

HOPEFULNESS IN THE QUR'AN

Harun Yahya- Adnan Oktar

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*...Do not despair of solace from Allah.
No one despairs of solace from Allah
except for people who do not believe.
(Surah Yusuf, 87)*

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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

His pen-name is made up of the names "Harun" (Aaron [as]) and "Yahya" (John [as]), in memory of the two esteemed Prophets who fought against their people's lack of faith. The Prophet (saas)'s seal on the cover of the books is symbolic and is linked to the their contents. It represents the Qur'an (the final scripture) and the Prophet Muhammad (saas), the last of the prophets. Under the guidance of the Qur'an and the Sunnah, the author makes it his purpose to disprove each one of the fundamental tenets of godless ideologies and to have the "last word," so as to completely silence the objections raised against religion. The seal of the final Prophet, who attained ultimate wisdom and moral perfection, is used as a sign of his intention of saying this last word.

All of the author's works center around one goal: to convey the Qur' an' s message to people, encourage them to think about basic faith-related issues (such as Allah's Existence and Unity and the hereafter), and to expose the feeble foundations and perverted ideologies of godless systems.

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, and they are enjoyed by readers worldwide.

Greatly appreciated all around the world, these works have been instrumental in many people recovering their faith in Allah and in many others gaining a deeper insight into their faith. The wisdom, as well as the sincere and easy-to-understand style, gives these books a distinct touch that directly effects anyone who reads or studies them. Immune to objections, these works are characterized by their features of rapid effectiveness, definite results, and irrefutability. It is unlikely that those who read these books and give serious thought to them can any longer sincerely advocate materialistic philosophy, atheism, or any other perverted ideology or philosophy. 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 collection of books written by Harun Yahya.

There is no doubt that these features result from 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.

Considering these facts, those who encourage people to read these books, which open the "eyes" of the heart and guide them to become more devoted servants of Allah, render an invaluable service.

Meanwhile, it would just 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 all the ordeals endured by the vast majority of people is the ideological prevalence of disbelief. This state 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, which leads people into a downward spiral of violence, corruption and conflict, it is clear that this service has to be provided more

speedily and effectively. Otherwise, it may be too late.

It is no exaggeration to say that the collection of books by Harun Yahya have assumed this 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.

To The Reader

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

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

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

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

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

In these books, you will not find, as in some other books, the personal views of the author, explanations based on dubious sources, styles that are unobservant of the respect and reverence due to sacred subjects, nor hopeless, doubt-creating, and pessimistic accounts that create deviations in the heart.

INTRODUCTION

Consider two different people, two next-door neighbors, for instance, who live under the same conditions. Let's say that the same terrible event befalls both of them: A burglar has stolen their valuables. Let's assume that one of the homeowners has faith in Allah, and that the other has gotten carried away with the ambitions of this world and forgotten the hereafter...

The unbeliever has worked his whole life and so was able to buy a number of valuables. For him, nothing is more important than these valuables, for he or she has based his whole life, aspirations, and expectations upon them. But now, having lost all of them quite suddenly, he thinks that his life has been for nothing, that his efforts have been wasted. Becoming engulfed in a continual spiritual state of pessimism and complaint, he complains to everybody. In fact, some people in this situation may even cry for days and become sick, or display constant irritability and hurt those around them. Sometimes they will withdraw into themselves suddenly, trying to make those around them partners to their helplessness and sorrow. With the loss of a few valuables, their entire life has, in their own words, been "turned upside down."

But the believer does not experience any of this. In contrast to the screaming and wailing from next door, an utmost calm and peaceful atmosphere prevails in his or her house. He does not succumb to the slightest sadness or negativity, and manages to maintain his uninterrupted submission to Allah, as well as his balanced and happy state of mind.

He can do this because just as he knows that the One Who gave him these valuables is Allah, he also knows that it is Allah Who takes them back. Realizing that this event must contain some good, he is at peace.

Never enslaved to his worldly passions only thus falling into despair, he remains hopeful that Allah will give him more beautiful and better things in both this world and the hereafter.

Such events do not cause Muslims to fall into a sense of hopelessness. On the contrary, such situations only cause their submission to Allah to increase, and they experience the happiness and peace of being thankful to Him regardless of their present circumstances. Since they know that Allah is testing them, they ask Him for that which benefits them.

Even if they have lost everything, believers can start fresh without the slightest feeling of hopelessness, and with patience and enthusiasm. Their enthusiasm arises from their faith, their trust in and love for Allah, their Qur'anic morals, and their certain realization of this world's transience. This optimistic attitude toward the future, this habit of always looking on the bright side, shows up in all of the events faced by believers throughout their lives.

No matter how difficult their situation, believers always display maturity, moderation, fortitude, and strength. They never compromise on matters affecting their dignity, integrity, or respect; nor do they display any of the unbelievers' attitudes or character disorders. Thus they are beautiful models for all people everywhere.

Their most distinctive characteristic in such situations is their continual hope. This is important, because Allah does not favor hopelessness, and because the Qur'an says that a lack of hope is a characteristic of unbelievers. Losing hope in Allah's help, mercy, and forgiveness is an ugly action, one that the Qur'an has forbidden.

As a result of their hopeful spiritual state, each believer lives a peaceful and happy life, whereas those who do not submit to Allah are forever hopeless, anxious, and worried. As a result, each unbeliever lives in dismay, sadness, and distress.

Most people fall into despair when they do not get what they want, lose something, or when some unexpected dreadful event befalls them. Moreover, it does not even occur to them to hope to be forgiven in the hereafter, to be freed from Hellfire, or to enter Paradise. In fact, because they do not have a sound and Qur'anic understanding of the afterlife, they do not even know what it means to hope for Paradise.

All of this is a result of being ignorant of the Qur'an and of following a different path from the straight one shown therein. Every negative event that befalls such people in their perpetually confused and turbulent lives causes them sadness and pessimism. Unaware of the Divine wisdom, advice, and counsel that the believers gain through the Qur'an, they listen to Satan's whisperings and so become enslaved by infinite anxiety, conjecture, and worry. They face the material and spiritual consequences, in both this world and the next, of turning their backs on the Qur'an that was sent to them.

This book provides an important opportunity for those who have lived far from the Qur'an to leave their familiar distorted attitudes and mindsets and be reunited with the happiness of this world and the next. As for those who already believe and follow the Qur'an, it is an advice, a reminder and an encouragement for them to understand it better.

THE BELIEVERS' HOPEFUL STATE

Hopefulness is one of the believers' characteristics

The Qur'an states that hopefulness is an important characteristic of believers and, at the same, an indication of their faith. People place their hope in Allah according to their degree of faith, and will cherish a deep longing to obtain His mercy and infinite bounties because He has promised believers the most beautiful things in this world and in the hereafter. People will hope to secure these according to their degree of trust in Allah, their closeness to Him, and their submission and sincerity. Knowing that everything happens according to His will, believers do not fall into despair or become hopeless and pessimistic. And, since believers know that Allah will accept their prayers, they do not doubt, even for a second, that a seemingly terrible event is simply a part of their test and that eventually it will work out for the best.

Everything that happens comes about through Allah's command of "Be." At every second, everything and scene that appears before us is created through Allah's will. Nothing is left to its own devices, for everything is created for the destiny that Allah has determined for it.

Believers who are aware of this do not lose hope, even when facing the most negative situations or the most distressing events, in Allah's mercy or help. Those who are patient in hardship, do not lose hope, and never compromise Allah's laws have been given glad tidings in both this world and the Hereafter.

The Qur'an portrays believers as being in a constant spiritual state of hopefulness toward Allah. Sincere believers will know and appreciate our Lord as the Qur'an describes Him and, as a result, will realize the mercy and favors that He has bestowed upon them. They know that He is the believers' friend and helper, that He is infinitely merciful and compassionate toward them, that He has sent glad tidings to His righteous servants of a great reward both in this world and the next, and that He never breaks His word. They see that He wills only what is best and good for them, that He opens the door of mercy and guidance for them, and that He provides endless opportunities to gain rewards.

And so believers who know this are in a constant state of hopefulness toward our Lord, hoping for the best and the good from Him in both this world and the next. Several Qur'anic verses mention how Allah gives believers a good reward and offers them glad tidings of grace, favor, and mercy.

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

He responds to those who believe and do right actions, and gives them increase from His favor. But the unbelievers will have a harsh punishment. (Surat ash-Shura, 26)

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

The believers' prayers and wishes are full of hope. As one verse says, "they call upon their Lord in fear and ardent hope" (Surat as-Sajda, 16). Since prayer itself is both a form of worship and an indication of a hopeful attitude toward Allah, believers pray in the hope that our Lord will answer their prayers.

The roots of hopefulness: submission to destiny

Many people frequently fall into despair when faced with an unexpected and sudden event. Take the example of those who have been unsuccessful at work, lost something they love, or failed an important exam. If such things have become their goals, they will be unable to cope with such unexpected results and experience great sadness, for they have placed all of their hopes and goals upon the chain of events happening as they had envisioned.

However, life does not always go according to one's plans, which means that people can face many unexpected events. For example, somebody who really wants to be an architect will study very hard for the entrance exam. All of her future plans are based upon becoming an architect. But something she never expects happens: She is accepted into another program. Having planned to become an architect, she now finds herself studying for an entirely different career.

A young man who is very interested in sports and has planned to dedicate his life to sports may suffer an injury that forces him to abandon his dream. Or, a couple may have furnished their new home with loving care, only to be forced into selling it without ever having lived in it.

Many similar unexpected events may befall people throughout their lives, for, in reality, no one knows what is going to happen even one second from now. The only thing that we know for sure is that everything in a person's life is determined long before he or she is even born. In other words, all events in a person's life are determined in "timelessness." When the appointed day and time arrive, he or she will experience that event, because Allah has made it part of their destiny. Given these facts, it will come to pass.

We can clarify this with a common daily occurrence. Imagine two cars at the exact moment when they crash into each other. Both drivers definitely wanted to be somewhere else seconds before this event. Maybe they wanted to get home to their waiting families or get to work. Both individuals had left their homes at specific times and gotten into their cars. Perhaps they experienced a second of indecisiveness before turning onto that particular street, but then eventually decided to do so. Either one or both of them could have been very cautious people who always drive with the utmost care. But just at that moment, they could have taken their eyes off the road for a second to change the cassette or do something else. Everything had been specially planned for that event, and every little detail led them toward it.

Generally any event, whether cars crashing into each other or any other unexpected event, takes place within a matter of seconds. From the drivers' loss of concentration to the music playing and the clothes worn – Allah had created and planned every detail of that particular event in His destiny. The person who was going to have that accident wore those clothes, left home, and turned onto the street where the accident would occur. Nothing could have prevented it.

This is how Allah preordains events. At this point, people begin to use the following logic: "If only I

hadn't gone into that street" or "If only I hadn't been playing with the tape and had concentrated on the road." But such logic is quite faulty and incorrect and, moreover, leads to unending complaining and regret. Although many causes may be found for the accident, the reality is that the accident and its causes were created in the course of destiny.

A person coming face to face with this truth for the first time might think: "Okay. Well, what could I have done? If everything is already written in my destiny and Allah knows about them, how am I supposed to behave when these situations occur?"

The Qur'an answers the above questions very clearly, and so we turn to it to find the truth for everything. According to the Qur'an, the best way to act and the best attitude to have is to submit to our destiny, look for the best in everything, not to get upset or fall into despair, and to be a grateful servant under all circumstances.

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

Just as Allah is the Creator of the universe and all of its contents, which include every living and non-living thing, so is He the Creator of every event in all of its minute details. The Qur'an presents this truth in the following verse:

That is Allah, your Lord. There is no god but Him, the Creator of everything. So worship Him. He is responsible for everything. (Surat al-An'am, 102)

Muslims who have faith in Allah, believe in the hereafter's existence, and fear Allah submit to our Lord, Who has created everything. In other words, they submit completely to whatever happens to them and do not despair, because they know that He controls everything and is their best Friend and Protector. Muslims know that panicking or losing hope are very wrong, because Allah, the most perfect Creator, has created every event. Thus, the event in question has been created in the most perfect way. Even though sometimes the events may appear to be negative, each believer knows that good comes out of everything.

