

Prophet Solomon (pbuh)

**We gave [to] David Solomon.
What an excellent servant!
He truly turned to his Lord.
(Qur'an, 38:30)**

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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, God's Existence—over the last 140 years it has caused many people to abandon their faith or fall into doubt. It is therefore an imperative service, a very important duty to show everyone that this theory is a deception. Since some readers may find the chance to read only one of our books, we think it appropriate to devote a chapter to summarize this subject.

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

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

In addition, it will be a great service to Islam to contribute to the publication and reading of these books, written solely for the pleasure of God. 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.

About the Author

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

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

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

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

Greatly appreciated all around the world, these works have been instrumental in many people recovering faith in God 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 God'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 God, render an invaluable service.

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

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

In this effort, the books of Harun Yahya assume a leading role. By the will of God, 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.

INTRODUCTION

The Qur'an was sent down to humanity as a guide to the right path and for obtaining God's mercy. It gives important knowledge about what Prophet Muhammad (may God bless him and grant him peace) did, his message to unbelievers, and his struggle to spread God's religion. It also gives important information about the lives of Prophet Moses, Prophet Joseph, Prophet Jesus, Prophet Jonah, Prophet Lot, Prophet Noah, Prophet Shu'aib, and Prophet Salih (peace be upon them all). Like our Prophet (may God bless him and grant him peace), they invited people to faith in God, warned them about the afterlife, and relayed true religion so that their people would adopt high moral standards.

Its verses advise and admonish people by describing the prophets' high morality, sincere prayers, behavior in difficult circumstances, and determined efforts to fulfill their mission. In addition, it advises people to obey His prophets and follow the path that they have shown, and announces the good tidings that as people advance along the path, they will live without fear or sorrow in this world and the world to come (Qur'an, 7:35). The Qur'an informs us that God sends prophets for one purpose:

We sent no Messenger except to be obeyed by God's permission... (Qur'an, 4:64)

One of these worthy individuals is Prophet Solomon (pbuh), a descendant of Prophet Noah (pbuh), who was given sublime knowledge of the right path by God. In the Qur'an, this command relating to Prophet Solomon (pbuh) is given:

... And before him We had guided Noah. And among his descendants were David and Solomon, Job and Joseph, and Moses and Aaron. That is how We recompense the good-doers. (Qur'an, 6:84)

God sent Prophet Solomon (pbuh) to the Tribe of Israel to warn them and instill fear in them:

We have revealed to you, just as We revealed to Noah and the Prophets who came after him. And We revealed to Abraham, Ishmael, Isaac, Jacob, the Tribes, Jesus, Job, Jonah, Aaron, and Solomon. And We gave David the Psalms. (Qur'an, 4:163)

As this book explains, God bestowed a great kingdom, incomparable wealth, a mighty army supported by jinns and birds, and superior knowledge upon Prophet Solomon (pbuh). He ruled justly throughout his life and, in his capacity as an administrator and a judge,

brought many societies under his dominion. He was aware that God, Lord of the Worlds, is the true possessor of all knowledge, riches, and dominion, and so always turned to Him (Qur'an, 38:30), bowed to Him, and submitted to Him.

This book will acquaint people with Prophet Solomon (pbuh), whom God made superior to other human beings, and analyze this chosen servant's exemplary moral qualities. As we examine what the Qur'an says about him, we will see that each of his qualities can be related to our own lives.

We will also study Prophet Solomon's (pbuh) story for information about the End Times, a period during which the Qur'an's moral teachings will prevail; all immorality, oppression, cruelty, injustice, and degeneration of the past eras will vanish; anxiety will be replaced by every kind of blessing, abundance, wealth, beauty, peace, and well-being; and technological developments will provide human beings with happiness and comfort.

The hadiths contain many descriptions of the End Times. For example, God will destroy all atheistic philosophies and ideologies through the Mahdi, who will guide humanity to the right path, and bring all cruelty and chaos in the world to an end. The Mahdi's most important duty will be to restore religion to its original form under our Prophet (may God bless him and grant him peace), make the Qur'an's moral teaching prevail, and establish global peace and well-being. In the hadith below, our Prophet (may God bless him and grant him peace) draws our attention to a quality that is shared by the Mahdi, Prophet Solomon (pbuh), and Dhu'l-Qarnayn (pbuh):

The Mahdi will rule Earth, just like Dhu'l-Qarnayn (pbuh) and Prophet Solomon (pbuh). (Ibn Hajar al-Haythami, Al-Qawl al-Mukhtasar fi 'Alamat al-Mahdi al-Muntazar, p. 29)

This hadith indicates that the Mahdi's rule will be similar to that of Prophet Solomon (pbuh) and Dhu'l-Qarnayn (pbuh). Therefore, we can gather important information about the End Times and the ensuing Golden Age by examining the Qur'anic accounts of Prophet Solomon's (pbuh) and Dhu'l-Qarnayn's (pbuh) reigns. (For more details about the connection between the time of Dhu'l-Qarnayn (pbuh) and the End Times, consult Harun Yahya, *Signs of the End Times in Surat al-Kahf* [New Delhi: Goodword Books, 2004].) Developments in science and technology, as well as advances in economic and social life, that will be enjoyed in the End Times will be very similar to those mentioned in connection with Prophet Solomon (pbuh). The Qur'anic account will allow believers to understand what is happening in the world from a broader perspective, and thereby open their horizons. One of this book's goals is to encourage people to think about these good tidings of the End Times and to share the joy and excitement that it will bring.

PROPHET SOLOMON (PBUH)

We gave knowledge to David and Solomon, who said: "Praise be to God, Who has favored us over many of His servants who are believers." Solomon was David's heir... (Qur'an, 27:15-16)

Prophet Solomon (pbuh) was a son of Prophet David (pbuh), to whom God gave great knowledge, wealth and wisdom (Qur'an, 2:251), favor (Qur'an, 34:10), and to whom He revealed the Psalms. In the Qur'an, God decrees: **"We gave [to] David Solomon"** (Qur'an, 38:30).

... We raise in rank anyone We will. Your Lord is All-Wise, All-Knowing. We gave him [Abraham] Isaac and Jacob, each of whom We guided. And before him We had guided Noah. And among his descendants were David and Solomon, Job and Joseph, and Moses and Aaron. That is how We recompense the good-doers. And Zachariah, John, Jesus, and Elias—all of them were among the righteous. And Ishmael, Elisha, Jonah, and Lot—all of them We favored over all beings. And some of their forebears, descendants, and brothers—We chose them and guided them to a straight path. (Qur'an, 6:83-87)

As He did with Prophet David (pbuh), God sent Prophet Solomon (pbuh) to the Israelites. God put him on the right path, counted him as one of His faithful servants and made him superior to other people. In fact, God tells believers:

They are the ones God has guided, so be guided by their guidance. Say: "I do not ask you for any wage for it. It is simply a reminder to all beings." (Qur'an, 6:90)

Like all other prophets, Prophet Solomon (pbuh) invited people to believe in God, avoid associating any other thing or being with Him, and obey His commands and recommendations.

PROPHET SOLOMON'S (PBUH) SUPERIOR KNOWLEDGE AND BLESSING

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

His prayer was accepted by God and He bestowed upon him great blessings, superior wisdom, more possessions than anyone else could attain, and a glorious kingdom in which he exercised an incomparable reign. Other verses give more information about his God-given wealth, power, and knowledge.

The Ability to Judge

We gave Solomon understanding of it [judgment]. We gave each of them judgment and knowledge... (Qur'an, 21:79)

When we examine the prophets' lives, we see clearly that God gave them superior wisdom to use in their conversations, decisions, and carrying out their decisions. Prophet Solomon (pbuh), a recipient of this divinely inspired judgment and knowledge, **"judged with truth"** (Qur'an, 38:26), like his father Prophet David (pbuh), and solved all disputes most justly.

And David and Solomon when they gave judgment about the field, when the people's sheep strayed into it at night. We were Witness to their judgment. (Qur'an, 21:78)

A system of justice, if it is to operate properly, must be directed by people with faith and who can judge justly. Prophet Solomon's (pbuh) time was one in which this understanding of justice was lived fully, for God says: **"Every nation has a Messenger, and when their Messenger comes everything is decided between them justly. They are not wronged"** (Qur'an, 10:47).

Two people who presided over hearings and gave just decisions were Prophet David (pbuh) and Prophet Solomon (pbuh).

Prophet Solomon's (pbuh) words, upon learning that a hoopoe bird had disappeared without his permission, draws our attention to this matter:

He inspected the birds and said: "How is it that I do not see the hoopoe? Or is it absent without leave? I will certainly punish it most severely or slaughter it if it does not bring me clear authority." (Qur'an, 27:20-21)

This is just one example of his justice: He gave the hoopoe an opportunity to defend itself, listened to it carefully, and inflicted no sudden penalty. Instead, he waited for it to produce clear proof.

Solomon (pbuh) and the Language of Birds

God taught Prophet Solomon (pbuh) to speak the language of birds, and because of this, he formed an army squadron composed of birds. Thus, he established a relationship with them that allowed him to command them as he wished. Fully aware that this ability was the result of God's mercy, he explained to his people that this knowledge came from God and was not the result of his own effort. In this way, he clearly expressed his submission to, and need for, God.

... O people, we have been taught the speech of birds and have been given everything. This is indeed a clear favor. (Qur'an, 27:16)

We can draw some important conclusions from this account:

Birds speak to one another on a special wave length that people cannot hear. God allowed Prophet Solomon (pbuh) to understand these conversations. This might have been made possible by technological means.

Since Prophet Solomon (pbuh) could understand these conversations, he may have given them special tasks to fulfill. (God knows the truth.)

Prophet Solomon (pbuh) achieved important results by using birds to both carry messages and gather information. This knowledge facilitated communication with other countries and reaching distant areas. (God knows the truth.)

This verse may be drawing our attention to a superior technology similar to that which will be used in the End Times. In fact, these birds may not even refer to birds as we know them, but perhaps to unmanned aircrafts.

Besides this, he may have attached transmitters to them to obtain information about other countries and his enemies. In this way, he could have obtained images and sound recordings and used the information to govern his kingdom.

Prophet Solomon (pbuh) had power over jinns and demons, for the Qur'an states: **"... And some of the jinns worked in front of him by his Lord's permission..."** (Qur'an, 34:12) and **"... some of the demons dived for him and did other things apart from that..."** (Qur'an, 21:82). When considered from this point of view, it may have been an army made up of jinns that looked like birds.

Another probability is that these birds may have been controlled by jinns who Prophet Solomon (pbuh) could use to make the birds do what he wanted them to do.

The Qur'an is valid for all people until the end of the world. Therefore, similar things that happened during Prophet Solomon's (pbuh) reign may also be experienced in the End Times. For example, God may put these jinns under humanity's control once again.

Again, the advanced technology indicated in this account may be a signal of what technology will bring to humanity in the End Times. (God knows the truth)

Prophet Solomon (pbuh) Understands the Female Ant

Then, when they reached the Valley of the Ants, an [female] ant said: "Ants! Enter your dwellings so that Solomon and his troops do not crush you unwittingly." (Qur'an, 27:18)

This verse may be interpreted as follows:

The female ant knew that Prophet Solomon (pbuh) and his army were entering the valley. This is an extremely conscious recognition. The fact that these ants could speak to one another and were aware of what was happening around them may indicate that these creatures may have been jinns. (God knows the truth.)

The ant mentioned here is not an ordinary ant, for the *Valley of the Ants* suggests a special place and special ants. This strengthens the possibility that they were jinns.

He [Solomon] smiled, laughing at its words, and said: "My Lord, keep me thankful for the blessing You have bestowed on me and my parents. Keep me acting rightly, pleasing You, and admit me, by Your mercy, among Your servants who are righteous." (Qur'an, 27:19)

Prophet Solomon's (pbuh) ability to hear the ants talking among themselves may indicate a development that will occur in computer technology in the End Times.

The modern term *Silicon Valley* refers to the center of the world of technology. Thus, it is very significant that this verse mentions the *Valley of the Ants*. God may be drawing out attention to the advanced technology that will appear in the End Times.

Prophet Solomon (pbuh) Commands the Winds

And to Solomon We gave the fiercely blowing wind, speeding at his command toward the land that We had blessed. And We had full knowledge of everything. (Qur'an, 21:81)

God allowed Prophet Solomon (pbuh) to control the wind and use it as a tool. This may be a reference to the use of wind energy in the End Times.

The phrase *fiercely blowing wind* under Prophet Solomon's (pbuh) command may be drawing our attention to the advanced aircraft technology that will be developed in the End Times.

And We gave Solomon power over the wind—a month's journey in the morning and a month in the afternoon... (Qur'an, 34:12)

The words ... *power over the wind—a month's journey in the morning and a month in the afternoon...*, may indicate the fact that Prophet Solomon (pbuh) moved very quickly from place to place.

In his own time, Prophet Solomon (pbuh) may have used a technology similar to modern aircraft technology and developed wind-powered vehicles. By this means, he could cover huge distances in a short time. (God knows the truth.)

Indications of the Use of Electricity

... And We made a fount of molten copper flow out for him... (Qur'an, 34:12)

One of the great blessings given to Prophet Solomon (pbuh) was *molten copper*. This verse can be interpreted in several ways:

Using the demons and jinns at his command, Prophet Solomon (pbuh) might have made decorations, huge dishes, vats, and statues for general use (Qur'an, 34:13).

Molten copper may indicate a high level of technological development in Prophet Solomon's (pbuh) time: the use of electricity. As we know, copper is one of the best conductors of electricity and heat, and plays a significant role in producing electricity.

The great amounts of electricity produced in Prophet Solomon's (pbuh) time could have been used in construction, communications, and many other areas. The words *flow out* may point to its widespread use. (God knows the truth.)

Many Qur'anic commentators have interpreted *ayna al-qitri* as referring to petroleum. Today, petroleum is the most basic raw material of technology. In his time, Prophet Solomon (pbuh) may have used it in technological operations. (God knows the truth.)

Jinns and Demons Obey Prophet Solomon (pbuh)

... And some of the jinns worked in front of him by his Lord's permission. And if a single one of them deviates at all from Our command, We let him taste the punishment of the Searing Blaze. (Qur'an, 34:12)

Another God-given blessing was the number of jinns and demons that served Prophet Solomon (pbuh). Prophet Solomon (pbuh) ordered these beings to fulfill various functions in his army, artistic creations, and construction projects:

So We subjected the wind to him to blow at his command, softly, wherever he directed. And the demons, every builder and diver. (Qur'an, 38:36-37)

God bestowed His grace upon Prophet Solomon (pbuh) by enabling him to control the demons, because Satan had great knowledge about Earth and what happened in the world, whether secret or public. Having such a creature in his power may have made it much easier for Prophet Solomon (pbuh) to arrange his foreign relations and administer his kingdom.

And some of the demons dived for him [Solomon] and did other things apart from that. And We were watching over them. (Qur'an, 21:82)

Prophet Solomon (pbuh) could have used these diving demons in many ways: to perform duties related to intelligence and the army, as well as to scientific undertakings (e.g., processing marine riches to benefit humanity).

This verse informs us of the importance of processing both underground and marine riches. But in order to extract and process these marine riches and make them useful for people, highly advanced technology is needed. Perhaps these demons had this technical knowledge and capability.

Thanks to the modern technological devices, vehicles, and submarines that God will put into the service of humanity in the End Times, extracting the oceans' wealth will be much easier. It is possible that the meaning of this verse points in this direction.

This verse may also be an assessment of the pearls, corals, and other special blessings to be found in the oceans. (God knows the truth).

At the end of the above verse, God reveals: "... **We were watching over them...**" In other words, these diving demons were under the control of God, the Lord of heavens and Earth. God gave Prophet Solomon (pbuh) a power from His own mercy that made the demons unable to rebel against him.

They made for him anything he wished: high arches and statues, huge dishes like cisterns, great built-in cooking vats... (Qur'an, 34:13)

This verse relates that demons created magnificent works of art according to Prophet Solomon's (pbuh) directions and very strong aesthetic sense.

Every Blessing Is a Grace from God

Prophet Solomon (pbuh) used all of his God-given power and possessions to represent and spread His religion in the best possible way, display the incomparable splendor of God's kingdom, and disseminate religious morality. When they saw his intelligence, knowledge, and artistic power, people more easily accepted his invitation to believe in God. Prophet Solomon (pbuh) received a fine reward for his service to God and a great kingdom. For thousands of years, Prophet Solomon's (pbuh) might and power have amazed people and been the subject of novels, paintings, and films.

This section has presented Prophet Solomon's (pbuh) God-given superior knowledge and blessings. However, one special point needs to be emphasized: The One Who gave all of these blessings and knowledge, and Who created all of them is God, the Lord of the Worlds. Everything that Prophet Solomon (pbuh) did was by God's will and approval. For example, God decrees: **"We gave Solomon understanding of it"** (Qur'an, 21:79), by which we can understand that no one can understand any event, notice any wisdom, or make any decision without God's consent. God, the All-Knowing, All-Wise, makes the decision; the person carrying it out is only a vehicle.

After announcing that the mountains and the birds bowed their heads with Prophet David (pbuh), Prophet Solomon's (pbuh) father, the verse says: **"This is something We are well able to do."** God taught Prophet David (pbuh) how to make armor, made the wind bow before Him, and made molten copper flow at Prophet Solomon's (pbuh) command. In Qur'an 21:81, God decrees: **"And We have full knowledge of everything."** Unless God wills, it is impossible for any person to have knowledge. People may have read and studied for years and come to be regarded as knowledgeable, but they must never forget that only God gives them their knowledge as part of their destiny. The words of the angels in Qur'an 2:32 clearly express this reality: **"Glory be to You! We have no knowledge except what You have taught us. You are the All-Knowing, the All-Wise."**

PROPHET SOLOMON'S (pbuh) MIGHTY KINGDOM and POWERFUL ARMY

Solomon's armies, made up of jinns and men and birds, were assembled for him, paraded in tight ranks. (Qur'an, 27:17)

Prophet Solomon (pbuh) had a mighty army, the likes of which had never been seen. It was composed of jinns, birds, and men, and was supported by a strong intelligence network.

This verse mentions *armies*, not army. The use of the plural form expresses his army's power and superior numbers.

His army was very disciplined, for the three groups that formed it worked together very harmoniously and without the slightest problem.

The support of jinns and demons gave Prophet Solomon (pbuh) a superior advantage over others, for these creatures could easily do what human beings could not. For example, one verse says: "**He and his tribe see you from where you do not see them**" (Qur'an, 7:27). Thus, the jinns were effective intelligence gatherers.

So We subjected the wind to him to blow at his command, softly, wherever he directed. And the demons, every builder and diver, and others of them, yoked together in chains. (Qur'an, 38:36-38)

The words *yoked together in chains* indicate that Prophet Solomon (pbuh) had great power over the jinns and demons that served him.

This verse indicates that Prophet Solomon (pbuh) had power over the religious jinns who submitted to God as well as over the unbelieving jinns. Not only did he render the demons and those whom they possessed, as well as unbelievers, harmless, but he also gave them various duties and made them serve Islam.

In this verse, God may be indicating that evil-intentioned individuals must be prevented from harming those who want to live according to Islam's morality. Making them serve God both prevents any possible damage and serves Islam.

This verse may imply that those individuals who oppress others and commit evil and malicious acts must be strictly controlled and prevented from mixing with others and stirring up strife.

