

IN THE NAME OF ALLAH, THE ALL-MERCIFUL AND MOST MERCIFUL

**Their Lord gives them the good news of
His mercy and good pleasure and Gardens
where they will enjoy everlasting delight.
(Surat at-Tawba, 21)**

**HARUN YAHYA
(ADNAN OKTAR)**

All translations from the Qur'an are from *The Noble Qur'an: a New Rendering of its Meaning in English* by Hajj Abdalhaqq and Aisha Bewley published by Bookwork, Norwich, UK 1420 CE/1999 AH.

**ARAřTIRMA
YAYINCILIK**

Talatpařa Mah. Emirgazi Caddesi
İbrahim Elmas İşmerkezi A Blok Kat 4
Okmeydanı - İstanbul
Tel: (0 212) 2220088

Baskı: Entegre Matbaacılık
Sanayi Cad. No: 17 Yenibosna-İstanbul
Tel: (0 212) 451 70 70

www.harunyahya.org / www.harunyahya.net

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Introduction

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About the Author

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

Harun Yahya's works, translated into 60 different languages, constitute a collection for a total of more than 45,000 pages with 30,000 illustrations.

His pen-name is a composite of the names Harun (Aaron) and Yahya (John), in memory of the two esteemed prophets who fought against their peoples' lack of faith. The Prophet's (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) seal on his books' covers is symbolic and is linked to their contents. It represents the Qur'an (the Final Scripture) and Prophet Muhammad (may Allah 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 irreligious ideologies and to have the "last word," so as to completely silence the objections raised against religion. He uses the seal of the final Prophet (may Allah bless him and grant him peace), who attained ultimate wisdom and moral perfection, as a sign of his intention to offer the last word.

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

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

Greatly appreciated all around the world, these works have been instrumental in many people recovering faith in Allah and gaining deeper insights into their faith. His books' wisdom and sincerity, together with a

distinct style that's easy to understand, directly affect anyone who reads them. Those who seriously consider these books, can no longer advocate atheism or any other perverted ideology or materialistic philosophy, since these books are characterized by rapid effectiveness, definite results, and irrefutability. Even if they continue to do so, it will be only a sentimental insistence, since these books refute such ideologies from their very foundations. All contemporary movements of denial are now ideologically defeated, thanks to the books written by Harun Yahya.

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

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

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

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

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

To the Reader

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

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

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

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

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

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

BOOK I

THE MANIFESTATION OF THE NAME OF ALLAH AS THE ALL-MERCIFUL AND MOST MERCIFUL IN THE QUR'AN

INTRODUCTION

Every moment of the 60-80 years that people spend in this earthly life before leaving it contains a test. After death, they will give an account of their good and evil words and deeds, and then will begin their eternal existence in the world to come. On the Day of Resurrection, everything that a person did while alive will be taken into account. Those who chose the way of the prophets; those who were true, devout, and sincerely submitted to Allah (God) in faith; those who feared Allah out of awe and respect and so respected the limitations He set upon humanity; and those who hoped to win Allah's favor and mercy and attain Paradise will rejoice in an eternal Paradise. On the other hand, satan and those who rejected Allah, along with idolaters and hypocrites; those who ignored Allah in order to satisfy their own desires; and those who embraced sinful actions will be sent to live in Hell. No one will be treated unjustly.

Believers, to whom Allah has promised the joys of Paradise, are those who sincerely believe that He created the whole universe from nothing, who know and remember the Creator by His most beautiful names and recognize His eternal power and might, and who spend their lives consciously striving to earn His favor. They know that Allah created them and the universe in complete perfection, down to the most subtle detail, and that He is their only Friend and Protector. They behave with the knowledge that He sees and hears them at all times, and that He is aware of everything.

Human beings have different beliefs or follow those that are considered heretical by the orthodox. But the important thing is to acquire knowledge of Allah through contemplating the perfect and incomparably sublime names by which He reveals Himself in the Qur'an. People need to abandon their false beliefs and understand these names. Sincere Muslims know His names and consider them deep within their hearts. Thus, the way they view life is quite different from how others look at it. They know that Allah is the universe's only ruler, has endless power and might, hears and sees everything, shows endless mercy toward His servants, is forgiving and

protective, sends and removes difficult times, makes success easy for His servants, is endlessly just and the Judge of those that pass judgment, and that everything belongs to Him. As a result, they live their lives according to this belief. The Qur'an reveals some of His most beautiful names in the following verses:

He is Allah - there is no deity but Him. He is the Knower of the Unseen and the Visible. He is the All-Merciful, the Most Merciful. He is Allah - there is no deity but Him. He is the King, the Most Pure, the Perfect Peace, the Trustworthy, the Safe guarder, the Almighty, the Compeller, the Supremely Great. Glory be to Allah above all they associate with Him. He is Allah - the Creator, the Maker, the Giver of Form. To Him belong the Most Beautiful Names. Everything in the heavens and Earth glorifies Him. He is the Almighty, the All-Wise. (Surat al-Hashr, 22-24)

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

One of the names of Allah revealed in these verses is the All-Merciful and Most Merciful. Of the Qur'an's 114 surahs, only one does not begin with this name. Believers are constantly aware of this name's manifestations, because it encompasses the universe and embraces each believer from birth to death, in sickness and health, weakness and strength, as well as permeates the matchless beauty of all animate and inanimate beings. The divine mercy, compassion, love, help, protection, grace and forgiveness of Allah toward all humans is one of the most beautiful manifestations of our Lord. The manifestations of this name deepens the way in which believers view the universe and all living things and adhere to the Qur'an's moral code. For this reason, when Muslims begin to read the Qur'an, practice the morality within the Qur'an and communicate it to others, advise other believers, and think about why the universe was created, they should breathe the most beautiful names of Allah in their spirits. To comprehend the beauty, contentment, well-being and blessing in these peerless names of our Creator, and to be aware of their sovereignty in Islam, is an important step toward deepening one's faith and coming to know Allah through His most beautiful names.

This book will focus on the place of the names All-Merciful and Most Merciful in the life of Muslims. We will look at the names All-Merciful and Most Merciful as they appear in the Qur'an and are manifested in the

universe, and stress the importance of seeing the meaning of life according to these names.

THE MERCY OF ALLAH EMBRACES EVERYTHING

The word **mercy** comes from the Arabic *rahama*, meaning pity, protect, compassion and forgiveness. The name *All-Merciful and Most Merciful of our Lord* comes from this root. The adjective *All-Merciful*, which is used in the Qur'an only for Allah means **"He Whose mercy embraces everything; Who wishes goodness, mercy, and beauty for all created things; Who imparts countless blessings without distinguishing who He loves from who He does not."** The adjective *Most Merciful*, which is also used for our Prophet (May Allah bless him and grant him in peace) (Surat at-Tawba, 128) when refers to Allah, means **"He Whose mercy embraces only believers in the Hereafter, Who rewards those Who use His blessings well with greater and infinite blessings."**

The name of Allah All-Merciful and Most Merciful is repeated numerous times in other verses of the Qur'an. All the surahs in the Qur'an except Surat at-Tawba, begins with the ascription *in the name of Allah, the All-Merciful and Most Merciful*. The name All Merciful of our Lord has a wide range of meanings: protecting, pitying, compassionate, and merciful names of Allah are all manifestations of Allah's name All Merciful. His mercy encompasses all things and is limitless, timeless, and eternal. Of all those who show mercy, our Lord is the Most Merciful. The Qur'an tells us that Job (pbuh) used this beautiful name in his prayers:

And Job, when he called out to his Lord: "Great harm has afflicted me, and You are the Most Merciful of the merciful." (Surat al-Anbiya, 83)

Allah the All Merciful manifests His infinite mercy in everything seen and unseen. It is possible to see the All-Merciful name of Allah in the miracles of creation pervading the universe; the creation of humans and in the billions of details in the human body; in animals, food, drink, water, and air. In short, in every aspect of the universe. The universe manifests this mercy, for only He makes countless seeds sprout from under the ground; creates fruits and vegetables, sends down rain, feeds and nourishes the infinite number of creatures inhabiting our world; and creates the oxygen that life needs to survive. Our Lord surrounds every being with countless

blessings, and thus no being can prevent the appreciation, generosity, and favor He shows toward humanity. In Surah Fatir our Lord announces His infinite Mercy upon the humans as below:

Any mercy Allah opens up to people, no one can withhold; any He withholds, no one can afterwards release. He is the Almighty, the All-Wise. (Surah Fatir, 2)

Every creature living on this planet, including human beings, can survive only if numerous conditions are met every moment, such as the existence of oxygen for them to breathe in, water and food for them to sustain their ability to carry out the countless processes. Moreover billions of processes take place in the human body every second. For the continuance of life, every single cell performs its own tasks upon Allah's will. Even one single person's survival, meeting all his physical needs, is bound to infinite number of details. Our Lord with his endless mercy has predetermined and supplied whatever is necessary.

He created human beings and placed them in the most suitable place to live. In return, all that human beings have to do is to be His servants. One manifestation of His name All-Merciful and Most Merciful is His sending of holy books through his Messengers to enable human beings to find the true path, and Prophets to explain the verses in ways that they could understand. In this way, Allah revealed Himself and invited them to the beauties of religious morality and told them how to lead a superior moral life. All of these things are clear evidence of our Lord's endless mercy.

The unbelievers, idolaters, and hypocrites benefit from the air, water, and all blessings that Allah has bestowed, in His endless mercy, upon humanity: property and possessions, a beautiful house and children, sustenance, health, strength, and beauty. These are all manifestations of Allah's infinite mercy. He does so in order to draw all people toward His religion and so that they will think reasonably and thank Him. Those who, nevertheless, continue to reject Allah will find that these blessings will only increase their misery. Those who turn away from Allah will enjoy these blessings throughout this short and temporary earthly life, while in the Hereafter, all of these blessings will belong to the believers who strove to draw near to Allah, earn His favor, and thanked Him without pause. Allah is eternal Justice and has announced the good news of Paradise, adorned with incomparable blessings, to the believers:

“Prescribe good for us in this world and the Hereafter. We have truly turned to You.” He said: “As for My punishment, I strike with it anyone I will. My mercy extends to all things, but I will prescribe it for those who guard against evil and give alms, and those who believe in Our Signs. (Surat al-A’raf, 156)

... Gardens of Eden, which the All-Merciful has promised to His servants in the Unseen. His promise is always kept. (Surah Maryam, 61)

The Most Beautiful Names of Our Lord

The name *All-Merciful and Most Merciful* has a broad and deep meaning which subsumes numerous names of our Lord mentioned in the Qur’an. For example, He is protective and forgiving in His endless mercy toward human beings and grants them incomparable blessings throughout their lives. Through His abundant grace, He provides physical and spiritual blessings; forgives their errors, accepts their repentance, protects them, covers their sin, and guides them on the straight path.

Due to His creation’s perfection and superior nature, Allah sustains the life of all creatures, every one of which submits to His supreme intelligence, endless compassion, and mercy. He has given them everything they need to survive in their close proximity, as another indication of His mercy. The Lord is **“All-Gentle, Most Merciful”** (Surat al-Baqara, 143) towards His creatures:

Do you not see that Allah has made everything on Earth subservient to you, and the ships running upon the sea, by His command? He holds back the heaven, preventing it from falling to Earth - except by His permission. Allah is All-Compassionate to humanity, Most Merciful. (Surat al-Hajj, 65)

He sends down Clear Signs to His servant to bring you out of the darkness to the light. Allah is All-Gentle with you, Most Merciful. (Surat al-Hadid, 9)

From the moment of birth, each person can survive only with Allah’s mercy, protection, and help. For example, disasters such as earthquakes, floods, tornadoes, and volcanic eruptions happen all over the world every single minute. In fact such events can happen anywhere at any chosen

time. And anyone can fall sick or experience material hardship. And there is a very basic fact that should never be forgotten in the face of such events; no matter how hard people may try, they cannot avoid any of these calamities, and no one can help them for they are all sent by Allah, and only Allah can remove them, for He, as the All-Merciful, is a person's sole protector and helper. Allah, if He wishes so, rescues people from every kind of trouble and calamity and also if He wishes so makes them face all kinds of difficulties.

Say: "Who rescues you from the darkness of the land and sea? You call on Him humbly and secretly: 'If You rescue us from this, we will truly be among the thankful.' " Say: "Allah rescues you from it, and from every plight. Then you associate others with Him." (Surat al-An'am, 63-64)

He [Noah's son] said: "I will take refuge on a mountain; It will protect me from the flood." He [Noah] said: "There is no protection from Allah's command today, except for those upon whom He has mercy." (Surah Hud, 43)

As for those who show disdain and grow arrogant, He will punish them with a painful punishment. They will not find any protector or helper for themselves besides Allah. (Surat an-Nisa, 173)

We can see from these verses that only Allah, out of His endless compassion, removes people's anxieties and protects them from disaster. Knowing this, believers take refuge in His endless mercy when confronted with sickness, anxiety, and difficulty, for He provides material and spiritual abundance in this world to those who sincerely believe in and obey Him. He makes a way for them out of their difficulties and removes their anxiety:

Is there anyone who will make Allah a generous loan so that He can multiply it for him [or her] many times over? Allah both restricts and expands. And you will be returned to Him. (Surat al-Baqara, 245)

Your Lord expands and restricts the provision of anyone He wills. He is aware of and sees His servants. (Surat al-Isra, 30)

Being eternal goodness, Allah is good to human beings throughout their lives and gives them things of incomparable goodness and beauty: **"Beforehand we certainly used to call on Him because He is the All-Good, the Most Merciful"** (Surat at-Tur, 28). Everything that exists comes from Him; all beauty and every fine blessing manifest His intelligence. Like all other beings, each person comes into this world, through His will, as a piece of flesh in its mother's womb, grows and gradually develops a beautiful face, and reflects His wondrous artistry in every detail:

O humanity! What has deus in respect of your Lord Most Beneficent? He Who created you, formed you, proportioned you, and assembled you in whatever way He willed? (Surat al-Infitar, 2)

Recite: In the Name of your Lord Who created, created humanity from clots of blood. Recite: And your Lord is the Most Generous, He Who taught by the pen, taught humanity what it did not know. No indeed! Truly humanity is unbridled, seeing itself as self-sufficient. Truly it is to your Lord that you will return. (Surat al-Alaq, 1-8)

In His endless grace, He has given countless blessings to humanity and, in return, expects them to serve Him. Those who turn to Him with sincere belief, serve Him with all their heart in submission, and worship Him

with full sincerity. They will receive a great reward in the Afterlife in return for this virtuous behavior, for His kindness is everlasting:

He has given you everything for which you have asked Him. If you tried to number Allah's blessings, you could never count them. Humanity is indeed wrongdoing, ungrateful. (Surah Ibrahim, 34)

Allah has shown His endless compassion in making Islam very easy for people to follow. In His mercy, Allah does not hold people responsible for what they have forgotten or for their lapses. Nor does He saddle the blind, the lame, or the sick with responsibility. He teaches people to be patient and trusting, and removes the load from their shoulders. These examples are given to help those who reject His endless mercy and compassion realize their ungratefulness. In this context, the Qur'an reveals His name *Al-Haleem* (The All-Clement, The Lenient):

Those of you who turned their backs on the day the two armies clashed - satan made them slip for what they had done. But Allah has pardoned them. Allah is Ever-Forgiving, Lenient. (Surah Al 'Imran, 155)

Allah will not take you to task for inadvertent statements in your oaths, but He will take you to task for the intention your hearts have made. Allah is Ever-Forgiving, Lenient. (Surat al-Baqara, 225)

The seven heavens and Earth and everyone in them glorify Him. There is nothing that does not glorify Him with praise, but you do not understand their glorification. He is Lenient, Ever-Forgiving. (Surat al-Isra, 44)

Allah keeps a firm hold on the heavens and Earth, preventing them from vanishing. And if they vanished, no one could then keep hold of them. Certainly He is Lenient, Ever-Forgiving. (Surah Fatir, 41)

Allah is eternal Justice and, in the world to come, will be perfectly just in rewarding or punishing people for what they have done. All anxiety, deprivation, and oppression in this world are each a test from Him. His forgiveness is without end, and He will reveal what every person has done and manifest His justice in sensitive scales. Allah reveals in the Qur'an that all oppressors will suffer the consequences of their oppression and that every good deed done here will be rewarded in the Hereafter:

On the Day We summon all people with their records, those who are given their Book in their right hand will read it and will not be wronged by even the smallest speck. (Surat al-Isra, 71)

Say: “Our Lord will bring us all together and then will judge between us with the truth. He is the Just Decider, the All-Knowing.” (Surah Saba, 26)

Those who submit to Allah and strive to earn His favor are content in this world and the Hereafter, a manifestation of His name Al-Lateef (The Gentle, the Subtle). Allah bestows His grace upon His faithful servants to help them in all sorts of difficulties:

Allah is very gentle with His servants. He provides for anyone He wills. He is the Most Strong, the Almighty. (Surat ash-Shura, 19)

Do you not see that Allah sends down water from the sky and then, in the morning, the land is covered in green? Allah is All-Subtle, All-Aware. (Surat al-Hajj, 63)

Just as Allah is the believers’ only friend and guardian in this world, He will also be their helper in the Hereafter, for in His gentleness He will turn their sins into goodness. Thus, as for the believers in Paradise:

They will say: “Beforehand we used to live in fear among our families. But Allah was gracious to us and safeguarded us from the punishment of the searing wind. Beforehand we certainly used to call on Him, because He is the All-Good, the Most Merciful.” (Surat al-Infitar, 26-28)

Allah’s gifts are many, and He gives them without expecting a return (Surah Sad, 9). Through His gentle kindness, He gives His sincere servants blessings and goodness in this world as a source of delightful rewards and a sign of His grace and generosity:

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

Riches, splendor, and goodness are basic characteristics of Paradise. For this reason, Allah creates similar blessings in this world to remind His beloved servants of Paradise and increase their desire and ardor to attain it. Just as unbelievers begin to suffer their eternal torment here, sincere

believers are shown here the eternal beauty that has been promised to them. The Qur'an tells us that those who repent and desire something from Allah will be allowed to enjoy both worlds and His generosity:

Ask your Lord for forgiveness and then repent to Him. He will let you enjoy a good life until a specified time and will give His favor to all who merit it. But if you turn your backs, I fear for you the punishment of a Mighty Day. (Surah Hud, 3)

Believers are aware of Almighty Allah's eternal power, and therefore they obey His commands and prohibitions, live according to the religion that He has chosen for humanity (Islam), and have hope as regards the Hereafter. In this world, Allah either rewards them with His assistance and generosity or can test them through distress and hardship.

Believers see the good in this and always put their trust in Allah, knowing that He will reward the Muslims because of their goodness in the Hereafter, out of His endless generosity:

Will the reward for doing good be anything other than good? (Surat ar-Rahman, 60)

What will those who invent lies against Allah think on the Day of Rising? Allah shows favor to humanity, but most of them are not thankful. (Surah Yunus, 60)

Nor will they give away any amount, whether large or small. Nor will they cross any valley without it being written down for them, so that Allah can recompense them for the best of what they did. (Surat at-Tawba, 121)

The metaphor of those who spend their wealth in His Way is that of a grain that produces seven ears; in every ear there are a hundred grains. Allah gives such a multiplied increase to whoever He wills. Allah is All-Encompassing, All-Knowing. (Surat al-Baqara, 261)

Satan promises you poverty and commands you to greed. Allah promises you forgiveness and abundance. Allah is All-Encompassing, All-Knowing. (Surat al-Baqara, 268)

Allah Is Endlessly Generous

and Accepts Repentance

All people are fallible, forgetful, misjudge situations, and make mistakes. They may not think carefully enough about many things, or may make wrong decisions and then engage in wrong actions. For this reason, Allah's endless mercy and compassion are great blessings. His eternal mercy provides people the chance to repent and reform themselves every time they make a mistake. Those who sincerely desire forgiveness can hope that Allah will grant their prayer, for **“Tell My servants that I am the Ever-Forgiving, the Most Merciful”** (Surat al-Hijr, 49). In fact, He reveals His readiness to forgive:

Anyone who does evil or wrongs himself [or herself] and then asks Allah's forgiveness will find Him Ever-Forgiving, Most Merciful. (Surat an-Nisa, 110)

Islam teaches that no one is perfect, for each person is weak and prone to sin and error. But since Allah is generous and forgiving, there is no need for despair over an intentional or an unintentional error, for He will accept the repentance of all who take refuge in Allah and do their best not to commit that mistake again. Of course, believers try hard to avoid all mistakes and sins and to stay within the limitations Allah has set for them. Nevertheless, they might make mistakes and sins. To repent and ask for forgiveness after such a behavior is a very favorable characteristic of Muslims. His names *At-Tawwab* (The Acceptor of Repentance), *Al-Ghaffar* (The Forgiving), and *Ar-Rahman* (The All-Merciful) are manifested in penitent believers who repent their mistakes and strive to do better:

When those who believe in Our Signs come to you, say: “Peace be upon you.” Allah has made mercy incumbent upon Himself. If anyone among you does evil out of ignorance and then repents and puts things right, He is Ever-Forgiving, Most Merciful. (Surat al-An'am, 54)

One of the things that distance people from the Qur'an's morality is the guilt complex that comes from committing sins which makes them begin to see themselves as *incorrigible and unmitigated*.. Such people, however, forget the name *All-Merciful and Most Merciful* of Allah, Who informs humanity that He is forgiving and eternally generous. Satan stirs them up by saying that they are sinners who will never be able to remedy their condition, that they should just accept it. Then he draws people into a

morass, deceiving them into thinking that since they have sinned already, there is nothing to lose by doing it again. Satan exploits their resulting sense of shame toward Allah in order to distance them totally from Him. But like every wile of Satan, this one too is weak, for committing a sin does not disqualify people from finding the straight path. Not only after committing a sin, even if one has committed the biggest sins numerous times, he always has the possibility of becoming a penitent and turning towards Allah. Regardless of the sin committed, Allah has informed us in the Qur'an that He will accept each person's sincere repentance and turning toward Him:

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

As for those who believe and do right actions, they will have forgiveness and a generous provision. (Surat al-Hajj, 50)

Those who fear [and respect] their Lord in the Unseen will have forgiveness and an immense reward. (Surat al-Mulk, 12)

Through His eternal mercy, Allah reveals that everyone is given the possibility to repent. For example, He accepted the repentance of those Jews who, after Moses (pbuh) led them out of Egypt, made a golden idol in the shape of a calf, and worshipped it:

And when Moses said to his people: "My people, You wronged yourselves by adopting the calf, so turn toward your Maker and kill yourselves. That is the best thing for you in your Maker's sight." And He turned toward you. He is the Ever-Returning, the Most Merciful. (Surat al-Baqara, 54)

The Qur'an reveals that Allah will forgive anyone who, after making a mistake inadvertently, sincerely repents and turns toward Him. Allah informs us that no matter how big the dimensions of the flaws committed by the believers, they should never lose their hope of obtaining His mercy if they sincerely repent for what they did:

Say [from Me]: "O My servants, you who have transgressed against yourselves, do not despair of Allah's mercy. Truly, He forgives all wrong actions. He is the Ever-Forgiving, the Most Merciful." Turn to your Lord and submit to Him before punishment

comes upon you, for then you cannot be helped. Follow the best that has been sent down to you from your Lord before the punishment comes upon you suddenly, when you are not expecting it. (Surat az-Zumar, 53-55)

Allah's name *Al-Ghaffar* (The Forgiving) is one of His greatest and most accessible blessings to humanity. Therefore, it is unseemly for people to despair and to think that after committing all those sins, they will not be able to reform themselves again. Those who disregard Allah's compassion, mercy, and readiness to forgive are unjust to themselves and misunderstand the Qur'an's moral teachings. Those believers who sincerely repent and then abandon their sins raise their station in the Hereafter, for this process has a maturing effect that makes them more aware of their weaknesses and deficiencies, as well as their reality as Allah's servants. The important thing here is immediate repentance, for:

I am Ever-Forgiving to anyone who repents, has faith, acts rightly, and then is guided. (Surah Ta-Ha, 82)

... except for those who, after that, repent and put things right. Allah is Ever-Forgiving, Most Merciful. (Surat an-Nur, 5)

But anyone who does right actions, being a believer, need not fear any wrong or belittlement. (Surah Ta-Ha, 112)

Perform prayer, give alms, and obey the Messenger so that, hopefully, mercy will be shown to you. (Surat an-Nur, 56)

As for those who believe and do right actions, We will erase their bad actions and recompense them for the best of what they did. (Surat al-Ankabut, 7)

... so that Allah can reward them for the best of what they did and give them more from His unbounded favor. Allah provides for anyone He wills without limit. (Surat an-Nur, 38)

Although people sincerely repent, they may commit the same sin again and again. However, when this sinful habit is finally broken, they may hope that Allah has accepted their repentance – provided that they are sincere. Some people think, mistakenly, that they can repent when they are older. But such an attitude betrays their insincerity:

Allah only accepts the repentance of those who do evil in ignorance and then quickly repent afterward. Allah turns toward such people. Allah is All-Knowing, All-Wise. There is no repentance for people who persist in doing evil until death comes to them and then say: "Now I repent," nor for people who die as unbelievers. We have prepared for them a painful punishment. (Surat an-Nisa, 17-18)

Given these facts, all believers should remember that committing sins should not cause them to fall into sadness and despair, for Allah will accept their sincere repentance and forgive them. Despair does not please Allah, for He tells believers to be joyful and eager to draw close to Him:

Were it not for Allah's favor to you and His mercy ... and that Allah is Ever-Returning, All-Wise. (Surat an-Nur, 10)

Were it not for Allah's favor to you and His mercy ... and that Allah is All-Gentle, Most Merciful. O you who have faith. Do not follow in satan's footsteps. Those who do so should know that he commands indecency and wrongdoing. Were it not for Allah's favor and mercy to you, not one of you would ever have been purified. But Allah purifies whoever He wills. Allah is All-Hearing, All-Knowing. Those of you are wealthy should not make oaths that they will not give to their relatives, the very poor, and those who have migrated in the way of Allah. Rather, they should pardon and overlook. Would you not love Allah to forgive you? Allah is Ever-Forgiving, Most Merciful. (Surat an-Nur, 20-22)

In other words, believers always have a sense of Allah's generosity and mercy, for they know that they can live a good life only because of His mercy. One of the main reasons for their sincere prayers, deep faith, and eagerness when giving thanks for their blessings is their intimate sense of every moment of their lives being lived in Allah's name *All Merciful, Most Merciful*. Those who do not practice the Qur'an's morality and do not appreciate His beautiful names cannot conceive of the splendor of this name, and thus live in a state of pessimism, without joy and hope, and far removed from all of the good and beautiful things coming from belief. When they sin, they do not know that Allah is protective and very forgiving. They do not consider that He forgives those who repent, and that His mercy and

compassion are infinite. But believers, on the other hand, always turn to Allah in prayer, repent, and ask forgiveness, knowing that He wants what is best for them. Therefore, He guides them on the straight path, protects them from evil, and shows them endless mercy and grace:

These are Allah's Signs, which We recite to you with truth. Allah desires no wrong for any being. That is on account of what you did. Allah does not wrong His servants. (Surah Al 'Imran, 182)

Any good thing that happens to you comes from Allah. Any bad thing that happens to you comes from yourself. We have sent you [O Muhammad] to humanity as a Messenger. Allah suffices as a Witness. (Surat an-Nisa, 79)

Why should Allah punish you if you are thankful and believe? Allah is All-Thankful, All-Knowing. (Surat an-Nisa, 147)

If it were not for Allah's favor to you and His mercy, all but a very few of you would have followed satan. (Surat an-Nisa, 83)

Allah's mercy toward His servants is evident in His calling out to the unbelievers, through His holy books and messengers, to follow the straight path. He tests them with various anxieties and hardships, hoping that *they will turn back* to Him. All of the suffering, hardship, anxiety, dryness, and scarcity mentioned in the Qur'an are manifestations of His mercy and compassion toward those who have not yet found the straight path. He offers them a chance to find this path so that they can avoid Hell's eternal pangs:

We seized Pharaoh's people with years of drought and scarcity of fruits so that, hopefully, they would pay heed. (Surat al-A'raf, 130)

We will give them a taste of lesser punishment before the greater punishment so that, hopefully, they will turn back. (Surat as-Sajda, 21)

If you are ungrateful, Allah is rich beyond need of any of you and is not pleased with ingratitude in His servants. But if you are grateful, He is pleased with you for that. No one can bear another's burden. Then you will return to your Lord, and He will inform you of

what you did. He knows what the heart contains. (Surat az-Zumar, 7)

We have never sent a Prophet to any city without seizing its people with hardship and distress so that, hopefully, they might learn humility. (Surat al-A'raf, 94)

The Qur'an tells us that disasters, hardships, and anxieties occur so that people will turn toward Allah, stop denying Him, and repent. Allah has created everything, including these tests, for a good purpose:

When a group of them asked: "Why do you rebuke a people whom Allah is going to destroy or severely punish?" they replied: "So that we have an excuse to present to your Lord, and so that, hopefully, they will take heed." (Surat al-A'raf, 164)

We sent Messengers to nations before you and afflicted them with hardship and distress so that, hopefully, they would humble themselves. (Surat al-An'am, 42)

The Qur'an states that Allah sends various warnings to people so that "hopefully, they will take heed" and "hopefully, they would humble themselves." In other words, He wants to include them in His mercy and in Paradise. The fact that He forgives their sins and provides them with countless opportunities to repent shows His great mercy and generosity:

If Allah were to punish people for their wrong actions, not a single creature would be left upon Earth. But, He defers them [His punishment] until a predetermined time. When their specified time arrives, they cannot delay it for a single hour nor can they bring it forward. (Surat an-Nahl, 61)

Your Lord is the Ever-Forgiving, the Possessor of Mercy. If He had taken them to task for what they have earned, He would have hastened their punishment. Instead, they have a promised appointment and will not find any refuge from it. (Surat al-Kahf, 58)

Therefore, it is never too late for people to become true servants of Allah through sincere repentance and striving to draw closer to Him. There

is no need to dwell on past sins, for the believers have learned the appropriate lessons and have abandoned them:

Allah has pardoned all that took place in the past. But if anyone does it again, Allah will take revenge on him [or her]. Allah is Almighty, the Lord of Retribution. (Surat Al-Ma'ida, 95)

Say to those who do not believe that if they stop, they will be forgiven what is past. But if they return to it, they have the example of previous peoples [who were punished for what they did]. (Surat al-Anfal, 38)

Allah grants everyone a period of grace during which they can receive whatever advice and encouragement they need (Surah Fatir, 37). He sends messengers to warn and incite fear and awe and, through them, reveal His will. But in spite of this, those who persist in unbelief will certainly receive the pay for what they have done. Those who are unaware of His countless manifestations as the All-Merciful and Most Merciful and do not praise Him will be *repaid* in the most appropriate and just manner:

Say: "As for those who are astray, let the All-Merciful prolong their term until they see what they were promised, whether it be the punishment or the Hour. Then they will know who is in the worse position and has the weaker troops." (Surah Maryam, 75)

The Qur'an:

A Manifestation of Allah's Mercy

The Qur'an is Allah's generous gift to humanity, a great manifestation of His name the All Merciful, Most Merciful. The Qur'an is the main source from which people will learn about the true religion. The Qur'an is the word of Allah, Who created the universe from nothing, has perfect knowledge of everything, and has infinite mercy. The Qur'an is a blessing from our Lord:

... a revelation from the All-Merciful, the Most Merciful, a Book whose verses have been explained in detail, for people who know, as a Qur'an in Arabic. (Surah Fussilat, 2-3)

We have sent down the Book to you so that you can make clear to them those things about which they differ, and as a guidance and a mercy to believers. (Surat an-Nahl, 64)

On that Day, We will raise up among every community a witness against them from among themselves and bring you as a witness against them. We have sent down the Book to you, making all things clear and as guidance and mercy and good news for the Muslims. (Surat an-Nahl, 89)

We have brought them a Book elucidating everything with knowledge, as guidance and a mercy for believers. (Surat al-A'raf, 52)

Allah, in a great manifestation of His mercy, sent down books to teach people, explain His decrees, and reveal Himself to them. Through His own words and wisdom, He showed them what they did not know. When these holy books were corrupted, He sent new messengers and revealed that the Qur'an would be protected until the Day of Judgment.

