

SOME SECRETS OF THE QUR'AN

**Certainly, in this there is a plain message
for people who worship.
(Surat al-Anbiya': 106)**

HARUN YAHYA

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By Harun Yahya
Edited By: Loraine Mirza

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Tel: (+90) 212 2892424

Website: www.harunyahya.com

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TO THE READER

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

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

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

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

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

In these books, you will not find, as in some other books, the personal views of the author, explanations based on dubious sources, styles that are unobservant of the

respect and reverence due to sacred subjects, nor hopeless, doubt-creating, and pessimistic accounts that create deviations in the heart.

About The Author

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

INTRODUCTION

There are many people who have no faith in the Qur'an despite claiming to be faithful believers. They spend their lives clinging to delusions and live with contradictions and deficiencies, refusing to adopt the Qur'an as their guide. Yet, only the Qur'an provides a lifetime of true knowledge for every person and contains the secrets of God's creation in its truest and purest form. Any piece of information not based on the Qur'an is in contradiction, and therefore is a deception and an illusion. Therefore, those who do not adhere to the Qur'an live in a state of delusion. In the hereafter they will be condemned to eternal punishment (unless God wills otherwise).

In the Qur'an, along with prayers, commands, prohibitions and high moral standards, God communicates many secrets to mankind. These are truly important secrets, and an attentive eye can witness these throughout his life. No other source than the Qur'an holds these secrets. The Qur'an is the unique source of secrets that those people, no matter how intelligent, literate or astute they are, could never hope to find anywhere else.

That some people cannot see while others have a grasp of some hidden messages in the Qur'an is another secret created by God. Those who do not seek these secrets revealed in the Qur'an, live in distress and difficulty. Ironically, they never know the cause of their distress. Those who learn about these secrets of the Qur'an, on the other hand, lead an easy, joyful life.

That is because the Qur'an is clear, easy and straightforward enough to be understood by anyone. In the Qur'an, God states the following:

O Mankind! A clear proof has come to you from your Lord. We have sent down a Clear Light to you. As for those who believe in God and hold fast to Him, He will admit them into mercy and favour from Him and will guide them to Him on a straight path. (Surat an-Nisa': 174-175)

However, many people, despite being capable of solving the most complicated problems, understanding and putting the most puzzling and ambiguous philosophies into practice, fail to grasp the clarity and simplicity found in the Qur'an. As this book explains, this itself is an important mystery. Not being able to grasp the fleeting nature of life in this temporal world, these people draw closer to inevitable death every day. The secrets in the Qur'an are a grace for believers while they bring down torment on disbelievers both in this world and in the hereafter. God relates this fact in a verse as follows:

We sent down in the Qur'an that which is a healing and a mercy to the believers, but it only increases the wrongdoers in loss. (Surat al-Isra': 82)

This book deals with the subjects related to some verses God has revealed to mankind as a secret. When a person reads these verses, and his attention is drawn to the secrets in these verses, what he must do is to seek the divine purposes hidden in events and evaluate everything in the light of the Qur'an. Then, people will realise with excitement that the secrets of the Qur'an control both their own lives and those of others alike.

From the moment one wakes up in the morning, the manifestations of these secrets created by God can be seen. To accomplish this, he only needs to remain heedful, turn to God and think. Then, he will realise that his life is by no means dependent on the laws many people prejudicially adopt and that the only valid authority and laws are the laws of God. This is a very important secret. Many of the rules and practices the majority of people have accepted for centuries as the most definitive truths have no validity. As a matter of fact, these people are greatly deluded. The truth is what is revealed in the Qur'an. Anybody who reads the Qur'an sincerely, evaluates events in the light of the Qur'an and faith, and lives as a friend of God, will clearly see these secrets. This will lead to a better grasp that God is the only One Who holds control over every being, every heart and every thought. As God states in a verse:

We will show them Our Signs on the horizon and within themselves until it is clear to them that it is the truth. Is it not enough for your Lord that He is a witness of everything? What! Are they in doubt about the meeting with their Lord? What! Does He not encompass all things? (Surah Fussilat: 53-54)

GOD ANSWERS EVERYONE'S PRAYERS

God, the All-Mighty, Merciful and Compassionate, revealed in the Qur'an that He is close to man and will answer people when they pray to Him. One of the relevant verses is as follows:

If My servants ask you about Me, I am near. I answer the call of the caller when he calls on Me. They should therefore respond to Me and believe in Me so that they will be guided aright. (Surat al-Baqara: 186)

As stated in the verse above, God is close to everybody. He has knowledge of everyone's wishes, feelings, thoughts, every word uttered, anything whispered and even what is concealed deep in one's thoughts. Consequently, God hears and knows everyone who turns to Him and prays to Him. This is God's blessing on mankind, and a manifestation of His mercy, grace and infinite power.

God has infinite might and knowledge. He is the Possessor of everything in the entire universe. Every being, every object, from the seemingly most powerful people to the greatest riches, from the magnificent celestial bodies to a tiny animal dwelling on the Earth, all belongs to God and are all under His complete will and control.

A person who has faith in this truth can pray to God for anything and can hope that God will answer those prayers. For example, a person who is seized by an incurable disease will surely resort to all forms of medical care. Yet, knowing that only God restores health, prayers will be offered to Him for recovery. Alternatively, a person with some kind of fear or anxiety can pray to God for relief and to remove all forms of fear. A person who encounters difficulties in accomplishing a task can turn to God for the removal of difficulties. One can pray to God for countless things; for guidance to the true path, for acceptance into paradise with other true believers, for a better grasp of paradise, hell and the Might of God, for good health and so on. This is what God's Messenger, peace be upon him, stressed when he said:

*Shall I introduce to you a weapon which will protect you both from the evils of enemies and increase your sustenance? They said: Yes, O Messenger of God. He said: Call your Lord day and night, for 'Prayer' is the weapon of a believer.*¹

However, there is another secret disclosed in the Qur'an, which deserves mention at this point. As God states in the verse, **"Man prays for evil just as he prays for good. Man is prone to be impetuous."** (Surat al-Isra': 11). For example, a person may ask God for more property and wealth for his children's future. However, God may not see any goodness in this request. It may well be that prosperity will turn the children away from God. In this sense, God hears this person's call and answers it in the best way. Alternatively, a person may pray not to be late for an appointment. However, it may well be that it is better for him to reach the destination after the specified time and instead,

meet someone who would contribute something beneficial for his eternal life. God knows this and He answers the prayer, not in the form the person thought, but in the best way. That is, God hears that person, but if He sees no good for him in his prayer, He creates what is best for him. This itself is a very important secret.

When prayers appear to go unanswered, those unaware of this secret assume that God did not hear their call. This is indeed a perverted belief of ignorance because **"God is closer to man than his own jugular vein"**. (Surat Qaf: 16) He knows every word one speaks, every thought and every instant pertaining to one's life. Even while one is asleep, God knows what he experiences in his dreams. It is God Who creates everything. Consequently, each time one prays to God, he should be aware that God will accept his prayer as a worship and believe that God will answer his call in the most appropriate time and create what is best for him.

Prayer, as well as being a form of worship, is also a precious gift from God to mankind. This is because, through prayer, God enables man to attain anything He deems good and beneficial for him. God relates the importance of prayers in the verse stating: **"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)

God answers the prayers of those who are in distress and need

Prayers are the times when one's closeness to God is explicitly felt; it is a time when one grasps God's closeness and how, as a servant of God, he is in need of Him. This is because when one prays, he grasps how weak and humble he is before God, and perceives that no one except God can ever help him. The sincerity and candidness in one's prayer depends on how desperately he is in need. For example, everybody prays to God for peace in the world. Yet, someone -who is desperate in the middle of a war would pray more earnestly and humbly to God. Similarly, people, during a storm in a ship or in an airplane in danger of crashing, would beg humbly to God. They will be sincere and submissive in their prayer. God relates this fact in a verse as follows:

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." (Surat al-An'am: 63)

In the Qur'an, God commands man to pray with humility:

Call on your Lord humbly and secretly. He does not love those who overstep the limits. (Surat al-A'raf: 55)

In another verse, God states that He answers the calls of the oppressed and those who are in need:

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

No doubt, one does not necessarily have to face death to implore God and to pray to Him in need. These examples are given so as to make people have a grasp of the mood with which to pray sincerely and ponder over the moment of death, when one can no longer be heedless and definitely turn to God with an inner sincerity. Believers who are wholeheartedly devoted to God, on the other hand, being aware of their weaknesses and feeling the need, always turn sincerely to God even if they are not in a situation of death or life. This is an important characteristic which distinguishes them from disbelievers and those of poor faith.

Not setting any limits on praying

A person can ask God for anything within the limits of the permissible (halal). This is because, as mentioned earlier, God is the only ruler and owner of the entire universe; and if He wills, He grants man anything He desires. Every person who turns to God and prays to Him should credit God's power to do anything and "*be firm in supplication*" as our beloved Prophet, peace be upon him, said.² He needs to know that it is easy for Him to fulfil any wish, and He will grant a person's request if there is anything good for that person in his prayer. Prayers of prophets and true believers mentioned in the Qur'an set an example to believers about the subjects they can ask from God. For example, the Prophet Zachariah (Zakariyya), peace be upon him, prayed to God for a pleasing heir and, God answered his prayer, despite his wife's barrenness:

When he called on his Lord in secret and said, 'My Lord, my bones have lost their strength and my head is crowned with white, but in calling on You, My Lord, I have never been disappointed. I fear my relatives when I am gone and my wife is barren, so give me an heir from You to be my inheritor and the inheritor of the family of Jacob (Ya'qub), and make him, my Lord, pleasing to You.' (Surah Maryam: 3-6)

God answered the Prophet Zachariah's prayer and gave him the good news of the Prophet John (Yahya), peace be upon him. Having received the tidings of a son, the Prophet Zachariah was surprised since his wife was barren. The answer of God to the Prophet Zachariah reveals a secret which believers should always keep in mind:

He said, 'My Lord! How can I have a boy when my wife is barren and I have reached advanced old age?' He said, 'It will be so! Your Lord says, "That is easy for me to do. I created you before, when you were not anything." (Surah Maryam: 8-9)

There are many other prophets mentioned in the Qur'an whose prayers were answered. For example, the Prophet Noah (Nuh), peace be upon him, asked God to inflict a torment on his people, who went astray despite his best efforts to guide them to the right path. As an answer to his prayer, God inflicted a great torment on them which went down in history.

The Prophet Job (Aiyub), peace be upon him, called out to God because of his distress, saying "... **Great harm has afflicted me and You are the Most Merciful of the merciful**" (Surat al-Anbiya': 83). The response to the Prophet Job's prayer is related as follows:

We responded to him and removed from him the harm, which was afflicting him and restored his family to him, and the same again with them, as a mercy direct from Us and a Reminder to all worshippers. (Surat al-Anbiya': 84)

God answered the Prophet Solomon (Sulayman), peace be upon him, who prayed, "**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 Sâd: 35). And God bestowed a great power and wealth on him.

Accordingly, those who pray should keep in mind the verse "His command when He desires a thing is just to say to it, 'Be!' (Surah Ya-Sin:82). As stated in the verse, everything is easy for God and He hears and knows every prayer.

God gives blessings of this world to those who desire them, but in the hereafter they will suffer heavy loss

The desires of those who do not harbour a deep-rooted fear in their heart for God and lack a profound faith in the hereafter are worldly-oriented. They ask for wealth, property and status only for the life of this world. God informs us that those who desire only the world will have no reward in the hereafter. Believers, on the other hand, pray both for this world and the hereafter since they believe that the life in the hereafter is as certain and near as this life. Of this, God states the following:

... There are some people who say, 'Our Lord, give us good in the world.' They will have no share in the hereafter. And there are others who say, 'Our

Lord, give us good in the world, and good in the hereafter, and safeguard us from the punishment of the Fire.' They will have a good share from what they have earned. God is swift at reckoning. (Surat al-Baqara: 200-202)

Believers, too, pray for good health, wealth, knowledge and bliss. Yet, all their prayers carry the intention to please God and have something to do for the good of the religion (*deen*). They ask for wealth, for instance, to use it in God's way. With regard to this, God gives the example of The Prophet Solomon in the Qur'an. Far from being a worldly ambition, the Prophet Solomon's call for unprecedented possessions was for the noble purpose of using them in the way of God, calling people to God's religion and to keep himself occupied with the remembrance of God. The words of the Prophet Solomon related in the Qur'an indicate this sincere intention:

**"... Truly do I love the love of good, with a view to the glory of my Lord."
(Surah Sâd: 32)**

God answered this very prayer of Solomon, granted him a great property in the world and rewarded him with the blessings of the hereafter. On the other hand, God also grants the wishes of those who desire only the life of this world, yet a painful punishment awaits them in the hereafter. No blessing they possess here in this world will be accessible to them in the hereafter.

This important fact is related in the Qur'an as follows:

If anyone desires to cultivate the hereafter, We will increase him in his cultivation. If anyone desires to cultivate the world, We will give him some of it but he will have no share in the hereafter. (Surat ash-Shura: 20)

As for anyone who desires this fleeting existence, We hasten in it whatever We will to whomever We want. Then We will consign him to Hell where he will roast, reviled and driven out. (Surat al-Isra': 18)

GOD INCREASES HIS BLESSINGS ON THOSEWHO ARE GRATEFUL

Every person is in need of God at every instant of life. From the air one breathes to the food he eats, from the ability to use one's hands to the faculty of speech, from being sheltered to being in a joyful spirit, one lives completely in need of what God creates and grants him. Still, a vast majority of people do not perceive their weaknesses and that they are in need of God. They suppose that things develop spontaneously or that they acquire everything by their own efforts. This is an important error, as well as a serious ingratitude towards God. Ironically, people who render their thanks to a person for even an insignificant gift, spend all their lives ignoring the countless blessings that God gives them all through their lives. However, so great are the blessings granted to a person that one could never count them. God relates this fact in a verse as follows:

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

Despite this fact, most people fail to give thanks for any of the blessings they have. The reason for this is related in the Qur'an: Satan, who pledged to misguide people from God's way, said that his ultimate aim is to make people be ungrateful to God. Satan's defiant statements to God emphasise the importance of giving thanks to God:

'Then I will come at them, from in front of them behind them, from their right and from their left. You will not find most of them thankful.' He (God) said, 'Get out of it, reviled and driven out. As for those of them (mankind) who follow you, I, will fill up Hell with every one of you.' (Surat al-A'raf: 17-18)

Believers, on the other hand, aware of their weaknesses and in humility before God, render their thanks to Him for every blessing granted. Wealth and possessions are not the only blessings for which believers render their thanks to God. Knowing that God is the Owner and Possessor of everything, believers express their inner gratefulness for good health, beauty, knowledge, wisdom, love of faith and hatred from disbelief, understanding, insight, foresight and for power. They are thankful for being rightly guided and for being in the company of believers. A beautiful landscape, easy handling of their affairs, fulfilment of their wishes, tidings of great joy, respectful conduct or any other blessings make believers immediately turn to God, express their gratefulness to Him and reflect on His mercy and compassion.

