbols, customs, and rituals so that they can put on a great show. As a result, they become known as very devout individuals who possess considerable degree of fear and respect for Allah and eventually hope to gain great prestige in their community. But this bigotry is actually no more than a superstitious structure designed by them to satisfy themselves, because, for whatever reason, the essence and truth of Allah's religion, or, to put it more clearly, its true contents and framework, are not enough for their distorted mentality. Their perverse minds cannot accept the fact that Islam is easy to live by and is based on reason and clarity; they can feel at ease only if they practice a difficult religion and display this to other people. They are uncomfortable with the idea that it is enough for Allah alone to know what they do, they prefer to follow a man-made religion that will enable other people to observe and comment upon their "piety."

However, it is important to mention that unlike the pre-Islamic idolaters who belonged to the religions revealed before Islam, by Allah's grace these later idolaters have been unable to change even a single word of the Qur'an, Allah's final scripture. Our Prophet (May Allah bless him and grant him peace) also revealed that no other scripture will be sent down, that no other religion will come, and that the Qur'an is valid until the Day of Judgment. Allah has protected - and will continue to protect - the Qur'an. Thus, those who sincerely wish to learn what Islam requires in a clear and detailed manner can do so by taking the Qur'an and our Prophet's (May Allah bless him and grant him peace) life style which is entirely compatible with the Qur'an, as their guide.

The idolaters, on the other hand, defend superstitious beliefs that keep people away from the Qur'an. None of the arguments they bring forth for their false beliefs are not compatible with the Qur'an. As Allah tells in the Qur'an, they speak falsehoods based upon their own speculations and conjectures. Harboring various suppositions regarding Allah, they live in a state of insecurity and oppression. Sometimes, they attempt to regain their self-confidence and determination by means of aggression, hypocrisy, mockery, and disregard of others' opinions.

At the same time, these idolaters are ignorant. Since even if they read and memorize countless books, they cannot be enlightened by the Qur'an's and the hadith's radiance or know Allah as they should, as He has revealed Himself in the Qur'an. Such people worship a supposed deity, one that is based upon their superstitious faith and they unwisely ignore the truth in the Qur'an.

Their subsequent ignorance and irrationality are reflected in all that they do. Unable to understand the Qur'an and the hadith, their ignorance, lack of reason that is defined in the Qur'an, and their defective logic constantly

cause them to be humiliated before other people. Since they are devoted to a false religion, they cannot defend their belief system in a rational manner.

The idolaters do not turn directly to Allah and establish a sincere closeness to Him because they are hard-hearted and feel no closeness or devotion to Him. Allah's name is on their tongue, but not in their heart. They arbitrarily appoint intermediaries to gain access to Allah and regard obtaining their approval as sufficient. However, all such intermediaries actually move them even further away from Allah and increase their idolatry. Allah reveals in the Qur'an the situation of how these people idolize their false deities supposing them as intercessions and that in essence these have no validity in the Presence of Allah:

They worship, instead of Allah, that which can neither harm nor help them, saying: "These are our intercessors with Allah." Ask: "Would you inform Allah of something about which He does not know either in the heavens or on earth?" May He be glorified and exalted above what they associate with Him! (Surah Yunus: 18)

Being far removed from the Qur'an means that they are also far removed from its moral values. In their everyday life, behaviors and conversations they follow a model incompatible with the Qur'anic morality and the Sunna. Since they do not read the Qur'an, or read it only with an idolatrous mentality that prevents them from understanding it correctly, they remain deprived of the blessings, knowledge, fine moral values, and spiritual virtues that Allah bestows on the believers in the Qur'an. Leaving its superior virtues aside, the idolaters find all kinds of immorality and fraud far more attractive. In addition, they are quite capable of suppressing their conscience and violating the bounds established by Allah for humanity in order to justify their decisions when placed in a difficult position or when their earthly desires and wishes conflict with Allah's regulations.

Another one of their characteristics is parsimony. In one verse Allah reveals that the believers use whatever money is left after meeting their needs to care for other people. Idolaters, on the other hand, spend only a very small amount – and even that is usually dispensed for show. Accumulating possessions and wealth is one of their greatest passions. Indeed, this is far more pleasing to them than spending what they have in Allah's way. Since they lack true faith and thus have no trust in or submission to Allah, they are always afraid of what the future will bring.

Idolaters constantly invest for their future. Of course such an activity is allowed; however, it must not become an all-consuming passion, for such an attitude indicates a lack of true submission to Allah as well as a deficiency in one's faith and understanding of Him as the Sole Provider.

In addition, idolaters are characterized by envy, greed, selfishness, and other moral vices. Having no sense of true aesthetics, art, and beauty, they

behave in a very coarse manner toward others and mindlessly try to portray this as a sign of their superiority.

The idolaters are also consumed by fear especially against the sincere Muslims, the cause of which they cannot identify. The feeling of fear is created by Allah as they are ascribing equals to Him. Allah reveals this in the Qur'an:

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

Furthermore, they are also unhappy and pessimistic because troubles, difficulties, woes, and sorrows never leave them alone as they ascribe equals to Allah. This is the beginning (in this world) of the punishment and humiliation they will face in the Hereafter. Besides this, they subconsciously feel an unwise rebel against Allah. However they refuse to give up their false religions, upon which they have based all of their various lifestyles, family structures, surroundings, and social and business relationships. Therefore, it does not suit them at all to abandon this way of life.

One of the idolaters' most important features is "the idolaters are unclean" (Surat al-Tawba: 28). This is an indication that they are both physically and spiritually unclean. Their bodies, clothes, and surroundings are so dirty as to endanger their health. They literally have no conception of proper cleanliness. Since their dietary habits are based on superstitions and man-made beliefs, they sometimes manifest physical or mental impairments stemming from an unbalanced diet.

The idolaters' mental health is also unsound, for their resulting negative and unhealthy lifestyle can affect their mental development and cerebral functions. This applies to their powers of judgment as well, which makes their speech and behavior unbalanced and inconsistent, far removed from rationality. Prone to ups and downs, they may suddenly become highly excited, experience rapid mood swings from depression to aggression, or speak in an uncomfortable, high, and impaired tone of voice.

Yet they fail to properly grasp the wicked situation they are in, for in the Qur'an Allah relates that He will assign the one, who shuts his eyes to His remembrance, a satan, and that he will assume himself to be guided on the true path. The related verses read:

If someone closes his eyes to the remembrance of the All-Merciful, We assign him a satan who becomes his bosom friend-they debar them from the path, yet they still think they are guided. (Surat al-Zukhruf: 36-37)

When idolaters are told of this, they usually either cannot or refuse to comprehend it because they are not sincere in matters of religion. Even if they read books and articles on the subject, they will be unaware of the fact

that they are not approaching the subject directly; if they do realize this, they will pretend not to. Even if all of these descriptions fit them to the letter, they will still refuse to accept it and will look for idolatry elsewhere.

However, those people who are sincere in their faith but fell into such misunderstanding initially, through ignorance, can still apply to their consciences when they learn the true facts. If they return to the true path they can be saved, if Allah wills, through sincere repentance. It may be hoped that people who join the idolaters out of ignorance and who do not have a truly idolater character themselves may attain Allah's true path as a result of their sincerity and good intentions. One goal of this book is to reach such people and enable them to see their errors and deficiencies, to make them aware of the darkness that surrounds them, and to encourage them to repent and enter Allah's pure religion.

Unless Allah lifts the veil over a person's eyes, ears, and heart, one cannot expect the conscience of a true idolater to begin working and the person concerned to achieve salvation. The reason why an idolater fails to realize the truth and believes that it does not apply to him or her, despite reading this book, is one of Allah's miracles. Naturally, the best and hoped for outcome is for such people to attain salvation. It must not be forgotten that all hearts are in the hands of Allah and that by His will He will guide those who sincerely draw close to Him, repent, realize the reality of their situation, and seek salvation only from Him. Therefore, one has to guard against succumbing to idolatry. One way to do this is to consider the possibility right from the start that Allah exists, what this fact means, and, with this in mind, review the beliefs and worldview of one's society, as well as one's personal beliefs, worldview, and opinion of Islam. There is no shame in recognizing and correcting one's faults; on the contrary, this is a sign of sincerity and a proof of one's fear for and respect of Allah.