In this verse, God may be hinting about the kind of punishment criminals will face in the End Times. In other words, they will be prevented from endangering society and will be made to benefit humanity.

The phrase *yoked together in chains* may be alluding to a security system similar to an electronic cuff or shackle that will be used in the End Times. Such *chains* will prevent criminals from escaping and harming themselves and others.

He [Solomon] inspected the birds and said: "How is it that I do not see the hoopoe? Or is it absent without leave? I will certainly punish it most severely or slaughter it if it does not bring me clear authority." (Qur'an, 27:20-21)

These verses show that Prophet Solomon (pbuh) inspected his army regularly so that he could notice and correct any problem immediately in order to preserve discipline. As the verse suggests, being absent without permission or notice was a very serious breach of discipline.

[Solomon said to the messengers of the Queen of Saba:] "Return to them. We will come to them with troops they cannot face, and we will expel them from it abased and humiliated." (Qur'an, 27:37)

This is how Prophet Solomon (pbuh) addressed the messengers who brought him gifts from the Queen of Saba. He stated that he would not accept her gifts under any circumstances, thereby manifesting his determination that she should submit to him.

In addition, we can understand that no other army could defeat his army. As we will see later on, when the rulers of Saba heard of this, they realized that submission was their only option.

PROPHET SOLOMON'S (pbuh) SUPERIOR MORAL CHARACTER

Having talked about Prophet Solomon's (pbuh) God-given knowledge, glorious kingdom and mighty army, we will now discuss one of his most important characteristics: his superior morality. Throughout his life, he invited people to live a moral life that would please God and served as a role model of deep faith and high moral character.

He Always Turned toward God

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

The Qur'an reveals that Prophet Solomon (pbuh) constantly turned toward God, prayed to Him, and revealed all of his desires to Him.

Although he lived at a time when idolatry was widespread, he never put anything on the same level with God. Rather, he only desired to please God and make His religion supreme. Therefore, he sought the approval of no other person or creature. For example, he invited the sun worshippers of Saba to abandon their ancestral belief system and submit to God.

We tested Solomon and placed a lifeless body on his throne. Then he returned. He said: "My Lord, forgive me and give me a kingdom the like of which will never be granted to anyone after me. Truly, You are the Ever-Giving." (Qur'an, 38:34-35)

Whenever Prophet Solomon (pbuh) encountered any difficulty, anxiety, or blessing, he immediately turned toward God. He remembered God in every conversation and made every decision with His name in mind. God tested Prophet Solomon (pbuh) in various ways, but his response was always morally good. For example, as the above verse shows, during one test the first thing that came to his mind was to pray to God and take refuge in His generous mercy.

... [Solomon] 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." (Qur'an, 27:40)

Prophet Solomon (pbuh) displayed this moral character in times of distress as well as in times of success and victory, for he was a humble servant who knew his own

helplessness before God. He realized that every success, like every difficulty, was a test from God.

He Always Gave Thanks to God ... "Work, O family of David, in thankfulness!" But very few of My servants are thankful. (Qur'an, 34:13)

As He did with Prophet David (pbuh), God bestowed upon Prophet Solomon (pbuh) blessings that no one had ever received. God willed him to use the mercy, which He bestowed upon him, as a means of thanking and remembering Him. In return, Prophet Solomon (pbuh) was always thankful, humble, and sincere, and directed all of his deeds toward God because he knew that he would have to answer for his responses to those blessings on the Day of Judgment.

"My Lord, keep me thankful for the blessing You have bestowed on me and on my parents; keep me acting rightly, pleasing You; and admit me, by Your mercy, among Your servants who are righteous." (Qur'an, 27:19)

The Qur'an relates that after Prophet Solomon (pbuh) heard the ants' conversation, he immediately turned toward God in prayer. Knowing that God was the real possessor of the blessings he had received, he showed that the sole purpose of his every word and deed was to gain His good approval.

God gave him the best reward for his sincere and faithful morality and announced these good tidings in Qur'an 38:40: **"He will have nearness to Us and a good Homecoming."** In another verse, He stated: **"We gave knowledge to David and Solomon who said: 'Praise be to God, Who has favored us over many of His servants who are believers'"** (Qur'an, 27:15).

Moreover, when Prophet Solomon (pbuh) saw this female ant's compassion for her community, he immediately thought of his mother and father. This reaction shows that people should thank God for the blessings that came to them through their parents (e.g., nurture from infancy, upbringing, shelter, and education), because these blessings actually come from God.

Prophet Solomon (pbuh) Loved Animals

When, toward the close of day, nobly-bred, swift-footed steeds were brought before him, he [Solomon] said: "Truly do I love the love of good because of the remembrance of my Lord." — [repeating these words as the steeds raced away,] until they were hidden by the veil [of dust]. (Qur'an, 38:31-32)

Obviously, Prophet Solomon (pbuh) devoted a certain amount of time to these horses, which gladdened the hearts of those who enjoyed watching their skillful and elegant gaits and postures. As he observed them, he praised God. All believers should strive for this exemplary behavior, for they should remember God when meeting with any form of beauty because of the profound effect that any form of beauty will form in their spirits. This effect comes from the believers' deep love of God.

Most of those who are far removed from the beautiful things that religious morality brings are reserved and become careless and insensitive. However, as we clearly see in Prophet Solomon's (pbuh) behavior, Muslims think deeply, are extremely sensitive toward the beautiful things around them, and take pleasure in art and beautiful things. They are aware of God's blessings, know how to enjoy them, and thank Him for them. In any case, as God says: **"Say: 'Who has forbidden the fine clothing God has produced for His servants and the good kinds of provision?' Say: 'They are [lawful] in the life of this world unto all who have believed—to be theirs alone on the Day of Rising'"** (Qur'an, 7:32), the beautiful things in the world are created for Muslims.

[Solomon said:] "Return them to me!" And he set about stroking their shanks and necks. (Qur'an, 38:33)

Prophet Solomon (pbuh) expressed his love in both word and deed. Here, we see most clearly his power to express his love. Generally, people do not always express their love and affection properly. In fact, they usually shrink away from expressing these feelings. A person's ability to show sincere affection toward someone else is a gift from God. In the Qur'an, God says that he gave this ability to Prophet John (pbuh), one of His faithful servants:

[We said to him:] "John, take hold of the Book with vigor." We gave him judgment while still a child. And tenderness and purity from Us—he guarded against evil. (Qur'an, 19:12-13)

- The Qur'an gives examples of Prophet Solomon's (pbuh) love for other animals, such as the ant mentioned above. A female ant, seeing Prophet Solomon (pbuh) and his army coming, told her fellow ants to return to the nest so that Prophet Solomon (pbuh) and his army would not injure them *unwittingly*. The word *unwittingly* indicates that while Prophet Solomon (pbuh) was waging war, he was so compassionate that he would not even harm an ant.

- This incident shows the importance of loving animals, because believers can understand better the beauties of creation and the deep wisdom with which God created

living things. As one verse relates: **"... there is beauty in them [animals] for you..."** (Qur'an, 16:6). So, his love for animals is an expression of the wonder felt for God's perfect creation.

- The Qur'an reveals that one of the benefits animals can give to human beings is security. For example, dogs can ensure their masters' safety. Qur'an 18:18 mentions the dog that belonged to the Companions of the Cave. Many other verses encourage people to love animals and examine the proofs of creation that they reflect.

Prophet Solomon's (pbuh) Attitude toward Possessions

... "Truly do I love the love of good because of the remembrance of my Lord." (Qur'an, 38:32)

As this verse says, Prophet Solomon (pbuh) praised God for the splendor of his wealth and stated that he loved his possessions because they made him remember God. We must consider his words carefully, for other verses assert that the love of possessions may lead people astray. For example: **"Truly, man is ungrateful to his Lord and indeed he bears witness to that. Truly, he is fierce in his love of wealth"** (Qur'an, 100:6-8).

Wealth and love of possessions harden the hearts of most people and alienate them from religion, because they think that they have earned their possessions through their own efforts. For this reason, they become arrogant and feel self-sufficient. Forgetting that they need God, they become wrapped up in their ambition to amass more wealth. Instead of living to serve God, they live to accumulate wealth. Muslims must avoid this trap by abandoning their greed and recognizing Him as the true source of their wealth and possessions.

Prophet Solomon (pbuh) showed us how Muslims should look at wealth and possessions: Aware of their true owner, Muslims must consider their wealth and possessions as no more than a means to remember God. Muslims who realize this great truth do not grow arrogant or haughty when wealth and possessions are given to them, or worry about losing them. Rather, they thank God for what He has given and use it in accordance with God's will and to win His good pleasure. They regard God's bestowal of great wealth, power, and magnificence upon them as a blessing and a means for proving their sincere belief in Him. As a result, their love, fear, and respect for God will grow even greater.

Given these facts, faithful and devout Muslims are the best guardians of wealth, possessions, and power. One such person was Prophet Solomon (pbuh) who, despite the

fact that no one had as much power as he did, was always sincere, approached God with deep reverence, and served His religion.

From this verse, we learn that people can love their possessions, provided that they are used in the hope of gaining His good pleasure and proclaim His eternal power.

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

- Prophet Solomon (pbuh) loved wealth, which he used to seek God's good pleasure, and wanted even more so that he could offer even more service to God. Muslims should follow this example if they find themselves in a similar situation.

- Muslims can have great wealth, magnificent possessions, and wonderful works of art. Indeed, throughout history Muslim empires were characterized by such traits. The most obvious example is the Ottoman Empire, which was Islam's standard bearer for several centuries and left its architectural and other artistic works throughout its vast realm.

- One reason for the believers' wealth is that wealth plays a major role in turning people's hearts to Islam. The believers' splendid possessions attract those who are far removed from religious morality and give too much value to material things. After meeting individual believers, their interest in religion is awakened. As we shall see in this book, this was one of the methods used by Prophet Solomon (pbuh) to get the Queen of Saba to accept Islam.

Prophet Solomon's (pbuh) Special Knowledge

We gave knowledge to David and Solomon, [both of whom] said: "Praise be to God, Who has favored us over many of His servants who are believers." This is indeed a clear favor. (Qur'an, 27:15)

- This test may be a miracle connected to Prophet Solomon's (pbuh) special knowledge. In a metaphysical way, God may have taken him from the material world to the spiritual world. Perhaps there is no matter in the spiritual world, which could have led Prophet Solomon (pbuh) to understand that his throne and the corpse were not material things, but rather objects of the imagination. After returning to the material realm, he may have reclaimed his body and returned to his former state.

We tested Sulayman and placed a lifeless body on his throne. Then he made repent. (Qur'an, 38:34)

- During this journey, he may have left his body and seen it as a corpse. As a result, he may have become aware of the true value of life in this world and of how helpless human beings are. He may have understood that the world would end one day and that all of the things that people value (e.g., money, wealth, property, possessions, and beautiful things) are only illusions.

- Prophet Solomon (pbuh) understood that this life had no value and that he was to use possessions in God's service. Immediately after this event, he prayed for great wealth.

HARUT AND MARUT

They follow what the demons recited during Solomon's reign. Solomon believed, but the demons did not, teaching people sorcery and what had been sent down to Harut and Marut, the two angels in Babylon...(Qur'an, 2:102)

- During the time of Prophet Solomon (pbuh), some people admired magical practices that God had forbidden. They learned such magic from demons and what was taught to two angels (Harut and Marut) in Babylon, again from demons, and used them for evil purposes.

- Satan, who opposed Prophet Solomon (pbuh), placed certain individuals under his spell and may have used Prophet Solomon's (pbuh) great wealth to incite the people against him. They might have rebelled by establishing secret societies to undermine his kingdom. (God knows the truth.) As a matter of fact, historical sources say that Prophet Solomon's (pbuh) Muslim Israelite Kingdom was split in two after his death because of internal conflicts.

... Harut and Marut, the two angels in Babylon, who taught no one without first saying to him: "We are merely a trial and temptation, so do not abandon belief." People learned from them how to separate a man and his wife. But they cannot harm anyone by it, except with God's permission. They have learned what will harm them and will not benefit them. They know that any who deal in it will have no share in the Hereafter. What an evil thing they have sold themselves for. If they only knew! (Qur'an, 2:102)

In order to deceive human beings, demons taught them the magic that they learned from Harut and Marut. However, Harut and Marut told their potential students that they were a test from God and warned them against abandoning belief. Only after this warning did they teach the people. For this reason, people must realize that magic is better off avoided.

- Everyone who resorts to magic must understand that only God can make it effective, for He created that particular spell for a purpose. No one can obtain anything without His knowledge and permission.

- People who believe in magic may suffer because of it, for God rewards their deviation with misery.

- Believers have no interest in magic or in what demons say. Using magic to destroy human relationships, as well as deviating from the right way by delving into such

superstitious beliefs, are evil games designed by Satan to prevent people from following the right path. Those who practice magic and the like have been beguiled by Satan.

There is no room in the Qur'an for such superstitious beliefs, for:

Say: "I seek refuge with the Lord of Daybreak, from the evil of what He has created, from the evil of the darkness when it gathers, and from the evil of women who blow on knots..." (Qur'an, 113:1-4)

The same matter is spoken of in the verses mentioning Harut and Marut. Neither magic nor *women who blow on knots* have any power or efficacy, for only God, Lord of the Worlds, has true power. All believers rely on God and trust only in Him, hope for assistance from Him, tell Him all of their needs and anxieties, and take Him as their friend and guardian.

- These verses may contain some reference to the End Times. In speaking of magic, God may be indicating that this sinful and useless practice might increase in the End Times. In fact, people might use them to earn a living and fortune-tellers might exploit people. One hadith mentions this situation:

The Hour will come when people will believe in the stars and reject Qadar [the Divine Decree of destiny]. (Ahmad Diya' ad-Din al-Kamushkhanawi an-Naqshbandi, Ramuz al-Ahadith, vol. 1, p. 1540.)

PROPHET SOLOMON (pbuh) and THE QUEEN OF SABA

Most of the verses about Prophet Solomon (pbuh) discuss his relations with the Queen of Saba. In addition to providing important details about the two kingdoms' political and economic relations, they give many examples of Prophet Solomon's (pbuh) international relations, administrative skills, and presentations of God's religion to others.

However, it was not long delayed, and then it [the hoopoe] said [to Solomon]: "I have comprehended something that you have not, and bring you accurate intelligence from Saba." (Qur'an, 27:22)

The relations between the two kingdoms began when the hoopoe, a member of Prophet Solomon's (pbuh) army, brought information about Saba and its queen. Upon its return, the hoopoe told Prophet Solomon (pbuh) the following:

"I found a woman ruling over them who has been given everything. She possesses a mighty throne." (Qur'an, 27:23)

The purpose of this verse may be to show that a woman ruler was unusual in those days. The hoopoe said that the Queen of Saba was endowed with wealth and every kind of blessing and emphasized the size of her throne. This may symbolize the extent of her power and authority. (God knows the truth.)

"I found both her and her people prostrating to the sun instead of God. Satan has made their actions seem good to them and debarred them from the Way, so they are not guided." (Qur'an, 27:24)

In other words, Satan had convinced these people that worshipping the Sun, instead of God, was the true path. This means that they were *following the faith of their ancestors*, an excuse often given by pagans for rejecting the true religion. This is just one more example of Satan's most important goal: diverting people from the true path and preventing them from submitting to God. This verse may also indicate that unbelievers are far from God's religion because they are deceived by superstitious beliefs, philosophies, and ideas.

But as the verse below says, Satan has no effect on those servants who believe with a pure and sincere heart:

He [Satan] said: "My Lord, because You misled me, I will make things on Earth seem good to them. I will mislead them all, every one of them, except Your servants among them who are sincere." (Qur'an, 15:39-40)

"And [they] do not prostrate to God, Who brings out what is hidden in the heavens and Earth, and knows what you conceal and what you divulge. God—there is no god but Him—the Lord of the Mighty Throne. (Qur'an, 27:25-26)

These verses reveal some of the hoopoe's characteristics:

- He might have been a believing jinn, for he often proclaimed his belief.
- He was obedient, because he knew that he first had to inform Prophet Solomon (pbuh), who had true wisdom and power, before telling anyone else.
- He understood the things he saw and related the information in a way that held his hearer's attention. He concentrated on the important matters and passed lightly over insignificant details, for his concise manner of speaking went to the essence of the matter.
- Even though the hoopoe was a bird, he could speak and relay information. As stated above, the female ant that saw Prophet Solomon (pbuh)'s army could also speak. Today, because of advanced computer technology, films often feature talking birds, ants, and other creatures. This may be one of the things alluded to in this account.

He [Solomon] said: "We will soon see if you have told the truth or are a liar." (Qur'an, 27:27)

- Prophet Solomon (pbuh) had noticed the hoopoe's absence. He did not make an immediate decision but waited for his explanation. This shows that Prophet Solomon (pbuh) was an intelligent, mature, fair, and just ruler.
- After hearing the hoopoe's information, Prophet Solomon (pbuh) ordered an investigation to ascertain its truth. This is a proof that he was a provident and just ruler.

"Take this letter of mine and deliver it to them. Then withdraw from them a little and see how they respond." (Qur'an, 27:28)

- Prophet Solomon's (pbuh) habit of making a decision after observing a person's reaction is a very intelligent practice. For instance, it prevents possible errors arising from the envoy's personal interpretation.
- In addition, the Queen of Saba was not aware that she was being observed. So, she behaved naturally and sincerely when consulting her advisors and expressed her

true thoughts. Thus, Prophet Solomon (pbuh) could learn what she really thought about him.

She said: "O Council! An important letter has been delivered to me." (Qur'an, 27:29)

- The Queen of Saba understood immediately that this letter was very important. This could have been for various reasons, such as the following:

- First, both the fact that the hoopoe delivered the letter and the hoopoe's characteristics could have revealed the situation's extraordinary nature.

- The quality of the paper, the seal, or the style of writing could have revealed Prophet Solomon's (pbuh) wealth, high artistic appreciation, and power. Such things might have affected her.

- She may have read the letter herself and only then have called in her advisors. Knowing its contents, she may have regarded it as *important*. (God knows the truth.)

- The verse uses the Arabic words *kitabun kareemun* for an *important letter*. The word *kitabun* can mean either *a writing* or *a book*. And *kareemun* can mean *basic, chosen, honorable, respected, valuable*. So, Prophet Solomon (pbuh) may not have sent just a letter, but maybe an accompanying book or document explaining the true religion. Its introduction may have begun with the words: *In the name of God, Most Compassionate, Most Merciful*.

"It is from Solomon and says: 'In the name of God, Most Compassionate, Most Merciful.'" (Qur'an, 27:30)

- The fact that the queen only announced that a letter (or book) had arrived from Prophet Solomon (pbuh) shows that he was known in Saba. We can understand from this that Prophet Solomon's (pbuh) kingdom was widely renowned for its wealth and power.

"Do not rise up against me, but come to me in submission." (Qur'an, 27:31)

- Prophet Solomon's (pbuh) style was open and very effective. The letter's incisive, decisive, and clear style showed that it was from a powerful ruler and might have affected the queen and her council.

"In the name of God, Most Compassionate, Most Merciful. Do not rise up against me, but come to me in submission."

Prophet Solomon (pbuh)

- Prophet Solomon (pbuh) used his letter to explain His religion and then invite the people of Saba to belief in God. He did not want to subjugate them to himself; rather, he wanted to lead them toward God so that they might become Muslims. This shows that he was more interested in their belief system than in conquering Saba, because he was sent to invite people to the true path and warn them.