In return for good morals displayed, a reward awaits believers. This is another of the secrets revealed in the Qur'an; God increases His blessings on those who are grateful. For example, God grants even more health and power to those who render their

thanks to God for the good health and strength they have. God bestows even more knowledge and property to those who are grateful for their knowledge or wealth. This is because they are sincere people who are contented with what God gives and are pleased with the blessings and who take God as their friend. God relates this secret in the Qur'an as follows:

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

Being grateful is also a sign of one's closeness to and love of God. People who give thanks have the insight and capability to perceive the beauties and blessings that God creates. God's Messenger, peace be upon him, also referred to this when he said:

*When God gives you property, the bliss of God's blessing and offering must be reflected on you.*³

On the other hand, a disbelieving or ungrateful person will only see the imperfections and faults even in the most beautiful environment, and thus will be unhappy and discontented. Indeed, as a divine purpose in God's creation, such people, always come across with seemingly unfavourable events and unpleasant scenes. On the other hand, God displays more of His bounties and blessings to those who have a sincere and insightful outlook.

That God increases His blessings to those who are grateful is one of the secrets of the Qur'an. However, one needs to keep in mind that sincerity is a prerequisite for being grateful. No doubt, one's way of showing his gratitude without turning sincerely to God and feeling the inner peace of God's infinite mercy and compassion, which is solely intended to impress people, would be sheer insincerity. God knows what hearts harbour, and will bear witness to this insincerity. Those who have insincere inner intentions may conceal it from other people, but not from God. Such people may render their thanks with affected manners when there is no affliction, but at times of hardship, it is possible that they may readily lapse into ungratefulness.

It should be also noted that true believers remain grateful to God even under harshest conditions. Someone thinking superficially may see the diminishing of some blessings believers enjoy. However, believers, who are able to perceive the good aspect of every event and situation, see goodness in this too. For example, God states that He will test people with fear, hunger and loss of wealth or life. In such a situation, believers rejoice and feel grateful, hoping that God will reward them with the gifts of paradise in return for the steadfastness they displayed in this test. They know that God does not impose on anyone more than he can bear. The steadfastness and submission of such awareness lead them to patience and gratitude. Therefore, it is an obvious attribute of

believers to show unwavering dedication and submission and God promises to expand His blessings on His grateful servants both in the life of this world and in the hereafter.

SECRETS OF SUBMISSION TO ONE'S FATE AND PUTTING ONE'S TRUST IN GOD

Putting one's trust in God is an attribute peculiar to believers who have profound faith, who can appreciate God's power, and who are close to Him. There are important secrets and blessings to placing one's trust in God. Putting one's trust in God implies a definite submissiveness to and reliance on God and the fate He creates. God has created all beings, animals, plants, as well as non-living objects – each with its own purpose or fate. The sun, moon, seas, lakes, trees, flowers, a tiny ant, a single leaf falling, a single particle of dust on your desk, a rock that you trip over, the shirt that you bought ten years ago, the peach in your refrigerator, your mother, your father, your relatives, your primary school friends, yourself - briefly everyone and everything has its fate which was predetermined millions of years ago in God's sight. The fate of every being is kept in a book, which is called "The Mother of the Book" in the Qur'an. The moment of death, the moment a particular leaf falls, the moment when the peach in your fridge starts decaying, and all the stages of rock until you tripped over it – briefly, every event, insignificant or important – is kept in this book.

Believers have faith in fate and they know that the fate God creates is the best for them. That is why, at every moment of their lives, they put their trust in God. In other words, they know that God creates all events in compliance with a divine purpose and there is goodness in whatever God creates. For example, catching a fatal disease, confronting a bitter and merciless enemy, being subjected to false accusations despite being innocent, or encountering the most terrifying events one can imagine do not shake the faith of believers nor arouse any fear in their hearts. They welcome what God has created for them. Believers derive great pleasure from encountering situations which normally terrify or bring despair to a disbeliever. That is because even the most dreadful scenario was previously planned by God to test them. Those who respond to these situations with steadfastness and put their trust in God and to the fate He creates, will earn the love and good pleasure of God. They earn paradise for all eternity. Therefore, believers enjoy the comfort and joy of putting their trust in their Lord throughout their lives. This is a blessing and secret that God discloses to believers. God states in the Qur'an that He loves those who put their trust in Him. (Surah Al 'Imran: 159) God's Messenger, peace be upon him, also remarked this when he said:

A servant of God can have no real faith unless he believes in fate with its good and evil sides and knows that he cannot prevent anything that befalls him (good or evil) and he cannot catch anything that escapes from him (good or evil).⁴

Another point mentioned in the Qur'an about putting trust in God is "taking measures." The Qur'an informs us about numerous measures believers can take in various situations. In many other verses, God also reveals the secret that those measures which are accepted as a form of worship by God, cannot change the fate. The Prophet Jacob, peace be upon him, advised his sons to take some measures while entering the city but afterwards he reminded them to place trust in God. The relevant verse is as follows:

He said, 'My sons! You must not enter through a single gate. Go in through different gates. But I cannot save you from God at all, for judgement comes from no one but God. In Him I put my trust, and let all those who put their trust, put it in Him alone.' (Surah Yusuf: 67)

As seen in the words of the Prophet Jacob, believers definitely take precautions, but they know that they cannot change what fate God has willed for them. For example, a person should follow traffic rules and not drive carelessly. This is an important measure and a form of worship performed for one's life and that of others. Yet, if God wills that person to die in a car accident, no measure can be taken to prevent his death. Sometimes a precautionary action or an act may seem to have enabled that person to escape death. Or one may take a crucial decision, which changes the entire course of his life; or one may recover from a fatal disease by showing strength and endurance. Yet, all these occur because God decrees so. Some people misinterpret such events as "overcoming one's fate" or "changing one's fate". But, no one, not even the seemingly strong and most resolute person in the world, can change what God has decreed. No man has such a power. On the contrary, every being is weak before God's decree. The fact that some people do not accept the fact, does not alter the truth. In fact, denying their fate is also decreed. For that reason, those who escape death or a disease, or whose course of life completely changes, experience these events because they were decreed. God relates this in the Qur'an as follows:

Nothing occurs, in the earth or in you, but is inscribed in the Book of Decrees before We make it happen. That is easy for God. In order that you will not be grieved about the things that pass you by or exult about the things that come to you. God does not love any vain or boastful man. (Surat al-Hadid: 22-23)

As stated in the above verses, any event that occurs is predetermined and kept in a book in God's sight. Therefore, God tells man not to grieve about what may have escaped him. For example, a person who loses all his property in a fire or in a commercial venture experiences this loss because it was decreed. It is not possible for him to prevent or avoid these happenings. Thus, it would be senseless to have a sense of grievance at such a loss. God puts his people to test by many events that were decreed for them. Those who put their trust in God when they encounter such events earn the good pleasure and love of God. Those who fail to put their trust in God, on the other hand, will never be free of troubles, restlessness and unhappiness all through their lives in this world, and are punished eternally in the hereafter. It is crystal-clear that putting one's trust in God is a gain and comfort both in this world and in the hereafter. By revealing these secrets to believers, God has relieved them of difficulties and has rendered their test in the life of this world easy.

THERE IS GOOD IN EVERY EVENT

God informs us that He creates every event with goodness in it. This is another secret that makes it easy for believers to place firm trust in God. God states that even events that seem to be unfavourable have a lot of good in them:

... It may well be that you dislike something in which God has placed a lot of good. (Surat an-Nisa': 19)

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

Aware of this secret, believers seek goodness and beauty in every event. No seemingly adverse incident, hardship or mischief ails or worries them. They maintain their composure whether the experience is insignificant or a serious ordeal. Sincere Muslims even see goodness and divine purpose in the loss of all their hard earned possessions. They express gratitude to God for the gift of life. They have faith that God may have protected them from committing an evil act or against too much attachment for possessions. Accordingly, they give their most inner thanks to God because no loss in this world equals the loss in the hereafter. Loss in the hereafter means eternal and intolerable punishment (unless God wills otherwise). Those who keep themselves occupied with the remembrance of the hereafter view every event as goodness and beauty leading to the hereafter. Those who overcome such ordeals will recognise their weaknesses before God, and will reconsider how much they are in need of Him. They will turn to God with more humility through prayers and that

remembrance will bring them closer to Him. This is surely an enormous benefit to one's hereafter. These aside, by putting absolute trust in God and showing steadfastness, they will earn God's pleasure and will be rewarded with eternal bliss.

Man should seek goodness and beauty not only in ordeals, but also in daily routines. For example, burning the food one has painstakingly prepared may lead that person to take numerous measures which would, by the Will of God, prevent a more serious accident in the future. A young person might have failed the college admission test he had pinned his hopes for a future on. He should, however, know that there is goodness in his failure, too; he should be able to think that God might have willed him to avoid some adverse circumstances or people and thereby feel pleased with the result. Alternatively, thinking that God has placed in every event many other blessings which are either obvious or are way beyond the imagination, believers see the beauty of full submission to the guidance of God.

A person may not always see the goodness and divine purpose behind every incident. Even if this is the case, he knows for certain that there is goodness in all events. He offers prayers for God to show him the goodness and divine purpose hidden behind everything that happens.

Those who are aware that everything has a purpose in God's creation never use phrases "I wish I had not done this..." or "I wish I had not said that" and so on. Mistakes, defects, or seemingly unfortunate events essentially include blessings and each one of them are the trials of destiny. God gives important lessons and reminders to man in the destiny he creates individually for each person. For those who can evaluate with insight, there are no mistakes or adversities, but lessons, warnings and wisdom from God. For example, a Muslim whose shop burns down will search his soul, and becomes even more sincere and true in his faith, deeming it as a warning by God against over indulgence in worldly goods and attachments.

Consequently, no matter what one encounters in this life, the ordeals will all eventually end. A person who recalls a hardship will be amazed that it is nothing more than a reminiscence in the mind. This is also how people recall the scenes from a film. Accordingly, one day will come and the most painful experience will become only a memory, more like the image of a scene from a movie. Only one thing will remain: the attitude a person assumed during the time of hardship and whether God is pleased with him or not. A person will not be called to account for the experiences, but for his attitudes, thoughts and sincerity he displayed at the time of these experiences. Therefore, being in an endeavour to see the goodness and the divine purpose God creates in the situations one encounters and a positive attitude will bring bliss to believers both in this world and in the hereafter. No sorrow or fear awaits these believers who are aware of this secret. Similarly, no one, no event can create fear, harm or distress in this world and in the hereafter. God reveals this secret in the Qur'an as follows:

We said, 'Go down from it, every one of you! Then when guidance comes to you from Me, those who follow My guidance will feel no fear and will know no sorrow.' (Surat al-Baqara: 38)

Yes, the friends of God 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 the world and in the hereafter. There is no changing the words of God. That is the great victory! (Surah Yunus:62-64)

THERE IS SURELY EASE WITH EVERY DIFFICULTY

God has created the world to test mankind. As an inherent feature of this examination, He tests man sometimes with blessings and at other times with hardships. People who do not evaluate events in the light of the Qur'an, fail to give the appropriate interpretation to events, and become downhearted and fall into hopelessness. However, God reveals an important secret in the Qur'an, which only true and submissive believers can perceive. This secret is revealed as follows:

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

As God informs us in these verses, no matter what sort of adversity a person experiences or how a situation is overcome, God creates a path that will lead to a way out and gives relief to believers. Indeed, a believer will witness that God grants ease along with all hardships if he remains steadfast in his patience. In other verses, God has given the good news of guidance and blessings to His servants who have fear for Him:

... Whoever has fear of God - He will give him a way out and provide for him from where he does not expect. Whoever puts his trust in God - He will be enough for him... (Surat at-Talaq: 2-3)

God does not place a burden greater than one can bear

God, the Merciful, Compassionate and Just, creates ease in everything and tests people within the limits of their strength. Forms of prayers God commands man to perform, difficulties He creates to test him, responsibilities that He charges man with are all in proportion to his individual capabilities. This is a good news and comfort to believers, and a manifestation of God's mercy and grace. God relates this secret in verses as follows:

And that you do not go near the property of orphans before they reach maturity - except in a good way; that you give full measure and full weight with justice - We impose on no one any more than they can bear; that you are equitable when you speak - even if a near relative is concerned; and that you fulfil God's covenant. That is what He instructs you to do, so that hopefully you will pay heed. (Surat al-An'am: 152)

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

We do not impose on any one any more than they can stand. With Us there is a Book, which speaks the truth. They will not be wronged. (Surat al-Muminun: 62)

It is easy to live by God's religion

A great majority of people think that religion will make their lives difficult and impose on them hard obligations. This is a delusion that Satan whispers to man to lead him astray. As mentioned earlier, religion is easy. God states that He will ease for believing people after difficulties. Besides this, the fundamentals of religion such as putting trust in God and having an understanding of fate, removes all burdens, difficulties and causes of distress or sorrow. For a person who lives by God's religion, there is no distress, sorrow or despair. In many verses, God promises to support those who submit themselves to Him and who help His religion, and to give them a good life both in this world and in the hereafter. Our Lord, Who never breaks His word, states as follows:

When those who have fear of God are asked, 'What has your Lord sent down?' their reply is, 'Good!' There is good in the world for those who do good, and the abode of the hereafter is even better. How wonderful is the abode of those who have fear of God. (Surat an-Nahl: 30)

God gives the good news to believers that He will render those who comply with His religion successful:

As for him who gives (in charity) and has fear of God and confirms the good, We will pave his way to ease. (Surat al-Layl: 5-7)

As these secrets reveal, one who sincerely turns towards God's religion has chosen right from the beginning, a path of ease that will bring success and benefit both in this world and in the hereafter. To disbelievers, on the other hand, just the opposite applies. Disbelievers already have a life filled with sorrow, sadness and loss both in this world and in the hereafter. At the moment they decided on disbelief, they lose both the world and the hereafter. This is related in verses as follows:

But as for him who is stingy and thinks he is self-sufficient, and denies the good, We will pave his way to difficulty. (Surat al-Layl: 8-10)

God is the Possessor and Creator of everything. It is surely above and over any power or support for a person to earn God's friendship, aid and support. The one who takes God as his friend and submits fully to Him will live, both in the world and in the hereafter, in bounty and blessings, and no hurt will come to him from any source. This is an immutable fact. Since this is the case, every man of wisdom and conscience should comprehend these secrets revealed in the Qur'an and choose the wise and correct path. That disbelievers cannot understand these clear facts is another secret by itself. No

matter how intelligent or well-educated they are, they do not use their reason so they are unable to understand and see these facts.