The Qur'an is Allah's last divinely revealed book, and Allah's protection of it is a mercy to humanity:

Nor can you say: "If the Book had been sent down to us, We would have been better guided than they were." For a Clear Sign has come to you from your Lord, and guidance and mercy. Who could do greater wrong than someone who denies Allah's Signs and turns away from them? We will repay those who turn away from Our Signs with the worst kind of punishment, because they turned away. (Surat al-An'am, 157)

The Qur'an's simple and clear style enables everyone to understand its perfect wisdom. Therefore, they can learn from the Qur'an's contents by reading and understanding the wisdom within the Qur'an concerning life in this world and the Hereafter:

"We have sent down to you a Book containing your Reminder. So, will you not use your intellect?" (Surat al-An'am, 10) and "We have not omitted anything from the Book" (Surat al-An'am, 38).

The Qur'an, which contains clear truths and is a sure guide to the straight path, reveals the truest knowledge on every truth that Allah revealed to Prophet Muhammad (may Allah bless him and grant him peace). Therefore, those who live by the Qur'an and the Prophet's sayings (hadiths) will obtain Allah's mercy and guidance:

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

This is clear insight for humanity and guidance and mercy for people with certainty. (Surat al-Jathiyya, 20)

Those who choose the Qur'an and our Prophet's way (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) will lead a life that is not like that of the unbelievers. For example, they are not anxious, discontented, fearful, worried, despairing, pessimistic, or overcome by panic in difficult situations.

They always conform to Allah's decrees, regardless of the surrounding circumstances. Their every decision, word, and action indicates that they follow the Qur'an's moral teachings. As a result, they always have a clear conscience and experience the ensuing spiritual contentment, well-being, and joy that Allah, in His mercy, grants those who live according to the Qur'an's moral teachings:

O humanity! Admonition has come to you from your Lord, as well as healing for what is in the breasts and guidance, and mercy for the believers. (Surah Yunus, 57)

In the Qur'an, Allah speaks clearly about truth and error so that those on the straight path can listen to their conscience, avoid their hearts' selfish desires, and thereby obey His decrees in order to find the truth. The Qur'an is full of wisdom, and thus can be easily understood by people of every age and every level of education.

Every well-intentioned and sincere person whom Allah has guided to the straight path can easily understand its message and implement it in their thoughts and actions. This is yet another wonderful manifestation of Allah's name *All-Merciful and Most Merciful*:

The Qur'an was sent down as guidance for humanity, with Clear Signs containing guidance and discrimination. (Surat al-Baqara, 185)

The Qur'an's moral teaching correspond to the innate nature of human beings, all of whom He created and are objects of His endless mercy and compassion. Everyone who does not realize this fact lives in a state of material and, more importantly, spiritual anxiety.

If the truth were to follow their whims and desires, the heavens and Earth, as well as everyone in them, would have been brought to ruin. No indeed! We have given them their Reminder, but they have turned away from it. (Surat al-Muminun, 71)

But only those who fear and respect Allah and His power, who sincerely submit to Him and prefer the Hereafter to this world, take advice and counsel from the Qur'an:

We did not send down the Qur'an to you to make you miserable, but only as a reminder for those who have fear [and respect for Him]. (Surah Ta Ha, 2-3)

This is an important secret of the Qur'an. People do not need to have great intelligence or skill to understand the Qur'an; it is enough that they are sincere and well-intentioned. The All-Merciful's mercy will allow all people to understand everything. Allah reveals the straight path to His sincere servants and allows them to attain salvation by practicing the Qur'an's moral teachings.

The Qur'an has been sent to all humanity, but it guides to the straight path only for those who fear and respect Allah and who believe in the Hereafter. As mentioned earlier, it is a proof of His compassion for His sincere servants:

"Am I to desire someone other than Allah as a judge, when it is He Who has sent down the Book to you clarifying everything?" Those to whom We have given the Book know it has been sent down from your Lord with truth, so on no account be among the doubters. (Surat al-An'am, 114)

On that Day, We will raise up among every community a witness against them from among themselves, and bring you as a witness against them. We have sent down the Book to you making all things clear, and as guidance and mercy and good news for the Muslims. (Surat an-Nahl, 89)

Those are the Signs of the Wise Book. Guidance and mercy for the good-doers. (Surah Luqman, 2-3)

O humanity! Admonition has come to you from your Lord and also healing for what is in the breasts, and guidance and mercy for the believers. (Surah Yunus, 57)

Allah tells us that the Qur'an is a book of counsel for all people, a guide to the straight path for sincere believers who respect His power, and a book that contains sublime wisdom and gives true knowledge of the past and the future. Its incomparable style pierces the veil that hides the human propensity for error. Since it is eternally valid, all believers are determined to follow its decrees and the Prophet's (May Allah bless him and grant him peace) example.

The Qur'an is *Al-Furqan*, the distinguisher between right and wrong, truth and falsehood: **"Right guidance has become clearly distinct from error"** (Surat al-Baqara, 256). Therefore, believers do not try to find a middle road between its moral teachings and a life of ignorance; they follow only the Truth: the Qur'an.

Knowing that the Qur'an manifests His name *All Merciful, Most Merciful* and thus proves His endless mercy toward all people, they obey Allah's command to cling to its moral teachings:

So hold fast to what has been revealed to you. You are on a straight path. It is certainly a reminder to you and to your people, and you will be questioned. (Surat az-Zukhruf, 43-44)

Sending a Warner Manifests His Name "All Merciful"

Out of His endless mercy and compassion, Allah has sent messengers to warn humanity and teach them about the Afterlife and life's real meaning and purpose. His messengers struggled throughout their lives to direct human beings to the straight path by rescuing them, with Allah's permission, from a life of ignorance. For example, Noah (pbuh) made a great effort to tell his people about Allah's existence and eternal power, and to lead them away from their mistaken views and beliefs. Undeterred by their rebellion and rejection, he did his best to carry out Allah's commands:

He [Noah] said: "My Lord, I have called my people night and day, but my calling has only made them more evasive. Indeed, every time I called them to Your forgiveness, they put their fingers in their ears, wrapped themselves up in their clothes, and were overweeningly arrogant. Then I called them openly. Then I

addressed them publicly and addressed them privately.” (Surah Nuh, 5-9)

These messengers’ sincere efforts are a great blessing for believers and a manifestation of our Lord’s great love for His servants. As a mercy from Allah, messengers struggle against unbelief and, without any expectation of reward, try to show believers the way to the straight path:

Allah showed great kindness to the believers when He sent a Messenger to them from among themselves to recite His Signs to them, purify them, and teach them the Book and Wisdom, even though before that they were clearly misguided. (Surah Al 'Imran, 164)

For this We sent a Messenger to you from among yourselves to recite Our Signs to you, purify you teach you the Book and Wisdom, and teach you things you did not know before. (Surat al-Baqara, 151)

[Noah asked his people:] “Or are you astonished that a reminder should come to you from your Lord by way of a man from among you, to warn you and make you guard against evil so that, hopefully, you will gain mercy?” (Surat al-A'raf, 63)

... by a command from Our presence. We are constantly sending out [mercy and peace] as a mercy from your Lord. He is the All-Hearing, the All-Knowing. (Surat ad-Dukhan, 5-6)

We have only sent you [O Muhammad] as a mercy to all the worlds. (Surat al-Anbiya, 107)

Allah's blessed messengers are the most trustworthy, honest, good-tempered, moral, intelligent, circumspect, perceptive, courageous, and patient people in the world. They evoke trust in everyone, are sincere and zealous, and their creation is a great act of His generosity. Messengers are also exemplary in their moral lives. They are a boon to their societies, for they invite people to follow His way, to obey the Qur'an, avoid evil deeds, and embrace goodness and honesty. They remind people of life's transitory nature and that real life is in the eternal world to come. The Qur'an tells us that a messenger is sent to every society:

We have sent you with the truth, bringing good news and giving warning. There is no community to which a warner has not come. (Surah Fatir, 24)

Nor were you on the side of the mount when We called. Yet it is a mercy from your Lord, so that you can warn a people to whom

**no warner came before, so that, hopefully, they will pay heed.
(Surat al-Qasas, 46)**

**Or do they ask: "He has invented it?" No indeed! It is the truth
from your Lord to warn a people to whom, before you, no warner
had come, so that, hopefully, they will be guided. (Surat as-Sajda,
3)**

We sent a Messenger among every people saying: “Worship Allah and keep clear of all false deities.” Among them were some whom Allah guided, but others received the misguidance they deserved. Travel throughout the land and see the unbelievers’ final fate. (Surat an-Nahl, 36)

O People of the Book. Our Messenger has come to you, making things clear to you, after a period with no Messengers, lest you should say: “No one came to us bringing good news or a warning.” Someone has come to you bringing good news and a warning. Allah has power over all things. (Surat al-Ma’ida, 19)

Messengers were a great blessing to the societies to which they were sent, for they taught people things they did not know and showed them how to live a life of contentment, security, peace, and justice. As a consolation, the Qur’an tells us that throughout history only a very few people have ever approached the messengers out of appreciation of their being a great mercy for them: **“Those are the Signs of the Book. And what has been sent down to you from your Lord is the Truth. But most people have no faith”** (Surat ar-Ra’d, 1). Those who denied Allah could never believe; others believed what the messengers said but never implemented their teachings or lived by the Qur’an’s morality. Such situations never deterred the messengers, however, because their sole desire was to see their people believe, know the blessing of this life and the Hereafter, and live the best and happiest life possible: **“Then We will rescue Our Messengers and those who believe as well. It is incumbent upon Us to rescue the believers”** (Surah Yunus, 103). The messengers receive no reward if the people around them believe and are happy in both worlds. But because of their sincere fear and respect for Allah and their superior morality, they spend their lives eagerly fulfilling these two commands as best as they can.

They endure great hardships and face many trials, and yet remain undaunted by anything. With Allah’s help and support, they are paradigms of courage and, by His will, are always victorious.

Allah has written: “I will be victorious, I and My Messengers.” Allah is Most Strong, Almighty. (Surat al-Mujadala, 21)

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

Allah, Who has endless mercy for His servants, calls every human being to the straight path through His messengers, gives every person enough time to heed advice, explains the truth in various ways, and rewards everyone as they deserve. The Qur'an says that a society that has not received a messenger will not be destroyed, as that would violate His justice:

We did not destroy any city without it having a set time. (Surat al-Hijr, 4)

That was because their Lord would never have destroyed the cities unjustly while their people were unaware. (Surat al-An'am, 131)

Your Lord would never destroy any cities without first sending to their chief a Messenger to recite Our Signs to them. We would never destroy any cities unless their inhabitants were wrongdoers. (Surat al-Qasas, 59)

Everything Is Recorded in Destiny

The fact that one's life happens according to his or her destiny, which is determined by Allah, is a grace and a wonderful manifestation of His names *All Merciful, Most Merciful*. Believers who know this display eagerness, joy, and patience in the face of hardships, for they understand that Allah has created everything for a good purpose and according to His will:

The keys of the Unseen are in His possession. No one knows them but Him. He knows everything in the land and sea. No leaf falls without His knowing it. There is no seed in the darkness of the soil, and nothing moist or dry, that is not in a Clear Book. (Surat al-An'am, 59)

Given that human beings are bound by time, they can only interpret events by looking at individual moments. Unable to know the future, they may not always see the long-term reason, good, and purpose of a particular event. But Allah, Who created time and therefore is not bound by it, looks

from outside of time at the lives of all beings. Thus, destiny is Allah's knowledge of every present, past and future event as a single moment. In other words, the events of the future are unknown only for us. For this reason, the test's beginning and end are clear. The past, present, and future are all one in His sight, for time, a human construct, does not apply to Him. But we learn of these events only after we have experienced them. (For detailed information see Harun Yahya, *Timelessness and the Reality of Fate* [New Delhi: Goodword Books, 2001]).

Those who believe in destiny are patient in all situations and experience the comfort of knowing that everything happens according to His will: **“No misfortune occurs except by Allah's permission. Whoever believes in Allah - He will guide his [or her] heart. Allah has knowledge of all things”** (Surat at-Taghabun, 11). Unbelievers, who have no understanding of destiny, endure great anxiety, stress, and discontent – totally unlike believers, who are content as a mercy from Allah, secure in the knowledge that they are surrounded by His endless mercy, and that everything happens for a reason.

Believers may encounter anxiety and hardship, such as the loss of their possessions or physical strength, illness, injury, or death. But they accept these as tests, as wonderful manifestations of His name *All Merciful and Most Merciful*. They realize that their moral character in such situations has great value in His sight. This pleasure, which belongs only to believers, enables them to face any difficulty without the accompanying feelings of sorrow, stress, pain, panic, or fear that are common among unbelievers. Allah will turn the apparent evil into good for them, bring them through the test, and reward them both in this world and the next for their patience and endurance: **“Allah will not give the unbelievers any way against the believers”** (Surat an-Nisa, 141). Those who trust and rely on Allah no longer experience any fear or sadness:

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

Not so! All who submit themselves completely to Allah and are good-doers will find their reward with their Lord. They will feel no fear and will know no sorrow. (Surat al-Baqara, 112)

Yes, the friends of Allah will feel no fear and will know no sorrow. Those who believe and have done their duty, there is good news for them in the life of this world and in the Hereafter. There is

no changing the words of Allah. That is the great victory! (Surah Yunus, 62-64)

Allah also says that those who believe and submit to Him have taken hold of the *Firmest Handhold*, one that will never break off:

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

There is no compulsion where religion is concerned. Right guidance has become clearly distinct from error. Anyone who rejects false deities and believes in Allah has grasped the Firmest Handhold, which will never give way. Allah is All-Hearing, All-Knowing. (Surat al-Baqara, 256)

The eager, joyful, and strong character that believers display in the face of difficulties and anxiety comes from their belief in Allah, destiny, and the Hereafter, as well as from their submission to Him. The messengers and sincere believers are great examples of such submission and strength. Among these people are the sorcerers in Pharaoh's court who accepted Moses' (pbuh) death and later were threatened by Pharaoh with death.

Pharaoh tried to drive these believers off the straight path by threatening them with torture and death. He thought that his army and show of strength would demoralize them, but they told him that they only feared and respected Allah, to Whom they turned in times of adversity. Thus, they refused to abandon the trust and submission to Allah that their faith gave them:

Pharaoh said: “Do you believe in him before I have authorized you [to do so]? He is your chief, the one who taught you magic. I will cut off your hands and feet alternately and have you crucified on palm trunks. Then you will know for certain which of us has the harsher and longer lasting punishment.” They said: “We will never prefer you to the Clear Signs that have come to us, nor to Him Who brought us into being. Decide on any judgment you like. Your jurisdiction only covers the life of this world. We have believed in our Lord so that He may forgive us for our mistakes and for the magic that you forced us to perform. Allah is better and longer lasting.” (Surah Ta Ha, 71-73)

Everything Has Been Created for a Good Purpose

Everyone suffers hardship and anxiety. Most people who live apart from the Qur'an's moral teachings go through difficult times feeling discontented, sad, and anxious. They think they can pass through this earthly life without being tested, and do not believe in Allah or in the destiny that He created for them. Therefore, they regard whatever happens to them as having no meaning and suffer even deeper pain. Allah states in the Qur'an that He will test Muslims and distinguish between those who are good and those who are not:

Or did you imagine that you were going to enter the Garden without Allah knowing those among you who had struggled and knowing the steadfast? (Surah Al 'Imran, 142)

Allah will only leave the believers in the position you now are in so that He can sift out the rotten from the good. Allah has not given you access to the Unseen. But Allah chooses those of His Messengers whom He wills. So believe in Allah and His Messengers. If you believe and guard against evil, you will have an immense reward. (Surah Al 'Imran, 179)

In this regard, the Qur'an gives us the example of something that happened during our Prophet's (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) lifetime:

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

Believers know that everything happens according to destiny and treat every event as an opportunity to show their faithfulness, attachment, and submission to Allah. As a result, He turns what appear to be evil or difficult events to the advantage of His sincere believers, for He wants them to follow the straight path and attain the endless rewards of Paradise. Thus, times of difficulty are very valuable times of which believers must take advantage.

Unbelievers do their best to avoid making mistakes, for such people are mocked by their own people, or may be denied an *important* opportunity. However, the Qur'anic morality teaches something quite different: Believers know that Allah creates everything for a good purpose and that everything is a grace from the All Merciful and Most Merciful; that believers do not judge others on the basis of their mistakes; that believers feel a sense of compassion and mercy, for they understand that whatever occurs is destined. Therefore, they will feel regret and do their best to reform themselves by repenting and then abandoning that particular sin completely. When they make a mistake, the sorrow that they feel also turns out to be for their good, for it contains the determination not to continue making this mistake. It is very important that believers show trust and submission in such times and that they act with the knowledge that everything happens in a way designed to bring them closer to Allah.

According to 216th verse of Surat al-Baqara, Allah can turn things that appear bad into good for human beings, and that people may like what is bad for them. One example of this is miserly rich people who do not believe. It is a great mistake for unbelievers to think that miserliness is something clever and that not using their wealth in His path will somehow benefit them. In fact, the Qur'an reveals that such wealth will be *worse* for its possessors and bring them great pain in the Afterlife:

Those who are miserly with the bounty that Allah has given them should not suppose that that is better for them. No indeed, it is worse for them! What they were miserly with will be hung around their necks on the Day of Rising. (Surah Al 'Imran, 180)

Believers have a totally different understanding of *wealth and possessions*. First of all, it is not so important to have possessions, because

believers devote themselves to earning His good pleasure by using what they have in His path, instead of amassing possessions for themselves, as the unbelievers do. Believers never pursue worldly gain, but always direct themselves toward whatever will earn them eternal life and an exalted status in Allah's sight. Allah announces these good tidings to them in the Qur'an:

Allah has bought from the believers their selves and their wealth in return for the Garden. They fight in His Way, kill and are killed. It is a promise binding on Him in the Torah, the Gospel, and the Qur'an. And who is truer to his [or her] contract than Allah? Rejoice, then, in the bargain you have made. That is the great victory. (Surat at-Tawba, 111)

All prophets, messengers, and sincere believers who were aware of this truth acted with the knowledge that their possessions actually belonged to Allah, and so used them to earn His good pleasure. For example, the Qur'an says that believers who possess a moral character and mercy will give **"...; those who honor their contracts when they make them, and are steadfast in poverty and illness and in battle"** (Surat al-Baqara, 177). And, unlike some people, believers spend of their wealth not for show, but **"spend their wealth, desiring the pleasure of Allah and strengthen their souls"** (Surat al-Baqara, 265). Therefore, if they lose some of their possessions, they consider it a test from Allah and remain patient and optimistic:

Say: "O Allah! Master of the Kingdom! You give sovereignty to whoever You will and take sovereignty from whoever You will. You exalt whoever You will, and abase whoever You will. All good is in Your hands. You have power over all things." (Surah Al 'Imran, 26)

The Qur'an tells us of the reward that Allah, in His generosity toward His servants, will give to those believers who spend their money and use their possessions in His Way: **"Anything you expend will be replaced by Him"** (Surah Saba', 39). It also reveals the reward that awaits those believers for whom earning Allah's good pleasure is more important than anything else, who are aware of this life's transitory nature, and hope only for the wonderful things of the Hereafter:

The metaphor of those who spend their wealth in His Way is that of a grain that produces seven ears; in every ear there are a hundred grains. Allah gives such a multiplied increase to whoever He wills. Allah is All-Encompassing, All-Knowing. (Surat al-Baqara, 261)

If you make a generous loan to Allah, He will multiply it for you and forgive you. Allah is All-Thankful, Most Forbearing. (Surat at-Taghabun, 17)

Say: "My Lord expands or restricts the provision of any of His servants He wills. But anything you expend will be replaced by Him. He is the Best of Providers." (Surah Saba, 39)

The Qur'an says that Muslims who give their possessions will have their reward multiplied by His endless generosity. And believers know very well that possessions are of no benefit in this world for those who reject Allah; on the contrary, they will lead to misery, for He states:

Do not let their wealth and children impress you. Allah merely wants to punish them by them during their life in this world, and for them to die while they are unbelievers. (Surat at-Tawba, 55)

The Creation of Weakness and Illness Is From Allah's Endless Mercy

Those who do not follow the Qur'an's morality interpret every anxiety, hardship, or illness as a disaster that upsets their orderly lives and destroys their dreams. This is because their plans for the future, which they expect to realize, deny such possibilities, even though such things happen every day. There is no place in their plans for a sudden illness or an accident. Many, even though they have a healthy body, think that they cannot confront these kinds of misfortune that happen to thousands of people every day. As a result, when confronted with such events, they become rebellious and begin to question Allah's destiny for them.

Seeing the cause of illness only in terms of germs and viruses, or traffic accidents as the result of bad driving, they remain unaware of the fact that Allah creates, and therefore controls and has knowledge of, every

cause. If a person becomes very ill because of a virus, this illness is included in Allah's knowledge. If a person is hit by a car and is left paralyzed, this is also subject to the fate that Allah has created. People are free to do whatever they want, but they cannot change their destiny, for it surrounds them on all sides. Those who submit to Allah's eternal power and trust in His endless wisdom and mercy view each illness, accident, and disaster as a temporary test that will end in good.

What is important in such instances is that the believers show their good moral character while submitting to their destiny with great patience, morality, and desire to draw even closer to Allah. Illness and accidents are periods when believers can show their patience and good moral character and they are important opportunities for them to draw close to Allah. In His endless mercy, the Lord has created illness, anxiety and hardship as tests and He desires by these means that everything will turn out for the good of His faithful servants. In the Qur'an, Allah has determined the period of illness and told us about the importance of showing patience in the face of hardship.

Rather, those with true devoutness are those who believe in Allah and the Last Day, the Angels, the Book, and the Prophets; and who, despite their love for it, give away their wealth to their relatives, orphans and the very poor, travelers and beggars, free slaves, and who perform prayer and give alms; those who honor their contracts when they make them, and are steadfast in poverty, illness, and battle. These are the people who are true. They are the people who guard against evil. (Surat al-Baqara, 177)

As the period of illness has already been determined, we need to realize that we must endure that particular test in a way that pleases Allah, for He has created both the test and the cure. We must not falter in the face of seeing no good in the situation; rather, we must submit to Him in complete sincerity and wait to see what happens, sure in our knowledge that He will reward us with endless beauty in the Hereafter. Most importantly, when we are passing through any given test, we must bear in mind that it is happening for a reason, which may or may not be known, that somehow will benefit us. Therefore, it must be kept in mind that all illnesses that happen to people happen for a reason. If Allah willed, no one would ever be ill or feel pain. But even if a person encounters these difficulties, he must realize that experiencing them is good for him because they enable him to understand the transitory nature of this world and the

eternal power of Allah. In addition, such tests help us understand this world's transitory nature and Allah's eternal power.

In times of illness, a healthy person's body falls victim to invisible germs and viruses and may experience weakness and pain in various areas. Perhaps they may even become bedridden. Their inability to overcome a microscopic virus reminds them of their inherent weakness and complete need for Allah. Perhaps they may remember this truth when they regain their health and strength or recover their lost possessions, for those who do not suffer often give it no thought. As a result, they may acquire a greater appreciation of the Creator's endless mercy, compassion, and power.

One of the things we do not think about in our daily life is how much of a blessing health is. An individual who has not had a long term illness is not used to feeling pain or discomfort. But when he becomes ill, he realizes that being healthy is a great gift from Allah. Some people, when they are stricken with a health-threatening illness or lose a limb, think of it as something bad for them. They do not consider that Allah may have sent it to them so that they would turn toward Him and begin thinking about the real meaning of life and the reality of the Afterlife. Perhaps they will realize how senseless their attachment to the world really is and how they could die at any moment. This new awareness, gained through an unexpected illness, may lead them toward salvation and engender within them a desire to start trying to earn Allah's good pleasure. When considered from this point of view, we can better understand that illness is a source of good for believers, a great gift from Allah to humanity.

When people believe that death is approaching, they begin to consider what such an event means. They may pray sincerely to Allah for good health, even if they have never prayed before. This may draw them closer to Allah and, if it causes a real change in their worldview, will have been a great boon for them by causing them to begin a new life. And, if this person continues to pray with the same sincerity and reacts with gratitude when the illness is past, his illness will have been a great blessing for him and the means by which he will lead a blameless life. Illness, therefore, is a great mercy and a gift given by Allah, designed to lead people toward seeing the possibility of good in everything, to make them think on a much deeper level than they are used to, and to take resort in Allah in every situation. In the Qur'an, Allah tells us that there are people who resort to Him in times of such difficulty. In Surah Yunus, it is revealed as follows:

When harm touches a person, he [or she] calls on Us, lying on his [or her] side, sitting down, or standing up. Then when We

remove the harm, he [or she] carries on as if he [or she] had never called on Us when the harm first touched him [or her]. In that way, We make what they have done appear good to the profligate. (Surah Yunus, 12)

We learn from this verse that it is not enough for people to pray in times of hardship. Just as they pray when they understand their own weakness in relation to Allah, they must also pray and take refuge in Him when they receive a blessing from Him. Perhaps this illness and anxiety may be the means by which they finally understand their weakness, repent, and begin a new life of complete submission to Him. In this case, our All-Merciful Lord's mercy will use this test as the door to the Afterlife's eternal blessings. In the Qur'an, Allah gives the example of the afflictions of Job (pbuh). Job (pbuh) was a patient believer who always turned to Allah, and as a manifestation of His mercy, Allah was pleased to show him the way, help him and grant him blessings.

Remember Our servant Job, when he called on his Lord: "Satan has afflicted me with exhaustion and suffering." [His Lord said to Job:] "Stamp your foot! Here is a cool bath and water to drink." We gave him [Job] back his family and the same again with them, as a mercy from Us and a reminder for people of intellect. [We said to Job:] "Take a bundle of rushes in your hand and strike with that, but do not break your oath." We found him steadfast. What an excellent servant! He truly turned to his Lord. (Surah Sad, 41-44)

The Easiness of Islam Is a Blessing From Allah

Believers constantly live their lives according to what the All-Merciful and Most Merciful has revealed in the Qur'an. No matter where they are, they display a moral character that pleases Allah and avoid any behavior that displeases Him. In His mercy, Allah gave Islam to humanity, a religion that is easy to follow and results in a good and contented way of life. From the Qur'an, we can see that Islam's requirements are extremely easy, because **"Allah desires ease for you; He does not desire difficulty for you"** (Surat al-Baqara, 185).

Due to His compassion and mercy, all true religions contain rules that are very easy to obey. The various attempts made throughout history to deviate from the essence of religion and to prevent people from living according to it have added several enforced practices and myths to it. When such distortions become firmly established and self-generating traditions, people, either with or without their knowledge, become far removed from the religious morality. One of the most dangerous of these distorted beliefs is that it is hard to live according to the religious morality. However, both Allah and our Prophet (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) state that it is very easy for believers to follow this morality.