**As we have seen thus far, rejecting the Qur'an and the Sunna of our Prophet (May Allah bless him and grant him peace) and adhering to superstitious and misguided rites, practices, and beliefs, lead one to strife and idolatry rather than to the true path. For that reason, the**

**only solution is to tightly embrace  
the way of our Prophet (May Allah  
bless him and grant him peace),  
the way of the Qur'an.  
TWO BASIC CAUSES OF IDOLATRY**

Two basic factors lead people into idolatry: ignorance and insincerity. In order to avoid idolatry, people must have the requisite and sufficient faith and strongly eschew insincerity.

### **Ignorance**

One of the most important factors revealed by Allah is ignorance as regards to religious moral values:

If any of the idolaters ask you for protection, give it until they have heard the words of Allah. Then convey them to a place where they are safe, because they are a people who do not know. (Surat al-Tawba: 6)

Only the Qur'an and the hadith contains the knowledge essential for pure faith, for no other scripture clearly describes what true belief in the One God is, defines deities and idols, explains the form that pure faith should assume, details the behavior and mentality that pleases Allah, shows how people are misguided to idolatry, reveals satan's snares of earthly desires and deceits, and discusses the attitudes and behavior to be avoided. Our Prophet Muhammad (May Allah bless him and grant him peace) explained these facts all through his life.

The reader must understand that the learning we are discussing here is not just an accumulation of facts, for *knowledge*, as defined in the Qur'an, is that which impacts one's heart and spurs one's mind and conscience. If people only learn the information imparted in the Qur'an but do not reflect on them as they should be, they may not gain any benefit from it.

Several verses involve Allah's oneness and the non-existence of whatever else people may consider a Deity, as well as about idolatry and its adherents. These matters are frequently emphasized and described in great detail to impress upon people how vital it is that such terms be understood. It is impossible for those who have not read and reflected on the Qur'an know about these facts. So they are, as Allah reveals in the Qur'an, *ignorant*.



The position of such people is identical to that of the idolatrous communities of the pre-Islamic era. Among the Muslim Arabs, this period is known as the "Days of Ignorance." Those who reject Islam, regardless of when or where they live, are therefore considered ignorant. Given that the Qur'an was revealed 1,400 years ago and is now available in all major languages, there is no excuse or justification for such ignorance and idolatry. People may claim to be devout, but if their faith is based on hearsay knowledge and handed-down superstitions, they are still ignorant because they are not living by the Qur'an's moral values and have not yet correctly understood the faith revealed by Allah. Allah reveals this fact in the Qur'an:

When they are told: "Come to what Allah has sent down and to the Messenger," they say: "What we found our fathers doing is enough for us." What! Even if their fathers did not know anything and were not guided! (Surat al-Ma'ida: 104)

The idolaters that lived among the communities of many prophets have been described as ignorant people. Allah reveals in the Qur'an:

We conveyed the tribe of Israel across the sea, and they came upon some people who were devoting themselves to some idols that they had. They said: "O Moses, give us an idol, just as these people have idols." He said: "You are indeed an ignorant people." (Surat al-A'raf: 138)

Remember the brother of 'Ad [Hud], when he warned his people by the sand dunes—and warners passed away before and after him—"Worship no one but Allah. I fear for you the punishment of a terrible Day." They said: "Have you come to us to divert us from our deities? Bring us what you have promised us, if you are telling the truth." He said: "All knowledge is with Allah. I only transmit to you that with which I have been sent. But I see that you are an ignorant people." (Surat al-Ahqaf: 21-23)

The concept of *ignorance* expressed in these verses is highly significant, for it includes not only not knowing, but also failing to understand the facts even though one sees and recognizes them. Some Israelites, who knew the Prophet Moses (pbuh) and the Torah sent down to him, and who witnessed his struggle against Pharaoh, are an example of this, for some of them adopted other deities even after obtaining this knowledge. It was as if they actually knew nothing at all. What is even more astonishing and exemplary is that they actually asked the Prophet Moses (pbuh) to set up an idol for them (Surely Allah is beyond that). This shows that salvation from ignorance lies in acquiring information and in understanding that knowledge which enters one's heart and then both affects that person's heart and is reflected by his or her thoughts and behavior.

This is the error made by some of the earlier peoples who deviated into idolatry, especially some of the Israelites (surely the Israelites who are truly sincere are beyond that) Although they possessed considerable information

and had learned it well, they still went astray. Allah describes in the Qur'an such people as *donkeys loaded with books*:

The metaphor of those who were charged with the Torah but then did not uphold it is that of a donkey loaded with weighty tomes. How evil is the metaphor of those who deny Allah's Signs! Allah does not guide those who do wrong. (Surat al-Jumu'a: 5)

In the Qur'an Allah also tells us that "...when a group of them (Jews) heard Allah's Word and then, after grasping it, knowingly distorted it?" (Surat al-Baqara: 75). In other words, having knowledge is not enough; one needs a sincere heart, one that is rooted in a genuine fear of and respect for Allah, in order to evaluate that information properly.

### Insincerity

What we mean by the concept of *insincerity* is refusing to abide by the facts and even acting in the opposite way although one learns and understands them, in order to preserve their worldly interests. Those who read the Qur'an properly and have reason and a conscience can easily understand what type of behavior and morality pleases Allah. After acquiring this knowledge, they are expected to abide by it and shape their life around it according to their level of sincerity.

Those who are insincere can abandon these truths in an instant for the sake of small benefits and advantages. Chasing after their worldly desires, greed, and passions, they exceed the bounds that Allah has established for humanity. Ignoring His commands and prohibitions, they live for this world and exchange the Hereafter for next to nothing.

Those who ascribe equals to Allah cannot overcome this great sin until they abandon their incorrect worldview and repent. No change occurs even if they exhibit the greatest scrupulousness with regard to those matters that do not conflict with their worldly interests. For example, observing many religious observances may be of no benefit if they deliberately ignore even one of His commands—if they neglect to perform the five regular prayers, for instance. If they continue to follow this path wholeheartedly, they become idolaters. Since they pick and choose which of His commands they will follow, they have unwisely turned their desires into deities. Unless the idolaters do not repent and ask forgiveness to Allah all their deeds including their worship will come to nothing in the Hereafter. Allah reveals this in the Qur'an:

It has been revealed to you and those before you: "If you associate others with Allah, your actions will come to nothing and you will be among the losers." No! Worship Allah and be among the thankful. (Surat al-Zumar: 65-66)

As can be seen, insincerity in this sense is not unique to those remote from religious morality. Some people who become idolaters due to their

insincerity apply double standards while maintaining a devout external appearance. In other words, they seek to save their worldly lives and satisfy their own desires by pretending to conform with the religion. But attempting to ease their conscience through self-deception cannot succeed. They observe a false faith according to their own wishes, instead of according to Allah's commands and prohibitions, and thus establish and live by their own man-made religion. Those who have sincere faith, who adhere to what Allah has revealed instead of their desires, urgings, and suggestions, however, seek only His mercy and approval, for as sincere servants to Him they can do nothing else. Thus, they never have to choose between their desires and faith.

But idolaters, whose mentality is the exact opposite of the believers' mentality, are insincere toward Allah right from the very outset. Although He knows their hearts, intentions, and every deed, they continue to follow their own hypocritical path in the misguided belief that He will accept their insincere excuses. They often convince themselves of this "truth," for almost all of them state, when asked, that they deserve of Paradise.

However, Allah tells us in the Qur'an something different: those who knowingly turn toward idolatry, despite knowing the truth, have lost the ability to reason. Thus, there is no point to looking for reason or logic in their incomprehensible and insincere double standards. Bearing this in mind, we can see that both unawareness and a failure to appreciate Allah properly underlie their insincerity and the ascription of equals to Allah that originates from it. Allah reveals this situation of idolaters in the Surat al-Zumar:

They do not measure Allah with His true measure. The whole earth will be a mere handful for Him on the Day of Rising, and the heavens will be folded up in His right hand. Glory be to Him! He is exalted above the partners they ascribe! (Surat al-Zumar: 67)

Hypocritical and insincere idolaters are a danger to themselves and all others, for they encourage others to follow them. The only escape from this lies in sincerity and the knowledge that Allah may bestow salvation upon them if they repent sincerely. This process involves turning to Allah with a sincere heart by beginning to base their life on His approval, learning the truth in the Qur'an and the hadith, and applying what they learn to their life. However, they will be successful only if they submit fully and unconditionally to Him as soon as possible and hope for His mercy. Allah reveals this fact in the Qur'an:

**Say (from Me): "O My servants, you who have transgressed against yourselves, do not despair of**

**Allah's mercy. 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. (Surat al-Zumar: 53-55)**

### ***EMOTIONALITY: A DANGER THAT CAN LEAD TO IDOLATRY***

As shown above, idolatry has no rational or logical foundation. In fact, when people begin to think clearly and use their reason and conscience to reflect upon their surroundings, they clearly see that there only Allah can exist. Nevertheless some people, perhaps even the majority, do not reflect and so act in the exact opposite manner.