GOD OBSCURES THE COMPREHENSION OF DISBELIEVERS

That some people cannot understand the Qur'an is one of the most important secrets revealed in the Qur'an. This is indeed an important secret, because the Qur'an is a very clear, easy and straightforward book. Anyone who wishes can read the Qur'an and learn about God's commands, the good morals that He is pleased with, the attributes of paradise and hell, and about many secrets some of which are presented in this book. However, as an immutable law of God, some people cannot understand the Qur'an despite all its clarity. Furthermore, these people can be atomic engineers or professors of biology, can understand very complicated branches of science such as physics, chemistry or mathematics, can grasp Buddhism, Hinduism, Shintoism, materialism or communism, and yet fail to understand the Qur'an. These people who adopt the complicated structures of non-Qur'anic systems somehow cannot grasp God's clear and easy religion, and fail to understand even the most evident subjects therein.

Their being unable to grasp even the most evident facts is a miracle in itself. By showing that they have such a serious deficiency in understanding, God explains that some people possess a different nature. On the other hand, this provides evidence to the fact that all hearts, reason and comprehension is in God's hands. God declares that He will cover the hearts and comprehension of those who are seized by feelings of grandeur, that is who do not submit to God. The fact that they understand anything but the Qur'an reveals that God has diverted them from His signs, and they are debarred from the Qur'an because of their insincerity. Some of the verses pertaining to this are:

When you recite the Qur'an, We place an obscuring veil between you and those who do not believe in the hereafter. We have placed covers on their hearts, preventing them from understanding it, and heaviness in their ears. When you mention your Lord alone in the Qur'an, they turn their backs and run away. (Surat al-Isra': 45-46)

Some of them listen to you but We have placed covers on their hearts, preventing them from understanding it, and heaviness in their ears. Though they see every Sign, they still have no faith, so that when they come to you, disputing with you, those who are disbelievers say, 'This is nothing but the myths of previous peoples!' (Surat al-An'am: 25)

Who could do greater wrong than someone who is reminded of the Signs of his Lord and then turns away from them, forgetting all that he has done before? We have placed covers on their hearts, preventing them from

understanding it, and heaviness in their ears. Though you call them to guidance, they will nonetheless never be guided. (Surat al-Kahf: 57)

As revealed in the verses, the secret why disbelievers cannot understand the Qur'an is that God has placed a barrier to their comprehension and set a seal upon their hearts because of their denial. This is a great miracle displaying the grandeur of God and that He is the possessor of hearts and thoughts of every man.

GOD BESTOWS UNDERSTANDING ON THOSE WHO FEAR HIM

Another secret revealed in the Qur'an is that God gives those who fear Him the ability to judge and discriminate between right and wrong. It is referred to as "wisdom". God relates this secret in Surat al-Anfal as follows:

You who believe! If you have fear of God, He will give you a criterion (by which to judge between right and wrong) and erase your bad actions from you and forgive you. God's favour is indeed immense. (Surat al-Anfal: 29)

As explained in the previous chapter, God obscures the wisdom and comprehension of disbelievers. These people, no matter how intelligent they may be, cannot grasp even the most obvious concepts pertaining to religion. Wisdom is an attribute peculiar to believers. The majority of people take it for granted that intelligence and wisdom mean very much the same thing. However, intelligence is the mental capacity that everyone possesses. For example, being an atomic scientist or a mathematical genius indicates intelligence. Wisdom, on the other hand, is the consequence of the fear a person has for God and the adherence to the conscience, and is by no means related to intelligence. A person may be very intelligent, yet he remains unwise if he has no fear of God.

Therefore, wisdom is a blessing God bestows on believers. Those deprived of such understanding is not even aware of their situation. For instance, those who assume they are the source of power and possessions, become arrogant. This is simply an indication of lack of wisdom. Because if there is wisdom, there is the realisation that nothing is as powerful as the Will of God. This awareness would ultimately lead one to conduct oneself with humility. This person, however, does not think that, if God wills, all his property can be reduced to insignificance in a few seconds, or that he can face death, leaving everything behind in the world and stand by the fire to receive reckoning. All these are more certain and real than what one possesses in this world. Only believers, who fear God, have this understanding, and do not drift toward the deceitful nature of the life of this world. They spend their lives knowing the real essence of things. God bestows understanding on the believers through their faith. As they feel closer to God, their comprehension deepens and they become more cognisant of the secrets in God's creation.

THOSE WHO DO GOOD MEET GOODNESS

Another secret that God reveals in the Qur'an is that those who do good will be rewarded with good both in the world and in the hereafter. Of this God says the following:

Say: 'My servants who believe! Have fear of your Lord. For those who do good in the life of this world there is good and God's earth is spacious. The steadfast will be paid their wages in full without any reckoning.' (Surat az-Zumar: 10)

However, one needs to know what the actual "goodness" is. Each society has developed its own understanding of goodness; being pleasant, giving money to the poor, behaving with tolerance towards every sort of treatment are often perceived as signs of "goodness" in society. However, God informs us what the actual "goodness" is in the Qur'an:

It is not righteousness to turn your faces to the East or to the West. Rather, truly righteous are those who believe in God 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 and to orphans and the very poor, and to travellers and beggars and to set slaves free, and who establish regular prayer (salat) and pay regular charity (zakat); those who honour their contracts when they make them, and are steadfast in poverty and illness and in battle. Those are the people who are true. They are the people who have fear for God. (Surat al-Baqara: 177)

As the verse above draws our attention, true goodness is to have fear of God, to keep oneself occupied with the remembrance of the day of reckoning, to follow one's conscience and always to engage in deeds which would please God. God's Messenger, Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, also bid believers to fear God and to do good:

*Fear God wherever you are. Do good immediately after a sinful act to erase it, and always be well-mannered in your relationship with people.*⁵

God has revealed in the Qur'an that He loves those who always do good due to their faith and their fear and love for God, and adds that He will reward them with good:

So God gave them the reward of the life of this world and the best reward of the hereafter. God loves the good-doers. (Surah Ali 'Imran: 148)

... There is good in the life of this world for those who do good, and the abode of the hereafter is even better. How wonderful is the abode of those who have fear of God. (Surat an-Nahl: 30)

This is good news given in the Qur'an to those who do good, who are self-sacrificing and who strive to earn God's good pleasure.

God gives these people the glad tidings of a good life both in this world and in the hereafter, an increase in blessings - both material and spiritual. The Prophet Solomon, who was given an entire kingdom, the like of which was never granted to anyone, and the prophet Joseph (Yusuf), who was placed in authority over the treasures of Egypt, are examples given in the Qur'an. God informs us about the blessings He granted on the prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, in the verse **"Did He not find you impoverished and enrich you?"** (Surat ad-Duha: 8).

One needs to remember that a beautiful and glorious life is not a blessing granted only to earlier generations of believers. God promises that, in each period, He will give His believing servants a good life:

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

Believers never chase after the world; that is to say, they do not demonstrate greed for worldly wealth, status or power. As God states in a verse, they have sold their lives and their wealth in return for paradise. Trade or commerce do not distract them from the remembrance of God, the performance of prayers and serving for religion. Furthermore, they show steadfastness and submission even when they are tested with hunger or loss of wealth, and they never complain. Believers who emigrated in the Prophet's time were an example. They immigrated to another city, leaving their houses, occupations, commerce, property and gardens behind and there, they were contented with little. In return they only wanted to earn God's pleasure. Their contentment and sincere remembrance of the hereafter earned them God's blessings and good lives and gifts. These gifts and wealth did not increase their attachment to this world, but rather led them to render their thanks to God and to remember Him. God promises every believer who displays high morals a good life in this world.

God has promised to multiply the deeds of His servants who do good

God has promised to multiply the deeds of His servants who do good. Some of the verses related in the Qur'an on this subject are as follows:

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 and they will not be wronged. (Surat al-An'am: 160)

God does not wrong anyone by so much as the smallest speck. And if there is a good deed God will multiply it and pay out an immense reward direct from Him. (Surat an-Nisa': 40)

The most obvious sign that God multiplies every good deed is the difference between the life of this world and the hereafter. The life of the world is quite a short period, which lasts 60 years on average. However, those who purify themselves and engage in good deeds in this world will be rewarded with an infinite goodness in the hereafter in return for what they did during this short life. God has given this promise in a verse as follows:

Those who do good will have the best and more... (Surah Yunus: 26)

One needs to contemplate the concept of "infinity" in order to comprehend the greatness of this reward. Let's assume that all people who have ever lived on earth so far and those who will live in the future spend every single second of their lives counting. This figure will surely become too large to articulate. Yet, next to "infinity", even this enormous number would mean nothing. Because "infinite" means endless, having no limits in time. The abode of those who display devotion to God in this world will be paradise in the hereafter. There, they will remain for all eternity, attain anything their souls desire and will have no limits for this. This is surely an example that should be reflected on in order to comprehend the enormity of God's mercy and grace.

THERE IS LIGHT IN BELIEVERS' FACES, BUT DISGRACE IN THOSE OF DISBELIEVERS

One of the secrets that God reveals in the Qur'an is that belief and disbelief are reflected on people's faces and skins. In many verses, God informs that there is light on believers' faces, whereas there is disgrace on disbelievers':

And you will see them brought forward to it (hell) made humble by disgrace, looking with a stealthy glance... (Surat ash-Shura: 45)

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

As stated in these verses, disbelievers' faces are shadowed by debasement. On the other hand, believers have light on their faces. God states that they are recognised by the traces of prostration on their faces:

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

In other verses, God informs that disbelievers and evildoers are recognised by their faces:

The evildoers will be recognised by their mark and seized by their forelocks and their feet. (Surat ar-Rahman: 41)

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

It is a miracle and an important secret revealed in the Qur'an that, depending on one's faith or evildoing, physical changes occur on one's face. Spiritual feelings produce

physical effects on body; although the contour remains the same, the expression of the face changes or the face is lightened or overshadowed. A man of faith, can, by the Will of God, see this miracle God performs on people.

THE SECRET THAT GOD ERASES BAD ACTIONS

The aim of believers is to earn the good pleasure, mercy and paradise of God. However, man is created weak and forgetful; therefore, makes many mistakes and possesses many failings. God, Who knows His servants best and Who is the most merciful and compassionate, has informed us that He will erase the bad actions of His sincere servants and will give them an easy reckoning:

As for him who is given his Book in his right hand, he will be given an easy reckoning and return to his family joyful. (Surat al-Inshiqaq: 7-9)

No doubt, God does not change the bad actions of every person into good. The attributes of those believers whose bad actions God erases and forgives are informed in the Qur'an.

Those who avoid serious wrong actions

In a verse, God states: **"If you avoid the serious wrong actions you have been forbidden, We will erase your bad actions from you and admit you by a Gate of Honour."** (Surat an-Nisa': 31). Believers who are aware of this fact observe the limits set by God meticulously and avoid committing what is forbidden. If they ever err out of forgetfulness or heedlessness, they immediately turn to God and repent and ask for forgiveness.

God informs us in the Qur'an about His servants whose repentance will be accepted. In this sense, knowing the commandments of God, yet deliberately committing sins, saying "no matter what happens I will be forgiven" shows completely flawed reasoning. That is because, God forgives the wrong actions of His servants who commit them out of ignorance and who, without losing any time, repent and display no insistence on them and make up for them:

God only accepts the repentance of those who do evil in ignorance and then quickly repent after doing it. God turns towards such people. God is All-Knowing, All-Wise. There is no repentance for people who persist in doing evil until death comes to them and who then say, 'Now I repent,' nor for people who die while they are disbelievers. We have prepared for them a painful punishment. (Surat an-Nisa': 17-18)

As the verses suggest, studious avoidance of sins is essential if a person wants his bad actions to be erased and to feel no regret on the day of judgement. A believer who commits a sin, on the other hand, should lose no time in asking for repentance from God.

Those who engage in good deeds

In other verses, God states that He will cover the bad actions of those who act rightly. Some of the relevant verses are as follows:

On the Day He gathers you for the Day of Gathering - that is the Day of Profit and Loss. As for those who believe in God and act rightly, We will erase their bad actions from them and admit them into Gardens with rivers flowing under them, remaining in them timelessly, forever and ever. That is the Great Victory! (Surat at-Taghabun: 9)

Except for those who make sincere repentance and believe and act rightly: God will transform the wrong actions of such people into good - God is Ever-Forgiving, Most Merciful - (Surat al-Furqan: 70)

Each act and all behaviour displayed to seek the favour of God are a "righteous deed". For instance, any attitude such as communicating the morality of the religion to people, reminding someone who does not put his trust in God about fate, hindering someone from gossiping, keeping one's house and body clean, expanding one's horizons by reading and learning, talking graciously, reminding people about the hereafter, caring for the sick, showing love and compassion to the elderly, earning money through lawful means so that one can use it for the good of people, staving off evil with good and patience can become righteous deeds when they are done to earn the good pleasure of God. Those who desire their wrong actions to be remitted and transformed into good in the hereafter should always choose to act in the way that God will be most pleased with. For such an end, one should constantly remember the reckoning on the Day of Judgement. It is obvious how one would act, for example, if he were made to stand before the fire of hell, he were shown the bad actions he had done in his life, and were warned that he had to act in the right way in order to be forgiven. A person who sees the fire, who hears the despair, remorse and groaning of the people of hell under that painful punishment and who witnesses the punishment of the hell with his own eyes would surely act in the way that would most please God and strive with his utmost striving. This person would pray on time, perform good deeds, would never be careless, would never dare to choose an act when he knows there is another act that would please Him. Because hell, which remains right beside him, would always remind him of his eternal life and of God's punishment. Such a person could not defer his deeds. He would immediately and perfectly perform what his conscience commands him to. He would be meticulous and persistent in prayers. So, in the life of this world, the wrong actions of only those who perform good deeds, fearing God and the day of judgement, as if they had seen the hell and returned back to the world, or as if they always see the fire right

beside them will be transformed into good. These believers are certain about the hereafter and they greatly fear and try to avoid God's punishment.

DIVINE PURPOSES IN SPENDING IN GOD'S WAY

One of the most important acts of worship that cleanses material and spiritual dirt, and enables man to discipline his souls and thus to attain a state of high morality that God would be pleased with, is to spend in God's way for benevolent causes. God has told the Prophet, peace be upon him, to take alms out of believers' property and to cleanse and purify them thereby.