- These verses inform us of the relations between Prophet Solomon (pbuh) and Saba, and that achieved his goals through diplomacy instead of war. Using letters and envoys, he sought to open relations and encourage mutual understanding and peace.

- This method of communication also reveals an important fact: Oral communication may be forgotten and be ineffective due to many distractions in the local environment. Also, people may not be able to express themselves clearly while talking, or those listening to them may become distracted. However, a written document helps both the writer and the reader to focus their attention on what is being said. Prophet Solomon's (pbuh) method of communication shows that he understood this. It must be remembered that the written word is an important way of relaying the reality of belief and the truth of God's religion.

She said: "O Council! Give me your opinion about this matter. It is not my habit to make a final decision until I have heard what you have to say." (Qur'an, 27:32)

- The fact that she immediately sought her advisors' advice shows that she was not an absolute monarch, but rather followed a democratic system. By asking for their opinions, she sought to profit from their experience.

They said: "We possess strength and great military force. But the matter is in your hands, so consider what you command." (Qur'an, 27:33)

- This verse shows that she consulted her military officials about which course she should follow. From their answer, we can see that this council acted with the authority and by the command of the Queen.

She said: "When kings enter a city, they lay waste to it and make its mightiest inhabitants the most abased. That is what they too will do." (Qur'an, 27:34)

Realizing that she could not defeat Prophet Solomon (pbuh) militarily, she decided to submit to his call. Yet, in order to gain time to find a way out of this situation, she sent Prophet Solomon (pbuh) a gift:

[The Queen of Saba said:] "I will send them a gift, and then wait and see what the envoys bring back." (Qur'an, 27:35)

- The purpose behind sending this gift was to learn his true intention and to gauge his reaction. Thus, she employed the same method as Prophet Solomon (pbuh) had.

- In this verse, we notice that a gift is important to judge a people's reactions and to analyze their spiritual state. When a person does not accept a valuable gift sent to influence his or her opinion, the subsequent refusal may be seen as a sign of sincerity and decisiveness.

When it reached Solomon, he said: "Would you give me wealth when what God has given me is better than what He has given you? No, rather it is you who delight in your gift." (Qur'an, 27:36)

- Prophet Solomon's (pbuh) response showed that he could not be influenced and that God's gifts to him were much better than what she had sent. This shows that he only sought God's good pleasure.

- He sent back the queen's envoys, thereby clearly showing that he knew her intention and would not accept her gift. In this way, he prevented her from being pleased with herself and being arrogant in her wealth. This was a great psychological blow for the people of Saba, who then realized that their queen's wealth could not help them.

[Solomon said:] "Return to them. We will come to them with troops they cannot face, and we will expel them from it abased and humiliated." (Qur'an, 27:37)

- Prophet Solomon (pbuh)'s army had extraordinary strength. Even the most powerful army may be opposed and withstood. However, this verse reveals that his army was well-known because of its supernatural power, which prevented it from being defeated.

- Here Prophet Solomon (pbuh) destroyed the queen's envoys' self-confidence and arrogance. In his second message, he reminded the queen and Saba's prominent citizens how weak they were compared to him and his army. Perhaps he did this so that he could achieve his aim without going to war.

He said: "O Council! Who among you will bring me her throne before they come to me in submission?" (Qur'an, 27:38)

- Prophet Solomon (pbuh) spoke with certainty about Saba's imminent submission. This may be a sign that God had informed him of this event.

- Each country values its flags and standards, because they symbolize the country's independence. As the hoopoe said, Saba's pride was its queen's great throne. By asking prominent members of his retinue to bring him that throne before the queen and her court arrived, Prophet Solomon (pbuh) sought to destroy her people's morale and make them submit more quickly.

- From this verse, we learn that Prophet Solomon (pbuh) could maneuver, make quick decisions, and carry them out without delay. This is a great advantage when it comes to gaining the upper hand against opposing forces, especially in a time of war.

A demon of the jinns said: "I will bring it to you before you get up from your seat. I am strong and trustworthy enough to do it." (Qur'an, 27:39)

This first proposal probably alludes to the fact that jinn can move or transport material things to another place.

He who possessed knowledge of the Book said: "I will bring it to you before the twinkling of your eye ceases." And when he [Solomon] 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." (Qur'an, 27:40)

This second proposal, which came from an individual *who possessed knowledge of the Book*, brings a few possibilities to mind:

- He may have been an army intelligence operative blessed with the foresight to bring the throne earlier as a precaution. Therefore, the verse may indicate that intelligence operatives take precautions to prepare for unexpected circumstances.

- The throne's transportation in the twinkling of an eye, and the facts that it was changed and that birds had exchanged information, may signify the advanced technology in the End Times that will be used to teleport material objects.

- Thanks to the Internet, people can send written material, pictures, films, and many other kinds of information over long distances in a very short time. For example, sending the queen's throne to a distant place in "the twinkling of an eye" may indicate that, in the End Times, things (for example, a three-dimensional image or picture of a throne) may be teleported almost instantaneously through the Internet.

- Prophet Solomon (pbuh) may have taken advantage of the jinns' knowledge and qualities to create devices, presently unknown to us, that could teleport objects.

- After the throne was brought, Prophet Solomon (pbuh) immediately turned toward God and asked for pardon, prayed, and gave thanks, for he was a sincere and faithful servant. He is an example for everyone of true and sincere belief.

- Transferring the throne, the symbol of Saba, to Prophet Solomon (pbuh)'s palace was a great psychological defeat for the queen. Moreover, he ordered it to be changed.

He said: "Alter her throne. We shall see whether she is guided or someone who is not guided." (Qur'an, 27:41)

- Additions may have been made to make it even more beautiful and luxurious. In doing this, Prophet Solomon (pbuh) may have wanted to show that his own wealth was superior and that he had supreme authority over the queen's wealth and possessions.

- This verse may be pointing out the excellence that Muslims seek for in art, as they do in all things. No matter how beautiful and splendid her throne was, it paled in comparison to Prophet Solomon's (pbuh) artistic capabilities.

- Here is an example of Prophet Solomon's (pbuh) great artistic capability. He may have combined art and technology perfectly and left people amazed by his intelligence and artistic power.

- The word *alter* is interesting. These days, computer programs can easily make any desired change to an image. This may refer to the widespread use of such a technology in the End Times.

Then when she [the queen of Saba] came, she was asked: "Is your throne like this?" She said: "It is as it were the same, and we were given the knowledge before it, and we were submissive." And what she worshipped besides God prevented her. Surely, she was of an unbelieving people." (Qur'an, 27:42-43)

- One reason Prophet Solomon (pbuh) may have asked this question was to determine her level of attention.

- From this verse, we can see that the queen proved herself to be an intelligent and reserved individual, for she answered his question with self-possession and deliberation. She did not say immediately whether it was or was not her throne, but chose to give an ambiguous answer.

- The queen and her people were sun worshippers. But the fact that she read Prophet Solomon's (pbuh) sincere and moving letter and then came to see his kingdom's splendor caused her to embrace true belief and become a Muslim.

She was told: "Enter the courtyard." But when she saw it, she supposed it to be a pool and bared her legs. He [Solomon] said: "It is a courtyard paved with glass." She said: "My Lord, I have wronged myself, but I have submitted with Solomon to the Lord of all the worlds." (Qur'an, 27:44)

When the queen came into Prophet Solomon's (pbuh) palace, she thought that the floor was under water. Several interpretations may be given for this impression:

- The word used to describe the floor may indicate a particular technology of that time of which the queen was unaware. Or, maybe the floor of this palace was different from other floors.
- The floor may have been a giant television screen placed in the palace's entrance to give people the impression that the floor was covered with water. (Such effects are often used in interior decoration.) So, when she saw the screen, she thought that she was looking at water.

This verse may be alluding to a different kind of technology. Today, simulation goggles let people think that they are in a different place than where they are. This verse may indicate this technology, which will be discovered in the End Times.

- We see that Prophet Solomon (pbuh) knew that such a situation would arise when the Queen of Saba arrived. He realized that this technology was very advanced and beyond the ordinary.

- In this verse, God may be indicating that water will be used in the End Times to produce decorative materials with advanced technology. These products, using water's aesthetic and clean appearance, may be used in beautiful things to recreate the splendor of Prophet Solomon's (pbuh) time.

- Prophet Solomon's (pbuh) deep understanding of art, which we see in these verses, is a very good example for Muslims. He used this understanding to express his great love for God and his wonder at the marvels of His creation.

- Believing artists have produced beautiful works of art throughout history. With God's permission, the power of Muslim art will greatly increase in the End Times. Artists who are inspired by the beauties of God's creation and feel a great sense of love toward Him will produce incomparable works of art and will cover the world with fine developments in the areas of painting, music, and architecture. With God's permission, the Muslim world will drive these great developments.

PROPHET SOLOMON'S (pbuh) DEATH

Then when We decreed that he [Solomon] should die, nothing divulged his death to them except the earthworm that ate his staff; so that when he fell down, it was made clear to the jinns that if they had truly had knowledge of the Unseen, they need not have stayed there, suffering humiliating punishment.(Qur'an, 34:14)

The Qur'an does not contain much information about the prophets' deaths. However, it does relate some important details about Prophet Solomon's (pbuh) death. For example, at the moment of his death he was surrounded by jinns who probably were trying to complete their assigned tasks. Not realizing that he was dead, they continued to work. This verse suggests that the jinns do not have any true knowledge of the Unseen, for if they did, they would have stopped working. As this verse emphasizes the words *humiliating punishment*, they were working very hard on a task and were afraid of Prophet Solomon (pbuh). Thus, they did not stop when he died as they did not realize he was dead until the staff broke.

The words in Arabic translated here as *earthworm* are *dabbat al-ard*. *Dabba* means *animal or beast*. Coming from *debbe*, which means a *light walking or to struggle*, it is used for animals and insects. *Ard* means *ground or floor*. Therefore, the expression *dabbat al-ard* can be thought of as referring to any animal, not just the earthworm.

THE JINNS AND ANIMALS UNDER PROPHET SOLOMON'S (pbuh) COMMAND

Earlier, we mentioned that the birds in Prophet Solomon's (pbuh) army and the community of ants in the *Valley of the Ants* may have been jinns. We noticed their highly conscious behavior, especially the ant community in the Valley of the Ants, which displayed an awareness unseen in other animals.

We will now touch on similar qualities possessed by other animals in the account of Prophet Solomon (pbuh).

However, it was not long delayed, and then it [the hoopoe] said: "I have comprehended something that you have not, and bring you accurate intelligence from Saba. I found a woman ruling over them who has been given everything. She possesses a mighty throne. I found both her and her people prostrating to the Sun instead of God. Satan has made their actions seem good to them and debarred them from the Way, so they are not guided." (Qur'an, 27:22-24)

- The hoopoe acted with great awareness. He went to Saba, did some detailed reconnoitering there, and returned to tell Prophet Solomon (pbuh) everything that he had seen.

He [Solomon] said: "We will soon see if you have told the truth or are a liar. Take this letter of mine and deliver it to them, and then withdraw from them a little and see how they respond." (Qur'an, 27:27-28)

- After receiving the hoopoe's information, Prophet Solomon (pbuh) gave him a new task. As this was not a task that any bird could do, this hoopoe was not an ordinary bird. Probably he was a jinn.

- A second possibility is that the hoopoe acted under the direction of jinns.

He [Solomon] inspected the birds and asked: "How is it that I do not see the hoopoe? Or is it absent without leave?" (Qur'an, 27:20)

- This verse does not say *ran away* and went; rather, it says that he was *absent* and that Prophet Solomon (pbuh) could not see him. Perhaps jinns can leave our dimension, enter their own dimension, and thus immediately become invisible.

When, toward the close of day, nobly-bred, swift-footed steeds were brought before him, he [Solomon] said: "Truly do I love the love of good because of the remembrance of my Lord"—[repeating these words as the steeds raced away,] until they were hidden by the veil [of dust]. [Solomon said:] "Return them to me!" And he set about stroking their shanks and necks. (Qur'an, 38:31-33)

- These verses indicate that, like the hoopoe, these horses can disappear from view behind a veil of dust. This may mean that the horses are jinns and can slip in a moment into the jinn world where people cannot see them.
- Or, they may be horses but controlled by jinns. The words "**return them to me**" explains that these horses were brought by others to Prophet Solomon (pbuh), and that these *others* may have been jinns.

Then when We decreed that he [Solomon] should die, nothing divulged his death to them except the earthworm that ate his staff, so that when he fell down, it was made clear to the jinn that if they had truly had knowledge of the Unseen, they need not have stayed there, suffering humiliating punishment. (Qur'an, 34:14)

Again, the earthworm (*dabbat al-ard*) mentioned here may have been a jinn. (God knows the truth.)

We tested Solomon and placed a lifeless body on his throne. Then he returned. (Qur'an, 38:34)

- Perhaps this corpse was the body of a dead jinn. It may have been left on the throne and taken back in a moment into the jinn world. The words "Then he returned" may indicate that this is what actually happened.
- Or, a human corpse could have been left on the throne and been taken back in a moment by jinns. The Qur'an mentions that a demon of the jinns brought the Queen of Saba's throne very quickly from her palace to Prophet Solomon's (pbuh).

SIMILARITIES BETWEEN PROPHET SOLOMON (pbuh) and DHU'L-QARNAYN (pbuh)

The Qur'an informs us of Dhu'l-Qarnayn (pbuh), another Muslim leader who ruled a great kingdom. His life was quite similar to Prophet Solomon's (pbuh).

They Both Had Power

God gave both "**power and authority in the land**" (Qur'an, 18:84). The words *power and authority* may imply the great importance of their kingdom's economic, military, and political power. Thanks to this power, Dhu'l-Qarnayn (pbuh) ruled over a great expanse of territory and established order therein. (For detailed information about Dhu'l-Qarnayn (pbuh), see Harun Yahya, *Signs of the End Times in Surat al-Kahf* [New Delhi: Goodword Books, 2004].)

They Were Intelligent and Believed in God

The Qur'an states that God granted Dhu'l-Qarnayn (pbuh) "**a way to everything**" (Qur'an, 18:84). In other words, he was a perceptive, cautious, and intelligent leader who could solve every problem. Examples of Prophet Solomon's (pbuh) intelligence, from his command over jinns and demons to his administration of his kingdom, are related in the Qur'an.

Like Prophet Solomon (pbuh), Dhu'l-Qarnayn (pbuh) also ruled a powerful and wealthy state whose fame had spread far and wide. People came to him seeking solutions to what they considered complex problems, and even those nations that lived beyond his kingdom knew him as *a person who impeded corruption in the land*. For example, *a people between the two mountains, scarcely able to understand speech*, asked him for help:

They said: "O Dhu'l-Qarnayn. Gog and Magog are causing corruption in the land. Can we, therefore, pay tribute to you in return for your constructing a barrier between us and them?" (Qur'an, 18:94)

Superior Military Power

The Qur'an, which informs us of Prophet Solomon's (pbuh) mighty army, states that Dhu'l-Qarnayn (pbuh) also had a powerful military force:

We said: "O Dhu'l-Qarnayn. You can either punish them or else you can treat them with gentleness." He said: "As for those who do wrong, we will punish them and then they will be returned to their Lord. He will punish them with a dreadful punishment." (Qur'an, 18:86-87)

Dhu'l-Qarnayn (pbuh) used his great military might to treat unbelievers who brought corruption into the land with great harshness and to defeat their plans to oppress others. Thus, a king ruling a vast territory must have a very strong military.

They Judged with Justice

Earlier, we discussed Prophet Solomon's (pbuh) methods of treating others justly. From the Qur'an's account of Dhu'l-Qarnayn (pbuh), we can see that he was also very just and fair. For example, he was ready to help any people defend themselves against corruption and oppression. The fact that both accounts emphasize both leaders' just administration shows that in order to ensure global security, happiness, justice, and stability, the existence of a very strong legal system supported by military and police power is essential.

They Refused All Gifts

Prophet Solomon (pbuh) did not accept the Queen of Saba's gift, but told her envoys to take it back and tell her:

When it reached Solomon, he said: "Would you give me wealth when what God has given me is better than what He has given you? No, rather it is you who delight in your gift." (Qur'an, 27:36)

And Dhu'l-Qarnayn (pbuh) told the people who offered to pay him a tax for his help that:

"The power my Lord has granted me is better than that..." (Qur'an, 18:95)

The fact that both leaders refused these gifts and reminded those who offered them that God was the sole owner of all possessions shows that they were sincere Muslims. These examples contain good advice for every Muslim leader.

They Always Turned toward God

Prophet Solomon (pbuh), who had superior moral qualities and was a faithful servant, constantly turned toward God. Whenever he was successful or victorious, or whenever God gave him a blessing, Prophet Solomon (pbuh) turned toward Him in worship and remembered that all power belongs to Him. Dhu'l-Qarnayn (pbuh) had the same moral character. For example, when he was able to protect the people from Gog and Magog, he praised God in the following words:

They were, therefore, unable to climb over it. Nor were they able to make a breach in it. He [Dhu'l-Qarnayn] said: "This is a mercy from my Lord. But

when my Lord's promise comes about, He will crush it flat. The promise of my Lord is surely true." (Qur'an, 18:97-98)

They Ruled over Jinns

As we know, our Prophet (may God bless him and grant him peace) said that there were two leaders in the past who had founded great kingdoms: Prophet Solomon (pbuh) and Dhu'l-Qarnayn (pbuh). Prophet Solomon (pbuh) controlled some jinns; perhaps Dhu'l-Qarnayn (pbuh) had a similar control. The people of Gog and Magog, against whom Dhu'l-Qarnayn's (pbuh) help was requested, may have been jinns.

In these two accounts, particularly the one about Prophet Solomon (pbuh), the jinns are mentioned quite often. This may signify that the End Times, when God may place the jinns and demons at the service of human beings. (Only God knows the truth.)

The Use of Tar or Molten Copper

Dhu'l-Qarnayn (pbuh), using a substance called *alayhi qitran*, made an effective barrier against Gog and Magog:

[Dhu'l-Qarnayn said:] "Bring me ingots of iron." Then, when he had made it level between the two high mountainsides, he said: "Blow," and when he had made it a red hot fire, he said: "Bring me molten copper [or tar] to pour over it." (Qur'an, 18:96)

The meaning of *alayhi qitran* is *molten copper* or *tar*. The Qur'an says that this same substance was also under Prophet Solomon's (pbuh) command:

And We gave Solomon power over the wind—a month's journey in the morning and a month in the afternoon. And We made a fount of molten copper flow out for him. And some of the jinns worked in front of him by his Lord's permission. And if a single one of them deviates at all from Our command, We let him taste the punishment of the Searing Blaze. (Qur'an, 34:12)

There is a noticeable similarity between the two leaders' use of this substance. Perhaps Prophet Solomon (pbuh) used this substance to establish his control over the jinns and the demons. Perhaps it was tar, for Qur'an 14:50 mentions "**wearing shirts of tar,**" which shows that this substance is also found in Hell.

In fact, right after this verse mentions that this substance was given on the orders of Prophet Solomon (pbuh), it says that the jinns served him. Both Prophet Solomon (pbuh) and Dhu'l-Qarnayn (pbuh) may have used this substance to control the jinns. Perhaps it contained an ingredient that affected them. (God knows the truth.)

Good Tidings about the End Times

The dominion exercised by Prophet Solomon (pbuh) and Dhu'l-Qarnayn (pbuh) is very good news for all Muslims, because these accounts contain important indications about the End Times.