Failing to abide by this truth, even though one has accepted it rationally and logically, stems from various emotional factors that impact on and smother one's reason and logic. For the sake of brevity, we refer to this as *emotionalism or romanticism*.

People can only think and act correctly if they use their reason. Allah describes in many verses of the Qur'an how believers comprehended very important truths by using their reason and that the idolaters and hypocrites always found themselves in trouble because they never used their reason. One of the most important reasons for this is that they act only according to

their emotions. Emotionality, which smothers reason, leaves people exposed to all of satan's suggestions and makes them his playthings. Through this "weapon," he directs the idolaters as he chooses and leads them into misguidance.

Allah bestows such feelings as love, fear, trust, need, and protection upon people from the moment of their Creation. People are to use them to gain Allah's approval, follow His path, and defend and engage in goodness and truth. However, if these emotions are diverted away from their true purpose which is clearly revealed in the Qur'an, they come to represent a force that propels a person toward satan and idolatry.

If these feelings are directed toward good, which is their true purpose, they lead one toward faith, purity, and Allah; if directed toward evil, they lead one toward idolatry. In the first case, the believers can expect their reward from Allah. In the second case, that of attributing a divine nature to man-made entities or personal desires, the unbelievers can expect only Allah's disapproval and punishment.

As we will later mention that all love, praise, exaltation, fear, respect, trust, and requests for help should be directed to Allah, for there is no other source and provider of all things, and no other possessor of actual superiority and beauty, knowledge and power. By unwisely ascribing even one of these Divine attributes to that which is not Him, one reveals himself or herself to be an idolater.

We will now examine the emotions of love, fear, and seeking aid to see how failing to control them through one's reason and basing one's life and actions upon them can lead to idolatry.

### Love

Believers know that since Allah created them, only He is worthy of their love, closeness, and devotion. After creating them out of nothing, Allah has continued to meet all of their physical and spiritual needs by creating countless blessings for everyone. Furthermore, as long as people have faith in and obey Him, Allah will reward them with a great and eternal blessing in both worlds, along with love and approval in His Sight. He bestows all of these things for no return, as a mercy and blessing from His Presence. Given this, how can any other member of Creation be worthy of a person's love and devotion?

One cause of love is the interest and awe felt when confronted with the Beloved's superior and beautiful features. When this interest and awe is returned, the relationship turns into a powerful bond of affection. The important point here, however, is to determine to Whom this superiority and beauty actually belong and then to turn these feelings of interest and awe in the proper direction: Allah is the source and true Lord of all beauty, superiority, and exalted titles. The titles that may appear to be inherent in His Creations are actually nothing more than very minor manifestations of

His infinite titles and, in fact, belong to Him alone. Thus, given that Allah manifests Himself in His servants, any love that one feels should be felt for Allah alone. If this is not the case, the person has ascribed equals to Allah.

Of course it is not wrong to feel love. What is wrong, however, is to forget Allah and bind oneself, with passion and fanaticism, to that which is not Him or to abandon those things of which He approves and finds pleasing. When looked at through the eyes of faith, all beauty possessed by human beings is understood to belong to Allah. Those who realize this naturally turn to Him and are aware that by loving the other person, they actually love Allah. Idolatrous love, however, is quite different. Allah reveals in the Qur'an about the idolaters who have adopted idols apart from Himself:

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

This bond of love will turn into hatred and mutual rejection, because these man-made idols to which people became attached through emotional bonds will bring them chastisement in the Hereafter. No one who takes Allah as his or her Only God can ever love any other thing or person as much as or more than he or she loves Allah. As for the idolaters, Allah says in the Qur'an:

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

The believers give Allah all of their love, for not doing so would mean that they are not sincere in their faith or lack a proper knowledge of Allah and Islam. Indeed, those who ascribe equals to Allah have a flawed and deficient knowledge and understanding of Him. Unable to establish a sincere closeness to Allah and appreciate Him as they should, they direct their love toward that which is not Him.

Here it will be useful to concentrate upon the male-female relationship, the tightest and most frequently observed form of idolatrous love. In these relationships, any devotion and togetherness constructed independently of Allah's approval is a major cause of deviation into idolatry. Thus, they are usually based on romanticism, emotionality, and mutual benefit, for one person is seeking the other person's approval. Not hesitating even for a moment about transgressing the bounds Allah set for humanity in order to please each other, they direct the love bestowed upon them by Allah toward each other and soon forget Him. The result is people who fulfill all duties to each other, instead of to Allah, and who perversely regard each other as

independent entities. In the Qur'an Allah describes such relationships as mutual worship and deifying the other person.

Allah notes in the Qur'an the passionate love felt toward women in such relationships. If this love causes the man to forget Allah or to not remember Him as is His due, if he prefers his love of the woman over and above his love for Allah, and if it replaces his love for Allah in his heart, he is heading toward idolatry. The same is true for the female member of this relationship. In the Qur'an Allah tells us that such a love, which society considers "innocent," is not pleasing to Him:

What they call on apart from Him are female idols. What they call on is an arrogant satan. (Surat al-Nisa': 117)

The same danger exists on the part of women as well. Some societies call this idolatrous love true love, *romantic*, and *pure emotion*; it even praises and encourages it. Since this romantic propaganda hinders the development of young people's minds and consciousness, generations emerge that are unaware of religion, faith, or the reason for their Creation. Never having known Allah, they feel no love, fear, or respect for Him. In their eyes, idolatry is a natural form of behavior, an acceptable lifestyle. Here, it is important to remember; of course people may love and be affectionate toward each other, but they must not do so independently of Allah. Apart from this, and as long as their love is based on their love of Allah, they are among those people whom Allah mentions in the Qur'an are "devoted, passionate, of like age" (Surat al-Waqi'ah: 37) in Paradise. Thus, this model is legitimate.

The love felt by believers is a transparent, radiant one that gives ease to the heart, for it is addressed to Allah. They love other people because they are no more than manifestations of Allah. This is why believers do not grieve when someone they love dies or when something they love becomes lost. Given that all spiritual and physical beauty in the loved one actually belongs to Allah, Who is eternal, without end, and nearer to a person than his or her jugular vein, such a loss is no more than His temporarily taking back one or more of His manifestations in order to test that person. So long as the person persists in faith and this understanding, He will continue to manifest Himself with His most beautiful attributes in an even more intense form in the Hereafter which has no end. Since believers who possess true faith understand this truth, they are immune to all forms of grief, sorrow, and emotionality. Allah reveals this in the Qur'an:

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

But the idolaters suffer the pangs of infinite separation in their hearts when the people whom they love and to whom they are devoted die. Every person and thing they preferred over Allah and ascribed as equal to Him will be a source of suffering in this world and in the Hereafter. This provides

endless subject-matter for songs, poems, novels, and movies, the great majority of which are dedicated to themes of unrequited love, separation, betrayal, abandonment, death, and the ensuing pain and suffering.

Thus the pains that begin in this world will continue eternally in the next, and with a far fiercer spiritual and physical pain. In the Qur'an Allah speaks of a fire in Hell that reaches right into the heart (Surat al-Humaza': 5-7) Every form of heartache in this world constitutes a part of the far worse suffering experienced by the idolaters in Hell. Allah visits His vengeance upon those who betray Him and groundlessly attribute equals to Him, both here and in the Hereafter.