Take alms from their wealth to purify and cleanse them... (Surat at-Tawba: 103)

However, the act of spending that purifies and cleanses people is the one that is made in the way specified in the Qur'an. People believe themselves to have exceedingly fulfilled their duty when they give some small change to beggars, when they give away some of their old clothes to the poor or when they feed a hungry person. No doubt these are the acts that would be rewarded in God's sight if they were performed with the intention of earning the good pleasure of God. Yet, there are limits specified in the Qur'an. For example, God commands man to spend whatever is surplus to his needs:

... They will ask you what they should give away. Say, 'Whatever is surplus to your needs.' In this way God makes the Signs clear to you, so that hopefully you will reflect; (Surat al-Baqara: 219)

Man needs very little to live in this world. Property that is in excess of one's needs is surplus goods. What is important is not the amount given but whether one sincerely gives away what he can really afford. God has knowledge of all things and He has left it to man's conscience to decide the things he actually does not need. Giving away is a very easy form of worship for those who are not seized by worldly ambitions and who have not sold out to this world, but yearn for the hereafter. God has ordered us to give away out of our wealth to avoid attachment to this world. This is a means to purify ourselves of greed. No doubt, this form of worship is very important for believers in respect of their reckoning in the hereafter. God's Messenger, peace be upon him, also said that he who spends in the way of God is favoured:

Two people are favoured: One is someone to whom God gave the Qur'an and who lived by it. He accepted as lawful whatever it commanded as lawful, and as unlawful

whatever it commanded as unlawful. The other is someone to whom God gave property and who allotted this property among his relatives and spent it on God's path.⁶

Man should give of what he loves to the needy

People often tend to do someone a favour if that favour does not harm their interests. For example, when someone gives away possessions to the needy, he often gives things that are no longer desired, or disliked, out of style, or no longer fit for use.

God, however, commands man to give away the entities he cherishes for himself. One may find it difficult to give away beloved possessions, but such generosity is essential to purification and the attainment of righteousness. This is an important secret that God has revealed to mankind. God has stated that man could, in no other way, attain goodness:

You will not attain true goodness until you give of what you love. Whatever you give away, God knows it. (Surah Ali 'Imran: 92)

You who believe! Give away some of the good things you have earned and some of what the earth produces for you. Do not have recourse to bad things when you give, things you would only take with your eyes tight shut! Know that God is Rich Beyond Need, Praiseworthy. (Surat al-Baqara: 267)

Spending in God's way is a means to draw nearer to Him

For a believer, nothing is dearer than earning God's good pleasure and love. A believer seeks the means to get closer to God throughout his life. Of this God states the following:

You who believe! Have fear of God and seek the means of drawing near to Him, and strive in His Way, so that hopefully you will be successful. (Surat al-Ma'ida: 35)

As a secret and good news to believers, God revealed in the Qur'an that what is spent should be a means of obtaining nearness to Him. Therefore, for a believer, giving away what he loves and what is beyond his needs is not a hardship, but rather a precious opportunity to demonstrate devotion and love for God. Of this God states the following:

And among the desert Arabs there are some who believe in God and the Last Day and regard what they give as something, which will bring them nearer to God and to the prayers of the Messenger. It does indeed bring them near. God will admit them into His mercy. God is Ever-Forgiving, Most Merciful. (Surat at-Tawba: 99)

Whatever is spent in God's way will have a good recompense

Another secret revealed in respect of giving away one's property in the Qur'an is that whatever is spent will certainly be replaced. This is God's promise. Those who spend their property in God's way with no fear of poverty, are presented astonishing blessings all through their lives. Whatever is spent in God's way is paid back in full. Some of the verses that relate to the promise are as follows:

You are not responsible for their guidance, but God guides whosoever He wills. Whatever good you give away is to your own benefit, when you give desiring only the Face of God. Whatever good you give away will be repaid to you in full. You will not be wronged. (Surat al-Baqara: 272)

... Anything you spend in the Way of God will be repaid to you in full. You will not be wronged. (Surat al-Anfal: 60)

Say: 'My Lord expands the provision of any of His servants as He wills or restricts it. But He will replace anything you spend. He is the Best of Providers.' (Surah Saba': 39)

Believers desire to earn only God's good pleasure and paradise when they give away their properties and extend themselves; but as a secret revealed by God, whatever they spend is paid back to them. As stated in the verse, God replaces what is spent. These repayments are both blessings in the world and, above all else, gifts in paradise God has prepared for believers. On the other hand, contrary to those who give away, God lessens the provision of those people who are miserly in giving away their wealth or who desire to accumulate more wealth by disregarding the limits of God. One of the relevant verses relates the state of those who charge interest:

God obliterates usury but makes deeds of charity grow in value! God does not love any persistently ungrateful wrongdoer. (Surat al-Baqara: 276)

God informs about the abundance that those who give away their properties attain as follows:

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

You who believe! Do not nullify your charity by demands for gratitude or insulting words, like him who spends his wealth, showing off to people and not believe in God and the Last Day. His likeness is that of a smooth rock coated with soil, which, when heavy rain falls on it, is left stripped bare. They have no power over anything they have earned. God does not guide disbelieving people.

The metaphor of those who spend their wealth, desiring the pleasure of God and firmness for themselves, is that of a garden on a hillside. When heavy rain falls on it, it doubles its produce; and if heavy rain does not fall, there is dew. God sees what you do. (Surat al-Baqara: 264-265)

Each one of these verses is a secret that God reveals to believers in the Qur'an. Believers spend their wealth only to earn the good pleasure and mercy of God and His paradise. However, being aware of these secrets revealed in the Quran, they also hope for God's blessings and grace. The more they spend their goods and extend themselves in God's way and the more meticulous they become in observing what is forbidden and lawful, the more God increases their wealth, makes their tasks easy, and provides more

of the opportunities to spend in His way. Every believer who fears God and harbours no fear in his heart for future, experiences this secret in the course of his life.

THE EFFECT OF GOOD ACTIONS AND GOOD WORDS

People are in a relentless search for peaceful environments where they can live in safety, have joy and cherish friendship. Despite this longing, however, they never put forth an effort to foster these values, but rather they become themselves the causes of conflicts and misery. Often people expect others to provide peace and safety and be friendly. This applies to family relations, relations among employees of a company, to social peace as well as to international affairs. Yet, maintenance of friendship, peace and safety demand altruism. Conflict and restlessness cannot be avoided when people insist on having the last word, when they consider only their own comfort and are unwilling to make any compromises or sacrifices. However, believers who fear God act differently. They are unselfish, forgiving and forbearing. Even when they are wronged, they renounce their own rights, regard the peace and safety of the society and happiness of others over their own self-interest, and display courteous behaviour. This is a noble attribute that God commands believers to have:

A good action and a bad action are not the same. Repel the bad with something better and, if there is enmity between you and someone else, he will be like a bosom friend. None will obtain it but those who are truly steadfast. None will obtain it but those who have great good fortune. (Surah Fussilat: 34-35)

Call to the way of your Lord with wisdom and fair admonition, and argue with them in the kindest way. Your Lord knows best who is misguided from His way. And He knows best who are guided. (Surat an-Nahl: 125)

As stated in the verse, in return for this good act of believers, God changes their enemies into "bosom friends". This is one of God's secrets. After all, all hearts are in God's hand. He changes the heart and thought of whomever He wills.

In some other verses, God draws our attention to the effect of good and gentle word. God commands the Prophet Moses and Aaron, peace be upon them, to go to Pharaoh and to speak to him gently. Despite Pharaoh's unfairness, insolence and mercilessness, God has commanded His messengers to speak to him with gentle words. God has explained the reason in the Qur'an:

Go to Pharaoh; he has overstepped the bounds. But speak to him with gentle words so that hopefully he will pay heed or show some fear. (Surah Ta Ha: 43-44)

These verses inform believers about the type of attitude they should assume towards disbelievers, their enemies and insolent people. This surely encourages patience, will, modesty and wisdom. God has revealed as a secret that He will render the acts of believers effective and will change their enemies into friends when they obey His commands and act in compliance with good morals.

THE SECRET THAT GOD PROVIDES ROOM FOR PEOPLE

One of the serious mistakes people make is that they consider everything as a consequence of something else. For example, as mentioned in previous pages, they think that they would run out of money if they spent their wealth in God's way. However, there is a secret in God's creation of which they are unaware; that God will increase His blessings on those who give in God's Cause both in this world and in the hereafter. Surely, God makes man perceive these as a cause and effect functioning of the world. For example, the affairs of someone who gives away his wealth for the cause of God is rendered easy and his earnings are increased by God. Or, as explained in the previous section, one may resort to force to cope with a furious person because he believes gentle words would not soothe him. However, for a person who obeys God's commands, the secrets God revealed in the Qur'an provide the only solution.

One of these secrets revealed in the Qur'an is another command of God:

You who believe! When you are told: 'Make room in the gathering,' then make room and God will make room for you! And when it is said, 'Get up!' Get up! God will raise in rank those of you who believe and those who have been given knowledge. God is aware of what you do. (Surat al-Mujadila: 11)

God commands believers to obey the call to make room in an assembly for newcomers or thin out the crowd when necessary. This, as well as indicating consideration and kindness, is also a sign of obedience. God revealed that He will provide ample room for believers and will raise them in rank in return to their behaviour. God holds the intention and heart of every man in His hand. If He is pleased with their behaviour, He can give this person any gift and beauty He wills. For that reason, believers expect the result and reward of everything from God. When they make room in

an assembly, they do not expect gratitude from people, but hope for God's good pleasure, for the peace He will give to their hearts and for being raised in rank.

GOD CERTAINLY HELPS THOSE WHO HELP HIS RELIGION

God reveals a secret in the Qur'an as follows:

You who believe! If you help God, He will help you and make your feet firm. (Surah Muhammad: 7)

Throughout their lives, believers make a serious effort to spread the values of the Qur'an amongst people and spread the message of God. On the other hand, throughout history, there have always been groups of disbelievers who have been against believers and tried to hinder them through force and pressure. In the Qur'an, God states that He is always with believers against disbelievers, that He will make their affairs easy, and that He will help and support believers. Believers who put sincere effort in God's way experience this at every single instant of their lives. God brings all their affairs to a conclusion with ease, and gives them success and beauty. Even in very difficult situations, He provides ease for the believers. Even in cases when those with poor faith said "alas", give way to despair and see no way out, God has sent down His help to the believers and made them successful.

Believers who are certain that God helps and supports them, never give up hope and wait with excitement to see how God will conclude an event. The Prophet Moses and his people are an example of this. The Prophet Moses and the people of Israel left Egypt to be protected from the cruelty of Pharaoh. But Pharaoh and his army chased them. When the Prophet Moses and the people of Israel reached the sea, some of them who had poor faith panicked and lost hope, thinking that they would be overtaken by the Pharaoh. Yet, the Prophet Moses said: "... **My Lord is with me and He will guide me.**" (Surat ash-Shu'ara': 62) And thus displayed his faith in God's support to believers. Indeed, God parted the waters of the sea and allowed the Prophet Moses and his companions to cross to the other shore safely. Meanwhile, He closed the sea over the Pharaoh and his soldiers and they drowned.

A believer, who is close to God, who takes God as his friend and knows He supports those who believe, will see the manifestation of this secret in every instance of his life. Surely, miracles like the parting of the sea are signs that God shows to some of His messengers. However, if believers ponder sincerely, reflect on God's creation and the verses of the Qur'an in every incident, they can see the miracle-like manifestations of God's support and help in every situation.

God helps believers also through imperceptible ways

In many verses, God has informed believers about the support He bestows on them. For example, in a verse, God has stated that He will make their enemies see believers as twice their number:

There has already been for you a Sign in the two armies that met (in combat): One was fighting in the cause of God, the other resisting God; these saw with their own eyes twice their number. But God does support with His aid whom He pleases. In this is warnings for such as have eyes to see. (Surah Ali 'Imran: 13)

God helps believers by means of foiling the plots hatched against them

As previously mentioned, disbelievers cause various difficulties for believers and hatch plots against them in order to hinder them from the way of God. But God informs in the Qur'an that all plots against believers will be foiled, will be returned back against the plotters and will not harm believers in any way. Some of these verses are as follows:

... But then when a Warner did come to them, it only increased their aversion, shown by their arrogance in the land and evil plotting. But evil plotting envelops only those who do it. Do they expect anything but the pattern of previous peoples? You will not find any changing in the pattern of God. You will not find any alteration in the pattern of God. (Surah Fatir: 42-43)

If something good happens to you, it galls them. If something bad strikes you, they rejoice at it. But if you are steadfast and have fear of God, their scheming will not harm you in any way. God encompasses what they do. (Surah Ali 'Imran: 120)

Prophet Joseph's life is exemplary in the sense that the schemes hatched against believers will ultimately turn in their favour and against hachers. As related in Surah Yusuf, the prophet Joseph's brothers, who were consumed with envy, devised a plan and threw him to a well. When Prophet Joseph, peace be upon him, was still young, another scheme was devised by the governor's wife, in whose house prophet Joseph resided. The promise of God entailed the failure of all these plots and protection from harm. Following the plans devised, God placed the prophet Joseph in authority over the treasures of the land. After all these, the prophet Joseph commented that the plots of the disbelievers are fated to failure:

(Then Joseph said: I asked for this) so that he (my former master) may know at last that I did not dishonour him behind his back and that God most surely does not guide the deviousness of the dishonourable. (Surah Yusuf: 52)

QUARRELLING CAUSES LOSS OF STRENGTH

One of the important secrets God reveals to believers is not to quarrel. Or else their strength will depart and they will be weak in heart. The relevant verse is as follows:

Obey God and His Messenger and do not quarrel amongst yourselves lest you lose heart and your momentum disappear. And be steadfast. God is with the steadfast. (Surat al-Anfal: 46)

Qur'anic morality is marked by humility. Those adhering to the moral values of the Qur'an settle quarrels, find solutions to problems, make things easy for people and do not display greed. In the absence of Qur'anic morality, disputes and conflicts are unavoidable. It is perfectly natural that everybody holds different opinions. For instance, 20 people can propose 20 different solutions to a problem. Each solution may be right or consistent within itself. If each one insists on being right, it is obvious that there will be disorder and conflict. In such a case, rather than unity by consensus of 20 people, there will be quarrels and personal ambitions that will impede good deeds engaged in for the cause of God. Consequently, the whole strength of these 20 people will dissipate, the union and brotherhood among them will be dissolved.

Believers should feel a profound love for one another, make sacrifices and establish a strong solidarity and co-operation among themselves. Especially at times of hardship, they should keep themselves occupied with the remembrance of God, and be much more patient and supportive towards one another. Quarrelling reduces strength, whereas co-operation increases the strength among the believers. In another verse, God has revealed the secret that if believers are not friends and protectors of one another, there will be confusion and great corruption in the land:

Those who disbelieve are the friends and protectors of one another. If you do not act in this way (protect each other) there will be turmoil in the land and great corruption. (Surat al-Anfal: 73)

Each one of these is a secret God has revealed and charged Muslims with responsibilities. No Muslim should consider a quarrel with another Muslim trivial, by saying, "So what if we quarrelled?" Because, as God informs us, every dispute among

Muslims, means the diminishing of the strength of believers for which Muslims will give an account to God. That is why our beloved Prophet, peace be upon him, said, "*Fear God. Make peace among you. Certainly, God makes peace among the Muslims.*"⁷

Muslims should not look for one another's mistakes or failings, but rather cover faults of other Muslims with compassion. The strength believers derive from this unity, means devoting all energy to spread God's religion and the morals of the Qur'an. With unity they can concentrate on communicating the signs of the existence of God through scientific works and render praiseworthy services to humanity. One must remember, however, that everyone renders his services essentially to earn an eternal life in the hereafter and to be safeguarded from God's punishment.