Muslims who meticulously keep within the limits God established for humanity, strive to make Islamic morality dominant in the world, and withstand all difficulties will be superior in all periods of history, for God will always help and support them. As both Prophet Solomon (pbuh) and Dhu'l-Qarnayn (pbuh) had these qualities, God gave them authority in the land (and, of course, all of His other spiritual graces). The same dominion will occur, with God's permission, in the End Times, for He has promised this to believers.

TWO ADMINISTRATIONS DESCRIBED IN THE QUR'AN

The Qur'an gives two important examples of state administration: that of the Queen of Saba and that of Pharaoh.

What happened after Prophet Solomon (pbuh) invited the Sun-worshipping Sabaeans to the true faith gives some idea of how their kingdom was administered.

After receiving Prophet Solomon's (pbuh) letter, the Queen of Saba assembled her advisors and asked for their opinions. In other words, she did not have the sole right to make decisions that affected the kingdom. The queen valued her advisors' ideas, and they respected her and authority. This shows that Saba may have had an administrative system that was similar to democracy.

At first sight, Pharaoh may have had a similar type of administration. He appears to have had a council of prominent persons who had great influence. But they led him astray and gave him commands that would cause dissension and injustice. They talked to Pharaoh in the following way:

They said: "Detain him [Moses] and his brother, and send out marshals to the cities." (Qur'an, 7:111)

The Egyptian government at this time may be called an oligarchy, for power was in the hands of a limited number of people. The power of such a government is most often proportionate to its material or military strength, and its governing body is always a tiny minority in proportion to the people it governs. These individuals govern the land for their own profit and pleasure. We can see from the Qur'an that Pharaoh's system of government was an oligarchy.

As **"Then We sent Moses and his brother Aaron with Our Signs and clear authority to Pharaoh and his ruling circle. But they were a proud and despotic people"** (Qur'an, 23:45-46) reveal, Pharaoh and his court formed a community that sought to impose its will on others. The oligarchic class, which was composed of Pharaoh's counselors, magicians, and soldiers, established its intellectual dominion over the public so that the people would remain loyal to the pharaonic system. In addition, it inculcated the masses with the false belief that Pharaoh was a superior being. Basing his rule upon this misguided system, Pharaoh and his circle oppressed the people. In fact, the Qur'an states that:

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. (Qur'an, 10:83)

Another evident proof of this administration's oppressive nature was segregating the people according to their race or religion and deliberately oppressing the Tribe of Israel.

Pharaoh exalted himself arrogantly in the land and divided its people into camps, oppressing one group of them by slaughtering their sons and letting their women live. He was one of the corrupters. (Qur'an, 28:4)

In Qur'an 7:127, we are told that Pharaoh had "**absolute power**." This power came from his army. We can understand his government's power from the commands he gave to his soldiers:

Pharaoh sent marshals into the cities. (Qur'an, 26:53)

They said: "Detain him [Moses] and his brother, and send out marshals to the cities." (Qur'an, 7:111)

As the above verses indicate, this oppressive state mechanism and system of intelligence gathering allowed the state hierarchy to watch over the kingdom's remotest regions. This supervision shows the strict discipline and oppression of Pharaoh's administration.

In the Queen of Saba's meeting with Prophet Solomon (pbuh), as well as her subsequent conversion and submission to him, there may be an indication that Saba knew no such oppression. The Qur'an relates that:

She said: "My Lord, I have wronged myself, but I have submitted with Solomon to the Lord of all the worlds." (Qur'an, 27:44)

In other words, Saba's method of administration was pretty democratic for that period of time. The people were not oppressed, the most important decisions of state were taken after agreement was secured among all levels of government, and there was mutual respect and freedom of conscience. It seems to have been a model in which rights were protected.

By describing these different systems of government, God shows us that one system opposed religious morality, whereas another one lived quite close to that morality, even though it had not yet heard of or embraced the true religion.

THE END OF SABA

Many verses mention that Saba had a strong army. We are told that its commanders left the final decision to the queen, as the following verse indicates:

"We possess strength and great force. But the matter is in your hands, so consider what you command." (Qur'an, 27:33)

But Saba's strong army turned out to be of no use, for despite the prophet's warnings, the Sabaeans's continued ungratefulness for God's blessings caused them to be punished generations later with a disastrous flood. The Qur'an describes the places in which the Sabaeans lived:

There was also a sign for Saba in their dwelling place: two gardens—one to the right and one to the left. [We said to them:] "Eat of your Lord's provision and give thanks to Him: a bountiful land and a forgiving Lord." (Qur'an, 34:15)

The Sabaeans lived in a land of striking beauty and of fruitful vines and gardens. Located on trade roads, they lived lives of considerable comfort and had built one of the finest cities of that time. Given their high standard of living and beautiful environment, it was their duty to *eat of their Lord's provision and give thanks to Him*.

But they did not do this, for they were ungrateful:

But they turned away. So, We unleashed against them the flood from the great dam and exchanged their two gardens for two others containing bitter-tasting plants, tamarisk, and a few lote trees. That is how We repaid them for their ingratitude. Are any but the ungrateful repaid like this? (Qur'an, 34:16-17)

The Sabaeans thought that their success and wealth came from their own effort. As these verses say, God willed His retribution, in the form of a great flood, to fall upon them and destroy them. Those who are ungrateful for God's blessings, who do not follow the way shown by the prophets, and who ignore the revealed Books that He has sent down will receive their *reward* for their actions both in this world and in the world to come. This is God's law, for He decrees:

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 stubble. We did not wrong them; rather, they wronged themselves. The deities they called upon besides God did

not help them at all when God's command came upon them. They did nothing but increase their ruin. (Qur'an, 11:100-01)

Saba Destroyed by the 'Arim Flood

According to historical sources, Saba was one of the four great civilizations of southern Arabia. Its inhabitants were a sophisticated people who had reached a high level of technology, as we can tell from the Ma'rib dam, one of their most important achievements. As the Sabaeans were establishing their civilization, they built this dam and began to irrigate the surrounding land, and develop a very comfortable lifestyle.

The Ma'rib dam was 16 meters (52 feet) high, 60 meters (196 feet) wide, and 620 meters (2,034 feet) in length. Scholars estimate that it irrigated 9,600 hectares of land: 5,300 hectares on the southern plain and 4,300 hectares on the northern plain. Sabaean inscriptions sometimes refer to these two plains as "Ma'rib and the two plains."¹¹ So, the Qur'anic expression of **"two gardens—one to the right and one to the left"** probably means these vines and gardens that stretched across two valleys. This dam, as well as the irrigation water it supplied to the surrounding land, made the area famous as the best irrigated and most productive land in southern Arabia.

The extensive repairs made during the fifth and sixth centuries CE did not prevent its collapse in 542. The ensuing flood, which the Qur'an calls the *Arim flood*, destroyed the Sabaeans' vineyards, gardens, and farms that they had cultivated for centuries. The Saba kingdom then entered a period of rapid decline and gradually disappeared.

Archeological finds and historical sources corroborate this event. The Qur'an speaks of the *Sayl al-'Arim* (i.e., the 'Arim flood). The word '*arim*' can mean *dam* or *barricade*. So, *Sayl al-'Arim* indicates that the flood happened because the dam collapsed.

German archeologist Werner Keller, author of *Und die Bible Hat Doch Recht* (The Holy Book Was Right), accepted the Qur'anic account of this flood and wrote that the existence of such a dam and the destruction of the whole kingdom by its collapse proves that the Qur'an's example of the people of the garden was indeed realized.¹²

The Ma'rib dam, which now has become a desolate ruin, is a lesson for all people who, like the Sabaeans, are ungrateful for God's blessings and so deserve His punishment. In a moment, all of their wealth was gone. (For a detailed discussion, see Harun Yahya, *The Perished Nations* [Ta Ha Publishers, Ltd.: 2002].)

PROPHET SOLOMON (pbuh) IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

Throughout this book, we have been considering Prophet Solomon's (pbuh) wealth, artistic understanding, and some of his other characteristics. We have spoken of his magnificent palace, which left everyone who saw it in awe, and of the works of art he commanded the jinns and demons under his command to create. We have related that some of them were builders and divers and knew how to make *high arches, statues, huge dishes like cisterns, and great built-in cooking vats.*

Earlier, we mentioned that Prophet Solomon (pbuh), just like his father Prophet David (pbuh), was sent to the Tribe of Israel. He warned them and invited them to live a good moral life. For this reason, there is much information about Prophet Solomon (pbuh) in the Old Testament.

The Old Testament contains the Torah revealed to Prophet Moses (pbuh), the Psalms given to Prophet David (pbuh), and other books believed either to have been written by various Jewish prophets or telling of their lives. Jews believe in the entire Old Testament, whereas Christians accept the Old Testament [but not the religious ritual and legal life that it commands all Jews to obey] with the added New Testament, which contains the four Gospels that recount a few incidents of Prophet Jesus' life, some letters written by St. Paul to the young Christian communities, and the letters of other early Christian figures.

The Qur'an reveals that the earlier revealed books were corrupted. However, a number of rules and practices belonging to the true religion have been preserved in these books. The Muslims' only guides to determining which elements in the religions revealed before Islam belong to the true religion, as well as those that have been corrupted, are those that are found in the Qur'an and the Sunnah of our Prophet (may God bless him and grant him peace).

The Old Testament contains many stories about Prophet Solomon (pbuh), especially his power, superior wisdom, and strong belief. These stories are all in perfect conformity with what is said in the Qur'an. The Old Testament mentions that Prophet Solomon's (pbuh) kingdom consisted of all the land between the Nile and the Euphrates rivers. To possess such a vast territory in Mesopotamia, the region's cultural and economic center at that time, and to have the strength to govern surrounding nations, as in the case of Saba, is indeed an indication of great political power.

Besides this, the information given in the Old Testament about Prophet Solomon's (pbuh) wealth, his temple's construction, the people who helped him, the materials he used, and its size.

Solomon (pbuh) Built A Great Temple Because God Willed It

Now I am about to build a temple for the Name of the LORD my God ... The temple I am going to build will be great... (2 Chronicles 2:4-5)

... My men will work with yours to provide me with plenty of lumber, because the temple I build must be large and magnificent. (2 Chronicles 2:8-9)

He made a bronze altar twenty cubits long, twenty cubits wide, and ten cubits high. (That is, about 30 feet [about 9 meters] long and wide, and about 15 feet [about 4.5 meters] high). (2 Chronicles 4:1)

The temple that King Solomon built for the LORD was sixty cubits long, twenty wide, and thirty high. The portico at the front of the main hall of the temple extended the width of the temple, that is twenty cubits, and projected ten cubits from the front of the temple. He made narrow clerestory windows in the temple. Against the walls of the main hall and inner sanctuary, he built a structure around the building, in which there were side rooms. The lowest floor was five cubits wide, the middle floor six cubits, and the third floor seven. He made offset ledges around the outside of the temple so that nothing would be inserted into the temple walls. (1 Kings 6:2-6)

Skilled Workmen Worked on the Temple

"Send me, therefore, a man skilled to work in gold and silver, bronze and iron, and in purple, crimson and blue yarn, and experienced in the art of engraving, to work in Judah and Jerusalem with my skilled craftsmen, whom my father David provided. Send me also cedar, pine, and algum logs from Lebanon, for I know that your men are skilled in cutting timber there..." (2 Chronicles 2:7-8)

Various Trees Were Used in the Carving

In building the temple, only blocks dressed at the quarry were used, and no hammer, chisel, or any other iron tool was heard at the temple site while it was being built. The entrance to the lowest floor was on the south side of the temple; a stairway led up to the middle level and, from there, to the third. So he built the temple and completed it, roofing it with beams and cedar planks. And he built the side rooms all along the temple. The height of each was five cubits, and they were attached to the temple by beams of cedar. (1 Kings 6:7-10)

In the inner sanctuary he made a pair of cherubim of olive wood, each ten cubits high. One wing of the first cherub was five cubits long, and the other wing five cubits—ten cubits from wing tip to wing tip. The second cherub also measured ten cubits, for the two cherubim were identical in size and shape. The height of each cherub was ten cubits. He placed the cherubim inside the innermost room of the temple, with their wings spread

out. The wing of one cherub touched one wall, while the wing of the other touched the other wall, and their wings touched each other in the middle of the room. He overlaid the cherubim with gold. (1 Kings 6:23-28)

On the walls all around the temple, in both the inner and outer rooms, he carved cherubim, palm trees, and open flowers. He also covered the floors of both the inner and outer rooms of the temple with gold. For the entrance of the inner sanctuary, he made doors of olive wood with five-sided jambs. And on the two olive wood doors he carved cherubim, palm trees, and open flowers, and overlaid the cherubim and palm trees with beaten gold. In the same way, he made four-sided jambs of olive wood for the entrance to the main hall. He also made two pine doors, each having two leaves that turned in sockets. He carved cherubim, palm trees, and open flowers on them and overlaid them with gold hammered evenly over the carvings. And he built the inner courtyard of three courses of dressed stone and one course of trimmed cedar beams. (1 Kings 6:29-36)

It took Solomon thirteen years, however, to complete the construction of his palace. He built the Palace of the Forest of Lebanon a hundred cubits long, fifty wide, and thirty high, with four rows of cedar columns supporting trimmed cedar beams. It was roofed with cedar above the beams that rested on the columns—forty-five beams, fifteen to a row. Its windows were placed high in sets of three, facing each other. All the doorways had rectangular frames; they were in the front part in sets of three, facing each other. He made a colonnade fifty cubits long and thirty wide. In front of it was a portico, and in front of that were pillars and an overhanging roof. He built the throne hall, the Hall of Justice, where he was to judge, and he covered it with cedar from floor to ceiling. And the palace in which he was to live, set farther back, was similar in design... (1 Kings 7:1-8)

Tens of Thousands of People Worked for Him

Solomon took a census of all the aliens who were in Israel, after the census his father David had taken; and they were found to be 153,600. He assigned 70,000 of them to be carriers and 80,000 to be stonecutters in the hills, with 3,600 foremen over them to keep the people working. (2 Chronicles 2:17-18)

King Solomon conscripted laborers from all Israel—thirty thousand men. He sent them off to Lebanon in shifts of ten thousand a month, so that they spent one month in Lebanon and two months at home. Adoniram was in charge of the forced labor. Solomon had seventy thousand carriers and eighty thousand stonecutters in the hills, as well as thirty-three hundred foremen who supervised the project and directed the workmen. At the king's command, they removed from the quarry large blocks of quality stone to provide a foundation of dressed stone for the temple. (1 Kings 5:13-17)

The Temple's Foundation

The foundation Solomon laid for building the temple of God was sixty cubits long and twenty cubits wide (using the cubit of the old standard). The portico at the front of the temple was twenty cubits long across the width of the building and twenty cubits high... (2 Chronicles 3:3-4)

Both the Inside and the Outside Were Covered With Pure Gold, Brass, and Precious Stones

He overlaid the inside with pure gold. He paneled the main hall with pine, covered it with fine gold, and decorated it with palm tree and chain designs. He adorned the temple with precious stones. And the gold he used was gold of Parvaim. He overlaid the ceiling beams, doorframes, walls, and doors of the temple with gold, and he carved cherubim on the walls. He built the Most Holy Place, its length corresponding to the width of the temple—twenty cubits long and twenty cubits wide. He overlaid the inside with six hundred talents of fine gold. The gold nails weighed fifty shekels. He also overlaid the upper parts with gold. (2 Chronicles 3:4-9)

Solomon covered the inside of the temple with pure gold, and he extended gold chains across the front of the inner sanctuary, which was overlaid with gold. So he overlaid the whole interior with gold. He also overlaid with gold the altar that belonged to the inner sanctuary. (1 Kings 6:21-22)

With all my resources I have provided for the temple of my God—gold for the gold work, silver for the silver, bronze for the bronze, iron for the iron, and wood for the wood, as well as onyx for the settings, turquoise, stones of various colors, and all kinds of fine stone and marble—all of these in large quantities. Besides, in my devotion to the temple of my God I now give my personal treasures of gold and silver for the temple of my God, over and above everything I have provided for this holy temple: three thousand talents of gold (gold of Ophir) and seven thousand talents of refined silver, for the overlaying of the walls of the buildings, for the gold work and the silver work, and for all the work to be done by the craftsmen... (1 Chronicles 29:2-5)

Solomon also made all the furnishings that were in God's temple: the golden altar; the tables on which was the bread of the Presence; the lamp stands of pure gold with their lamps, to burn in front of the inner sanctuary as prescribed; the gold floral work, lamps, and tongs (they were solid gold); the pure gold wick trimmers, sprinkling bowls, dishes, and censers; and the gold doors of the temple: the inner doors to the Most Holy Place and the doors of the main hall. (2 Chronicles 4:19-22)

He brought in the things his father David had dedicated—the silver and gold and all the furnishings—and he placed them in the treasuries of God's temple. (2 Chronicles 5:1)

All these structures, from the outside to the great courtyard and from foundation to eaves, were made of blocks of high-grade stone cut to size and trimmed with a saw on their inner and outer faces. The foundations were laid with large stones of good quality, some measuring ten cubits and some eight. Above were high-grade stones, cut to size, and cedar beams. The great courtyard was surrounded by a wall of three courses of dressed stone and one course of trimmed cedar beams, as was the inner courtyard of the temple of the Lord with its portico. (1 Kings 7:9-12)

He also made ten movable stands of bronze; each was four cubits long, four wide and three high. This is how the stands were made: They had side panels attached to uprights. On the panels between the uprights were lions, bulls, and cherubim—and on the uprights as well. Above and below the lions and bulls were wreaths of hammered work. Each stand had four bronze wheels with bronze axles, and each had a basin resting on four supports, cast with wreaths on each side. On the inside of the stand there was an opening that had a circular frame one cubit deep. This opening was round, and with its basework it measured a cubit and a half. Around its opening there was engraving. The panels of the stands were square, not round. The four wheels were under the panels, and the axles of the wheels were attached to the stand. The diameter of each wheel was a cubit and a half. The wheels were made like chariot wheels; the axles, rims, spokes, and hubs were all of cast metal. Each stand had four handles, one on each corner, projecting from the stand. At the top of the stand there was a circular band half a cubit deep. The supports and panels were attached to the top of the stand. He engraved cherubim, lions, and palm trees on the surfaces of the supports and on the panels, in every available space, with wreaths all around. This is the way he made the ten stands. They were all cast in the same molds and were identical in size and shape. (1 Kings 7:27-37)

Sculptors Decorated the Temple

In the Most Holy Place he made a pair of sculptured cherubim and overlaid them with gold. The total wingspan of the cherubim was twenty cubits. One wing of the first cherub was five cubits long and touched the temple wall, while its other wing, also five cubits long, touched the wing of the other cherub. Similarly one wing of the second cherub was five cubits long and touched the other temple wall, and its other wing, also five cubits long, touched the wing of the first cherub. The wings of these cherubim extended twenty cubits. They stood on their feet, facing the main hall. He made the curtain of blue, purple and crimson yarn and fine linen, with cherubim worked into it. (2 Chronicles 3:10-14)

They Made Large and Splendid Lavers and Candlesticks

He then made ten basins for washing and placed five on the south side and five on the north. In them the things to be used for the burnt offerings were rinsed, but the sea was to be used by the priests for washing. (2 Chronicles 4:6)

He made ten gold lamp stands according to the specifications for them and placed them in the temple, five on the south side and five on the north. He made ten tables and placed them in the temple, five on the south side and five on the north. He also made a hundred gold sprinkling bowls. He made the courtyard of the priests, and the large court and the doors for the court, and overlaid the doors with bronze. He placed the sea on the south side, at the southeast corner. (2 Chronicles 4:7-10)

He then made ten bronze basins, each holding forty baths (about 880 liters) and measuring four cubits across, one basin to go on each of the ten stands. He placed five of the stands on the south side of the temple and five on the north. He placed the sea on the south side, at the southeast corner of the temple. (1 Kings 7:38-39)

Even Shields Were Made of Silver

Also all the kings of Arabia and the governors of the land brought gold and silver to Solomon. King Solomon made two hundred large shields of hammered gold; six hundred bekas (about 3.5 kilograms) of hammered gold went into each shield. He also made three hundred small shields of hammered gold, with three hundred bekas [3 minas] (about 1.7 kilograms) of gold in each shield. The king put them in the Palace of the Forest of Lebanon. (2 Chronicles 9:14-16; 1 Kings 10:16-17)

Prophet Solomon's (pbuh) Throne

Then the king made a great throne inlaid with ivory and overlaid with pure gold. The throne had six steps, and a footstool of gold was attached to it. On both sides of the seat were armrests, with a lion standing beside each of them. Twelve lions stood on the six steps, one at either end of each step. Nothing like it had ever been made for any other kingdom. (2 Chronicles 9:17-19, 1 Kings 10:18-20). [According to 1 Kings 10:18-20, "its back had a rounded top."]