## Fear

Another factor that leads people to idolatry is fear. When this emotion, which should be directed solely toward Allah, is felt toward His Creation and influences one's attitudes and behavior, it becomes idolatry. Believers know that the Only Entity worthy of their fear is Allah, Who has absolute power, controls all that exists, and has subjected everything to His will. For example, nothing can harm a person without His permission, and only He can remove that harm. Fearing any other entity reveals that one ignorantly believes that entity to be independent of Allah and thus outside of the destiny He has created for it (Surely Allah is beyond that). Allah reveals this in the Qur'an:

Allah says: "Do not take two deities. He is the only One God, so fear Me alone." Everything in the heavens and earth belongs to Him, and the religion belongs to Him, firmly and forever. So why do you fear anyone other than Allah? (Surat al-Nahl: 51-52)

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

As indicated in these verses, the idolaters fear people and even believers instead of Allah, a misguided emotion that is the result of irrationality. In the Qur'an Allah states:

You are a greater cause of terror in their breasts than Allah! That is because they are people who do not understand. (Surat al-Hashr: 13)

## Expecting help and trust

Everything other than Allah is merely one of His Creations that exist because He wills it to exist; it survives only because He provides it with the necessary health and sustenance, and makes it laugh and cry. In short, everything, except Allah, is infinitely helpless, impoverished, needy, and has no real power or abilities of its own. Therefore, apart from Allah, there is nobody to trust or ask for help. Rejecting this truth and trusting in causes,



intermediaries, and people means that one thinks they have independent power and will; in short, this is idolatry. Allah reveals in the Qur'an:

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. (Surah Ya Sin: 74-75)

The Prophet Muhammad (May Allah bless him and grant him peace) warned his companions against seeking help from others than Allah. At-Tabarani reports:

In the time of the Prophet (May Allah bless him and grant him peace) there was a hypocrite who used to harm the believers, and some of them said: "Come, let us seek aid from the Messenger of Allah (May Allah bless him and grant him peace) against this hypocrite." But the Prophet (May Allah bless him and grant him peace) said: "Aid must not be sought from me; aid must only be sought from Allah (swt)." (Kitaab At-Tawheed (The Book of Tawheed), Shaikh Imam Muhammad Abdul-Wahhaab, Translated by Sameh Strauch, International Islamic Publishing House, Chapter: 12)

In the Qur'an Allah reveals that the idolaters are soon enslaved by their own man-made deities by putting their trust in them and expecting help from them. Forgetting Allah and seeking to please His Creations in order to safeguard their own futures, they spend their lives in abasement and humiliation at the orders of these idols. However, the hopes they place in them go unanswered. And this is just one of their "rewards" they receive in this world and in the Hereafter which will be bitter and last forever.

Allah describes the meaninglessness of people serving man-made entities:

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

These false deities' helplessness is also mentioned:

Do they make things into partner-deities that cannot create anything and are themselves created; which are not capable of helping them and cannot even help themselves? (Surat al-A'raf: 191-192)

Those you call on besides Him cannot help you. They cannot even help themselves. (Surat al-A'raf: 197)

And yet heedless people have always beseeched and begged them for help. Their end, as stated in the Qur'an, will be as follows:

So do not call on any other deity along with Allah, or you will be among those who will be punished. (Surat al-Shu'ara': 213)

One person who was punished in this world for this attitude is the owner of the garden mentioned in Surat al-Kahf. An exceedingly proud man because of his garden and possessions, claimed that they would never disappear and that the Day of Judgment would never come. And yet when the retribution came upon him, he realized what a grave error he had made by attributing equals to Allah. Allah reveals this in the Qur'an:

The fruits of his labor were completely destroyed, and he woke up wringing his hands in grief, regretting everything that he had spent on it. It was a ruin with all of its trellises fallen in. He said: "Oh, if only I had not associated anyone with my Lord!" There was no group to come to his aid, besides Allah, and he was not given any help. (Surat al-Kahf: 42-43)

Those who place their hope and esteem in that which is not Allah, who hope for compassion from them and trust them, will never attain their desires. Thus, they feel empty, lonely, and abandoned, especially in difficult times: "Do not set up any other deity together with Allah and so sit there reviled and forsaken" (Surat al-Isra': 22). In the Qur'an Allah uses a very wise simile to describe this emptiness:

...Have done with the defilement of idols and telling lies. Be people of pure natural belief in Allah, not associating anything else with Him. As for anyone who associates others with Allah, it is as though he had fallen from the sky and the birds had seized him and carried him away, or if the wind had dropped him in a distant place. (Surat al-Hajj: 30-31)

On the other hand, believers who trust in and rely on Allah alone, who serve only Him and seek His assistance, spend their lives enjoying blessings, respect, and honor: "... those who believe and whose hearts find peace in the remembrance of Allah..." (Surat al-Ra'd: 28). One whose heart is at peace and content through remembering Allah needs nothing else, even when faced with great difficulties. They are as dignified as the Prophet Jacob (pbuh), who said: "I complain about my grief and sorrow to Allah alone, because I know things from Allah you do not know" (Surah Yusuf : 86). This attitude is due to the believers' correct understanding of destiny:

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

When love, trust, and expecting help are combined, what emerges is the closeness described in the Qur'an as friendship and guardianship. Allah is a sufficient *Protector* and *Helper* (Surat al-Nisa': 45) and states that He is a person's only true friend and guardian:

Allah is He to Whom the kingdom of the heavens and earth belongs. He gives life and causes to die. You have no protector or helper besides Him. (Surat al-Tawba: 116)

As Allah is the only being with true power, everything therefore depends upon Him:

Say: "Am I to take anyone other than Allah as my protector, the Bringer into Being of the heavens and earth, He Who feeds and is not fed?" Say: "I am commanded to be the first of the Muslims" and "Do not be among the idolaters." (Surat al-An'am: 14)

And yet one of the idolaters' major characteristics is their persistence in adopting friends other than Allah, although abandoning Him and taking His servants as friends is a serious sin that entails terrible consequences unless they repent and ask Allah for forgiveness. Allah reveals this in the Qur'an:

Do the unbelievers imagine that they can take My servants as protectors instead of Me? We have prepared Hell as a welcome for them! (Surat al-Kahf: 102)

While believers take only Allah as their protector, unbelievers and idolaters take satan. Going along with his commands, they flout the Qur'an and the bounds set by Allah for humanity, deliberately ascribe equals to Him, fail to remember Him, and show their loyalty and adherence to satan's commands. This exceedingly irrational action leads to a very unpleasant end. In the Qur'an Allah reveals:

If anyone takes him (satan) as a friend, he will mislead him and guide him to the punishment of the Searing Blaze. (Surat al-Hajj: 4)

Thus, Allah warns the people about the satan in the Qur'an and states He is the true friend of the humanity:

Allah knows best who your enemies are. Allah suffices as a Protector; Allah suffices as a Helper. (Surat an-Nisa', 45)

## The feeling of indebtedness

All people encounter various blessings at every moment of their lives. Since most of these blessings can be attributed to various causes, it is human nature to direct one's gratitude toward those causes instead of toward Allah. In the Qur'an Allah uses the term giving thanks to describe this feeling of gratitude. However, everyone should understand that whoever or whatever those intermediaries may be, they need to be aware that only Allah can bestow a blessing and that they can depend only upon Him. Thus, this phrase signifies an expression, made by one's heart and tongue, of each person's indebtedness and gratitude to Him.

Giving thanks and being grateful to Allah are signs of genuine servitude:

O you who believe, eat of the good things We have provided for you and give thanks to Allah, if you worship Him alone. (Surat al-Baqara: 172)

So eat from what Allah has provided for you, lawful and good, and be thankful for the blessing of Allah, if it is Him you worship. (Surat al-Nahl: 114)

As in these verses Allah makes clear, giving thanks only to Him is a precondition for and a sign of being a true servant, for this attitude shows

that one understands that only He can bestow blessings and control everything. Knowing this means that a person really understands that Allah is the only power, force, and authority that exists and that there is no other deity besides Him. Thus, the person has undiluted faith, embodies the human model described and praised in the Qur'an, and has fulfilled one of the preconditions of true faith and purity if he gives his thanks only to Allah.

The idolaters, however, attribute whatever blessings they enjoy to entities and beings which are in reality merely instruments in their creation by Allah, and place their hopes in, and direct their gratitude toward them. Adopting ignorantly such false deities who have no independent power and influence, they blind themselves to the fact that Allah created these false deities and allows them to appear as independent entities by willing that their actions occur. It is both idolatry and also the height of ingratitude to forget Allah, look for power and influence in His servants, and turn to and thank them.