ONLY IN THE REMEMBRANCE OF GOD DO HEARTS FIND SATISFACTION

All men living on earth seek ways to attain real happiness. Hopes are pinned on a goal of attaining happiness. Some seek happiness in an opulent life style, some in a prestigious career, a good marriage, plastic surgery, college admission. Once these goals are attained, however, whatever happiness results is usually transitory. Or often there is no joy or satisfaction at all in achieving the goal. However, there has been no one on earth who has ever attained true happiness through these methods. There are many issues that bother or disquiet even someone who believes the goal of complete happiness has been achieved.

True happiness, peace, pleasure and ease can only be found in the remembrance of God. God relates this fact in a verse as follows:

Those who believe and whose hearts find peace in the remembrance of God. Only in the remembrance of God can the heart find peace. (Surat ar-Ra'd: 28)

This is a very important secret that God reveals to mankind in the Qur'an. Unaware of this fact, many people spend their lives under the delusion that worldly gifts would bring satisfaction. As if they would never die and meet the day of reckoning, they greedily strive to possess the values pertaining to this world.

Yet this is a great delusion. Nothing possessed in this world can bring true peace and happiness. Only believers who are sincerely devoted to God and who are cognisant of God's mercy, compassion and protection over them can attain the peaceful state of the heart. God grants this relief on the heart of the person who sees the evidences of God's creation and remembers Him at all times. Therefore it is vain to seek for ease or peace and happiness by any other means.

THE CUNNING OF SATAN IS WEAK

Man's greatest enemy, since the Prophet Adam, peace be upon him, has always been Satan. Satan pledged himself to lead people astray when the Prophet Adam was created, and has committed himself to this cause by devising schemes that make the world appear charming and alluring to mankind. The Qur'an also informs us that his scheming is feeble and that he can exercise no authority over people:

Those who believe fight in the Way of God. Those who disbelieve fight in the way of false gods. So fight the friends of Satan! Satan's scheming is always feeble. (Surat an-Nisa': 76)

Diabolis (Iblis) was correct in his assessment of them and they followed him, except for a group of believers. He had no authority over them except that We might test those who believe in the hereafter from those who are in doubt about it. Your Lord is The Preserver of all things. (Surah Saba': 20-21)

In fact, that Satan's scheming is feeble and that he has no power over people is God's making things easy for mankind. Satan is the only negative power against religion and His weakness implies that believers will not experience any difficulty in living by the values of the Qur'an. However, for this to happen, sincere faith is essential. In the Qur'an, God informs us that those with sincere faith will not be affected by the tricks of Satan:

He (Satan) said, 'My Lord, because You misled me, I will make things on the earth seem good to them (mankind) and I will mislead them all, every one of them, except Your servants among them who are sincere.' (Surat al-Hijr: 39-40)

In other verses, God has revealed that Satan will have no power over those who believe and put their trust in their Lord:

He has no authority over those who believe and put their trust in their Lord. He only has authority over those who take him as a friend and associate others with God. (Surat an-Nahl: 99-100)

The secret of how to escape false hopes and the whisperings of the Satan

Despite Satan's inefficacy on the believers, he may sometimes attempt to bother them with his whisperings because of a deed they have committed.

Another important secret God reveals in the Qur'an is how to escape the whisperings of Satan. This is a very important subject for believers who fear God and hope to attain paradise, because the whispers of Satan are misleading words that divert man from God's way and keep him occupied with vain and trivial issues. Satan tries to inject feelings of sorrow, fear and distress to people, to sow discord amongst them, to cause them to feel doubts about God, the Qur'an or the religion (*deen*). He fills them with false hopes. Some of the verses that describe Satan's whisperings to man are as follows:

"I will lead them astray and fill them with false hopes. I will command them and they will cut off cattle's ears. I will command them and they will change God's creation." Anyone who takes Satan as his protector in place of God has clearly lost everything.

He (Satan) makes promises to them and fills them with false hopes. But what Satan promises them is nothing but delusion. (Surat an-Nisa': 119-120)

(The insidious whisperer) who whispers in people's breasts (hearts) (Surat an-Nas: 5)

No matter what Satan whispers to believers, he will not be able to distract them from God's guidance as long as they follow the path that God shows. God reminds believers of the following against Satan:

If an evil impulse from Satan provokes you, seek refuge in God. He is All-Hearing, All-Seeing. As for those who have fear of God, when they are bothered by visitors from Satan, they remember and immediately see clearly. (Surat al-A'raf: 200-201)

As can be understood from the verse, believers remain alert to the whisperings of Satan. They lose no time on thinking about his whisperings, and, aware that it would not please God, they never allow themselves to be carried away by pessimism, fear or sorrow, which are all negative feelings shunned by believers. When believers are troubled with something not in compliance with Qur'anic morality, they immediately recognise it to be a noxious whisper from Satan that would not please God. They dismiss the whisperings of the Satan through the remembrance of God and the verses of the Qur'an.

OBEYING THE MAJORITY MISLEADS MAN FROM THE RIGHT PATH

Assuming that the common conviction of the majority is right often deludes mankind. Indeed, when asked about the underlying reason of a particular act or attitude, many people answer "Because the majority does so." However, God informs us that obeying the majority is misleading:

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

In another verse, God states that most people will not believe:

But most people, for all your eagerness, are not believers. (Surah Yusuf: 103)

In Surat al-Ma'ida, God mentioned the abundance of "evil" and called people of intelligence to avoid it.

Say: 'Evil and good are not the same, even though the abundance of evil may seem attractive to you.' Have fear of God, people of intelligence, so that hopefully you will be successful. (Surat al-Ma'ida: 100)

Consequently, what the majority does, believes in or advocates can never be a reliable source or reference. People tend to follow the majority under the influence of the "herd instinct". However, believers who act in accordance with this divine secret God gives in the Qur'an do not follow the majority, but only observe God's commands and His religion. Even if they are alone, they never harbour doubts about their beliefs and the path they follow.

SECRETS IN THE EXPANSION AND DIMINISHING OF BLESSINGS

In the Qur'an, God reveals the reason why He grants blessings or takes them back from people:

That is because God would never change a blessing He has conferred on a people until they changed what is in themselves. God is All-Hearing, All-Knowing. (Surat al-Anfal: 53)

Everyone has a succession of angels in front of him and behind him, guarding him by God's command. God never changes a people's state until they change what is in themselves. When God desires evil for a people, there is no averting it. They have no protector apart from Him. (Surat ar-Ra'd: 11)

What is related in these verses are very important secrets that people are mostly unaware of or ignore. God says that He will expand the blessings of those people who engage in good acts, and will restrict the blessings of those who perform evil acts, and that the blessings on people will alter in accordance with the changes in their behaviour and sincerity.

Believers who know this secret of God try to see the hidden purposes in God's creation in every situation they encounter and remain heedful about this subject. They never feel self-sufficient, but strive hard to attain the moral perfection described in the Qur'an, and to correct their wrongdoings and failings. In this sense, they never dare to falter in displaying moral perfection and the refinement of their conduct.

OBEDIENCE TO THE MESSENGER IS OBEDIENCE TO GOD

One of the most important acts of worship that God commands believers in the Qur'an is obedience to His messengers. God says He has sent messengers to be obeyed, and believers, in every age, have been tested in their obedience to the messengers. Messengers are the people who convey God's message and His commands to people, and warn them of the day of reckoning and of His signs. They are the sincere and blessed people who are chosen by God over the rest of the people and whose acts, attitudes and perfect morals are exemplary. They are the friends of God who are drawn near to Him. As stated in the verse below, obedience to messengers is the indication of one's obedience to God.

Whoever obeys the Messenger has obeyed God. If anyone turns away, we did not send you to them as their keeper. (Surat an-Nisa': 80)

God's Messenger, peace be upon him, also said that the glad tidings are to those who witness to this fact:

*You witness that there is no deity but God and that I am His Messenger, don't you? If so, the glad tidings are yours. The Qur'an is such a rope that one of its end reaches to God and the other end reaches to you. Hold fast to it. If you do so, you will never fall into error or danger.*⁸

Disobedience to a messenger is direct disobedience to God and His religion. This is one of the important secrets that God reveals in the Qur'an. In a verse, God relates the state of those who obey the messenger and those who don't:

These are God's limits. As for those who obey God and His Messenger, We will admit them into Gardens with rivers flowing under them, remaining in them timelessly, forever. That is the Great Victory. As for those who disobey God and His Messenger and overstep His limits, We will admit them into a Fire, remaining in it timelessly, forever. They will have a humiliating punishment. (Surat an-Nisa': 13-14)

God has revealed many details in the Qur'an about obedience to the messenger and made clear how the true obedience and submission should be as well as the kind of obedience acceptable in His sight. As also seen in these verses, the fulfilment of all requirements of the religion and rendering too much services for its cause is not adequate. If a person fails to adopt the attitude and morality pertaining to the obedience to the messenger in the sense God describes in the Qur'an and displays imperfections in his obedience, it may well be that God may render all his actions void. Some of the relevant verses are examined below under different sections:

They are not believers until they submit themselves completely to the Messenger

God reveals a very important secret in Surat an- Nisa':

No, by your Lord, they are not believers until they make you their judge in the disputes that break out between them, and then find no resistance within themselves to what you decide and submit themselves completely. (Surat an-Nisa': 65)

In this verse, a very important secret about the ideal obedience to the prophet is revealed. Most people know the concept of obedience. However, obedience to the messenger is much different from all other forms of obedience people know. As God states in the verse above, believers should obey the messenger wholeheartedly, without harbouring the slightest doubt or showing any hesitation. If one feels any doubt about what the messenger says and considers his own ideas more accurate than the

messenger's, then this, as the verse suggests, essentially means he is not a true believer.

Believers with true faith and submission know that what the messenger says is the best for them. Even if his words are in conflict with their personal interests, they accept and obey him eagerly and with enthusiasm. This virtuous conduct is a sign of true faith, and God gives the glad tidings of salvation to those who obey the messenger with such submissiveness. Some of the verses in which God gives this good news are as follows:

Whoever obeys God and the Messenger will be with those whom God has blessed: the Prophets and the truthful, the witnesses (who testify) and the righteous (who do good). What excellent company such people are! (Surat an-Nisa': 69)

All who obey God and His Messenger and have awe of God and fear Him, they are the ones who are victorious. (Surat an-Nur: 52)

Say: 'Obey God and obey the Messenger. If you should turn away, he is only responsible for what he is charged with and you are responsible for what you are charged with. If you obey him, you will be guided.' The Messenger is only responsible for clear transmission. (Surat an-Nur: 54)

As stated above, those who obey the messenger will be rightly guided. Throughout history, all people have been tested in their obedience to the messengers. God has always chosen His messengers among people. In this context, some narrow-minded and unwise people have not grasped how to obey a man from among themselves or a man who is not wealthier than themselves. However, God has chosen His messengers, provided support to them from His sight and has given them knowledge and strength. The essence of the matter these people fail to fully understand is that, God chooses whomever He wills. A sincere believer wholeheartedly obeys and respects whom God has chosen, and becomes heartily devoted. He knows that, each time he obeys the messenger, he in fact obeys God. Those who are submissive to God and religion are completely submissive to His messenger too. God relates the situation of those who submit themselves to Him as follows:

Not so! All who submit themselves completely to God 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)

Deeds of those who raise their voices above the voice of the prophet become null

In a verse, God states the following:

You who believe! Do not raise your voices above the voice of the Prophet and do not be loud when speaking to him as you are when speaking to one another, lest your actions should come to nothing without your realising it. Those who lower their voices when they are with the Messenger of God are people whose hearts God has tested for fear for God. They will have forgiveness and an immense reward. (Surat al-Hujurat: 2-3)

God's messenger always invites believers to the right path, and to the most beautiful. There are surely times these calls of messengers conflict with the interests of the people around them. However, those who believe and obey the messenger do not pursue their opinion, but rather yield to the words of God, His messenger and the Qur'an. On the other hand, those with poor faith or those who cannot hold their desires under control may show disobedience or weakness upon the call of the messenger. As stated in the verse, their voices, speeches and words they utter may reveal the sickness in their hearts and their weakness in obedience. They may be so unwise to oppose what the prophet says and to raise their voices above his. God informs that deeds of these people will be rendered void. God has informed that all efforts of such a person, even if he works day and night in order to spread the values of religion, will come to nothing on account of his disobedience.

This is a very important secret revealed in many verses in the Qur'an. God has commanded people to perform good deeds, to serve eagerly and firmly for the benefit of Islam, to act in compliance with the good morals described in the Qur'an, to be generous, steadfast, tolerant, truthful and faithful. No doubt, all these are important forms of worship that will be of help to him in the hereafter. However, as seen in Surat al-Hujurat, a single act of disrespectful behaviour towards God's messenger may render all that person's deeds in vain. This, undoubtedly, reminds us once again how important it is to obey and respect God's messengers.

God takes the strength of those who do not obey the messenger

The incident of Saul (Talut) and his army related in the Qur'an is another reminder, which lays heavy stress on the importance of obedience to God's messenger. As related in the Qur'an, when Saul, God's messenger, set out with his forces towards the enemy, he warned his men against drinking from the river they would come across. The relevant verse is as follows:

When Saul marched out with the army, he said, 'God will test you with a river. Anyone who drinks from it is not with me. But anyone who does not taste

it is with me - except for him who merely scoops up a little in his hand.' But they drank from it - except for a few of them. Then when he and those who had faith with him had crossed it, they said, 'We do not have the strength to face Goliath and his troops today.' But those who were sure that they were going to meet God said, 'How many a small force has triumphed over a much greater one by God's permission! God is with the steadfast. (Surat al-Baqara: 249)

As seen in the verse, those who did not obey Saul's order grew weak, whereas those who obeyed Saul were given strength by God and, by the Will of God, vanquished the enemy although they were quite in the minority. These are the secrets that God reveals to mankind in the Qur'an. Strength, victory and superiority do not rest on material wealth, prestigious status, being in the majority or possessing physical superiority. Whoever observes God's limits, obeys Him and His messenger, God makes them stronger than all others, and rewards them with innumerable gifts such as wisdom, health, beauty, blessings and wealth. For those ready to stand up with God's messengers there is beautiful eternal life prepared for them in the hereafter.

