

THE COURAGE OF THE FAITHFUL

HARUN YAHYA

*Say Your Prayers Before
Prayers Are Said For You*

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Abbreviations used:

(saas-sall-Allahu 'alyahi wa sallam): May Allah bless him and grant him peace (following a reference to the Prophet Muhammad)
(as-'alayhi's-salam): Peace be upon him (following a reference to the prophets or angels)

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TO THE READER

A special chapter is assigned to the collapse of the theory of evolution because this theory constitutes the basis of all anti-spiritual philosophies. Since Darwinism rejects the fact of creation—and therefore, Allah's Existence—over the last 140 years it has caused many people to abandon their faith or fall into doubt. It is therefore an imperative service, a very important duty to show everyone that this theory is a deception. Since some readers may find the chance to read only one of our book, we think it appropriate to devote a chapter to summarize this subject.

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

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

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

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

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

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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

His penname is a composite of the names *Harun* (Aaron) and *Yahya* (John), in memory of the two esteemed Prophets who fought against their people's lack of faith. The Prophet's seal on his books' covers is symbolic and is linked to their contents. It represents the Qur'an (the final scripture) and the Prophet Muhammad (saas), 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 (saas), who attained ultimate wisdom and moral perfection, as a sign of his intention to offer the last word.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

INTRODUCTION

Consider the person who lives his entire life avoiding responsibility. One who thinks only of feeding himself, of only his own future, house, car and other property... That which unfolds around him, the tragedies and injustices that take place all over the world, the bloodshed, anguish and hunger suffered by others, does not concern him at all. He is indifferent to plight of those who have been unjustly attacked, or the child who can find not even a crumb to eat. He is of the corrupt mentality that suggests, "Let the snake which does not bite me live a thousand years." He thinks only of himself.

Such persons are quite common, however. There are many who think that if they can avoid thinking of these concerns, they themselves can be at peace. Though he finds himself in a cruel world, this does not trouble him or affect his conscience.

However, during such times, there are great responsibilities upon everyone. All can achieve the state of mind to dispose them to come to the rescue of those who are suffering, who have been unjustly exiled from their homes, or endured massacre. Working to save the world from these afflictions is a duty which falls on everybody with mind to think and a conscience.

Now, you may be thinking, "Yes, but what can I do?" But, think how the world would be if everyone thought that way... There would not be a single person to battle for good against the evils of the world. In fact, in every period of history, there have been those who fulfilled this duty. They came out fearlessly, trying to promote good in the world and keep it alive. The basic characteristics to be found among them were a fear of Allah, listening to their conscience, courage, outspokenness, and a willingness to accept responsibility.

In order to replace the cruelty and injustice which have become pervasive throughout the world with good, prosperity and justice, the first strategy is to step courageously along the path of righteousness. Perhaps, you will be wondering why it would require courage to recommend people to do good? The truth is that, courage is one of the foremost qualities necessary for those who wish to banish evil from the face of the Earth.

In order to understand how important are courage and sense of determination in instructing people to do good, and discouraging them from doing harm, we should consider the prophets, the example of their lives, and how they battled against evil in the cause of Allah.

Considering this subject will help us to recognize that throughout the centuries, every movement for the promotion of good has been opposed by some other people.

Of course, in every period of history, as well as those who struggled for virtue, beauty, morality, peace and tranquility to prevail, there have been a large numbers of those who killed others unjustly, expelled them from their homes, worked to spread

moral degeneracy, oppressed the weak, all the while seeking by these means also to exalt themselves.

In the same way that the aim of Muslims is to spread moral excellence, the aim of these others is to spread their evil throughout the world. This is demonstrated by events throughout history. Attempts have been made in every period to place under pressure the prophets and the faithful who followed them in preaching superior morality and to stop them with ugly and baseless slanders and various methods of oppression.

However, there is a special secret that those who oppose good to become established in the world can neither know, or even understand. As is pointed out in the verse, **"It is Our army which will be victorious."** (Surat as-Saffat, 173), Muslims are always victorious over the unbelievers. This is the promise of Allah. In this world, Allah definitely brings victory over their enemies to those who follow His path with courage, and rewards them in the Hereafter for their devoted efforts by placing them in Paradise.

All who trust in Allah, and show determination in adhering to and promoting superior morality sanctioned by Him, can hope to be rewarded with His boundless blessings. Whoever shows courage and determination similar to that of the prophets and the sincere faithful, and strives forth without deviating from the right path, may hope to become among the dwellers of Paradise. In a verse, Allah promises the following:

Those who believe and migrate and strive in the Way of Allah can expect Allah's mercy. Allah is Ever-Forgiving, Most Merciful. (Surat al-Baqara, 218)

In this book, we will explore the subject of courage, an important part of sublime morality of Islam. We will explain the true meaning of courage, as defined in the Qur'an, and, at the same time, examine how it is often misunderstood. We will compare the type of courage outlined in the Qur'an with this misinterpreted conception. Later, we will look at examples of the evil type of courage to which Satan incites people. Finally, we will offer examples of the courage of the prophets, and of pious believers, as recounted in the Qur'an.

COURAGE ACCORDING TO THE QUR'AN

T rue courage, as outlined in the Qur'an, is showing determination in respecting all of Allah's limits, without exception, and without hesitation, fearing none other than Allah, and not deviating from this course whatever the circumstances or the condition. Essentially, courage is the virtue that arises as a result of faith, in those who fear no one but Allah, and who are deeply devoted to Him.

Those who believe in Allah show courage as an outcome of their fear of Allah and their longing for the Hereafter. Because they are sincere, they are also courageous. For the good pleasure of Allah, they adopt the manners taught by the Qur'an, and strive to persuade others to do the same, not remaining silent in the face of evil acts committed around them. They take on the responsibility of struggling against evil, and speaking of truth, beauty and virtue.

The very basis of the courage of the faithful is their love and fear of Allah, and their rendering sincere effort to earn His good pleasure. For that reason, their courage in fulfilling the requirements of morality is not dependent on specific circumstances. In all conditions, a believer retains the courage that results from trusting in Allah.

As for the courageous acts of unbelievers, these are carried out solely for their own gain or other worldly ambitions. Therefore, those who are removed from the light of the Qur'an apply what they deem as courage to the wrong situations. In matters where true courage is required, they may actually falter. As such, the courage they usually exemplify is of little purpose, and of no benefit to themselves, with regards to the Hereafter.

Being bound by his conscience, a believer cannot fail to be courageous. For example, if an innocent person is accused, and he is aware of his innocence, he defends the person, for the good pleasure of Allah, even if it is in conflict with his own interests, or places him at risk. This is a true example of outstanding courage. The source of this courage exemplified by the faithful is their fear of Allah. Because, Allah instructs us in the Qur'an:

... Do not conceal testimony. If someone does conceal it, his heart commits a crime. Allah knows what you do. (Surat al-Baqara, 283)

As told in the above verse, concealing evidence is defined by Allah as unlawful. Because they fear any shortcomings or hesitation in obeying Allah's commands, the faithful display exemplary courage in following Allah's prohibitions.

In a society that does not abide by the Qur'an, a person who listens to the voice of conscience, and defends the rights of the downtrodden, is asked questions like, "Are you his lawyer?" or "Is it your job to defend him?", in an attempt to belittle him and cause him to give up. The truth, however, is that what he is doing is a noble example of

morality, and which deserves appreciation. If the person being criticized also fails to adhere to religious morality, he will be unable to withstand the criticism of those around him, and be inclined to his own selfish interest. But, if this person is a believer in Allah, who follows the Qur'an, he never hesitates in implementing the morality which Allah has commanded.

This person listens to his conscience and has the courage to fight for justice, even under the most difficult circumstances. When he encounters a wrong, he tries to counter it with virtue, as instructed in the verse. For this reason, he may be accused of being naïve, and be looked down on by those who do not follow the morality of the Qur'an. Nevertheless, he persists in his superior morality, even if those around him mock his behavior. A fine example is given in the Qur'an of not fearing the condemnation of accusers, but remaining brave and showing determination:

You who believe! If any of you renounce your religion, Allah will bring forward a people whom He loves and who love Him, humble to the believers, fierce to the disbelievers, who strive in the Way of Allah and do not fear the blame of any censurer. That is the unbounded favor of Allah which He gives to whoever He wills. Allah is Boundless, All-Knowing. (Surat al-Ma'ida, 54)

We can explain this matter further with examples from our own lives. A person meets a poor man in the street who needs help. He wants to help, but those around him try to dissuade him. "Leave him be," they say, and, "Is it your job to help him?" mockingly to prevent him from doing so. In such a situation, the person is faced with a choice.

Some, fearing that their friends will look down on them, or that they may lose them, reject the right moral way and leave the needy person to his own devices. But, a Muslim helps the person without fearing any blame, because he knows that the needy person has been created by Allah, and put before him for a purpose. This may be a test of whether or not he will demonstrate steadfastness in being moral. A believer with insight knows right away that Allah has especially ordained this moment, and chooses the kind of behavior complying with Allah's good pleasure. If his friends mock him, it does not put him off at all. He behaves courageously in doing what he knows to be right.

From time to time, a person determined to act morally may encounter others who oppose him and who try to make him abandon his morals. When we study the verses of the Qur'an, we are led to understand such a situation as a test. As explained in the Qur'an, good people will always come across wicked people, who want to impart their wicked ways to others. Therefore, they try to interfere with those who do good. Allah tells us this truth in several verses:

... Who could do greater wrong than someone who denies Allah's Signs and turns away from them? We will repay those who turn away from Our Signs with the worst kind of punishment because they turned away. (Surat al-An'am, 157)

Have you seen him who denies the religion? He is the one who harshly rebuffs the orphan and does not urge the feeding of the poor. So woe to those who pray, and are forgetful of their prayer, those who show off and deny help to others. (Surat al-Ma'un, 1-7)

The Qur'an draws our attention to the fact that those who resist Allah will do their utmost to prevent the spread of virtue. However, as it is a means of separating the good from the wicked, it will nevertheless be for the advantage of the believer. We are told so in the following verse of the Qur'an:

Those who disbelieve spend their wealth barring access to the Way of Allah. They will spend it; then they will regret it; then they will be overthrown. Those who disbelieve will be gathered into Hell. (It is) so that Allah can sift the bad out from the good, and pile the bad on top of one another, heaping them all together, and tip them into Hell. They are the lost. (Surat al-Anfal, 36-37)

Some commit evil acts because they are influenced by bad people. When they want to do good, their friends regard it as strange, and try to harass them by word and action. Being influenced by Satan, they present wickedness as virtuous and virtue as evil. The weak-willed, shy and timid are affected by such people and give up performing good. They easily conform to the behavior of people of low morality.