Believers and unbelievers have very different reactions to events. For example, a believer may be late for an interview that she assumes will be good for her and thus lose a unique opportunity. However, assured that everything is predestined and that her being late is utterly under Allah's control, she sees a good in this unexpected event, thanks Allah for it, and hopes for a better end. She knows that it would be wrong to attribute this turn of events to such causes as traffic congestion or a flat tire. Indeed, if Allah had so willed, traffic congestion would have reduced or the tire would not have been punctured.

These or similar conditions are surely the apparent reasons for being late. Yet, more important than these apparent reasons is Allah's divine plan, which specially decreed that event long ago, and that destiny was only fulfilling itself as Allah willed.

In the above example, Allah decreed that the person in question would miss the interview. Consequently, there is no way that she could have been there.

All obstacles come into existence because Allah wills a good for believers. If people are to understand this submission fully, they must take Allah as their sole Friend and Protector and turn to Him in complete sincerity. A most telling characteristic of the morality that Allah wills for believers is that they do not become sad or negative or fall into despair, no matter what they may encounter.

Hopelessness indicates disbelief or weak faith, and is a consequence of one's failure to comprehend that everything takes place according to destiny. Allah draws our attention to this error, for under despair lies a mood and rationale opposed to the very values of the Qur'an. Such an attitude is forbidden, because Allah advises people to trust in Him, be hopeful, and see good in all that happens.

When confronted with the most negative events, and even such unexpected ones as being wounded or losing everything, believers display an extremely submissive and patient character, since they know that Allah creates every event. He creates every being, both the visible and the invisible, with a flawless design, and gives life to each of them. Allah, the Creator of everything, also created all human beings, regardless of time or place, and their individual destinies. The minor events experienced by a person living in a distant land also are under Allah's control, for He sees everything and place, and hears every noise. Moreover, Allah creates the concepts of "space," "sound," and "image."

Given that He controls everything, giving way to despair is always an error, for the event will happen regardless of whether one wants it to or not. Besides, all events occur for some good reason. What is important here is to see the good in events. Those who do so will see how perfectly and flawlessly Allah

creates events, and this attitude will enable them to obtain a more profound faith.

Such a line also exists between hope and despair. Hope befits reason and rationale, while despair is utterly against it. For instance, one may fail a test despite studying hard. Let's assume that he has been shaken and fallen into despair, since he worked so hard but still failed. He obviously does not benefit from such a mood, and the ensuing distress and trouble harms both his body and soul.

But in reality, Allah wills another good for him. Rather than attending college that year, it might be better for him to prepare for the entrance exam. Or perhaps his chosen college or profession could have become a source of trouble and hardship in his future life. It may be that he will enter an even better college next year or choose a different profession which will be better for him in the future.

Throughout their lives, people encounter events that seem to serve no clear purpose: They cannot get a job they like, lose some money they desperately need, lose something they cherish, or lose through theft possessions that they could buy only after years of hard work. Such events may happen to everyone. Indeed, Allah makes it clear that people are tested by their souls and possessions. In one of his sayings, our Prophet (saas) made this clear:

"Whatever Allah takes is for Him, and whatever He gives is for Him. Everything with Him has a limited fixed term (in this world), and so people should be patient and hope for Allah's reward." (Sahih Bukhari)

Thus, those who remain patient will attain good, whereas those who rebel and despair will lose.

It is vital to fully comprehend the importance of being hopeful and to be patient in order to gain Paradise. Being positive is obligatory, as the following verse shows:

Do not despair of solace from Allah. No one despairs of solace from Allah except for people who do not believe. (Surah Yusuf, 87)

As Allah commands that we have this attitude, we must realize that He dislikes any type of despair. Thus, we must take Allah as our Friend and try to act according to His will.

Allah's infinite bounties necessitate our trust in Him and our hope for His mercy

Another factor that develops the believers' submission to Allah is reflecting upon His attribute of the Most Loving (*al-Wadood*). Allah created and provides for humanity; gives people whatever they want; makes them laugh and lets them see, hear, and think; and hears them when they pray and then accepts their prayers and gives them numerous other bounties.

Allah created the most beautiful and tastiest foods and drinks. He created strawberries, bananas, plums, oranges, watermelons, rock melons, tomatoes, carrots, capsicums, corn, varieties of ice cream, chocolate, and thousands of other tastes that give people such pleasure. In addition, He created those animals so loved by people, as well as all plants, trees, oceans, beaches, sports, music, films, cars, and all other things.

However, a majority of people are ungrateful and do not submit to Him completely, and thus fall into despair. This type of attitude is apparent in the following verse:

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

Allah has given humanity everything that it wants. In the sincere reflection that we carry out within ourselves, we can attest to this truth. In return for this, He asks that we submit to Him; not be spoiled by the favors in our hands or fall into despair when we lose them; stay away from worldly ambitions and turn to Him with a serene spirit; and think about our true and eternal life in the hereafter and to live accordingly.

Through His signs, Allah makes it clear to everyone that this world is a place of trial. As Earth is not our real home, it is only a place to prepare for our true eternal homeland, a place to develop both spiritually and morally. As all people will undergo various ordeals while here, they must, first of all, submit to Allah and be ready for whatever tests will come their way.

Those who submit to their destiny patiently and display the best behavior will succeed in both this world and the hereafter, and will meet with much good. As for those who go along with the flow, who, heedless of destiny's true nature, react to events in a way incompatible with the Qur'an, they only oppress themselves and find themselves far from Allah's mercy.

Allah makes it clear that He is not pleased with those who attach themselves to this world, worry about the future, are ambitious, arrogantly think that they are in control but then despair at the slightest setback, and are ungrateful:

If We let man taste mercy from Us and then take it away from him, he is despairing, ungrateful. But if We let him taste blessings after hardship has afflicted him, he says: "My troubles have gone away" and is overjoyed and boastful, except for those who are steadfast and do right actions. They will receive forgiveness and a large reward. (Surah Hud, 9-11)

The secret behind the believers' trust in Allah in all situations, as well as their continual joy and enthusiasm, lies in their belief in and reliance upon Allah. They understand that Allah is behind every apparently difficult situation, as well as the fact that only He gives and takes.

Allah's beautiful promises to believers necessitate that they remain hopeful

Allah has promised believers great bounties in both this life and the Hereafter, and people may hope to obtain them according to the degree of their faith in and closeness to Allah, as well as their submission and sincerity. They see these bounties as a means to get closer to Allah, to be thankful to Him, and to witness the manifestation of His eternal attributes and beauties. And so for this reason, they hope for great bounty from Allah. Since He gives beauty to those who act beautifully, believers constantly hope that Allah will increase their favors, thereby enabling them to become closer to Him.

The conscience of those who have certain belief in Him and do what He asks is clear. They cherish great hope, for our Lord has promised to reward them with Paradise for their attachment to Him while living in this world. This hope manifests itself at all times, for such people are as happy, joyful, and excited as if they had already entered Paradise. They have befriended our Lord by struggling and trying to please Him, purifying their egos of all evil, and always pursuing good. And in the end, they will return to Him. Believers who carry this excitement are hopeful that, having pleased Him, they will meet our Lord in the hereafter.

Allah gives glad tidings of His support and Paradise to believers, and has proclaimed that He will reward all Muslims who serve in His path. Those Muslims who know that they will recompensed for each good deed, kindness, and good behavior that they do, and for their decision to adhere to the Qur'an, will experience the beauty of submission, trust, patience, and faith.

Therefore, believers who know these facts will constantly be in a positive state about our Lord, hoping for the most beautiful and the best blessings in both this world and the hereafter. In many verses, Allah promises believers a good reward, grace, favor, and mercy:

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

He responds to those who believe and do right actions, and gives them increase from His favor. But the unbelievers will have a harsh punishment. (Surat ash-Shura, 26)

The tests placed upon Muslims may sometimes involve hardship and trouble, such as various types of oppression and plots, or being detained or imprisoned. Throughout history, many Muslims have been killed. However, Muslims who are subjected to oppression in order to frighten, dishearten, or make them swerve from Islam never despair when confronted with such difficulties. In fact, their zeal and enthusiasm never abate, contrary to the unbelievers' expectations. Recalling the verses that remind them that unbelievers will try to oppress believers, they feel a great excitement when experiencing the same, and thus feel grateful to Allah. While unbelievers assume that they frighten them, believers feel the joy of their faith and ponder upon Allah's promises.

In the Qur'an, Allah promises believers an absolute victory over unbelievers, as well as security and peace, provided that they do not ascribe partners to Him:

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

When encountered with the unbelievers' oppression and plots, believers who have an unshakable faith in Allah and the Qur'an remember this promise and show patience with hope and joy. This attitude is indeed a great source of grief for unbelievers, for the believers' trust in Allah makes the unbelievers feel His wrath and the torment awaiting them in both this world and the next. They are seized by an indefinable fear and anxiety.

In the Qur'an, we see that Muslims are in a constant state of hopefulness. Sincere believers appreciate

our Lord, as described in the Qur'an, and thus recognize His mercy and bounties upon them. Those who abide by the Qur'an's commands know that Allah is the believers' Friend and Helper, that He has infinite mercy and compassion for them, that He gives His sincere servants the good news of great rewards in both this world and the hereafter, and that His promise is certain. They further see that Allah always wills what is good for them, opens the gates of mercy and guidance to them, and gives them countless opportunities to earn His good pleasure.

The Muslims' zealous and hopeful attitude to our Lord, Who always gives the good news of bliss, is described as follows:

Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah. Those who are with him are fierce to the unbelievers, merciful to one another. You see them bowing and prostrating, seeking Allah's good favor and His pleasure. (Surat al-Fath, 29)

As the verse maintains, in return for Allah's promises the Muslims try to display throughout their lives those attitudes that please Allah: obeying the commands conveyed through His Messengers and books, and striving to display the morality that most pleases Him. Aware that He is pleased with servants who are compassionate, tolerant, just, patient, hopeful, modest, helpful, and self-sacrificing, they compete with one another to display moral excellence. They do so because Allah commands His servants to compete with each other in the hope of obtaining Paradise:

Race each other to forgiveness from your Lord, and a Garden [i.e., Paradise] as wide as the heavens and the earth, prepared for the people who guard against evil: those who give in times of both ease and hardship, who control their rage and pardon other people – Allah loves the good-doers – those who, when they act indecently or wrong themselves, remember Allah and ask forgiveness for their bad actions – and who can forgive bad actions except Allah? – and do not knowingly persist in what they were doing. Their recompense is forgiveness from their Lord, and Gardens with rivers flowing under them, remaining in them timelessly, forever. How excellent is the reward of those who act [righteously]! (Surah Al Imran, 133-136)

Race each other to forgiveness from your Lord and to a Garden, whose breadth is like that of heaven and earth combined, made ready for those who believe in Allah and His Messengers. That is Allah's favor, which He gives to those whom He wills. Allah's Favor is indeed immense. (Surat al-Hadid, 21)

Allah promises His sincere servants a beautiful life in this world, as well as superiority, victory, and an infinite life replete with beauties in the hereafter. Allah commands thus in the Qur'an:

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

Allah has promised the men and women of the believers Gardens with rivers flowing under them, remaining in them timelessly, forever, and fine dwellings in the Gardens of Eden. And Allah's good pleasure is even greater. That is the great victory. (Surat at-Tawba, 72)

Allah has told believers to give glad tidings to each other with these verses, and has made Paradise a means of joy and hope for them while still in this world. Paradise is a place beyond our wildest imagination, beyond our desires. It is above and beyond all bounties we could ever hope to have, a place that contains all of this and much more as a mercy from Allah, a most beautiful place that words cannot describe.