A SMALL GROUP OF BELIEVERS CAN OVERCOME A VAST MAJORITY OF DISBELIEVERS

One of the miracles of God is that believers, despite being in the minority, always vanquish their opponents by the Will of God. This is an important secret that God reveals in many verses and leads disbelievers to be mistaken. As seen in the story of Saul, God has made believers victorious because of their obedience, despite the fact they are small in numbers. God concludes the story of Saul with the following words:

"How many a small force has triumphed over a much greater one by God's permission! God is with the steadfast." (Surat al-Baqara: 249)

Steadfastness brings great strength to believers

As frequently emphasised in this book, there are many secrets hidden in numerous verses of the Qur'an. One of these secrets is about steadfastness. God gives the glad tidings that those who are steadfast will become stronger. Remember that all power belongs to God. Even the strength of a person who is against God, in fact, belongs to God. God grants some faculties to people so as to put them and those around them through a test. Likewise He takes away as easily as He gives whenever He wills. God informs us that those who are steadfast will be strong, that is, He will reinforce them. Of this, God states the following:

Yes indeed! But if you are steadfast and have fear of God and they come upon you suddenly, your Lord will reinforce you with five thousand angels, clearly identified. (Surah Ali 'Imran: 125)

As stated in the verse above, if God wills, He can make people victorious in imperceptible ways. In one's endeavour to uphold God's religion, for instance, God can provide subtle support to enable the person to make the most inspiring and influential speech and turn the hearts of people who listen toward the religion. Consequently, no one can win a victory or exert an influence on others unless God wills it. The owner of all accomplishments, victories and inspiration is God. What falls to mankind is to follow the commands of God and to observe His limits. In another verse, God informs believers how to achieve great strength:

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 those who are disbelievers, because they are people who do not understand.

Now God 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 God's permission. God is with the steadfast. (Surat al-Anfal: 65-66)

As God states in these verses, if believers do not have any weakness in themselves, and are firm in steadfastness and faith, the strength of a single believer can be equivalent to that of 10 men. In this context, the word "strength" holds other connotations other than physical strength. For example, the efforts of a believer to convey the message of religion and to call people to God's way can be equivalent to the efforts of a total of 10 people. Alternatively, the knowledge of a believer can be equivalent to the knowledge of ten people. A good deed a believer performs solely to earn God's pleasure may be equivalent to a deed that 10 people perform together. A single believer can invite as many people as ten disbelievers lead astray to the right path of God and can be a means to the improvement of their faith. A single believer can demolish the disbelief ten disbelievers communicate and replace it with the truth.

This secret that God reveals in the Qur'an is of great importance. This is because, if all Muslims race each other toward the right path, no matter how small a group it may be, God will make them victorious in every affair they undertake. For example, if there is a whole world of disbelieving people, faithless professors from universities all around the world who lead all the people in every country to disbelief, God renders a small group of Muslims strong, competent and wise enough to show all these people the true path. God

gives believers ease in their affairs while making things hard for disbelievers. For this reason, believers who know this secret should never belittle their efforts and say, "Would my efforts be of any help to change the situation?", but rather be assured that any sincere deed done with the sole purpose of pleasing God will be very effective. A piece of sincere writing on the existence of God, a word that calls people to God or an act in compliance with the moral values of the Qur'an may well lead many people to salvation and kindle in them love and fear of God. We need to keep in mind that the laws and cause-effect phenomena that apply to this world are solely what is revealed in the Qur'an by God. Anyone who thinks in accordance with the Qur'an can grasp these secrets in God's creation and, by the Will of God, attain a superior strength and wisdom above and over that any man can attain. God gives true believers the good news that they will overcome disbelievers as long as they are firm in their faith:

Do not give up and do not be downhearted. You shall be uppermost if you are believers. (Surah Ali 'Imran: 139)

As seen in verses, the requisite condition for being victorious and superior both in this life and beyond, is sincere faith. Another secret revealed on this issue in the Qur'an is having faith without ascribing partners to God.

GOD MAKES HIS RELIGION SUPREME WHEN ONE WORSHIPS HIM ALONE

One of the most important goals of a Muslim in this life is to spread the Qur'anic morals all over the world, so that people can serve God as they should. In the Qur'an, God has shown believers the way to achieve these aims and commanded as follows:

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

In accordance with a secret God reveals to believers, God will secure the establishment of the values of the Qur'an all over the world if believers only worship God, without ascribing partners to Him. This is a very important secret, because, it indicates that it is the responsibility of every believer to spread the guidance of the Qur'an among all people. Since this is the case, every believer of conscience should

strictly avoid associating partners with God and worship only Him. Before all else, associating partners with God is a sin that God does not forgive and which sends man to hell. However, it may well be that a majority of people relate this concept to pagans who worship idols. Mankind should also be wary of the "hidden idolatry". In this form of idolatry, one can readily express his faith in God, acceptance of God as the one and only God and creator and obedience to Him. But, fearing any being other than God, considering the approval and support of other people more important, considering trade, family and ancestry more important than God and striving in His way, are outright idolatry. The true sense of faith as explained in the Qur'an deems the good pleasure of God above and over anything else. The affection displayed to all beings other than God, can only be means to earn God's pleasure. Those who feel indebted to people for a blessing given to them, who regard them as their protector are, in fact, idolaters. This is because, the One Who bestows various kinds of sustenance to people is God; the One Who feeds, protects and shelters every living being and restores them to health when they are ill is God alone. If God wills, He restores a sick person to health by the hand of a doctor. In this sense, it is illogical for someone to pin his hopes only on the doctor. Because, no doctor can cure a patient unless by the Will of God. A person whose health is improved should see his doctor as a person by whose hands God restores him to health and, accordingly, show the due respect to the doctor. However, knowing that it is actually God Who heals, it is God to Whom he should be grateful. Otherwise, he would be associating partners with God and would ascribe an attribute of God to man. All Muslims should strictly avoid hidden idolatry, and making friends, confidants or protectors other than God.

THE LIFE OF THE WORLD IS IN FACT VERY BRIEF

A majority of people are attached to this world as if they will never die, and thus avoid living by the religion and reflecting on death and the hereafter. However, the life of this world, they are so strongly attached to, is very short and transitory. Even those with long lives will certainly come to terms with death one day. This aside, the life of this world is not even as long as it seems to be. God reveals this secret to mankind in many verses of the Qur'an:

He will say, 'How many years did you tarry on the earth?' They will say, 'We tarried there for a day or part of a day. Ask those able to count!' He will say, 'You only tarried there for a little while if you did but know!' 'Did you suppose that We created you for amusement and that you would not return to Us?' (Surat al-Muminun: 112-115)

On the Day the Last Hour arrives, the evildoers will swear they have not even tarried for an hour. That is the extent to which they are deceived. (Surat ar-Rum: 55)

Above are the dialogues among those gathered together to be reckoned. As these dialogues also suggest, after death people realise that they, in fact, stayed in the world only for a short while. That is, the period, which seems to be six to seven decades in the life of the world, is in fact as short as a single day or even much shorter. This is similar to the case of a man who assumes that he had spent days, months or even years in his dream, but who, after awakening, realises that he dreamt only for a few seconds.

Some contemplation would enable man to grasp the brevity and temporary nature of the life of this world. For example, everyone makes certain plans and sets some goals for his life. These plans and goals never end. They follow one another. Typically, a person graduates from high school, enrolls in university, and then takes a job with a company. All these are, however, fleeting experiences. In youth, one hardly imagines reaching thirty years old. Yet before too long they reach forty.

The shortness of the life of the world is a certain fact God reveals in the Qur'an that can be understood by anyone before dying. For those who grasp this it would be unwise to neglect the endless and real life of the hereafter for such a brief and temporary life. Some of the verses in which God warns mankind of the briefness of the life of this world are as follows:

'My people! The life of the world is only fleeting enjoyment. It is the hereafter, which is the abode of permanence.' (Surah Ghafir: 39)

These people love this fleeting world and have put the thought of a Momentous Day behind their backs. (Surat al-Insan: 27)

GOD CASTS DREAD INTO THE HEARTS OF DISBELIEVERS

God states in many verses that He casts fear into the hearts of those who disbelieve:

And when your Lord revealed to the angels, 'I am with you so make those who have faith firm. I will cast dread into the hearts of those who are disbelievers...' (Surat al-Anfal: 12)

It is He who expelled those who were disbelievers among the People of the Book from their homes to the first gathering-place. You did not think that they would leave and they thought that their fortresses would protect them from God. Then God came upon them from where they least expected it and cast dread into their hearts. Their houses were pulled down by their own hands and by the hands of the believers. People of insight, take note! (Surat al-Hashr: 2)

What is told in these verses is a miracle by God. Through casting dread into their hearts, God diminishes the strength of those who oppose believers and who resist God and the morality of His religion. It is of great importance that believers should ponder on these verses and draw lessons for themselves. This is because, as mentioned in previous chapters, our hearts are in God's hand, and God sows whatever He wills in the heart of whoever He wills. The duty of believers is not to try to create an impact on others, but only to be sincere. For example, a believer is responsible to warn a person in the light of God's verses. However, that person will only be rightly guided by the advise given, no matter how lucid the explanation, if God guides that person to the right path. By the same token, a believer is helpless against dangers. Alternatively, there is no power to frighten enemies. But God protects and supports believers who are sincere and put forth efforts for the sake of God's pleasure. For example, as said in the verses above, He casts dread into the hearts of their enemies, making them deeply occupied with their own troubles. This way, God gives relief to believers.

God inspires various fears into the hearts of disbelievers. There is the fear of death, the future, injury, natural disasters or fear of loss of wealth. Alternatively, the fear of death is greater because a disbeliever does not believe in the hereafter and is strongly attached to this world. Believing that he will be reduced to nothing and lose all possessions, the great fear for death is nurtured. Ultimately, this fear breeds infirmities.

God tells us dread is cast into the hearts of disbelievers because they associate others with Him. The end these people will meet is related in the Qur'an as follows:

We will cast dread into the hearts of those who are disbelievers because they have associated others with God for which He has not sent down any authority. Their shelter will be the Fire. How evil is the abode of the wrongdoers! (Surah Ali 'Imran: 151)

**WISDOM AND DECISIVE
SPEAKING ARE BLESSINGS FROM GOD**

Wisdom and decisive speech are blessings from God as related in the Qur'anic verses below:

He gives wisdom to whomsoever He wills and he who has been given wisdom has been given a great good. But no one pays heed but people of intelligence. (Surat al-Baqara: 269)

We made his kingdom strong and gave him wisdom and decisive speech. (Surah Sâd: 20)

Great gifts are the wisdom and impressiveness in speech. A subject can be explained by various people with different styles. Yet, the most impressive style is a wise and decisive one. Such an explanation makes one focus attention, awakes him from heedlessness, encourages a reflection on things already known but often forgotten. A person of decisive speaking skills does not make unnecessarily long speeches, but expresses thoughts and views in the briefest, most concise, yet in the most comprehensible and impressive way possible. Explanations by a wise man on a subject are limited to a few sincere sentences, and thus makes a stronger impact on others. One thing deserves mention here - decisive speaking is not a faculty that can be learned. It has no rules or intricate points. It demands only sincerity and prayers for the blessings of God. God, in the course of one's speech, inspires this wisdom to whomsoever He wills.

The grand masterpiece of wisdom and impressive talking is surely the Qur'an, which is the direct words of God. This wisdom is peculiar to all the books revealed by God to mankind. This is related in the verses below as follows:

News has come to them, containing a rebuke: consummate wisdom - but warnings are profitless. (Surat al-Qamar: 4-5)

MAN WILL ALSO ACCOUNT FOR HIS THOUGHTS AND INTENTIONS

In the Qur'an, God commands man to live by the principles of the religion voluntarily and devoutly:

... It is even better for anyone who can volunteer some wealth. But that you should fast is better for you, if you only knew. (Surat al-Baqara: 184)

Safeguard strictly your (habit of) prayers- especially the middle one; and stand up devoutly to (worship) God. (Surat al-Baqara: 238)

Abraham (Ibrahim) was a community in himself, exemplary, devoutly obeying God's will, a man of pure natural belief and he joined not deities with God. (Surat an-Nahl: 120)

In the Qur'an, God draws our attention to the existence of some people who perform prayers or who give away their wealth only to show off. However, as seen in the verses above, while performing one's prayers, fasting, giving alms or showing obedience, what really matters is one's real intention and heartfelt thoughts. It may well be that these people do not reflect on God, and consider their feebleness and submissiveness before God while praying, but only perform the rituals. Alternatively, one may do charity works, may found schools or help the poor. However, unless done for the sole purpose of earning the good pleasure of God, reflecting on the fact that one is weak and in need before God and feeling fear of the hereafter, these acts may not be acceptable by God. God tells us that the blood of the sacrificial animals does not reach Him, but the devotion (taqwa) is what reaches Him:

Their flesh and blood does not reach God but your devotion (taqwa) reaches Him. In this way He has subjected them to you so that you might proclaim God's greatness for the way that He has guided you. Give good news to the good-doers. (Surat al-Hajj: 37)

Among the major erroneous beliefs is that people assume they will be held responsible only for their actions. Yet, God informs us that man will account for his intentions, thoughts and even what he conceals deep in his heart.

Everything in the heavens and everything in the earth belongs to God. Whether you divulge what is in yourselves or keep it hidden, God will still call you to account for it. He forgives whomever He wills and He punishes whomever He wills. God has power over all things. (Surat al-Baqara: 284)

God has knowledge of one's heart, subconscious, thoughts and what he keeps hidden from others. God intervenes between a man and his heart. Therefore, man cannot possibly keep anything hidden from God. Any doubt that crosses his mind, any whispering of Satan, his actual thoughts about believers, his faith in the Qur'an, what crosses his mind while performing the prayers are all known one by one by God and recorded by angels. For example, God knows when one performs prayers lethargically, or when he harbours contradictory thoughts. Man will meet each one of these on the Last Day. Purifying one's heart, living by the religion, not by observing the rituals only but also by being sincere and committed, are the ways we will attain salvation. It would

simply be imprudence to neglect the eternal and real life of the hereafter for a brief and fleeting life. Below are some verses in which God warns mankind about the temporary nature of the life of the world:

My people! The life of the world is only fleeting enjoyment. It is the hereafter, which is the abode of permanence. (Surah Ghafir: 39)

These people love this fleeting world and have put the thought of a Momentous Day behind their backs. (Surat al-Insan: 27)

IT IS GOD WHO PLACES LOVE IN PEOPLE'S HEARTS

In many verses, God reveals that it is He Who places love and affection in the hearts of people. For example, God has stated in the verse below that it is He Who gathers believers and unites their hearts as brothers:

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

In other verses, God informs us that it is He Who gives believers tenderness and compassion.