By abandoning what they know to be right and opting for base morality, in order to conform to those around them, and earn the admiration of those who are not on the right path, they do themselves great harm. In choosing the wrong path, so as not to be blamed or rejected by others, and conforming to wicked ways, they are actually oppressing themselves. These people, who then tolerate base morality, so as not to lose friends, not knowing that their true friend is Allah, are not aware that they are lowering themselves in the sight of Allah, and will suffer for it in the Hereafter.

However, those who, at all cost, are courageous and stay determined to follow the instructions of Allah, and of those of superior character, who are compassionate, merciful, just, self-sacrificing, devoted and magnanimous, who invite others to do good, think positively and regard everything as a blessing, may be belittled and rejected by other, but it does not bother them. Because, in this world, and the Hereafter, they will be exalted by Allah, and set above those who turned their faces from what is right.

Courage, according to the Qur'an, requires fearing nothing and no one other than Allah; not hesitating to act in the way which conforms the nearest to Allah's good pleasure, and showing determination. Amongst the most important characteristics of the faithful are that they do not give up when faced with difficulty, and fear nothing and no one but Allah. They know that there is no power other than He. This fosters courage in them, to overcome any kind of fear. An example of such exemplary behavior is given in the Qur'an:

(Prophets are) those who conveyed Allah's Message and feared Him, fearing no one except Allah. Allah suffices as a Reckoner. (Surat al-Ahzab, 39)

To defeat the evil alliances that are established by those who enjoy wickedness, and want others to be like them, requires one to be as brave as the prophets, and the pious faithful who strove at their sides for good to prevail. The basis of this courage is a sincere faith purged of idolatry.

Those who do good, and urge others to do the same, will draw the attention of the wicked conspirators, and efforts will be made to divert them from virtue. This truth has been demonstrated a thousands times over. Efforts have been made throughout history to prevent every Muslim from living according to the superior morality and inviting others to it.

For example, in a society where the morality of the Qur'an is not adhered to, when a person begins to perform his daily prayers, attempts will surely be made to stop him, by saying things as, "You're still young. Never mind now, you can perform your prayers in the future," or "I take the responsibility of your sins." However, worship is something which must not be impeded but encouraged. Allah has this to say in the Qur'an about those who prevent others from fulfilling their acts of worship:

Have you seen him who prevents a servant when he goes to pray? Do you think he is rightly guided or commands fear of Allah? Or do you see how he has denied and turned away? Does he not know that Allah sees? No indeed! If he does not desist, We will grab him by the forelock, a lying, sinful forelock. Let him call his attendants; We will call the Guards of Hell! No indeed! Do not obey him, but prostrate and draw near. (Surat al-'Alaq, 9-19)

Satan does not want even a single person to emerge with the truth, who lives according to the morality of the Qur'an, and directs his thoughts towards the Hereafter. For this reason he sends his cohorts to assault those who scrupulously adhere to the Qur'an, and tries to wear them down, frighten them and influence them negatively. Satan carries out this activity directly with blandishments and stratagems, but also through

those who have come under his influence and made him their friend. Allah informs us that this method of Satan's can have no effect on the faithful:

That was only Satan who intimidated his adherents. But do not fear them —fear Me if you are believers. (Surah Al 'Imran, 175)

In the following verses, the courage and determination in religious matters of those who fear Allah, and the fine reward they will receive from Him are described:

(Believers are) those to whom people said, "The people have gathered against you, so fear them." But that merely increased their faith and they said, "Allah is enough for us and the Best of Guardians." So they returned with blessings and bounty from Allah and no evil touched them. They pursued the pleasure of Allah. Allah's favor is indeed immense. (Surah Al 'Imran, 173-174)

One who behaves bravely, listens to his conscience and, recognizing what is right, proceeds along the correct path without fearing anyone, will achieve salvation. He will be blessed with the mercy, pleasure and bounty of Allah in Paradise. As for the one who lends an ear to the blandishments of Satan, he is driven to the depths of Hell, where he will be forced to remain eternally.

The duty of a believer, as Allah has commanded, is to urge others to accept the virtuous and the correct. This is the main duty of the faithful. However, it must also be realized that in carrying out this task a person may meet various difficulties, or more correctly, trials. Efforts will be made to impede and oppress him, and he will suffer from various forms of slander and punishments, because this is a promise Allah informs us of in the Qur'an:

Or did you suppose that you would enter the Garden without facing the same as those who came before you? Poverty and illness afflicted them and they were shaken to the point that the Messenger and those who believed with him said, "When is Allah's help coming?" Be assured that Allah's help is very near. (Surat al-Baqara, 214)

As Allah vows in the above verse, every believer who hopes to enter Paradise will endure trials like those experienced by the faithful in the past. At this point, they will devote themselves to Allah, trust in Him, remain determined and courageous, knowing that all trials are a part of life.

If, under such circumstances, a person compromises his religion in any way whatsoever, it is truly dishonorable for him. If the person is sincere, there is nothing to fear. In fact, in the verses of the Qur'an, Allah informs us of the good news that for every

difficulty there is relief, and that He will not burden anyone beyond their ability to cope with it:

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

As for those who believe and do right actions—We impose on no self any more than it can bear—they are the Companions of the Garden, remaining in it timelessly, for ever.

We will strip away any rancor in their hearts. Rivers will flow under them and they will say, "Praise be to Allah Who has guided us to this! We would not have been guided, had Allah not guided us. The messengers of our Lord came with the Truth." It will be proclaimed to them: "This is your Garden which you have inherited for what you did." (Surat al-A'raf, 42-43)

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN COURAGE ACCORDING TO THE QUR'AN AND COURAGE ACCORDING TO SOCIETY

Like many false notions, courage is one of those concepts which is perceived and experienced differently from that in the Qur'an in a society that does not adhere to religious morality. Of course, people may be able to propound many different things on the subject of courage, but as in all matters, the best definition we are given is the one in the Qur'an.

Everybody has moments of courage but the matters concerning which people are brave, the purposes for which they achieve courage and the limits of the courage they demonstrate may be very different from those described in the Qur'an.

If a definition of courage is required, the definition of one who does not know the morality of the Qur'an, and the kind of courage Allah recommends, will certainly be different from the definition of a Muslim. While a Muslim determines what is courage according to the Qur'an, a great many will describe some hero-figure constructed from their imagination through the influence of the action films. For instance, they would describe driving in the wrong direction on an expressway heavy with traffic, something often seen in films, as an example of great courage.

The concept of courage for high school students is very different. A student who argues with the teacher may be regarded by his friends as very brave. Likewise, one who behaves rebelliously and breaks the rules is thought of as brave. For example, in a school that requires navy blue pants, a person who shows up with green pants has great courage, according to the other students. Cheating on exams is also an example of courage in a society ignorant of the morality of the Qur'an.

For a businessman, in a society plagued with ignorance, courage means being able to take certain financial risks. For example, putting a large sum of money into the stock market is an example of courage for such people. Or, we can say that investing in a brand-new start up is for only the bravest people.

In short, in societies not adhering to religious morality, each will interpret courage according to his own experience or the environment he comes from. Because the criteria for them is not the Qur'an, but their own principles and habits, what each individual understands as courage differs. For example, for those living in slums, courage is understood in a way specific to their circumstances, while the definition of courage offered by the upper-classes will differ accordingly. What a housewife understands by courage is different from a politician's idea of it.

It is possible to multiply examples of this type relative to the number of different classes of society. But, the common point among them all is their perception that courage resides in a variety of extreme acts outside the norm, that is, is perceived as going beyond the limits otherwise set by society.

In a society whose culture does not hold the Qur'an supreme, this deviated notion knows no limits. A thief may regard himself as courageous, and claim that his business is one which requires a great deal of audacity. Each evaluates situations differently. Because everybody is sure that his opinion is correct, conflicts inevitably arise between those who admire their own opinions and their own value judgments.

On the other hand, when people act according to the Qur'an, they are adhering to the noblest and most correct model of morality. True courage, according to the Qur'an, bears no relationship whatsoever to the notions listed above. According to the Qur'an, courage is a soundness of character, which springs from trusting in and relying on Allah, and devoting one's life to Him at all times. As we will explain in later chapters, the best examples of this soundness of character can be seen in the lives of our prophets (saas) sent by Allah.

What we learn from their examples mentioned in the Qur'an is that courage must be rational. Allah calls on us to use our intelligence, and in a verse refers to those who do not as such:

No self can believe except with Allah's permission. He places a blight on those who do not use their intellect. (Surah Yunus, 100)

Rational courage will be successful. According to what society recognizes, courage is a "blind spirit of adventure". Those motivated by such spirit of adventure, and who are reckless, are greatly admired by the rest of society. For example, one who goes into a burning home and tries to remove his valuables may be regarded as very brave. However, this person is doing something extremely dangerous and unintelligent. Instead of being encouraged, he should be prevented. A person's life is more important than material goods of any type.

Wisdom is the most important element of courage according to the Qur'an. Being wise is a result of living in fear of Allah. Allah confers on those who fear Him as He ought to be feared a sense of understanding to be able to distinguish right from wrong. This sense of understanding, which issues from fear of Allah, enables one to find the correct option in every situation. The Qur'an informs us of this truth:

You who believe! If you fear Allah, He will give you discrimination and erase your bad actions from you and forgive you. Allah's favor is indeed immense. (Surat al-Anfal, 29)

Wisdom is emphasized in the Qur'an as an important quality. This wisdom, which can be discerned at all times in the behavior of the faithful, will make itself known in their acts of bravery. The courage shown by the faithful is not blind or emotional. They may at times place themselves at risk, but never on an impulse. As in all behavior of the faithful, wisdom is its source. The faithful do not engage in acts of courage blindly or recklessly.