King Solomon made for himself the carriage; he made it of wood from Lebanon. Its posts he made of silver, its base of gold. Its seat was upholstered with purple... (Song of Prophet Solomon 3:9-10)

Prophet Solomon's (pbuh) Table

All of King Solomon's goblets were gold, and all the household articles in the Palace of the Forest of Lebanon were pure gold. Nothing was made of silver, because silver was considered of little value in Solomon's day. (2 Chronicles 9:20)

Solomon's daily provisions were thirty cors (about 6.6 kiloliters) of fine flour and sixty cors (about 13.2 kiloliters) of meal, ten head of stall-fed cattle, twenty of pasture-fed cattle and a hundred sheep and goats, as well as deer, gazelles, roebucks, and choice fowl. (1 Kings 4:22-23)

The district officers, each in his month, supplied provisions for King Solomon and all who came to the king's table. They saw to it that nothing was lacking. (1 Kings 4:27)

When the queen of Sheba saw all the wisdom of Solomon and the palace he had built, the food on his table, the seating of his officials, the attending servants in their robes, his cupbearers, and the burnt offerings he made at the temple of the LORD, she was overwhelmed. (1 Kings 10:4-5)

Prophet Solomon's (pbuh) Horses

Solomon had four thousand stalls for horses and chariots, and twelve thousand horses, which he kept in the chariot cities and also with him in Jerusalem. He ruled over all the kings from the river to the land of the Philistines, as far as the border of Egypt. The king made silver as common in Jerusalem as stones, and cedar as plentiful as sycamore trees in the foothills. Solomon's horses were imported from Egypt and from all other countries. (2 Chronicles 9:25-28)

Solomon had four thousand stalls for chariot horses, and twelve thousand horses. (1 Kings 4:26)

Solomon accumulated chariots and horses; he had fourteen hundred chariots and twelve thousand horses, which he kept in the chariot cities and also with him in Jerusalem. The king made silver and gold as common in Jerusalem as stones, and cedar as plentiful as sycamore trees in the foothills. Solomon's horses were imported from Egypt and from Kue—the royal merchants purchased them from Kue. They imported a chariot from Egypt for six hundred shekels of silver, and a horse for a hundred and fifty. They also exported them to all the kings of the Hittites and of the Arameans. (2 Chronicles 1:14-17)

Explanations from the Book of Proverbs

As previously stated, a detailed examination of the Old Testament shows that many rules and practices that are compatible with Qur'anic moral values have been preserved.

However, some beliefs have been distorted. Muslims must take the Qur'an and the Sunnah as their only guides when determining whether certain beliefs have been corrupted or not. This section contains certain Old Testament passages that are compatible with Qur'anic moral values.

Those Who Do Not Listen to God's Word

But since you rejected me when I called and no one gave heed when I stretched out my hand, since you ignored all my advice and would not accept my rebuke, I in turn will laugh at your disaster; I will mock when calamity overtakes you—when calamity overtakes you like a storm, when disaster sweeps over you like a whirlwind, when distress and trouble overwhelm you. Then they will call to me but I will not answer; they will look for me but will not find me. Since they hated knowledge and did not choose to fear the LORD, since they would not accept my advice and spurned my rebuke, they will eat the fruit of their ways and be filled with the fruit of their schemes. For the waywardness of the simple will kill them, and the complacency of fools will destroy them; but whoever listens to me will live in safety and be at ease, without fear of harm. (Proverbs 1:24-33)

Good Morals

Do not withhold good from those who deserve it, when it is in your power to act. Do not say to your neighbor, "Come back later; I'll give it tomorrow," when you now have it with you. Do not plot harm against your neighbor, who lives trustfully near you. Do not accuse a man for no reason, when he has done you no harm. Do not envy a violent man or choose any of his ways, for the Lord detests a perverse man... The Lord's curse is on the house of the wicked, but He blesses the home of the righteous. He mocks proud mockers but gives grace to the humble. The wise inherit honor, but fools He holds up to shame. (Proverbs 3:27-35)

The man of integrity walks securely, but he who takes crooked paths will be found out. (Proverbs 10:9)

A good man obtains favor from the Lord, but the Lord condemns a crafty man. (Proverbs 12:2)

The plans of the righteous are just, but the advice of the wicked is deceitful. (Proverbs 12:5)

Wicked men are overthrown and are no more, but the house of the righteous stands firm. (Proverbs 12:7)

No harm befalls the righteous, but the wicked have their fill of trouble. (Proverbs 12:21)

An anxious heart weighs a man down, but a kind word cheers him up. (Proverbs 12:25)

Pride only breeds quarrels, but wisdom is found in those who take advice. (Proverbs 13:10)

He who scorns instruction will pay for it, but he who respects a command is rewarded. (Proverbs 13:13)

A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger. (Proverbs 15:1)

Whoever gives heed to instruction prospers, and blessed is he who trusts in the Lord. (Proverbs 16:20)

A good name is more desirable than great riches; to be esteemed is better than silver or gold. Rich and poor have this in common: The Lord is the Maker of them all. (Proverbs 22:1-2)

Humility and the fear of the Lord bring wealth and honor and life. In the paths of the wicked lie thorns and snares, but he who guards his soul stays far from them. (Proverbs 22:4-5)

He who oppresses the poor to increase his wealth and he who gives gifts to the rich—both come to poverty. Pay attention and listen to the sayings of the wise; apply your heart to what I teach, for it is pleasing when you keep them in your heart... (Proverbs 22:16-18)

My son, if your heart is wise, then my heart will be glad; my inmost being will rejoice when your lips speak what is right. Do not let your heart envy sinners, but always be zealous for the fear [and awe] of the Lord. There is surely a future hope for you, and your hope will not be cut off. Listen, my son, and be wise, and keep your heart on the right path. (Proverbs 23:15-19)

Listen to your father ... and do not despise your mother when she is old. Buy the truth and do not sell it; get wisdom, discipline, and understanding. (Proverbs 23:22-23)

Do not fret because of evil men or be envious of the wicked. (Proverbs 24:19)

I applied my heart to what I observed and learned a lesson from what I saw. (Proverbs 24:32)

Like a city whose walls are broken down is a man who lacks self-control. (Proverbs 25:28)

Do not boast about tomorrow, for you do not know what a day may bring forth. (Proverbs 27:1)

A ruler who oppresses the poor is like a driving rain that leaves no crops. (Proverbs 28:3)

He who conceals his sins does not prosper, but whoever confesses and renounces them finds mercy. Blessed is the man who always fears [and respects] the Lord, but he who hardens his heart falls into trouble. (Proverbs 28:13-14)

He who trusts in himself is a fool, but he who walks in wisdom is kept safe. He who gives to the poor will lack nothing, but he who closes his eyes to them receives many curses. (Proverbs 28:26-27)

Bloodthirsty men hate a man of integrity and seek to kill the upright. A fool gives full vent to his anger, but a wise man keeps himself under control. (Proverbs 29:10-11)

A man's wisdom gives him patience; it is to his glory to overlook an offense. (Proverbs 19:11)

Listen to advice and accept instruction, and in the end you will be wise. (Proverbs 19:20)

The Lord abhors dishonest scales, but accurate weights are His delight. When pride comes, then comes disgrace, but with humility comes wisdom. The integrity of the upright guides them, but the unfaithful are destroyed by their duplicity. Wealth is worthless on the day of wrath, but righteousness delivers from death. The righteousness of the blameless makes a straight way for them, but the wicked are brought down by their own wickedness. The righteousness of the upright delivers them, but the unfaithful are trapped by evil desires. When a wicked man dies, his hope perishes; all he expected from his power comes to nothing. The righteous man is rescued from trouble... (Proverbs 11:1-8)

Not Following the Godless

For wisdom will enter your heart, and knowledge will be pleasant to your soul. Discretion will protect you, and understanding will guard you. Wisdom will save you from the ways of wicked men, from men whose words are perverse, who leave the straight paths to walk in dark ways, who delight in doing wrong and rejoice in the perverseness of evil, whose paths are crooked ... (Proverbs 2:10-15)

Do not set foot on the path of the wicked or walk in the way of evil men. Avoid it, do not travel on it; turn from it and go on your way. For they cannot sleep till they do evil; they are robbed of slumber till they make someone fall. (Proverbs 4:14-16)

The Way of the Righteous

Thus you will walk in the ways of good men and keep to the paths of the righteous. For the upright will live in the land, and the blameless will remain in it; but the wicked will be cut off from the land, and the unfaithful will be torn from it. (Proverbs 2:20-22)

The path of the righteous is like the first gleam of dawn, shining ever brighter till the full light of day. But the way of the wicked is like deep darkness; they do not know what makes them stumble. (Proverbs 4:18-19)

Trusting Only in God

Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make your paths straight. Do not be wise in your own eyes; fear [and respect] the Lord and shun evil. This will bring health to your body and nourishment to your bones. Honor the Lord with your wealth, with the first fruits of all your crops; then your barns will be filled to overflowing ... (Proverbs 3:5-10)

The Importance of Wisdom

Does not wisdom call out? Does not understanding raise her voice? On the heights along the way, where the paths meet, she takes her stand; beside the gates leading into the city, at the entrances, she cries aloud: "To you, O men, I call out; I raise my voice to all humanity. You who are simple, gain prudence; you who are foolish, gain understanding. Listen, for I have worthy things to say; I open my lips to speak what is right. My mouth speaks what is true, for my lips detest wickedness. All the words of my mouth are just; none of them is crooked or perverse. To the discerning all of them are right; they are faultless to those who have knowledge. Choose my instruction instead of silver, knowledge rather than choice gold, for wisdom is more precious than rubies, and nothing you desire can compare with her. I, wisdom, dwell together with prudence; I possess knowledge and discretion. To fear [and respect] the Lord is to hate evil; I hate pride and arrogance, evil behavior and perverse speech. Counsel and sound judgment are mine; I have understanding and power. By Me kings reign and rulers make laws that are just; by Me princes govern, and all nobles who rule on Earth. I love those who love me, and those who seek Me find me. With Me are riches and honor, enduring wealth and prosperity. My fruit is better than fine gold; what I yield surpasses choice silver. I walk in the way of righteousness, along the paths of justice, bestowing wealth on those who love Me and making their treasuries full. (Proverbs 8:1-21)

The fear [and respect] of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and knowledge of the Holy One is understanding. For through me your days will be many, and years will be added to your life. If you are wise, your wisdom will reward you; if you are a mocker, you alone will suffer. (Proverbs 9:10-12)

SIMILARITIES AMONG PROPHET SOLOMON (pbuh), DHU'L - QARNAYN (pbuh), AND THE MAHDI

Earlier, we considered various signs of the End Times in the Qur'an's account of Prophet Solomon's (pbuh) life. We said that, in the End Times, there would be a Golden Age in which Islamic morality would be foremost, and that this period would be ushered in by the Mahdi, who bears title *al-Hadi* (the one who guides).

The hadiths of our Prophet (may God bless him and grant him peace) reveal signs of these two periods. And, when we compare them with what is happening today, we see many indications that we are living in the End Times and that the Golden Age is about to come.

The hadiths characterize the End Times as a treacherous period in which the number of wars and conflicts will increase and the world will be in general chaos because of the moral degeneration arising from people's rebellion against religious morality. Natural disasters will be everywhere, poverty will reach a previously unknown level, crime rates will soar, and murder and massacre will follow each other in an apparently endless succession. But this is only the first stage of the End Times; in the second stage, God will use the Mahdi to rescue people from this chaos.

Indeed, such events have happened numerous times in human history, for wars, earthquakes, and other natural disasters have been common. The same is true of moral degeneration, poverty, and hunger. What distinguishes the signs of the End Times from these events is that all of these signs will happen in the same period one after the other, and in the way described in the hadiths. Here we must give the glad tidings that this chaos will be temporary, for the coming of the Golden Age will bring this distressing period to an end.

The Golden Age will be a time when wars and conflicts will end, all irreligious ideologies that caused so much misery will be buried in the dark recesses of history, and the world will enjoy a period of justice and abundant blessings. Islamic morality will spread throughout the world, and people will stream toward religion. As we stated earlier, some of the hadiths describe this dominance of Islamic morality, such as when our Prophet (may God bless him and grant him peace) speaks of the similarities between this period and the reigns of Prophet Solomon (pbuh) and Dhu'l-Qarnayn (pbuh). Some of these are as follows:

The Mahdi will rule Earth, just like Dhu'l-Qarnayn (pbuh) and Prophet Solomon (pbuh). (Ibn Hajar al-Haythami, Al-Qawl al-Mukhtasar fi 'Alamat al-Mahdi al-Muntazar, p. 29)

There have been four kings on Earth: two were believers and two were unbelievers. The believers were Dhu'l-Qarnayn (pbuh) and Prophet Solomon

(pbuh), and the unbelievers were Nimrod and Nebuchadnezzar II . There will be a fifth king, from the People of my House. (Ibn al-Jawzi)

In the following pages we will present some of the signs that we are in the End Times and that the blessed Golden Age is near. (For a detailed discussion of these signs, see Harun Yahya's *The End Times and The Mahdi* [USA, Khatoons. Inc., March 2004] and *The Golden Age* [Kuala Lumpur, A.S. NOORDEEN, 2003])

A man named Mahdi will come when the systems change...

(Al-Muttaqi al-Hindi,

Al-Burhan fi 'Alamat al-Mahdi Akhir al-Zaman, p. 14)

In this hadith, our Prophet (may God bless him and grant him peace) announced that the Mahdi will come during a period of changing systems. This probably refers to communism, which was widespread before collapsing in the late 1980s.

This atheistic philosophy, the product of materialist philosophy, was one of the main reasons for the bloody wars and massacres that marked the twentieth century. This ideology influenced large parts of Europe, Asia, South America, and Africa. Many countries were ruled by communist regimes for decades or were targeted by communist organizations. Communism was one of the reasons for the cold war, which continued from the late 1940s until the early 1990s, and for the cruelest massacres.

Besides fighting with other countries to extend their ideology, communists subjected their own people to great cruelty, mass executions, and massacre. Moreover, they put people to death in forced labor camps and killed them by starvation.

According to various historians' calculations, communist regimes were responsible for the deaths of 120 million people during the twentieth century. Most of these were not soldiers who died in battle, but were civilians murdered by communists. Tens of millions of men, women, old people, children, and babies lost their lives because of the communists' brutal savagery. Apart from this, millions of people were oppressed and forced to leave their homes and countries. Their lands and possessions were confiscated, and they were made to live every moment in fear of being killed, falsely arrested, or subjected to cruelty.

But toward the end of the twentieth century, these regimes, which seemed to be so strong and firm, began to lose their power and crumble one by one. The clearest symbol of this collapse was the tearing down of the Berlin Wall in 1989. Two years later, the world's largest and most powerful communist state—the Soviet Union—collapsed and the Eastern Bloc completely fell apart. Communist regimes from Africa to Central Asia collapsed one after another, the bipolar world order that had been firmly in place since 1945 disappeared, and, according to political commentators, a new world order replaced it. With these very surprising developments, the *change of system* mentioned in the hadith came about.

Today, as the last ideological and political traces of communism, and the totalitarian fascist system based on the same ideas, disappear, the world is being totally cleansed of these bloody ideologies. With the spread of Islamic morality throughout the world, the oppression, suffering, darkness, and poverty that these systems imposed on millions of people will be truly ended, and people will have beauty, wealth, happiness and well-

being. And after distress, darkness, war, massacre, and suffering, God, in His mercy and kindness, will give people His incomparable blessings.

At the end of time, their rulers will cause My people severe trouble in such a way that there will be no comfort for Muslims anywhere.

***(Al-Muttaqi al-Hindi,
Al-Burhan fi 'Alamat al-Mahdi Akhir az-Zaman, p. 12)***

This hadith indicates that before the Mahdi comes, rulers in some Muslim states will be far removed from religious morality, cruel and pitiless, or ineffective. Indeed, we can see this in such countries as Iraq, Afghanistan, Djibouti, Somalia, Tunisia, Libya, Ethiopia, and Syria. All of the Muslims in these countries are oppressed by their governments and subjected to difficulty and anxiety. They cannot live their religion freely and perform their prayers, and economic restrictions make their lives difficult. Below are some examples of what these people have experienced:

In Iraq, which lost about one million soldiers out of a total of three million during its war with Iran, the fascist Ba'thist dictator Saddam Hussein subjected the Iraqi people to incredible torture and oppression.

Since the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan in 1979, the country has been unstable and chaotic. Those in power have not been true representatives of Islam; rather, they founded an oppressive, intolerant, and pitiless system.

Between 1977-91, the tiny African country of Djibouti was ruled by a brutal regime that killed about 2 million Muslims and falsely arrested and tortured 7,000 people.

Between 1969-91, Major General Siad Barre led an oppressive regime in Somalia that targeted Muslims.

For 31 years, Tunisia was governed by the dictatorial regime of Habib Bourguiba. He declared himself *president of the republic for life* and, while in power, oppressed his subjects. For example, he tried to ban the fast of Ramadan on the grounds that it hurt national production figures.

During the 30 years of Hafez al-Assad's dictatorship, Syrian Muslims were subjected to various acts of cruelty. After some massacres, women were raped and men were tortured. The most atrocious example act of his rule was his decision to bomb and destroy Aleppo (city in northwestern Syria) when it revolted against his rule in early 1982. An untold number of people were killed.

Before the Hour comes, there will be a dusty and smoky tribulation like patches of dark night...

(Sunan Abu Dawud)

The Arabic word translated here as *tribulation* is *fitnah*, which means something that completely alienates the human mind and heart from justice and right. It can also

refer to war, savagery, confusion, conflict, and discord. This hadith says that dust and smoke will be left after this tribulation. This tribulation might be *dark* because why it occurs is not clear and it is unexpected.

When we look at it from this angle, this hadith probably refers to the 9/11 attack against New York and Washington, DC. As we saw on television and in newspapers, large clouds of dust followed these two acts of terrorism and wrapped the areas in smoke.