... We gave him judgement while still a child, and tenderness and purity from Us - he had fear of God. (Surah Maryam: 12-13)

As for those who believe and do righteous acts, The All Merciful will bestow His love on them. (Surah Maryam: 96)

Among His Signs is that He created spouses for you of your own kind so that you might find tranquillity in them. And He has placed affection and compassion between you. There are certainly Signs in that for people who reflect. (Surat ar-Rum: 21)

God also states that He will place love between believers and those who are hostile to them. It is evident that God holds control over all hearts – both of believers and all other people.

It may well be that God will restore the love between you and those of them who are now your enemies. God is All-Powerful. God is Ever-Forgiving, Most Merciful. (Surat al-Mumtahana: 7)

THE DEATHS OF DISBELIEVERS AND BELIEVERS WILL NOT BE THE SAME

In the Qur'an, God discloses a secret about death, which is unknown to many people – what a dying person actually experiences is not what other people outwardly observe. God tells us in the Qur'an as follows:

Why then, when death reaches his throat and you are at that moment looking on - and We are nearer him than you but you cannot see. (Surat al-Waqi'a: 83-85)

Another secret God reveals about death is the great terror and agony disbelievers experience at the moment of death. The people around are unlikely to witness this terror. God relates this fact in His verses as follows:

Who could do greater wrong than someone who invents lies against God or denies His Signs, or who says, 'It has been revealed to me,' when nothing has been revealed to him, or someone who says, 'I will send down the same as God has sent down'? If you could only see the wrongdoers in the throes of death when the angels are stretching out their hands, saying, 'Disgorge your own selves! Today you will be repaid with the punishment of humiliation for saying something other than the truth about God, and being arrogant about His Signs.' (Surat al-An'am: 93)

Do not let their wealth and their children impress you. Through them, God merely wants to punish them during their life in the world, and for them to expire while they are disbelievers. (Surat at-Tawba: 85)

In accordance with this secret revealed in the Qur'an, a disbeliever may seem to have peacefully died in his bed. It may seem to the people around as if he had by no means gone through any pain or suffering in the course of death, but that his eyes had just closed. However, God informs us that a disbeliever feels a deep agony. How angels take disbelievers in death is explained in the Qur'an as follows:

How will it be when the angels take them in death, beating their faces and their backs? That is because they followed what angers God and hated what is pleasing to Him. So He made their actions come to nothing. (Surah Muhammad: 27-28)

If only you could see when the angels take back those who were disbelievers at their death, beating their faces and their backs: 'Taste the punishment of the Burning! That is for what you did. God does not wrong His servants.' (Surat al-Anfal: 50-51)

Contrary to this trying death of disbelievers, believers experience a very easy death. For example, a believer who fought in a battle next to the prophet and was stabbed with a dagger, relieved from all forms of fear, experiences a peaceful moment of death. As God informs in the verse, believers' souls will be taken in a state of purity and they will be welcomed by angels with greetings and good news. God has described the death of believers as follows:

... 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)

PRAYER KEEPS MAN AWAY FROM EVIL

Prayer is prescribed for believers five times a day, as specified in the Qur'an. God promised to reward those who strictly guard their prayers and who are constant in their prayers. Another reward that those who establish prayer will receive is revealed in the Qur'an as follows:

Recite what has been revealed to you of the Book and establish prayer. Prayer precludes indecency and wrongdoing. And remembrance of God is greater still. God knows what you do. (Surat al-'Ankabut: 45)

As God states in the verse above, those who perform prayer are kept away from indecency and evil. God inspires the avoidance of such wrongdoing.

One who strictly safeguards and performs prayers as prescribed in the Qur'an is one who fears God. One who stands, bows and prostrates before the Lord five times a day will surely keep away from wrong actions and as a result feel deeply in awe of God. The conscience of such people, by the will and inspiration of God, will keep them away from evil and indecency. Even if they do something wrong for an instant, they will realise their

wrongdoing while praying and reflecting before the Lord on His infinite power. Thus they will repent and avoid wrongdoing in the future.

THOSE WHO ARE KILLED IN THE WAY OF GOD ARE NOT DEAD

God has revealed in the Qur'an that those who die in His way are in fact not "dead", but are alive in His presence. This fact is related in verses as follows:

Do not suppose that those killed in the Way of God are dead. No indeed! They are alive and well provided for in the very presence of their Lord, delighting in the favour God has bestowed on them, rejoicing over those they left behind who have not yet joined them, feeling no fear and knowing no sorrow, rejoicing in blessings and favour from God and that God does not let the wage of the believers go to waste. (Surah Ali 'Imran: 169-171)

Do not say that those who are killed in the Way of God are dead. On the contrary, they are alive but you are not aware of it. (Surat al-Baqara: 154)

That guidance of martyrs is completed in God's presence, and the fact that they are welcomed to paradise is another secret God reveals in the Qur'an.

Their Lord responds to them: 'I will not let the deeds of any doer among you go to waste, male or female - you are both the same in that respect. Those who have left their homes or been driven out therefrom or suffered harm in My Cause and fought and were killed, I will erase their bad actions from them and admit them into Gardens with rivers flowing under them, as a reward from God. The best of all rewards is with God.' (Surah Ali 'Imran: 195)

Those who leave their homes in the cause of God and then are killed or die, God will provide for them handsomely. Truly God is the best Provider. He will admit them by an entrance, which is pleasing to them. God is All-Knowing, All-Forbearing. (Surat al-Hajj: 58-59)

Facts revealed in the above verses about those who are killed in the way of God are among the secrets of the Qur'an, which are not known by people at large.

GOD IS THE GIVER OF HONOUR

Many people who do not believe in the hereafter seek power, strength and superiority in the world, assuming that their life is the one of this world alone. All through their lives, they strive greedily for this end. They have their own values and criteria of being powerful, strong and honourable. According to their criteria, one needs to be rich, have a leading role in society and fame. Should they lose any of these, they think their entire esteem, honour and prestige are finished. They are, however, mistaken. This mistake is explained in the Qur'an as follows:

They have taken other gods besides God to be a source of power and strength for them! No indeed! They will reject their worship and will be opposed to them. (Surah Maryam: 81-82)

The only possessor of power and might is God and He gives power and might to whomever He wills. Therefore, those who resort to other means to attain power and superiority other than praying to God are in fact associating partners with Him. This is because neither wealth, nor prestige, nor status has any individual will to provide a person with power. Besides, it is a matter of a single moment for God to take back this power from a person. For example, a top-executive may lose all his wealth, prestige and status in a moment, because the only and real possessor of everything is God.

God bestows power and honour on His servants who are friends to Him, who are wholeheartedly devoted to Him and who follow the Qur'an. A person who lives by the Qur'an never does anything likely to bring disgrace, feel regret or shame in the presence of the Lord. The true believers fear no one and no power, and never curry favour with anyone. They only want to attain the pleasure of God and fear only God. That is why they have no weakness or any sense of inadequacy. Although they do now own any possessions, wealth, rank or prestige, God grants power and honour to them. Such a person, meanwhile, holds the superiority and honour of being faithful and living by the morals of the Qur'an. Of this God states the following:

... But all might belongs to God and to His Messenger and the believers... (Surat al-Munafiqun: 8)

SECRETS OF FINDING THE STRAIGHT PATH

Almost everyone has his own rights and wrongs. The criteria used to determine these rights and wrongs differ greatly. A book, a person, a politician, or, at times, a philosopher may well be the guide in life for a person. However, the right path, which is the only path that leads to salvation, is the religion which God has chosen. In this path,

the unique goal is to earn the pleasure, mercy and paradise of God. Other paths, no matter how attractive they may seem, are deceptive and lead to ruin, hopelessness, unhappiness and painful punishment both in this world and in the hereafter (unless God wills otherwise).

Those who are guided to the straight path are a secret revealed in the Qur'an. They are the servants God has guided to His straight path and who earn His paradise.

Believing with certainty

Before all else, one needs to have faith in order to be guided to the straight path. If one believes that the only possessor and creator of the heavens and the earth and everything in between is God, and is certain that the reason of his existence in the world is to be the servant of God, and seeks to earn God's contentment all through his life, God guides him to the straight path. Faith in God, in the hereafter and the Qur'an should be a resolute and certain faith. Although some people say that they are believers, they may have doubts. When they are together with disbelievers and remain under their influence, such people are likely to display weaknesses and assume a hostile attitude against God and His religion. However, those God guides to the straight path have a resolute and unwavering faith:

And so that those who have been given knowledge will know it is the truth from their Lord and believe in it and their hearts will be humbled to Him. God guides those who believe to a straight path. (Surat al-Hajj: 54)

Turning to God with complete submission

Believers' turning to God with complete submission is another secret of being guided to the straight path. For one who believes in God and fears the hereafter, this world holds no charm.

When the only ambition is to please God, true believers turn to God in all their acts, and knowing that God is testing them, they submit themselves to the fate God has predetermined. God has informed that those who submit themselves to Him will be guided to the straight path:

How can you disbelieve, when God's Signs are recited to you and the Messenger is there among you? Whoever holds fast to God has been guided to a straight path. (Surah Ali 'Imran: 101)

He has laid down the same religion for you as He enjoined on Noah: that which We have revealed to you and which We enjoined on Abraham, Moses and Jesus: 'Establish the religion and do not make divisions in it.' What you call the associators to follow is very hard for them. God chooses for Himself

whomsoever He wills and guides to Himself those who turn to Him. (Surat ash-Shura: 13)

Following the advice given

Another command of God to His servants who desire to be guided to the straight path is as follows:

... But if they had done what they were urged to do, it would have been better for them and far more strengthening. In that case We would have given them an immense reward from Us and We would have guided them on a straight path. (Surat an-Nisa': 66-68)

Believers who fear God strive to purify themselves of their wrongdoing and to attain the moral perfection God will be most pleased with. However, one needs humility to be absolved of mistakes and receive guidance to the straight path. A modest person who seeks to purify himself will, first of all, meticulously follow God's commands. Besides, sincere believers are friends and protectors of one another. They command what is right and forbid what is wrong. Hence, knowing that a believer's warning is of great importance for one's reckoning in the hereafter, believers should also be receptive to one another's advice. One who follows good advice will be guided to the right path. God gives good news to His servants who avoid following the Satan and obey those who call to the Qur'an and to its commands:

Those who shun the worship of false gods and turn towards God 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, they are the ones whom God has guided, and they are the people of intelligence. (Surat az-Zumar: 17-18)

MAN'S INNER SELF COMMANDS EVIL ACTS

Man's inner self is the commanding power inside him and knows both depravity and how to avoid it. In other words, it is the inner self which inspires evil and wicked deeds. God relates these two features of the inner self in the Qur'an as follows:

And the inner self and what proportioned it and filled it with both its debauchery and its sense of duty, he who purifies it has succeeded. (Surat ash-Shams: 7-9)

The inner self is mentioned in the verses as the source of all depravities and wrong acts of people. Having such a feature, the inner self is among the most avowed enemies of mankind. The inner self is arrogant and selfish; it always wants to satisfy its own desires and vanity. It cares only about its own needs, interests and seeks only pleasure. It resorts to every means to tempt mankind since it is not always possible to fulfil its wishes through legitimate ways. The words of the Prophet Joseph explains this fact in the Qur'an as follows:

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

That one's inner self vigorously inspires evil and wicked deeds is a very important secret revealed to believers having fear of God. This way, they know that the devices of the inner self will never cease, not even for a single moment. Through temptations, it continuously tries to lead man astray from God's way. In accordance with this secret, the inner self will never remain silent; it will justify its deeds under all circumstances, will love itself more than all others, will grow arrogant, will desire to possess everything good and will desire to lead a life of pleasure. In brief, it will resort to any means to make a person display the type of an attitude contrary to the morality which would please God.

Indeed, the behaviour and manners of disbelievers, which do not comply with the morals of the Qur'an, are shaped completely by their inner-selves. Having no fear of God, disbelievers cannot demonstrate the will to obey their conscience but rather follow their inner-selves. Quarrels, conflicts of interests and unhappiness raging in societies in which the morality of the religion is cast aside, have their roots in individuals' plunging into their inner-selves and their own interests and consequently, losing all their humane attributes such as true love, respect and sacrifice.

That is why this secret revealed by God is of great importance. As long as one keeps this secret in mind, he can take precautions against his inner self and assume the correct way of conduct. The inner self can be disciplined by doing just the opposite of

what it commands. For example, when the inner self commands laziness, one must work harder. When the inner self commands selfishness, one must become more self-sacrificing. When the inner self commands stinginess, one must become more generous.

Apart from the wicked side of the soul, from Surat ash-Shams, we know that God also inspired in the soul a conscience which makes a person restrain his soul from fulfilling lower desires. That is to say, next to an inspiration instigating the soul to evil, the soul is also open to instigation of righteousness. Every man is aware of these whispering voices and recognises the evil and the righteous one. Yet, only those who fear God follow the voice of their conscience.

SECRETS OF ABUNDANCE AND THE WEALTH GIVEN TO PEOPLE

The entire universe belongs to God, and He gives what He wills to whom He wills. It is God who grants provision to men, who makes them rich and gives them abundant crops. As God states in a verse, God expands the provision of any of His servants as He wills or, in a similar manner, restricts them. He does this for a certain cause and out of wisdom. Both those whose provision is expanded and whose provision is restricted, are in fact put to the test by God. Those who do not become arrogant and spoilt because of what they are given, but render thanks to God for everything endowed, who put their trust in God and show steadfastness when their possession is restricted are the servants with whom God is pleased. The words of the Prophet Solomon cited in the Qur'an make clear that the blessings God endows to people are actually a part of the test:

He who possessed knowledge of the Book said, 'I will bring it to you before your glance returns to you.' And when he saw it standing firmly in his presence, he said, 'This is part of my Lord's favour to test me to see if I will give thanks or show ingratitude. Whoever gives thanks only does so to his own gain. Whoever is ungrateful, my Lord is Rich Beyond Need, Generous.' (Surat an-Naml: 40)

The words of the Prophet Solomon's stating "This is part of my Lord's favour to test me to see if I will give thanks or show ingratitude" explain one of the reasons why people are given gifts.

What God defines as the "attractions of this world" in the Qur'an – including wealth, children, spouses, relatives, status, prestige, intelligence, beauty, health, profitable commerce, success, in brief, everything is given to put man to test.