However, this does not mean that it is wrong for people to thank each other. As long as they remember that Allah performs the good deed in question and act out of that awareness, they are still behaving correctly. Idolaters, on the other hand, unwisely make concessions with regard to faith and to Allah's approval for the sake of these false deities (Surely Allah is beyond that). Allah reveals this in the Qur'an:

(Abraham said to his people:) "Instead of Allah you worship only idols. You are inventing a lie. Those you worship besides Allah have no power to provide for you. So seek your provision from Allah, worship Him, and give thanks to Him. It is to Him you will be returned." (Surat al-'Ankabut: 17)

Unlike idolaters, believers thank Allah alone and feel gratitude only to Him. They turn to Him when they receive a blessing, thank Him, and realize that what they receive is due to His favor. One example of this is how Allah made the Prophet Zacharia (pbuh) responsible for the blessed Maryam (pbuh):

Her Lord accepted her with approval and made her grow in health and beauty. And Zacharia became her guardian. Every time Zacharia visited her in the Upper Room, he found food with her. He asked: "Maryam, how did you come by this?" She said: "It is from Allah. Allah provides for whoever He wills without any reckoning." (Surah Al 'Imran: 37)

Clearly, she was aware that all of the blessings bestowed upon her were from Allah. Another example is how the Prophet Solomon (pbuh) turned to Allah:

He said: "O council members, who among you will bring me her (the Queen of Saba's) throne before they come to me in submission?" A demon of the jinn said: "I will bring it to you before you get up from your seat. I am strong and trustworthy enough to do it." He who possessed knowledge of the Book said: "I will bring it to you before your glance returns to you." And when he saw it

standing firmly in his presence, he said: "This is part of my Lord's favor to test me to see if I will give thanks or show ingratitude. Whoever gives thanks only does so to his own gain. Whoever is ungrateful, my Lord is Rich Beyond Need, Generous." (Surat al-Naml: 38-40)

Even though he expressed a wish that was fulfilled immediately, he instantly turned to and gave thanks to Allah rather than to the one who had performed the deed. That is the attitude of all believers. For those who forget Allah in a comparable situation actually place their hopes in an intermediary and imagine that the blessing came from it. Any person who thinks this way has ascribed an equal to Allah.

Ascribing equals to Allah and giving thanks to Him are mutually opposed actions. For example, Allah reveals that the Prophet Abraham (pbuh) was not a idolater, but one who gave thanks for Allah's blessings:

Abraham was a community in himself, exemplary, obedient to Allah, a man of pure natural belief. He was not one of the idolaters. He was thankful for His blessings. Allah chose him and guided him to a straight path. (Surat al-Nahl: 120-121)

As we have seen above with other emotions, gratitude brings with it faith and purity when directed toward Allah and gives rise to idolatry when directed to anything other than Him. Giving thanks is exceedingly important, and thus satan regards *making human beings ungrateful* as one measure of his so called success. In the Qur'an Allah reveals this warning from satan's own mouth:

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

So far, we have looked at only a few of the emotions that can lead people into idolatry. While these are among the most important and common ones, there are many others, such as compassion, goodness, and kindness.

Imagine someone who is grieving over his young child's death or a beloved animal. This supposed compassion may lead him to rebel against Allah and ascribe equals to Him. However, if that person uses his reason to clear his mind of grief, he will see the truth in a very distinct and transparent form. For one thing, since there is no question of their suffering retribution or oppression, death is a salvation for small children, believers, and innocent animals as well as a step toward an eternal, beautiful life. Death is a door through which Allah takes these lovely entities into His Presence. From the point of view of satan and his followers, however, death is a moment when excesses and the endless demands of one's passions come to an end, a moment when the door to the eternal suffering promised them opens. Thus satan regards death as something terrible and seeks to have others look at it

in the same way. This analysis is quite correct from his own perspective; however, it does not apply to innocent people and sincere believers. For them, death brings happiness and Paradise.

**Someone who uses his reason and thus rises above his emotions sees the facts clearly and behaves accordingly. Matters that appear very complicated, complex, irresoluble, and inexplicable to those who are emotional and whose reason is therefore clouded are very simple, clear, and uncomplicated to believers. As long as these people do not change their stance, they dragged along by their emotions have left their reason behind in order to continue on their way toward eternal suffering in a morass of idolatry, having submitted their wills to satan's enchantments.**

**THE MOST DANGEROUS FORM OF  
IDOLATRY: *COVERT IDOLATRY***

So far we have been looking at idolatry in its general sense, where it stems from, how it emerges, and the forms it takes. In this chapter we consider a far more dangerous form of idolatry: covert idolatry.

Our beloved Prophet (May Allah bless him and grant him peace) warned believers against this type of idolatry, for which he gave showing off to people as an example. Mahmud ibn Lubayd narrated:

The Prophet (May Allah bless him and grant him peace) came out and announced, "O people, beware of secret Shirk (idolatry)!" The people asked, "O messenger of Allah, what is secret Shirk?" He replied, "When a man gets up to pray and strives to beautify his prayer because people are looking at him; that is secret Shirk." (Collected by Ibn Khuzaymah)

Abu Musaa narrated:

One day Allah's messenger delivered a sermon saying "O people, fear Shirk for it is more hidden than the creeping of an ant." Those whom Allah wished asked, "And how do we avoid it when it is more hidden than the creeping of an ant, O Messenger of Allah?" He replied, "Say: 'O Allah, we seek refuge in you from knowingly committing shirk with you and we ask your forgiveness for what we do not know about.'" (Collected by Ahmad and at-Tabarani)

Even though people may have escaped all of the snares cited above, they must still be on their guard against self-deception. If they wish to attain a truly unsullied faith, they must think about this subject and avoid pride. Allah commands His servants to believe in Him and turn only to Him without ascribing any equals to Him. This is revealed in the Qur'an:

... turning toward Him (in repentance). Fear (and respect) Him and establish prayer. Do not be among the idolaters. (Surat al-Rum: 31)

Those who do not believe ask: "Why has a Sign not been sent down to him from his Lord?" Say: "Allah misguides whoever He wills and guides to Himself all who turn to Him." (Surat al-Ra'd: 27)

As it is made clear in these verses, Allah has made undiluted faith obligatory and has forbidden idolatry. At the same time, He has revealed that He will direct anyone who turns to Him to the true path. In other words, those who want to be guided to the true path must avoid all forms of idolatry and "make your Lord your goal" (Surat al-Inshirah: 8). But what does this actually mean?

It means regarding Allah as one's only friend and helper, seeking His approval alone, and basing oneself solely upon His mercy. One's ultimate aim is Allah's love and approval. For that reason, such people live according to His criteria, commands, and prohibitions. Other people's approval and contentment is always secondary, for they want nothing in the world other than their true friend, Allah, to be pleased with them. Every believer who reads these words may well think that he or she possesses these same

attributes. However, instead of being absolutely certain of themselves, they should think long and deeply on the subject and constantly strive to perfect themselves.

### Remembering that Allah controls all things

Those who dedicate themselves only to Allah have full trust in Him alone, for they know that only He has actual control of, and actual power over, everything. Thus, there is no need for them to call upon that, which is not Him. Those who possess this true trust never feel doubt and sadness, and are not troubled by anything that comes their way during life. Aware that Allah sends everything to test them, they accept it and turn toward Him. Out of respect for Him, they feel satisfied with whatever He, in His wisdom, has destined for them. There is a great deal of good in whatever true believers experience, a fact that they know very well. Surely Allah has the true knowledge of what is good for His servants. In the Qur'an Allah reveals this:

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

Therefore, true believers do not go astray when confronted by events or situations that unbelievers would consider dangerous and terrible. They remain steadfast in their trust of Allah, because if they feel even a moment's doubt it means that their trust in Allah is incomplete and that they have failed to properly appreciate His might and wisdom. This is coming dangerously close to idolatry, for which a true believer has no legitimate excuse.

Here is where covert idolatry emerges as a grave danger. For example, it would be completely wrong for those who find themselves in a difficult situation to think: *I am generally very submissive. I have complete trust in Allah, but sometimes I panic and lack full submission.* Self-deception is also very dangerous in such cases. Clearly, someone who follows this line of reasoning does not have full trust in Allah. Even if they accept His existence, just thinking of compromising their belief indicates a lack of complete submission and a failure to comprehend His infinite might. Such an attitude can exist only among idolaters.