There, the Muslims will be able to do whatever their hearts desire. They will live with their loved ones, together in happiness, for eternity. Paradise, which contains no flaws, is distant from material and spiritual deficiency. The Qur'an describes it as a place where "rivers flow by underneath", "where, wherever one looks one sees delight and a great kingdom" and where bounties are never "failing, nor unrestricted." In addition, the Qur'an reports that "they [believers] will have there all that their hearts desire and in which their eyes find delight" (Surat az-Zukhruf, 71). Paradise is also a place full of spiritual bounty. Allah informs us that no vain talk will be heard there, that there will be no anger or revenge, but only a happy and joyous endeavor at every instant. Most important of all, there will be Allah's greeting of "Peace" to those who believe. The Qur'an addresses those believers who will enter Paradise in the following manner:

O self at rest and at peace, return to your Lord, well-pleasing and well-pleased! Enter among My servants! Enter My Paradise! (Surat al-Fajr, 27-30)

In other verses, the joy and happiness of the believers who enter Paradise, as well as their gratitude to Allah, is described as follows:

They will say: "Praise be to Allah, Who has fulfilled His promise to us and made us the

inheritors of this land, letting us settle in Paradise wherever we want. How excellent is the wage of [righteous] workers!" You will see the angels circling round the Throne, glorifying their Lord with praise. It will be decided between them with truth. And it will be said: "Praise be to Allah, the Lord of all the Worlds." (Surat az-Zumar, 74-75)

To be given the glad tidings of Paradise is the greatest gift one can receive. And so believers pray that this reality will not be removed from their consciousness, and that they will be reminded of it constantly. "The joy of Paradise" is a great favor bestowed upon Muslims in this world. Just as those who hear that they have inherited a large fortune feel great pleasure, those believers who receive tidings of inheriting an eternal Paradise experience an even greater joy. They are aware of how quickly life passes by, and that the time when they will gain Paradise, which has been promised to the sincere ones, is close at hand.

If we consider that a believer's life span is approximately 60 years, a 30-year-old will have 30 years left and a 40-year-old will have 20 years left. In actual fact, even if one lives to be 100 years old, death is inevitable; however, with Allah's permission, he or she will reach Paradise, which is eternal. They will spend eternity with their loved ones, witnessing Allah's manifestations and living a joyous and happy life in untold purity and bounties, the likes of which have never been seen in this world.

Moreover, these eternal bounties can be obtained very easily. The only thing one needs to do is to follow Allah's commands, put one's worship into practice, and live by the Qur'anic morals with the hopeful joy of the possibility of attaining these bounties. Such a lifestyle will result in the most pleasure that a person can experience in this world. What Allah asks from His servants is described in the following verses:

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

As these verses show, people must do good deeds and advise other people to follow Allah's commands in order for humanity, as a whole, to be servants worthy of Paradise. In addition to promising His righteous servants Paradise as a reward, Allah has promised bounties in this world by making it clear that He will bless sincere Muslims with a good life. Some related verses are as follows:

Those who do good will have the best and more! Neither dust nor debasement will darken their faces. They are the Companions of Paradise, remaining in it timelessly, forever. (Surah Yunus, 26)

When those who heed Allah are asked: "What has your Lord sent down?" Their reply is: "Good!" There is good in this world for those who do good, and the abode of the hereafter is even better. How wonderful is the abode of those who guard against evil. (Surat an-Nahl, 30)

These are Allah's promises to believers, both for this world and the hereafter. And many verses clarify that His promise is definite and real: "Allah's promise is true" (Surah Fatir, 5; Surah Luqman, 9; Surah Yunus, 55; Surat ar-Rum, 60).

These most beautiful promises are the most important factor for believers to ensure that they always maintain a positive outlook and never despair or suffer anxiety. Those who have hope in Allah's promises and Paradise will live their religion with the utmost enthusiasm, excitement, and diligence.

To hope for "the best" from Allah

Being positive involves submitting to Allah regardless of the conditions or situation, how events unfold, and the direction they take. It also involves meeting all events without anxiety or worry, and without the slightest doubt that for believers, all events eventually turn out for the best.

One of the believers' most important characteristics is that they turn to Allah in all of their affairs and submit to their destiny wholeheartedly. Even if things do not turn out as planned, they do not get what they really wanted or lose something or someone they really loved – in short, in all circumstances – they turn to Allah and see the good and the best in every event. It is not possible to hear believers say: "Why did this happen?" or "If only such and such had not happened," for they are content with Allah from the start and have submitted to their destiny.

Believers pray for the best from Allah, given that they cannot know what is "the best" for them beforehand, for such knowledge is known only to Allah. For instance, believers who are fully committed to Islam may wish for another person to receive guidance, to accept and practice Islam, and may, hoping for this event, pray to Allah. Obviously, they want what is good and legitimate and have a good intention. However, they accept that "Allah knows best after all." As a person can have faith only if Allah wills it so, believers who see that those whom they love do not receive guidance realize that there must be some good in this and

thus do not become sad or fall into despair. Allah has made this fact clear in the following verse:

You cannot guide those you would like to, but Allah guides those He wills. He has the best knowledge of the guided. (Surat al-Qasas, 56)

Let's consider another example: Believers naturally would want to spend all of their time with other believers, for they are the protectors of each other and each other's closest friends and brothers and sisters. Each of them has dedicated themselves to Allah and His religion, and so they derive great happiness from being together. But it may not be possible for them to always be together. For example, they may find themselves far from their loved ones while serving Islam, or, as occurred at the time of the Prophet (saas), may be forced to migrate due to the unbelievers' oppression. To be in the believers' company is obviously a very good thing; however, persevering in the face of suffering and oppression in Allah's way may lead to even greater rewards and better things.

We know of prophets and believers who were exiled and imprisoned by those who rejected the Qur'an. In similar situations, believers never lose hope, for they know that such an event is very beneficial for them. Their goal is to display the best morals in all situations and thereby gain reward and Allah's good pleasure. They desire great pleasure from turning wherever they are into a place in which they can worship.

The believers' resigned attitude under all circumstances shows how sincere they are in their faith. Even if they succumb to the most serious disease or if circumstances necessitate their presence in the harshest places, they remain constantly hopeful and submitted, always thinking of the divine reason behind every situation and the good that may come of it.

The door of repentance is always open

Allah makes clear that people who make a mistake due to ignorance, but then return to Allah in sincerity and ask for forgiveness, will be forgiven. As long as believers are sincerely sorry for what they have done, they must never lose hope in Allah's mercy regardless of the sin's magnitude. This truth is emphasized in the following verse:

Say: "My servants, you who have transgressed against yourselves, do not despair of Allah's mercy. Truly Allah forgives all wrong actions. He is the Ever-Forgiving, the Most Merciful." (Surat az-Zumar, 53)

Our Prophet (saas) also stated that Allah accepts the believers' repentance:

If you are innocent, Allah will soon reveal your innocence. If you have committed a sin, repent to Allah and ask Him to forgive you, for when a person confesses his sin and asks Allah for forgiveness, Allah accepts his repentance. (Bukhari)

This is one of Islam's greatest favors and leniencies. Falling into despair after making a mistake, as well as thinking that one will be unable to get back on one's feet when the religion has made such an allowance, is just gross conjecture. Those who ignore Allah's allowance oppress their souls and, at the same time, fail to apply one of Islam's requirements.

The Qur'an's leniency prevents many of those acts that violate it in many ignorant societies. For example, ridiculing and degrading people who make mistakes in ignorant societies can never flourish where Qur'anic manners predominate. On the contrary, where such manners abide, those people who have returned to Allah and asked His forgiveness as sincere believers will live their lives in peace, happiness, and eagerness.

A person's superiority can be measured only by piety, that is, the degree to which they commit themselves to Allah and the Qur'an. Whereas in ignorant societies the people's faults and mistakes are of the utmost importance, in societies where the Qur'anic ideals prevail, a person's past mistakes and sins are never mentioned. The important thing is to receive Allah's forgiveness. To condemn and censure somebody whom Allah has promised to forgive cannot be valid or legitimate under any circumstances.

To think of oneself as being faultless, sinless, and perfect is no different than claiming divinity, for humanity is prone to making mistakes and committing sins. As human beings are weak creatures, Allah has made it known that He is most forgiving and accepting of repentance. This is why it would be incompatible with the Qur'an for someone to fall into despair after having listened to his or her ego and sinned, either knowingly or unknowingly. After making a mistake, believers learn their lessons, see the truth after regretting their actions, immediately seek refuge in Allah, and do their best not to make that same mistake again.

Undoubtedly, believers take the utmost care in avoiding mistakes and sins, and in observing the

limits set by Allah. But despite this fact, believers still may make a mistake or sin. But after doing so, believers characteristically return to Allah and seek forgiveness. As a result, Allah's Names, such as The Acceptor of Repentance (*at-Tawwab*), The All-Forgiving (*al-Ghafur*), and The Beneficent (*ar-Rahman*), become manifest upon those believers who regret their mistakes and turn to Allah.

Just as believers make mistakes and repent, so do they reflect upon their mistakes with the concept of destiny in mind. First of all, such mistakes have been written into their destiny in order to allow them to grow in this world and enable them to move closer to Allah. Once they ask for forgiveness, these mistakes become a way for them to receive rewards, for after vowing to abandon that particular mistake and displaying Qur'anic values by repenting immediately, mistakes actually raise the sincere believers' degree in the afterlife. They cause believers to mature and become more aware of their deficiencies, weaknesses, and servitude, for the important thing is to abandon the sin, repent immediately, and truly regret what one has done.

In other words, believers who sin but then repent and seek Allah's forgiveness should not be seized by grief and hopelessness, for hopelessness displeases Allah. After making a mistake, the enthusiasm, fervor, and joy of believers should not diminish. On the contrary, they increase.

Striking a balance between hope and fear

Striking a balance between hope and fear is a most important factor when it comes to attaining a good character. While hope enables believers to practice their religion with enthusiasm, effort, fervor, joy, and zeal, their respectful fear of Allah causes them to take the utmost care in observing the limits set by Allah, to strictly avoid those things about which Allah has warned, and to be meticulous when it comes to what is allowed and what is forbidden. The enthusiasm and zeal resulting from being positive, together with the sobriety, fastidiousness, and sensitivity resulting from the fear of Allah, are ways to beautify the believers' character and for them to draw closer to Allah.

The Qur'an shows that just as Allah wills believers not to despair but to always remain hopeful and confident, He also wills them to have awe of His glory and a respectful fear of Him. As a matter of fact, such a fear has an important place in religion and it is one of its central topics.

Those who have a proper fear of Allah do not stray beyond what He has ordered and also have good character. While they hope for His forgiveness and mercy, as well as acceptance into Paradise, at the same time they have a great fear of Him, because nobody is guaranteed a place in Paradise or immunity from His punishment. Believers are only obliged to do their best and hope for Allah's mercy.

In addition to this hope, having an awe of Allah's glory and fearing Him has a positive effect upon one's worship. Those who have such a fear will work harder to gain their afterlife and always try to do good deeds. Those having only a weak fear are likely to assume that they "will get to Paradise anyway" or that "they'll be forgiven in the long run," and so do not commit themselves to their worship with the same degree of love and enthusiasm as do those who have the proper degree of fear. Those who fear Allah do not consider their good deeds as ever being enough, and so they always seek to please Him to the utmost. However, exerting only a little effort when one has been given ample opportunities, as well as giving into ego's desires, can place a person's other good deeds at risk.

As the Qur'an mentions, a soul can be balanced between hope and fear only if it is sincere toward Allah. Naturally, those who believe in the existence of Allah and the afterlife will want to be among those who please Him here and enter Paradise. Those who turn to Him sincerely will see the superiority and perfection everywhere in His creation, and naturally will feel a respectful and awesome fear of Him. This fear will cause them to take the utmost care by acting according to the Qur'an and, with the peace and confidence that arises from obeying Allah's commands, they can hope for Paradise. Thus sincere believers must maintain a natural balance between hope and fear.