Secrets in the abundance given to

disbelievers

Many are the people in the world who, despite having no faith in God, rejoice in a long life, enjoy countless blessings, possess fruitful lands and raise healthy children. These people, instead of seeking to earn the good pleasure of God, have degenerated because of these blessings and drifted apart from God. These people, who have gone great lengths in leading a rebellious life towards our Lord and who have committed more and more sins every day, consider what they possess as good for themselves. However, the Qur'an draws our attention to another secret and divine purpose behind these blessings and the time granted:

Do not let their wealth and their children impress you. God merely wants to punish them by them in the life of this world, and for them to die while they are disbelievers. (Surat at-Tawba: 85)

Those who disbelieve should not imagine that the extra time We grant to them is good for them. We only allow them more time so they will increase in evil-doing. They will have a humiliating punishment. (Surah Ali 'Imran: 178)

So leave them in their glut of ignorance for a while. Do they imagine that, in the wealth and children We extend to them, We are hastening to them with good things? No indeed, but they have no awareness! (Surat al-Muminun: 54-56)

As explained in the verses, what these people possess is actually not good for them. The time granted to them is only to add to their sins. When their term is over, neither their wealth, nor their children nor their status can save them from the painful punishment. Indeed, God has related the situation of the past generations who lived in wealth and abundance of provision, yet met a painful punishment as follows:

How many generations We have destroyed before them who had finer furnishings and a better outward show! (Surah Maryam: 74)

The following verse explains the reason why these people are granted extra time:

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)

God is Just and Most Merciful. He creates everything with wisdom and goodness, and everyone is repaid in full for what he does. Being aware of this, believers assess events with the aim of seeing the wisdom and goodness that God creates in every event. Otherwise, people would live a life of deception, far removed from realities.

THE SECRET OF WHY GOD DOES NOT IMMEDIATELY PUNISH THE DISBELIEVERS

One of the secrets revealed in the Qur'an is that people are not repaid immediately for the wrong acts they commit, but punishment is deferred until a specified time. This is related in verses as follows:

If God were to take mankind to task for what they have earned, He would not leave a single creature crawling on the surface (of the earth), but He is deferring them until a specified time. Then, when their time comes, God sees His servants! (Surah Fatir: 45)

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 they will not find any refuge from it. (Surat al-Kahf: 58)

That many people are not immediately repaid for their wrong actions may lead them to think that they will never be held accountable for their evil acts. This presumption hinders them from asking for repentance, feeling regret and rectifying their errors. Furthermore, this adds to their insolence. Being bereft of wisdom, they cannot foresee that this will render their punishment even more unbearable in the hereafter. In the Qur'an, God states the following:

Those who disbelieve should not imagine that the extra time We grant to them is good for them. We only allow them more time so they will increase in evildoing. They will have a humiliating punishment. (Surah Ali 'Imran: 178)

This is a delay created by God only to put man to the test. However, there is surely an appointed time in the sight of God so that every man can be repaid for what he has engaged in. When this appointed time is over, it can neither be delayed nor drawn closer, not for a moment. God informs us that everyone will certainly be repaid:

And were it not for a decree that has already gone forth from your Lord, and a specified term, (their punishment) would have inevitably taken place already. (Surah Ta Ha: 129)

I will give them more time. My subtle scheme is sure. (Surat al-A'raf: 183)

CONCLUSION

Every man who reads the Qur'an and lets it settle into his heart and soul, who considers life, and the happenings around him with the attitude of a faithful person, and who takes God as his sole friend can see the secrets revealed in the Qur'an. No event, significant or not, takes place randomly; nothing appears as a result of a coincidence. A secret, a good and divine purpose of God lays behind each one of them. If people act sincerely and always turn to God, then they can appreciate these secrets and the wisdom behind them.

One who grasps the secrets of the Qur'an draws closer to God and consolidates the friendship with Him. These people have a better understanding of the Lord, The Creator of the heavens and the earth and attain a better appreciation of His power, wisdom and knowledge. They realise that there is no friend or protector other than God. They feel the excitement and joy of seeing and comprehending the wisdom and secret God creates at every single moment. God discloses more of the secrets in His creation to such people. Even if such a person's life appears as ordinary to others, God, actually, creates something extraordinary for that person each minute. God will show these to anybody who sincerely wants to see His wisdom and the secrets in His creation.

As God states in the Qur'an:

Certainly there is a plain message in this (the Qur'an) for people who worship. (Surat al-Anbiya': 106)

THE EVOLUTION MISCONCEPTION

Every detail in this universe points to a superior creation. By contrast, materialism, which seeks to deny the fact of creation in the universe, is nothing but an unscientific fallacy.

Once materialism is invalidated, all other theories based on this philosophy are rendered baseless. Foremost of them is Darwinism, that is, the theory of evolution. This theory, which argues that life originated from inanimate matter through coincidences, has been demolished with the recognition that the universe was created by God. American astrophysicist Hugh Ross explains this as follows:

Atheism, Darwinism, and virtually all the "isms" emanating from the eighteenth to the twentieth century philosophies are built upon the assumption, the incorrect assumption, that the universe is infinite. The singularity has brought us face to face with the cause - or causer - beyond/behind/before the universe and all that it contains, including life itself. ⁹

It is God Who created the universe and Who designed it down to its smallest detail. Therefore, it is impossible for the theory of evolution, which holds that living beings are not created by God, but are products of coincidences, to be true.

Unsurprisingly, when we look at the theory of evolution, we see that this theory is denounced by scientific findings. The design in life is extremely complex and striking. In the inanimate world, for instance, we can explore how sensitive are the balances which atoms rest upon, and further, in the animate world, we can observe in what complex designs these atoms were brought together, and how extraordinary are the mechanisms and structures such as proteins, enzymes, and cells, which are manufactured with them.

This extraordinary design in life invalidated Darwinism at the end of the 20th century.

We have dealt with this subject in great detail in some of our other studies, and shall continue to do so. However, we think that, considering its importance, it will be helpful to make a short summary here as well.

The Scientific Collapse of Darwinism

Although a doctrine going back as far as ancient Greece, the theory of evolution was advanced extensively in the 19th century. The most important development that made the theory the top topic of the world of science was the book by Charles Darwin titled "*The Origin of Species*" published in 1859. In this book, Darwin denied that different living species on the earth were created separately by God. According to

Darwin, all living beings had a common ancestor and they diversified over time through small changes.

Darwin's theory was not based on any concrete scientific finding; as he also accepted, it was just an "assumption." Moreover, as Darwin confessed in the long chapter of his book titled "Difficulties of the Theory," the theory was failing in the face of many critical questions.

Darwin invested all his hopes in new scientific discoveries, which he expected to solve the "Difficulties of the Theory." However, contrary to his expectations, scientific findings expanded the dimensions of these difficulties.

The defeat of Darwinism against science can be reviewed under three basic topics:

- 1) The theory can by no means explain how life originated on the earth.
- 2) There is no scientific finding showing that the "evolutionary mechanisms" proposed by the theory have any power to evolve at all.
- 3) The fossil record proves completely the contrary of the suggestions of the theory of evolution.

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 the theory cannot answer. However, first and foremost, of the first step of the alleged evolutionary process it has to be inquired: How did this "first cell" originate?

Since the theory of evolution denies creation and does not accept 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. This, however, is a claim inconsistent with even 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, the theory asserting 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, worms developing in meat was assumed to be evidence of spontaneous generation. However, only some time later was it 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 in the period 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 Darwin's book was published, the discovery of Louis Pasteur disproved this belief, which constituted the groundwork of evolution. Pasteur summarized the conclusion he reached after time-consuming studies and experiments: "*The claim that inanimate matter can originate life is buried in history for good.*" ¹⁰

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

Inconclusive Efforts in the 20th Century

The first evolutionist who took up the subject of the origin of life in the 20th century was the renowned Russian biologist Alexander Oparin. With various theses he advanced in the 1930's, he tried to prove that the cell of a living being could originate by coincidence. These studies, however, were doomed to failure, and Oparin had to make the following confession:

Unfortunately, the origin of the cell remains a question which is actually the darkest point of the entire evolution theory. ¹¹

Evolutionist followers of Oparin tried to carry out experiments to solve the problem of the origin of life. The best known of these experiments was carried out by 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, the atmosphere used in the experiment having been very different from real earth conditions. ¹²

After a long silence, Miller confessed that the atmosphere medium he used was unrealistic. ¹³

All the evolutionist efforts put forth throughout the 20th century to explain the origin of life ended with failure. The geochemist Jeffrey Bada from 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? ¹⁴

The Complex Structure of Life

The primary reason why the theory of evolution ended up in such a big impasse about the origin of life is that even the living organisms deemed the simplest have incredibly complex structures. The cell of a living being is more complex than all of the technological products produced by man. Today, even in the most developed laboratories of the world, a living cell cannot be produced by bringing inorganic materials 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 cell, being synthesized coincidentally, is 1 in 10^{950} for an average protein made up of 500 amino acids. In mathematics, a probability smaller than 1 over 10^{50} is practically considered to be impossible.

The DNA molecule, which is located in the nucleus of the cell and which stores genetic information, is an incredible databank. It is calculated that if the information coded in DNA were written down, this would make a giant library consisting of 900 volumes of encyclopaedias of 500 pages each.

A very interesting dilemma emerges at this point: the DNA can only replicate with the help of some specialized proteins (enzymes). However, the synthesis of these enzymes can only be realized 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. ¹⁵

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 Mechanisms 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 variations chance to occur.*¹⁶

Lamarck's Impact

So, how could these "favourable variations" occur? Darwin tried to answer this question from the standpoint of the primitive understanding of science in his age. According to the French biologist Lamarck, who lived before Darwin, living creatures passed on the traits they acquired during their lifetime to the next generation and these traits, accumulating from one generation to another, caused new species to be formed. For instance, according to Lamarck, 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, and in his book "*The Origin of Species,*" for instance, said that some bears going into water to find food transformed themselves into whales over time.¹⁷

However, the laws of inheritance discovered by Mendel and verified by the science of genetics that flourished in the 20th century, utterly demolished the legend that acquired traits were passed on to subsequent generations. Thus, natural selection fell out of favour as an evolutionary mechanism.

Neo-Darwinism and Mutations

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

a process whereby numerous complex organs of these organisms such as the 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 always cause harm to them.

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

Mutations are small, random, and harmful. They rarely occur and the best possibility is that they will be ineffectual. These four characteristics of mutations imply that mutations cannot lead to an evolutionary development. A random change in a highly specialised organism is either ineffectual or harmful. A random change in a watch cannot improve the watch. It will most probably harm it or at best be ineffectual. An earthquake does not improve the city, it brings destruction. ¹⁸

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 beings, and leaves them disabled. (The most common effect of mutation on human beings is cancer). No doubt, 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, neither could any imaginary process called evolution have taken place.

The Fossil Record: No Sign of Intermediate Forms

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

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

Had this been the case, then 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 had 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.*¹⁹

Darwin's Hopes Shattered

However, although evolutionists have been making strenuous efforts to find fossils since the middle of the 19th century all over the world, no transitional forms have yet been uncovered. All the fossils unearthed in excavations showed that, contrary to the expectations of evolutionists, life appeared on earth all of a sudden and fully-formed.

A 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.*²⁰

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, it is very strong evidence that living beings are created. The only explanation of a living species emerging suddenly and complete in every detail without any evolutionary ancestor can be that this species 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.*²¹

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

The Tale of Human Evolution

The subject most often brought up by the advocates of the theory of evolution is the subject of the origin of man. The Darwinist claim holds that the modern men of today evolved from some kind of ape-like creatures. During this alleged evolutionary process, which is supposed to have started 4-5 million years ago, it is claimed that there existed

some "transitional forms" between modern man and his ancestors. According to this completely imaginary scenario, four basic "categories" are listed:

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

Evolutionists call the so-called first ape-like ancestors of men "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, has shown that these belonged to an ordinary ape species that became extinct and bore no resemblance to humans.²²

Evolutionists classify the next stage of human evolution as "homo," that is "man." According to the evolutionist 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 foremost defenders of the theory of evolution in the 20th century, admits this fact by saying that "the chain reaching as far as Homo sapiens is actually lost." ²³

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.²⁴

Moreover, a certain segment of humans classified as Homo erectus have lived up until very modern times. Homo sapiens neandarthalensis and Homo sapiens sapiens (modern man) co-existed in the same region.²⁵

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

What has become of our ladder if there are three coexisting lineages of hominids (A. africanus, the robust australopithecines, and H. habilis), none clearly derived from another? Moreover, none of the three display any evolutionary trends during their tenure on earth. ²⁶

Put briefly, the scenario of human evolution, which is sought to be 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 ground.

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 particularly 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." He formed a spectrum of sciences 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. 27

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.

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 retina of the eye. Here, these light rays are transmitted into electric signals by cells and they reach a tiny spot at the back of the brain called the centre of vision. These electric signals are perceived in this centre of the brain 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 the inside of the brain is solid dark, and light does not reach the location where the brain is situated. The place called the centre of vision is a solid dark place where no light ever reaches; it 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 20th century has not been able to attain it. For instance, look at the book you read, your hands with which you hold it, 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, coloured, 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 having depth.

For many years, ten of thousands of engineers have tried to make a three-dimensional TV, and reach 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 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 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; the inner ear sends these vibrations to the brain by translating them into electric signals. Just as with the eye, the act of hearing finalises in the centre 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 like 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 brain, which is insulated from sound, you listen to the symphonies of an orchestra, and hear all the noises in a crowded place. However, if the sound level in your brain was measured by a precise device at that moment, it would be seen that a complete silence is 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 this technology and the thousands of engineers and experts who have been working on this endeavour, 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 biggest 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 technology of the human body are extremely sharp and clear. A human ear never perceives a sound accompanied by a hissing sound or with atmospherics as does HI-FI; 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 visual or recording apparatus produced by man 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 fact lies beyond all this.

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

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

The stimulations coming from the eyes, ears, and nose of a human being travel to the brain as electro-chemical nervous 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 about this subject: Who is it that perceives these electro-chemical nervous impulses as images, sounds, odours and sensory events in the brain? There is a consciousness in the brain that perceives all this without feeling any need for eye, ear, and nose. To whom does this consciousness belong? There is no doubt that this consciousness 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 give any answer to these questions.

For this consciousness is the spirit created by God. The spirit needs neither the eye to watch the images, nor the ear to hear the sounds. Furthermore, nor does it need the brain to think.

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

A Materialist Faith

The information we have presented so far shows us that the theory of evolution is a claim evidently at variance with scientific findings. The theory's claim on the origin of life is inconsistent with science, the evolutionary mechanisms it proposes have no evolutionary power, and fossils demonstrate that the intermediate forms required by the theory 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 pressingly kept on the agenda of science. Some people even try to represent criticisms directed against the theory as an "attack on science." Why?

The reason is that the theory of evolution 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 for the workings of nature.

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

It is not that the methods and institutions of science somehow compel us accept a material explanation of the phenomenal world, but, on the contrary, that we are forced by our a priori adherence to material causes to create an apparatus of investigation and a set of concepts that produce material explanations, no matter how counter-intuitive, no matter how mystifying to the uninitiated. Moreover, that materialism is absolute, so we cannot allow a Divine Foot in the door.²⁸

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

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

**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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