According to the official account, aircraft crashed into the World Trade Center and the Pentagon. The ensuing explosions, caused by their fuel, caused a great cloud to form. Smoke rose so high and spread so far that it could be seen throughout New York City and even in surrounding towns. The collapse of the World Trade Center and the nearby Building Number 7 after the explosions caused an even larger cloud of dust to cover all people in the affected area from head to toe.

This event is extremely important, because it occurred within the same period as other signs and is similar to what is described in the hadiths. Therefore, this most deplorable terrorist act may be the *tribulation like patches of dark night* mentioned as a sign of the Mahdi's coming.

The Mahdi will only appear at a time when people are experiencing great fear and are afflicted by disturbances, civil war, and other disasters.

(Reported by Abu Ja'far Muhammad ibn 'Ali)

In the great majority of the hadiths in which our Prophet (may God bless him and grant him peace) mentions the Mahdi's coming, he stresses that the world will be in a state of general chaos, insecurity, and anxiety before he comes. Along with wars and conflicts, another characteristic of this period will be mass murder. The hadith given above draws our attention to this last characteristic.

Historians estimate that both world wars killed about 65 million people. They also estimate that during the twentieth century, more than 180 million people were killed for political reasons. This is an extraordinary figure when compared with similar figures for previous centuries. Until the twentieth century, most of the wars were largely local conflicts fought by opposing armies along a particular line or front. However, twentieth-century developments in weapons technology and military strategy, as well as the prevalence of ideologies that favored violence and bloodshed, made both the idea and the actual implementation of total war feasible. Now governments target not only the opposing army on the front, but also civilians behind the front. Sometimes, there is not even a front to separate the two sides. The twentieth century saw cities bombed (e.g., carpet bombing); chemical, biological, and nuclear weapons used; genocide campaigns implemented with impunity; and concentration and forced labor camps built to hold various unwanted groups of people.

If we look at recent history, we see many instances of massacres. For example, the Serbs targeted mainly Bosnian civilians. Thousands of people were killed, including women, children, and the elderly. The mass graves discovered after the war show the dimensions of the massacres in horrible detail.

The ethnic cleansing campaign directed against the Palestinians since the 1940s is a more long-term policy of mass murder. Instances of this policy, like the slaughters at Sabra and Shatila in 1982, overseen by now-prime minister Ariel Sharon of Israel, show the dimensions of this policy.

Africa has experienced frequent violent ethnic conflict in which thousands of people have lost their lives. In the spring of 1994, a conflict occurred between two large tribes—the Hutu and the Tutsi (slightly less than 15 percent of the nation's population)—that involved five countries—Zaire, Rwanda, Uganda, Burundi, and Tanzania. Nearly 800,000 people died in this ethnic conflict. Tens of thousands of refugees had to contend with destitution and epidemics in the forests; many of them died. Small children and babies were savagely slaughtered just because they belonged to another tribe.

The Mahdi will not emerge unless innocent people are massacred, and he will appear when those on Earth and up in the sky can no longer put up with such massacres.

(Ibn Hajar al-Haythami,

Al-Qawl al-Mukhtasar fi 'Alamat al-Mahdi al-Muntazar,

p. 37)

The hadiths concerning the Mahdi's coming speak of widespread slaughter in which innocent people are especially targeted. As we know, in almost every conflict today the basic target is innocent civilians, mainly women, children, and the elderly. Since civilians do not have the means to defend themselves, vast numbers of people are killed.

Besides these massacres, recent terrorist activities have focused on the mass eradication of *unwanted* people. Terrorism, which is designed to spread fear and dread among the general population, is an assault directed mainly against such public places as shopping centers, restaurants, cafes, and schools where people congregate.

Corruption that no one can escape will occur and spread immediately to another place from where it stays.

(Ibn Hajar al-Haythami,

Al-Qawl al-Mukhtasar fi 'Alamat al-Mahdi al-Muntazar,

pp. 21-22)

The above hadith speaks of a continuous long-term corruption that is global in extent. This Arabic word translated here as *corruption*, *fitnah*, means *war*, *retribution*,

fighting, conflict. When we consider these meanings, we realize that this is an accurate description of the twentieth century, a time when war quickly spread to many nations, and when conflict, civil war, and chaos began and still continues today. Unfortunately, such violence still continues in the twenty-first century.

When we analyze the outbreaks of violence since the 1970s, we can see that when corruption ends in one place, it begins in another. During this period, conflict and civil strife occurred in many countries and regions: Bosnia-Herzegovina, Kosovo, Albania, Bulgaria, Iran, Iraq, Afghanistan, Chechnya, Palestine, Israel, North Korea, Cambodia, Eastern Turkistan (Xinjiang [northwestern China]), Ethiopia, Somalia, Yemen, Uganda, Algeria, Rwanda, Mozambique, Angola, Congo, Liberia, Burundi, Sudan, Lebanon, Argentina, Northern Ireland, El Salvador, and Nicaragua.

World history is full of war and conflict, but those that occurred in the twentieth century are unique. First, the numbers of dead far surpassed the total of deaths in all other centuries. Second, until then war had always regional and restricted to a certain region. But in the twentieth century, it spread over the entire world. It seems that, in the last century, no country or region was immune from conflict or terrorism.

Third, the power of weapons is almost beyond human comprehension. The use of nuclear and chemical weapons inflicted unbelievable slaughter on the generation that lived through these conflicts, and succeeding generations continue to be affected by the long-term negative side effects. The first event that comes to mind in this regard is the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945.

Today, one of the most threatening kinds of warfare is biological warfare. An example of this happened after the 9/11 terrorist attack, when letters containing the anthrax bacteria were sent to important addresses; to date, several people have died because of such letters.

In conclusion, it is likely that the corruption mentioned in this hadith consists of the wars, conflicts, chaos, and terrorism that began in the last century and continue into this one. All of these things may be signs that we are living in the End Times and that the Golden Age may be near.

God Almighty will send the Mahdi after despair has reached the point that people will say: "There is no Mahdi."

(Narrated by Nu'aym ibn Hammad)

In the End Times, people will be full of pessimism, for seeing war, poverty, need, injustice, moral depravity, and epidemics all around them will cause them to lose their belief in the Mahdi's coming. Many Muslims will begin to believe that such problems will continue to be unsolvable, and so will lose their expectation of the coming Golden Age and the global prevalence of Islamic morality.

We see many examples of this spiritual state. For example, despite the many hadiths about the Mahdi's coming and the Golden Age's beauty, many people do not believe that such an age will come. But at a time when this pessimism is widespread, by God's grace the Golden Age will begin.

Many hadiths speak of the hunger and poverty that will foretell the Mahdi's coming. Although hunger and destitution have existed throughout history, they will increase markedly around the world in the End Times.

***The poor will grow in number.
(Amal ad-Din al-Qazwini,
Mufid al-'Ulum wa Mubid al-Humum)***

Three years before the Antichrist appears, there will be exceedingly stressful days and hunger will rule ...

***(Muhammad ibn 'Abd ar-Rasul Barzanji,
Al-Isha'ah li Ashrat as-Sa'ah, p. 220)***

Today, many people have nothing to eat or drink, live in unhealthy conditions, and have nowhere to stay. This situation is widespread in the Third World and, to a lesser extent, in America and Europe. While a small minority of people lives in luxury, billions of others live on the brink of starvation. In an article, an Oxfam official described the world situation in the following words:

As we enter the new millennium, we bring with us a world in which 35,000 children die each day from causes related to poverty. That is one child dying every 2.5 seconds. We face a world in which the total number of people below the poverty line is growing each year, and now stands at around 1.5 billion. This is greater than the population of China, four times the entire population of the European Union.

... This is a world in which the gap between rich and poor is accelerating. United Nations figures show that the richest 20% of people owned 30 times the wealth of the poorest 20% in 1960. In the next 37 years, the rich did very nicely, ending up in 1997 with 74 times as much wealth as the poorest 20%.

... The combined wealth of the world's richest three families (Bill Gates, the Waltons, and the Sultan of Brunei) is more than the annual income of 600 million people in the least developed countries. Moreover, in more than 80 of the world's poorest countries, per capita income is lower today than it was 10 years ago.¹³

When the Golden Age begins, all of these problems will disappear. Hunger, poverty, and destitution will be replaced by wealth and abundance. No one will be in need,

because religion will be lived as God describes in the Qur'an and everyone will share what they have, for **"beggars and the destitute received a due share of their wealth"** (Qur'an, 51:19). In a society that lives according to Islamic morality, there can be no destitute people, for believers will strive to avoid the state that God describes in the following terms: **"He used not to believe in God the Magnificent, nor did he urge the feeding of the poor. Therefore, here today he has no friend"** (Qur'an, 69:33-35). This will be the means whereby social justice, happiness, and abundance will be established in society.

People will prosper until the ninety-fifth year, that is, their business will prosper. In the ninety-seventh and the ninety-ninth year, their possessions will go to waste.

(Ibn Hajar al-Haythami, *Al-Qawl al-Mukhtasar fi 'Alamat al-Mahdi al-Muntazar*, p. 54)

This hadith gives us some details about the state of the economy before the Golden Age dawns.

The *ninety-fifth year* probably refers to 1995, a year in which people were comparatively well-off and living conditions were fairly easy. The assertion that *business will prosper* means that people will have enough income to have a good living standard and have enough money to buy property. But during 1997-99, the economy worsened and poverty and need increased. In these years, property lost its value. We can see that this actually happened in Argentina, where the situation is still serious and continuing.

The inhabitants of Egypt and Sham [Damascus] will kill their ruler and his commands...

***(Ibn Hajar al-Haythami,
Al-Qawl al-Mukhtasar fi 'Alamat al-Mahdi
al-Muntazar, p. 49)***

When we look at Egypt's recent history, we see that its ruler was killed: Anwar al-Sadat, who ruled the country from 1970-1981.

Sadat was assassinated in 1981 by his opponents while presiding over an official parade. Other Egyptian leaders who have been assassinated are Prime Minister Boutros Ghali (1910), Prime Minister Ahmed Maher Pasha (1945), and Prime Minister Mahmoud Nokrashi Pasha (1948).

The word *sham* does not refer just to Damascus. In Arabic, *sham* means *left* and refers to the cities located to the left of Hijaz (where Makkah and Madinah are located).¹⁴ Many leaders in this region have been assassinated, among them Syrian

prime minister Salah al-Din Bitar (1920), Syrian prime minister Droubi Pasha (1921), Syrian premier Muhsin al-Barazi (1949), King Abdullah of Jordan (1951), and Lebanese Phalangist leader Bashir Jemayel, after a bomb attack in 1982.¹⁵

Having discussed some of the signs foretelling the Mahdi's coming, we now turn our attention to various minor signs that will occur when the End Times begin. As they will happen before the Golden Age, they also can be regarded as signs of the Mahdi's coming.

When we examine the events mentioned in the hadiths containing this information, we see that each of them is being experienced in today's societies. While these events may appear negative at first sight, in reality they are forerunners of an age of abundance, plenty, happiness, peace, and security. After these events, God will inaugurate an age of light for all humanity. This is God's promise, which He has announced to His believers:

We wrote down in the Zabur, after the Reminder came: "It is My servants who are righteous who will inherit the earth." (Qur'an, 21:105)

And [He will give you] other things you love: support from God and imminent victory. Give good news to the believers! (Qur'an, 61:13)

A time when booty is in the hands of certain people, trust is seen as booty, giving alms is seen as a heavy burden...

(Muhammad ibn 'Abd ar-Rasul Barzanji, Al-Isha'ah li Ashrat as-Sa'ah, p. 114)

Goods entrusted to one being regarded as booty, and the giving of alms being regarded as a loan (which is hard to repay)...

***(Muhammad ibn 'Abd ar-Rasul Barzanji,
Al-Isha'ah li Ashrat as-Sa'ah,, p. 139)***

***The Hour will come when adultery becomes widespread.
(Al-Haythami, Kitab al-Fitan)***

The Last Hour will not be established until they [wicked people] commit adultery on the roads [public ways].

***(Muhammad ibn 'Abd ar-Rasul Barzanji,
Al-Isha'ah li Ashrat as-Sa'ah,, p. 140)***

The rebuilding of the ruined places in the world, and the ruination of constructed places are signs and portents of Doomsday. (Ismail Mutlu, Signs of the Last Day

[Istanbul: Mutlu Publications,1999], p. 138)

When developed places are ruined, then Doomsday is no further away than the distance between your two fingers.

(Muhammad ibn 'Abd ar-Rasul Barzanji, Al-Isha'ah li Ashrat as-Sa'ah, p. 143)

People will compete with one another in constructing high buildings.

(Sahih Bukhari)

Doomsday will not come until a person kills his brother.

(Muhammad ibn 'Abd ar-Rasul Barzanji,

Al-Isha'ah li Ashrat as-Sa'ah, p. 141)

The conflict in Zaire (now the Democratic Republic of the Congo) between the Hutus and the Tutsis fleeing the violence in neighboring Rwanda, has been going on for years. This conflict has caused the death of countless children.

The community of the faithful will be on a favorable path until they encounter three things: goodness disappears, immoral children grow in number, and essekharun appears amongst them... They asked: "What is essekharun"? They answered: "A generation that will emerge in the End Times, among whom greetings will be regarded as vile oaths.

(Muhammad ibn 'Abd ar-Rasul Barzanji,

Al-Isha'ah li Ashrat as-Sa'ah,, pp. 141-42)

... everyone complaining about decreased earnings ... the rich respected for their money ...

(Muhammad ibn 'Abd ar-Rasul Barzanji,

Al-Isha'ah li Ashrat as-Sa'ah,, p. 146)

... stagnation in the markets, a reduction in earnings...

(Muhammad ibn 'Abd ar-Rasul Barzanji,

Al-Isha'ah li Ashrat as-Sa'ah,, p. 148)

... business being slack. Everyone will complain: "I cannot sell, buy or earn money."

(Muhammad ibn 'Abd ar-Rasul Barzanji,

Al-Isha'ah li Ashrat as-Sa'ah,, p. 152)

Doomsday will not come until your leaders kill and the wicked inherit your world.

(Ibid., p. 141)

The Golden Age

As we mentioned earlier, the appearance of these signs one after another gives believers the good tidings of the coming Golden Age.

Just as in Prophet Solomon's (pbuh) day, the Golden Age will be a time of wealth, splendor, beauty, happiness, and peace. Life on Earth will be like Paradise, because the Qur'an's morality will prevail throughout the world. Doubtless, this is a grace and good tidings from God for the last period of world history. He announces in the following verse that:

God has promised those of you who believe and do right actions that He will make them successors in the land, as He made those before them successors; 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. (Qur'an, 24:55)

The Times of Prophet Solomon (pbuh), Dhu'l-Qarnayn (pbuh), and the Golden Age

Up to this point, we have focused on Prophet Solomon's (pbuh) exemplary life and moral character, faithfulness toward God, and how he turned toward Him in everything he did. We have mentioned his courage, just dealings, and tolerance, as well as his forgiving, courteous, welcoming, peace-loving, and noble character. In addition, we have studied his methods of state administration and intelligence gathering, along with his diplomatic successes, public building, and artistic undertakings. We then looked at Dhu'l-Qarnayn (pbuh), a faithful servant who shared many similarities with Prophet Solomon (pbuh).

All of this information shows that Prophet Solomon (pbuh) was engaged in artistic and scientific work about which we know nothing and cannot even guess. This great leader and Prophet made extraordinary advancements in various scientific and other fields in his day. Dhu'l-Qarnayn (pbuh) also established dominion over a vast territory and governed societies with superior knowledge.

Another thing we considered while examining these accounts was the signs of the End Times that they contain. As we know from the hadiths, the Golden Age will be a time of extraordinary development in science, art, and technology, just as in the days of Prophet Solomon (pbuh) and Dhu'l-Qarnayn (pbuh). Although the other two periods have

passed and the Golden Age is still to come, all of them are realities announced to us by God.

The term *Mahdism* connotes the establishment of these two leaders' superior morality on a new, different, and broader foundation. In other words, the spirituality, logic, intelligence, and social manifestation of Prophet Solomon (pbuh) and Dhu'l-Qarnayn (pbuh) will reveal themselves in society in the End Times.

These three periods are characterized by the prevalence of Islamic morality throughout their realms. God approves of all three of these periods. The times of Nebuchadnezzar II, Nimrod, and Pharaoh were governed by Satan and therefore were irreligious periods. Just as God made Islamic morality prevail after these periods, in the End Times our Lord will let His servants live under the rule of that same morality. This will be the Golden Age, which will be characterized by happiness, well-being, love, brotherhood, loyalty, peace, self-sacrifice, humanity, and helpfulness. Below are some examples of the similarity between the three times.

The Mahdi Will Rule the World

Prophet Solomon (pbuh) and Dhu'l-Qarnayn (pbuh), who made Islamic morality prevail in their vast territories and had mighty armies, have much in common with the Golden Age. For example, during the Golden Age Islamic morality will prevail throughout the world, streams of people will become Muslims, godless ideologies will be wiped off the face of the Earth, and religion will be lived as it was in the time of our Prophet (may God bless him and grant him peace). Some hadiths describe this era, among them:

The Mahdi will own the entire world. (Al-Muttaqi al-Hindi, Al-Burhan fi 'Alamat al-Mahdi Akhir al-Zaman, p. 10)

The Mahdi will invade all the places between East and West. (Ibn Hajar al-Haythami, Al-Qawl al-Mukhtasar fi 'Alamat al-Mahdi al-Muntazar, p. 56)

The Mahdi's Special Knowledge and the Great Knowledge Granted to Prophet Solomon (pbuh) and Dhu'l-Qarnayn (pbuh)

We have already seen the various kinds of knowledge that God gave Prophet Solomon (pbuh): how to rule over jinns and demons, speak to birds, hear and understand ants talking among themselves, and subject the winds and copper to his command. All of these wondrous characteristics distinguished him from other people. Of Dhu'l-Qarnayn (pbuh), the Qur'an says: "**We had encompassed that he had 'knowledge comprising essence' near him [or all that he had in knowledge]**" (Qur'an, 18:91). From this, we know that he was a servant to whom God granted knowledge.

Like these two leaders, the Mahdi also will have special knowledge. In his *Mevzuatu'l ulum* (11:246), Taskopruluzade Ahmet Efendi writes that the Mahdi will possess 'ilm al-jafr (the art of divination through numbers). Another hadith reveals the following:

He is called the Mahdi because he is given guidance for a situation unknown to anyone. (Al-Muttaqi al-Hindi, Al-Burhan fi 'Alamat al-Mahdi Akhir al-Zaman, p. 77)

Our Prophet (may God bless him and grant him peace) also says that the Mahdi, like Prophet Solomon (pbuh), will know the language of animals and have power over human beings and jinns.

The Mahdi speaks the language of birds and other animals. Therefore, his justice will manifest itself over all people and jinns. (Muhammad ibn 'Abd ar-Rasul Barzanji, Al-Isha'ah li Ashrat as-Sa'ah, p. 188)

Scientific and Technological Developments

As we learn from the Qur'an, Prophet Solomon's (pbuh) and Dhu'l-Qarnayn's (pbuh) times witnessed great and unusual scientific and technological advancements. The hadiths describing the Golden Age present a similar situation.