Allah has drawn special attention to the fact that believers possess these two characteristics. Both are necessary requirements of having faith and, when felt strongly in the heart and applied, both will guide believers to the straight way and bring happiness in both this life and the next.

Allah asks those believers who, when they turn and pray to Him, to keep a balance between hope and fear. The related verses are as follows:

Do not corrupt earth after it has been put right. Invoke Him in fear and aspiration. Allah's mercy is close to the good-doers. (Surat al-A'raf, 56)

Their sides eschew their beds as they call upon their Lord in fear and ardent hope. And they

give of what We have provided for them. (Surat as-Sajda, 16)

With this advice from Allah, believers pray in the hope that they will obtain Paradise and, at the same, pray with a powerful fear of Allah. A prayer of our Prophet (saas) also indicates this state:

O Allah! I surrender to You, entrust all of my affairs to You, and depend upon You for Your blessings both with hope and fear of You. (Bukhari)

ALLAH'S PROMISES TO BELIEVERS

ALLAH'S PROMISES TO BELIEVERS IN THIS WORLD

Allah will accept the believers' repentance

And he who repents and does righteousness does indeed turn to Allah with [accepted] repentance.

(Surat al-Furqan, 71)

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

[It was so that] Allah may punish the hypocrite men and hypocrite women and the men and women who associate others with Him, and that He may accept repentance from the believing men and women. Allah is Ever-Forgiving, Most Merciful. (Surat al-Ahzab, 73)

Allah has promised those who believe and do right actions forgiveness and an immense reward. (Surat al-Maida, 9)

Allah will replace the believers' wrong actions into good

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

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

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

Allah will make His religion superior and destroy falsehood

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

Allah was pleased with the believers when they pledged allegiance to you [O Muhammad] under the tree. He knew what was in their hearts, sent down serenity to them, and has rewarded them with an imminent victory. (Surat al-Fath, 18)

Say: "Truth has come and falsehood has vanished. Falsehood is always bound to vanish." (Surah Maryam, 81)

Such people [believers] are the inheritors [as successors over the land and of the bounties in the hereafter]. (Surat al-Mu'minin, 10)

Allah supports believers in difficult times with His angels

If you are steadfast and have fear of Allah and they come upon you suddenly, your Lord will reinforce you with five thousand angels, clearly identified. (Surah Al 'Imran, 125)

The angels descend upon those who say: "Our Lord is Allah," and then go straight: "Do not fear and do not grieve, but rejoice in the Garden that you have been promised." (Surat al-Fussilat, 30)

Allah helps those who help His religion

He will guide them, better their condition, and admit them into Paradise, which He has made known to them. O you who believe! If you help Allah, He will help you and make your feet firm. (Surah Muhammad, 5-7)

Those who follow the Messenger, the Ummi, whom they find written down with them in the Torah and the Gospel, commanding them to do right and forbidding them to do wrong, making good things lawful for them and bad things forbidden for them, relieving them of their heavy loads and the chains that were around them. Those who believe in him, honor him, help him, and follow the Light that has been sent down with him, they are the ones who are successful. (Surat al-A'raf, 157)

Those who were expelled from their homes without any right, merely for saying: "Our Lord is Allah." If Allah had not driven some people back by means of others, monasteries, churches, synagogues, and mosques, in which Allah's name is mentioned much, would have been pulled down and destroyed. Allah will certainly help those who help Him. Allah is All-Strong, Almighty. (Surat al-Hajj, 40)

Before you, We sent other Messengers to their people, and they also brought them the Clear Signs. We took revenge on those who did evil, and it is Our duty to help the believers. (Surat ar-Rum, 47)

The Romans have been defeated in the land nearby, but after their defeat they will be victorious in a few years time. The affair is Allah's from beginning to end. On that day, the believers will rejoice in Allah's help. He grants victory to whomever He wills. He is the Almighty, the Most Merciful. That is Allah's promise. Allah does not break His promise, but most people do not know it. (Surat ar-Rum, 2-6)

Allah will accept prayers

And [mention] the man of the fish [i.e., Yunus], when he left in anger and thought We would not punish him. He called out in the pitch darkness: "There is no god but You! Glory be to You! Truly I have been one of the wrongdoers." We responded to him and rescued him from his grief. That is how We rescue the believers. (Surat al-Anbiya', 87-88)

Nuh called out to Us, and what an excellent Responder We are! We rescued him and his family from the terrible plight. (Surat as-Saffat, 75-76)

Thus does their Lord answer their prayer: "I will not let the deeds of any doer among you go to waste, male or female – you are both the same in that respect. Those who emigrated and were driven from their homes, and suffered harm in My Way and fought and were killed, I will erase their bad actions and admit them into Gardens with rivers flowing under them, as a reward from Allah. The best of all rewards is with Allah." (Surat Al 'Imran, 195)

We responded to him [Ayyub] and removed from him the harm that was afflicting him and restored his family to him, and the same again with them, as a mercy direct from Us and a reminder to all worshippers. (Surat al-Anbiya, 84)

Allah desires ease for believers

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

Whoever has fear of Allah, He will make matters easy for him. (Surat at-Talaq, 4)

Allah does not demand from any self more than He has given it. Allah will appoint, after difficulty, ease. (Surat at-Talaq, 7)

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

Allah desires ease for you; He does not desire difficulty for you. [He desires] that you complete the number [of days required in fasting] and proclaim Allah's greatness for the guidance He has given you so that, hopefully, you will be thankful. (Surat al-Baqara, 185)

Allah will have mercy upon His believing servants

He calls down blessings upon you, as do His angels, to bring you out of the darkness into the light. He is Most Merciful to the believers. (Surat al-Ahzab, 43)

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

ALLAH'S PROMISES TO BELIEVERS IN THE AFTERLIFE

Allah will reward the steadfast with the best reward

That is some of the news of the Unseen, which We reveal to you. Neither you nor your people knew it before this time. So be steadfast. The best end result is for those who guard [against evil]. (Surat al-Hud, 49)

**And be steadfast. Allah does not let the wage of good-doers go to waste. (Surat al-Hud, 115)
[Allah] will reward them for their steadfastness with Paradise and with silk. (Surat al-Insan, 12)**

Peace be upon you because of your steadfastness! How wonderful is the Ultimate Abode! (Surat ar-Ra'd, 24)

Such people will be repaid for their steadfastness with the Highest Paradise, where they will meet with welcome and with: "Peace." They will remain in it timelessly, forever. What an excellent lodging and abode! (Surat al-Furqan, 75-76)

Say: "O servants of Mine who believe! Observe your duty to your Lord. For those who do good in the world there is good, and Allah's earth is spacious. The steadfast will be paid their wages in full, without any reckoning. (Surat az-Zumar, 10)

Allah has promised beautiful dwellings in the Gardens of Eden for those who do righteous deeds

Allah has promised the men and women of the believers Gardens with rivers flowing under them, remaining in them timelessly, forever, and fine dwellings in the Gardens of Eden. And Allah's good pleasure is even greater. That is the great victory. (Surat at-Tawba, 72)

Gardens of Eden, whose gates will be open to them, where they will recline, calling for plentiful fruit and drink; and there will be dark-eyed maidens with them, with eyes reserved for them alone. This is what you are promised on the Day of Reckoning. This is Our provision, which will never run out. (Surah Sad, 50-54)

Gardens of Eden with rivers flowing under them, remaining in them timelessly, forever. That is the reward of those who purify themselves. (Surah Ta Ha, 76)

They will enter Gardens of Eden, where they will be adorned with gold bracelets and pearls, and where their clothing will be of silk. (Surah Fatir, 33)

But those who keep their duty to their Lord will have high-ceilinged halls, and more such halls built one above the other, and rivers flowing under them. That is Allah's promise, and Allah does not break His promise. (Surat az-Zumar, 20)

Allah promises believers a life in Paradise, a life full of endless bounty

Gardens of Eden that the All-Merciful has promised to His servants in the Unseen. His promise is always kept. They will not hear any prattling there, nothing but "Peace." They will receive their provision there morning and night. That is the Garden that We will bequeath to those of Our servants who guard against evil. (Surah Maryam, 61-63)

Say: "Is that better, or the Garden of Eternal Life promised to those who guard [against evil]? That is their recompense and destination. They will have in it whatever they want timelessly, forever. It is a binding promise of your Lord." (Surat al-Furqan, 15-16)

For those who believe and do right actions, there are Gardens of Delight, to remain in them timelessly, forever. Allah's promise is true. He is the Almighty, the All-Wise. (Surah Luqman, 8-9)

An image of the Garden promised to those who keep their duty [to Allah]: In it are rivers of water that will never spoil, rivers of milk whose taste will never change, rivers of wine delightful to all who drink it, and rivers of honey of undiluted purity. In it they will have fruit of every kind, and forgiveness from their Lord. Is that like those who will be in the Fire timelessly, forever, with boiling water to drink, [water] that lacerates their bowels? (Surah Muhammad, 15)

But those who keep their duty to their Lord will have Gardens with rivers flowing under them, remaining in them timelessly, forever: hospitality from Allah. What is with Allah is better for those who are truly good. (Surat Al 'Imran, 198)

Reclining in it on couches, they will experience there neither burning sun nor bitter cold. Its shading branches will droop down over them, its ripe fruit hanging and ready to be picked. Vessels of silver and goblets of pure crystal will be passed around among them, crystalline silver that they have

measured very exactly. They will be given there a cup to drink mixed with the warmth of ginger. In it is a flowing spring called Salsabil [Nectar]. Ageless youths will circulate among them, serving them. Seeing them, you would think them scattered pearls. Wherever you look, you see delight and a great kingdom. They will wear green garments of fine silk and rich brocade. They will be adorned with silver bracelets. And their Lord will give them a pure draught to drink. This is your reward. Your striving is fully acknowledged. (Surat al-Insan, 13-22)

But as for those who believe and do right actions, We will admit them into Gardens with rivers flowing under them, remaining in them timelessly, for ever and ever. Allah's promise is true. Whose speech could be truer than Allah's? (Surat al-Nisa, 122)

Sovereignty on that Day will be Allah's. He will judge between them. Those who believe and do right actions will be in Gardens of Delight. (Surat al-Hajj, 56)

But those who believe and do right actions will have Gardens with rivers flowing under them. That is the Great Victory. (Surat al-Buruj, 11)

Some faces on that Day will be radiant, well-pleased with their efforts. (Surat at-Tariq, 8-9)

Except for those who repent and believe and act rightly. They will enter Paradise and will not be wronged in any way. (Surah Maryam, 60)

The example [i.e., description] of Paradise, which the righteous have been promised, is [that] beneath it rivers flow; its foodstuffs and cool shade never fail. That is the final destiny of those who have fear of Allah. But the final destiny of the unbelievers is the Fire. (Surat ar-Ra'd, 35)

It is not your wealth or your children that will bring you near to Us – only in the case of people who believe and act rightly; such people will have a double recompense for what they did. They will be safe from all harm in the high halls of Paradise. (Surat as-Saba, 37)

Except those who repent and put things right, hold fast to Allah, and dedicate their religion to Allah alone; they are with the believers. Allah will give the believers an immense reward. (Surat an-Nisa, 146)

Allah will recompense righteous deeds in full

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

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

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

But as for those who believe and do right actions, We will not let the wage of the good-doers go to waste. (Surat al-Kahf, 30)

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

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

Anyone who does right actions and is a believer, will never have his effort spurned. We are writing it down on his behalf. (Surat al-Anbiya, 94)

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

Allah will increase the reward of those who spend in His Way

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

Those who recite the Book of Allah, establish prayer, and give of what We have provided for them, secretly and openly, hope for a transaction that will not prove profitless. (Surah Fatir, 29)

Anything you spend in the Way of Allah will be repaid to you in full. You will not be wronged.