As with everything else that exists, Allah has created human beings from nothing. With full knowledge of them, as well as being closer to them than their jugular veins, He created religion in such a way that it fully corresponds with each person's inherent human nature:

So set your face firmly toward the Religion, as a pure natural believer, Allah's natural pattern on which He made humanity. There is no changing Allah's creation. That is the true Religion - but most people do not know it. (Surat ar-Rum, 30)

The Qur'an is a clear teaching that anyone, regardless of age and culture, can understand. The oft-heard assertion that this is not true is based mainly on people's ignorance of Islam's essence. Today, many people are unaware of the truths revealed in the Qur'an, the existence of the Afterlife, the pangs of Hell, the incomparable blessings of Paradise, and of what He has revealed concerning various matters. However, the Qur'an was sent down so that people could read it, know its wisdom, and learn the purpose of life:

It's revealed in the Qur'an that: **"And [I have been ordered] to recite the Qur'an."** (Surat an-Naml, 92)

A Muslim's greatest responsibility is to read the Qur'an and live according to It. The Qur'an is clear, and everyone who reads It can understand It. But only those whom Allah guides to the straight path can apply Its morality to their lives. Allah promises to guide everyone who turns to Him in complete sincerity. Those who assert that the Qur'an is hard to understand seek to prevent others from reading it, turning toward Allah, and living according to its moral teachings. However, Allah says in many verses that the Qur'an is clear and understandable:

We have sent down Clear Signs to you, and no one rejects them except the deviators. (Surat al-Baqara, 99)

O humanity! A clear proof has come to you from your Lord. We have sent down a Clear Light to you. (Surat an-Nisa, 174)

Allah has been pleased to choose the religion of Islam for humanity; moreover, the rules and practice of the Qur'an are very simple. In its verses, Allah says of the Qur'an:

We did not send down the Qur'an to you to make you miserable, but only as a reminder for those who fear [and respect Allah]. (Surah Ta Ha, 2-3)

As mentioned earlier, the Qur'an's morality corresponds exactly with human nature, for both were created by Allah. Allah has created human beings from nothing and He knows very well what they need, what worship they have the strength to perform and how they will be healthy, contented and happy. For this reason, Allah says in the Qur'an that no one will be given a responsibility that is beyond his strength to fulfill:

Allah does not impose on any self something more than it can stand. For it is what it has earned; against it, what it has brought upon itself. "Our Lord, do not take us to task if we forget or make a mistake. Our Lord, do not place on us a load like the one You placed on those before us. Our Lord, do not place on us a load we have not the strength to bear. Pardon us, forgive us, and have mercy on us. You are our Master, so help us against the unbelievers." (Surat al-Baqara, 286)

In His endless mercy and compassion, Allah has detailed in the Qur'an the kind of life that will ensure our happiness and contentment. For example, as part of their creation, human beings are naturally loving, respectful, and compassionate and wish to receive the same treatment from others. They avoid cruelty, immorality and evil and do not want to be subjected to them. Such feelings exist in one's soul by Allah's will. Allah created people upon this disposition. Consequently, a life in compliance with the Islamic morality is the most pleasing life that a human being will derive pleasure from. Allah states this in the Qur'an as follows:

But as for him [or her] who believes and acts rightly, he [or she] will receive the best of rewards, and We will issue a command, making things easy for him [or her]. (Surat al-Kahf, 88)

We have made the Qur'an easy to remember. But is there any one there who will remember it? (Surat al-Qamar, 17)

He has selected you and not placed any constraint upon you in the religion - the religion of your forefather Abraham. (Surat al-Hajj,78)

One of the most important features of the hadiths of our Prophet (may Allah bless him and grant him peace), who made the Qur'an his guide, is that they are very easy to follow. Prophet (may Allah bless him and grant him peace), who made the Qur'an his guide gave this advice to his people: *"Make things easy for the people, and do not make it difficult for them. Make them calm (with glad tidings), and do not repulse (them)"* (Sahih Bukhari).

It is important for every Muslim to show that religion, in its essence, is easy in order to kindle the people's hearts with the Qur'an and Islamic morality, teach them the Qur'an and our Prophet's (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) Sunnah as the only guides for their lives. Many people are unaware of this truth and think that their lives will be more comfortable if they disregard the Qur'an's morality out of concern that it will restrict their enjoyment of life's pleasures. However, such great errors and deceptions obscure the fact that such morality is easy to follow, for Allah, Who created humanity, is fully aware of what system of morality is best for His creation. Actually, what is difficult is to live in a society composed of individuals who do not know the boundaries that Allah has set.

Various types of stress pervade societies that do not follow the Qur'an's morality: continual chaos, confusion, discontent, fear, unhappiness, and stress. Those who do not fear and respect Allah know no limits and thus are prone to lives characterized by immorality. They lead a degenerate life. They do not give of themselves to others, offer no material or spiritual support, and make a display of love and respect without knowing what they really mean. For this reason, apart from the kind of life Allah has revealed, people can never be happy.

For example, the frequent examples we encounter today of drug use and trafficking, prostitution, bribery, and fraud is related to the absence of the religion's morality and the spiritual values that go with it. Those who live such lives consider themselves free and have the luxury of behaving as they wish. However, such *freedom* will result in their material and spiritual ruin.

When people do not live by the moral teachings of the Qur'an, an environment appears in which people can never find contentment. This is just the kind of environment resembling Hell, as is desired by Satan.

Think of a person who has led a dissolute and miserable life whose health has deteriorated through prostitution, drugs, and alcohol, and who looks much older than his biological age. What can be the advantage of leading such a life? Indeed, leading a life without limits, disregarding the Qur'anic morality in the belief that there is only oblivion at the end always

brings physical and spiritual ruin, for Allah reveals in the Qur'an that: **"hearts find peace in the remembrance of Allah"** (Surat ar-Ra'd, 28). It is Allah Who gives people contentment; otherwise they can never find comfort.

Besides as a result, those who ignore the Qur'an's morality in this life will feel deep sorrow and experience great pain and hardship in the Afterlife. Those who have no belief, act contrary to their conscience, and freely transgress the limits that He has set, will suffer in both worlds. Allah reveals in one of the verses:

Those are Allah's limits [that He has placed upon humanity], and anyone who oversteps them has wronged himself [or herself]. (Surat at-Talaq, 1)

Those who sincerely submit to Allah, fear and respect Him, and observe the Qur'an's morality will enjoy success in both worlds. Above all, they experience the spiritual enjoyment and clear conscience that come from obeying Him, for Allah gives glad tidings to those who do His will and keep within the boundaries:

Those who repent, those who worship, those who praise, those who fast, those who bow, those who prostrate, those who command the right, those who forbid the wrong, and those who preserve the limits of Allah: give good news to the believers. (Surat at-Tawba, 112)

Some people who cannot understand the essence of religion can easily become fanatical by prohibiting what Allah has not prohibited, and thereby assume that they are superior to others. Allah has warned believers about this danger:

Say: "O People of the Book. Do not go to extremes in your religion, asserting other than the truth, and do not follow the whims and desires of people who were misguided previously and have misguided many others, and are far from the right way." (Surat al-Ma'ida, 77)

Allah gives the example of some Christians who deviated from Jesus' (pbuh) teachings:

Then We sent Our Messengers following in their footsteps and sent Jesus son of Mary after them, giving him the Gospel. We put compassion and mercy in the hearts of his followers. They invented monasticism - We did not prescribe it for them - purely out of desire to gain Allah's pleasure. But even so, they did not observe it as it should have been observed. To those of them who believed We gave their reward, but many of them are deviators. (Surat al-Hadid, 27)

As mentioned in the verse above, the people who made the laws did not observe them properly. However, what a person must do is to obey the commands that Allah has made in the Qur'an and to avoid what He has forbidden. They sought to make religion difficult for others, even though Allah has made it easy. Such people should realize that they will have to account for this in the Afterlife. As in everything else, our Prophet's (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) life and practice is our best example.

In one hadith, he reminds believers not to abandon or transgress the limitations that Allah has set and states that it is easy to live a life of religious morality:

"Religion is simple. No one can be severe against religion, for he [or she] will be defeated. (That is to say, one should conform to religion's ease. Whoever tries to be firm will be helpless). Straighten your line of conduct, be close to the boundary/end" (Rumuz al-Ahadith, 1:98)

People should regard religion as our Prophet (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) mentioned in the hadith above. In His mercy, Allah has made Himself clear and understandable, and yet it is a big mistake that some people try to make His easy decrees appear difficult and incomprehensible. This ease is a proof of Allah's limitless love, compassion, and generosity.

The Easiness of Allah's Commands and Recommendations Is a Mercy to Believers

In all conditions and circumstances, Allah's decrees are characterized by being easy to practice. For example, Allah gives all people many blessings to supply their daily needs: colorful fruits, various foods to eat and drink, and everything else that we need - all of them serve human beings. In the Qur'an, Allah tells us that He has made all clean foods permissible.

“They will ask you what is lawful for them. Say: “All good things are lawful for you.” (Surat al-Ma’ida, 4) And those foods that Allah has forbidden (e.g., carrion, blood, and pork) are unclean and harmful. Allah reveals in one of the verses:

Say: “I do not find, in what has been revealed to me, any food that is forbidden to eat except carrion, flowing blood, and pork - for that is unclean - or some abomination consecrated to other than Allah. But if anyone is forced to eat it, without desiring to or going to excess in it, your Lord is Ever-Forgiving, Most Merciful.” (Surat al-An’am, 145)

In this verse, the word *unclean* is very important, because pork really has some qualities that are harmful to the human body. The prohibition of harmful food is a mercy meant to make things easy for people and protect them. And a person is responsible for doing as Allah commands. When Allah speaks of forbidden food, He explains how people are to behave in any given situation. In this way, they know what to do when confronted with unexpected situations. Some of the verses about this subject is as follows:

So eat from what Allah has provided for you, lawful and good, and be thankful for His blessing, if it is Him you worship. He has forbidden you carrion, blood, pork, and anything consecrated to other than Allah. But if someone is forced to eat it, without desiring to or going to excess in it, your Lord is Ever-Forgiving, Most Merciful. (Surat an-Nahl, 114-115)

The glad reminder in this verse that Allah is generous and giving is a comfort for believers because human beings have been created weak. People may make mistakes, forget, are heedless, and lack determination. But when they sincerely repent, Allah says that He will be giving and generous toward them.

Allah gives many comforts to those who pray five times a day. For example, if they cannot find water for the necessary ablutions, Allah reveals how to use clean soil, a technique that can be easily performed anywhere. In the Qur’an, Allah reveals how those who cannot find water can perform their ablutions with earth:

If you are in a state of major impurity, then purify yourselves. But if you are ill or on a journey, or have come from the lavatory, or have touched women and cannot find any water, then take for

yourselves clean soil and wipe your faces and your hands with it. Allah does not want to make things difficult for you; He wants to purify you and to perfect His blessing upon you so that, hopefully, you will be thankful. (Surat al-Ma'ida, 6)

Out of His endless compassion and mercy, Allah makes things easy for human beings by showing them the easiest and best ways to live and worship. In addition, He has announced the glad tidings of His favor, mercy, and Paradise to those who adhere to the Qur'an's morality.

Allah commands Muslims to fast during the month of Ramadan, but excuses them if they have a valid reason for not doing so, such as illness or traveling. This is yet another example of the ease of following the Qur'an's morality:

The month of Ramadan is the one in which the Qur'an was sent down as guidance for humanity, with Clear Signs containing guidance and discrimination. Any of you who are resident for the month should fast it. But any of you who are ill or on a journey should fast a number of other days. Allah desires ease for you; He does not desire difficulty for you. You should complete the number of days and proclaim Allah's greatness for the guidance He has given you so that, hopefully, you will be thankful. (Surat al-Baqara, 185)

In verses related to His decrees, Allah reveals that He wants things to be easy for people and shows them that they must think in order to understand just how easy His religion is. Those who avoid worshipping Him because they think it is difficult have an incorrect understanding of what religion is. Besides our Lord reveals in one of the verses that: **"If Allah had willed, He could have been hard on you. Allah is Almighty, All-Wise."** (Surat al-Baqara, 220)

As a further manifestation of Allah's mercy and compassion, some people are not responsible for what they are too weak to bear. It is another proof of the endless compassion of our Lord that the responsibilities of those with physical handicaps will be lightened. Allah tells us about this in the following verse:

There is no constraint on the blind, the lame, or the sick. We will admit all those who obey Allah and His Messenger into Gardens

with rivers flowing under them. But We will punish with a painful punishment anyone who turns his [or her] back. (Surat al-Fath, 17)

The Qur'an reveals that Allah, the All Merciful and Most Merciful, has made Islam an easy religion at all times, places, and situations. When people want to be sincerely religious and grateful servants, they will find no difficulty in doing so.

Allah, the All Merciful and Most Merciful Does Not Give a Person A Load Too Heavy for Him to Carry

Everyone has a different level of intelligence, cognitive ability, education, conceptual ability, and physical strength, for Allah has given different abilities to people in order to test them in the most appropriate manner. For this reason, every person's endurance, determination and capacity are different. Allah has created the tests of the life of this world differently according to each individual. Allah uses different events and individuals as means to subject every person to different kinds of tests. But there is something very important here that we need to consider:

"The adversities that a person encounters in life may appear difficult at the time, but actually everything that happens is of an intensity that can be endured." Allah knows very well what each person can bear and, in His endless justice, does not move His test beyond that point. This is a promise from Allah and a manifestation of the All Merciful and Most Merciful. The Qur'an says the following:

We do not impose on any self any more than it can bear. With Us is a Book that speaks the truth. They will not be wronged. (Surat al-Muminun, 62)

As for those who believe and do right actions - We impose on no self any more than it can bear - they are the Companions of the Garden, remaining in it timelessly, forever. (Surat al-A'raf, 42)

Allah does not impose on any self any more than it can bear. For it is what it has earned; against it, what it has brought upon itself. (Surat al-Baqara, 286)

Some individuals are made to live in poverty to test their patience. Some are made to live in abundant wealth to test their thankfulness, morality, and level of worldly ambition. But, in the end, the rich person and

the person living in crushing poverty live the best lives for themselves and for the Hereafter.

Poverty and wealth are not unendurable hardships, regardless of how long they last, for such circumstances will not change the true character of any believer. In the end, both groups of people are tested on the basis of the moral character they display. Either they will try to draw closer to Allah and their love of Allah will lead them to adhere to the Qur'an's morality, or they will be ungrateful and ignore the limits that He has placed upon humanity. In every adversity, people who fear and respect Allah turn to Him, seeking His help and favor. They do not despair and never abandon their Qur'anic morality, no matter how severe the test may be. Their trust and submission to Allah causes them to see all adversity as a mercy from Him and, as a sign of His eternal compassion and mercy, Allah enables them to endure the test. In Surat al-Kahf this truth is revealed as follows: **"But as for one who believes and acts rightly, he [or she] will receive the best of rewards, and We will issue a command, making things easy for him [or her]"** (Surat al-Kahf, 88)

In another verse Allah has revealed as follows:

As for one who gives [charity], is heedful, and confirms the Good, We will pave his [or her] way to ease." (Surat al-Layl, 5-7)

For those who do not trust and rely on Allah, who are ungrateful and do not believe or practice the Qur'an's morality, even easy situations can seem difficult. Allah always makes things difficult for them because of their ingratitude, lack of faith and refusal to practice the moral teachings of the Qur'an:

But as for one who is stingy, self-satisfied, and denies the Good, We will pave his [or her] way to difficulty. One's wealth will be of no use when he [or she] plummets to the depths. Assuredly, guidance is up to Us. (Surat al-Layl, 8-12)

Everyone may somehow be tested with illness, accident, and material and spiritual anxiety. Sometimes, they may believe, mistakenly, that there is no way out, that everything has come to an end, and that their problems are insurmountable. Forgetting that every situation has its good side, they adopt a rebellious attitude. But all these are empty apprehensions instilled by satan. Sincere believers must know that each situation is an opportunity to demonstrate their patience and good moral character. Despair is a

groundless apprehension coming from satan. In the Qur'an, Allah tells His servants not to lose hope:

Do they not know that Allah expands and restricts the provision of anyone He wills? There are certainly Signs in that for people who believe. Say [from Me]: “My servants, you who have transgressed against yourselves, do not despair of His mercy. Truly, Allah forgives all wrong actions. He is the Ever-Forgiving, the Most Merciful.” Turn to your Lord and submit to Him before punishment comes upon you, for then you cannot be helped. (Surat az-Zumar, 52-54)

The verses above say that everything will turn out well for a person who obeys Allah's command and thinks positively; a person who despairs, however, will be alone and without help. Allah tells in the Qur'an that to lose hope in Him is to reject Him.

Those who reject Allah's Signs and the meeting with Him, such people can despair of My mercy, such people will have a painful punishment. (Surat al-Ankabut, 23)

Do not despair of solace from Allah. No one despairs of solace from Allah except for the unbelievers. (Surah Yunus, 87)

A general characteristic of people who do not know the Qur'an's moral teachings is that they become arrogant, due to the belief that they make their own happiness and comfort. When something bad happens to them, they immediately look for someone to blame. However, Allah's justice is endless and every bad thing comes from that particular person. The All Merciful and Most Merciful desires what is good for His servants, but people want to please their lower selves and so choose to leave the straight path. In one of the verses it is revealed as follows:

Any good thing that happens to you comes from Allah. Any bad thing that happens to you comes from yourself. (Surat an-Nisa, 79)

The Qur'an gives examples of the warped judgment of those who reject Allah. For instance, when Pharaoh and those around him suffered misfortune, they blamed Moses (pbuh) and his followers, nor realizing that the real source of their misfortune was themselves:

Whenever a good thing came to them, they said: “This is our due.” But if anything bad happened to them, they would blame their ill fortune on Moses and those with him. No indeed! The ill fortune is theirs in Allah's sight. But most of them did not know. (Surat al-A’raf, 131)

As we have seen in the verse above, those who ignore the Qur’an’s morality look for someone to blame in every bad situation, for they do not consider themselves responsible. However, Allah has said that the real source of evil is themselves. They regard goodness as wickedness, and, if something negative happens to them, they regard it as a disaster. But they have no one to blame other than themselves. In His endless mercy, the Lord does not give anyone a load he cannot bear or a responsibility that is beyond his strength or contrary to his nature.

Allah’s Mercy toward Women

Allah tells us that He sent the Qur’an as a **“Reminder”** (Surat al-Muminun, 71), and gives prosperity to everyone who practices its morality and follows the straight path. The only way for some women to escape the difficulties they face in unbelieving societies and to be respected as they deserve is found in the Qur’an.

In many verses, Allah defends women and their rights, removes wrong ideas found in unbelieving societies about them, and gives them a respected place in society. The Qur’an tells us that Allah values the person’s fear and respect of Allah, faith, moral character, sincerity, and piety, not his or her gender. All these things are proofs of our Lord’s incomparable generosity toward women.

O humanity! We created you from a male and female, and made you into peoples and tribes so that you might come to know each other. The noblest among you in Allah’s sight is the one of you who best performs his [or her] duty. Allah is All-Knowing, All-Aware. (Surat al-Hujurat, 13)

O Children of Adam [and Eve]! We have sent down clothing to you to conceal your private parts, and fine apparel, but the garment of heedfulness - that is best! That is one of Allah’s Signs, so that, hopefully, you will pay heed. (Surat al-A’raf, 26)

Elsewhere, Allah says **“Whatever good you do, Allah knows it. Take provision; but the best provision is fear [and respect] of Allah. So fear [and respect] Me, people of intelligence”** (Surat al-Baqara, 197), and tells us that a person’s best quality is piety. Therefore, it must be piety that gives human beings their basic value and superiority in His sight. Allah says: **“The men and women who give charity and make a good loan to Allah will have it increased for them, and they will have a generous reward”** (Surat al-Hadid, 18). This verse reminds us that both women and men will be rewarded for abiding by the Qur’an’s morality. Of course, women and men have different physical characteristics, but this is not the reason for their superiority. In another verse, Allah says that some people see wealth as an element of superiority, but to desire Allah’s generosity is more acceptable:

Do not covet what Allah has given to some of you in preference to others - men have a portion of what they acquire and women have a portion of what they acquire - but ask Allah for His bounty. Allah has knowledge of all things. (Surat an-Nisa, 32)

Allah tells us in the Qur’an how to protect and care for women and give them the respect they deserve. All of these measures are for the sake of women. All these measures are for the sake of women so that they will not be harmed or oppressed.

Allah has shown humanity the straight path in the Qur’an and has rooted out falsity and ignorance. According to the Qur’an’s morality, the important thing is being attached to Allah with deep faith, fear, and respect. One’s gender is completely irrelevant. Obeying Allah’s commands and prohibitions means to follow the Qur’an’s moral teachings as closely as possible. These are the people who will have value in His sight. The Qur’an explains the basic qualities a person of faith, whether a man or a woman, must have:

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

As Allah tells us, believing women and believing men are responsible for worshipping, adhering to the Qur’an’s moral teachings, urging others to

do good, refraining from evil, and doing what the Qur'an says to do. Allah promises to give all persons, regardless of gender, **“a criterion [to judge between right and wrong]”** (Surat al-Anfal, 29). In return for their faith and sincerity, Allah will guide them toward Himself; enable them to make right decisions and behave correctly; and give them intelligence, understanding, and perception. Therefore, intelligence does not depend on a person's gender, but is bestowed upon those who fear and respect Allah and do their best to draw close to Him.

Every man or woman who acts according to the wisdom coming from belief may surpass others and attain success in every area of life. This depends completely upon the person's will, zeal, and determination. In accordance with the precepts of Islamic morality, believers never consider themselves to be perfect in any matter; rather, they always try to be more aware, more able, more responsible, more developed in their character, and more successful in leading a good moral life. As much as possible, they strive to develop themselves in every area. Allah tells believers to pray to Him so that they may be examples of good character to those around them:

[Believers are] those who say: “Our Lord, give us joy in our wives and children, and make us a good example for those who guard against evil.” (Surat al-Furkan, 74)

A devout woman who does her best to be an example of character, moral rectitude, and industry will, Allah willing, attain a high position within her society. She carries out her responsibilities as best as she can, makes the most appropriate decisions, finds the best solutions to problems, and puts the best measures into effect.

Islam mandates complete equality for men and women. The Lord of all mercy has nullified all the gender distinctions arising from ignorance and mistaken ideas regarding gender, and demands that women be given their due value and respect. All of this depends upon each believer’s belief in Allah, moral character, and the responsibilities that they had assumed. Therefore, there is no struggle for equality with men for those women who practice the Qur’an’s morality; rather, there is a moral race of goodness in which all believers must do their best to earn His favor. With this goal in mind, they strive to become the person closest to Allah, His most beloved and favored. But this race is utterly of a blessed nature. Allah tells us that one of the believers’ main characteristics is the effort they put forth to achieve this goal:

Such people are truly racing toward good things, and they are the first to reach them. (Surat al-Muminun, 61)

Then We made Our chosen servants inherit the Book. But some of them wrong themselves, some are ambivalent, and some outdo each other in good, by Allah’s permission. That is the great favor. (Surah Fatir, 32)

In another verse, Allah reminds us that no man or woman will be treated unjustly in this world or in the Hereafter, but that everyone will get exactly what they deserve: **“Anyone who acts rightly, male or female, being a believer, We will give them a good life and recompense them according to the best of what they did”** (Surat an-Nahl, 97). All of these things are proofs of Allah’s mercy toward his faithful servants. In societies that do not practice the Qur’an’s morality, women are still treated like second-class persons. As a manifestation of His name the All Merciful and Most Merciful, Allah protects women and gives them glory and honor.

(For detailed information see Harun Yahya, *Maryam: An Exemplary Muslim Woman* [Istanbul: Global Publishing, 2004].)

It Is a Great Generosity of Allah to Believers That He Answers Their Prayers

Prayer is a great manifestation of the name *All Merciful and Most Merciful* and a huge generosity to believers, for it allows believers to tell Allah of their sincere faith and love, as well as the fear and respect they have for Him. By praying believers can show their submission to Allah, their only friend and advocate, ask for and expect help from Him alone. In societies that do not practice the religion's morality, praying to Allah has been complicated by various myths and superstitions. Although people always want to approach Allah, they have set certain times and means for this. Allah warns people about these superstitions:

Indeed, is the true religion not Allah's alone? People who take protectors besides Him (say): "We only worship them so that they may bring us nearer to Allah." Allah will judge between them regarding the things about which they differed. Allah does not guide anyone who is an ungrateful liar. (Surat az-Zumar, 3)

Those who say that there are various ways to pray make religion appear difficult and divert people from the straight path. But the Qur'an tells us that Allah is always very close: **"We created humanity and We know what his [or her] own self whispers to him [or her]. We are nearer to him [or her] than his [or her] jugular vein"** (Surat al-Qaf, 16). That is, a person may approach Allah at any time and pray for assistance, for His endless mercy answers sincere prayers. People must pray with a sense of His being and closeness, because only those who are aware of Allah's existence understand prayer's real meaning and importance: establishing a warm and special bond between Allah and His servants. People seek His aid in everything, and Allah answers their prayers. There is no need to wait for a particular time to pray or to use special forms, for Allah can hear prayers at every moment and in every place. A person can pray as he goes from one place to another, comes downstairs, does his shopping, prepares a meal, watches television, rides in an elevator, waits in a certain place, goes to bed, gets up in the morning, has breakfast, drives his car—in short, in every place and at every time—and expresses his desires to Him. It is enough for people just to think something, because Allah knows all that is hidden in the human heart. Believers pray with the

knowledge that Allah hears, sees, and knows their thoughts, regardless of how fleeting they might be. A believer prays with the knowledge that Allah hears him, sees him, and knows his thoughts. He knows that the Lord even knows his most fleeting thoughts and can do his acts of worship as he wishes without regard for place or time. The simplicity that Allah has given for something as important as worship is an act of generosity toward a believer.

When we think of prayer, we imagine it as a verbal offering of praise to Allah, a confession of sins, and an expression of one's own needs and those of other believers. To do this, people must be sincere.

Those who have a sense of Allah's majesty, fear His punishment, and desire to win His favor turn to Him honestly and sincerely. In the same way, those who submit to Allah and accept Him as their friend and helper tell Him of their every anxiety and pain. Like Jacob (pbuh), believers tell Allah of such matters and seek His assistance and goodness: **"I (Jacob) complain of my grief and sorrow to Allah alone"** (Surah Yusuf, 86). While he is praying, what is important is that person's spiritual condition, intention and sincerity.

Prayer is a great blessing, and believers engage in it to protect themselves against despair and to ask for patience, strength, and endurance. Knowing that Allah always creates everything for the best purpose, they know that their prayers will be answered in the best possible way. As the holder of the only true power that exists, Allah will answer the believers' prayers if they turn to Him, seeking ease:

... He Who responds to the oppressed when they call on Him, removes their distress, and has appointed you as inheritors of Earth. Is there another deity besides Allah? How little you pay heed! (Surat an-Naml, 62)

Indeed, this limitless possibility is a display of His mercy. Many Qur'anic verses tell us that He is close to human beings, will be the advocate for those who turn to Him, and will answer the prayers of those who call upon Him. Allah is closer to His servants than their jugular veins and calls everyone to pray to Him. To ask help from Allah in prayer is a grace from Allah and a great blessing He has given to humanity. The Qur'an says:

If My servants ask you about Me, I am near. I answer the call of the caller when he [or she] calls upon Me. They should,

therefore, respond to Me and believe in Me so that, hopefully, they will be rightly guided. (Surat al-Baqara, 186)

Your Lord says: “Call on Me, and I will answer you. Those who are too proud to worship Me will enter Hell abject.” Allah appointed the night for you so that you might rest in it, and the day for seeing. Allah pours out His favor on humanity, but most people are not thankful. (Surah Ghafir, 60-61)

Believers should think more about this mercy and blessing and strive to earn His favor. This ease is a boundless possibility, and Allah, Who always fulfills His promises, promises to grant whatever people ask, if it accords with His will for them. And Allah certainly does not go back on His promises. In the Qur'an the Lord tells us that He grants the prayers of prophets and sincere believers. He says the following about Zachariah (pbuh):

We responded to him and rescued him from his grief. That is how We rescue the believers. And Zachariah, when he called out to his Lord: “My Lord, do not leave me on my own, although You are the Best of Inheritors.” We responded to him and gave him John, restoring for him his wife’s fertility. They outdid one another in good actions, calling out to Us in yearning and in awe, and humbling themselves to Us. (Surat al-Anbiya, 88-90)

When people come face-to-face with an unexpected disaster, suffer from a terrible disease, enter great trial or, in short, feel helpless, the first thought that comes to their mind is to turn to Allah. There is only one reason for this: They are certainly aware that only Allah can really help them...they are aware that even if they do their best, all their options for survival have run out. At such times, they are completely sincere. But when the difficulty passes, many of them return to their former ways. They may convince themselves that they are not helpless and not in need of Allah's assistance or they may live as if they were unaware that they will die one day. However, if they encounter another disaster or difficulty, they turn to Allah again. Their unrepentant and ungrateful attitude returns when their troubles end, for the apparent normality of their condition helps them forget their former helplessness. But Allah Who is the Most Just will surely pay them for their ungratefulness. A related verse Allah reveals is as follows:

Say: "What has My Lord to do with you if you do not call on Him? But you have denied the truth, so punishment is bound to come." (Surat al-Furqan, 77)

Indeed, prayer is an opportunity and blessing offered to everyone. The arrogant pride of those who reject Allah draws them into rebellion against Him, which causes them to be deprived of the blessings of prayer and live in anxiety, pain, and despair. Far removed from Allah's mercy, their lives are the earthly recompense of their arrogance toward Him. But they will receive the real return for their haughtiness in the Afterlife. Allah says in the Qur'an;

Your Lord says: "Call upon Me, and I will answer you. Those who are too proud to worship Me will enter Hell abject." (Surah Ghafir, 60)

However, believers understand Allah's mercy and thus possess one of the greatest blessings: the hope of gaining His mercy. Aware of their helplessness, they believe that He sends everything to them for a good purpose. They are certain that every created thing needs Allah, that He knows everything, and that no thing or person has any strength apart from His will. They show their recognition of these truths by expressing their weakness and submission to Him through prayer. They know that Allah will answer their prayers in His own way, that He will give them their deepest longings or even most fleeting desires (provided that they are in accord with that person's particular destiny), and that He will always protect and care for them. Therefore, the believers will always obtain His mercy in this world and the Hereafter.