However, those who dedicate themselves to Allah submit sincerely to the destiny He has created for them, for they know that it cannot be altered in any way. Allah reveals that whatever we experience is recorded in a book and that we can experience only what He has written in it. In the Qur'an Allah reveals this:

...Not even the smallest speck eludes your Lord, either on earth or in heaven. Nor is there anything smaller than that, or larger, which is not in a Clear Book. (Surah Yunus: 61)



As it is made clear in the verse, every event in a person's life, without exception, is recorded in a book. Fully aware of this, believers evaluate whatever happens to them according to that awareness, seek the beauty in every detail of their predetermined destiny, and thus avoid the error of regretting or being displeased or unhappy. Without exception, believers are pleased with every moment of their life.

If this is not the case, it means that one's faith is not deep enough and that he or she has fallen into idolatry. Although they may say that they have faith in Allah, believe in the Hereafter, and are true Muslims, anyone who is ever displeased is actually failing to live according to the submission commanded in the Qur'an. This failure to comprehend the true meaning of destiny is a sign of *covert idolatry*.

In other words, a person's feelings or reactions toward events are of great importance. Given this, all people who consider themselves to be true believers must review their whole life, day-to-day mode of living, thoughts, feelings, perspective on life, and, most important of all, their subconscious to see if there is any weakness in their belief.

Idolatry may sometimes be very deep-rooted in a person's life. For example, fear may prevent some people from living by the faith in the very purest manner. In fact, they might become so caught up in serious concerns over the future that they begin to ignore Allah's commands and prohibitions in order to "guarantee their future". Such a course of action involves making "necessary" concessions. Or, they might regard their difficulties as unwelcome and become rebellious. This is where the majority of people forget Allah's infinite might and control and fall into covert idolatry. Forgetting that only Allah creates the future, gives them money and possessions, and eliminates their difficulties, they seek assistance from other entities.

Everyone must strongly avoid such negligent behavior and, if they find themselves in it, abandon it at once. They must consider their situation according to what Allah says in the Qur'an, remember that our Lord's might is sufficient for all things, and understand that He is the sole Lord of every entity and event.

For instance, those who have cancer or are paralyzed in an unexpected motor accident, if they consider themselves to be true and sincere believers, will not grieve or worry. In fact, they will not even complain about these difficulties; rather, they will greet their situation with submission and pleasantness, knowing that this is what Allah has destined for them and that, if they endure it successfully, they will receive an unimaginable reward in the Hereafter. Sincere believers bear all difficulties in a pleasant manner and look for the good and the wisdom in them. They do not do this to console themselves, but because they know that only good will come out of these present difficulties. Aware that Allah has determined their destiny and that

everything happens for a reason, they reflect upon their life and have patience and fortitude at all times.

Everyone may experience unexpected events on any given day, such as a great injustice or slander, or a verbal or physical assault. But those who are free of covert or open idolatry never forget their destiny, never fall prey to their emotions or sorrows, and are never troubled. They remember that Allah controls all things and that whatever happens is part of His destiny for them. Therefore, they respond to evil with good, just as Allah commands in the Qur'an.

They may experience events that would alarm unbelievers, and that would be quite natural. However, sincere believers do not feel fear or concern, for they have placed their full trust in Allah. For example, if sincere believers lose their family and possessions in a single moment, they remain fully submitted to Allah even at that very instant. In the face of what unbelievers would consider a disaster, their faith, submission, and trust in Allah does not waver. They will never grieve or give way to pessimism, sorrow, and despair.

People must honestly think about how they would react to such situations and then take precautions so that they will not succumb to covert idolatry. Just thinking that *such a little thing will do no harm*, regarding ignorant reactions as normal under difficult circumstances, or basing their reactions upon those exhibited by most other people may lead to covert idolatry. Allah reveals in the Qur'an:

If you obeyed most of those on earth, they would misguide you from Allah's Way. They follow nothing but conjecture. They are only guessing. (Surat al-An'am: 116)

Another factor that may lead to covert idolatry is the belief that people are successful due to their own efforts. For example, it would be a great mistake for a speaker to attribute his or her successful speech to his or her own reason, for only Allah can will someone to talk and give speeches. If someone is successful, makes scientific discoveries, or invents things that make life easier, all it means is that Allah has willed this as part of that person's destiny. People cannot be the source of their success; believing this and then boasting of their accomplishments means that they have forgotten Allah. In the Qur'an Allah reveals this:

But you cannot will unless Allah wills. Allah is All-Knowing, All-Wise. (Surat al-Insan: 30)

When people experience something negative (e.g., a disaster, illness, or injury), they must remember that these things are a part of their destiny. They cannot attribute such events to a reckless driver or a virus, for this would mean that they do not understand the truth. Of course various attributable causes have been created, but these are completely within

Allah's knowledge and under His control. Those who understand this truth have a proper appreciation of Allah; those who do not understand or accept this truth, or who engage in hidden or open rebellion, have fallen into covert idolatry. While it is true that one's illness may have been "caused" by a microbe, Allah created the microbe and gave it the purpose and function of delivering the person's predetermined illness. For example, Allah relates in the Qur'an a moment of difficulty experienced by believers in the time of our Prophet (May Allah bless him and grant him peace):

What assailed you on the day the two armies met was by Allah's permission, so that He would know the believers and the hypocrites... (Surah Al 'Imran: 166-167)

It is made clear in the verses that, as all events occur by Allah's will, there is no logical or rational reason to forget that all things are under His control. As He is the All-Knowing, every stage and moment of one's life and destiny takes place because He wills it to. No matter how such an event may appear, it always contains auspicious and great wisdom. But people, both believers and non-believers, may not always understand that wisdom. Sometimes they may see it and give thanks to Allah; sometimes they may be unable to see it but still retain their trust in Allah, knowing with certainty that He creates everything with great good and wisdom.

### The logic of a little faith, a little idolatry is a grave mistake

Covert idolatry is a gross self-deception that arises from adopting the twisted logic of *a little faith and a little idolatry* and of thinking perversely that *no harm will come to me from a little idolatry in my faith*. All believers are to dedicate themselves to Allah at every moment and to make no concessions on this matter, for these are core requirements of faith and reason. Therefore, they must not even entertain the thought that any person or entity other than Allah possesses any actual power. Allah commands His servants not to attribute equals to Him and reinforces the truth that everything is under His control in the Qur'an:

Say: "Praise be to Allah and peace be upon His servants whom He has chosen." Is Allah better, or what you associate with Him? He Who created the heavens and earth and sends down water for you from the sky by which We make luxuriant gardens grow—you could never make their trees grow. Is there another deity besides Allah? No indeed, but they are people who equate others with Him! He Who made earth a stable dwelling place, appointed rivers flowing through its midst, placed firmly embedded mountains on it, and set a barrier between the two seas. Is there another deity besides Allah? No indeed, but most of them do not know it! He Who responds to the oppressed when they call on Him and removes their distress and has appointed you as vicegerents of earth. Is there another deity besides Allah? How little you pay

heed! He Who guides you in the darkness of the land and the sea and sends out the winds, bringing advance news of His mercy. Is there another deity besides Allah? May Allah be exalted above what they associate with Him! He Who originates Creation and then regenerates it and provides for you from out of heaven and earth. Is there another deity besides Allah? Say: "Bring your proof if you are being truthful." (Surat al-Naml: 59-64)

As we can see from the above verses, all events take place because Allah wills them to. Forgetting this fact and imagining that anything can take place independently of Allah is to attribute equals to Him.

Covert idolatry is the most significant obstacle to the emergence of true faith. One can only truly live by faith if one's faith is *pure and unsullied*. Looking for a middle way or imagining that – Surely Allah is beyond that – a person or an entity can have actual power or control is idolatry. Pretending not to understand this fact is useless and no more than self-deception. The subjects under discussion here are facts upon which Muslims must reflect and do their best to implement in their life as soon as possible. To imagine that one is immune to this danger and can live as a "half-Muslim" is not only highly irrational, but is also the cause of a troubled life. People must evaluate their earthly desires from the correct Islamic perspective and then identify and correct their errors, for no one knows when he or she will die and be called to account.