(Surat al-Anfal, 60)

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

Those who spend their wealth in the Way of Allah, and then do not follow what they have spent by demands for gratitude or insulting words will have their reward with their Lord. They will feel no fear and will know no sorrow. (Surat al-Baqara, 262)

Those who give away their wealth by night and day, secretly and openly, will have their reward with their Lord. They will feel no fear and will know no sorrow. (Surat al-Baqara, 274)

Those who struggle in the Way of Allah will succeed

But the Messenger and those who believe along with him have struggled with their wealth and with themselves. They are the people who will have the good things. They are the ones who are successful. Allah has prepared Gardens for them with rivers flowing under them, remaining in them timelessly, forever. That is the great victory. (Surat at-Tawba, 88-89)

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

So let those who sell the life of the world for the afterlife fight in the Way of Allah. If someone fights in the Way of Allah, whether he is killed or is victorious, We will pay him an immense reward. (Surat an-Nisa, 74)

If you are killed or die in the Way of Allah, forgiveness and mercy from Allah are better than anything you can acquire. (Surah Al 'Imran, 157)

Do not suppose that those killed in the Way of Allah are dead. No indeed! They are alive and well provided for in the very presence of their Lord. (Surah Al 'Imran, 169)

Those who migrate in the Way of Allah and then are killed or die, Allah will provide for them handsomely. Truly Allah is the best Provider. He will admit them by an entrance that is pleasing to them. Allah is All-Knowing, All-Forbearing. (Surat al-Hajj, 58-59)

Allah will reward those who are grateful

No self can die except with Allah's permission, at a predetermined time. If anyone desires the reward of the world, We will give him some of it. If anyone desires the reward of the afterlife, We will give him some of it. We will recompense the thankful. (Surat Al 'Imran, 145)

Safa and Marwa are among the landmarks of Allah, so anyone who goes on pilgrimage to the House or visits [it] incurs no wrong in going back and forth between them. If anyone spontaneously does good, Allah is responsive to gratitude, All-Knowing. (Surat al-Baqara, 158)

On the Day of Judgment and in the afterlife, Muslims will face no difficulties

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

But they were not sent as guardians over them. So today those who believe are laughing at the unbelievers, on couches, gazing in wonder. (Surat al-Mutaffifin, 34-35)

Except those who believe and do right actions: They will have a wage that never fails. (Surat al-Inshiqaq, 25)

O you who believe! Repent to Allah. It may be that your Lord will erase your bad actions and admit you into Gardens with rivers flowing under them on the Day when Allah will not disgrace the Prophet and those who believed along with him. Their light will stream out ahead of them and on their right. They will say: "Our Lord, perfect our light for us and forgive us! You have power over all things." (Surat at-Tahrim, 8)

On the Day the Hour arrives, that Day they will be split up. As for those who believed and did right actions, they will be in a garden [of Paradise] delighted. (Surat ar-Rum, 14-15)

Those for whom the best from Us was preordained will be far away from it [Hell]. They will not

hear the slightest hint of it, and will remain there [i.e., Paradise] timelessly, forever, among everything their selves desire. The greatest terror will not upset them, and the angels will welcome them: "This is your Day, the one that you were promised." (Surat al-Anbiya, 100-103)

Allah has promised Paradise to those who obey Him and His Messenger

These are the limits set by Allah. As for those who obey Allah and His Messenger, We will admit them into Gardens with rivers flowing under them, remaining in them timelessly, forever. That is the Great Victory. (Surat an-Nisa, 13)

Whoever obeys Allah and the Messenger will be with those whom Allah has blessed: the Prophets and the veracious, the martyrs and the righteous. What excellent company such people are! (Surat an-Nisa, 69)

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

He will put your actions right for you and forgive your wrong deeds. All who obey Allah and His Messenger have won a mighty victory. (Surat al-Ahzab, 71)

Those who did good and guarded against evil among those who responded to Allah and the Messenger after the wound had been inflicted will have an immense reward. (Surah Al 'Imran, 172)

THE UNBELIEVERS' HOPELESS CONDITION

Hopelessness, a spiritual sickness, is frequently found among people living far from religion. This arises due to their denial of Allah's Existence or because they do not recognize and acknowledge Him as required. Lacking faith and Qur'anic knowledge, they believe that all events are the result of a series of coincidences. They cannot understand that Allah has created everything within a context of a destiny that He has determined and that He controls everything at every instant.

For this reason, every unfavorable event that befalls them leads to distress and hopelessness. In fact, they do not even need a negative or bad event to happen, for the conjectures, whisperings, and worries that they create for themselves are enough to make them fall into a deep depression. Such people can interpret everything negatively or find the bad in it. For any event, they can reach a conclusion that will lead them into depression and hopelessness, because they have no guide to serve as a frame of reference. What determines their life philosophy and perspective on events is based upon coincidence, randomness, and chance. Such concepts cannot give them hope or confidence; rather, believing in these ideas and basing one's life on them leads to all manner of distress and pain.

This is a natural consequence, for not recognizing Allah and not taking the Qur'an, which was sent to them by Him as a guide, a mercy, and good tidings, results in them oppressing their own selves and becoming the cause of all of their pain. They are ignorant of the divine destiny enveloping themselves and all of creation, and so perceive all events, which occur within Allah's knowledge and a result of His will, as a series of random events. In short, the great blindness and ignorance in which they find themselves causes them to lead a life akin to the pain of Hell.

This is the unbelievers' situation; however, some people who call themselves Muslim are in the same spiritual state. Regardless of their self-description, their reaction and response to events is not all that different from that of unbelievers, because they are so far removed from the values of the Qur'an. They consider all events to be the result of a series of causes, the laws of nature or social development, and do not believe that Allah created them. Thus they do not see the Divine Wisdom and goal behind each event.

The Qur'anic perspective, however, gives people a totally different character. First, those who approach events with a believer's perspective believe that all events are good for them and also for other believers, for Allah is the believers' friend, the One Who wills and creates the best for them in both this world and the next. If they encounter a situation that appears to be negative, they do not attribute this to bad luck and ill fortune, or to things not going their way, for they can see that Allah may have created a great benefit in it, as in: "It may be that you hate something when it is good for you" (Surat al-Baqara, 261)

Knowing that everything comes from Allah and occurs through His will causes believers not to become sad or negative, or to fall into despair under any circumstances. Viewing everything in this world is a trial, they meet every event with the best attitude and manners, as determined by the Qur'an.

Only unbelievers despair of Allah's mercy

People can be divided into two groups based on how they respond to difficult events. The first group denies Allah's Existence and gets caught up in this worldly life. Whenever its members meet with any difficulty, distress, physical or spiritual affliction, they suddenly become aggressive and display unexpected and rebellious behavior. This despair affects their whole lives, for it destroys their enthusiasm and fervor and gives way to great defiance. They see every hardship as a calamity, and so cannot respond in a mature and balanced fashion.

The people who despair of Allah's mercy are those who do not believe in Him or the afterlife. Allah makes it clear in the following verse that only those who reject Him despair of His Mercy:

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

Prophet Yaq'ub (as), one of the prophets praised in the Qur'an, advised his sons to maintain their hope in Allah and reminded them that only those who reject faith lose hope in His mercy, as follows:

O my sons! Seek news of Yusuf and his brother. Do not despair of solace from Allah. No one despairs of solace from Allah except for people who do not believe. (Surah Yusuf, 87)

Abandoning hope in Allah's mercy means that one is not aware that He has power over all things. Those who do so show an exceedingly vast ingratitude, for every member of humanity owes everything to our Lord. Allah created humanity and endowed its members with sight and hearing, and the ability to think, walk, and run; He causes people to breathe and smile; gives them good health; and provides for them and presents to them that which they love. Given all of the above facts, those who abandon any hope in Him in effect disregard all of these gifts and benefits. In particular, Allah is not pleased when people fall into despair after He withdraws one or more of His bounties from them.

When We bless man, he turns away and draws aside. When evil touches him, he despairs. (Surat al-Isra, 83)

Ungrateful people, who disregard the fact that Allah provides all of this bounty, lose all hope once that bounty is withdrawn from them and suddenly go into great shock. Such ingratitude and hopelessness are among the negative characteristics of those who live far from the Qur'an.

When they forgot what they had been reminded of, We opened up for them the doors to everything, until, when they were exulting in what they had been given, We suddenly seized them and at once they were in despair. (Surat al-An'am, 44)

Until We open to them a gate to a harsh punishment, in which they will at once be crushed by despair. (Surat al-Mu'minun, 77)

The unbelievers' weak and base nature is mentioned in another verse, as follows:

Man never tires of praying for the good, and if evil touches him, he despairs and loses hope. (Surat al-Fussilat, 49)

Allah makes it clear to believers that they should not befriend unbelievers, who do not believe at all in the afterlife and have lost all hope in the hereafter. In fact, such people are behind all illicit activity, from murder to stealing. They oppress people without hesitation and make a lifestyle out of unlawfulness and deceit, for their lack of any belief in the hereafter and hope in the hereafter means that they have no fear of Allah. This is why the following verse advises believers not to befriend such people:

O you who believe! Do not make friends of people with whom Allah is angry, who have despaired of afterlife as the unbelievers have despaired of the inhabitants of the graves. (Surat al-Mumtahana, 13)

Hopelessness is one of the most definitive differences between those who do not believe and those who do. Since unbelievers do not live according to the desire to obtain Allah's good pleasure, they do not carry the peace that believers acquire by accepting whatever happens to them as Allah's will. And so they worry even about the second after this one, and get caught up in the assumption that all events will develop against them.

Even if they get hopeful for a second, whenever something does not turn out the way they planned, they immediately fall into despair. For believers however, the exact opposite is true. Faith is the greatest favor a person can possess in this world, and a believer has "grasped the firmest handhold" (Surat al-Baqara, 256). The One Who makes existent what was not and raises to life what was dead; Who heals one after

sickness; Who makes one eat, drink, and grow; and Who brings out of the darkness into the light is Allah, and believers have faith in Him alone and do not associate anything with Him.

Faith protects people from factors that cause physical and spiritual harm, such as falling into despair, sadness, worry, stress, anger, anxiety about the future, fear, and nervousness. Instead of all of this, faith causes people to be exceedingly joyous and peaceful. In short, only faith can liberate people. As a matter of fact, those that try to hold onto anything other than faith will never find peace. Even if they reach their goals, they will see that they cannot find happiness.

In times of sickness and especially when they reach old age, people see that those things or people to whom they had dedicated their lives have not remained faithful to them. As they realize that the years went by for nothing and did not do them any good, they become dejected. The ideals, expectations, friends, and loved ones that kept them on their feet until now have all vanished.

For the people of faith, however, their bodily changes and the losses around them and in their own lives do not lead to sadness or depression, because they are not so attached to this world. The esteemed Islamic scholar Bediuzzaman Said Nursi, who spent his life struggling in the way of Allah, explains how faith was sufficient for him, and how it was an inexhaustible source of hope:

And so the light of belief was sufficient for me and all my sorrows arising from old age and the pains of separation; it gave me an inextinguishable hope, an unassailable faith, an unquenchable light, unending solace. Belief then is certainly more than enough for you in the face of the darkness, heedlessness, sorrows and griefs of old age. In reality, the old age, which is utterly black and lacking in light and solace, and the most grievous and terrible separation, is the old age and separation of the people of misguidance and the dissipated. Experiencing the belief which affords such hope, light and solace, and its effects, is possible through adopting a consciously worshipful attitude, worthy of old age and appropriate to Islam. It is not possible by trying to imitate the young, plunging one's head into heedlessness, and forgetting old age. (Risale-i Nur Collection, The Twenty-Sixth Flash, <http://www.bediuzzaman.org/flashes/f26.html>)

For those who are happy and joyous that Allah's bounty is present in their lives, changing their whole personality when it is withdrawn or falling into a great state of despair and anxiety is completely degrading and base. It is a sign that they do not have true faith in Allah or the hereafter, and also a sign of lack of wisdom and deficient understanding.