As in all matters, fear of Allah is essential. One who has no fear of Allah may easily engage in behavior which will harm others, trampling on their rights for his own advantage. Such a person's conception of courage is diametrically opposed to the true courage of which the Qur'an informs us.

They regard obtaining money by doing what is forbidden, obtaining advantages by disregarding the rights of others, and ignoring the risk of being caught by the authorities while doing so, as courage. They believe that being able to commit several crimes simultaneously and becoming rich without being caught is courage. They perceive involving themselves fearlessly in such immorality, not hesitating to trample on others for the sake of their own gain, and recognizing no authority whatsoever as a mark of their superiority over others. In fact, fomenting conflict, oppressing others, trampling on other people's rights, and other acts of a similar nature, all represent wicked behavior which is forbidden by Allah in the verses of the Qur'an, and for which they will be unable to answer for in the Hereafter. Courage only has real meaning when it is combined with superior morality. Courage demonstrated against society's rules is an ugly form of courage, and cannot be reconciled with the superior morality and the Muslim model of which Allah informs us in the Qur'an.

Courage is behavior which is adopted in order to earn Allah's good pleasure. The faithful sacrifice their lives and their goods for the purpose of obtaining Allah's goodwill. At bottom, this is not a decision taken at some late stage by people of faith. Believers take this decision the moment they say, "I believe":

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

For those who make this decision from the outset, all that remains afterwards is for an opportunity to come to carry out what it requires. In truth, this courage shown by the faithful is merely that which Allah has ordered. For that reason, the faithful perform their greatest feats of bravery with composure. Because, when it is a matter of earning the goodwill of Allah, there is nothing that he is not willing to give up.

It is Allah Who gives life and property. Just as He confers these on whom He wishes, so, too, it is in Allah's power to take them back, whenever and however He likes. It

should also not be forgotten that nothing happens by coincidence. When living according to the morality of the Qur'an, one who acts with courage and determination for the sake of Allah, will experience nothing that is not written for him according to his fate. Nevertheless, these circumstances are but of the greatest good for him in this world and the Afterlife. That is, when a person behaves courageously through difficulty, when he tries to overcome that problem, no matter what he may come up against, the outcome will be beneficial for him. Because, in the Qur'an, Allah informs us that He will surely conclude the affairs of His faithful believers to their advantage.

From the Qur'an, which provides us with the best definition of true courage, we may recognize from the examples provided of the lives of the prophets, and the faithful who followed them, that courage exhibited for the approval of Allah is an exalted virtue.

As discussed to this point, the most important element which distinguishes the type of courage outlined in the Qur'an from the mistaken notions of society is purpose. When we examine the Qur'an, we can see that, according to it, true courage comprises of very different purposes from those commonly recognized. The aim of courage, according to the Qur'an, is neither to gain the praise and admiration of others, nor to satisfy one's own ego. The aim is solely to earn Allah's good pleasure.

Of course, this is the reason for the substantial differences between the courage of the Qur'an and society's conception of it. As explained earlier, according to the notion of courage prevalent in society, there are worldly aims; that is, when demonstrating courage in any matter, the person does not have in mind a purpose of achieving the Hereafter, but striving for worldly goals. Maybe he is doing something noble and good, like, for example, rescuing a child who has run onto the road from being run over, but the aim here is to ease his own conscience. Or, perhaps, he is defending the rights of someone who has suffered injustice. His behavior is good, but his aim is to win the praise of those around him. Really, he should perform these actions to earn Allah's good pleasure, because in the sight of Allah that is what matters.

Muslims, never losing sight of this truth, do not show courage for the sake of worldly advantages or benefits. They never harbor desires such as wanting to be praised for their courage, or to be called brave, or to attract other people's attention. It is enough for them that Allah knows about the courage they have demonstrated for His sake.

SATAN INSTRUCTS PEOPLE IN AN EVIL FORM OF COURAGE

Satan's purpose is to keep people away from the religion of Allah, and to mislead them into Hell. For this reason, he uses various stratagems against them in order to deceive and ensnare them. He deceives the majority with these ruses, and misguides them to evil. Because he wants to distance people from the true faith, and coerce them into his own perverse system, he confuses ideas, and tries to present superior morals as despicable, and base morality as desirable. In this way, he ensures that people have an incorrect perception of all aspects of superior morals. This behavior of Satan's and those who follow him is described in a verse of the Qur'an:

Shall I tell you upon whom the satans descend?

They descend on every evil liar.

They give them a hearing and most of them are liars. (Surat ash-Shu'ara', 221-223)

For example, though patience is an excellent moral virtue, Satan presents it to people incorrectly. People are almost completely ignorant of the finer aspects of patience. For the most part, they believe it to be a difficult, troublesome and oppressive duty. Their understanding of the meaning of patience is mentioned as forbearance, a period of undesired waiting for something. However, patience means determined and persistent commitment to a task of which Allah approves, not abandoning it, or becoming wearied, but carrying resolutely it to a conclusion. For example, the ability to remain tolerant despite adverse circumstances, to restrain anger and respond with kindness, in circumstances where rage might otherwise be vented, and to be determined to do so, at whatever cost, and not to feel overburdened, is a true example of patience.

Similarly, patience means waiting contently in expectance of the positive outcome promised by Allah. This is not, as Satan tries to portray it, something difficult or burdensome. On the contrary, it increases the motivation of the faithful. For example, all believers long for the Afterlife. They passionately desire to be united in Paradise, waiting patiently for this end. A believer who is patient for the good pleasure of Allah, in any matter, enjoys the contentment and peace of mind of knowing that he will surely receive from Allah his due reward.

When a believer is treated badly, he deals with it patiently. That is, he does not become angry or despair, but maintains the composed behavior commanded in the Qur'an.

Another idea which, like patience, Satan tries to distort, is the subject of this book: Courage. If people do not conform to Allah's commands, they will fall under Satan's influence, so that, instead of learning the meaning of the message of the Qur'an, they learn the suggestions of Satan. Satan guides people towards false courage. False courage is the audacity to commit evil without fear, and to reject our Lord, Who created the entire universe, without shame, without a troubled conscience, and without consideration for the outcome. The Qur'an relates the following with regard to those who demonstrate false courage:

They say, "The All-Merciful has a son."

They have devised a monstrous thing.

The heavens are all but rent apart and the Earth split open and the mountains brought crashing down, at their ascription of a son to the All-Merciful!

It is not fitting for the All-Merciful to have a son.

There is no one in the heavens and Earth who will not come to the All-Merciful as a servant.

He has counted them and numbered them precisely.

Each of them will come to Him on the Day of Resurrection all alone. (Surah Maryam, 88-95)

A believer fears Allah and carefully resists falling into any form of immorality, or failing to praise the boundless power of Allah. He bears in mind that Allah will call on him to render account in the Hereafter, and that, if he is in any way immoral, or fails to praise Allah adequately, he will be called to account for it. Those who do not fear Allah show false courage, it being an example of the base morality of Satan's influence.

There are many duped by the notion of false courage. Those who have no fear of Allah, and who do not live in accordance with the morality of the Qur'an, are devoid of feelings of respect towards others, as of mercy, compassion and humanity, and are prone to evil tendencies. Examples of this sort of evil is recognizable in every class of society, from businessmen to street kids, and diverse cultural backgrounds. Though they comprise different segments of the society, if they do not fear Allah, they will be prone to the evil morality of Satan.

One who follows Satan is capable of every kind of evil imaginable. Because, Satan incites him to false courage, deceives him with his coaxing, and encourages him to do evil without remorse. He shares his same corruption. Allah invited him to prostrate to Adam (as). Yet, out of pride, he showed false courage, refusing to comply, and so became perverse. This perversion of his, which serves as a warning for humanity, is described in the Qur'an as follows:

We created you and then formed you and then We said to the angels, "Prostrate before Adam," and they prostrated—except for Iblis. He was not among those who prostrated.

He said, "What prevented you from prostrating when I commanded you to?" He replied, "I am better than him. You created me from fire and You created him from clay."

He said, "Descend from Heaven. It is not for you to be arrogant in it. So get out! You are one of the abased."

He said, "Grant me a reprieve until the day they are raised up."

He said, "You are one of the reprieved."

He said, "By Your misguidance of me, I will lie in ambush for them on your straight path."

Then I will come at them, from in front of them and behind them, from their right and from their left. You will not find most of them thankful."

He said, "Get out of it, reviled and driven out. As for those of them who follow you, I will fill up Hell with every one of you." (Surat al-A'raf, 12-18)

The fact that he knew he had committed a great wrong, he was aware that he would be sentenced to Hell for having been bold enough to show such insolence. This demonstrates the depths of Satan's depravity. Therefore, Satan tries to bring people under his influence, to debase them to the same level of depravity and false courage. Allah warns people about falling under Satan's influence in a number of verses:

You who believe! Do not follow in the footsteps of Satan. Anyone who follows in Satan's footsteps should know that he commands indecency and wrongdoing. Were it not for Allah's favor to you and His mercy, not one of you would ever have been purified. But Allah purifies whoever He wills. Allah is All-Hearing, All-Knowing. (Surat an-Nur, 21)

O humanity! Eat what is good and lawful on the Earth. And do not follow in the footsteps of Satan. He truly is an outright enemy to you.

He only commands you to do evil and indecent acts and to say about Allah what you do not know. (Surat al-Baqara, 168-169)

One of the primary causes of Satan's depravity is his conceit. Satan tries to make people conceited too, to pervert them so that they can be like him. Basically, false courage is the result of a person's having fallen victim to pride.