People may not suffer great harm if they postpone resolving other matters. However, not resolving the matter discussed above is a grave danger and error, for it is of the utmost importance. Idolatry is the dividing line between faith and unbelief, and covert idolatry is a most deceptive wall that prevents people from seeing the truth, blunts their reason and foresight, causes them to forget why they are here, and leads them toward heedlessness with regard to the Day of Judgment.

Once people recognize that they have fallen into idolatry, however, it is very easy to free themselves. All they have to do is to sincerely and properly appreciate the might of Allah, their Creator. If they think that by practicing what we have described will enable them to achieve something very difficult or to act heroically, they would be mistaken. In fact, such an attitude would actually reflect their great insincerity, for Allah asks only two easy things from all believers: complete dedication to Him alone and complete belief in Him as the sole Possessor of true power and control.

Those who possess such a pure character may expect complete success, beauty, and blessings from Allah when they truly turn to Him without attributing any equals to Him, for:

Allah has promised those of you who believe and do right actions that He will make them successors in the land, [just] as He made those before them successors; 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 do not believe after that, such people are deviators. (Surat al-Nur: 55)

These believers' situation in the Hereafter is revealed in these terms:

... except [for] those who repent, put things right, hold fast to Allah, and dedicate their religion to Allah alone; they are with the believers. Allah will give the believers an immense reward. (Surat al-Nisa': 145-146)

## **SMASHING THE IDOLS**

Idolatry is a *lifestyle* common to those who grow up in societies that do not know the true religion. Heedless of Allah, they ignorantly adopt their society's false deities and thereby ascribe equals to Allah without a second thought. As a result, most people never imagine that their deeds actually constitute rebellion against Allah and that He will punish them severely for their ignorance. Furthermore, they find those strange who call them to Islam and to abandon that which they have made equal to Him.

Makkah's leading idolaters at the time of our Prophet (May Allah bless him and grant him peace) reacted in exactly that same way. They believed in Allah's existence, but equated almost all of their worldly affairs with other, minor and false deities, idols. Trade, love, war, and agriculture – all had their own false deities. This idolatrous order seemed perfectly natural to them, and thus they were stunned when our Prophet (May Allah bless him and grant him peace) rejected it and called upon them to believe in Allah alone. Allah reveals this in the Qur'an:

They are surprised that a warner should come to them from among themselves. The non-believers exclaim: "This is a lying magician. Has he turned all of the deities into One God? That is truly astonishing!" Their leaders went off saying: "Carry on as you are! Hold fast to your deities. This is clearly something planned. We have not heard of this in the old (ancestral) religion. This is merely something contrived." (Surah Sad: 4-7)

Our Prophet's (May Allah bless him and grant him peace) declaration that Allah is the Only God and that all other supposed deities had no true power totally confounded the perverse mentality of the idolaters. Due to their blindness, they could not understand that all of these false deities possessed no real power. In fact, it is Allah Who bestows His grace upon Whom He wills. Allah reveals this truth in the Surah Quraysh:

... in acknowledgment of the established tradition of Quraysh, their tradition of the winter and summer caravans: so let them worship the Lord of this House Who has preserved them from hunger and secured them from fear. (Surah Quraysh: 1-4)

People living today make this same mistake. How, they may ask, can they live after abandoning all of the concepts and people they have regarded as deities and serve only Allah? The answer is: they must realize that only Allah possesses the power to create them, to cause them to continue living, has mercy upon them, and protects and watches over them. Their employer does not enable them to eat by paying their salary; rather, this is accomplished by Allah, Who created their employer with his or her own destiny and causes him or her to pay those wages. Events neither take place haphazardly and by coincidence; nor occur through millions of small and false divine interventions, on the contrary each one happens in accord with His will. Allah created the world with a destiny and people, as revealed in Surat al-Takwir 29, have submitted to Him so completely that they cannot even ask for anything unless He so wills it:

There is no creature He does not hold by the forelock (Surah Hud: 56).

Satan may portray freeing oneself from idolatry and living by monotheism, purity, and faith as something quite difficult. But such claims are no more than mere apprehensions inspired by satan the liar. Allah reveals this in the Qur'an:

When the affair is decided, satan will say: "Allah made you a promise, a promise of truth, and I made you a promise but broke my promise. I had no authority over you, except that I called you and you responded to me. Do not, therefore, blame me, but [rather] blame yourselves. I cannot come to your aid, nor you to mine. I reject the way you associated me with Allah before." The wrongdoers will have a painful punishment. (Surah Ibrahim: 22)

Given this fact, it would be highly irrational for people who are trying to be true and sincere believers to despair because of satan's whispered lies and apprehensions.

A sincere change of intent is enough to liberate oneself from idolatry, for this will transform one's idolatrous worldview into a monotheistic one. To put it another way, there is no need to illuminate all places so that someone wearing dark glasses can see them; it is enough just to take off one's glasses. Idolatry blocks the light of truth in exactly the same way. Taking off one's glasses in a single stroke is both easy and the only effective way to pass from idolatry to the life of faith and purity that pleases Allah. And, this involves no more than deciding to trust Him in all circumstances and to adhere scrupulously to His commands and prohibitions in the Qur'an. This sincerity and determination will inevitably bring with it His assistance and mercy, as well as the true path to salvation in both worlds.

Only Allah can lead people to the true path. Thus, those who wish to live a life that will win His approval must constantly ask Him to guide them to the true path, help them to live an honest and sincere life, and know that He will certainly answer such sincere and honest prayers. They must never fall into satan's trap of pessimism by wondering *How can I ever manage all of this? How can I ever acquire a sincere and unsullied faith?* Rather, they must understand that Allah will turn them in the direction of the best path and protect them from all deviations, provided that they show true sincerity and determination, and enable them to live in the ease and joy that such knowledge brings.

Those who abandon their false deities and turn to Allah alone will never be left *empty* and *alone*; on the contrary, they will attain the greatest peace, comfort, and security. Allah states this in the Qur'an:

Whoever has fear of [and respect for] Allah-He will give him a way out and provide for him from where he does not expect. Whoever puts his trust in Allah-He will be enough for him. Allah always achieves His aim... (Surat al-Talaq: 2-3)

For this reason, people who realize and regret that they are living in a state of idolatry must immediately stop worshipping their false deities, whether they be their possessions, money, businesses, or properties. None of their possessions actually belong to them; their daily bread does not depend on them, their great wealth may or may not continue to be enjoyed by their descendants, and so on, because only Allah controls everything and bestows upon people what He wills. Realizing this, people must not become proud because of their possessions; rather, they should consider their lifestyle and worldview very carefully and make the necessary changes. They must understand that whatever they possess belongs to Allah alone, that they are a test from Him, and that they must be used in a manner that will please Him. Making the intention to free themselves from any feelings of pride and ownership, they must utterly destroy these false deities. Their sincerity in this matter, however, can only be proven by their subsequent lifestyle and determination. For instance, they must be able to spend all of their wealth and possessions, when necessary, in Allah's cause without a second thought or any concern for the future or from where their next meal will come. Completely trusting in Allah, they must always remember that only He can provide one's daily bread and realize that they are utterly helpless before Him.

As we have seen, the difference between monotheism and polytheism is generally one of intention and perspective. Our Prophet (May Allah bless him and grant him peace) literally smashed the idols inside the Ka`bah, and the Prophet Moses (pbuh) burned the calf and threw its ashes into the sea. So they properly smashed the logic of the idolatry. Today, it is necessary to

smash the logic of idolatry in a drastic way, which can only be done by changing one's intention and perspective.

Therefore, the greatest change experienced by new believers takes place primarily in their own mind. While they might be able to maintain certain elements from their previous life, they will nevertheless have a totally new perspective and understanding. In short, their society's social norms, their elders' and ancestors' beliefs, their own personal desires, and the ideas of other people will become meaningless, for they will regulate their new life solely according to the Qur'an and the hadith and aim to achieve Allah's approval. By ceasing to illogically serve and please many minor and false deities, they will surrender entirely to Allah. This is revealed in the Qur'an:

**(Joseph said:) "What you serve apart from Him are only names that you and your ancestors have made up. There is no mandate for them from Allah. Allah alone is qualified to judge. His order is to worship none but Him. This is, in truth, the straight and upright religion, but most people do not know." (Surah Yusuf: 40)**

## **THE DECEPTION OF EVOLUTION**

Darwinism, in other words the theory of evolution, was put forward with the aim of denying the fact of Creation, but is in truth nothing but failed, unscientific nonsense. This theory, which claims that life emerged by chance from inanimate matter, was invalidated by the scientific evidence of miraculous order in the universe and in living things, as well as by the discovery of about 300 million fossils revealing that evolution never happened. In this way, science confirmed the fact that Allah created the universe and the living things in it. The propaganda carried out today in



order to keep the theory of evolution alive is based solely on the distortion of the scientific facts, biased interpretation, and lies and falsehoods disguised as science.