Believers who experience such comfort and hope will never give way to despair and hopelessness, while unbelievers do. They know the comfort and contentment of taking refuge in Allah, and the joy and delight that this gives their hearts. This is one of the greatest blessings, for it causes people to live humble and moral lives and leads them to turn to Allah. They know that Allah is with them when they pray, and draw near to Him in sincerity when they encounter difficulties. They firmly believe that He hears them and is preparing an eternal and incomparable Paradise for them. Bediuzzaman Said Nursi explains this deep submission:

The most important aspect, the most beautiful aim, the sweetest fruit of this is this: "The one who offers the supplications knows that there is Someone Who hears the wishes of his heart, Whose hand can reach all things, Who can bring about each of his desires, Who takes pity on his

impotence, and answers his poverty." And so, O impotent, needy man! Do not neglect a means like supplication, which is the key to the treasury of mercy and to an inexhaustible strength. Cling to it! Rise to the highest peaks of humanity! Include in your supplications those of all the universe, like a king! Say, From You alone do we seek help. (Bediuzzaman Said Nursi, The Words, Twenty-Third Word)

Allah's Promises and Assistance to the Believers

In the Qur'an Allah tells us that most people are far removed from the morality of the Qur'an: **"But most people have no faith"** (Surat ar-Ra'd, 1). For this reason, some unmindful and unaware people think they are on the straight path, even though they deny Allah's existence. Feeling that their superior strength and numbers give them a sense of security, such people evaluate events superficially and act as if they were truly superior to others. But they are unaware of a great truth: Allah's promises and support to the believers:

Allah will not give the unbelievers any way against the believers. (Surat an-Nisa, 141)

As mentioned in the verse above, Allah does everything to their benefit for believers and supports them. In Surat al-Inshirah, He reveals the secret that, for a Muslim, every difficulty is created with the corresponding ease to bear it. Allah creates both the disease and the cure, and with every difficulty comes ease and a solution. This truth is revealed as follows:

For truly with hardship comes ease; truly, with hardship comes ease. (Surat al-Inshirah, 5-6)

Only believers know this support and assistance of Allah. Thus, whatever believers encounter, they act with a sense of contentment and security. Allah makes this promise to His believers:

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

Those who worship what is other than Allah and those who reject Him have much to fear; those who do not believe and associate Allah with His creatures think that everything that happens and exists has no meaning, and thus live in constant fear and tension:

And when your Lord revealed to the angels: “I am with you, so make those who believe firm. I will cast terror into the hearts of those who do not believe.” (Surat al-Anfal, 12)

Allah supports and assists believers throughout their lives. Throughout history, Allah has helped them by giving miracles to the prophets, sending invisible armies and angels, and sending guardians and even natural events. Allah tells us in the Qur'an:

He sent down serenity into the hearts of the believers, thereby increasing their faith with more faith - the legions of the heavens and Earth belong to Allah. Allah is All-Knowing, All-Wise. (Surat al-Fath, 4)

The legions of the heavens and earth belong to Allah. Allah is Almighty, All-Wise. (Surat al-Fath, 7)

The Qur'an reveals the great support and help that the Lord of the armies of heaven and Earth gives to believers. Allah reveals the help He gives to believers in the following verses:

... that they would certainly be helped. Our army will be victorious. (Surat as-Saffat, 172-173)

We will certainly help Our Messengers and the believers both in this world and on the Day the witnesses appear. (Surah Ghafir, 51)

O believers! If you help Allah, He will help you and make your feet firm. (Surah Muhammad, 7)

That is because Allah is the Protector of the believers and because the unbelievers have no protector. (Surah Muhammad, 11)

And remember when two of your clans were on the point of losing heart and Allah was their Protector. Let the believers put their trust in Allah. Allah helped you at Badr when you were weak, so fear [and respect] Him, so that, hopefully, you will be thankful. (Surah Al 'Imran, 122-123)

If Allah helps you, no one can vanquish you. If He forsakes you, who can help you after that? So the believers should put their trust in Allah. (Surah Al 'Imran, 160)

No, Allah is your Protector. And He is the best of helpers. (Surah Al 'Imran, 150)

... in a few years' time. The affair is Allah's from beginning to end. On that day, the believers will rejoice in Allah's help. He grants victory to whoever He wills. He is the Almighty, the Most Merciful. That is Allah's promise. Allah does not break His promise. But most people do not know it. (Surat ar-Rum, 4-6)

Everyone will be tested concerning their belief in Allah and the Afterlife. On the surface, it seems that those who are good and those who are not live under the same conditions. However, the believers live a very different type of life than the unbelievers.

As stated earlier, Allah always makes things easy for the believers and shows them a way out of difficult situations. This is clearly a help from Allah. The Qur'an states that Allah, in His great mercy, will help His servants and support them in ways they cannot conceive, and give them ease in unexpected ways.

Allah describes this help as **"a wind against them and other forces you could not see"** (Surat al-Ahzab, 9) and that He will send them protectors: **"...angels..."** (Surat al-An'am, 61). Some of the ways that He helps people are as follows:

Allah sends help to believers through angels

Allah's help to believers is manifested in various ways. One of the ways He helps is by sending angels to them at difficult times. In the Qur'an, Allah gives us an example of when He helped our Prophet (may Allah bless him and grant him peace):

And when you asked the believers: "Is it not enough for you that your Lord reinforced you with three thousand angels, sent down?" Yes indeed! But if you are steadfast and guard against evil and they come upon you suddenly, your Lord will reinforce you with five thousand angels, clearly identified. Allah only did this for it to be good news for you and so that your hearts might be set at rest by it [help comes from no one but Allah, the Almighty, the All-Wise]. (Surah Al 'Imran, 124-126)

In another verse Allah tells us that He helps believers by means of invisible armies:

O believers! Remember Allah's blessing to you when forces came against you and We sent a wind against them, and other forces you could not see. Allah sees what you do. (Surat al-Ahzab, 9)

Allah's announcement that believers will always be victorious is a great blessing and promise. Indeed, believers never forget this certain truth. All help comes from Allah, and all power belongs to Him. Believers know that real assistance and victory belong to Allah. They never forget that the angels' support is a glad tidings from Allah and a manifestation of His help and support. In the Qur'an, the Lord reveals this truth:

Remember when you called on your Lord for help, and He replied: "I will reinforce you with a thousand angels, riding rank after rank." Allah only did this to give you good news and that so your hearts would be at rest. Victory comes from no one but Allah. Allah is Almighty, All-Wise. (Surat al-Anfal, 9-10)

Believers who know that Allah can help them whenever He wills have a sense of inner contentment and security in even the most difficult moments. They live a very good life in this spiritual state of mind.

Allah makes it appear to their enemies that believers are more numerous than they actually are

Contrary to the unbelievers, believers achieve success through the intelligence, understanding, perception, and good moral qualities that Allah has given them. In addition, the Qur'an tells us that He has made the believers' numbers and power seem great in the eyes of the unbelievers, and thus has intimidated and scared them. In the Qur'an, Allah tells us of an event that happened in the time of *Asr-i Saadat* (Century of happiness—time of our Prophet (may Allah bless him and grant him peace):

Remember when Allah made you see them as few when you met them, and also made you seem few in their eyes. This was so that Allah could settle a matter whose result was preordained. All matters return to Allah. O believers. When you meet a troop, stand

firm and remember Allah repeatedly so that, hopefully, you will be successful. (Surat al-Anfal, 44-45)

The small community of believers was far weaker than the unbelievers. The fact that they appeared to be such a large group was one of Allah's miracles. At the same time, this fact makes things much easier for the believers, as it allows them to be successful. In some verses, Allah tells Prophet Muhammad (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) that He will multiply the believers' power whenever He wills. In return for their patience, He promises to give His believers far more strength and victory:

O Prophet. Spur on the believers to fight. If there are twenty of you who are steadfast, they will overcome two hundred; and if there are a hundred of you, they will overcome a thousand of the unbelievers, because they do not understand. Now Allah has made it lighter on you, knowing there is weakness in you. If there are a hundred of you who are steadfast, they will overcome two hundred; and if there are a thousand of you, they will overcome two thousand, with Allah's permission. Allah is with the steadfast. (Surat al-Anfal, 65-66)

As the above verses show, Allah supported our Prophet (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) and the believers on the battlefield by making them appear stronger and more numerous. Allah, Who is always the believers' friend and helper, is the only One with true power. By saying *Be*, Allah can bring into existence whatever He wills. Those who rely on Allah, trust Him, and acknowledge His eternal and all-sufficient power understand this and so are at peace.

Allah sent down serenity into the hearts of believers.

In Surat al-Fath, Allah tells us of the spiritual support He has bestowed on believers.

Allah sent down serenity into the believers' hearts, thereby increasing their faith with more faith - the legions of the heavens and earth belong to Allah. Allah is All-Knowing, All-Wise. (Surat al-Fath, 4)

Allah was pleased with the believers when they pledged allegiance to you under the tree. He knew what was in their hearts,

sent down serenity to them, and has rewarded them with an imminent victory. (Surat al-Fath, 18)

Allah places serenity to the believers' hearts in times of difficulty, and thus they experience a sense of contentment, security, and determination.

Actually, this sense is with believers at all times, for they know that Allah is the sole ruler of all things and thus have no reason to panic or feel sad or anxious. They understand the truth of: **"If Allah helps you, no one can vanquish you. If He forsakes you, who can help you after that? So the believers should put their trust in Allah"** (Surah Al 'Imran, 160). All believers know that their difficulties, no matter how great they may appear, are transitory. Understanding that their life in this world, when compared to the eternal life waiting for them in the Hereafter, is very short, they realize that whatever they suffer here, regardless of how long it seems, will be well worth it, for enduring it patiently and showing their true character will cause Allah to let them enter Paradise. There, believers will suffer no anxiety, sadness, want, boredom, or hardship. On the contrary, they will live amid endless beauty and have whatever their hearts desire.

So, living in this awareness allows them to approach every event with unshakable trust in Allah. And, the resulting sense of spiritual contentment and joy is one of this world's finest blessings. It must be remembered that all hearts and strength is in Allah's hands, for He creates what, when, and however He wills. Those who seek contentment and security will never find the road to it if Allah does not give the directions. The ease that living a life of religious morality brings to people comes from the knowledge that Allah controls everything. Those who turn to Allah and expect a reward only from Him will always find His avenues of help and support close-by:

No, Allah is your Protector. And He is the best of helpers. (Surah Al 'Imran, 150)

***All the traps set for believers
are destroyed immediately***

Those unbelievers who struggle against the believers resort to all sorts of insidious measures, such as forming alliances against believers and setting various traps for them. They think that because they outnumber the believers they will be successful. However, they forget that where there are two people, Allah is the third; where there are three people, Allah is the fourth. Moreover, they are entirely unaware that Allah is closer to a person than his or her jugular vein. But whether they hide their intentions or strike

openly, **“Allah knows what the heart contains”** (Surah Luqman, 23), every detail of their plans, and every trap they set. Thus, He foils them from the beginning, regardless of their complexity. No matter how extensive or insidious the trap, Allah the Creator of all tells us in the Qur’an that He will destroy it:

Allah always confounds the schemes of the unbelievers. (Surat al-Anfal, 18)

They concocted their plots, but their plots were with Allah, even if they were such as to make the mountains vanish. (Surah Ibrahim, 46)

Besides this, Allah tells us that these traps will not harm sincere believers, but will turn back on those who devised them:

But evil plotting envelops only those who do it. Do they expect anything but the pattern of previous peoples? You will not find any change in His pattern. You will not find any alteration in His pattern. (Surah Fatir, 43)

Believers know that the assistance of the All-Generous is always with them and live with trust in Allah. They know that every situation contains His purpose and good, even if they cannot see it.

In His endless mercy Allah leads people on the right path and strengthens their faith

As we said in earlier chapters, the Lord always calls people to follow the right path through His messengers and the books He has sent. He repeatedly sends warnings to every society urging people to cease denying Him and to turn to faith. This is a great act of generosity from the Lord.

Allah desires ease for His servants who work to strengthen their belief and thus supports them in many ways. The Qur’an tells us about this support in the following words:

As for those who believe in Allah and hold fast to Him, He will admit them into mercy and favor from Him, and will guide them to Him on a straight path. (Surat an-Nisa, 175)

There is nothing wrong in seeking bounty from your Lord. When you pour down from Arafat, remember Allah at the Sacred Landmark. Remember Him because He has guided you, even though before this you were astray. (Surat al-Baqara, 198)

But it must not be forgotten that people find truth only through Allah's will. The Lord of eternal mercy chooses His servants as He wills, writes the way to truth in their destiny, and guides them toward it:

No misfortune occurs except with Allah's permission. Whoever believes in Allah - He will guide his [or her] heart. Allah has knowledge of all things. (Surat at-Taghabun, 11)

When Allah wills to guide someone, He expands his [or her] breast to Islam. When He wills to misguide someone, He makes his [or her] breast narrow and constricted, as if he [or she] were climbing up into the sky. That is how Allah penalizes the unbelievers. (Surat al-An'am, 125)

Allah is the Light of the heavens and earth. The metaphor of His Light is that of a niche in which is a lamp, the lamp inside a glass, the glass like a brilliant star, lit from a blessed tree, an olive, neither of the East nor of the West, its oil all but giving off light even if no fire touches it. Light upon Light. Allah guides to His Light whoever He wills, makes metaphors for humanity, and has knowledge of all things. (Surat an-Nur, 35)

Before finding the truth, many people exist in a state of great chaos and confusion. They are often overwhelmed by sadness, anxiety, jealousy, despair, resentment, and hatred. The slightest negative thing that happens to them drags them into deep melancholy. When they embrace belief and submit to Allah's eternal power and might, this dark spiritual state disappears immediately. This transition is called *bringing out of darkness into the light*.

Allah is the Protector of the believers. He brings them out of the darkness into the light. But the unbelievers have false deities as protectors. They take them from the light into the darkness. Those are the Companions of the Fire, remaining in it timelessly, forever. (Surat al-Baqara, 257)

He calls down blessing on you, as do His angels, to bring you out of the darkness into the light. He is Most Merciful to the believers. Their greeting on the Day they meet Him will be "Peace," and He has prepared a generous reward for them. O Prophet! We have sent you as a witness, a bringer of good news and a warner, a caller to Allah by His permission, and a light-giving lamp. Give good news to the believers that they will receive immense favor from Allah. Do not obey the unbelievers and hypocrites, and disregard their abuse of you. Put your trust in Allah. Allah suffices as a Protector. (Surat al-Ahzab, 43-48)

It is a great blessing that Allah has created human life with such reversals. Indeed, this makes it much easier to grasp the value of belief and good moral character.

Rewarding Those Who Do Good

Allah is generous in His bounty to those who are generous in this life. He announces good tidings in both worlds to His faithful servants who strive to win His favor, fear and respect Him, obey the Qur'an as best as they can, and tell others of the Qur'an's morality. While still in this world, believers are honored with blessings that resemble those of Paradise.

The Qur'an reveals that those who do good will enjoy many blessings:

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

... "Good!" There is good in this world for those who do good, and the abode of the Hereafter is even better. How wonderful is the abode of those who guard against evil. (Surat an-Nahl, 30)

Abraham was a community in himself, exemplary, obedient to Allah, a man of pure natural belief. He was not an idolater. He was thankful for His blessings. Allah chose him and guided him to a straight path. We gave him good in this world, and in the Hereafter he will be one of the righteous. (Surat an-Nahl, 120-122)

From the Qur'an, we learn that it announced blessings first for the prophets and sincere believers. For example, Allah made our Prophet (may

Allah bless him and grant him peace) wealthy in this life, **“Did He not find you impoverished and enrich you?”** (Surat ad-Duha, 8). In addition, David (pbuh), Solomon (pbuh), Dhu'l-Qarnayn (pbuh), Abraham (pbuh) and his family all enjoyed great wealth.

It is a glad tidings from Allah that His faithful servants receive wonderful blessings in this life both as a reward and as a source of joy, and as an indication of His generosity and protection. Just as the unbelievers' eternal pangs begin in this life, so do the believers begin to receive the eternal blessings promised to them.

Another blessing on the sincere believers is that their bad deeds are changed into good. As we said earlier, a human being is a creature that can easily make mistakes. A person may fall into error, commit sins unknowingly, behave incorrectly and say bad things. But the important thing is that he later repents of these errors and corrects his behavior. To His servants with such a sincere morality, our Lord gives glad tidings in the Qur'an:

Those are people whose best deeds will be accepted, and whose wrong deeds will be overlooked. They are among the Companions of the Garden, in fulfillment of the true promise made to them. (Surat al-Ahqaf, 16)

These glad tidings manifest the All-Merciful and Most Merciful Allah's endless generosity to His servants, as does His changing of bad deeds into good. The Qur'an tells us of this in the following words:

Except for those who repent, believe, and act rightly: Allah will transform the wrong actions of such people into good - Allah is Ever-Forgiving, Most Merciful. For certainly all who repent and act rightly have turned sincerely toward Allah. (Surat al-Furqan, 70-71)

But as for those who believe, do right actions, and believe in what has been sent down to Muhammad - and it is the truth from their Lord - He will erase their bad actions and improve their condition. (Surah Muhammad, 2)

Believers believe in Allah Who created them, obey His commands and prohibitions, live according to the Qur'an's morality, and, most importantly, have great hope and expectation for the Afterlife. As a result, they are far removed from all sadness and spiritual anxiety, for they believe in destiny and that Allah has created everything. And so they submit to whatever

happens, for **“nothing can happen to us except what Allah has ordained for us”** (Surat at-Tawba, 51). They seek Allah’s favor and say: **“Allah is enough for us and the Best of Guardians”** (Surah Al ‘Imran, 173).

Since the world is a place of trial, believers will encounter hunger, illness, sleeplessness, accidents, material loss, and other hardships as part of their destiny. Understanding that these events were designed to test their belief and that their patience will be the source of their eternal reward in the Hereafter, they also realize that these ordeals will help them mature. Thus they entrust themselves to Allah and remain content, joyful, and happy, free of all anxiety and spiritual imbalance. In fact, their joy and excitement actually increase.

This situation is quite the opposite for the unbelievers, for they suffer spiritual distress and various kinds of physical pain. Their sense of fear, despair, apprehension, pessimism, and negativity are the first stirrings of the pain they will suffer in Hell. In the Qur’an, Allah describes those people who deviate from the true path:

When Allah wills to guide someone, He expands his [or her] breast to Islam. When He wills to misguide someone, He makes his [or her] breast narrow and constricted, as if he [or] she were climbing up into the sky. That is how Allah defiles the unbelievers. (Surat al-An’am, 125)

Allah will show His kindness to those believers who approach Him with fear and awe, repent, and ask forgiveness. If they are sincere, they will receive many wonderful blessings in this life:

Ask your Lord for forgiveness, and then repent to Him. He will let you enjoy a good life until a specified time, and will give His favor to all who merit it. But if you turn your backs, I fear for you the punishment of a Mighty Day. (Surah Hud:3)

Believers do good to win Allah’s approval and mercy so that they may attain Paradise. All they want is to serve and please Him; they have no desire to serve or seek any person’s favor or respect, to acquire high rank or position. They fear, respect, and love Allah, always remembering that He is their sole friend and advocate. In the Qur’an, the Lord tells us that His devoted servants will be rewarded with a great and never-ending reward, that this reward will be perfect in all respects and that it will be given to them twice over:

When it is recited to them they, say: “We believe in it; it is the truth from our Lord. We were already Muslims [bowing down to Allah] before this came. They will be given their reward twice over, because they have been steadfast, warded off the bad with the good, and gave from what We provided them. (Surat al-Qasas, 53-54)

Those who believe and do right actions will have a wage that never fails. (Surah Fussilat, 8)

[O Prophet, tell your wives:] “But if you desire Allah, His Messenger, and the abode of the Hereafter, Allah has prepared an immense reward for those among you who do good.” (Surat al-Ahzab, 29)

Those who recite the Book of Allah, pray, and give of what We have provided for them, secretly and openly, hope for a transaction that will not prove profitless. [Believers hope] that He will pay them their wages in full and give them more from His unbounded favor. He is Ever-Forgiving, Ever-Thankful. (Surah Fatir, 29-30)

But those of you who obey Allah and His Messenger and act rightly will be given their reward twice over; and We have prepared generous provision for them. (Surat al-Ahzab, 31)

Those who produce a good action will receive ten like it. But those who produce a bad action will only be repaid with its equivalent; they will not be wronged. (Surat al-An’am, 160)

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

We see in the above verses that Allah promises a great reward in return for His servants’ sincere efforts to win His favor, do good, and spread the Qur’an’s morality to all around them. The greatest reward is earning

Allah's favor. Moreover, Allah promises a great and generous reward to those believers whose only goal in this life is to win His favor and mercy and attain Paradise. Another reward announced in the Qur'an is that the Lord will encompass these sincere believers with His mercy:

As for those who believed and did right actions, their Lord will admit them into His mercy. That is the Clear Victory. (Surat at-Jathiyya, 30)

No matter what conditions believers live under, they always trust in Allah, turn to Him, think about pleasing Him, and never compromise the Qur'an's morality. For this reason, Allah's mercy, love, and generosity are always with them. Allah has announced good tidings to His sincere servants who sincerely try to follow His way and gladly spend their energy and resources to win His favor; as a reward for what they have done, they will be endowed with blessings that will never end;

There is good news for them [the believers] in this world and in the Hereafter. There is no changing of Allah's words. That is the great victory! (Surah Yunus, 64)

Their Lord gives them the good news of His mercy and good pleasure, and Gardens in which they will enjoy everlasting delight. (Surat at-Tawba, 21)

In other words, Allah has given to believers the good tidings of Paradise, revealed that He will accept all of their good works, and that the beauty and happiness they will attain is very near. The knowledge that Allah's endless mercy and love are always with them, as well as the hope that He will reward them with Paradise give the believers' great contentment and relief. Allah also says that these glad tidings will be announced to believers by angels:

The angels descend on those who say "Our Lord is Allah" and then go straight: "Do not fear and do not grieve; rather, rejoice in the Garden you have been promised." (Surah Fussilat, 30)

These glad tidings can be seen in the lives of several prophets mentioned in the Qur'an. For example, Allah answered Solomon's (pbuh) prayer: **"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” (Surah Sad, 35), and gave him great possessions in this world. Elsewhere, the Qur’an mentions that great wealth and resources were given to prophets. As a generous reward, Allah has made believers inheritors of many blessings and beautiful things in Paradise. Along with this, He gives them blessings in this life and increases their closeness to Himself, as well as their zeal and desire for Paradise.

Allah promises that believers will always be happy and secure in this world, that He will give them strength and power to live under the rule of the moral teachings of the Qur’an:

Allah has promised those of you who believe and do right actions that He will make them successors in the land, just as He made those before them successors; will firmly establish for them their religion with which He is pleased; and give them, in place of their fear, security. “They worship Me, not associating anything with Me.” Any who do not believe after that, such people are rebels. (Surat an-Nur, 55)

This is Allah’s promise to all believers. Believers must thank and praise Him constantly for His incomparable generosity.

With Allah’s permission, those who obey the Qur’an, listen to the Qur’an’s advice, and prepare themselves for the Afterlife will live a good and endless life without defect and cleansed of all sin. Believers who follow the Qur’an’s advice, show trust, submit when told to do so, and fear and respect Allah will enter His presence purified on Judgment Day.

This life will be eternal, as a manifestation of His name All-Merciful and Most Merciful, and every believer will give Him endless praise. As the Qur’an says:

Those who shun the worship of false deities and turn toward Allah will have good news. So give good news to My servants. Those who listen well to what is said and follow the best of it are the ones whom Allah has guided. They are the people of intelligence. (Surat az-Zumar, 17-18)

Elsewhere in the Qur’an, Allah tells us that, when that day comes, those who fear and respect Him will be greeted warmly at the gates of Paradise:

And those who fear [and respect] their Lord will be driven to the Garden in companies. When they arrive there, finding its gates open, its custodians will say to them: "Peace be upon you. You have done well, so enter it timelessly, forever." They will reply: "Praise be to Allah, Who has fulfilled His promise to us and made us the inheritors of this land, letting us settle in the Garden wherever we want. How excellent is the wage of those who work!" (Surat az-Zumar, 73-74)

Certainly, the best news people can receive is that they will live forever in Paradise, and that they will be welcomed by angels at the gate of Paradise as a reward for what they have done. These are glad tidings for those who listen well and follow the Qur'an's morality.

Believers, unlike unbelievers, have been promised that they will be welcomed upon their deaths by the beautiful words of angels, that their souls will be taken gently, and that their life in Paradise will begin:

[Those who guard against evil are] those the angels take in a virtuous state. They say: "Peace be upon you. Enter the Garden for what you did." (Surat an-Nahl, 32)

Allah has promised all of these things to those who submit sincerely to Him. Indeed, the endless life of Paradise will be His greatest reward to those who live according to the Qur'an's morality and thus enjoy the contentment sent by Him.

BOOK II

THE MANIFESTATIONS OF THE NAME OF ALLAH AS THE ALL-MERCIFUL AND MOST MERCIFUL IN THE UNIVERSE

INTRODUCTION

In the first book, we considered Allah's manifestations in the Qur'an as the All-Merciful and Most Merciful and saw proofs of His endless mercy. Through the Qur'an, we understand that Allah is generous to all people, and that He accepts their repentance, turns their evil into good, and accepts their prayers when they submit to Him sincerely. In addition, He shows endless mercy to believers who have much goodness in their hearts and do good works. All of these proofs give contentment, joy, and peace to the believers and further strengthen their faith and love for Him.

For those who carefully consider the name of Allah as All-Merciful and Most Merciful, the entire universe reveals Him plainly. We can find proofs of Allah's endless compassion everywhere, from the universe's formation to the creation of all living and non-living things, from the miracle of human creation to the perfect structure of each cell, to all animals, plants, fruits, and vegetables.

One does not need deep knowledge or expert training to see these proofs. It is enough to look at the universe with an understanding of Allah's name as All Merciful and Most Merciful, and to consider His endless love and generosity. Those who look at the world in this way encounter a world that is different from the one they see every day, and soon become aware that its every aspect is truly a proof of His mercy.

The Qur'an says that everything in existence is a manifestation of Allah's mercy: **"So look at the effect of the mercy of Allah"** (Surat ar-Rum, 50). Many other verses urge individuals to consider creation's beauty and think about the hardship and sense of deprivation they would experience without these blessings.

Allah asks us to consider why He created night and day, why He causes rain to fall and ships to float, why He feeds His servants with various foods, why birds stay in the air, and why animals, trees, wind, and lightning exist. In short, He calls upon us to consider the reason behind

everything that exists, whether animate or inanimate. The Qur'an tells people to think again and again about the heavens' perfect creation:

... He Who created the seven heavens in layers. You will not find any flaw in the creation of the All-Merciful. Look again - do you see any gaps? Then look again and again. Your sight will return to you, dazzled and exhausted! (Surat al-Mulk, 3-4)

The section invites readers to consider His name All-Merciful and Most Merciful, Creator of humanity from nothing and Giver of innumerable blessings from His generosity. We will now study just a small portion of these proofs and learn just how great a generosity Allah's endless knowledge and artistry really are.

And, we must remember that Allah proclaims: **"If you tried to number Allah's blessings, you could never count them. Allah is Ever-Forgiving, Most Merciful"** (Surat an-Nahl, 18). In this section we will look at only a few of the millions of proofs that require long consideration.

MANIFESTATIONS OF ALLAH AS THE ALL-MERCIFUL AND MOST MERCIFUL IN THE CREATION OF THE UNIVERSE

Our universe is characterized by a perfect balance, harmony, and order, yet another proof of Allah's endless power and might as Ruler of the universe. In the Qur'an, Allah tells us that this is a truth that human beings must ponder:

Are you stronger in structure, or is heaven? He built it. He raised its vault high and made it level. He darkened its night and brought forth its morning light. After that He smoothed out Earth. (Surat an-Nazi'at, 27-30)

People must be aware that our Lord created the universe's system and balance in the best way possible, so as to make them meet the requirements of human life. Being aware of it, humanity must think about it and learn a lesson from it:

He has made night and day subservient to you, and the Sun and Moon and stars, all subject to His command. There are

certainly Signs in that for people who use their intellect. (Surat an-Nahl, 12)

In another verse it says:

He makes night merge into day and day merge into night, and He has made the Sun and Moon subservient, each one running until a specified time. That is Allah, your Lord. The Kingdom is His. Those you call upon besides Him have no power over even the smallest speck. (Surah Fatir, 13)

The Qur'an tells us that Allah has placed night and day, the Sun and the Moon, at humanity's service. This is a wonderful manifestation of His name All-Merciful and Most Merciful. He has placed His flawlessly ordered universe in humanity's care and, in return, wills only that people believe in and serve Him. People are obliged to be aware of this truth, submit to His endless power and might, think about the evidence of mercy that surrounds them, and turn to Allah with sincere hearts.

These manifestations of mercy in the universe's creation, order, and flawless operation are beyond numbering. Moreover, this order is based on a perfect and delicate balance that meets all living things' needs. Thinking about this helps people understand His generosity and how much they need Him, as their only friend and advocate, in this world. Those who do not think about these subtle things can easily fall into error and be unaware of His manifestation as the All-Merciful. Every detail of universe's formation is filled with clear proofs of His endless mercy toward humanity and all living things. Some of these proofs are as follows:

The universe came into being due to the Big Bang. In the beginning, a single point with no volume and infinite density contained all matter. The universe was formed when this point of zero volume exploded. Actually, *zero volume* is a theoretical expression devised by scientists, for the concept of nothing is beyond human conception. The universe came out of nothing or, more exactly, it was *Created*. Since the Big Bang was an explosion, it is thought that matter spread *randomly* through empty space. However, it somehow gradually took on shape and order. The first stage of this order was the explosion's velocity.

The resulting matter began to expand outward with incredible speed. But during this first stage, there was a gravitational force strong enough to bring the entire universe together at one point. Therefore, during this first

moment there were two opposite forces: the power of the explosion and a gravitational force that resisted that force and worked to bring the resulting matter together. *It was because of the perfect balance between these two forces that the universe came into being.* If this gravitational force had been stronger (or weaker) than the explosion's force, then the universe would have collapsed upon itself (or dispersed) without expanding (or being brought together again).

Stephen Hawking affirms this extraordinary balance: "*Why did the universe start out with so nearly the critical rate of expansion that separates models that recollapse from those that go on expanding forever, so that even now, ten thousand million years later, it is still expanding at nearly the critical rate? If the rate of expansion one second after the big bang had been smaller by even one part in a hundred thousand million, the universe would have recollapsed before it ever reached its present size.*" (Stephen W. Hawking, *A Brief History of Time* [London: Bantam Books, 1988], 121.) This delicate adjustment is only one proof that corroborates Allah's incomparable creation, for it is impossible that the universe and all of its contents could come into being after a random explosion. All of the details that we see before our eyes are proofs of Allah's existence and supreme power – and only thinking people can perceive them. The universe's perfect balance, extraordinarily delicate design, and flawless harmony are a manifestation of Allah as the All Merciful and Most Merciful.