This conceit may take many different forms. Like Satan, among those who follow him, there are those who are aware of the existence of Allah, but do not abide by religious morality. Others may reject the existence of Allah, in spite of the myriad of evidence around them. Or, if they do not reject Him, they may ignore certain truths. For

example, although every square inch of the Earth holds signs of Allah's creative power, some, who are prone to false courage, may claim that they all came into being by accident. They may claim that all living creatures, as well as the earth, the sky, the world, the stars, the solar system came into existence by chance. Even if they can see this is impossible, knowing so in their hearts, they will reject the magnificence of Allah's creation. All such tendencies are marks of their failure to submit to Allah, out of false courage and pride. Though you would show them countless proofs, if you were to explain to them over and over again what is true and what is good, it will be of no use.

In fact, those who have become consumed with self-pride, and tend to false courage, doubt the Resurrection, which they do not hesitate to express openly. In the Qur'an, Allah informs us of the lack of wisdom and understanding of such people:

Does not man see that We created him from a drop yet there he is, an open antagonist!

He makes likenesses of Us and forgets his own creation, saying, "Who will give life to bones when they are decayed?"

Say "He Who made them in the first place will bring them back to life. He has total knowledge of each created thing;

He Who produces fire for you from green trees so that you use them to light your fires."

Does He Who created the heavens and Earth not have the power to create the same again? Yes indeed! He is the Creator, the All-Knowing.

His command when He desires a thing is just to say to it, "Be!" and it is.

Glory be to Him Who has the Dominion of all things in His Hand. To Him you will be returned. (Surah Ya Sin, 77-83)

When they are warned to reform themselves, they refuse to obey. They can ignore that which happens for them to derive lessons. For example, those of base morality, who foment discord in the world, who try to repress those of superior morality, who, in short, tend towards all manner of evil, will regard themselves as good people. When those nations who in the past committed the same wrong, denouncing the prophets, thus deserving the punishment of Allah, they fail to recognize the warnings in these events. In short, if they are warned to do what is right, they disobey, and resign themselves to the eternal torment of Hell. In the Qur'an, Allah informs us of the condition of such people

Just ask their opinion: Is it they who are stronger in structure or other things We have created? We created them from sticky clay. No wonder you are surprised as they laugh with scorn! When they are reminded they do not pay heed. When they see a Sign they only laugh with scorn. They say, "This is just downright magic. When we are dead and turned to dust and bones will we then

be raised up again alive? And our earlier ancestors as well?" Say: "Yes, and you will be in a despicable state." (Surat as-Saffat, 11-18)

In subsequent verses, Allah describes the painful end awaiting those who tend to show false courage, and who follow the path set out by Satan:

There will be but one Great Blast and then their eyes will open. They will say, "Alas for us! This is the Day of Reckoning!" This is the Day of Decision you used to deny. Assemble those who did wrong together with their associates and what they worshipped besides Allah, and guide them to the Path of the Blazing Fire! And call them to a halt. They will be asked: "Why are you not helping one another?" No, today they come in absolute submission. (Surat as-Saffat, 19-26)

False Courage Alienates People from their Conscience

False courage is something contrary to one's conscience. Harassing people, committing crimes without remorse, heedlessly trouncing human rights, oppressing, stealing that which they have accumulated with great effort, and leaving the needy to their own devices, are all vices which result from it. While people recognize these things to be wrong according to their conscience, those who fall prey to a false sense of superiority deny the voice of their own conscience to commit these wrongs. The calm and cold-blooded behavior of these people is a characteristic that arises from the false self confidence and false courage inspired in them by Satan.

None of such actions conform to the morality of the Qur'an. They display a type of courage so lacking in intelligence that they are prone to levels of wickedness that harm even themselves. The use of narcotics, joining criminal gangs, fighting, troublemaking and rioting, are all examples of false courage. In ignorant societies, people of this sort will find fame as "men of courage", or "desperadoes", and, being consumed with pride, will persist in their evil ways.

Those who do not live by religious morality have a specific name for this type of behavior. Examples of this ugly behavior, known as being "crazy", are quite common. Because people of this sort are lacking in qualities such as love, respect for others, compassion, kindness, and common sense, that results from faith, they are spiritually corrupt and show various behavioral defects.

False courage is regarded by those who follow Satan as very admirable. When one of them performs an act of false courage, he is immediately praised by others. In school, one who behaves badly towards teachers or other students, mocks them, makes derisive

jokes about them, that is, accosts them, is praised and encouraged to go on. Those who share his immorality continually praise him, talking about how brave he is.

The same tendencies take place in the high society which exhibits a bad moral model. People say, "How brave he is!" of someone who speaks against religion, uses expressions so disrespectful and hateful that no one else would dare to use them, acts disrespectfully, belittling people and brazenly harms them. The wearing of indecent or outlandish clothing is referred to as "courage and generosity". Though, such people are not courageous at all, but are merely shameless. Even so, Satan, who distorts the meanings of things, to those not intelligent enough to avoid him, convinces them that their behavior is courageous, and misleads them along with himself to eternal torment.

The only ones not affected by the efforts of Satan, and the debauchery he promotes, nor deceived by his stratagems and deceits, are the faithful. In many verses of the Qur'an, Allah gives us the good news that Satan has no influence on His sincere followers, and cannot mislead them from the true path, no matter what he may try:

If an evil impulse from Satan provokes you, seek refuge in Allah. He is All-Hearing, All-Seeing.

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

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

Satan Directs People Towards Cowardice

Allah's instructions to the faithful are to wage war ideologically against those who reject faith, to instruct others in virtue, to protect them from evil, and inspire in them the fear of Allah, by reminding them of the torment of the Hereafter. Our Prophet (saas) also said, "Fear Allah wherever you are." (Abdul Wadoud, Forty Hadith An-Nawawis, translated by Ezzeddin Ibrahim and Denys Johnson-Davies, Third Edition, 1985), stressing the importance of having fear of Allah in guarding against Satan. In this regard, being timid, not behaving courageously or adamant in teaching others about Allah's commandments, but sitting by and leaving others do it, saying, "Never mind someone else will do it," is a bad act which Allah dislikes and which He has forbidden the faithful.

A believer is one whose peace of mind and determination increase still further when he is confronted with a problem, or when he is the brunt of accusations from others, because he knows it to be a test from Allah. As pointed out earlier, Allah has promised that difficulties similar to the ones which afflicted those who lived in the past will be

visited on the sincere faithful, and that in this way He will test them. Also, a fact that should not be forgotten is that those of base morality never condemn those they regard as their own, because such people know that they are their needed allies in their deviance. They try to intimidate those who invite them to follow the path of Allah.

Most hold back from pointing out what is wrong. They cannot find the courage to fight for what they know to be right. Those who behave conscientiously, however, are the faithful who fear Allah. And, because of this, they never run from any responsibility. Although they know that they will suffer slanders from the unbelievers who oppose them, and be subjected to persecution, they continue to inform others of Allah's existence, His unity and the morality which He has commanded, and persist in their struggle with enthusiasm and determination.

Throughout history, one of the most salient characteristics of the faithful who opposed unbelievers was their acceptance of the great responsibility of propagating religious morality, a task which they fulfilled courageously. That the faithful persist in conveying good morals, even when threatened, astonishes the unbelievers. What encouraged both the prophets and those who followed them to remain steadfast and be courageous was their faith in Allah. They were certain of the fact that Allah was watching over them, of the truth of the Hereafter, and that they would be called to account for their actions in this world.

To fully appreciate the courage of the faithful, it is first necessary to understand its source: The morality taught in the Qur'an. A person must fear Allah, understand His verses, and the importance of the behavior He encourages. Clearly, one who sits idly by, watching the tyrannical alliance of the wicked, fails to carry out the duty expected of him. However, if we consider that the great majority of the Earth's inhabitants do not follow the path of Allah, then clearly such effort requires great courage. Because, the slightest disruption of the comfort the wicked enjoy riles them into action. They may become oppressive, conspire, slander or resort even to physical violence. It is then that the difference between those who show true courage and those who do not, can be determined.

Most just close their eyes to the immorality of their friends and relatives, so as not to be rejected or harassed by them. They do not fulfill their duty of warning them otherwise. In societies where the morality of the Qur'an is not adhered to, most may stand idly by, and ignore the prevailing injustices, even though it bothers their conscience. In their hearts they may reject that cruelty, and may want to eradicate it, but they cannot find the courage to struggle against it. Without drive or determination there can be no courage. Where there is no drive and determination, one does not think of preventing the evils he encounters, nor finds solutions to do so. It must not be forgotten that simply being bothered by cruelty, while observing evil that abounds, and merely complaining about it, is not a sufficient way of dealing with it. Rather, it requires sincere effort. But, to do so requires courage.

If the courageous do not take initiative, there will be great mayhem and oppression on Earth, and the world will become uninhabitable. Those who do not show such courage, who are hesitant to preach their religion, will suffer great loss. As we are told in the verses of the Qur'an:

By the Late Afternoon, truly man is in loss-except for those who believe and do right actions and urge each other to the truth and urge each other to steadfastness. (Surat al-'Asr, 1-3)

Satan Cannot Influence the Faithful into Cowardice

As stated earlier, Satan has no power or influence over the faithful. This truth is referred to in a verse of the Qur'an:

You have no authority over any of My servants except for the misled who follow you. (Surat al-Hijr, 42)

Satan's efforts only effect his followers whom he has corrupted, and he can only influence by frightening them:

That was only Satan who intimidated his adherents. But do not fear them —fear Me if you are believers. (Surah Al 'Imran, 175)

A believer responds to Satan's wiles and snares with trepidation and courage. For example, Satan is determined to undermine the strength of the believers, sow enmity among them, and demoralize them. As we are told in the following verse, "... **The satans inspire their friends to dispute with you...**" (Surat al-An'am, 121), he attacks the faithful by way of his followers. But, believers whose faith is strong, and who are aware of Satan's ruses, from having been informed of them in the Qur'an, are not deluded. They recognize Satan's petty schemes right away.

Believers are courageous despite the attempts of Satan and his cohorts. They respond to his ploys by doing the exact opposite of what he demands. If Satan wants them to become demoralized, they devote themselves to their religion with even greater zeal and determination. For this reason, the tactics of those who reject faith only strengthen and motivate them further. The faithful cause Satan suffer great disappointment with their boundless determination.