As Allah bestows and removes bounties, one of the believers' most important characteristics, one that distinguishes them from all others, is the favorable morality that they display in such a situation. Their most fundamental feature is their complete submission to Allah, thinking and acting according to the Qur'an that He sent to humanity, and their adopting only those solutions that are in accord with the Qur'an's mentality, model, or perspective.

Those without faith, on the other hand, base every dimension of their lives on a model that goes against the Qur'an. Some of this model's features include ridicule, oppression, worry, fear, distress, deceit, a fear of death, worldly ambition, and sadness. Hopelessness is found in practically all unbelievers, because they have not based their life's goals and lifestyles on a solid foundation, namely, faith in Allah and servitude. Therefore their lives, capabilities, and perseverance are as weak as cotton thread. They are in a spiritual state that is, at all times, prone to ruin and desolation.

In order to have an enthusiastic hope that is neither exhausted nor extinguished, people need to have complete faith and trust in, as well as devotion to, Allah. People live in hope, as required, only if they are friends with Allah. Those who do not believe in Him will not know true hope, that is, a hope that does not depend upon worldly conditions. They will dwell on negative possibilities and thus evaluate events negatively. Their lack of trust in and reliance upon Allah will give them innumerable and endless reasons to worry, for they think that everything is random and happens as a result of coincidence. Under these circumstances, even potential natural disasters are a major source of distress for them.

The universe contains much detail that, under the most sensitive of balances, creates harmony. When one part of this balance is upset by the slightest amount, a major catastrophe can result. For instance, a strong earthquake can devastate everything on Earth's crust. The crust is like a membrane swimming on hot magma, which boils and bubbles at temperatures of thousands of degrees, in which the hardest metals exist only in solution. It is very easy for this membrane to rip apart in many places, and for the crust to turn to ashes from the boiling lava. Even those places on Earth considered to be the safest are not free of this danger, for no calculations carry any certainty and therefore are only estimations and suppositions.

At the same time, the world is spinning at the most incredible speed through the void of space, and thousands of meteors are passing by it at various tangents. There is no guarantee that one day a meteor will not hit Earth. A meteor just 1 km across is large enough to threaten life on Earth by upsetting the climate's balance. A large explosion on the Sun, and the resulting energy and radiation released, may end life on Earth in an instant. These are only a few examples, and there are thousands of alternative possibilities.

If people are aware of such things and yet have no faith in Allah or have not submitted to Him, they will feel great terror and unease. On the other hand, people of faith know that the universe, including their own bodies, are under His control. They have submitted completely to His will and knowledge. The fact that the universe is based on a sensitive balance increases their faith and strengthens their bond to Allah, as well as their wonder.

In his own uniquely sincere style, Bediuzzaman Said Nursi compares the peace of Muslims to the hopelessness experienced by unbelievers in the following extract:

And so all material and spiritual events in series in the universe assault, threaten and terrify the faithless people of misguidance. They unsettle their spiritual strength, putting it into disarray. As for the people of faith, let alone threatening or scaring them, these events are a source of happiness and joy, companionship, hope and strength. Because, with their faith, the people of belief can see that that endless series of events that appear one after another like the wagons of a train, a physical and spiritual train, and the mobile universe are being administered to and are sent by a Wise Creator, with perfect order and wisdom to carry out their duties. They do not deviate from these duties in the slightest degree and they do not infringe upon one another. By giving us spiritual power they make us see that they are subject to the perfect artistry and manifestations of beauty in the universe, and faith is depicted as a sample of eternal happiness... (Risale-i Nur Collection, Hutbe-i Samiye)

Unbelievers will fall into the greatest despair on the Day of Judgment, the day on which all people will be raised and called to account. Upon seeing themselves come face to face with a difficult day, they finally will meet with the truth that they denied all their lives, and will feel an untold regret because they never approached faith while on earth. Remembering Allah's promises, they will realize that they are going to be thrown into Hell. Their despair at that exact moment and from then onward is the endpoint of despair. In fact, their feelings of regret will not be like those felt on earth, for nothing is comparable to it in severity. Allah expresses their desolation on that day, the beginning of the hereafter, as follows:

On the Day the Hour arrives, the evildoers will be in despair. (Surat ar-Rum, 12)

It is also clear that the punishment of those who willingly reject faith after being invited to it by the Qur'an will be very severe and unending. The related verse reads:

It will not be eased for them. They will be crushed there by despair. We have not wronged them; it was they who were wrongdoers. (Surat az-Zukhruf, 75-76)

The spiritual condition of those in despair

One of the most important spiritual factors that gives people energy and keeps them alive, happy, and at peace is a positive spiritual state. Maintaining such a condition is required to ensure that people can live their lives in a healthy manner. In fact, many people who do not completely experience a positive outlook, and who therefore experience pain and distress, oppress themselves and make the world unlivable for themselves.

This problem is due to the facts that they do not believe in Allah's control of all events and so do not submit completely to their destiny, for only complete submission to Allah and destiny can bring peace to a person. Being positive about the future, instead of getting caught up in fear and distress, and trusting Allah renders people both physically and spiritually healthy. Not doing so makes it impossible for them to be balanced and healthy. Those who feel anxious and distressed about the future, even if it is only one second from now, are like those who have lost all life, even though they are still living. It would be wrong to expect great progress and service, as well as good ideas and thoughts and positive behavior from such people, because their souls are constantly filled with displeasure and anxiety.

People who are shaken by the smallest event that goes against their wishes, who go into depression and spiritual decline, are at a loss on several accounts. Their souls become battered, and consequently their bodies start to decline, whereas they were created to be peaceful, healthy, and productive by submitting to and trusting in Allah alone.

For those without faith, everything can seem to be a problem. Getting sick on an important day, not being able to accept a "special" invitation, complete one's research, or going on a much-desired holiday, not receiving attention from somebody one wants to impress, or even a small scrape on one's car can lead to sudden and great sadness and despair. Similar trivial events also can lead to sudden depression. The reason for such negative attitudes is that such people give far more importance to the world than it deserves, do not think even for a minute about the afterlife or remember that everybody will die and leave this world behind. Thus they get stuck on trivial things and problems, and the hopes that they placed on small goals can be shaken very quickly. People who adopt this type of lifestyle become unhappy and troubled.

People may also become depressed about a certain unexpected physical flaw and may experience a period of great despair. During this time, they may exhibit certain behavior – which they would not display if they thought there were no flaws in their physical appearance – such as mocking a beautiful or handsome friend out of jealousy or talking in ways that make their friends feel ugly. Other people, under the same circumstances, may withdraw into themselves and avoid their friends. All of these behavior disorders result from not submitting to destiny and trusting Allah.

No one gains from despair, for it has no positive effect upon their manners, spiritual health, future, or present lifestyle. On the contrary, it drives them to sickness and moral depression, which can lead even to death. However, having a positive attitude bears a lot of physical and spiritual gains. First of all, it results in one's gaining Allah's good pleasure and performing a type of worship by applying His commands.

Remaining hopeful in the face of all events and rejecting hopelessness leads to the soul's positive development. Such people are resigned to their destiny and have no worldly ambitions. Patient and calm, they are not swept away by events and are strong, content, and respected by others. They become people who are sought after for advice, are mature, and have the characteristics of a leader.

The "hope" of those without wisdom

There is a very important connection between being hopeful, following Allah's commands, and observing the limits set by Him. A person's degree of hope for Allah's mercy is in direct proportion to one's attachment and closeness to Him and to one's observance of the Qur'an's rulings. Those who do not remember Allah, who live as they please, and who turn away from Allah's commands and then expect a good recompense are only fooling themselves. They can obtain that good recompense only by correcting those attitudes and turning to Allah in sincere repentance.

Thus, the hope of unwise people is like this. Many people have convinced themselves that they will receive a great reward in the hereafter, even though they have not acknowledged and appreciated Allah as required and have no idea about the Qur'an and Islam. Instead of being hopeful, a trait unique to believers, this ugly daring and recklessness is brought about by unbelief. They try to comfort their consciences – which have become constricted due to their living far from religion – with false hopes and expectations. Eventually, they make themselves believe in the truth of such self-deceptions.

For example, consider a researcher who does not display even the slightest Qur'anic behavior and yet expects to be saved because of his scientific research. Or a philosopher who, even though she denies and rejects religion, believes that she is superior to others because of her education, and believes that she will be rewarded for it in the afterlife. A merchant also expects the hereafter and becomes hopeful because of the merchandise and opportunities that he provides to others. But when one speaks to these people for a while, one sees that they doubt the existence of an afterlife. One verse describes such people as follows:

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

This person clearly has doubts about the Day of Judgment, and so displays an inconsistent logic by hoping to meet with a good result just in case he goes to the hereafter. This inconsistent logic is a result of the senselessness engendered by the lack of true faith. This example reflects a mentality that is very widespread today.

Those who have this ridiculous hope and expectation believe that they should be rewarded for the good they did in this world – which they did only for their own benefit. In fact, they believe it is their natural right. They adopt and frequently use such slogans as "Work is the greatest form of worship" and "Service to the public is service to Allah." Now these ideas are useful if they are done sincerely, but to display an ungrateful and rebellious attitude toward Allah in addition to the corrupt behavior and ugly manners that the Qur'an forbids, and then to expect to be rewarded for deeds done only to suit one's ego is illogical.

But when reminded that such an expectation is vain and ridiculous, and that Allah considers the important thing to be having faith and carrying out actions solely to gain His good pleasure, they do not draw near to accepting this truth. The Qur'an relates that deeds done without faith or keeping Allah's good pleasure in mind receive no reward in the afterlife and are for nothing. Except for what Allah wills, whatever they do is in vain if they have no faith, as related in the Qur'an as follows:

Say: "Shall I inform you of the greatest losers in their actions? People whose efforts in the life of the world are misguided while they suppose that they are doing good." (Surat al-Kahf, 103-104)

People who consider themselves religious but who, in reality, have adopted a non-Qur'anic religious model and are thus committing idolatry, also entertain false expectations and hopes of the hereafter. However, the only religious way or application that has any value to Allah is the Qur'an, for it contains the true religion revealed by Allah. No so-called "religious" model other than the Qur'an and the Sunnah of our Prophet (saas) is valid in His sight. The Qur'an mentions those people who think they are serving religion, but whose thinking is actually based on idolatry, as having acted in vain.

It is not for the polytheists to maintain the mosques of Allah [while] bearing witness against themselves of their disbelief. They are the ones whose actions will come to nothing. They will be in the Fire timelessly, forever. (Surat at-Tawba, 17)

The Qur'an also describes the shock when those who set up partners with Allah, and yet still expected to enter Paradise, face this unexpected situation as follows:

On the Day We gather them all together, We will say to those who associated others with Allah: "Where are the partner-gods for whom you made such claims?" Then they will have no recourse except to say: "By Allah, our Lord, We were not polytheists." See how they lie against themselves, and how what they invented has forsaken them! (Surat al-An'am, 22-24)

Therefore, being hopeful has meaning only when coupled with faith, for then it becomes a type of worship and good manners. To hope from Allah and to expect the hereafter without having true faith, observing the Qur'anic rulings, and worshipping in the manner prescribed by Allah are all products of an insincere, inconsistent mentality driven by easing one's conscience. Such thinking only deludes those who follow it, for it is no more than empty conjecture. The believers' hopefulness should not be confused with the vain hope of the people of ignorance and those who associate others with Allah.

Those who hope for Paradise should behave in a manner consistent with Allah's signs for this. If they act according to His will, follow His orders and advice, and never compromise with His verses, they win the right to hope that they will be among those whom Allah has determined to be worthy of the reward of Paradise. The following verse states:

Wealth and sons are the embellishment of the life of the world. But in your Lord's sight, right actions that are lasting bring a better reward and are a better basis for hope. (Surat al-Kahf, 46)

Another point deserves special mention here: Until this very moment, one may well have adopted a morality and a way of life that displease Allah. But what matters is that one repent and intend to be a sincere person after becoming aware of the facts related in the Qur'an. After making this decision, one should display moral perfection throughout his or her life. In such a case, one may hope for Allah's forgiveness and Paradise.