When we look at our Solar System's structure, we find the same extraordinary balance. The force that prevents planets from scattering into the freezing cold of outer space is the balance between the Sun's *gravitational pull* and the planet's *centrifugal force*. The Sun's immense gravitational force attracts the planets, and the centrifugal force produced by their rotation gives them a specific degree of resistance to its gravitational pull. If the velocity of a planets' rotation were less, they would be pulled toward the Sun and explode.

The opposite might also be possible. If the planets rotated at a higher velocity, the Sun's gravitational pull would be unable to hold them and they would scatter into outer space. However, this very delicate balance has enabled our solar system to survive. It is important to note that this balance is not the same for each planet, for they are not the same distance from the Sun. In addition, their masses are quite different, which means that each one must have a different velocity of rotation so that they do not collide with the Sun or disperse into outer space.

Such astronomers such as Johannes Kepler (1571-1630) and Galileo (1564-1642), who worked to uncover our Solar System's extraordinarily sensitive balance, stated many times that it indicated a very obvious design and constituted evidence for Allah's sovereignty over the universe, all of which serves humanity. It shows that He created the distance between the Sun and the heavenly bodies on the one hand, and Earth on the other, in a perfect balance. This is certainly a sign of Allah's mercy toward His servants.

Besides this perfect balance, Earth's system and location in space also indicate the existence of a flawless creation and of Allah's endless mercy. The latest astronomical discoveries show that the existence of the other planets in our solar system is of great importance for Earth's stable orbit. Consider Jupiter, the system's largest planet, which actually keeps Earth in balance. Astrophysical calculations show that its orbit provides stability for that of Earth and other planets. In short, the solar system's structure is specially arranged for human beings. Those who have a sincere and intelligent mind understand that the All Merciful and Most Merciful has created everything for a purpose and arranged it for a particular end: **"We did not create heaven and Earth and everything between them to no purpose. That is the opinion of the unbelievers"** (Surat as-Sad, 27). This profound concept is revealed in another verse of the Qur'an:

In the creation of the heavens and Earth, and the alternation of night and day, there are Signs for people with intelligence: those who remember Allah, standing, sitting, and lying on their sides, and reflect on the creation of the heavens and Earth: "Our Lord, You have not created this for nothing. Glory be to You. Safeguard us from the punishment of the Fire." (Surah Al 'Imran, 190-191)

MANIFESTATIONS OF ALLAH AS THE ALL-MERCIFUL AND MOST MERCIFUL IN THE CREATION OF THE WORLD

Some people, when they encounter something new, may understand the extraordinary thing that they see and be led to investigate it further. After a while they get used to it, and the first effect it had upon them diminishes. Especially those things or events they encounter nearly every day become commonplace for them. This has happened to humanity, who now finds Earth, its position, and its contents commonplace.

Those people who acquire more than an ordinary amount of knowledge about Earth become accustomed to its wonders. For them, it is normal to think of Earth as constantly rotating in space, containing a layer of fire a few kilometers under their feet, constantly threatened by falling meteorites, and the Sun's indispensable existence. However, thinking people do not become accustomed to the blessings and beauty surrounding them; rather, they always marvel at Earth's suitability to sustain life and the presence of what is needed for this life to remain and flourish. They recall the name the All-Merciful and Most Merciful and give thanks for all things, among them Earth's distance from the Sun, the balanced atmosphere, the speed of Earth's revolution and orbit, the benefit of Earth's oceans and mountains, as well as the qualities of living things and connections with each other. For a human being to understand Allah's eternal power, it is very important to consider the proofs that we will explain:

Earth's temperature is a wonderful manifestation of the All-Merciful. Among the 9 known planets in the solar system and their 53 moons there is not one body in the heavens suitable to sustain life. Each one of them is a silent and lifeless mass of matter. The Earth is much different from them. Its atmosphere, surface shapes, temperature, seasons, elements, and distance from the Sun are different from theirs, for everything is created in a special balance to sustain life. This flawless creation of the Earth is a great generosity from Allah to humanity.

The Earth's temperature allows living things, especially such complex living things as human beings, to live and an atmosphere they can breathe. And these two factors have come about through determining the ideal values in all of its widely differing components. One of these is its distance from the Sun. When we consider the universe, we see that the average temperature needed to support life is very difficult to obtain. But Earth has

the exact temperature mean. Indeed, this temperature has to do as much with the Sun's energy generated as the distance between Earth and the Sun.

According to calculations, if a 10 percent drop in the amount of the Sun's energy that reaches the Earth occurred, our planet would be covered by a layer of ice of meters thick. If that energy increased slightly, every living thing would be burned to a crisp. However, these things do not occur and Earth's atmosphere remains perfectly stable - a manifestation of Allah's incomparable artistry and eternal love.

It is very important that Earth's ideal temperature is evenly distributed within the planet. To achieve this even balance, some very important conditions must come together. For example, the 23°27' inclination of Earth's axis prevents the excessive heat that would not permit the part of the atmosphere existing between the poles and the equator to form. In its absence, the difference between the temperature at the poles and the equator would greatly increase and the atmosphere would be unable to support life. In addition, a few automatic systems continually balance the atmosphere's temperature. For example, when one area becomes overheated, evaporation increases and clouds form to reflect back some of the Sun's rays, thereby preventing the air below and Earth's surface from becoming too hot. When all of these balances work together, Earth's temperature is such that all life can survive. The fact that so many and varied conditions work together to produce a magnificent order is one of the countless manifestations of Allah as the All-Merciful. Earth's seasons are also a result of these conditions, and every season is filled with wonderful things that Allah has created.

Thinking a little about Earth's size allows us to see Allah's mercy. When we examine our planet, we see that it is exactly as large as it has to be. American geologists state its *suitability* to sustain life: "The Earth is exactly the size it needs to be. If it were smaller, gravity would be weakened and could not maintain the atmosphere around the Earth. If it were any larger then gravity would greatly increase and certain poisonous gasses would be trapped in the atmosphere, making that atmosphere lethal." Because of the delicate balance in this subtle plan created by Allah life can be sustained on this Earth. This is a good example of Allah's endless compassion for His servants.

Earth's internal structure is also created to support life. Due to the strata in its internal structure, it has a magnetic field that is very important for sustaining life. This field extends far beyond the planet's atmosphere,

which protects Earth from the dangers that may come from outer space. Fatal cosmic rays originating from stars other than the Sun cannot penetrate this protective shield, for Earth's magnetic field allows only 0.1 percent of them to enter, all of which are then absorbed by the atmosphere. Without this magnetic field, life would be destroyed by these fatal rays. But because its core is exactly as it must be, Earth is protected. In other words, as the Qur'an tells us, a special protective shield has been set up for us: **"We made the sky a preserved and protected roof, yet still they turn away from Our Signs"** (Surat al-Anbiya, 32).

Indeed, there are other things apart from physical laws that Allah has created to protect living creatures. Consider Earth's stable security. As one moves toward the planet's center, the temperature increases by 30 degrees every kilometer (mile). In the core, it is as high as 4,500 degrees. When we consider that the temperature just one kilometer underground is close to 60 degrees Celsius, we can appreciate just how dangerous this is. But all living things are secure and live unaware of the burning magma below them. We can plainly see that Allah has ordered our planet's surface with a ball of fire beneath it. He keeps the heavens under His control and protects all living creatures at every moment, whether they know it or not, from great danger. People become accustomed to things and look at their existence as completely natural; these things are basic proofs of Allah's divine protection and mercy. Since the hundreds of physical laws that give order to the Earth exist at this moment as they must, there are no overriding forces. Allah is the best of protectors.

Earth's atmosphere is an extraordinary mixture that brings together the conditions required for life to survive: 77% nitrogen, 21% oxygen, and about 1% carbon dioxide, argon, and other gasses. Oxygen causes the chemical reactions that human beings and other creatures with complex body structures produce in order to obtain energy. For this reason, we constantly need oxygen, and we breathe in order to supply this need. The level of oxygen in the air is a very delicate balance. If the mixture of gasses were different, life could not exist on Earth. But Allah has ordered the atmosphere perfectly so that living things can survive and, as a proof of His mercy, maintains this balance. Allah's eternal knowledge rules every atom and molecule of this perfectly operating system, and without His eternal power, no oxygen and nitrogen molecules could have been assembled. The atmosphere could be composed of heavy and malodorous gasses that would make our breathing difficult. However Allah, in His endless mercy,

created the atmosphere so that we can breathe comfortably, for He is the Guardian Who protects, watches over, and sustains all life: In one of the verses it is revealed as follows: **“...and you will not harm Him at all. My Lord is the Preserver of everything”** (Surah Hud, 57). Allah created the universe and adorned its system with millions of varied details; He controls it and preserves it at every moment. He created everything from nothing and designed a perfect order ruling over creation with His intelligence and power. And He still creates this order, watching over it and protecting it at every moment: Allah reveals this truth in the verses: **“Your Lord is (as a Guardian) on a watch-tower.”** (Surat al-Fajr, 14).

The atmosphere's numerical values are important not only for breathing, but also for keeping the *blue* planet blue. If the atmospheric pressure fell by one-fifth, the rate of evaporation would increase and accumulate in high proportions in the atmosphere, thereby raising Earth's temperature excessively. If the atmospheric pressure rose by 1, evaporation would decrease greatly and nearly all of the planet would become desert. All of these balances, like other aspects of Earth, show that our atmosphere has been created specially to sustain life. The Lord Who rules the universe created matter from nothing and shaped it according to His will; He holds the galaxies, the stars, and the planets in His power and has made them serve humanity. Allah has ordered our blue planet to sustain life and, as the Qur'an says, has *smoothed out* the Earth for human beings (Surat an-Nazi'at, 30).

All that we have examined here shows us that this perfect order is a manifestation of Allah's sublime mercy and compassion. Earth has been ordered to bring forth life. Its location in space, together with the fact that it has been endowed with whatever living creatures require, are proofs that this planet is a work of Allah's artistry filled with His generous goodness. We see the same truth when we look at this life-giving planet's inhabitants. All living things on this Earth are created with an amazing artistry, every creature has been created in an appropriate environment and body, and every aspect of what exists reflects His flawless artistry.

MANIFESTATIONS OF ALLAH AS THE ALL-MERCIFUL AND MOST MERCIFUL IN THE CREATION OF HUMAN BEINGS

Allah, Who created the universe from nothing, endowed humanity with the abilities to think, decide, and choose. For this reason, believers look at

the incomparable creation of the universe by our Lord of endless mercy, contemplating in amazement His peerless artistry. Everything they learn allows them to deepen their intellect and increase their knowledge of the straight path. The universe's creation, Earth's delicate balances, the flawless provision of all that is needed to sustain life allow people to better understand Allah's eternal power and might. But there is also another miracle that pervades each person's life at every moment: one's own physical body.

Every aspect of the human body contains great wonders. For example, the operation of every one of its trillions of cells and extraordinary internal systems contain obvious proofs that enable people to grasp more deeply the name of Allah as the All-Merciful and Most Merciful. The only thing that they need to do is to think in more detail about how He causes life to be sustained. The process of birth alone is enough to amaze anyone.

To summarize: The body of each man and woman is formed by combining two different and completely independent but mutually compatible elements: a man's sperm and a woman's egg, both of which are formed apart from each person's will and control. They do not even know that they are being formed. In the Qur'an, the Lord says:

We created you, so why do you not confirm the truth? Have you thought about the sperm that you ejaculate? Is it you who create it, or are We the Creator? (Surat al-Waqi'a, 57-59)

These two elements have been created to be compatible with each other. Their creation, union, and subsequent development into a human being are great miracles. The sperm produced in the testes, at the average rate of 1,000 per second, have a special structure, as if they knew the nature of their journey on their way from the male body to the female eggs. Each sperm is composed of a head, a neck, and a tail. The tail enables it to swim like a fish toward the mother's womb. The head, which contains a section of the baby's genetic code, is covered with a special armored covering that recognizes the entrance to the mother's womb, the extremely acidic environment of which protects the mother from germs. Allah knows this acid exists because He created it. Also, it is obvious that He covered the sperm with its protective coat of armor. It is not only the millions of sperm that are injected from the male into the uterus; there is also a mixture of various fluids. Allah shows us this truth in the Qur'an:

Has humanity ever known a point of time when it was not something remembered? We created humanity from a mingled drop to test it, and We made him hearing and seeing. (Surat al-Insan, 1-2)

Sperm have a difficult journey on their way to the woman's uterus. No matter how hard they defend themselves, hardly more than 1,000 of the 200-300 million sperm will reach the egg. While the sperm is designed to be compatible with the egg, the egg becomes mature in a different environment. An egg formed in the ovary is first released into the abdominal cavity, where it is immediately caught by arms on the ends of the fallopian tubes. It then begins to move up the fallopian tube, aided by the movement of the hairs located inside it. The egg is about half the size of a grain of salt.

The egg and the sperm meet in the fallopian tube, where the egg secretes a fluid so that the sperm can find it. All of these operations happen under Allah's protection and thus perform their functions perfectly. The egg and the sperm act as if they were conscious beings. However, when we say that the egg secretes a fluid, we are not talking about a person or a conscious being. This small mass of protein has no power to decide anything. Moreover, the fact that it produces and secretes a sperm-attracting chemical compound is clear evidence of Allah's endless power, knowledge, and incomparable creation. Allah has created the female and made reproductive systems as mutually compatible in every detail. This miraculous creation goes on for nine months, until a child is born. Every second of this extraordinary process is amazing. For example, when the sperm approaches the egg to fertilize it, the egg decides to secrete a fluid that will break down the sperm's protective armor. As a result, corrosive enzyme sacks produced for the egg appear on the sperm's head. When it approaches the egg, these enzymes pierce its membrane so that the sperm can enter. A great contest ensues among the sperm trying to enter the egg and only one sperm succeeds to fertilize the egg. Only one sperm can enter the electrical field that surrounds the egg, after which the egg's negative charge (-) becomes positive (+). As a result, the egg now has the same charge as the remaining sperm outside and so begins to repel them. In other words, the electrical charge of these two elements, which were formed differently and independently of each other, is compatible. Finally, the male DNA in the sperm combines with the female DNA in the egg to produce a new foreign cell in the mother's uterus. After this fertilization

process, an extraordinary nine-month adventure begins, during which the baby will develop fully under the protection of Allah's endless mercy.

When the sperm and the egg unite, the baby's first basic characteristics are formed. A single cell (a zygote) divides without tearing and multiplies until it forms a piece of flesh. But a zygote cannot grow in an open space, and so it attaches itself to the uterine wall by means of extensions resembling a plant's roots in the soil. This enables it to obtain whatever it needs from its mother's body to develop. Now that it is firmly attached in the womb, the zygote begins to develop. The mother's womb is full of *amniotic fluid*, which surrounds the zygote and keeps the embryo safe from external trauma while it grows. The baby remains in safety for nine months because of Allah's endless compassion and protection. Allah reveals this truth to us in the Qur'an: **"Did We not create you from a base fluid, then place it in a secure repository?"** (Surat al-Mursalat, 20-21).

As time passes, the fetus begins to change from what resembles a mass of gelatin to a small body with hard bones that will enable it to stand upright. And the cells, which first had the same structure, begin to differentiate into those that form eye cells sensitive to light, nerve cells able to perceive heat, cold, pain, and sound waves. As a result of these and many other amazing processes, the embryo completes its development and is born in a form that is 100 million times larger than its original size and 6 billion times heavier. Certainly, no one has the power to create another human being or any material thing.

It is Allah Who creates all these wonderful systems and all the details of their various stages of development:

Then [We] formed the drop into an blood clot, the blood clot into a lump, formed the lump into bones, and clothed the bones in flesh. Then [We] brought it into being as another creature. Blessed be Allah, the Best of Creators! (Surat al-Muminun, 14)

Cell division is a miraculous process. In order for a cell to divide and multiply, it must first make a copy of itself that, over time, becomes a series that will eventually produce millions of copies of the same cell. But this process is even more complex than it seems, because at one stage these copies must differentiate themselves and take on a totally new structure so that they can produce tissues, organ systems, and a person's nose, hands,

eyelids, and kidneys. They multiply as much as required and then stop at just the right time. Nerve cells develop extensions that allow them to transmit electrical signals. Cells located in the joints assume a globular shape that is resistant to pressure. Bone cells are formed in the embryonic stage and look like ordinary cells; however, without any apparent reason, they begin to store calcium in order to develop a very hard structure that is extremely strong and carry a lot of weight throughout their lives. When they are broken, they can repair themselves. Compared to an equally resilient material, they are very light (due to internal cavities), flexible, and resilient. The fact that cells stop multiplying at just the right time is a clear sign that they are under the control of Allah, Whose generosity and compassion encompasses all people.

Each cell's membrane seems to know how to decide, remember, and evaluate, for it ensures the connection between neighboring cells and delicately controls the access to and the exit from them. Therefore, it is considered the cell's brain. When we observe this membrane with an electron microscope, we notice that it resembles a two-sided wall with capillaries that permit access material to move in and out from the cell, as well as receptors that allow it to know the external environment. These are located on the wall of the cell and meticulously control entrance to and exit from the cell. The membrane's first duty is to surround the cell's organelles and keep them together. In order to ensure that the organelles function without interruption, it provides the required material from outside. In doing this, the cell membrane takes in only the amount of material that the cell needs. In addition, it locates harmful waste material in the cell and immediately ejects it. The function of the cell membrane is vital; it does not accept the slightest mistake. Any mistake or miscalculation, no matter how small, could destroy the cell. Allah makes the cell membrane, which is formed from fat and protein molecules, perform these miraculous functions and prepares this extraordinary system to sustain human life.

While the fetus is developing in the mother's womb, each of its millions of cells must find the place where it belongs. For this purpose, they must engage in what is known as cell migration. During this journey, timing is just as important as locating the right place, for an error no larger than one one-hundredth of a centimeter or one one-hundredth of a second could cause, for example, a foot to grow from the head or an ear from the chest. But system functions so perfectly that such errors never occur. Cells travel to their place in the embryo over a special road. When they arrive at their

destination, they recognize it for what is and remain there. That is, millions of cells know beforehand the right road to their destination and, moreover, they decide to start out on their journey and to stop when they arrive at the place where they are going. And so stomach cells are not confused with liver cells, and wonderfully functioning internal organs, arms, legs, and all bodily organs combine to form a mass of flesh that slowly take on a human form. In the Qur'an Allah says:

We created you from dust, then from a drop of sperm [and an egg], then from a clot of blood, then from a lump of flesh, formed yet unformed, so We may make things clear to you. (Surat al-Hajj, 5)

During all of these processes, there is no confusion or disorder. The migrating cells and the cells that they will eventually combine with recognize one another. For example, scientists have observed some of the millions of neurons (nerve cells) that go up the nervous system to locate their counterparts and form a bond with them, in a marvelous example of engineering, to form each organ's structure and shape. For example, brain cells establish about 120 trillion electrical connections so that they can communicate among themselves. It is not difficult to imagine what a single error or short circuit in this extraordinarily complex electrical web would do to the entire organ.

We have explained that trillions of cells work in harmony with one another finding their counterparts without error according to a calculated plan. But cells cannot think, plan, or find their destination on their own, so how do they always reach their appointed place? Obviously, there must be a power that makes all of these things possible and controls them: the endless might of Allah, the Lord of the universe. In His mercy, He makes cells from nothing and inspires each one to go to its proper destination without any mistake, loss of direction, or confusion about its counterpart. Human beings out of Allah's endless mercy and their lives are sustained as long as they live by His protection.

The nourishment of the new baby that comes from a sperm is a miracle in itself. Infants are nourished by their mother's milk, which is produced and begins to flow without any participation on her part. Its compounds contain all that an infant needs, and therefore is a wonderful source of nourishment. Besides it contains the kind of material that increases both the infant's and the mother's resistance to illness. Doctors

are united in their opinion that artificial milk should only be used when the mother's milk is insufficient and that the child should be fed with it, especially during the first months.

Amazingly, the components found in mother's milk change according to the baby's stage of development. The number of calories and the balance of nutrients vary according to whether the baby was born early or on time. If the baby were premature, the milk's fat and protein is much higher than if it were born on time, because a premature baby needs more calories. The baby's immune system, composed of antibodies and defense cells, are already prepared in the mother's milk. In fact, they are like a standing army that defends a foreign body to which they do not belong against its enemies. This is a great miracle. But how does the mother's body seem to know when the baby will be born and start producing milk accordingly? It is evident that the mother's body does not make this decision. Clearly, Allah has protected the baby in a secure place for nine months and continues to do so after its birth. This is only one manifestation of His mercy toward human beings.

Mother's milk also contains anti-bacterial qualities. Bacteria enter and destroy ordinary milk left at room temperature within six hours. But this does not happen to mother's milk. In addition, it prevents any hardening in the baby's blood vessels and can be digested quickly. Nutrition experts know that no formula is as beneficial as mother's milk. Allah creates mother's milk and the baby that needs it, for He feeds all beings from the moment of their birth.

An infant's skull bones are very soft and may even rub against each other, however slightly. Such elasticity prevents its head from being damaged during birth. If the bones were hard, they might crack when coming out of the mother's womb or even break, causing great damage to the baby's brain.

Allah has created human beings according to a particular order. With our extraordinary systems, we are one of the most marvelously complex creatures in nature. The human body is a mass of flesh and bones weighing approximately 60-70 kilograms (132-154 pounds). Our flesh is one of the most non-resilient materials in nature, for it will putrefy in a few hours if left out in the cold and rot within a day or two, producing an unendurable stench. The human body is composed mainly of this corruptible material. But because the circulating blood nourishes it and the skin protects it from alien bacteria, it can be kept from spoiling and rotting for 70-80 years. This

is Allah's protection of human beings. Without this divine protection, we would not survive for even one moment.

It is a wonderful proof of Allah's mercy and compassion that a fetus grows proportionately in the mother's womb. Every organ has its own predetermined size and develops at just the right time, thereby avoiding overdevelopment and underdevelopment. Hands, feet, ears, eyes, and other pairs must take shape at the same time, and their development must end at the same time so that they will be the same size at the end. At the same time, the organs must develop symmetrically because the cells ensure the right timing. At the same time, the parts develop symmetrically because the cells act equally to ensure the right timing. We can understand how vital it is that organs develop at the same time if we think of what would happen in the opposite case. Suppose that body parts grew at different rates and were independent of each other. If a baby's skull did not expand enough, its brain would be crushed and death would come quickly. Or, if the skin developed more slowly than body's frame, the rapidly growing skeleton and limbs would stretch and tear it as they developed. Apart from a very strange looking appearance, the baby could not survive. We could give many more examples, from the harmonious development of the cell membrane and cell organelles to the balanced growth of the skeleton and the internal organs. The only reason why these things exist and why we are born as fully-formed human beings is that Allah, in His mercy and compassion, protects us. And yet some people continue to think that the brain, cells, or blood gives a person life. However, unconscious cells cannot give life. Only Allah, Who created us from nothing, can do this, for He is *Al-Muhyi* (Life-Giver): In Surah Yunus Allah reveals as follows: **"He gives life and causes to die, and you will be returned to Him."** (Surah Yunus, 56). It is only Allah Who creates a creature from nothing and orders the conditions of this world in order to give it life and sustain it. In nine months, Allah creates a seeing and hearing human being from nothing and endows it with life. It is clear that an egg and a sperm could not produce these miraculous stages in the formation of a living being. The egg and sperm seem to unite and produce life only when Allah wills them to do so.

The body's hormone system is very important, for it and the nervous system ensure coordination among the body's cells. When we examine these systems, we understand that only Allah, their rightful owner, controls them. We can walk and talk, and our hands can perform various tasks. But

deep inside this body there are thousands of chemical and physical events that occur apart from the person's knowledge and will. For example, we cannot determine the length of our height or the size of our organs. Under Allah's inspiration, the growth hormone secreted by the pituitary gland determines these things. Growth occurs in two ways: Some cells increase their volume. Some cells divide and multiply. The growth hormone affects all the cells of the body. Every cell understands the message sent from the pituitary gland. If it must grow, it grows; if it must divide and multiply, it does so. For example, even though a new-born baby's heart is about one-sixteenth the size of an adult heart, both hearts have the same number of cells. The growth hormone affects each cell during the development process. Every cell develops as much as the growth hormone tells it to. Thus, the infant's heart grows and turns into an adult's heart. Other cells, such as those belonging to the muscles and bones, divide and multiply, again due to the growth hormone's instructions. This is a miraculous process, because the chickpea-sized pituitary gland controls all of the body's cells and ensures their growth either by increasing their bulk or dividing.

This wonderful order shows the perfection in Allah's creation. Cells contained in one small area make sure that trillions of cells divide and grow in an ordered way. However, these cells cannot see the human body from the outside, or know how much it must grow, or at what stage it must stop growing. Bereft of all knowledge, sight, and consciousness, they nevertheless produce the growth hormone, stop the growth at the appropriate time, and control both the organ's growth and this hormone's secretion at every stage. Allah has created such a perfect system that growth and the secretion of this hormone are controlled at every stage. And this shows once again the power and the knowledge at every point in the creation of the human body and makes us think more profoundly about the limitless kindness of our Lord. Faced with such facts, how can we not ponder His limitless kindness and try to draw closer to Him?

It is a great miracle that the growth hormone affects each cell, for much confusion would arise if only some cells obeyed it. For example, what would happen if the heart cells obeyed but the cells in the rib cage refused to divide and multiply? The growing heart would be squeezed in the still-small rib cage, and the person would die. Or, if the nose bone grew and the skin did not stretch, the bone would tear through the skin. The harmonious growth of all muscles, bones, skin, and other organs is perfectly ensured when each cell obeys the growth hormone. The growth hormone tells the

cartilage to grow on the ends of the bones, thus giving each new-born a template. If the cartilage does not grow, neither does the baby. Its cells direct the bone to lengthen, but how do these cells know that the bone must be told to do so? If this bone grew sideways, it would tear the skin and break through it. But each cell's nucleus carries the most appropriate plan, and so bones grow by lengthening. This is only one of the millions of miracles that Allah has created in the development of the human body.

Another miracle related to the growth hormone is the timing and amount of its secretion. This hormone is secreted in just the right amount, but in a greater amount while the person is growing. This is a wonderful miracle, because if this were not the case people would either be dwarfs or giants. Thus, a special system regulates the amount of growth hormone secreted. Thanks to this system, when there is too much growth hormone in the blood, its secretion is slowed down. So, how do cells know how much growth hormone is required in the blood? How can they measure how much of it is in the blood and decide what to do? This secretion also continues in adults. But if adults continued to grow and their limbs continued to lengthen, they would become giants. However, the cells cease to divide and multiply when a person reaches a certain height. Scientists still do not know why this happens. All they know is that the cells are somehow programmed to end this activity at a certain time. A person should consider the power that created this flawless system: Almighty Allah, Who orders and ensures what He wills, down to the smallest detail.

Your cells ensure that your hands, eyes, and nose have the proper shape. Your cells begin their work while you are still in your mother's womb, forming you better than any plastic surgeon. They make your organs without any excess or deficiency. For example, they calculate the number, length, and shape of your fingers. They do this for your whole body. For example, your eye alone has 40 parts, all of which must grow in proportion, have sound connections among themselves, and be in their proper places for your eye to function properly.

When the embryo is four weeks old, two cavities form on either side of its head. At six weeks, its cells begin to work according to a wonderful plan. Some cells make the cornea, some make the pupil, and others make the lens. When each cell finishes building its particular area, it stops. Each cell makes a different part, and all of them gradually combine. No other stratum is formed in the pupil's place, and everything is in its own place. This

process lasts for months, and the result is a beautiful and functional pair of eyes.

Each cell that makes up the embryo is aware of the body's general plan. Indeed, they produce parts with different characteristics, just as if they had agreed beforehand on what they would do. Allah created this wonderful plan encoded in cells, inspires them to carry out their tasks, and ensures its perfect implementation:

He forms you in the womb however He wills. There is no deity but Him, the Almighty, the All-Wise. (Surah Al 'Imran, 6)

He is Allah - the Creator, the Maker, the Giver of Form. To Him belong the Most Beautiful Names. Everything in the heavens and Earth glorifies Him. He is the Almighty, the All-Wise. (Surat al-Hashr, 24)

Was it not a drop of ejaculated sperm, then a blood-clot that He created and shaped? (Surat al-Qiyama, 37-38)

THE MANIFESTATIONS OF ALLAH AS THE ALL MERCIFUL AND MOST MERCIFUL IN THE CREATION OF HUMAN BODY

The human body's approximately 100 trillion cells, as well as its bones, respiratory system, glands, organs, tissues, and every other element, belong to Allah, Who placed proofs in the human body and the universe so that people will come to know and recognize Him. As we said in the last chapter, we see Allah's mercy toward human beings while they are still in their mother's womb: **"... then made him [or her] a drop in a secure receptacle"** (Surat al-Muminun, 13). Everything that happens in this process of human development is a wondrous manifestation of His name the All-Merciful and Most Merciful. During a person's life, the same functions continue. Each cellular change, breath, glance, perception, understanding, mental activity, eating, digestion, growth, and everything else that happens in one's body is controlled by Allah, Who wills it to happen. A person's shape, intelligence, and spiritual and physical faculties are all proofs of His great mercy. The Lord tells us of this reality in the Qur'an:

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

In this chapter, we consider the wonderful functioning of some human organs, the extraordinary systems required to sustain life, and some of the bodily functions in the hope that readers will realize that only Allah's endless mercy sustains their lives. It must not be forgotten that everything we will sum up in the following paragraphs happens by the endless power and might of our Lord, the only Ruler of the universe. No human being can ever have any influence over the functioning of any of these things.

The 100 trillion cells act as if they knew each other. They carry out their special functions without any negligence or laxity. In this perfect coordination, hormones (*messenger cells*) relay commands that cause physical growth, reproduction, the body's inner balance, the coordination of the nervous system, and many other functions to occur. Allah created these incomparable systems and directs it through cells and hormones without your knowledge and fully out of your *power* to control.