HOW IS COURAGE ACHIEVED?

Courage is a quality which is greatly admired and praised in the community. People want to be regarded as brave by those around them, because those who are considered courageous always attract much respect and admiration. But, while many try very hard to seem brave, they are unable to show real courage. However, there are reasons why they are unable to be as courageous as they would like to be.

As it is necessary to have true faith in order to be merciful, gentle, and compassionate, faith is also necessary to be brave. Although, this does not mean that a non-believer cannot be brave. There will be times at which he will be courageous. However, one who ascribes partners to Allah, who imputes power to other entities, and is not aware that everything is under Allah's control, will certainly be faced with situation in which he will be unable to be courageous. This is the proof that he does not possess the genuine courage that derives from faith in Allah, the sole source of power.

Belief is a prerequisite for genuine courage. Belief is the knowledge that everything is under Allah's control, and that nothing can take place without His willing it, and includes submission to Him and fear of Him alone.

One who possesses such belief devotes himself to Allah, and as a consequence has fortitude and is brave. He is courageous at all times, no matter what happens to him. Even great adversities do not make him lose his courage. He knows that everything is under Allah's control, that nothing occurs without Allah's willing it, and that He has created everything for his good. Even if death finds him, he remains devout, because, as a believer, he knows he will meet Allah in the Hereafter.

Knowing that everything is under Allah's control provides one who surrenders himself wholly to the fate which He has created for him with a strong faith, and with that faith, a strong character. To that end, one needs to be close to Allah, to recognize the ultimate good in all things, not to give in to despondence or sorrow, to be aware that Allah is the Creator of all things in the universe, that not even a leaf can fall without His willing it, that He governs all hearts and souls, and that there is no power or will other than His.

A person who knows that everything which takes place does so with Allah's approval, and by His will, and submits himself to Allah, is naturally brave. Because, there is nothing for him to fear or be nervous or worry about. Everything is brought about by Allah, and He maintains all things under His control. There is nothing at all for one who adopts Him as his friend and guardian to be nervous about or fear, because Allah is the Protector of the faithful. Allah tells us the following in the Qur'an:

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

Children of Adam! If messengers come to you from among yourselves, recounting My Signs to you, those who guard against evil and put things right, will feel no fear and will know no sorrow. (Surat al-A'raf, 35)

In spite of all the distress and difficulty they encounter, believers recommend the morality commanded by Allah to others with great determination, while the pressures over them never impede that determination in the least. This trait is directly related to the faith they possess. One without faith cannot remain determined when subjected to slander, harassment, or is unjustly mistreated. Those who do not possess genuine faith lose any sense of determination when faced with the slightest difficulty, abandoning their beliefs and principles.

The measure of the sincerity of a Muslim is the determination he shows when faced with difficulties. One without sincere faith does not accept social responsibility, for he knows that he may be faced with such difficulties, as have befallen the prophets and their pious followers before. But, the behavior of those who accept the responsibility of promulgating the morality of the Qur'an, guiding others towards good and keeping them from evil, even when it becomes difficult, is admirable and truly worthy of praise. While the great majority of people are devoted to their own businesses and other worldly affairs, engaging themselves in an ideological battle for the sake of Allah, and accepting the large number of difficulties which it entails, is highly noble behavior.

Moreover, for a true believer, all this is not a problem, but a great blessing. Because, as pointed out earlier, similar trials befell the prophets. A number of prophets were subjected to slander, suffered oppression, were threatened with violence and death and even martyred. They attracted the hostility of those of base morality, simply because they called attention to Allah's existence and unity. But, in the end, Allah's promises were fulfilled, and they were successful in spreading His word, even though they had refused to hear it.

One of the most important ways of gaining and experiencing the genuine courage related in the Qur'an is thinking continually about death and the Day of Judgment. Indeed, the Prophet (saas) recommended people to think about death, and said: *"Those who are most aware of death and prepare themselves for it. They are the wisest of people."* (Muslim)

A Muslim who fears Allah knows that the life of this world will come to an end some day, and that he will be called to account for his actions in the Hereafter. He is aware that, in order not to be amongst those sent to Hell, he must conform scrupulously to the teachings of the Qur'an, and avoid cowardice, procrastination and lack of fortitude.

For that reason, he does not want to postpone fulfilling what Allah has commanded him to do, even for a moment, because he does not know when death will find him. He strives to achieve the highest levels of the morality which Allah has prescribed. This is one of the most important reasons for the extreme courage of believers, their refusal to make any concessions in carrying out Allah's commands, and their powerful determination. They know that they would be called to account in the Hereafter for any hesitation or failing to show the necessary determination. They know that they will have their recompense for ignoring Allah's commands and prohibitions after they die. In the Qur'an, Allah defines believers as follows:

Those who fulfill Allah's contract and do not break their agreement; Those who join what Allah has commanded to be joined and are afraid of their Lord and fear an evil Reckoning;

Those who are steadfast in seeking the face of their Lord, and establish prayer and give from the provision We have given them, secretly and openly, and stave off evil with good, it is they who will have the Ultimate Abode. (Surat ar-Ra'd, 20-22)

In the Qur'an, Allah shows believers the way to conquer fear and worry, just as He shows the way on all other matters. The number one enemy of courage is fear, and the concerns and anxiety that arise from it. These are feelings which can easily be overcome if a person conforms to the Qur'an. When one of sincere faith conforms attentively to the Qur'an, his reaction to the things he encounters are reformed.

EXAMPLES OF COURAGE AMONG THE PROPHETS AND SINCERE BELIEVERS

Because of their faith, believers behave with great devotion and courage, at times when others would be unable to do the same. For example, even when unbelievers scheme to ensnare them, or threaten them with physical violence, the faithful, who attract attention with their sense of determination, bravery, and decisiveness, never behave as the unbelievers want, because they are certain that what they are doing is right, and they never deviate from their faith or from the morality of the Qur'an.

The unbelievers want to make the faithful abandon their efforts in preaching the superior morality. As will be explained with several examples in the coming pages, the Qur'an informs us that unbelievers have behaved like this throughout history.

The faithful are aware that unbelievers continually plot to trap them. Indeed, it is the Qur'an that informs them of this. The purpose of these snares is to cause the faithful material and psychological harm. But, in spite of everything, as Allah has promised, the faithful remain upright and honorable, and engage themselves courageously in a battle of ideas against them. This is a command of Allah's:

You who believe! If any of you renounce your religion, Allah will bring forward a people whom He loves and who love Him, humble to the believers, fierce to the disbelievers, who strive in the Way of Allah and do not fear the blame of any censurer. That is the unbounded favor of Allah which He gives to whoever He wills. Allah is Boundless, All-Knowing. (Surat al-Ma'ida, 54)

The faithful at the time of our Prophet (saas) engaged personally in wars against the unbelievers. These times of war were situations in which the unbelievers suffered heavily in loss of morale. But, the attitude of the faithful was otherwise. The prophets and their companions left a potent example of courage to all the Muslims who followed them. During these wars, some Muslims lost part or all of their property. Others lost arms and legs or relatives, but their courage never gave way. In the Qur'an, Allah relates that Muslims in the past were extremely steadfast, and informs us their saying, "... **We belong to Allah and to Him we will return.**" (Surat al-Baqara, 156) when a disaster struck them. Their courage shows what a tremendous devotion they had towards our Prophet (saas) and to the Qur'an. While the hypocrites avoided doing battle, with the excuse that the weather was too harsh, believers sacrificed their lives and property. When the order for war was handed down to our Prophet (saas), the hypocrites amongst them began to make themselves apparent. A large number of those who had until then

described themselves as Muslims, revealed the disease in their heart. This is described by Allah in the following verse:

Those who believe say, "If only a sura could be sent down." But when a straightforward sura is sent down and fighting is mentioned in it, you see those with sickness in their hearts looking at you with the look of someone about to faint from fear of death... (Surah Muhammad, 20)

As can be discerned from the above verse, cowardice is one of the most pronounced characteristics of hypocrites. In another verse, we are told:

When you see them, their outward form appeals to you, and if they speak you listen to what they say. But they are like propped-up planks of wood. They imagine every cry to be against them. They are the enemy, so beware of them. Allah fight them! How they are perverted! (Surat al-Munafiqun, 4)

When the order arrived, the hypocrites, who claimed that they were Muslims, who until then had vouched that they would fight, tried to act as if it was not they who had said such things. They did not keep their promises. Allah declared the following on the matter:

... More fitting for them would be obedience and honorable words. Once the matter is resolved upon, being true to Allah would be better for them. (Surah Muhammad, 20-21)

They were afraid to fight because they did not have a sure faith in Allah and the Hereafter, and therefore, failed to show the courage typical of true believers. When the sincere Muslims heard these verses, their determination increased. To emphasize this sentiment in the faithful, Allah tells us in one verse: **"... Some of them have fulfilled their pact by death and some are still waiting to do so, not having changed in any way at all."** (Surat al-Ahzab, 23) Those who were of sincere faith resigned themselves to such severe tests, because courage is a characteristic of the believer. And, is not something that can be imitated. Allah ordains a number of trials for people, during which it is possible to determine who is telling the truth and who is lying.

In the Qur'an, Allah frequently refers to the superior morality of the faithful, and their devotion to Him. In a number of verses, He gives examples of their courage. The following is one example dating from the time of our Prophet (saas):

When the believers saw the Confederates they said: "This is what Allah and His Messenger promised us. Allah and His Messenger told us the truth." It only increased them in faith and in submission. (Surat al-Ahzab, 22)

As is to be understood from the above verse, the faithful are those who trust only in Allah, and depend solely on Him. They commit themselves unconditionally to Him. When their enemies are gathered against them, they are not distressed, for they know that it is Allah Who created their enemies, and willed the difficult trials which they face. They know that Allah's power encompasses all things, and that their enemies can have no power independent from His. And, therefore, when they encounter situations such as that described in the above verse, they put their faith in our Lord, the Creator of all. Their refusal to give up when they receive bad news, their turning to Allah under every circumstance, and the fact that their morale is never weakened, causes unbelievers to despair and become filled with fear.