The Golden Age will be a time of great scientific, technological, communication, and medical advancements. Every new development will serve humanity and make life easier in all respects. One sign of this in the hadiths is as follows:

The end of humanity's whip will speak to him. (Hadith at-Tirmidhi)

This hadith probably refers to the cell phone, one of the most common means of communication today. (God knows the truth.)

The hadiths also mention another important technological development:

People will reap 700 measures of wheat for every one they sow ... People will throw down a few handfuls of seeds and reap 700 handfuls ... Although much rain will fall, none will be wasted. (Ibn Hajar al-Haythami, Al-Qawl al-Mukhtasar fi 'Alamat al-Mahdi al-Muntazar, p. 43)

This hadith may be speaking of modern agriculture, which is characterized by the use of machines. In former times, sowing seeds and harvesting by hand were extremely tiring and time-consuming chores. But technological advances have enabled great developments in agriculture, and modern machines have made both sowing and harvesting much easier. Improving seed stocks has increased agricultural production. As technology advances, new methods are developed to increase productivity.

In the Mahdi's time, many important agricultural and technological advances will make the lives of farmers much easier.

The Importance of Loving Animals

The Qur'an gives some information about Prophet Solomon's (pbuh) love and compassion for animals. For example, he loved horses and did not want to harm ants.

In the Golden Age, love for animals will be encouraged. The hadiths reveal that there will be places in which every kind of animal can be easily watched and admired. Here are some examples:

... He will say to the sheep to go to the pasture and eat. The animals will pass through the crops, but will not eat even a single stalk of wheat. Snakes and scorpions will not hurt anyone, and wild animals will sit at our doors but not harm anyone. (Muhammad ibn 'Abd ar-Rasul Barzanji, Al-Isha'ah li Ashrat as-Sa'ah, p. 245)

Snakes will get along with children, cows will get along with lions. (Ibn Hajar al-Haythami, Al-Qawl al-Mukhtasar fi 'Alamat al-Mahdi al-Muntazar, p. 64)

These hadiths indicate another similarity between the time of Prophet Solomon (pbuh) and the Golden Age: humanity's dominion over animals. Just as Prophet Solomon (pbuh) established his rule over birds and other animals, in the Golden Age all animals,

including beasts of prey, will be under humanity's dominion and thus rendered harmless to people.

Working for Peace and Using Diplomacy

Prophet Solomon's (pbuh) relations with neighboring countries were tolerant, forgiving, and peaceful, for he preferred diplomacy to war and applied democratic methods. He established a superior culture and founded his rule on diplomacy, art, and culture. Even though he had invincible armies, he did not use military might. Dhu'l-Qarnayn (pbuh), known to those around him as a man who opposed corruption and dissension, was a leader who brought peace and well-being to his people. From this point of view, their times were very similar to that of the Golden Age.

In the Golden Age, people will become Muslims of their own volition, the world will be dominated by Islamic morality, and war will become unnecessary.

No one will be awakened from their sleep or have a bleeding nose. (Ibn Hajar al-Haythami, Al-Qawl al-Mukhtasar fi 'Alamat al-Mahdi al-Muntazar, p. 42)

The Mahdi will follow the way of the Prophet. He will not wake up a sleeping person or shed blood. (Muhammad ibn 'Abd ar-Rasul Barzanji, Al-Isha'ah li Ashrat as-Sa'ah, p. 163)

The hadiths state that the Mahdi will make Islamic morality prevail all over the world by peaceful means through a great cultural initiative. At that time, God willing, the following verses will be fulfilled:

When God's help and victory have arrived, and you have seen people entering God's religion in droves, then glorify your Lord's praise and ask His forgiveness. He is the Ever-Returning. (Qur'an, 110:1-3)

Inviting People to Religious Morality

Prophet Solomon's (pbuh) quick and intelligent decisions make him a good example for all believers. His letter to the Queen of Saba, inviting her and her people to true belief, shows his powers of communication. Placing great importance on quick decisions, he employed a knowledgeable person to bring him her throne. In order to stop the corruption of Gog and Magog among a people who were located far from his kingdom, Dhu'l-Qarnayn (pbuh) quickly built a barricade strong enough to stand until the end of the world. This showed his strength and power of reason. In these respects, the Golden Age will be very similar to the times of these two noble men.

In addition, people will flock to Islam, and rapid and comprehensive efforts will be made to facilitate this movement. Societies will adopt Islamic morality, godless ideologies will be quickly and permanently removed, and every kind of oppression will

pass into the dark depths of history. With regard to this, the great Islamic scholar, Muhyiddin ibn al-'Arabi, wrote:

God will give the Mahdi so much power that he will remove cruelty from the world overnight, religion will be established, and Islam will be revived. The Mahdi will restore lost value to it [Islam], and it will come to life after its apparent demise ... Ignorant people, misers, and cowards alike will become very knowledgeable, generous, and brave ... They will practice religion as in the time of Prophet Muhammad (may God bless him and grant him peace)... (Muhyiddin ibn al-'Arabi, Futuhat al Makkiyah, Bab 66, "Signs of the End Times," p. 186)

The Importance Given to Building

Prophet Solomon (pbuh) placed great importance on public building. As we saw earlier, he used the jinns and demons under his command to construct high arches, statues, huge dishes, and vats. Everyone who saw his palace, including the Queen of Saba, was amazed. Dhu'l-Qarnayn (pbuh) also used a very effective construction technique to build the barricade mentioned above, so that, unless God wills, it will never fall.

The hadiths also allude to the great importance of construction in the Golden Age. In this period, cities will attain a high level of civilization, and their people will live in happiness and peace. One of these hadiths is as follows:

The Mahdi works in the construction of Constantinople and other places. (Ibn Hajar al-Haythami, Al-Qawl al-Mukhtasar fi 'Alamat al-Mahdi al-Muntazar, p. 40)

Wealth and Splendor Used to Benefit Islam and Gain God's Good Approval

Prophet Solomon (pbuh) used his wealth to proclaim God's religion and spread Islamic morality in his realm. Especially in the cities that he conquered, he invited the people to believe in God and submit to Him. His letter to the Queen of Saba is an important proof of this. And Dhu'l-Qarnayn (pbuh), who said: **"The power my Lord has granted me is better than that..."** (Qur'an, 18:95), was blessed by God with stable political power, which he used to rid his realm of corruption.

In the Golden Age, people will enjoy great wealth, well-being, and comfort. The Mahdi will use the world's wealth to make God's religion supreme and establish peace and high moral standards throughout his realm. He will do many things that the world has never seen before, soften people's hearts toward Islamic morality, and cause it to prevail within a short time. For example:

There will be a Mahdi among the people. God will send him to make people rich. People will have comfort and good fortune, animals will have plenty to eat, and the soil will bring forth plants... (Al-Muttaqi al-Hindi, Al-Burhan fi 'Alamat al-Mahdi Akhir az-Zaman, p. 15)

Before allegiance, people will flock to it, and everyone who goes there will enjoy the divine plenty. (Ibn Hajar al-Haythami, Al-Qawl al-Mukhtasar fi 'Alamat al-Mahdi al-Muntazar, p. 25)

Plenty and Abundance

We can understand from the Qur'an that Prophet Solomon's (pbuh) time was characterized by great wealth and that the people lived comfortable lives. His palace was splendid, he had a mighty army, and he ruled a vast domain.

The Golden Age's plenty and abundance will be like that in Prophet Solomon's (pbuh) time. People will be given whatever they want and however much they want; even the birds will be happy with the Mahdi's rule. Many hadiths describe in great detail this plenty, abundance, and well-being, among them those given below:

A time will come when a person, withalms of gold in his hand, will go around, finding no one [in need] who is willing to receive them. (Mukhtasar Tazkirah Qurtubi)

Then will my ummah be blessed, the number of animals will increase, and the land will bear its fruits. (Ibn Hajar al-Haythami, Al-Qawl al-Mukhtasar fi 'Alamat al-Mahdi al-Muntazar, p. 26)

Possessions will be in abundance then, flowing like water. Yet no one will (condescend) to take any. (Mukhtasar Tazkirah Qurtubi)

During this [period], my ummah [people] will lead a kind of comfortable and carefree life that they have never known before. [The land] will bring forth its yield and will not hold anything back... (Sunan Ibn Majah)

The land will turn like a silver tray growing vegetation... (Sunan Ibn Majah)

Justice and Tolerance

Prophet Solomon (pbuh) ruled in a tolerant and democratic manner. This will also be the case in the Golden Age, when Islamic morality will dominate and the world will be tolerant and at peace. People will be treated with compassion and mercy, and people of every religion will live in happiness and security. The world's wealth will be distributed equally, and poverty and need will disappear. Here are some relevant hadiths:

The Mahdi will bring justice and sovereignty to a world full of cruelty and injustice. (Muhammad ibn 'Abd ar-Rasul Barzanji, Al-Isha'ah li Ashrat as-Sa'ah, p. 305)

His justice will fill every place... (Ibn Hajar Haythami, Al-Qawl al-Mukhtasar fi 'Alamat al-Mahdi al-Muntazar, p. 20)

A man from my family [Ahl al-Bayt] appears to fill Earth with justice, just as it has been filled with corruption. So whoever reaches that [time] ought to come to them, even if crawling on the ice/snow, since among them is the vicegerent of God [khalifat Allah] al-Mahdi. (Sunan Ibn Majah)

In his time, the goodness of good people will increase, and goodness will even be shown to bad people. (Al-Muttaqi al-Hindi, Al-Burhan fi 'Alamat al-Mahdi Akhir az-Zaman, p. 17)

All nations will open their gates to him ... Security and tranquility will reign over Earth. (Muhammad ibn 'Abd ar-Rasul Barzanji, Al-Isha'ah li Ashrat as-Sa'ah, p. 164)

CONCLUSION

Throughout this book, we have spoken of the incomparable blessings that God gave to Prophet Solomon (pbuh) and of the superior knowledge that He never gave to anyone before. Everyone who has read it carefully will have found in Prophet Solomon's (pbuh) life story some sound advice and interesting signs that are relevant to the present day.

Prophet Solomon (pbuh) was an ideal statesman, and every Muslim should take him as an example in the areas of justice, modesty, sincerity, intelligence, prudence, patience, and decisiveness. Everyone who follows his example will meet with success both in this world and the next.

As we said earlier, Dhu'l Qarnayn (pbuh), just like Prophet Solomon (pbuh), had great power and dominion. God gave him **"power and authority in the land and granted him a way to everything"** (Qur'an, 18:84). Everywhere he went, he brought people happiness, justice, and security. In addition, he made God's religion supreme throughout his realm. Muslims should do their best to emulate this powerful, decisive, and faithful person. (For more detailed information, see Harun Yahya, *Signs of the End Times in Surat al-Kahf* [New Delhi; Goodword Books, 2004].)

God sent these guides to inform people of the true path. If believers take these great people's lives and morality as an example, and desire only to win God's good pleasure, they will no doubt attain great success and victory.

Today, one sign after another of Islamic morality's emerging dominance is taking place. All over the world, people are turning toward God in great numbers. The most-read newspapers in the world contain news items about this development, and there are now many thousands of new Muslims. Islamic morality invites all people to peace, tolerance, and happiness. As it becomes better known, this movement will surely grow even stronger.

From these developments, we can understand that, God willing, Islamic morality's global dominance may happen quickly under the leadership of a strong nation. Even many Western politicians and strategists have begun to speak of this. Today's centers of conflict and chaos (e.g., the Balkans, Central Asia, the Caucasus, and the Middle East) will, by means of the peace and happiness flowing from Islamic morality, be rescued from the chaos in which they are drowning.

God willing, the twenty-first century will be a blessed time, in which Islamic morality will give direction to the world.

THE JINNS IN THE QUR'AN

Previously, we explained that God gave Prophet Solomon (pbuh) great support by putting the jinns under his command. Now, we must consider what we are told in the Qur'an. For example:

And He created the jinns from a fusion of fire. (Qur'an, 55:15)

We created the jinns before out of the fire of a searing wind. (Qur'an, 15:27)

The Qur'an reveals that jinns live in their own societies, have formed communities, and that they have ancestors (Qur'an, 7:38; 18:50). Although they live in a different dimension, the jinns can see, watch, and listen to people.

A demon of the jinns told Prophet Solomon (pbuh) that he could bring the Queen of Saba's throne before he got up from his seat and said **"I am strong and trustworthy enough to do it"** (Qur'an, 27:39). These words may be alluding to the fact that he could move with great speed from one place to another and transport material objects.

God tells us why the jinns were created: **"I only created jinn and man to worship Me"** (Qur'an, 51:56). Just like humanity, they are warned by Messengers and divinely revealed Books, are tested in this world, worship and obey God, and will receive a reward from God. The Qur'an states:

O company of jinn and humanity. Did not Messengers come to you from among yourselves relating My Signs to you and warning you of the encounter of this Day of yours? They will say: "We testify against ourselves." The life of this world deluded them, and they will testify against themselves that they were unbelievers. (Qur'an, 6:130)

As the verse says, the jinns experience much the same testing as humanity does. Some of them are deceived by the world's temporary delights and ignore or reject the warning that they should follow the true path. The jinns, who can hear the Messengers' words and the Qur'an's recitation, and who can tell their own people what they have learned, listened to the words of Prophet Muhammad (may God bless him and grant him peace):

And We diverted a group of jinns toward you to listen to the Qur'an. When they were in earshot of it, they said: "Be quiet and listen." When it was over, they went back to their people and warned them. They said: "Our people, we

have heard a Book that was sent down after Moses, confirming what came before it, guiding to the truth and to a straight path." (Qur'an, 46:29-30)

In several verses, God speaks to the jinns and human beings at the same time, advises them, and warns them against the pains of Hell. In Qur'an 7:38, God decrees: **"Enter the Fire together with the nations of jinn and humanity who have passed away before you."** Those jinn and human communities who deny the Qur'an's truth will meet with the following fate:

Say: "If both humanity and the jinns banded together to produce the like of this Qur'an, they could never produce anything like it, even if they backed each other up." (Qur'an, 17:88)

Here are some verses in which God addresses jinns and human beings together:

Those are people of whom the statement about the nations, both of jinn and humanity, who passed away before them, has also proved true; truly, they were the lost. (Qur'an, 46:18)

We created many of the jinns and humanity for Hell. They have hearts with which they do not understand. They have eyes with which they do not see. They have ears with which they do not hear. Such people are like cattle. No, they are even further astray! They are the unaware. (Qur'an, 7:179)

Believers and Unbelievers

The Qur'an says that some jinns believe in God and follow His way, while others are godless and rebellious. Muslim jinns listen while the Qur'an is being recited, as the verses below reveal:

Say: "It has been revealed to me that a band of jinns listened and said: 'We have heard a most amazing recitation. It leads to right guidance, so we believe in it and will not associate anyone with our Lord. He—exalted be the Majesty of our Lord!—has neither wife nor son.'" (Qur'an, 72:1-3)

"The fools among us have uttered a vile slander against God. We did not think it possible for either humanity or jinn to tell a lie against God." (Qur'an, 72:4-5)

There are different groups of jinns: sincere Muslims, pagans and polytheists, and those who tell lies about God. Believers are told that:

"Among us [jinns] there are some who are righteous and some who are other than that. We follow many different paths. We realized we would never thwart God on Earth and would never thwart Him by flight, and when we heard the guidance, we believed in it..." (Qur'an, 72:11-13)

Like humanity, jinns are responsible for obeying God's book. They will have to account for all they said and did, and will obtain a reward that is completely appropriate to their actions. Believers are told that they will receive a fine reward from God:

"Anyone who believes in his Lord need fear neither belittlement nor tyranny. Some of us are Muslims and some are deviators. Those who have become Muslim are those who sought right guidance." (Qur'an, 72:13-14)

However, those who deny God's existence will meet with the following fate:

"The deviators will be firewood for Hellfire." (Qur'an, 72:15)

"I will fill up Hell with the jinn and humanity all together." (Qur'an, 11:119)

Their Communication with Human Beings

In some cases, certain people may communicate with the jinns and, if God wills, even control them. For example, God placed the jinns under Prophet Solomon's (pbuh) control, and he used them in all kinds of work.

Such communication needs to be analyzed, for today some people, especially young people, try to summon jinns. Even if some people call it *calling up the heart* or *calling up the spirit*, it is actually the jinns that are being summoned. In some situations, even if no jinn is actually summoned up, people believe that it is anyway.

Generally, the jinns who answer these summons do not believe in God. Their probable purpose is to make people waste their time in frivolous pursuits. Deceived by these jinns, individuals think that they can gain something from them and learn something about the Unseen. However, without God's permission, the jinns cannot provide any such information. For example, they did not know that Prophet Solomon (pbuh) had died: **"When he [Solomon] fell down, it was made clear to the jinns that if they had truly had knowledge of the Unseen, they need not have stayed there suffering humiliating punishment"** (Qur'an 34:14). Moreover, it must be remembered that **"No one in the heavens and Earth knows the Unseen except God"** (Qur'an, 27:65).

Those Who Associate Jinns with God

Some people believe that the jinns have a certain power of their own. However, this is quite wrong, for God created them and only He has real power. Apart from God's will, they cannot harm or benefit anyone. Despite this, some people hope for their assistance and regard them as their guardians:

Yet they make the jinns co-partners with God 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! (Qur'an, 6:100)

The Qur'an says that some people have been misled after making contact with the jinns:

"Certain men from among humanity used to seek refuge with certain men from among the jinns, but they increased them in wickedness." (Qur'an, 72:6)

In another verse, the Qur'an reveals that some people actually worship the jinns:

They [the angels] will say: "Glory be to You! You are our Protector, not them. No, they were worshipping the jinns. They mostly had faith in them." (Qur'an, 34:41)

A major reason why people associate the jinns with God and hope for their assistance is that they think that these beings know the Unseen. But this is a serious error, for they have no such knowledge (Qur'an, 34:14). The Qur'an says that they cannot guide human beings and may even make broad, yet empty, hints to lead people away from the true path. However, the jinns can influence people only if God wills it, for He created them and they move at His command:

In this way, We have appointed as enemies to every Prophet demons from both humanity and from the jinns, who inspire each other with delusions by means of specious words—if your Lord had willed, they would not have done it, so abandon them and all they fabricate. (Qur'an, 6:112)

Those jinns who lead people astray, as well as those people who associate the jinns with God, will be punished with the eternal pangs of Hell. Those who were deluded by the jinns' alluring words will, in the Hereafter, understand the enormity of their error. On the Day of Judgment, whatever they associated with God will be removed, and they will understand that they are totally alone in His presence. Upon learning that they will have to suffer the pangs of Hell, they will beg:

Those who do not believe say: "Our Lord, show us those jinns and men who misguided us, and we will place them beneath our feet so that they will be among the lowest of the low." (Qur'an, 41:29)

Another verse says that fire will be their endless dwelling place:

On the Day We gather them all together: "O Company of jinns, 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 God wills. Your Lord is All-Wise, All-Knowing." (Qur'an, 6:128)

The Reward of the Rebellious

The Qur'an reminds us that jinns and human beings are weak creatures that move by God's inspiration. Furthermore, it states that their godless rebellion and denial of His signs will always fail, because God is the Lord of the worlds and Ruler of heaven and Earth:

O Company of jinns and humanity, if you are able to pierce through the confines of the heavens and Earth, pierce through them. You will not pierce through, except by a clear authority. (Qur'an, 55:33)

The reward for those who undertake such an enterprise is described as follows: **"He will pursue you with a piercing flame and fiery smoke, and you will not be helped"** (Qur'an, 55:35). Muslim jinns are aware of this reality and acknowledge their weakness by saying: **"We realized we would never thwart God on Earth and would never thwart Him by flight"** (Qur'an, 72:12). In addition, the end of such rebellious is Hell:

When heaven is split apart and goes red like dregs of oil. So which of your Lord's blessings do you both then deny? That Day no person or jinn will be asked about his sin. So which of your Lord's blessings do you both then deny? The evildoers will be recognized by their mark and seized by their forelocks and their feet. So which of your Lord's blessings do you both then deny? This is Hell, which the evildoers deny. (Qur'an, 55:37-43)

Throughout this section, we have described the jinns' characteristics. and have seen that although they have the same responsibilities as people, they are a different kind of creature. Indeed, having power over these very different creatures is a blessing from God

given as a reward for strong, deep faith. Prophet Solomon (pbuh) was awarded this blessing from God, Who also showed His mercy by rewarding him with a mighty kingdom.