For example, you have nothing to say about how this system functions: you cannot make your height longer, or command your cells to divide, multiply, and make you taller, for all of these have been determined by Allah and cannot be altered. This control is a grace from Allah, for exercising such continual control is beyond any person's ability. A person could never control his own body even if he had to. Or if a human being had such control, human life could never possibly survive. But, in his infinite kindness, Allah creates every cell in the human body and in everything in the world perfectly at the same moment and sustains them all under his control. Thus, we should understand that Allah's mercy encompasses everyone and everything and acknowledge His power.

People do not have to worry or even think about their vital functions while sleeping, for Allah keeps them working perfectly. Indeed, Allah's mercy causes each bodily system to perform its functions silently while sleeping. We never have to worry that one will stop functioning, such as our lungs forgetting to breath.

Capillary vessels carry oxygen, energy, nutrients, hormones, and other materials to every cell. The 5 billion capillary vessels have a total length of 950 kilometers (590 miles). If a person put 10,000 of the smallest capillary vessels side by side, the total thickness would be roughly equivalent to a piece of pencil lead. Blood can move in these narrow vessels, without

getting clogged or slowing down, because of water's high fluidity. Michael Denton, a noted molecular biologist, says: *"A capillary system will work only if the fluid being pumped through its constituent tubes has a very low viscosity. A low viscosity is essential because flow is inversely proportional to the viscosity... From this it is easy to see that if the viscosity of water had a value only a few times greater than it is, pumping blood through a capillary bed would require enormous pressure and almost any sort of circulatory system would be unworkable... If the viscosity of water had been slightly greater and the smallest functional capillaries had been 10 microns in diameter instead of 3, then the capillaries would have to occupy virtually all of the muscle tissue to provide an effective supply of oxygen and glucose. Obviously the design of macroscopic life forms would be impossible or enormously constrained ... It seems, then, the viscosity of water must be very close to what it is if water is to be a fit medium for life"* (Michael Denton, *Nature's Destiny* [Free Press: 1998], 35-36.). In other words, the fluid's fluidity is also ideal for sustaining life. And, Allah created the fluid with these millions of different fluidities and regulates each one of them as exactly as required.

The eye, apart from its front part, is spherical in shape. Its outer surface, a hard resilient stratum with a full white color (the white of the eye), is visible and surrounds the center's colored part. If the white of the eye had a soft, gelatinous consistency, it could not protect the eye effectively. But because it is hard, it can easily rid the eye of such harmful foreign matter as dust with the help of tears.

The hard, resilient tissue covering the eye changes at the cornea, which it is composed of a transparent stratum that allows light to pass through it. Despite the fact that the cornea and the white of the eye both form continuity, their structures are totally different and separated by a distinct boundary. The white of the eye can be compared to the hard granite covering the front of a building; the transparent cornea can be compared to the building's windows. If the cornea's thin tissue covered the whole eye, it would be totally defenseless against external influences, powerless, and blind. If the hard, white tissue that forms the white of the eye extended over the front transparent stratum of the eye, light could not reach the lens and so people could not see. But Allah arranges all of these things perfectly to display His incomparable artistry.

The cornea must always be transparent and sensitive in order to see objects clearly. But when this transparency is lost, one's vision becomes

blurred due to insufficient light. The stratum open to the outside is very sensitive; it can notice the smallest speck of dust that flies into the eye and get rid of it. The cornea is transparent because its fibers are arranged in a delicate order. Any interference with this order will cause the cornea to grow dark and one's vision to blur. The cornea is just as important as a camera lens; it is so clear that it can only be seen when looked at carefully from close up. One of the body's most delicate structures, its surface is composed of invisible nerves and lymphatic vessels that do not interfere with vision. But these do not interfere with vision. These nerves react to the slightest touch, and their reflexes summon such protective mechanisms as the eyelid to assist. The eyelid immediately ejects anything adhering to the cornea, and closing it protects the cornea from other dangers. In one sense, the cornea is like a window behind which the eye works. A grain of sand can scratch it; however, if it is scratched or damaged, it can repair itself rapidly. Thus, people do not have to go through life with blurry vision, as if staring through a hazy curtain. The facts that a living piece of tissue of fibers and blood vessels is as clear and transparent as glass, and that it can make such a difference in our life, are proofs of Allah's wonderful creation.

All of the cells that form this thin, transparent, and delicate living membrane in the eye; that form hard bones and the tissue of the intestines; and those belonging to the blood came about due to the division and multiplication of one cell. As the result of the division of the same cell, rock-hard bones and the cornea as transparent as glass were formed. These cells, all of which are formed from lifeless, unconscious atoms, cannot decide to create such things or design the necessary plans. Allah orders them to do what they do, what organ they form, and what functions they perform.

By the time you finish reading this sentence, your eyes will have performed about 100,000,000 functions. It may be hard to believe, but you have two of the world's most magnificent instruments. Humanity has never been able to produce the like. Your eyes give meaning to whatever you see: family, friends, home, work, and so on. Without them, you could not know the outside world, imagined colors, shapes, views, people's faces, or understand the concept of beauty. Even more amazing, all you have to do to see something is just look at it. It is as simple as that. You do not order your eyes, or the organelles, the nerves connecting the eyes to the brain, and then the brain to Look and see. You only have to look to see. In order to see an object clearly, you cannot calculate the optical measurement of the

radius that your eye's lens needs to make according to its distance from the object, or the delicate proportions of the contraction of the muscles attached to the lens. Many people do not realize what a great miracle this is. But believers know that vision is a wonderful gift from Allah.

The eye is a complex structure that occupies a very small space. Just as valuable jewels are protected in a case, so are our eyes protected against external influences. In proportion to their importance, they are protected because of their superior creation. The eyes rest on a protective cushion of oil connecting the lower bone protrusion with the skull, within sockets surrounded by special tissues. They are protected from external trauma by the nose bone, muscles, and the cheek bones, also known as the eye cavity. Their location is ideal for providing the best vision. For example, their position allows us to control and manage our bodies and limbs in the best possible way and, moreover, ensures their health and security. With a small quick movement of the neck, the eyes ensure that a person does not come into contact with any object that could cause injury. The best location for the eyes is on the face. For example, if they were located under the nose they would not be so secure, would present an esthetically discomforting sight, and limit a person's vision. From all points of view, the eyes are in their ideal place, symmetrical, and esthetically pleasant. The space between them is about the size of one eye. If this proportion were wider or narrower, the whole expression of the face would change. The eye, with all of its characteristics, is proof that human beings were created by Allah. This resulting harmony, symmetry, and esthetical appearance are blessings from Him.

Allah tells human beings about these blessings and wills us to be thankful:

Then [He] formed it [a human body], breathed His Spirit into it, and gave you hearing, sight, and hearts. What little thanks you show! (Surat as-Sajda, 9)

The eyes, the body's windows, look out on the external world. They are protected and maintained by a special system. One of this system's most important parts is the eyelids, which protect the eyes and ensure that the conjunctiva and the cornea are always covered with a certain amount of fluid. The vessels of the conjunctiva, a stratum located on the inside of the eyelids, nourish the eye's outer layer, which receives no oxygen during sleep. The eyelid's skin is very thin, compared to other parts of the body,

and can completely and tightly cover the eye socket when necessary. This skin's lower layer contains no oil, is very loose, and blood can collect in it. If it were thin and oily, opening and closing the eyes would be very difficult. Every day, a person's eyes blink thousands of times. This involuntary and automatic movement, which most people do not pay much - if any - attention to, protects the eyes from contact with intense sunlight and foreign matter. The fact this movement is automatic is a blessing that most people are not aware of. If this cleansing were not automatic, blinking would only remind people that some material needed to be removed from their eyes so that it would not be infected by germs and that they could see clearly. As a result, blinking would be a bother and a person would have to concentrate so as not to forget to blink. This would be a great problem, especially during sleep, as the eyes would dry out if people forgot to blink.

The eyelids, located on the eye's curved surface, are in full contact with the eye's front section as they open and close. If this were not the case, it would be impossible to keep the opening clean and free of foreign matter. An oily secretion from a gland within the eyelids prevents them from sticking together when opening and closing, and facilitates their sliding over the eyes. Such precision shows the protection of the All-Merciful and Most Merciful over us. The eyelid is a grace from Allah, one of countless clear examples of His mercy and compassion.

If the eyelids did not close during sleep, sleeping would be very difficult. A dark room would be needed, and a person would not be able to sleep during the day. Moreover, during sleep the eyes would remain open and thus defenseless before every external influence.

If eyelids did not exist, people would go blind very quickly. The cornea, the eye's top layer, would dry up and cease functioning. The least bit of dust entering the eye would gradually cause major problems, and the eye would be attacked by germs, defenseless against any trauma, and in constant danger of becoming blind. For example, people suffering from lagophthalmia, an illness that prevents the eyelids from completely closing or closing in the normal manner, find themselves faced with the danger that the cornea cannot be lubricated, and infections may arise due to drying. If this illness persists for a long time, the eye can be permanently damaged.

Human reflexes are defined as rapid involuntary reactions to external warnings. This reflex mechanism moves the eyelids at the appropriate time and wards off danger. Something that touches the cornea, the eyelashes,

the area between the eyes, or the forehead may cause a reflex that warns the eyelids. If we examine the network of nerves that produce blinking, we see just how subtle this nerve network really is. To produce each of the reflexes described above, warnings must be carried to the eyelid by different paths and proceed to the brain, where they are evaluated. Nerve stimuli are then sent to the relevant muscles.

In this process, the nerve stimuli reach the brain directly within one one-thousandth of a second. Thus, the eyelid closes at just the right time to protect the eye from the foreign matter or to clean it. This process of recognizing danger and sending various reflexes as signals along separate nerve paths without any confusion is extremely complicated. Human beings, who are surrounded by constantly changing conditions, must know what is going on around them. For this reason, blinking is such a quick action that it does not endanger the person in any way, which is truly a great blessing. It would be very dangerous if blinking lasted a long time. At a moment when a person was engaged in blinking, perhaps he might not notice a truck coming at him and be able to escape. The eye—a human being's window on the outside world—is protected in all these ways; it is an example of the blessings of Allah in this world.

Most people think of tears as just *salty water*. However, in reality they are composed of a very special fluid whose components differ according to their various functions. The tears' first duty is to protect the eyes from germs. *Lysozyme*, an enzyme found in tears, destroys many kinds of bacteria and germs and thus protects the eyes from infection. This material is more effective than the powerful disinfectants used to clean buildings from germs. And yet it does not harm the eyes, for Allah created it to be in perfect harmony with the eye's chemical structure. No other disinfectant of such power can be used in the eyes, and no artificial disinfectant can replace human tears.

Tears are produced according to very delicate measurements that provide the right amounts to protect the cornea from drying out and the eyeball from losing its lubrication. Thus, the eye can move comfortably, for no discomfort is produced when the inside of the eyelid moves against the eye's surface. If some foreign matter enters the eye, tear production increases automatically, the presence of more lysozyme acts as an antiseptic, and the increased amount of fluid ejects it. If sufficient tears were not produced, the resulting (and constant) friction between the eye and the eyelid whenever our eyes moved would torment us. We can get an

idea of this when eyes, for whatever reason, cannot produce tears: The person always feels a burning sensation in his or her eyes, which swell, get red and, in advanced states, may destroy the person's eyes.

Eyelashes protect the eye from dust and foreign matter. If they are plucked or cut off, they grow again. When they reach their former length, they cease to grow. Eyelashes are smooth, soft, and curl upwards. Their curved and elastic form occurs with the help of a greasy secretion from the sebaceous glands, known as the glands of Zeis, inside the eyelids. If this were not the case, one's eyelashes would be like a brush, and every blink would engender an uncomfortable sticking feeling. Our eyebrows prevent sweat from dripping into our eyes, break up the Sun's rays, and prevent them from shining in our eyes. Besides this, they complete the esthetic appearance of a person's eyes, for Allah has created human beings to be beautiful in every detail.

In addition to tears, the eye has a lubrication system. The eyes move in every direction about one hundred thousand times a day, and this system protects them from becoming worn out. This constant lubrication which produces no discomfort when the eyes move, protects the eyes from the effects of friction and foreign matter. If a serious problem arose with the conjunctiva and lubrication could not occur, every movement of the eye would cause unendurable pain. However, thanks to this flawless system, a healthy person never experiences such discomfort.

Our five senses have been created to meet our needs. For example, our ears hear sound waves only between certain limits. At first, it might appear advantageous to hear a wide range of sound waves, but this limit of perception (the *sound threshold*), has been set for a particular purpose. If we had more sensitive ears, we would hear all sorts of sounds, from our heart beats to the rustling of microscopic bugs in the ground. This would make us very uncomfortable. The flawless creation in our ears and our hearing is a gracious gift from Allah. In this regard, the Lord says in the Qur'an:

He has created hearing, sight, and hearts for you. What little thanks you show. (Surat al-Muminun, 78)

When you eat, your digestive system starts working. The teeth, which have been specially created to tear and grind the food, are covered with

enamel, the hardest known organic material, and are highly resistant to chemical substances. Every tooth is shaped to suit its function. For example, ten sharp teeth cut the food, the canine teeth are pointed to tear the food into pieces, and the molars are designed to grind the food. If our teeth were all the same shape, eating would be impossible. Moreover, each tooth is in its proper place: The incisors are in the front the molars are in the back. No other arrangement would be suitable. The upper and lower teeth are independent of one another, yet enjoy a relationship of perfect harmony. They are designed to press against one another when the mouth is closed. For example, if one molar were longer than the other teeth or if it protruded too much, you could not close your mouth or speak and eat as you do now.

Food is both ground by the teeth and attacked by chemicals found in one's saliva. No one really pays attention to their saliva, whether it is being secreted or not, or in what amount. But saliva, usually considered a simple secretion, is actually a special balance of various chemicals. First of all, it allows us to taste our food by recognizing the food molecules that give food its taste. Only when these combine with the tongue's taste-sensing nerve endings can we taste food. This is also why we cannot taste food when our mouth is dry. The mouth secretes two kinds of saliva. One of them decomposes carbohydrates and changes them partly into sugar. For example, bread is a carbohydrate. If you put a piece of bread in your mouth and wait for a moment without chewing, you will sense the taste of sugar on your tongue from the decomposing carbohydrates. The other kind of saliva has a dense sticky consistency that causes whatever you eat come together in a shape like a piece of syrupy cake so that you can swallow it. Without saliva, we could not swallow, taste our food, talk comfortably, or eat solid food. This would be a very difficult situation for us.

Saliva secreted from three different glands enables us to swallow our food easily and its chemical components breaks this food down into useful parts. Our mouths work like a chemistry laboratory that breaks down the starch in our food. Salivary amylase, an enzyme found in saliva that is specially produced for this work, breaks down starch and converts it into sugar. This process of digestion that happens in the mouth is chemical and mechanical (viz., the teeth), two distinct kinds of digestion that complement each other.

The tongue plays an important part in grinding the food, for it is very sensitive to taste and allows chewed food to pass easily through the throat.

On its top surface and sides are about 10,000 taste buds that are sensitive to the four tastes: bitter, sweet, salty, and sour. Through them, we can taste what we eat, even if we have never eaten that particular item before, because they do not confuse the tastes and each individual perceives the same taste in the same food. In other words, bitter is always bitter, regardless of who is doing the eating and tasting.

Some scientists regard the tongue as having an extraordinary chemical technology. If it had only a few taste buds, we could not perceive the taste of each piece of candy, grilled meat, bread, or any other food. No matter what we ate, it would always have the same insipid taste. Eating would no longer be an enjoyable blessing and would become an irksome duty.

The stomach's various functions display a wonderful balance. Digestion is accomplished by the stomach's hydrochloric acid, which is so strong that it can both digest food and decompose the stomach's lining. But Allah created the perfect solution for this: The stomach's walls are completely covered by the mucus secreted during digestion, which protects the stomach against the acid's corrosive quality. However, there is a perfect harmony between this digestive acid and the protective mucus. When the stomach is empty, the secretion decomposes protein (meat products) and does not have its corrosive quality. When food containing protein enters the stomach, a compound secreted into the stomach turns this benign substance into a powerful decomposer of protein. So, when the stomach is empty, this powerful protein decomposer does not harm the stomach, which is made up of protein. This is an extraordinary example of how Allah protects human beings.

Breathing depends on delicate balances. If we breathe cold or dirty air, our health may be adversely affected. Our noses have been created to warm and purify this air. For example, its hairs and inner sticky material catches dust from the air and filters it, and its curves warm the air. The bones inside the nose are created in such a way that air passing through it is warmed up before entering the lungs. The fact that air is directed to the lungs by such an intricate system is proof that Allah, in His mercy, created both systems. As a result, we breathe warm, moist, and purified air. The delicate adjustment of the atmosphere and the perfect design of all the aspects of our nose have been specially created. We can see Allah's protection and His mercy and compassion for human beings in every detail.

Your survival depends upon the amount of sugar in your body remaining between certain limits. When you eat food containing sugar, the necessary calculations are done automatically. For example, when the amount of sugar in our blood rises, the pancreas secretes insulin, which commands the liver and other bodily cells to recover and store the excess sugar so that it will not reach dangerous levels. Besides controlling these things, your pancreas, insulin, and liver maintain this balance. If two containers of blood with different sugar levels were placed in front of you, could one determine the difference between them without the presence of a laboratory and advanced instruments? However, Allah has made such an analysis automatic, for certain cells measure the blood's sugar level more precisely than any laboratory could do and then take the appropriate measures: locate the sugar in the blood, separate it, and burn it. This is an incomparable protective system, because too much sugar in the blood could be fatal.

The skeleton, the body's structural support, is a wonder of engineering. It protects the body's essential organs (e.g., the brain, heart, and lungs) and enables movement far beyond the ability of any artificial machine. Its bones have a superior structure. For example, the thigh bone, when standing upright, can lift a ton. And at every step, a weight equal to three times the body's weight is put on this bone. When a pole-vaulter lands on the ground, his or her thigh bone is subjected to a pressure of 1,400 kilos (3,086 pound) per square centimeter. What makes this bone, the result of a single cell's division, so strong? The answer is hidden in its incomparable creation, which makes bones extremely strong and light enough to be managed. Otherwise, if each bone was strong inside and out and not hollow, it would be too heavy for a person to carry, and its structure would be so hard and brittle that it would break at the slightest trauma. This wonderful creation allows us to live very comfortably and make difficult movements without pain.

Another characteristic of the bones' structure is that they are flexible wherever flexibility is required. For example, the rib cage protects the heart and the lungs and expands and contracts to allow the lungs to breathe. This flexibility can change with time, such as when a woman's pelvic bones become loose and separate from each other in the last months of pregnancy. This is very important, because it allows the baby's head to come out without being crushed. The skeleton's capacity for movement is a manifestation of Allah's endless compassion.

At every step we take, the vertebrae that make up our spinal column move on top of one another. This continual movement and friction could cause the vertebrae to wear away. However, this is prevented by the resilient cartilage (disks) located between them to serve as shock absorbers. Moreover, every step sends a reactive force, due to the body's weight, from the ground to the body. This force does not harm the body, because these shock absorbers and their folded force-dispersing shape do not allow the force from the ground to be carried directly to the brain. As a result, the top of the spinal cord cannot break through the skull and pierce the brain.

All of these details are proof of Allah's wondrous creation. Allah loves all people and so manifests His pity and mercy to them. Every blessing and perfect design He creates are designed to give us comfort. Also, He has created human beings in an aesthetically beautiful way. Even looking at the human body from the outside reveals His perfect artistry. It says in Surah Ghafir:

Allah made Earth a stable home for you and the sky a dome; and formed you, giving you the best of forms; and provided you with good and wholesome things. That is Allah, your Lord. Blessed be Allah, the Lord of all the worlds. (Surah Ghafir, 64)

The joints that attach the bones to each other are also great miracles. Although they move as long as the person is alive, they do not need to be lubricated, for the surfaces where they receive friction are covered with a thin, porous layer of cartilage below which is a dark, slippery fluid. If part of the joint is under pressure, the fluid squirts from the pores, making the joint's surface as slippery as oil. Therefore, human beings can perform many actions quickly and comfortably. What if our leg consisted only of one bone? Walking would certainly be a major problem, and our bodies would be extremely clumsy and slow-moving. It would even be hard for us to sit down, and the danger of breaking a leg because of the strain of such movements would be constant. However, our skeleton allows the body to move with ease, truly a great mercy. Allah reveals in the Qur'an as follows:

Look at the bones - how We raise them up and clothe them in flesh. (Surat al-Baqara, 259)

Think of a long piece of tissue. It has the ability to become warm or cool, is strong but beautiful, and can protect what it covers against every kind of external influence. Our skin has all of these characteristics. If just

one part of it is damaged, we may die because of significant water loss. If we remove one centimeter (0.3 inch) of skin, we will see underneath it is something not so pleasing to look at: fats, proteins, and blood vessels. The skin, covering up all of these unsightly things, contributes an important aesthetic quality to our bodies as well as protecting us from all external influences.

By creating our skin, Allah gave us a beautiful appearance and, because of its underlying material, allowed us to be aware of our vulnerability. Skin is more important than ears, nose, or eyes. We can live without the other sense organs, but we cannot survive without skin, for without skin, the body could not retain the water that forms a significant part of our body.

The skin is resilient and flexible. While a significant number of cells on its upper layer are dead, those on its lower layer are alive. The former soon begin to lose their character as cells and turn into keratin, a hard substance that holds dead cells together and enables them to form a protective armor for the body. You might think that if the skin were harder and thicker, its protective qualities would increase. But this is not the case. If our skin was as thick as that of elephants or rhinoceroses, our bodies would be able to move only with great difficulty. If the cells in the skin's upper layer were constantly dying, our skin would continue to thicken until it became too thick. But this never occurs; the skin is always just as thick as it needs to be. The cells that make up skin tissue cannot decide when to stop, nor can this whole system have come into being by chance. There is an obvious design in its structure, and its designer is Allah.

The skin contains mechanisms that enable it to cool down in hot weather. In cold weather, it maintains the body's heat by slowing down its sweat glands and narrowing its blood vessels. This decreased blood flow prevents the body's heat from escaping. The skin both protects us and acts as a climate-control device and, because of its elasticity, enables us to move easily. Besides, it is very aesthetic. Our skin could have been hard, thick, and course; or so inelastic that it could have split when we put on a bit of weight; or could have caused us to faint in the summer and freeze in the winter. But He covered us in the most comfortable, convenient, and aesthetic way, for **“He is Allah—the Creator, the Maker, the Giver of Form”** (Surat al-Hashr, 24).

The most important part of our body is surely the heart. Its creation, based on extremely delicate balances, consists of four chambers that pump blood throughout the body without mixing purified and non-purified blood and contains small safety valves. Our heart always beats at a certain tempo—an obvious proof of His name the All-Merciful and Most Merciful. It begins to beat while the embryo is still in the mother's womb, and beats at a rate of 70-100 beats per minute (about 10,000 times per day) until the person dies, with only a half-a-second wait between beats. All of its elements function in a very delicate way. Every detail (e.g., pure blood being separated from impure blood, blood pressure, delivering nutrients to the body) was created for a specific function and designed accordingly. Located in the rib cage, it is well-protected from external trauma.

The amount of blood pumped changes according to the body's needs. Under normal conditions, the heart beats 70 times a minute. Our muscles need more oxygen during times of intense exercise, and so the heart rate goes up to 180 and the amount of blood pumped increases. If this did not happen, the body's balances would break down and damage would occur. However, without any intervention on our part, the heart itself adjusts the amount of blood to be pumped.

A special nerve system controls the amount of blood to be pumped and adjusts both the amount and the rate at which it must be pumped. The heart's elements, also without our intervention, adjust how much blood is needed and where and when it is needed. Since the heart could not form itself, and since this wonderful system could not have come into being by chance, the heart must have been created. Allah, in His eternal knowledge, is responsible for this amazing creation and uses it to display His flawless artistry. The fact that such subtlety, order, and perfection could come together in one plan is a sign of His love and compassion.

Our hands do normal things like stirring tea, turning pages, and writing. But these are really wonders of engineering. The hand, a perfect proof of creation, has several different functions. For example, when clenched into a fist it can hit any object with a force of 45 kilograms (99 pounds); at the same time, it can sense a piece of paper one tenth of a millimeter thick when held between the thumb and the index finger. We can see that these two functions are totally different from each other: the first requires delicacy, while the second requires great force. But when we pick up a sheet of paper or hit something with our fist, we do not consider how

to perform these functions or adjust the needed force. The hand has been created to do all of these things at the same time. All of its fingers, which are proportionate to one another, have the correct length and location to perform their functions. For example, the force behind the blow of a fist with a normal thumb differs from the blow of a fist with a short thumb, for the thumb with the appropriate length can fold over the other fingers, support them, and increase their force. And when we add the fact that hands can work together in perfect harmony, we can see its perfected creation more clearly. Allah created our pair of hands to show us the incomparable perfection of His creative artistry. The universe's perfect creation is found at its highest level in the human body, every detail of which is a perfect proof of His name the All-Merciful and Most Merciful.

Blood flows in a network of vessels resembling an immense river that flows to every part of the body, carrying packets of material that the cells need to function properly: food, water, and chemical material. The package that needs to be delivered most urgently is oxygen, because cells die very quickly without it. We cannot feel or see this river flowing through our body, from the outside, for the two millimeters (0.07 inches) of skin covering the body hides them masterfully. But despite this, the skin can easily be cut and allow the underlying blood to escape. If the blood vessels were not covered by the thin and aesthetic skin, even the face of most beautiful person would be too ugly and repulsive to look at. This esthetical appearance is a wonderful grace from Allah the All-Merciful.

The most miraculous quality of blood is its ability to clot, which minimize the loss of blood due to an injury. Scientists have pointed to this clotting mechanism as an example of a perfect plan and creation, for all of the involved proteins, enzymes, and vitamins go about their tasks in perfect order. The body bleeds when it receives the occasional scratch or cut. Normally, we would expect the blood to flow out of such a cut; instead, it clots and plugs up the opening. This operation is like the repairing and stopping up of a hole in the bottom of a bottle so that the water will not run out. This is certainly a great miracle, for it enables people to go on living.

Allah, in His endless mercy and compassion, protects people by this wonderful process. Clotting is the result of many enzymes coming together. Composed of proteins and different kinds of lifeless, unconscious, and blind atoms, every one of them starts to function whenever a wound occurs by organizing themselves to stop the flow of blood. For examples, they produce the required proteins as medicine and send messages to others for

help; the others understand the message, immediately go to place indicated, and perform their duties perfectly. The system works flawlessly. If the blood started to clot without a wound, or if the clot left its place around a wound, or if there was a breakdown of communication between the proteins involved ... if any of these things happened, the way to the body's vital organs would be stopped up and death would occur through blood loss.

Blood clotting is not limited to visible wounds, for it also repairs the many tears that happen every day unnoticed by us in capillary vessels. When we hit a table with our leg, many capillary vessels are ripped and internal bleeding occurs. However, the clotting system stops this bleeding immediately and repairs the damage from inside. Without this clotting system, all of us would have hemophilia and would, in the advanced stages of this disease, be unable to stop even a small wound from bleeding. In other words, we would be in constant danger of bleeding to death. Every detail of this clotting system is a product of a separate plan and creation; a demonstration of Allah's eternal knowledge, intelligence, and power.

The human body is surrounded by several dangerous enemies: bacteria, viruses, and similar microscopic creatures found in the air and water, as well as our food and environment. But Allah has created for each body a wonderful protective system. For example, the keratin in the cells located on the skin's outer surface effectively prevents any foreign elements, such as bacteria and fungus, to penetrate the skin. In addition, this layer continually sheds and is replaced by new skin from below. So, any unwanted microorganisms that seep between the skin layers are removed along with the dead skin. These enemies can enter the skin only through a wound.

Viruses can enter the body through the air, but a special secretion in the nose's mucus and the lungs' protective cell-eating elements (phagocytes) is usually able to deal with such situations before the danger increases. The majority of germs that enter the body through food are destroyed by acid in the stomach and tiny digestive enzymes in the intestines. All of these defense mechanisms are created with a superior system that also fights against its enemies by a Creator with superior knowledge and power. This Creator, Who protects people from any hardship and difficulty with His endless mercy and compassion is Allah, the All-Merciful.

Breathing, eating, and walking are quite normal activities. However, most of us never wonder how these vital activities happen. For example, we

do not think about how certain foods benefit our bodies or that vitamins and proteins separate from each other and go to the organ where they belong, in what proportion they will mix with our blood, or the exact amount required. When we think we want to eat something good, a vast and extremely complex network in our body starts to perform the necessary work for us, by Allah's inspiration, in order to separate the harmful from the beneficial, and to use what is beneficial and expel what is harmful or unnecessary. All of this is an important sign of Allah's love, mercy, and compassion, for we do not have to think about it. It simply occurs, as that was how He created each system.

Pain is a mercy from Allah. Many people are not aware that this is a blessing, for they never consider that pain makes them aware that something is wrong in their body and that they should go to the doctor. If there were no pain, how would people know that they have stomach problems or kidney stones? If this were not known, the illness would remain unknown until it intensified and somehow became noticeable. But, in His mercy, Allah makes people feel the symptoms of every illness, thereby enabling them to be diagnosed in advance.

The sense of smell is an incomparable manifestation of Allah as the All-Merciful and Most Merciful. Such smells as those that belong to roses, carnations, lilacs, jasmine, lavender, grass, spring flowers, orange, tangerine and lemon blossoms, various aromas, spices, toast, tea and coffee at breakfast, meat cooking on the grill, or the clean smell of soap are blessings from His endless generosity. What we define as smell is actually molecules that are released from objects. For example, what we perceive as the smell of freshly ground coffee is actually the pleasant aroma of airborne molecules carrying the coffee's smell. The more intensely molecules are given off, the stronger the smell is. The reason a cake cooking in the oven smells more than a stale cake is because it releases more particles into the surrounding environment, since heat allows the molecules of smell to move freely and spread over a wide area.