The people who most demonstrated the courage which is described in the Qur'an as an excellent characteristic of believers were without doubt the prophets. Below we list some of the events in the Qur'an which happened to the prophets and the pious believers who set an example of courage.

The Prophet Muhammed (saas)

Our Prophet (saas) was the blessed person entrusted with Allah's revelation, and the last to be made a prophet. The outstanding morality he possessed, and his devotion to Allah and His religion, are cited as examples to Muslims in many verses of the Qur'an. Our Prophet (saas), once fled with a companion when his enemies were after him, and took refuge in a cave. The words he spoke there, as an advice to the man who was with him, make light of his trust in Allah, and the courage which resulted from it:

If you do not help him, Allah did help him when those who disbelieved drove him out and there were two of them in the Cave. He said to his companion, "Do not be despondent, Allah is with us." Then Allah sent down His serenity upon him and reinforced him with troops you could not see. He made the word of those who disbelieved undermost. It is the word of Allah which is uppermost. Allah is Almighty, All-Wise. (Surat at-Tawba, 40)

Our Prophet (saas), who reminded the companion at his side that Allah was always with them, implying that there was no need to despair, continues to be an example for all Muslims. That period was one during which the faithful battled physically with the unbelievers. All who fought for the religion of Allah during that difficult period were examples of courage. Our Prophet (saas), who was the most severely threatened, because he was the leader of the Muslims, is the finest example of the courage among them.

The Prophet Ibrahim (as)

The Prophet Ibrahim (as) is cited by Allah in the Qur'an as an example on a number of varied subjects. The most important virtues of the Prophet Ibrahim (as) were the deep faith which he possessed, his great devotion to Allah, and his great courage in doing battle against the unbelievers. In a verse of the Qur'an, Allah refers to him as **"a community unto himself"** (Surat an-Nahl, 120). This accorded status should be regarded as an example by all Muslims. Every Muslim should become "a community in himself", which is to say, that even if he is alone, he can possess faith, courage and determination, by which he may also inspire others.

In a number of verses, Allah relates the examples of the courage that was coupled with powerful insight in the Prophet Ibrahim (as). One account provided in the Qur'an describes the astounding courage shown by him in the face of the unbelievers who worshipped idols:

One of his followers in faith was Ibrahim when he came to his Lord with an unblemished heart, and said to his father and his people, "What are you worshipping? Is it falsehood—gods besides Allah—that you desire?" "So what are your thoughts about the Lord of all the worlds?" He took a look at the stars and said, "I am sick." So they turned their backs on him. He turned surreptitiously to their gods and said, "Do you not eat? What is the matter with you that you do not speak?" He turned on them, striking out with his right hand. (Surat as-Saffat, 83-93)

As we are told in these verses, the Prophet Ibrahim (as) opposed himself to the entire tribe, and through clever dialogue, made them recognize that their idols were not gods, but only manmade sculptures of wood. The unbelievers, who had not until then ever met anyone who denounced their idols, were angered by and wanted to punish him:

They came rushing back to him. He said, "Do you worship something you have carved when Allah created both you and what you do?" They said, "Build a pyre for him and fling him into the blaze!" They tried to outwit him but We made them the lowest. He said, "I am going towards my Lord; He will be my guide." (Surat as-Saffat, 94-99)

In spite of their rage, the Prophet Ibrahim (as) continued to speak of the existence and unity of Allah, carrying out his duty with courage. Knowing that all people, including the tribe who were so violently opposing him, are under the control of Allah, he behaved steadfastly, showing his boundless trust in our Lord. The leaders of the tribe wanted to

throw him into a fire, but Allah saved him by a miracle. This is a proof of Allah's promise of help to all believers who battle fearlessly on His path.

In other verses of the Qur'an, the Prophet Ibrahim's (as) show of devotion to Allah, and the courage he demonstrated, are held up as examples of the behavior for believers to aspire to:

His people argued with him. He said, "Are you arguing with me about Allah when He has guided me? I have no fear of any partner you ascribe to Him unless my Lord should will such a thing to happen. My Lord encompasses all things in His knowledge so will you not pay heed?"

Why should I fear what you have associated with Him when you yourselves apparently have no fear of associating partners with Allah for which He has sent down no authority to you? Which of the two parties is more entitled to feel safe, if you have any knowledge?"

Those who believe and do not mix up their faith with any wrongdoing, they are the ones who are safe; it is they who are guided.' (Surat al-An'am, 80-82)

The Prophet Musa (as)

Amongst the prophets reported in the Qur'an is the Prophet Musa (as). The courage and patience he showed in the face of a savage tribe of unbelievers is an example for Muslims. The Pharaoh, the despotic ruler of Egypt, who was far from the truth of the religion, cowed his people by violent and shameful methods, and spread fear everywhere with his tyranny. At that time, we know from the Qur'an that the Pharaoh tortured those who did not bow to him, cutting off their arms and legs.

Despite these circumstances, Allah charged the Prophet Musa (as), who had been taken in at the palace as a child, and brought up by Pharaoh, with calling him and his circle to follow the morality of religion. Facing Pharaoh, who was notorious as an extremely unjust ruler, and who oppressed his people, obviously required great faith and courage. With the faith and determination which Allah placed in his heart, the Prophet Musa (as) warned and admonished Pharaoh. When the Prophet Musa (as), who had grown up in Pharaoh's palace, set himself against his system of superstitions, and declared Allah to be the only God, Pharaoh was enraged. The Qur'an describes Pharaoh's fury in the following manner:

He (Pharaoh) said (to Musa), "Did we not bring you up among us as a child and did you not spend many years of your life among us? Yet you did the deed you did and were ungrateful." (Surat ash-Shu'ara', 18-19)

Eventually, the Pharaoh began to question the Prophet Musa (as), thinking that, if he could get the better of him in debate, the matter would be closed. He tried to belittle the Prophet Musa (as) before his circle of associates and the rest of the society. When this did not work, he threatened to throw him in prison. With rigid determination, the Prophet Musa (as) continued to tell the Pharaoh of the existence of Allah.

When, finally, the Prophet Musa (as) brought about a series of miracles, Pharaoh began to better understand the gravity of the situation, but now began to think the Prophet Musa (as) was practicing sorcery. His pride and conceit prevented him from seeing what was obviously supernatural. Conspiring with his inner circle, he dared to set a trap for the Prophet Musa (as).

Although he knew that the Pharaoh was a cruel and tyrannical ruler, the Prophet Musa (as) showed not the slightest weakness in carrying out the command of Allah and, ignoring all danger, stood firm against the Pharaoh and demanded that he abandon his perverted ways. Even when threatened with death by the Pharaoh, the Prophet Musa (as) informed him of Allah's commands, without the least hesitation. Throughout this interchange, part of which is related in the Qur'an, the Prophet Musa (as) was not at all intimidated by the Pharaoh's threats.

He (Pharaoh) said, "If you take any god other than me, I will certainly throw you into prison." He (Musa) said, "Even if I were to bring you something undeniable?" (Surat ash-Shu'ara', 29-30)

The sorcerers instructed by Pharaoh to outperform the Prophet Musa (as) came instead to faith as a result of his destroying their tricks, and making them seem inferior. With the courage that faith ignited in them, they declared their faith openly and publicly in front of Pharaoh. Without being intimidated by the Pharaoh's threats of torture and execution, they continued to declare their faith.

We are told of this honorable behavior of the sorcerers in the Qur'an:

The magicians threw themselves down in prostration.

**They said, "We believe in the Lord of all the worlds,
the Lord of Musa and Harun."**

Pharaoh said, "Have you believed in him before I authorized you to do so? This is just some plot you have concocted in the city to drive its people from it.

I will cut off your alternate hands and feet and then I will crucify every one of you."

They said, "We are returning to our Lord.

You are only avenging yourself on us because we believed in our Lord's Signs when they came to us. Our Lord, pour down steadfastness upon us and take us back to You as Muslims." (Surat al-A'raf, 120-126)

This extraordinary response by the sorcerers shows how immediately faith lead people to bravery, and superior morality.

A further example of courage and devotion to Allah related in the Qur'an is the Prophet Musa's (as) never losing his trust in Allah, even at a time when his own people thought he was defeated. Out of fear, his tribe abandoned him and left him to struggle on his own. But the Prophet Musa (as) showed how the courage of even a single sincere believer is capable of thwarting unbelievers, and once again, Allah kept His promise of help to His faithful followers, by rescuing him from Pharaoh:

And when the two hosts came into sight of one another Musa's companions said, "We will surely be overtaken!" He said, "Never! My Lord is with me and He will guide me." So We revealed to Musa, "Strike the sea with your staff." And it split in two, each part like a towering cliff. And We brought the others right up to it.

We rescued Musa and all those who were with him. Then We drowned the rest. There is certainly a Sign in that yet most of them are not believers.

Truly your Lord is the Almighty, the Most Merciful. (Surat ash-Shu'ara', 61-68)

The Prophet Sulayman (as)

The Prophet Sulayman (as) was one of the bravest and most determined of prophets in spreading the supreme morality. Allah bestowed on him a great kingdom. He devoted himself wholeheartedly to encouraging morality among his people, and developing methods for that purpose that were unprecedented. His courage deeply affected a number of communities, and his wisdom, understanding and determination aroused the wonder of other tribes. In sending word to the Queen of Sheba, who had large armies arrayed against him, he used a very insightful method to bring her and her tribe into the faith:

She said, "Council! A noble letter has been delivered to me.

It is from Sulayman and says: "In the name of Allah, All-Merciful, Most Merciful. Do not rise up against me, but come to me in submission.'

She said, "Council! Give me your opinion about this matter. It is not my habit to make a final decision until I have heard what you have to say."

They said, "We possess strength and we possess great force. But the matter is in your hands so consider what you command."

She said, "When kings enter a city, they lay waste to it and make its mightiest inhabitants the most abased. That is what they too will do. I will send them a gift and then wait and see what the messengers bring back."