Satan desires to infect people with hopelessness

Satan inculcates a lack of confidence, despair for the future, and a negative outlook of events in people who befriend him. He does not want people to have faith, trust and obey Allah, submit to their destiny, or to live with hope and enthusiasm. Allah wills that believers have all of these attributes, because they allow them to draw closer to Him. Of course Satan does not want to see people succeed in reaching such goals, and so tries to drive them to destruction by tempting them to non-enthusiasm, depression, helplessness, and boredom.

One of the things that Satan wants to make the believers do, but fails at, is to feel despair when

situations appear negative. Satan fails only with the sincere believers, for he cannot pull them toward him due to their ever-mindful faith, which causes them to observe carefully Allah's commands and advice at all times. And since He has mentioned being positive in the Qur'an, believers cannot form a different response on this topic. Allah tells believers:

Do not despair of solace from Allah. No one despairs of solace from Allah except for people who do not believe. (Surah Yusuf, 87)

So, believers avoid showing any tendency toward such a state of mind.

Other verses also condemn falling into despair and state that it is one of the unbelievers' negative characteristic. The related verses are as follows:

Man never tires of praying for the good, and if evil touches him, he despairs and loses hope. But if We let him taste mercy from Us after he has suffered hardship, he says: "This is my due. I do not think that the Hour is going to come. And if I am returned to my Lord, I will definitely find the best reward with Him." But We will inform those who do not believe of what they did, and make them suffer a severe punishment. (Surat al-Fussilat, 49-50)

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

Those who lose hope and rebel have fallen into Satan's trap and fulfilled his commands. On the other hand, believers are always hopeful and look positively upon their future. They have gained Allah's good pleasure and the reward of the hereafter and, as a favor from Him, live a healthy and happy life in this world. Satan cannot lure them into despair, because they are hopeful under all circumstances, bound firmly to the Qur'an, and have taken Allah as a close Friend. Since this subject is most important and even central to Islam, believers are just as meticulous with it as they are with all other Qur'anic teachings.

Satan does not want Allah's religion to prevail. Rather, he wants people to live lives based on anti-religious morals, and hopelessness is one part of this model. In some societies, hopelessness has become a philosophy of life. Those who are under Satan's influence reach a state in which they receive egotistical pleasure out of songs, films, and other forms of expression that reflect hopelessness and pessimism.

But the mind, mentality, opinion, and reasoning of those without hope are not conducive to healthy decision-making. Just as hopelessness can cause people to lose their physical and mental health, it is also a serious spiritual illness that, depending on its severity, can lead people to commit suicide. Obviously, such people cannot be expected to live according to the Qur'anic morals. This situation serves Satan very well, for he uses it to make people stray from the religion and any expectation in the hereafter, and to drag them along with himself toward an endless punishment. Throughout human history, this has always been his goal.

People without hope infect those around them with the same negative depressive state. In effect, they virtually become Satan's helpers, for they can inculcate in other people the spiritual state desired by Satan. When successful, this approach turns people – willingly or unwillingly – into Satan's servants, despite the fact that humanity was created only to serve Islam and to be Allah's servant.

THE SATANIC WHISPER: THE BEGETTER OF DESPAIR

Satan's whispering (*waswasah*) consists of vain doubts and conjectures that form in people's minds and prevent them from making the right decisions. It makes people procrastinate and doubt, renders them indecisive, and causes distress. In addition, it causes meaningless fears, ruins their ability to think, and saps their confidence. The afflicted are then engulfed by anxiety, indecision, fear, hopelessness, and negativity. This whispering and its accompanying psychological problems are experienced particularly by people who are ignorant of the concept of destiny, who do not know how to trust in Allah, and who are weak in faith.

Satan's goal is to whisper empty conjectures to such people in order to cause them to stray far from their religion, become ignorant of Allah's power, and not to acknowledge Allah in the way required. Satan tries to make people follow those models displayed by people who waste their lives on vain goals, who put their own desires and passions ahead of Allah's will, and who have forgotten the true purpose of their creation: serving Allah. By listening to Satan and getting caught up in his whisperings, they take what he says seriously and forget Allah. Thus, they lose in both this world and the hereafter.

At the head of their worldly losses is that of hope and stability, for following such a path causes unease and instability to rule their lives. People can fall prey to many kinds of conjecture at different stages in their lives, depending upon the person. Most of the time they live with the agony of making the right decision

when faced with events. They are constantly indecisive on questions related to education, work, and other issues. As a result, they always ask themselves: "Should I have taken that other job?" or "Would it have been better if I had gone to the other school?"

At this point, a question comes to mind: "What's the harm in always trying to do the right thing?" However, what we are trying to clarify here is not finding the best and correct solution to a problem, but that such people are prone to feelings of distress and apprehension at every instant of every day, for they can never be sure of what they do. Thus, they eventually reach a state in which they cannot think of the truly important things. Their constant cross-examination of themselves keeps their thoughts and minds in a state of constant confusion. This is one of the biggest dangers that Satan's whisperings can bring to people.

Satan's dark suggestion is such a calamity that it results in indecisiveness and all manner of conjecture. This curse eats up most of a person's time and, consequently, a large part of one's life. Any indecision and doubt that results in empty supposition eventually leads to a stressful and tense spiritual state. If those who heed the Satan's evil suggestions do not believe in Allah, or believe but have not acknowledged His power, the conjecture and suppositions just keep on getting bigger and bigger. Since they are not relying upon and trusting in Allah, Who created them, they cannot break free of Satan's suggestions and thus continue to suffer from their own misgivings, which engulf and constrict them. Such a spiritual state is very widespread and is experienced by everybody in his or her immediate environment. From time to time, they recognize it within their own selves.

This satanic whispering's most serious danger is its ability to engulf one's mind and prevent proper thought. Those who are so afflicted, whose minds are constantly preoccupied with conjecture and doubt, cannot acknowledge and recognize Allah, as required, or live as He wills. They are angry with and anxious about the world, and thus cannot acquire the good morals engendered by obeying the Qur'an's call to submit to Him or the ensuing peaceful and calm spiritual state.

Those whose spirits are caught up in conjecture will confuse right and wrong, good and bad, and what they should and should not do. They are in a constant state of anxiety, doubt, and hesitation about what will happen to them, and never stop worrying about the correctness of their decisions. This situation places great pressure upon their minds and prevents them from thinking logically, making healthy decisions, and reasoning things out.

But all of this is so utterly meaningless. Humanity was created for a specific purpose: To serve Allah in the way that He wills, and to never forget that our Lord is always a friend to those who struggle sincerely. People who know their purpose never forget that Allah creates all things and that every event occurs within His knowledge. People who continue to live with conjecture and stray far from the path leading to true salvation need to understand this truth, and to realize that conjecture, doubt, and supposition cannot change the results of any events. Only those who know this can lead a life of peace, for they have submitted to the destiny that Allah, the One Who created them out of nothing, has determined for them and that is absolutely good for them.

But Satan becomes a plague upon those people who are unaware of the fact that they cannot escape their destiny, and that, in reality, they are no more than viewers of it. What lies at the heart of those who cannot free themselves from this curse is that the satanic whisperings keep growing, which deepens their depression and ruins their spirit. But they cannot escape it, for they do not know how to approach it since they do not know either its source or its cure: a strong love for and fear of Allah, and a solid submission resulting from faith.

Satan's suggestions drive people to despair

Throughout this book, we have explained that those who have true faith are in a continual state of hope. Given this, a most insidious technique used by Satan to divert people from the path of Allah is to get them to conjecture about hoping for good and beneficial things. This only results in despair, for its ultimate goal is to lead people away from that path. Those who fall prey to these whisperings and the ensuing despair have a fundamental weakness in their faith, and thus display their lack of a true and requisite faith in destiny.

However, many verses clearly explain that Allah controls everything. One such verse is the following:

The keys of the Unseen are in His possession. No one knows them but Him. He knows everything in the land and sea. No leaf falls without His knowing it... (Surat al-An'am, 59)

As understood from this verse, nothing, not even the falling of a leaf, happens without Allah's

knowledge and will. In other words, every event that occurs on earth happens within His knowledge and under His control. And so people must realize and never forget that Allah has created this world as a place of trial, and that He has placed many means for testing in it.

Given this world's trial-like nature, Allah may test people in many ways. The Qur'an expounds the following fact:

We will test you with a certain amount of fear and hunger and loss of wealth and life and fruits. But give good news to the steadfast (Surat al-Baqara, 155)

Many other verses proclaim that people will be tested in different ways. The best response to all such events is to be grateful, patient, and hope for the best and good from Allah. Believers who realize that a difficult situation will soon pass and that they are being tested, and that their display of good behavior will give them a hope of Paradise, will never be shaken by such circumstances. They do not feel sadness, depression, or despair, and do not become engulfed in anxiety.

However, people must have a fixed resolve so that they can stop themselves from falling victim to Satan's whisperings, which can assume forms that would never occur to them. For example, Satan whispers to a person who makes frequent mistakes that he will always make such mistakes. He lies by suggesting to one who may have made a mistake against Allah that she will never be forgiven, regardless of how much she repents, and that even her intention to do the right thing will never be accepted. This is one of Satan's most insidious games to keep people in a state of despair and away from repentance. People who listen to these lies begin to become hopeless and anxious, for they think that they cannot fix that mistake. However, if they regret what they have done and repent immediately with the intention of never repeating it, this mistake will turn out well for that person. One verse states:

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)

Another one of Satan's secret techniques is to cause doubt and make it seem that there is no way out of a particular situation. If a situation is considered easy, its solution will also be easy. But Satan makes events appear difficult and complicated. He makes people think that whatever happens to them is such a major event that they will never be able to find their way out of its associated difficulties. He does this so that people will lose their hope and become engulfed in a pessimistic and unhappy spiritual state. And this is exactly what he wants, because it is harder to get a happy and hopeful person to listen to his whisperings than it is to do so with a person who is already pessimistic, sad, and hopeless.

Those who want to be free of Satan's whisperings must not like that spiritual state or want to live in it. Some people say that they are sick of living like this, but because they cannot seem to free themselves of it, they continue on in their hopeless and distressed state. And on top of all this, the sad and hopeless song lyrics that they listen to, as well as the films that they watch, make them feel even more depressed. Even if somebody tells them the truth, they say such things as: "Well, what can I do? It's not in my hands. I'm sad," which are hard to explain logically. Thus they fixate on the idea that they must continue living their lives in this way.

Even if they do not openly admit it, we know that some people enjoy such a life. However much pain they endure, subconsciously these "melancholic" people get a strange pleasure from feeling sad and, in effect, become addicted to it. Since it has become a habit, they do not want to leave this Satan-inspired state of mind even if conditions change. Satan tries to make people prefer this ignorant state of mind, which is characteristic of the people of the Fire. He tries to make them experience the spiritual Hell-like punishment while still in this world, and to lead them far from Allah's straight path, mercy, and Paradise. This is one of his important strategies.

The solution to being free of this type of spiritual state is true faith, recognition of Allah's power, and acknowledgement of His compassion and mercy. In addition, one must realize the purpose of his or her creation and steer clear of Satan's trap. For this reason, those who submit to Allah and know that they only follow their destiny can never be tricked by Satan's temptations and fall into despair.

People who listen to Satan's whisperings live in fear and anxiety

Allah states that only one type of fear will lead a person to the right path: the fear of Allah. The

Qur'an proclaims that Allah, the Possessor of Infinite Knowledge, will give people the ability to distinguish between right and wrong if they fear Him. This is one of the most important characteristics for a person to have. Discerning people who have faith know the difference between right and wrong, and thus are not fooled by Satan's games.