At this point, we should take note of the order and delicate balances in human life. Some things have no smell, such as stones, steel, and glass, because they do not give off molecules at room temperature. If everything in your room had a smell, you would be rather uncomfortable. Another interesting and important fact is that water, even though it evaporates at low temperatures, has no smell. So, there would be no difference between a dry rose and one that had been recently watered and still had drops of

water on it. In other words, the rose's natural scent would not be destroyed. And the water vapor in the air would make the smell stronger. For example, water molecules that evaporate after a rainfall raise particles of smell from flowers into the air and help these pleasant scents permeate the surroundings.

The variety of smells is a wonderful gift from Allah. It is still unknown how many scents exist in nature, for we can never know the number of different molecules. Attempts have been made to categorize scents, but there is such an extraordinary variety of smells that no satisfactory grouping has ever emerged. Allah, Who created this world's blessings to satisfy our needs and Who created these things to benefit us, created them to speak to our spirits and give us pleasure. The magnificent aromas of food and plants are proofs of His compassion. A pleasant smell is not a necessity; rather, it is something beautiful that pleases human beings and their spirits. Allah's goodness is great, His generosity is limitless, and He offers good things to humanity.

The characteristics of different smells come from the microscopic differences in molecules. For example, the difference between a freshly cooked egg and a rotten egg is the difference in the structure of the particles they spread in the air. The differences between molecules' chemical structures depend on very delicate distinctions. So, just changing one carbon atom could make a pleasant smell repulsive. The creation at every point in the universe is also noticeable in the structure of molecules of smell. The particular aromas of cacao, lavender, flowers, and strawberries come from the atoms that produce the smell molecules and the special ordering of the relation among them. Every molecule has been planned to fulfill its special purpose. Certainly, this wondrous plan belongs to Allah, for **"He created everything and determined it most exactly"** (Surat al-Furqan, 2). And all of these details have been created so that people can take greater pleasure in His blessings, which in itself is a grace from His eternal generosity.

There is a very delicate balance between smells and our pleasure. We enjoy the smells of things that are good for us, but are repelled by the smell of things that are harmful for us. The smells coming from food that is good for our bodies awake in us a sense of pleasure and arouse our interest. When we are hungry, the smell of cooking food makes us want to eat. So, we take pleasure in eating and also fulfill our bodily needs. Again, while our bodies are busy digesting the food and feel no need for more food, the smell of food is not very attractive to us. The smells we describe as bad

usually come from things that are harmful to us. We can easily identify poisonous chemicals from their bad smell. Also, bad smells due to bacterial infections, such as rotten fruit or spoiled food, warn us not to eat them. The heavy smell spread around by a rotten fruit or spoiled food warns people of the danger.

Such delicate balances are also evident in the sense of smell, which is ordered to fulfill every creature's needs. Let's take a human being as an example. If our sense of smell were weaker, we could not be aware of some dangerous situations. If it were as strong as a dog's, our attention would be distracted every moment and we would be very uncomfortable. These balances can be seen in each molecule's structure. For example, a pleasant smell is not pleasing if it is too overpowering. Many plants have very pleasant smells, but a strong essence made from them does not please us. This shows that their scents have been created to please human beings as a blessing from the All-Merciful and Most Merciful, Who created the attractive scents in the plants we need for food. His generosity and grace are without limit, and in His endless compassion and mercy, He has made us like what is good for us and dislike those which are bad for us. We should thank Him for these blessings, instead of taking them for granted. If Allah do desires, those who do this, will have forever the real blessings of Paradise. However, those who are ungrateful enough to deny Allah's blessings will live forever without them in Hell.

The sense of taste is one of His incomparable blessings. Besides the wonderful tastes of such foods as meats, fish, vegetables, soups, salads, pastries, sweets, savories, fruits, jams, ice cream and candied fruit, Allah has created systems in our body that allow us to distinguish their tastes. Two of these systems, the senses of taste and smell, are very important for us. We can only discover the richness of the world of taste and smell through the agency of taste and smell. Without these systems, there would be no meaning to the ideas of a delicious taste or a pleasant smell. If we could not appreciate such fine smells and tastes, we would not know what a strawberry was. We use our senses of taste and smell as soon as we are born, and perceive an infinite number of them throughout our lives because of these wonderful systems. Even more amazing is that this all happens without our conscious effort.

Of course, we must think carefully about these things, and there is no doubt that, like everything else we possess, Almighty Allah, Lord of the universe has created them. If we examine the sense of taste and smell, we

see that these systems are full of amazing proofs of creation. The Qur'an speaks of the perfection in Allah's creation:

He is Allah - the Creator, the Maker, the Giver of Form. To Him belong the Most Beautiful Names. Everything in the heavens and Earth glorifies Him. He is the Almighty, the All-Wise. (Surat al-Hashr, 24)

The human body needs food and water to continue its vital functions. We meet the needs of its trillions of cells by eating and drinking so that each cell can acquire the energy it needs to function properly. We make a variety of decisions while eating: Is the food nourishing and healthy, or is it rotten and potentially dangerous? Does the food taste bitter, salty, or acidic? Does it contain the necessary mineral salts and fluids, amino acids used in the synthesis of cell protein, carbohydrates to meet our energy needs, and fats?

Moreover, we know how to maintain our health. For example, when we feel out of sorts, we choose foods rich in vitamins, minerals, and sugars. When our blood pressure drops, we eat salty foods; when it rises, we avoid such foods and beverages. Our sense of taste analyses proteins, ions, complex molecules, and many chemical compounds; it works unceasingly throughout our lives on our behalf. And, as it provides our daily nutritional needs, we enjoy the incomparable tastes of food, drink, fruit, pastry, and candied fruit. We can enjoy such wonderful things because of the sense of taste that Allah, in His endless generosity, has placed at our service. The Qur'an tells us that Allah has created good, clean food for human beings:

Allah made Earth a stable home for you and the sky a dome; formed you, giving you the best of forms; and provided you with good and wholesome things. That is Allah, your Lord. Blessed be Allah, the Lord of all the worlds. (Surah Ghafir, 64)

MANIFESTATIONS OF ALLAH AS THE ALL MERCIFUL AND MOST MERCIFUL IN THE LIFE IN THIS WORLD

There are many fine proofs in this world of living creatures of Allah's manifestation as al-Badee' (*The Originator; the Innovative Creator*), for **"... the Originator of the heavens and Earth. When He decides on something, He**

just says to it, 'Be!' and it is."(Surat al-Baqara, 117). Allah's knowledge is without limit. He created everything that surrounds us without a model; created a flawless system of atoms, molecules, cells, living creatures, planets, stars, and galaxies; and everything that exists, from the micro-world to the heavenly bodies. The Qur'an tells us:

Say: "My Lord has commanded justice. Stand and face Him at each (time and place) of prostration and call upon Him, making your religion sincerely His. As He originated you, so will you return." (Surat al-A'raf, 29)

He is the Originator of the heavens and Earth. How could He have a son when He has no wife? He created all things and has knowledge of all things. (Surat al-An'am, 101)

Allah created everything in an amazing order. The heavenly bodies and the millions of creatures on Earth live their lives in wonderful harmony. The order in nature has been stable since the time it was established. And when we examine life on Earth, we encounter countless amazing proofs of creation. Such order in the universe and, as a result, the existence of life in this world, can continue only because a Creator with supreme intelligence created everything in harmony:

Do you not see how He created seven heavens in layers, placed the Moon as a light in them, and made the Sun a blazing lamp? Allah caused you to grow from the soil [and] then will return you to it and bring you out again. Allah has spread the land out as a carpet for you so that you can use its wide valleys as roadways. (Surah Nuh, 15-20)

Thinking about the name the All-Merciful and Most Merciful helps people see these proofs and appreciate the blessings placed at their service. In the following pages, we will show proofs of Allah's mercy. Although we come across them constantly, many of us do not recognize them for what they are; rather, we think of them as ordinary occurrences.

Consider the example of rain. One of its measurements is related to how heavily it falls. A body of the same size and weight as a raindrop, if released from a height of 1,200 meters (3,940 feet), will gradually increase in speed and fall to Earth at about 558 kilometers per hour (346 miles per hour). However, the speed of raindrop is only 8-10 kilometers per hour (5-6 miles per hour), because it has a shape that increases the friction in the atmosphere and allows it to fall at a far lower speed. If a raindrop had a different shape or there was no friction in the atmosphere, every rainfall would cause great disasters on Earth.

About 70 percent of the human body is composed of water. Our cells contain more water than anything else, and our blood is largely water. This is true of any living creature. In fact, life cannot exist without water. If the laws of nature permitted matter to exist only in a hard or a gaseous state, life would never have come to be. The atoms found in hard matter are compact and motionless, and so could not allow the dynamic molecular activity needed for living organisms to develop. The atoms found in gas are free, volatile, and unstable. Under such conditions, the complex mechanisms of living organisms cannot function. The best liquid environment for life, therefore, is water, which is **"... the handiwork of Allah, Who gives to everything its solidity."** (Surat an-Naml, 88)

Water's fluidity is very important for each cell's internal activities and for the circulation system. All living things larger than a quarter of a millimeter have circulation systems. After reaching this size, such a system is needed to transport nutrients and oxygen to and from the cell's fluid. The body contains countless cells, and thus needs some channels to deliver

oxygen and energy and other channels to collect the waste products. These channels are the blood vessels, and the heart is the pump that ensures the flow of blood in these vessels. (If the cells, proteins, and hormones in the blood are removed, the remaining plasma is 95 percent water.) So, water's fluidity is critical for the efficient functioning of the circulation system. For example, if water's fluidity was the same as that of tar, no heart could pump it.

Water has the same fluidity as olive oil, which is 100 million times more fluid than tar. Even if the heart could pump tar, it would flow with great difficulty and could never enter the body's millions of capillary vessels. Unlike any other fluid, water's physical and chemical properties were designed to sustain human life. The world was created for human life; it also came alive through water, which was specially created as the foundation of human life, for everything that we eat from the soil comes about because of water. Thus, water is a very important blessing:

He [Allah] sends down water from the sky. From it you drink, and from it come the shrubs among which you graze your herds. And by it He makes crops grow for you, as well as olives, dates, grapes, and fruit of every kind. There is certainly a Sign in that for people who reflect. (Surat an-Nahl, 10-11)

Allah created all of these systems so that everything would live because of water. He created the world with rivers and other sources of water, and brings forth the clouds and makes it rain. Allah created everything in such harmony and interdependence that conscious people will see that there is only one Allah and that He created all of these things. They will also understand that Allah is very generous in His love and mercy for humanity.

Many people may never have considered what a colorful world they live in or why so many colors exist. They have never thought of what a world without color would be like. Everyone with ordinary vision encounters a world of color from the moment they are born. A dark and colorless world is not inconceivable; but the amazing thing is that we are living at this moment in a bright, colorful world. When someone mentions a colorless world, we may think of tones of black, white, and gray. However, these are colors. As a result, when we try to describe colorlessness, we are obliged to use the idea of color. We may try to express this idea as: "Everything is

colorless; there is no color in your face; it is completely white.” But these words describe a world characterized by the colors of black and white.

Imagine that everything surrounding you has lost its color. In such a situation, it would be impossible to distinguish separate objects, for one would blend into the other. For example, you could not see an orange, a strawberry, or a flower on a brown table, because there would be no colors to distinguish them. Naturally, we would soon become tired of living in such a world. Therefore, colors are a wonderful blessing from Allah, a gift of His incomparable gift that leads us toward contentment and joy. Allah has endowed the whole universe with matchless beauty. His name as-Sani’ (The Artificer; The Maker) expresses the idea that incomparable beauty, subtle artistry, harmony, and goodness is reflected in everything He has created.

Allah created many different creatures to reflect this name, and none of them resembles another in outward appearance. He created a tropical bird’s wings and a flower’s leaves with phosphorescent colors, gave a butterfly’s wings various tones; and made reptiles, birds, and sea animals bear no resemblance to each other. His endless artistry can also be seen in the millions of different plants and flowers: **“And also the things of varying colors He has created for you in the Earth...”** (Surat an-Nahl, 13). Every one is different from another in scent, shape, color, and symmetry. For example, orchids have hundreds of different appearances and many colors, and roses appear in many different colors and particular shades. Such colors, shades, and lines are signs of art. Everywhere we look, we encounter examples of this art that belongs to the eternal artistry of the Supreme Artist: Allah.

In the world of creatures, the human eye is the most functional when it comes to perceiving the minutest variation of color, for it was created to function in a world of color. And so only we can understand this and conclude that everything that exists, including every detail and color, were created so that we may perceive, consider, and understand their order. Every color has been arranged to please the human spirit. The animate and inanimate worlds are dominated by a perfect symmetry and harmony of color. Just as thinking people realize immediately that a painting was painted by an artist, they also understand that their colorful, bright, symmetrical, and esthetically beautiful surroundings are the work of a Creator. Using no models for His creation, Allah created these colors and everything else in harmony with each other, and placed us in this world with its infinite number of colors and beautiful blessings.

Our world contains countless beings that we can and cannot see: single celled organisms, plants, insects, sea creatures, birds, reptiles, and so on. When we look at the soil, we see a variety of creatures that bear no resemblance to each other. The same applies to the air we breathe. Minute creatures that you have never heard of live on your skin, and each living creature's intestines contain millions of bacteria and single-celled organisms required to digest food. At the same time, our planet contains far more animals than people. When plants are added, it becomes quite clear that every piece of this planet contains some form of life, each of which has its own physical systems, way of life, and different characteristics. The most important thing is that all of them were created for a specific purpose: to balance creation, which benefits us and give us pleasure. Wherever we look and whatever we observe, we see manifestations of His name the All-Merciful and Most Merciful, for only He supplies them with the countless benefits that they need to live and survive.

One of the most important elements that give the universe its harmony is its symmetry. Every living creature, be it a seed, a fruit, or a leaf, has its own symmetrical structure. Pick up a leafy plant and notice how its leaves spiral around the stem, which forms an obvious symmetry. There is a clear order in the structure of a seed's nucleus and in the ordering of a leaf's veins, as well as symmetry in a butterfly's wings, each of which has the same shade of color and the same line. The matchless order and magnificent artistry in living creatures is meant to speak to the human spirit, to give pleasure to human beings, for no other creature can appreciate such art and beauty. Non-symmetrical views are tiring and unpleasant, for confusion and disharmony do not speak to the human spirit. As a result, everything in creation reflects the value He places on humanity and the love and compassion He has for us.

Each animal's colors, patterns, spots, and stripes have a specific function, such as to communicate and to warn enemies. So, each color's shade and each stripe's direction were especially determined. If we observe creation carefully, we see that everything is just how it should be so that we may enjoy it, such as the refreshing blue sky, colorful flowers, green trees and grass, the Moon in the black sky that shines on our world, and the stars. In this perfect creation, Allah showed His mercy toward human beings and animals, for **"My mercy extends to all things"** (Surat al-A'raf, 156). Allah holds everything under His control and His glory is majestic. The most important duty that falls to someone who recognizes Allah's endless mercy

and generosity toward His servants is to put forth every effort to win His favor and to be worthy of His blessings.

MANIFESTATION OF ALLAH AS THE ALL MERCIFUL AND MOST MERCIFUL IN THE CREATION OF ANIMALS

We can also see clear proofs of Allah's endless mercy, compassion, and generosity in the world of animals. It is yet another proof of the All Merciful and Most Merciful Allah's compassion that He made animals to serve people as providers of meat, milk, leather, and honey, and for carrying people and loads, drawing chariots, and for hunting.

The gentle expression on the faces of young animals, their helplessness and obedience, are manifestations of Allah's compassion and love. Even young wolves, jackals, tigers, and crocodiles – all wild animals, awaken feelings of pity and compassion in human beings. This is a clear manifestation of Allah as the All-Merciful.

Every new-born animal is weak and helpless. Knowing nothing of the surrounding danger, it needs a protector to feed it so that it can grow up to be strong and survive. There is almost no chance of its surviving on its own. This role is filled by its parents, who will protect it from danger, feed it and, if necessary, give their lives for it, just as human parents do for their own young.

Weak and helpless baby animals can only survive if they are protected by strong adults. Their parents never neglect them and untiringly take on every responsibility for them. Some parents even do this when their young are still in the egg.

The most savage animals have great compassion for their young and protect them from danger at the cost of their own lives. Crocodiles carry their young in their mouths; birds collect branches and twigs to make nests, chirp shrilly to warn the flock of danger, and pretend to be wounded in order to draw an enemy's attention to themselves; zebras place themselves between a young zebra and its enemy; penguins sit on their eggs without moving for months and, during snowstorms, carry them between their feet without eating any thing.

Such types of behavior are amazing examples of self-sacrifice. But since animals have no intelligence, consciousness, or awareness, we can understand that Allah inspires these things in them. Allah, the All-Merciful and Most Merciful, makes wild animals serve their young. All animals show

wonderful examples of self-sacrifice and feed their young with a great sense of duty. In His mercy, Allah supplies all animals with the food they need. These are just a few of the millions of proofs we will see when we look at the lives of animals.

The crocodile, one of the most savage animals in existence, pays great attention to its young. After the young hatch, the mother carries them in her mouth to the water. Until they can look after themselves, she carries them in her mouth or on her back. Her mouth is the most secure place for them, for it is a sack that has been created to carry and protect about six babies. Whenever they sense danger, young crocodiles hurry to this protective shelter. However, given that crocodiles are both savage and unaware, one would not expect them to protect their young, but to eat them indiscriminately. But Allah inspires them not to do so, for He is the merciful protector of every creature.

Even the python, which can be very dangerous, protects her eggs. She usually lays about 100 eggs at a time and then coils herself around them to provide shade to cool them in hot weather, and causes her body to shiver to warm them up in cold weather. This arrangement also protects them from other dangers.

Why do these animals protect their young and, without concern for themselves, meet their needs? Do they do this consciously? For example, can we really say that a bird consciously and determinedly risks its own life to protect its young? Of course not. Animals cannot think and have no awareness. Thus, on their own they cannot have feelings of compassion and mercy. Here we see a single truth: Allah inspires all animals to love and feel maternal and other types of compassion for their young. Such self-sacrifice is only one proof of Allah's name as All-Merciful and Most Merciful.

Some mothers must leave their young behind in their communities at great risk until they are weaned. Many animals look after their young for days, months, or sometimes even years, giving them food and a warm nest, and protecting them from wild animals. Some birds feed their young between four and twenty times an hour. Female mammals have other responsibilities. When they are producing milk, they must eat more nourishing food and therefore hunt more frequently. In spite of this, the baby gains weight and the mother loses weight.

One would expect animals to abandon their young after giving birth, for they are not even conscious of what these young creatures are.

Nevertheless, the fact that they assume all the responsibility for their babies becomes only possible by Allah's inspiration, another manifestation of His name as All-Merciful.

Male and female penguins defend their young *to the death*. A male penguin keeps its young between his legs for four months without interruption, during which he does not eat. Meanwhile, the female penguin goes into the sea to find food for the baby, which she brings back in her craw. These are well-known examples of great self-sacrifice.

Nests and dens are very important for protecting young animals. As a result, some species build nests and dens with various architectural qualities and techniques. Usually they make plans like an architect and work like an experienced bricklayer; they devise technical solutions like an engineer and sometimes adorn their nests and dens like an interior decorator. Sometimes these expert contractors work day and night. If they have mates, the two work together, sharing the effort. They prepare these nests and dens, which they construct with so much care and attention, for their young.

One would not expect unaware or non-intelligent animals to be able to do such things. In the following pages, we will give some examples of these amazing nests and dens, none of which they could have built on their own. Such constructions cannot be built in the absence of a plan.

First, the animals must determine that they need a nest or a den to protect their young. Then, they must decide upon the best place to build it. To construct the nest or the den, they select the most appropriate local materials. For example, sea birds that live on the shore build their nests with grass that floats so that the eggs will be protected even if the water rises. Birds that live in reedy areas make wide, deep nests so that the eggs will not fall out when the wind blows. And desert birds build their nests in the tops of bushes, where it is 10 degrees cooler than the surrounding temperature. Otherwise, the 45 degree temperature at ground level would soon kill their young. Such choices demonstrate knowledge and intelligence, neither of which these birds have. So, how are they able to protect their young? The only answer that makes any sense is that they are inspired by Allah's awareness, intelligence, and knowledge.

The survival of their young is very important for animals and, from the moment they are born, their only concern is to protect them and their nests and dens. For example, weaver birds build many *false nests* in the area to

protect their young from predators. Of course, this could not come from the weaver birds' own intelligence; it is an extremely well-planned diversionary tactic inspired in them by Allah.

Another common protective measure is to hide the nest in dry leaves or thorny trees. Some species make their nests in hollow cavities in trees and, to protect the mother and the egg during incubation, cover the entrance with mud or with a square wall made from secretions mixed with soil. Some bird species knit plant fibers, grass, twigs, and small branches together to make interesting and secure nests for their young to grow up in. A young female bird who has never laid eggs before can build a perfect nest, even though she had never seen how to build one before. Surely, all of these birds cannot possess these abilities on their own. So, what is the power that urges them and other creatures to build perfect nests? From where do animals get their protective and generous behavior? It is the most merciful and most generous Allah Who inspires this behavior in them and creates them with their wonderful abilities.

In addition to the expert architecture of their animals' nests and dens, we can also see the sacrifice that it takes to build them. For example, birds build nests for their young with great care; they make more ordinary nests for themselves. When we consider the stages of nest-building, we can understand the great pains, energy, and sacrifices it takes to build them. A bird makes hundreds of flights just to collect the necessary twigs and branches. It can bring back only one or two pieces in its bill each time. However, it continues to transport the required materials without interruption. It never tires while building the nest and, because sufficient materials are always available, no detail is neglected. Allah gives these creatures their sense of self-sacrifice, patience, industriousness, and determination. By His inspiration, weak creatures are protected by stronger ones and the balance of nature continues.

Every bird species shows great concern for its young. For example, albatrosses always mate in the place where they were born and thus gather in colonies when mating time comes. Weeks before the females arrive, the males come to repair the nests so that the females and the new-borns will be comfortable. The attention that albatrosses give to their eggs is very noticeable; they sit on them in their well-prepared nests without moving for about 50 days. Moreover, they will have to fly more than 1.5 kilometers (a mile) just to find food for their young.

We can see from the examples given so far that every animal species uses different methods to protect its young. And yet these techniques are

so complex that we wonder how creatures with no awareness, intelligence, or ability to think or plan can implement them so successfully. Here we have creatures with no awareness of intelligence and without the will required to demonstrate compassion, mercy, self-sacrifice, and other virtues in any planned way. But at the same time, we can see that they produce works that require intelligence, awareness, planning and that they show mercy and self-sacrifice. Clearly, such abilities and feelings can only come from Allah.

Ants, termites, bees, and other creatures that live in communities concentrate on their eggs and larvae. Ants place their eggs and larvae in rooms in the underground nests prepared for them. Worker ants often place the eggs and larvae in their mouths and move them from room to room, depending on the temperature and humidity. If another creature attacks the eggs, the worker ants empty the rooms and hide the larvae somewhere outside the nest. One would expect these unaware creatures to abandon their young after giving birth; however, they assume total responsibility for them and protect them from every danger.

Every creature assumes responsibility for its young until they are old enough to take care of themselves. Clearly, the source of such behavior cannot be their own intelligence, for they have no intelligence. A bird, a tiger, or any other creature cannot consider the needs of another creature and act to fulfill them down to the slightest detail. All of them act under His inspiration, for they are all subject to Allah, Who created them.

In Africa, the Sun's rays are sometimes so strong that they can kill animals. Thus, some animals look for shady places to protect themselves. When protecting its eggs and its young from the Sun's rays, ostriches in South Africa sit on their eggs and frequently spread their ample wings to prevent the rays from affecting the eggs and the babies. But to do this, they have to leave themselves exposed, a striking proof of self-sacrifice.

Animals can be quite savage and dangerous when protecting their young. When they sense danger, they prefer to take their young and leave the area quickly. But when there is no chance of escape, they do not hesitate to throw themselves at the attacker. For example, bats and birds will attack researchers taking their young out of their nests.

When attacked by such enemies as hyenas, zebras and other large animals immediately separate into groups, put their young in the middle, and quickly run away. If they are caught, the herd's adults bravely defend their young. When giraffes are attacked, they put their babies under their

bodies and kick the attacker hard with their front feet. Deer and antelopes are generally timid and excitable who, when their young are not present, run away. But if their young are threatened by a fox or a wolf, they do not hesitate to use their sharp hooves.

Some birds pretend to be wounded to divert an enemy's attention toward themselves. A female bird who sees an enemy approaching will quietly leave her nest, place herself in front of the enemy, and start to flutter on the ground, striking it with a wing, making painful cries, and trying to convince the enemy, while staying beyond its reach, that she is helpless. As the enemy tries to catch her, it gets farther away from the nest. When the enemy is far enough away, she stops her imitation and escapes before the enemy can catch her. This display fools dogs, cats, snakes, and even other birds. Several birds that make their nests on the ground protect their young in this way. For example, when a predator approaches her ducklings, a mother duck pretends to be wounded and unable to fly by fluttering her wings. But she always keeps her distance from the attacker. When the hunter is far enough away from the ducklings hidden on the shore, she immediately flies off and returns to them. Scientists cannot explain this phenomenon of the *wounded bird*.

For a bird to invent such a display, it would have to be highly conscious, intelligent, and talented. Such defenses show great courage and determination. More interesting, birds are born with such knowledge; they do not learn it from their parents. All animals have their own innate defense systems, but more important than the systems themselves is the conclusion we can draw from them. For example, is it sensible to maintain that a bird will consciously risk its life to protect its young, despite the fact that they have no awareness or intelligence?

Of course this is not logical; here we have unaware and unintelligent animals. What makes them act with such awareness, compassion, and mercy is the All-Merciful Allah, Who created and sustains them.

Dogs and people do not have the same perception of smell. For example, a dog's nose is so sensitive that it can detect scents left by other dogs as well as people, gather information from them, and detect the slightest scents in the air without any difficulty. Some types of dog have a sense of smell that is a million times more sensitive than a human being's, a characteristic that enables them to do things that people and even sophisticated electronic devices cannot manage, such as finding rugs,

missing persons, explosive materials, wild animals, criminals, accident and disaster victims.

For example, blood hounds can follow a four day-old scent and the traces of a person for more than 80 kilometers (50 miles). Amazingly, they never lose the scent in spite of the countless other scents on the ground. In experiments, a trained dog could find an item from among several things that had been sprayed with the scent of a skunk. The Schlieren photography technique has revealed that dogs breathe differently. When a dog breathes, the air goes in through side openings toward the back. Because of this special creation, the air goes out in a different direction from the source of the scent and thus does not mix with the scent. In giving creatures such special abilities, the merciful Lord has given them to the service of human beings. Dogs are especially helpful to human beings with regard to security. In ways that we cannot fathom, Allah has given His blessings and His mercy to His beloved servants. In this way, He makes our lives easy and secure. His generosity is great and His kindness is abundant.

Animals usually carry their small and weak young when they have to move or in times of danger. Each animal's method of carrying its young is different: on their backs, in their mouths, or in special pouches in their abdomen. The babies being carried thus are not injured. The fact that animals carry their babies away from danger is an important example of self-sacrifice, because doing so greatly reduces an animal's speed and ability to move. Despite this, animals never abandon their young in times of danger.

Most animals carry their young on their backs. For example, monkeys carry their babies everywhere. The mother monkey can move very easily while carrying her baby, because it firmly grasps the hair on her stomach and back with its hands and feet. At such times, a female monkey can jump into a tree, run along a branch, and jump into another tree. Kangaroos and other animals with pouches carry their young in fur-covered pouches in their abdomens. A young kangaroo lives for five months in its mother's pouch and, even when it comes out, always remains at her side. If it senses danger, it runs to its mother and jumps head first into her pouch. Then the mother kangaroo escapes by hopping on her powerful hind legs. Squirrels pick up their young by the loose skin of their abdomens. If her nest is destroyed, a mother squirrel carries her baby even further away. She carries one baby at a time and returns to the nest until every baby has been safely evacuated.

All creatures, from insects to lions and from frogs to birds, protect their young by carrying them in this way. But what causes them all to take such great pains and risk their own lives to protect their young? Once again, we can only conclude that they act according to the inspiration that Allah, Who controls everything that exists, has placed within them. In one of these verses our Lord says:

His Footstool encompasses the heavens and Earth, and their preservation does not tire Him. He is the Most High, the Magnificent. (Surat al-Baqara, 255)

Another miraculous characteristic is the cuteness and sweetness that characterize many young animals. Young animals look very sweet. Their eyes are larger than normal, their faces are round, and they are loveable because of their baby-like expressions of surprise and dependence. Their manner awakens a protective instinct in people. Adult tigers, lions, and bears are wild and aggressive, and yet their young stir up a sense of compassion and mercy within us. Like everything else, they are subject to Allah, for **“when everything in the heavens and Earth, willingly or unwillingly, submits to Him and to Him you will be returned?”** (Surah Al ‘Imran, 83). In this way, Allah makes us want to protect them. On the other hand, He has made them a source of blessing and great pleasure for us.

Kittens are born blind, defenseless, tiny, and only weigh about 100 grams (3.6 ounces). The mother sleeps very little in order to look after them, keeps them close to her to keep them warm, and gives them milk when they are hungry. Although the kittens’ eyes are closed for the first week, they have no difficulty finding their mother’s teats. The mother’s milk contains just the right amount of rich nutrients needed by the kittens to grow and protects them from illness. Kittens can take care of themselves after about eight weeks, and so their mothers stop carrying them around.

Lions are among the most powerful creatures in the world. They are very savage toward their enemies, but very gentle with their young. Baby lions which are born very small and begin to eat meat when they are three months old, nevertheless are suckled until they are six months old. Lions, tigers, and other large cats carry their young by the scruff of their necks. Since the babies remain motionless while being carried, they suffer no injury. Almighty Allah, the Creator of all, teaches these animals to be compassionate and merciful toward their young, as well as the other lions in

the pride to take care of, protect, and look after them. Such characteristics are displays of His limitless power and infinite compassion.