When it reached Sulayman he said, "Would you give me wealth when what Allah has given me is better than what He has given you? No, rather it is you who delight in your gift. Return to them. We will come to them with troops they cannot face and we will expel them from it abased and humiliated." (Surat an-Naml, 29-37)

This determination and courage of the Prophet Sulayman (as), not tainted with any desire for anything of this world, but aimed solely for seeking the good pleasure of Allah, affected the Queen of Sheba deeply, and brought her to the faith:

... She said, "My Lord, I have wronged myself but I have submitted with Sulayman to the Lord of all the worlds." (Surat an-Naml, 44)

The Prophet Nuh (as)

The Prophet Nuh (as) was one of the prophets who preached the religion of Allah with great determination to a tribe that refused to heed his words. The Prophet Nuh (as) tried for a very long period of time, through countless methods and tactics, to bring the tribe to the true path. But, not only could his people not understand what he was trying to explain, they could not even stand listening to him. As experienced by every prophet, they used every manner of harassment against him, not hesitating to assail so righteous a person. Though, he persisted in telling them of the existence of Allah and the Hereafter, with tremendous patience and determination, the Prophet Nuh's (as) converts amongst his tribe were very few in number. The verses of the Qur'an inform us of the Prophet Nuh's (as) struggle in the following manner:

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

Then I addressed them publicly and addressed them privately." (Surah Nuh, 5-9)

As with other prophets, the Prophet Nuh (as) was subjected to the insults, threats and assaults of the furious unbelievers.

They said, "Why should we believe you when the vilest people follow you?" (Surat ash-Shu'ara', 111)

They said, "Nuh, if you do not desist you will be stoned." (Surat ash-Shu'ara', 116)

However, he did not relent or abandon his task of preaching the message, but continued to tell his people about Allah's commandments with courage and determination. Throughout the long period he remained with his people, he persisted in this noble and superior moral conduct.

The quality of morality we see in the Prophet Nuh (as) is that of a believer who does not fear the condemnation of his accusers, but instead fears only the loss of the favor of Allah, to whom he surrenders himself entirely. In this manner, the Prophet Nuh (as) set an important example for all Muslims who came after him.

While suffering all the mockery and cruelty met out by his people, the Prophet Nuh (as) nevertheless carried out the instructions of our Lord and maintained a sure faith in Allah's promise of help:

Build the Ark under Our supervision and as We reveal and do not address Me concerning the wrongdoers. They shall be drowned. He began to build the Ark and every time some nobles of his people passed him by, they ridiculed him. He said, "Though you ridicule us now, we will certainly ridicule you as you do us. You will soon know who will receive a punishment which disgraces him and find unleashed against himself an everlasting punishment." (Surah Hud, 37-39)

After the Prophet Nuh's (as) long struggle, Allah punished the people who rejected him, by drowning all those who mocked, ill-treated and menaced him. The Prophet Nuh (as), however, was saved along with those who were faithful. The story of the Prophet Nuh (as) is an example showing us that Allah will not allow the deeds of those who battle with courage and determination on His path to go unrewarded. It is to show that, through their patience, they will attain success in this world and the next, and that He will surely exercise His revenge on those who try to impede or suppress them.

Maryam (as)

In the Qur'an, Maryam (as) is described as an upright, patient, sincere and faithful believer, who did not fear the condemnation of her accusers. Allah chose Maryam (as) and educated her miraculously. Maryam (as) was superior through her closeness to Allah, and her moral excellence:

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

Despite being subjected to unjust slander, Maryam (as), who was miraculously made pregnant by Allah with the Prophet 'Isa (as), did not deviate from Allah's commandments, carrying out everything He instructed her to do to the letter.

Maryam (as) was truly a chaste woman, and a devout believer in Allah. That her people considered her as having committed an immoral deed, despite her known moral excellence, was truly a test from Allah. From her youth on, Allah had always helped her, and throughout her life, turned every deed of her to good. Maryam (as) never forgot that all things are under Allah's control, and maintained a strong faith that Allah would exonerate her from all such false accusations.

Indeed, Allah helped her in this task too, and told her to keep silent. When her people attempted to talk to her, Allah instructed her to remain silent, and only show 'Isa (as) to those who slandered her. This way, Allah helped Maryam (as) and saved her from having to offer a difficult explanation. As relief, Allah made 'Isa (as) instead offer the explanation that was expected from her. Due to this miracle, the plot hatched against Maryam (as) was thwarted. This is related in the Qur'an as follows:

She said, "How can I have a boy when no man has touched me and I am not an unchaste woman?" (Surah Maryam, 20)

She brought him to her people, carrying him. They said, "Maryam! You have done an unthinkable thing!

Sister of Harun, your father was not an evil man nor was your mother an unchaste woman!"

She pointed towards him. They said, "How can a baby in the cradle speak?"

He said, "I am the servant of Allah, He has given me the Book and made me a prophet." (Surah Maryam, 27-30)

The courage shown by Maryam (as), though she was subjected to various forms of slander, and the determination she maintained, brought her great respect among all believers. While praising her name, Allah informs the faithful in the Qur'an that He made her an example for all believers, and that she achieved high stature in His sight:

Allah has made an example for those who believe: The wife of Pharaoh when she said, "My Lord, build a house in the Garden for me in Your presence and rescue me from Pharaoh and his deeds and rescue me from this wrongdoing people."

And Maryam, the daughter of 'Imran, who guarded her chastity—We breathed Our Spirit into her and she confirmed the Words of her Lord and His Book and was one of the obedient." (Surat at-Tahrim, 11-12)

The Prophet Lut (as), the Prophet Shu'ayb (as) and the Prophet Hud (as)

The tribes to whom the Prophets Lut (as), Shu'ayb (as) and Hud (as) were sent had exercised depravity to extremes, and fallen completely away from the morality that is upright. The Prophet Lut (as) noted that the most prominent characteristic which made his tribe different from others was that they had given themselves up to gross sexual perversion. Those who did not listen to the Prophet Lut's (as) message when he invited these people to behave morally, decided that the way to be rid of him and his preaching was to expel him from the city. However, the perverted people were not aware of how close they were to immanent danger. Allah sent angels to the Prophet Lut (as) to give him the good news that the tribe's end was at hand:

And Lut, when he said to his people, "Do you commit an obscenity not perpetrated before you by anyone in all the worlds?

You come with lust to men instead of women. You are indeed a depraved people."

The only answer of his people was to say, "Expel them from your city! They are people who keep themselves pure!" (Surat al-A'raf, 80-82)

They said, "Lut, we are messengers from your Lord. They will not be able to get at you. Set out with your family—except for your wife—in the middle of the night and none of you should look back. What strikes them will strike her as well. Their promised appointment is the morning. Is the morning not close at hand?" (Surah Hud, 81)

As may be discerned from these verses, the Prophet Lut (as) believed in Allah, and warned the tribe, but in response, he was threatened with banishment. However, this in no way frightened him, for he knew that Allah's help was close at hand.

The leaders of the Prophet Shu'ayb's (as) tribe were involved in all kinds of corruption and oppression. This perverted people, which set out to ensnare the Prophet Shu'ayb (as), and assailed him and those who followed him, did not recognize the wrong in these injustices they committed.

What prevented them from using still more terrible methods against the Prophet Shu'ayb (as) was that they were afraid of his followers. Shu'ayb (as) made no compromises in preaching the message, but maintained honorable fight, and, every chance he could, he informed them that he did not rely on his followers but on Allah, and that, if they were going to be afraid, it was Allah they should be fearing.

Those who rejected the Prophet Shu'ayb (as) threatened to drive him from his home, or stone him to death, because he was a man of faith, also threatening his dearest

companions and others who followed. The Prophet Shu'ayb's (as) determination and courage in confronting his people is referred to in the Qur'an as an example to consider:

They said, "Shu'ayb, We do not understand much of what you say and we see you are weak among us. Were it not for your clan, we would have stoned you. We do not hold you in high esteem!"

He said, "My people! Do you esteem my clan more than you do Allah? You have made Him into something to cast disdainfully behind your backs! But my Lord encompasses everything that you do!

My people! Do as you think best. That is what I am doing. You will certainly come to know who will receive a punishment to disgrace him, and who is a liar. So look out. I will be on the lookout with you." (Surah Hud, 91-93)

The Prophet Shu'ayb's (as) struggle in preaching the message to his people is mentioned in a number of verses:

And to Madyan We sent their brother Shu'ayb who said, "My people, worship Allah! You have no other god than Him. A Clear Sign has come to you from your Lord. Give full measure and full weight. Do not diminish people's goods. Do not cause corruption in the land after it has been put right. That is better for you if you are believers.

Do not lie in wait on every pathway, threatening people, barring those who believe from the Way of Allah, desiring to make it crooked. Remember when you were few and He increased your number: See the final fate of the corrupters!

There is a group of you who believe in what I have been sent with and a group who do not, so be steadfast until Allah judges between us. He is the best of judges."

The ruling circle of those of his people who were arrogant said, "We will drive you out of our city, Shu'ayb, you and those who believe along with you, unless you return to our religion." He said, "What, even though we detest it?"

"We would be inventing lies against Allah if we returned to your religion after Allah has saved us from it. We could never return to it unless Allah our Lord so willed. Our Lord encompasses everything in His knowledge. We have put our trust in Allah. Our Lord, judge between us and our people with truth. You are the best of judges." (Surat al-A'raf, 85-89)

As with all of Allah's messengers, when he went to his people to admonish them, the Prophet Hud (as) was faced with similar attacks and threats. The people sought to harm him with false accusations, such as that he was mad. But, the Prophet Hud (as)

remained steadfast despite the harassment meted out against him and his followers with outstanding courage. We are told of the words of the Prophet Hud (as) in the Qur'an:

The ruling circle of those of his people who disbelieved said, "We consider you a fool and think you are a liar." He said, "My people, I am by no means a fool, but rather am a messenger from the Lord of all the worlds. (Surat al-A'raf, 66-67)

He said, "Punishment and anger have come down on you from your Lord. Do you argue with me regarding names which you and your forefathers invented and for which Allah has sent down no authority? Wait, then; I am waiting with you." (Surat al-A'raf, 71)

CONCLUSION

We live only a short time in this world. Where we will abide for the longest period of time is in the Hereafter. In order to be a believer who deserves eternal life in Paradise, it is necessary to behave in this world in such a way so as to earn the good pleasure of Allah. What Allah demands of us is that we devote ourselves to Him, and adopt the superior morality which He has commanded. The courage shown by the faithful on the path of Allah is a trait of this superior morality. The prophets and those who followed them were important examples in this regard for those Muslims who come after them.