SATAN

The Qur'an tells us a great deal about Satan and warns us about his wiles. In order to avoid his subtle traps and tricks, we need to analyze this creature.

Satan's Rebellion against God and His Humiliation

After God created Adam, He commanded all of the angels to prostrate before him. And all of them did so except Satan, who claimed that he was superior because he was created from fire while Adam was created from clay:

We created you [Adam], formed you, and then said to the angels: "Prostrate before Adam," and they prostrated—except for Satan. He was not among those who prostrated. We asked: "What prevented you from prostrating when I commanded you to?" He replied: "I am better than him. You created me from fire, and You created him from clay." (Qur'an, 7:11-12)

Satan thought that he would be humiliated if he prostrated before Adam. So, due to his pride and arrogance, he refused to obey God's command. Although he knew that God created and directed everything he became arrogant and claimed that he was better than Prophet Adam (pbuh). This claim was extremely disrespectful; on the one hand, he said he believed in God, and yet, on the other hand, he dared to oppose Him.

In his arrogance, Satan mistakenly thought that he could preserve his pride by refusing to prostrate to Adam. Contrary to what he expected, he was greatly humiliated, embarrassed, and banished. Moreover, throughout human history he would be known as the worst of the worst, a being condemned to the pangs of Hell. And he will always be known as such. The Qur'an describes his banishment from God's presence, as follows:

He said: "Descend from Heaven. It is not for you to be arrogant in it. So get out! You are one of the abased." (Qur'an, 7:13)

He said: "Get out of it, reviled and driven out. As for those of them who follow you, I will fill up Hell with every one of you." (Qur'an, 7:18)

Actually, all arrogant and conceited people fall into this same trap. Satan misleads them into thinking that if they puff themselves up, they will receive respect and honor. But, in fact, they will receive just the opposite. Before all else, in God's sight they will be humiliated because **"God does not love anyone vain or boastful"** (Qur'an, 4:36). They will also be humiliated among other people, because no one likes an arrogant person. Thus, they have no real friends and are despised by everyone. This humiliation is

one of the worst things they experience; but an even greater humiliation will be the pangs of Hell that they will endure along with Satan and his minions.

Satan First Misled Prophet Adam (pbuh) and His Wife

After Satan was driven out of God's presence, he began his struggle that will last until the Day of Judgment. He insinuated himself into people's lives in order to deceive and mislead them. His first big trap was to deceive Prophet Adam (pbuh) and his wife, when they lived in Paradise. The Qur'an tells us of this event, which happened at the beginning of human history:

[God said:] "Adam, live in the Garden, you and your wife, and eat of it wherever you like. But do not go near this tree, lest you become wrongdoers." Then Satan whispered to them, disclosing to them their private parts, which had been concealed from them. He said: "Your Lord has only forbidden you this tree lest you become angels or among those who live forever." He swore to them: "I am one of those who give you good advice." So he enticed them to do it by means of trickery. Then when they tasted the [fruit of the] tree, their private parts were disclosed to them and they started stitching together the leaves of the Garden in order to cover themselves. Their Lord called out to them: "Did I not forbid you this tree and say to you: 'Satan is an outright enemy to you'?" They said: "Our Lord, we have wronged ourselves. If you do not forgive us and have mercy on us, we will be among the lost." He said: "Go down from here as enemies to each other! You will have residence on Earth and enjoyment for a time." He said: "On it you will live and on it you will die, and from it you will be brought forth." (Qur'an, 7:19-25)

This was the beginning of human life in this world, and this was Prophet Adam's (pbuh) state. But he repented, and God forgave him. Satan's struggle against human beings, however, has not ended.

Demons May Appear in Human Form

God tells us that demons may appear in the forms of human beings or jinns so that they can influence people with their words or misleading suggestions, and lead them away from the right path:

Say: "I seek refuge with the Lord of humanity, the King of humanity, the God of humanity, from the evil of the insidious whisperer who whispers in people's breasts and comes from the jinns and from humanity." (Qur'an, 114:1-6)

Given this, we must be careful of demons who come in other forms. People cannot see Satan, unless God wills otherwise, and he can only influence their minds by means of

evil thoughts, fears, and anti-religious ideas. If people realized that such ideas do not come from themselves, but rather from Satan, they would immediately turn to God and think good and edifying thoughts. If they recited various Qur'anic verses, Satan's evil intimations could have no influence on them.

If an evil impulse from Satan provokes you, seek refuge in God. He is All-Hearing, All-Seeing. As for those who guard against evil, when they are bothered by visitors from Satan, they remember and immediately see clearly. (Qur'an, 7:200-201)

Sometimes Satan's minions may appear to us as a friend, an intellectual, or an aggressive individual. These demons resemble human beings in every way and try, through their words and actions, to lead people away from God and arouse their passion for this world.

God says that Satan's army has been trying, since humanity first appeared, to alienate people from the right path. But those who persevere on God's path will be victorious. Satan and his army, on the other hand, will have their reward in Hell:

They will be bundled into it head first, they and the misled, and every one of Satan's regiments. (Qur'an, 26:94-95)

Satan Tries to Make Earthly Life Seem Attractive

After he was driven out of God's presence, Satan blamed human beings for his fallen state and decided to show his resentment by misleading them. But in reality, he was punished for his own amorality, insolence, arrogance, and disobedience. Blinded by his own arrogance, however, Satan did not accept this truth and swore the following oath:

He [Satan] said: "Grant me a reprieve until the day they are raised up." He [God] said: "You are one of the reprieved." 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." (Qur'an, 7:14-17)

One of Satan's main tactics is to use people's own weaknesses to deceive them. For example, Prophet Adam (pbuh) and his wife were deceived with the promise of eternal life. Satan attempts to mislead people by strengthening their attachment to this earthly life, making it seem attractive, desirable, and eternal. The following verse informs us that:

He [Satan] said: "My Lord, because You misled me, I will make things on the Earth seem good to them and I will mislead them all, every one of them." (Qur'an, 15:39)

For example, Satan may put suggestions into a businessman's mind that bind him passionately to his work and lead him to place material gain and financial considerations above everything else. Because of these intimations, the businessman will renounce all moral and spiritual values, reject religion, and deny the Hereafter. So, by exploiting this person's weak points, Satan will alienate him from religion.

God tells us that this is how Satan misled the people of Saba:

[The hoopoe said:] "I found a woman ruling over them who has been given everything. She possesses a mighty throne. I found both her and her people prostrating to the Sun instead of God. Satan has made their actions seem good to them and debarred them from the Way, so they are not guided and do not prostrate to God, Who brings out what is hidden in the heavens and Earth, and knows what you conceal and what you divulge. God—there is no god but Him—the Lord of the Mighty Throne." (Qur'an, 27:23-26)

But we must remember that Satan's tricks and tactics are actually quite weak and that he has no influence over sincere believers who act according to their conscience and keep God and the Qur'an in mind.

Satan Cannot Influence Believers

Satan's sneaky tactics and insinuations cannot influence a believer. All of those with strong belief, as in the case of Prophet Solomon (pbuh), can defeat all of Satan's plans and render him totally ineffective. For believers who always remember God, see the goodness and beauty in His creation, turn toward Him, and look to the Qur'an in everything they think and do, Satan's wiles have no power, since:

He [Satan] has no authority over those who believe and put their trust in their Lord. He only has authority over those who take him as a friend and associate others with God. (Qur'an, 16:99-100)

In another verse, God says that Satan has no coercive power. However, he was given his influence in order to separate the good from the evil:

Satan was correct in his assessment of them and they followed him, except for a group of the believers. He had no authority over them, except to

enable Us to know those who believe in the Hereafter from those who are in doubt about it. Your Lord is the Preserver of all things. (Qur'an, 34:20-21)

Satan is not an autonomous creature; he does what he does with God's knowledge. So, He separates those who follow Satan and those godly believers who do not fall into his traps.

Some of Satan's Qualities

He is sneaky and a liar. (Qur'an, 14:22)

He is rebellious. (Qur'an, 22:3)

He only has power to call. (Qur'an, 14:22)

He is arrogant. (Qur'an, 4:117)

His influence on people is filthy. (Qur'an, 8:11)

He wants to prevent people from giving thanks to God. (Qur'an:7:17)

He tries to intimidate people. (Qur'an, 3:175)

He tries to destroy relationships between believers. (Qur'an, 17:53; 5:91)

He tries to persuade people that he gives them good advice. (Qur'an, 7:20-21)

He uses the name of God in the attempt to delude people. (Qur'an, 35:5-6)

He wants believers to become faint-hearted over time. (Qur'an, 3:155)

He breaks his promises. (Qur'an, 14:22)

He tries to make people fall into apprehension and doubt. (Qur'an, 4:119-20)

He shows deviant practices as attractive and desirable. (Qur'an, 27:24)

He tries to threaten people with poverty. (Qur'an, 2:268)

He tries to make people arrogant. (Qur'an, 38:74-75)

He urges people to make a show of praying. (Qur'an, 4:38)

He tries to alienate people from the Qur'an. (Qur'an, 43:36-37)

He makes people forgetful and oblivious. (Qur'an, 58:19; 6:68; 18:63)

He tempts people into emotionalism. (Qur'an, 17:64; 60:1-3)

He makes people get caught up in details. (Qur'an, 2:67-71)

He urges people to be extravagant. (Qur'an, 17:26-27)

The above verses reveal Satan to be a creature who dared to oppose God, is extremely rebellious and harbors great enmity toward human beings, and spares no effort to mislead people from the true path. That Prophet Solomon (pbuh) controlled demons and used them for the advantage of true religion is certainly an indication that he was one of God's greatest servants.

THE DECEPTION OF EVOLUTION

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

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

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

The Scientific Collapse of Darwinism

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

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

- 1) The theory cannot explain how life originated on Earth.

2) No scientific finding shows that the "evolutionary mechanisms" proposed by the theory have any evolutionary power at all.

3) The fossil record proves the exact opposite of what the theory suggests.

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

The First Insurmountable Step: The Origin of Life

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

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

"Life Comes From Life"

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

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

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

However, five years after the publication of Darwin's book, Louis Pasteur announced his results after long studies and experiments, that disproved spontaneous generation, a cornerstone of Darwin's theory. In his triumphal lecture at the Sorbonne in 1864, Pasteur said: "Never will the doctrine of spontaneous generation recover from the mortal blow struck by this simple experiment."¹⁶

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.¹⁷

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.¹⁸

After a long silence, Miller confessed that the atmosphere medium he used was unrealistic.¹⁹

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?²⁰

The Complex Structure of Life

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

The conditions required for the formation of a cell are too great in quantity to be explained away by coincidences. The probability of proteins, the building blocks of a cell, being synthesized coincidentally, is 1 in 10^{950} for an average protein made up of 500 amino acids. In mathematics, a probability smaller than 1 over 10^{50} is considered to be impossible in practical terms.

The DNA molecule, which is located in the nucleus of a cell and which stores genetic information, is an incredible databank. If the information coded in DNA were written

down, it would make a giant library consisting of an estimated 900 volumes of encyclopedias consisting of 500 pages each.

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

It is extremely improbable that proteins and nucleic acids, both of which are structurally complex, arose spontaneously in the same place at the same time. Yet it also seems impossible to have one without the other. And so, at first glance, one might have to conclude that life could never, in fact, have originated by chemical means.²¹

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

Imaginary Mechanism of Evolution

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

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

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

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

Natural selection can do nothing until favourable individual differences or variations occur.²²

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.²³

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

Neo-Darwinism and Mutations

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

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

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

First, genuine mutations are very rare in nature. Secondly, most mutations are harmful since they are random, rather than orderly changes in the structure of genes; any random change in a highly ordered system will be for the worse, not for the better. For example, if an earthquake were to shake a highly ordered structure such as a building, there would be a random change in the framework of the building which, in all probability, would not be an improvement.²⁴

Not surprisingly, no mutation example, which is useful, that is, which is observed to develop the genetic code, has been observed so far. All mutations have proved to be harmful. It was understood that mutation, which is presented as an "evolutionary mechanism," is actually a genetic occurrence that harms living things, and leaves them disabled. (The most common effect of mutation on human beings is cancer.) Of course, a destructive mechanism cannot be an "evolutionary mechanism." Natural selection, on the other hand, "can do nothing by itself," as Darwin also accepted. This fact shows us

that there is no "evolutionary mechanism" in nature. Since no evolutionary mechanism exists, no such any imaginary process called "evolution" could have taken place.

The Fossil Record: No Sign of Intermediate Forms

The clearest evidence that the scenario suggested by the theory of evolution did not take place is the fossil record.

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

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

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

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

If my theory be true, numberless intermediate varieties, linking most closely all of the species of the same group together must assuredly have existed... Consequently, evidence of their former existence could be found only amongst fossil remains.²⁵

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.²⁶

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.²⁷

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

The Tale of Human Evolution

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

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

Evolutionists call man's so-called first ape-like ancestors *Australopithecus*, which means "South African ape." These living beings are actually nothing but an old ape species that has become extinct. Extensive research done on various *Australopithecus* specimens by two world famous anatomists from England and the USA, namely, Lord Solly Zuckerman and Prof. Charles Oxnard, shows that these apes belonged to an ordinary ape species that became extinct and bore no resemblance to humans.²⁸

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."²⁹

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.³⁰

Moreover, a certain segment of humans classified as *Homo erectus* have lived up until very modern times. *Homo sapiens neanderthalensis* and *Homo sapiens sapiens* (modern man) co-existed in the same region.³¹

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

What has become of our ladder if there are three coexisting lineages of hominids (*A. africanus*, the robust australopithecines, and *H. habilis*), none clearly derived from another? Moreover, none of the three display any evolutionary trends during their tenure on earth.³²

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.³³

The tale of human evolution boils down to nothing but the prejudiced interpretations of some fossils unearthed by certain people, who blindly adhere to their theory.

Darwinian Formula!

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

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

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

Briefly, unconscious atoms cannot form the cell by coming together. They cannot take a new decision and divide this cell into two, then take other decisions and create the professors who first invent the electron microscope and then examine their own cell structure under that microscope. Matter is an unconscious, lifeless heap, and it comes to life with God'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 was measured by a precise device at that moment, complete silence would be found to be prevailing there.

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

So far, no man-made visual or recording apparatus has been as sensitive and successful in perceiving sensory data as are the eye and the ear. However, as far as seeing and hearing are concerned, a far greater truth lies beyond all this.

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

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

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

For this consciousness is the spirit created by God, 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 God, and fear and seek refuge in Him, for He squeezes the entire universe in a pitch-dark place of a few cubic centimeters in a three-dimensional, colored, shadowy, and luminous form.

A Materialist Faith

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

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

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

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

It is not that the methods and institutions of science somehow compel us accept a material explanation of the phenomenal world, but, on the contrary, that we are forced

by our a priori adherence to material causes to create an apparatus of investigation and a set of concepts that produce material explanations, no matter how counter-intuitive, no matter how mystifying to the uninitiated. Moreover, that materialism is absolute, so we cannot allow a Divine Foot in the door.³⁴

These are explicit statements that Darwinism is a dogma kept alive just for the sake of adherence to materialism. This dogma maintains that there is no being save matter. Therefore, it argues that inanimate, unconscious matter created life. It insists that millions of different living species (e.g., birds, fish, giraffes, tigers, insects, trees, flowers, whales, and human beings) originated as a result of the interactions between matter such as pouring rain, lightning flashes, and so on, out of inanimate matter. This is a precept contrary both to reason and science. Yet Darwinists continue to defend it just so as "not to allow a Divine Foot in the door."

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

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

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

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

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

As for those who do not believe, it makes no difference to them whether you warn them or do not warn them, they will not believe. God has sealed up their hearts and hearing and over their eyes is a blindfold. They will have a terrible punishment. (Qur'an, 2:6-7)

... They have hearts with which they do not understand. They have eyes with which they do not see. They have ears with which they do not hear. Such people are like cattle. No, they are even further astray! They are the unaware. (Qur'an, 7:179)

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

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

In fact, the Qur'an relates the incident of Prophet Moses (pbuh) 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 Moses (pbuh) to meet with his own magicians. When Moses (pbuh) did so, he told them to demonstrate their abilities first. The verses continue:

He said: "You throw." And when they threw, they cast a spell on the people's eyes and caused them to feel great fear of them. They produced an extremely powerful magic. (Qur'an, 7:116)

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

We revealed to Moses, "Throw down your staff." And it immediately swallowed up what they had forged. So the Truth took place and what they did was shown to be false. (Qur'an, 7:117-118)

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

I myself am convinced that the theory of evolution, especially the extent to which it's been applied, will be one of the great jokes in the history books in the future. Posterity will marvel that so very flimsy and dubious an hypothesis could be accepted with the incredible credulity that it has.³⁵

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

**They said, "Glory be to You!
We have no knowledge except what You have taught us.
You are the All-Knowing, the All-Wise."
(Qur'an, 2:32)**

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BACK COVER

God blessed Prophet Solomon (pbuh) with a great kingdom, incomparable wealth, a powerful army supported by jinns and birds, and superior wisdom. This book looks at his special God-given qualities, as described in the Qur'an, that made him superior to other human beings. Such a study enables us to consider the exemplary moral character of this chosen servant of our Lord.

Given that many aspects of Prophet Solomon's (pbuh) biography are connected with the End Times, we also examine this period. The End Times, which is drawing ever-closer and during which the Qur'an's moral teachings will prevail, will witness the coming of the Mahdi. This spiritual person, an agent of God, will destroy all false philosophies and ideologies, thereby bringing an end to the oppression and chaos seen all over the world.

The hadiths state that the world rule in the End Times will be very much like the reigns of Prophet Solomon (pbuh) and Dhu'l-Qarnayn (pbuh). For this reason, the author examines the Qur'anic accounts of the times of these two great leaders from this point of view. This method will allow believers to interpret events from a wider perspective and broaden their horizons. In addition, it will cause Muslims to think about the good tidings of the End Times and live in eager expectation of its arrival.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

The author, who writes under the pen-name Harun Yahya, was born in Ankara in 1956. He studied arts at Istanbul's Mimar Sinan University, and philosophy at Istanbul University. Since the 1980s, the author has published many books on political, faith-related and scientific issues. His main focus has been the refutation of Darwinism and materialism, two modern myths presented under a scientific guise. Harun Yahya's books appeal to all kinds of readers, Muslims and non-Muslims alike, regardless of their age, race, or nationality, for they focus on one objective: to broaden the readers' perspective by encouraging them to think about a number of critical issues, such as the existence of God and His unity, and to display the decrepit foundations and perverted works of godless systems.