Among the elephants' most important characteristics is their attachment to each other. They help and sacrifice themselves for members of their family and for the entire herd. For example, when hunters shoot at the herd, elephants rush toward the elephants that are in danger. The foundation of this closely knit society is the group of young elephants. New-born elephants are welcomed by other members of the herd with great love and compassion. If the mother elephant dies, another elephant with milk will suckle the calf. For the first six months, mother elephants follow her calf everywhere and continually make sounds expressing their connection with each other. If the calf makes a sound indicating that it is in the slightest distress or danger, the entire herd will come to see what the trouble is. This is quite effective in dissuading an enemy. But how do they know that they should do these things, given that they have no intelligence or determination of their own? This amazing sense of self-sacrifice found among all animals is one of the miracles of Allah's creation and reminds us that we should ponder over such things: **"There is instruction for you in cattle"** (Surat an-Nahl, 66).

In the middle of winter, bear cubs are born blind and furless while their mother hibernates. They are the size of a squirrel and are only strong enough to climb up to where the milk is. This milk is rich in fat and calories, and so the cubs grow quickly throughout the winter. When the mother wakes up in the spring, the cubs are strong enough to follow her out of the den. Being very active and quite defenseless, they stay at their mother's side for a whole year, during which time they are protected from danger, learn to look after themselves, and grow quickly. Like other adult animals, bears may behave very savagely toward an enemy they think is threatening their young. A mother bear tirelessly looks after her cubs for three years.

Wolves are among the most savage of animals, and yet adult wolves cooperate in protecting their young. A wolf pack consists of a male, a female, their pups, and sometimes one or two young wolves. The females assist each other. Sometimes one of them stays in the den all night to look after the cubs so that the mother wolf can go hunting. Allah, the All-Merciful and Most Merciful, inspires the intelligence, compassion, and mercy that these animals demonstrate. He created animals to be hardworking and self-sacrificial in order to perpetuate themselves, and has inspired in them how to hunt, reproduce, and protect and feed their young.

Allah tells us that He inspires honeybees to know where to build their nests: **“Your Lord revealed to the bees: ‘Build dwellings in the mountains and the trees, and also in the structures which men erect’”** (Surat an-Nahl, 68). In addition, He inspires within them how to build these nests and what materials to use. Some animals show great self-sacrifice and experience much difficulty in reproducing and protecting their eggs or their young from extremes of heat and cold, predators, and all sorts of other dangers. Some animals migrate vast distances to lay their eggs, take great care in building their nests and dens, die after mating or laying their eggs, go without food for weeks while they carry their eggs in their mouths, stay with their eggs for weeks... all examples of self-sacrifice serves to propagate the species. Weak and powerless baby animals can survive only if they are looked after and protected by strong adults. Certainly, an abandoned baby gazelle or an untended nest of eggs have almost no possibility of survival. But animals take on these responsibilities with tireless and unflagging commitment. Each one of them perfectly performs the duties that Allah inspires in them.

MANIFESTATIONS OF ALLAH AS THE ALL-MERCIFUL AND MOST MERCIFUL IN THE CREATION OF PLANTS

The existence of green plants is indispensable for the continuation of life, because they provide the balance required by oxygen, water, and nutrients. Other balances are also very important both for humanity and all other living things, for they control Earth's temperature and protect the balance of gasses in the atmosphere. Our Lord endowed Earth with millions of different plant species, each having its won colors and appearances. Besides their usefulness, plants also give comfort, joy, and pleasure to the human spirit. In this chapter, we will analyze the role of plants in creation, and how they are a great manifestation of His generosity toward humanity.

The fact that different plants sprout from the same soil is a blessing from Allah. For example, look at melons, kiwis, bananas, cherries, tomatoes, grapes, peaches, and beans. When you peel off a banana's dark yellow skin, a light colored and aromatic banana reveals itself. An apple's peel can be red, green, or yellow with a smooth glaze. Inside, the juice has its own particular taste and smell, neither of which scientists can reproduce. So, we may ask ourselves, why do all flowers, trees, vegetables, and fruits have

such different colors even though they all come from the same soil? This is proof of Allah's infinite knowledge and unique creation.

People cannot create a new color. All colors that we produce are derived from colors in nature. But Allah, Who creates from nothing, created all colors that complete every thing in the world. One of the names of Almighty Allah is the *Al-Musawwa* (The Shaper).

Allah clothes all plants with colors and attractive appearances so that they will appeal to the human spirit. Fruits, vegetables, trees, and flowers all have an incomparable variety of colors, esthetic appearance, marvelous patterns, and their own characteristics. For example, the purple-colored violet with its velvet-soft leaves is incomparable. Velvet cloth seeks to imitate its texture, but it can never possess the same quality. No matter what plant we consider, we must conclude that Allah created the best and most beautiful things for human beings.

This generosity is one of His countless graces to human beings, for there is no way that we could ever produce something that He has not created. He created all fruits with unimaginable beauty, taste, and colors, and then wrapped them in the most perfect manner and offered them to us. The different tastes of every fruit and vegetable were created to appeal to us and give us pleasure, for as our Creator, He knows what will give us the most pleasure. Whenever we see a cherry tree with its branches laden with fruit, or smell the aroma of a banana or a strawberry, or see hundreds of grapes growing on a dry branch, we will remember, hopefully, that Allah created them. Out of His generosity and love for humanity, He offers us the best and the most beautiful of everything.

Human beings cannot create such blessings. We can imitate them, but they will not awake in our spirits the deep amazement and excitement produced by the natural ones. For example, an artificial flower will never produce within us the same psychologically positive feelings as a flower growing in a garden does. Moreover, in His infinite generosity, Allah has offered all of these blessings to us and has spread them throughout the world. Their amazing richness and variety awaken immense pleasure in human beings. Indeed, we are indebted to Allah for all of these pleasant and beautiful things that move the human spirit. Apart from His will and mercy, we could not attain even one of these blessings:

He Who created the heavens and Earth and sends down water for you from the sky by which We make luxuriant gardens grow - you could never make their trees grow. Is there another deity besides Allah? (Surat an-Naml, 60)

Scientists could never make a tree grow nor create a majestic plane tree, a palm tree, a pine tree with its musky smell, or a willow tree with its hanging branches. A human being has neither the strength nor the lifespan to create a tree. But everywhere we go, we see majestic trees, each with its own particular beauty. Some are laden with fruit, and some are remarkably beautiful. Allah created them from nothing, for He created all beauty and every blessing to please human beings.

A very small seed planted in the ground will eventually bring forth a huge tree that will grow 4-5 meters (13-16 feet) high and weigh hundreds of kilos (pounds). In the first stages, its extra internal nutrients are essential; later on, more essential nutrients come from the soil and the sunlight. For example, an apple seed produces a well-designed tree that has its own transport system and roots that process materials in the soil. An intelligent creature, such as a human being, would find it hard even to draw a tree, and even harder to draw its roots and branches. But a seed produces this highly complex living thing, including all its systems, even though it has no independent intelligence, consciousness, or will. So, we cannot say that the seed is responsible for the tree. In reality, each seed contains a high intelligence and all-embracing knowledge given to it by Allah, Who is the only possessor of such knowledge and power.

Those who consider seeds to be no more than insignificant objects might think that they are something like fruit pits or twigs. Plant each of these and see what happens. Only the seeds, provided that their needs are met, will sprout and produce a variety of plants. What makes them different from a splinter of wood? For one thing, seeds contain information about every branch and stem of the plant species to which they belong. They know about every leaf, their number and shapes, their thickness and what color their bark or covering will be; their width and the number of capillaries that will carry nutrients and water, their height and whether they will produce fruit or not; and how the fruit will taste and smell, what shape and color it will have, and everything else.

If we saw seeds for the first time and knew nothing about them or what they were good for, how could we imagine that all plants and trees come from them? Could we ever imagine that the countless musky smelling flowers or pleasant smelling fruits of various shapes and colors could come from what looks like a splinter of dry wood? We are amazed that these little seeds bring forth an infinite number of fruits and vegetables, flowers and trees, all of which benefit us. It is beyond belief that for millions of years,

seeds have used their stored knowledge to produce the same item each time, without ever making a mistake. Clearly Allah, Who stores so much incomparable information in a dry splinter of wood and brings forth from it sweet-smelling plants with delicious tastes, is extremely generous.

The main source of energy on Earth is the Sun. However, human beings and animals cannot use this energy directly, because they do not have the necessary systems to use this energy as it is, and so must depend upon the nutrients produced by plants. All of the energy that these raw materials provide to our cells are actually the Sun's energy given to us by plants. For example, when we sip tea or eat some bread, we acquire a bit of the Sun's energy. The strength in our muscles is just another form of this energy. By performing complex operations on this energy, plants store molecules inside themselves for both human beings and animals. They eat plants, which become their energy packages of stored energy from the Sun. Plants produce their own nutrients and, unlike the cells in human beings and animals, can use the Sun's energy directly. Thus, each plant's cells transform this energy into energy that human beings and animals can acquire by eating them.

A process known as photosynthesis enables plants to produce nutrients using the Sun's energy. Herbivorous animals receive the Sun's energy by eating plants, carnivorous animals receive it by eating herbivores, and we receive it by eating both plants and animals. And so Photosynthesis has another important consequence: Along with glucose it also releases six oxygen molecules, a process that allows plants to purify the atmosphere that is continually polluted by people and animals. People and animals, who obtain energy by burning oxygen in the atmosphere, reduce the amount of oxygen available just by breathing. Photosynthesis replaces this lost oxygen and makes it possible for life to continue.

Photosynthesis is an extremely important process, one characterized by a perfect balance between the energy consumed by plants and animals. Plants give us glucose and oxygen, both of which we combine and burn it in our cells. In this way, the Sun's energy that plants have added to the glucose is released for our use. What we do is actually the reverse of photosynthesis: Carbon dioxide from our lungs is released into the atmosphere and is immediately used by plants for photosynthesis. This amazing process, which we take for granted if we ever think about it at all, is also automatic. Could trees and flowers have created such a process, which is still not fully understood, on their own? Could plants have designed the mechanism that formed the special root system that extracts the materials needed for photosynthesis from the soil, or a transport system

with different kinds of channels to transport nutrients and water? We could multiply these questions, but every answer would point to the same thing: Every aspect of a plant has a different beauty.

Such characteristics require intelligence, knowledge, the abilities to measure and evaluate—none of which plants have. In the absence of such abilities and awareness, we must conclude that all plants are the creations of Allah, Who has supreme intelligence, sustains His creations, and fulfills all of their needs. He plans, considers, and calculates everything flawlessly for the sake of our good, comfort, health, and, most importantly, life.

Human beings and animals use nutrients produced by plants to obtain the energy they need to survive. In fact, plants were created to benefit all creatures, but especially people. Let's consider our environment and what we eat. For example, a melon: This watery fruit grows from the dry soil during the summer. Think about its nice, clean, and delicious smell. Those who produce artificial aromas expend great effort to control the process and make the same smell last. But no control is needed to get the aroma of a fruit to last. Besides this, every fruit has components relative to its season. For example, such winter fruits as oranges and tangerines are loaded with vitamin C and energy. Vegetables contain all the vitamins and minerals that living things need. Photosynthesis enables the delicate roots of fruits and vegetables to extract chemicals from the dark soil, which become extremely beneficial nutrients. Since this is true of every plant, we can understand that all plants have been specially created and designed for human beings and animals. Allah, the Lord of the universe, created food for every creature and bestowed various tastes, aromas, and benefits upon them. This is proof of His goodness and abundant generosity:

... and also the things of varying colors He has created for you in the soil. There is certainly a Sign in that for people who pay heed. (Surat an-Nahl, 13)

Among the most amazing characteristics of all fruits are their total compatibility with human taste and its health benefits. Each fruit has its own delicious taste and aroma, both of which are derived from materials they obtain from the soil. But soil does not smell so good and tastes bad. A tree takes what it needs from this mass of mud, puts them through a chemical process, and creates wonderful tastes and aromas. However, we must realize that goodness of taste and smell is a human idea, as is a person's sense of pleasure and that both of these are, of course, unknown

to trees. If a tree were to fulfill these functions without being inspired by Allah, it would have to learn why we take pleasure from delicious tastes and what tastes we like, and then devise and implement a chemical process to carry out this job with materials gathered from the soil.

The incredible ability of a tree is not limited to smell, taste, and color. This wooden structure knows what vitamins we need, puts them inside its fruit, and even adds the needed vitamins according to the season. Such winter fruits as oranges, tangerines, and grapefruits are richer in vitamin C than summer fruits, so that they can protect people against the cold. How and why do these things occur? How can a piece of wood like a tree produce good tastes and aromas? How can it know what pleases people, meet their esthetical sense, supply the necessary vitamins, and produce something on the basis of these requirements? If we try to make with our own hands what a tree produces, we would become engaged in an unending effort. First of all, a machine to obtain fruit from the soil has not even been invented yet. We can produce aromas, but only after lengthy procedures in a laboratory.

However, the resulting perfumes are not totally artificial, for all of them contain various fine aromas that come from plant essences. In short, human technology remains unable to produce the fine and beautiful scents of plants and trees. There is only one explanation for this amazing situation: Tree and plants have been created by Almighty Allah Who, with His sublime intelligence and infinite knowledge, brings out of the dark, malodorous soil the most delicious and wonderfully scented foods. In the Qur'an, Allah says:

A Sign for them is the dead land that We bring to life and from which We bring forth grain of which they eat. We place in it gardens of dates and grapes, and cause springs to gush out in it, so they may eat its fruits - they did not do it themselves. So will they not be thankful? (Surah Ya-Sin: 33-35)

The color of a red rose, every curl of its leaves, the softness of its petals, its velvety structure, and its scent are all bits of information. And what brings forth sweet and watery grapes on a dry vine is the bits of information hidden in the seeds' nucleus that makes a grape's skin different from the shell of a hazel nut; gives to each its color, taste, smell, and their vitamins; and determines that one is watery and the other is dry. Since fruits first appeared, this knowledge has existed in every seed.

Now, who puts this information in the seed? From what we have learned above, only Allah, the Creator of all, could have done such a

marvelous thing. The various characteristics of seeds, together with the amazing information they contain, are examples for believers of Allah's incomparable creative artistry and are displayed to bring them closer to Allah and follow His path more carefully. The infinite amount of information placed in tiny seeds and the resulting varied incomparable plants that come from them show us once again His almighty power. He tells us of this truth in the Qur'an;

Allah splits the seed and kernel. He brings forth the living from the dead, and produces the dead out of the living. That is Allah, so how are you led astray? (Surat al-An'am, 95)

All of these miraculous events and wonders, both hidden and visible, have been given to us as blessings. We cannot make even one grape or the color of one flower, for we need Him in everything. He needs nothing, and yet is infinitely generous, merciful, and gracious to all of creation. In His sublime artistry, Allah created these blessings with their complex, miraculous systems so that we might come to know Him.

The proofs created in fruits are great blessings from Allah. For example, a melon's spongy cells can carry a large amount of water, which they spread equally throughout the fruit. If we think of gravity, this water should collect at the bottom and the upper area should be dry. But due to this even distribution, a melon's sugar, taste, and aroma are also spread evenly. All of this is due to the information encoded within every seed, which is covered with a special, protective case that has just the right amount of flexibility to prevent any damage to the seed. Under the case is another layer that connects the upper and lower parts that hold the seed together. As a result, a seed opens as soon as the appropriate level of heat and moisture is reached. Within a short time, the smooth white section within the seed produces green sprouts.

Consider the structure of a melon's shell. Its cells produce the melon's smooth waxy appearance by secreting the same amount of a waxy material. And what makes the melon smooth and round is its cells' perfect arrangement, all of which must know where they have to go to make the melon smooth and perfectly round. Clearly, a melon's cells work in flawless harmony with each other, just as they do in plants. We would come to the conclusion that plants have been specially created for human beings and all other creatures. Allah, the Lord of the universe, has created food for every

creature and has made every kind of food with its different tastes, aromas, benefits:

And also the things of varying colors He has created for you in the soil. There is certainly a Sign in that for people who pay heed. (Surat an-Nahl, 13)

... and soaring date-palms with layered spathes, as provision for Our servants; by it We brought a dead land to life. Thus will the Resurrection be. (Surah Qaf, 10-11)

The ability of ivy to climb along a branch or another object is something that people should think about. If we filmed its growth and then watched it in fast motion, we might think that ivy had some sort of conscious awareness. It pushes itself forward along a branch as if it knew there was a branch there, and attaches itself to it as if it were throwing a lasso. Sometimes it even anchors itself as it advances. In this way it moves quickly and, when it comes to the branch's end, turns around or finds a new path downwards. Believers who witness this see once again that Allah created every living thing with its own flawless systems. If we continued to observe its movement, we would notice another important characteristic: It sprouts tentacles along its sides, which allow it to cling strongly to a wall. The resulting adhesive is so strong that if it were removed from any surface, it would pull some of the paint off as well. Who else could have created such an amazing phenomenon other than Allah, Who created them out of His mercy?

Plants do not only provide water and put oxygen into the air; in addition, their leaves act as highly developed cleansing and purifying devices. The cleaning devices that we use are developed and produced by scientists after a great deal of labor, effort, and expense. These machines need a lot of care and technical support both during and after use, all of which require technicians, additional machines, and spare parts. The waste material that they produce is another problem. All these explained here in fact covers only the brief summary of what actually happens in cleaning devices. However, plants do the same work as these machines, and yet need only water and sunlight to function. Moreover, they do the tasks without fail, the quality of their work is guaranteed, and the waste they produce after cleansing the air is oxygen, the most basic need of all living creatures.

Allah gives food to His servants at no cost and creates various blessings for their benefit: **“Truly Allah, He is the Provider, the Possessor of Strength, the Sure”** (Surat adh-Dhariyat, 58). Allah is very compassionate toward all people, as we can clearly see through all of the blessings that He has given us. Sometimes the soil brings forth green plants and spikes of grain in the absence of any cultivation; other times it brings forth yellow, red, green, and orange fruits and vegetables. The blue sea is filled with thousands of different kinds of delicious fish. Besides all of these things, He has given us the meat of animals and birds to eat. He makes animals produce clean milk and causes bees to make honey. But the Qur’an tells us that, if He willed, the land would not bring forth its products, rain would not fall, and everything would be dry and barren: **“Who is there who could provide for you if He withholds His provision?”** (Surat al-Mulk, 21). But Allah is the All-Merciful and Most Merciful, and the kinds of food He gives to us are infinite. The Qur’an tells us that Allah gives countless blessings to His servants:

O humanity! Remember Allah’s blessing to you. Is there any creator other than Allah providing for you from heaven and Earth? There is no deity but Him. So, how have you been led astray? (Surah Fatir, 3)

Conclusion

Allah has commanded the Sun, the Moon, and every law of nature to serve humanity. In this book, we have touched on a few of the innumerable blessings of Allah that, out of His generosity, He bestowed upon human beings. All of these miraculous events surround us on every side. All of the complex systems in the heavens, on Earth, and in between function perfectly and without interruption – and all created to serve us.

However, we occupy a place the size of a dot in this vast universe. But, in his generosity, Allah values us and tells all of these good blessings to serve us. He created countless blessings to protect us from every hardship, anxiety, and trouble, to make our lives easy, and to appeal to our pleasure. In this way, He has opened the gates of His mercy to human beings, all of whom are protected by His kindness. In return, we are responsible for giving constant thanks to Allah for every good thing and blessing.

When believers understand His greatness and mercy toward them, they exalt Him all the time. In return for these blessings, His servants are expected to remember these blessings and praise Him:

Those who have been given knowledge see that what has been sent down to you from your Lord is the truth and that it guides to the Path of the Almighty, the Praiseworthy. (Surah Saba, 6)

THE DECEPTION OF EVOLUTION

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

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

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

The Scientific Collapse of Darwinism

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

Darwin invested all of his hopes in new scientific discoveries, which he expected to solve these difficulties. However, contrary to his expectations,

scientific findings expanded the dimensions of these difficulties. The defeat of Darwinism in the face of science can be reviewed under three basic topics:

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

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

The First Insurmountable Step: The Origin of Life

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

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

Life Comes From Life

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

Similarly, maggots developing in rotting meat was assumed to be evidence of spontaneous generation. However, it was later understood that

worms did not appear on meat spontaneously, but were carried there by flies in the form of larvae, invisible to the naked eye.

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

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

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

Inconclusive Efforts of the Twentieth Century

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

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

Evolutionist followers of Oparin tried to carry out experiments to solve this problem. The best known experiment was carried out by the American chemist Stanley Miller in 1953. Combining the gases he alleged to have existed in the primordial Earth's atmosphere in an experiment set-up, and adding energy to the mixture, Miller synthesized several organic molecules (amino acids) present in the structure of proteins.

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

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

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

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

The Complex Structure of Life

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

The conditions required for the formation of a cell are too great in quantity to be explained away by coincidences. The probability of proteins, the building blocks of a cell, being synthesized coincidentally, is 1 in 10950 for an average protein made up of 500 amino acids. In mathematics, a probability smaller than 1 over 1050 is considered to be impossible in practical terms.

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

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

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

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

Imaginary Mechanism of Evolution

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

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

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

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

Natural selection can do nothing until favourable individual differences or variations occur.⁷

Lamarck's Impact

So, how could these "favorable variations" occur? Darwin tried to answer this question from the standpoint of the primitive understanding of science at that time. According to the French biologist Chevalier de Lamarck (1744-1829), who lived before Darwin, living creatures passed on the traits they acquired during their lifetime to the next generation. He asserted that these traits, which accumulated from one generation to another, caused new species to be formed. For instance, he claimed that giraffes evolved from antelopes; as they struggled to eat the leaves of high trees, their necks were extended from generation to generation.

Darwin also gave similar examples. In his book *The Origin of Species*, for instance, he said that some bears going into water to find food transformed themselves into whales over time.⁸

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

Neo-Darwinism and Mutations

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

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

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

First, genuine mutations are very rare in nature. Secondly, most mutations are harmful since they are random, rather than orderly changes in the structure of genes; any random change in a highly ordered system will be for the worse, not for the better. For example, if an earthquake were to shake a highly ordered structure such as a building, there would be a random change in the framework of the building which, in all probability, would not be an improvement.⁹

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

The Fossil Record: No Sign of Intermediate Forms

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

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

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

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

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

If my theory be true, numberless intermediate varieties, linking most closely all of the species of the same group together must assuredly have existed... Consequently, evidence of their former existence could be found only amongst fossil remains.¹⁰

Darwin's Hopes Shattered

However, although evolutionists have been making strenuous efforts to find fossils since the middle of the nineteenth century all over the world, no transitional forms have yet been uncovered. All of the fossils, contrary to the evolutionists' expectations, show that life appeared on Earth all of a sudden and fully-formed.

One famous British paleontologist, Derek V. Ager, admits this fact, even though he is an evolutionist:

The point emerges that if we examine the fossil record in detail, whether at the level of orders or of species, we find – over and over again – not gradual evolution, but the sudden explosion of one group at the expense of another.¹¹

This means that in the fossil record, all living species suddenly emerge as fully formed, without any intermediate forms in between. This is just the opposite of Darwin's assumptions. Also, this is very strong evidence that all living things are created. The only explanation of a living species emerging suddenly and complete in every detail without any evolutionary ancestor is

that it was created. This fact is admitted also by the widely known evolutionist biologist Douglas Futuyma:

Creation and evolution, between them, exhaust the possible explanations for the origin of living things. Organisms either appeared on the earth fully developed or they did not. If they did not, they must have developed from pre-existing species by some process of modification. If they did appear in a fully developed state, they must indeed have been created by some omnipotent intelligence.¹²

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

The Tale of Human Evolution

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

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

Evolutionists call man's so-called first ape-like ancestors Australopithecus, which means "South African ape." These living beings are actually nothing but an old ape species that has become extinct. Extensive research done on various Australopithecus specimens by two world famous anatomists from England and the USA, namely, Lord Solly Zuckerman and Prof. Charles Oxnard, shows that these apes belonged to an ordinary ape species that became extinct and bore no resemblance to humans.¹³

Evolutionists classify the next stage of human evolution as "homo," that is "man." According to their claim, the living beings in the Homo series are more developed than Australopithecus. Evolutionists devise a fanciful evolution scheme by arranging different fossils of these creatures in a particular order. This scheme is imaginary because it has never been proved that there is an evolutionary relation between these different classes. Ernst Mayr, one of the twentieth century's most important evolutionists, contends in his book *One Long Argument* that "particularly

historical [puzzles] such as the origin of life or of Homo sapiens, are extremely difficult and may even resist a final, satisfying explanation."¹⁴

By outlining the link chain as Australopithecus > Homo habilis > Homo erectus > Homo sapiens, evolutionists imply that each of these species is one another's ancestor. However, recent findings of paleoanthropologists have revealed that Australopithecus, Homo habilis, and Homo erectus lived at different parts of the world at the same time.¹⁵

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

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

What has become of our ladder if there are three coexisting lineages of hominids (A. africanus, the robust australopithecines, and H. habilis), none clearly derived from another? Moreover, none of the three display any evolutionary trends during their tenure on earth.¹⁷

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

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

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

We then move right off the register of objective truth into those fields of presumed biological science, like extrasensory perception or the interpretation of man's fossil history, where to the faithful [evolutionist]

anything is possible – and where the ardent believer [in evolution] is sometimes able to believe several contradictory things at the same time.¹⁸

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

Darwinian Formula!

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

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

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

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

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

Technology in the Eye and the Ear

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

As is the case with imagery, decades of effort have been spent in trying to generate and reproduce sound that is faithful to the original. The results of these efforts are sound recorders, high-fidelity systems, and systems for sensing sound. Despite all of this technology and the thousands of engineers and experts who have been working on this endeavor, no sound has yet been obtained that has the same sharpness and clarity as the sound perceived by the ear. Think of the highest-quality hi-fi systems produced by the largest company in the music industry. Even in these devices, when sound is recorded some of it is lost; or when you turn on a hi-fi you always hear a hissing sound before the music starts. However, the

sounds that are the products of the human body's technology are extremely sharp and clear. A human ear never perceives a sound accompanied by a hissing sound or with atmospherics as does a hi-fi; rather, it perceives sound exactly as it is, sharp and clear. This is the way it has been since the creation of man.

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

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

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

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

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

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

A Materialist Faith

The information we have presented so far shows us that the theory of evolution is incompatible with scientific findings. The theory's claim regarding the origin of life is inconsistent with science, the evolutionary mechanisms it proposes have no evolutionary power, and fossils demonstrate that the required intermediate forms have never existed. So, it certainly follows that the theory of evolution should be pushed aside as an

unscientific idea. This is how many ideas, such as the Earth-centered universe model, have been taken out of the agenda of science throughout history.

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

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

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

It is not that the methods and institutions of science somehow compel us accept a material explanation of the phenomenal world, but, on the contrary, that we are forced by our a priori adherence to material causes to create an apparatus of investigation and a set of concepts that produce material explanations, no matter how counter-intuitive, no matter how mystifying to the uninitiated. Moreover, that materialism is absolute, so we cannot allow a Divine [intervention]...¹⁹

These are explicit statements that Darwinism is a dogma kept alive just for the sake of adherence to materialism. This dogma maintains that there is no being other than 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 intervention." Anyone who does not look at the origin of living beings with a materialist prejudice will see this evident truth: All living beings are works of a Creator, Who is All-Powerful, All-Wise, and All-Knowing. This Creator is Allah, Who created the whole universe from non-existence in the most perfect form, and fashioned all living beings.

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

Anyone free of prejudice and the influence of any particular ideology, who uses only his or her reason and logic, will clearly understand that belief

in the theory of evolution, which brings to mind the superstitions of societies with no knowledge of science or civilization, is quite impossible.

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

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

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

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

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

Words cannot express just how astonishing it is that this spell should hold such a wide community in thrall, keep people from the truth, and not be broken for 150 years. It is understandable that one or a few people

might believe in impossible scenarios and claims full of stupidity and illogicality. However, "magic" is the only possible explanation for people from all over the world believing that unconscious and lifeless atoms suddenly decided to come together and form a universe that functions with a flawless system of organization, discipline, reason, and consciousness; a planet named Earth with all of its features so perfectly suited to life; and living things full of countless complex systems.

In fact, the Qur'an relates the incident of 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. (Surat al-A'raf: 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. (Surat al-A'raf: 117-118)

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

I myself am convinced that the theory of evolution, especially the extent to which it's been applied, will be one of the great jokes in the

history books in the future. Posterity will marvel that so very flimsy and dubious an hypothesis could be accepted with the incredible credulity that it has.²⁰

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

**They said, "Glory be to You!
We have no knowledge except
what You have taught us. You are
the All-Knowing, the All-Wise."
(Surat al-Baqara, 32)**

Notes

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The Qur'an's 113 surahs begin with the name of Allah, The All-Merciful and Most Merciful. Believers are constantly aware of this name's manifestations, because it encompasses the universe and embraces each believer from birth to death, in sickness and health, weakness and strength, as well as permeates the matchless beauty of all animate and inanimate beings. The divine mercy, compassion, love, help, protection, grace and forgiveness of Allah toward all humans is one of the most beautiful manifestations of our Lord. The manifestations of this name deepens the way in which believers view the universe and all living things and adhere to the Qur'an's moral code. For this reason, when Muslims begin to read the Qur'an, practice the morality Qur'an tells and communicate it to others, advise other believers, and think about why the universe was created, they should breathe the most beautiful names of Allah in their spirits. To comprehend the beauty, contentment, well-being and blessing in these peerless names of our Creator, and to be aware of their sovereignty in Islam, is an important step toward deepening one's faith and coming to know Allah through His most beautiful names.

About the Author

The author, who writes under the pen-name Harun Yahya, was born in Ankara in 1956. He studied arts at Istanbul's Mimar Sinan University, and philosophy at Istanbul University. Since the 1980s, the author has published many books on political, faith-related and scientific issues. Greatly appreciated all around the world, these works have been instrumental in helping many to return their faith in Allah, and, in many others, to gain a deeper insight into their faith. Harun Yahya's books appeal to all kinds of readers, regardless of their age, race, or nationality, for they focus on one

objective: to broaden the reader's perspective by encouraging him or her to think about a number of critical issues, such as the existence of Allah and His unity, and to live by the values He prescribed for them.