The type of courage that is in accordance with the teachings of the Qur'an can provide us with much in both material and spiritual gain. First of all, when one shows determination according to what Allah desires, his conscience will be at ease. And, because his conscience is easy, he enjoys tranquility of spirit.

Believers who show courage in conveying the message of the superior morality which Allah has commanded to people, are those with profound faith, who carry out His instructions without fear of reprisal, or of the devious tactics and slander of the unbelievers.

They are examples for everyone. Unbelievers become overwhelmed by the drive, zeal and determination which the faithful display, and they can observe them only with a wonder tinged with envy. Effectively, the determination and courage of the faithful are such as to set an example to all who are on the face of the Earth.

Courage ensures even greater devotion in earning Allah's good pleasure and propagating the morality of the Qur'an. In spite of all the hindrances effected by the unbelievers, the believer becomes still more determined in carrying out the duty imparted upon him by Allah of informing others about the faith, and continues to relate the morality of the Qur'an with great fervor.

In spite of oppression and other obstacles, it is the duty of every Muslim to live according to the superior morality of Islam. Otherwise, as Allah advises us in the following verse, "What reason could you have for not fighting in the Way of Allah—for those men, women and children who are oppressed and say, **"Our Lord, take us out of this city whose inhabitants are wrongdoers! Give us a protector from You! Give us a helper from You!"** (Surat An-Nisa', 75), they will not be fulfilling His instructions. In fact, every believer with a conscience has enough faith and spiritual strength both for himself and to come to the aid of others. In a world where people are treated with cruelty, killed unjustly, and basically subjected to torment in this world, it is inappropriate for any believer to pursue his own selfish interests or to ignore the plight of such people.

Under such circumstances, every Muslim of conscience should develop his courage, and if there are points at which his courage is deficient, he should determine what these

are and improve it with fear of Allah, because, "the life of this world, compared to the Hereafter, is only fleeting enjoyment." (Surat ar- Ra'd, 26).

In this world, which passes in the blink of an eye, not to act bravely, and not to show the determination which Allah demands, would be a failure for which people will undoubtedly feel great regret in the Hereafter.

THE DECEPTION OF EVOLUTION

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

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

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

The Scientific Collapse of Darwinism

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

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

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

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

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

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

The First Insurmountable Step: The Origin of Life

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

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

"Life Comes From Life"

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

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

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

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

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

Inconclusive Efforts of the Twentieth Century

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

These studies, however, were doomed to failure, and Oparin had to make the following confession:

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

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

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

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

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

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

The Complex Structure of Life

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

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

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

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

Diego, California, confesses this fact in the September 1994 issue of the *Scientific American* magazine:

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

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

Imaginary Mechanism of Evolution

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

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

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

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

*Natural selection can do nothing until favourable individual differences or variations occur.*⁷

Lamarck's Impact

So, how could these "favorable variations" occur? Darwin tried to answer this question from the standpoint of the primitive understanding of science at that time. According to the French biologist Chevalier de Lamarck (1744-1829), who lived before Darwin, living creatures passed on the traits they acquired during their lifetime to the next generation. He asserted that these traits, which accumulated from one generation to another, caused new species to be formed. For instance, he claimed that giraffes evolved from antelopes; as they struggled to eat the leaves of high trees, their necks were extended from generation to generation.

Darwin also gave similar examples. In his book *The Origin of Species*, for instance, he said that some bears going into water to find food transformed themselves into whales over time.⁸

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

Neo-Darwinism and Mutations

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

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

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

*First, genuine mutations are very rare in nature. Secondly, most mutations are harmful since they are random, rather than orderly changes in the structure of genes; any random change in a highly ordered system will be for the worse, not for the better. For example, if an earthquake were to shake a highly ordered structure such as a building, there would be a random change in the framework of the building which, in all probability, would not be an improvement.*⁹

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

The Fossil Record: No Sign of Intermediate Forms

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

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

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

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

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

*If my theory be true, numberless intermediate varieties, linking most closely all of the species of the same group together must assuredly have existed... Consequently, evidence of their former existence could be found only amongst fossil remains.*¹⁰

Darwin's Hopes Shattered

However, although evolutionists have been making strenuous efforts to find fossils since the middle of the nineteenth century all over the world, no transitional forms have yet been uncovered. All of the fossils, contrary to the evolutionists' expectations, show that life appeared on Earth all of a sudden and fully-formed.

One famous British paleontologist, Derek V. Ager, admits this fact, even though he is an evolutionist:

*The point emerges that if we examine the fossil record in detail, whether at the level of orders or of species, we find—over and over again—not gradual evolution, but the sudden explosion of one group at the expense of another.*¹¹

This means that in the fossil record, all living species suddenly emerge as fully formed, without any intermediate forms in between. This is just the opposite of Darwin's assumptions. Also, this is very strong evidence that all living things are created. The only explanation of a living species emerging suddenly and complete in every detail without any evolutionary ancestor is that it was created. This fact is admitted also by the widely known evolutionist biologist Douglas Futuyma:

*Creation and evolution, between them, exhaust the possible explanations for the origin of living things. Organisms either appeared on the earth fully developed or they did not. If they did not, they must have developed from pre-existing species by some process of modification. If they did appear in a fully developed state, they must indeed have been created by some omnipotent intelligence.*¹²

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

The Tale of Human Evolution

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

1. Australopithecus

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

Evolutionists call man's so-called first ape-like ancestors *Australopithecus*, which means "South African ape." These living beings are actually nothing but an old ape species that has become extinct. Extensive research done on various *Australopithecus* specimens by two world famous anatomists from England and the USA, namely, Lord Solly Zuckerman and Prof. Charles Oxnard, shows that these apes belonged to an ordinary ape species that became extinct and bore no resemblance to humans.¹³

Evolutionists classify the next stage of human evolution as "homo," that is "man." According to their claim, the living beings in the *Homo* series are more developed than *Australopithecus*. Evolutionists devise a fanciful evolution scheme by arranging different fossils of these creatures in a particular order. This scheme is imaginary because it has never been proved that there is an evolutionary relation between these different classes. Ernst Mayr, one of the twentieth century's most important evolutionists, contends in his book *One Long Argument* that "particularly historical [puzzles] such as the origin of life or of *Homo sapiens*, are extremely difficult and may even resist a final, satisfying explanation."¹⁴

By outlining the link chain as *Australopithecus* > *Homo habilis* > *Homo erectus* > *Homo sapiens*, evolutionists imply that each of these species is one another's ancestor. However, recent findings of paleoanthropologists have revealed that *Australopithecus*, *Homo habilis*, and *Homo erectus* lived at different parts of the world at the same time.¹⁵

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

This situation apparently indicates the invalidity of the claim that they are ancestors of one another. 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.*¹⁷

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

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

Zuckerman also made an interesting "spectrum of science" ranging from those he considered scientific to those he considered unscientific. According to Zuckerman's spectrum, the most "scientific"—that is, depending on concrete data—fields of science are chemistry

and physics. After them come the biological sciences and then the social sciences. At the far end of the spectrum, which is the part considered to be most "unscientific," are "extra-sensory perception"—concepts such as telepathy and sixth sense—and finally "human evolution." Zuckerman explains his reasoning:

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

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

Darwinian Formula!

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

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

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

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

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

Technology in the Eye and the Ear

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

A Materialist Faith

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

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

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

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

It is not that the methods and institutions of science somehow compel us accept a material explanation of the phenomenal world, but, on the contrary, that we are forced by our a priori adherence to material causes to create an apparatus of investigation and a set of concepts that produce material explanations, no matter how counter-intuitive, no matter

*how mystifying to the uninitiated. Moreover, that materialism is absolute, so we cannot allow a Divine Foot in the door.*¹⁹

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

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

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

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

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

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

As for those who do not believe, it makes no difference to them whether you warn them or do not warn them, they will not believe. Allah has sealed up their

hearts and hearing and over their eyes is a blindfold. They will have a terrible punishment. (Surat al-Baqara, 6-7)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

As we can see, when people realized that a spell had been cast upon them and that what they saw was just an illusion, Pharaoh's magicians lost all credibility. In the present day too, unless those who, under the influence of a similar spell, believe in these ridiculous claims

under their scientific disguise and spend their lives defending them, abandon their superstitious beliefs, they also will be humiliated when the full truth emerges and the spell is broken. In fact, world-renowned British writer and philosopher Malcolm Muggeridge also stated this:

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

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

**They said, "Glory be to You!
We have no knowledge except
what You have taught us. You are
the All-Knowing, the All-Wise."
(Surat al-Baqara, 32)**

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Consider the person who lives his entire life avoiding responsibility. One who thinks only of feeding himself, of only his own future, house, car and other property ... That which unfolds around him, the tragedies and injustices that take place all over the world, the bloodshed, anguish and hunger suffered by others, does not concern him at all. He is indifferent to plight of those who have been unjustly attacked, or the child who can find not even a crumb to eat. There are many who think that if they can avoid thinking of these concerns, they themselves can be at peace. Though he finds himself in a cruel world, this does not trouble him or affect his conscience.

Now, you may be thinking, "Yes, but what can I do?" But, think how the world would be if everyone thought that way ... There would not be a single person to battle for good against the evils of the world. In fact, in every period of history, there have been those who fulfilled this duty. They came out fearlessly, trying to promote good in the world and keep it alive. The basic characteristics to be found among them were a fear of Allah, listening to their conscience, courage, outspokenness, and a willingness to accept responsibility.

True courage, as outlined in the Qur'an, is showing determination in respecting all of Allah's limits, without exception, and without hesitation, fearing none other than Allah, and not deviating from this course whatever the circumstances or the condition.