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

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

## The Scientific Collapse of Darwinism

As a pagan doctrine going 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 opposed, in his own eyes, the fact that Allah created different living species on Earth separately, for he erroneously claimed that all living beings had a common ancestor and had diversified over time through small changes. Darwin's theory was not based on any concrete scientific finding; as he also accepted, it was just an "assumption." Moreover, as Darwin confessed in the long chapter of his book titled "Difficulties on Theory," the theory failed in the face of many critical questions.

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

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

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

## The First Insurmountable Step: The Origin of Life

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

Since the theory of evolution ignorantly denies Creation, it maintains that the "first cell" originated as a product of blind coincidences within the laws of nature, without any 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."<sup>1</sup>

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

### Inconclusive Efforts of the Twentieth Century

The first evolutionist who took up the subject of the origin of life in the twentieth century was the renowned Russian biologist Alexander Oparin. With various theses he advanced in the 1930s, he tried to prove that a living

cell could originate by coincidence. These studies, however, were doomed to failure, and Oparin had to make the following confession:

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

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.<sup>3</sup>

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

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?*<sup>5</sup>

## 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<sup>950</sup>** for an average protein made up of 500 amino acids. In mathematics, a probability smaller than 1 over **10<sup>50</sup>** 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.<sup>6</sup>

No doubt, if it is impossible for life to have originated spontaneously as a result of blind coincidences, then it has to be accepted that life was "created." This fact explicitly invalidates the theory of evolution, whose main purpose is to deny Creation.

### Imaginary Mechanism of Evolution

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

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

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

Therefore, the mechanism of natural selection has no evolutionary power. Darwin was also aware of this fact and had to state this in his book *The Origin of Species*:

*Natural selection can do nothing until favourable individual differences or variations occur.*<sup>7</sup>

### 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.<sup>8</sup>

However, the laws of inheritance discovered by Gregor Mendel (1822-84) and verified by the science of genetics, which flourished in the twentieth century, utterly demolished the legend that acquired traits were passed on to subsequent generations. Thus, natural selection fell out of favor as an evolutionary mechanism.

### Neo-Darwinism and Mutations

In order to find a solution, Darwinists advanced the "Modern Synthetic Theory," or as it is more commonly known, Neo-Darwinism, at the end of the 1930s. Neo-Darwinism added mutations, which are distortions formed in the genes of living beings due to such external factors as radiation or replication errors, as the "cause of favorable variations" in addition to natural mutation.

Today, the model that Darwinists espouse, despite their own awareness of its scientific invalidity, 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.***<sup>9</sup>

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

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

For instance, some half-fish/half-reptiles should have lived in the past which had acquired some reptilian traits in addition to the fish traits they already had. Or there should have existed some reptile-birds, which acquired some bird traits in addition to the reptilian traits they already had. Since these would be in a transitional phase, they should be disabled, defective, crippled living beings. Evolutionists refer to these imaginary creatures, which they believe to have lived in the past, as "transitional forms."

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

*If my theory be true, numberless intermediate varieties, linking most closely all of the species of the same group together must assuredly have existed...*

*Consequently, evidence of their former existence could be found only amongst fossil remains.*<sup>10</sup>

However, Darwin was well aware that no fossils of these intermediate forms had yet been found. He regarded this as a major difficulty for his theory. In one chapter of his book titled "Difficulties on Theory," he wrote:

***Why, if species have descended from other species by insensibly fine gradations, do we not everywhere see innumerable transitional forms? Why is not all nature in confusion instead of the species being, as we see them, well defined?... But, as by this theory innumerable transitional forms must have existed, why do we not find them embedded in countless numbers in the crust of the earth?... Why then is not every geological formation and every stratum full of such intermediate links? Geology assuredly does not reveal any such finely graduated organic chain; and this, perhaps, is the most obvious and gravest objection which can be urged against my theory.***<sup>11</sup>

### 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.***<sup>12</sup>

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.*<sup>13</sup>

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 man evolved from so-called ape-like creatures. During this alleged evolutionary process, which is supposed to have started 4-5 million years ago, some "transitional forms" between present-day man and his imaginary 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.<sup>14</sup>

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."<sup>15</sup>

By outlining the link chain as Australopithecus > Homo habilis > Homo erectus > Homo sapiens, evolutionists imply that each of these species is one another's ancestor. However, recent findings of paleoanthropologists have revealed that Australopithecus, Homo habilis, and Homo erectus lived at different parts of the world at the same time.<sup>16</sup>

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

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

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

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.*<sup>19</sup>

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

Let evolutionists put plenty of materials present in the composition of living things such as phosphorus, nitrogen, carbon, oxygen, iron, and magnesium into big barrels. Moreover, let them add in these barrels any material that does not exist under normal conditions, but they think as necessary. Let them add in this mixture as many amino acids and as many proteins—a single one of which has a formation probability of 1 in 10<sup>950</sup>—as they like. Let them expose these mixtures to as much heat and moisture as they like. Let them stir these with whatever technologically developed device they like. Let them put the foremost scientists beside these barrels. Let these experts wait in turn beside these barrels for billions, and even trillions of years. Let them be free to use all kinds of conditions they believe to be necessary for a human's formation. No matter what they do, they cannot produce from these barrels a human, say a professor that examines his cell structure under the electron microscope. They cannot produce giraffes, lions, bees, canaries, horses, dolphins, roses, orchids, lilies, carnations, bananas, oranges, apples, dates, tomatoes, melons, watermelons, figs, olives, grapes, peaches, peafowls, pheasants,

multicoloured butterflies, or millions of other living beings such as these. Indeed, they could not obtain even a single cell of any one of them.

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

The theory of evolution, which claims the opposite, is a total fallacy completely contrary to reason. Thinking even a little bit on the claims of evolutionists 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 measured by a precise device at that moment, complete silence would be found to be prevailing there.

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

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

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

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

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

The stimulations coming from a person's eyes, ears, and nose travel to the brain as electro-chemical nerve impulses. In biology, physiology, and biochemistry books, you can find many details about how this image forms in the brain. However, you will never come across the most important fact: Who perceives these electro-chemical nerve impulses as images, sounds, odors, and sensory events in the brain? There is a consciousness in the brain that perceives all this without feeling any need for an eye, an ear, and a nose. To whom does this consciousness belong? Of course it does not belong to the nerves, the fat layer, and neurons comprising the brain. This is why Darwinist-materialists, who believe that everything is comprised of matter, cannot answer these questions.

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

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

### A Materialist Faith

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

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

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

Interestingly enough, they also confess this fact from time to time. A well-known geneticist and an outspoken evolutionist, Richard C. Lewontin from Harvard University, confesses that he is "first and foremost a materialist and then a scientist":

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

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 brought life into being. 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 ignorantly defend it just so as not to acknowledge, in their own eyes, the evident existence of Allah.

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

### The Theory of Evolution: The Most Potent Spell in the World

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

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

Sun, the tribe of Prophet Ibrahim (as) worshipping idols they had made with their own hands, or some among the people of Prophet Musa (as) worshipping the Golden Calf.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

We revealed to Musa: "Throw down your staff." And it immediately swallowed up what they had forged. So the Truth took place and what they did was shown to be false. (Surat al-A'raf, 117-118)

As we can see, when people realized that a spell had been cast upon them and that what they saw was just an illusion, Pharaoh's magicians lost all credibility. In the present day too, unless those who, under the influence of a similar spell, believe in these ridiculous claims under their scientific disguise and spend their lives defending them, abandon their superstitious beliefs, they also will be humiliated when the full truth emerges and the spell is broken. In fact, world-renowned British writer and philosopher Malcolm Muggeridge, who was an atheist defending evolution for some 60 years, but who subsequently realized the truth, reveals the position in which the theory of evolution would find itself in the near future in these terms:

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

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

## NOTES

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

(Surat al-Baqara, 32)