Satan is very aware of peoples' weak spots, and so approaches them from these angles. He varies his tactics, for no two people are alike. For example, he tries to frighten people with various types of fear, such as of the future, death, poverty, or hunger. For example, a person who receives a benefit from somebody else fears that he might somehow be prevented from obtaining that benefit and that person might cause him to lose his money, his goods, or even his reputation. By attributing an independent identity to that person, he displays his belief that this other person is the one who decides and that his "might" causes negative events to occur. In other words, he has forgotten that Allah also created that person, provides him with food and drink, and cures him when he gets sick.

Even if that person is not aware of it, he was created in submission to Allah and lives his life accordingly, and each of his words is spoken and measured out according to his destiny. In the Qur'an, Allah makes it clear that those supposed "benefactors" are, in fact, His servants and have no power of their own. Every person will be called to account in the hereafter and will be asked about what they did. So in reality, people should fear Allah alone.

People who do not comprehend Allah's infinite power and His absolute control over all things attribute identities to different beings, see them as independently powerful beings, and believe themselves to be in danger from all sides. They do not know from where and from whom evil will come, and so they are in constant fear and distress. People who live far from religion have an intense fear of the future, for what might happen to them keeps them in a state of continual anxiety: "Is something going to happen to me? What if I get sick? What if I die at a young age? Will I have a comfortable life?" We encounter these completely baseless worries frequently, as well as hundreds of others. The resulting conjectures about what might happen bring nothing but great distress and despair.

A natural consequence of Satan's whisperings and conjecture is an intensely anxious spiritual state. A simple problem that is easily solved when evaluated by a calm and trusting mind can become an unsolvable problem for one who listens to Satan's whisperings. This incorrect attitude drives a person to fear and anxiety, and eventually turns into a calamity.

The believers' source of strength and untainted morale lies in their full knowledge of these truths and their sincere belief in the destiny that Allah has created for them.

Becoming free of Satan's whisperings

Some people realize that Satan's whisperings are just empty conjectures, but for some reason they do not have enough willpower to free themselves. Thus, in reality they allow Satan to invite them to disbelief and to keep on playing his games with them. By remaining indifferent to this satanic whispering out of the mistaken belief that "it can't harm me," people fall into his trap. Those who see through this trickery should struggle to break free of it, because another of Satan's tricks is to make us believe that we cannot do so. And most important of all, Satan hides the fact that he is the one who is doing the whispering and thereby fools people into believing that these thoughts and conjectures are produced in their own minds.

By instilling endless insinuations in a person's mind, Satan makes them believe that they are trapped forever. Considering freedom from these artificial problems to be something impossible for them, they fall into hopelessness and despair. If only they looked at events through the eye of the Qur'an, they would see that only Allah can create and that He has the power to create anything He wills. This realization would enable them to turn to Allah in every situation and ask for His help. They would know and hope that Allah would save His sincere servants from all distress and give them inner peace and happiness. People who live in ignorance of our Lord think that they have to find the solution to everything and, when their strength is exhausted, they are left desolate.

Our life in this world passes quickly, and so every instant is very precious and should not be wasted on empty fears and useless conjectures. People should always be positive and struggle in accordance with the purpose of their existence. Those who do so will, by Allah's will, find happiness in both this world and the hereafter. If they have truly perceived the peace of faith in Allah and submission to their destiny, they cannot fall into Satan's trap. In other words, the way of freeing oneself from Satan's whisperings lies in seeking

refuge in Allah and living and acting as our Lord wills as it is said in the Qur'an:

As for those who fear Allah, when they are bothered by visitors from Satan, they remember and immediately see clearly. (Surat al-A'raf, 201)

Another verse shows the way to freedom from Satan's vain whisperings:

If an evil impulse from Satan provokes you, seek refuge in Allah. He is All-Hearing, All-Seeing. (Surat al-A'raf, 200)

Believers are not troubled by Satan's whisperings, for their faith and constant remembrance of Allah prevent them from getting carried away with Satan and his suggestions. But unbelievers, who do not have a leg on which to stand, have no strength to struggle against Satan's games and insinuations. Those people who obey his commands can never be free. The fact that Satan can influence only unbelievers is made clear in the following verses:

(Satan) said: "My Lord, because You misled me, I will make things on earth seem good to them, and I will mislead them all, every one of them, except Your servants among them who are sincere. (Allah) said: "This is a Straight Path to Me. You have no authority over any of My servants except for the misled, who follow you." (Surat al-Hijr, 39-42)

THE PROPHETS' HOPEFUL CHARACTERS

As with everything else, the prophets are the best exemplars of trusting in Allah and remaining hopeful when faced with any difficulty. They took only Allah as their friend, were sincerely bound to His laws, and lived entirely for Him. At every instant of their lives, they trusted in and depended upon Him, for they knew that His help was near at all times.

Given this, those believers who struggle to imitate their beautiful character should take them as models of how to be hopeful. Their resulting behavior, responses, and decisions will be healthy ones, and thus will influence the people around them, who then will try to show the same attitude.

Throughout history, many prophets were oppressed by their peoples' leading unbelievers and prevented from advocating the good character that Allah wills. The unbelievers prepared all manner of plots in line with their goals, and slandered and persecuted the prophets.

However, the prophets met this great oppression with patience, trusting in Allah, and knowing that He is always with them. Thus they never despaired, and resumed their struggle with even greater enthusiasm and resolve. Their determination caused good character spread among their people and made the unbelievers' efforts come to naught.

On the following pages are some examples from the Qur'an of their lives.

Prophet Musa (as)

One prophet whom the unbelievers tried to undermine was Musa (as). While his people were struck with fear and driven to despair by their enemies, he never became hopeless or forgot that Allah would be with them. In response to his sincerity and submission, Allah helped them with a great miracle: He parted the sea in order to make a path for them.

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. (Surat ash-Shu'ara, 61-63)

Prophet Ayyub (as)

Even though he was afflicted with a serious disease, Ayyub (as) showed no sign of sorrow or hopelessness. Rather, he turned to Allah with a deep attachment and asked to be cured. He saw a benefit in his sickness and thus was patient. His excellent example of hopeful patience is expounded in the Qur'an, as follows:

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

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

Prophet Ya'qub (as)

Ya'qub (as), the father of Yusuf (as), is praised and used as an example because of his beautiful character and devotion. In response to the deceptive plan that his other sons devised against Yusuf (as), he did not lose hope in Allah but rather turned to Him in complete sincerity and asked for Yusuf (as) to be returned:

He said: "I complain about my grief and sorrow to Allah alone, because I know things from Allah that you do not know. My sons, seek news of Yusuf and his brother, and do not despair of solace from Allah. No one despairs of solace from Allah except for people who do not believe." (Surah Yusuf, 86-87)

Prophet Ibrahim (as)

Throughout history, all of Allah's prophets and messengers commanded people not to lose hope in His mercy. The messengers who came to give the good news to Ibrahim (as) that his wife would bear a child displayed the same attitude:

They said: "We bring you good news of the truth, so do not be among those who despair."(Surat al-Hijr, 55)

Allah praises Ibrahim (as) in the Qur'an. However, his people failed to appreciate and recognize his sincerity and truthfulness. They even tried to burn him alive. His attachment to Allah in the face of all these events has always made him a great example for Muslims.

Despite the rejection of his people, Ibrahim (as) showed a great devotion to Allah by never losing faith in Him, and by relying on His mercy and submitting to his destiny. By making the fire cool, Allah allowed no harm or pain to touch him.

The only answer of his people was to say: "Kill him or burn him!" But Allah rescued him from the fire. There are certainly Signs in that for people who believe. (Surat al-Ankabut, 24)

We said: "Fire, be coolness and peace for Ibrahim!" (Surat al-Anbiya, 69)

CONCLUSION

This world is only a temporary place of rest for people, for our true abode is the afterlife. The true abode of those believers who ran after good deeds in this world will be Paradise, while that of those unbelievers who ran away from the truth will be Hell.

Believers know that they will be tested with many trials in this temporary worldly life. They also know that their real goal is not to settle down in the very short and fleeting life of this world, but to establish a good place in the eternal hereafter, which contains no fault or deficiency. This worldly life was created so that people would desire the afterlife, and thus has been filled with deficiencies so that people would not become so attached to it.

Knowing this, believers will desire to gain Paradise and therefore will carry this desire with them in everything that they do here in order to gain much reward. While those who do not believe and so establish and hope to attain their own petty goals in this world, believers set their sights on the afterlife.

The afterlife is the place that all believers desire while living this worldly life. They never forget it, and so do not get caught up in this world. Since their belief in the hereafter is complete, all of their actions, worship, and hopes are turned toward it.

Believers race each other to do good deeds, work toward attaining the best character, and try to be a servant close to Allah due to their faith in and love for Him, as well as their hope that they will obtain His mercy and Paradise. The stronger the hope, the more intense the struggle.

Hope in Allah's mercy and Paradise greatly influence a person's whole life, attitude toward life, sincerity of worship, and resolve. Those who hope for Allah's mercy cannot do anything that He has forbidden, ignore something that He has commanded, say a bad word, or neglect the voice of his or her conscience. They advise people to good and right, discourage them from evil, and carry out with enthusiasm many other forms of worship Allah has commanded.

Within this enthusiastic make-up there is no room for hopelessness. These are the people with whom

Allah is content, and to whom He has promised Paradise.

This is what you were promised. It is for every careful penitent: those who fear the All-Merciful in the Unseen and come with a contrite heart. Enter it in peace. This is the Day of Timeless Eternity. They will have there everything they want, and with Us there is still more. (Surah Qaf, 32-35)

THE EVOLUTION DECEPTION

In the present day, there are people who live in a manner far removed from Allah, and who even reject faith and deny the existence of Allah for their own ends. On account of their blindness and mindless fearlessness, they try to influence others and turn them away from Allah. They have put forward a whole range of inconsistent ideas and twisted ideologies by which to do this. One of these is the theory of evolution.

The Ideological Collapse Of Darwinism

The aspect of Darwinism that stops it from being a claim of interest only to the scientific world and makes it of great importance to society as a whole is its ideological dimension. The answer it gives to the question of how living things, including mankind, came into existence makes Darwinism the basis of a number of philosophies, worldviews and political ideologies.

Here, we shall consider the relationship between Darwinism and materialist philosophy. Materialist philosophy, or "materialism," is a system of thought going as far back as ancient Greece. Materialism rests on the assumption that matter is the only thing that exists. According to materialist philosophy, matter has always existed, and will continue to do so for all time. Again according to this philosophy, nothing exists beyond matter.

Naturally, materialism is also reflected in the political arena, with communism indisputably taking pride of place in this regard. Karl Marx (1818-83) and Friedrich Engels (1820-95), regarded as the founders of communism, were also the founders of dialectical materialism. In any case, communism is nothing more than materialist philosophy adapted to the social sciences by Marx and Engels.

Communism is today regarded as an ideology consigned to the wastes of history, whereas the fact is that it is still exceedingly influential. The destructive effects of this ideology can still be felt in many countries.

This is where Darwinism assumes great importance. Since Darwinism, or the theory of evolution, maintains that living things were not created but came into being by chance, it has received a wide acceptance among materialist ideologies, and has been adopted as the "basic foundation" of communism in particular. All the main communist ideologues have accepted the theory word for word, and have based their ideologies upon it.

In a letter to Friedrich Engels in 1860, for instance, Karl Marx said of Darwin's book that "This is the book which contains the basis in natural history for our view."¹ In another letter the following year, this time to Ferdinand Lassalle (1825-64), Marx said: "Darwin's book is very important and serves me as a basis in natural science for the class struggle in history."² Similarly Mao Tse Tung, the founder of Chinese communism, openly stated that "The foundations of Chinese socialism rest on Darwin and the theory of evolution."³

Thus the intellectual struggle against communism must be aimed at materialist philosophy and, therefore, the theory of evolution. It is also clear that the wide acceptance of the theory of evolution in society will further nourish materialism as well as communism.

The Scientific Collapse of Darwinism

Although this doctrine goes back as far as ancient Greece, the theory of evolution was advanced extensively in the nineteenth century. The most important development that made it the top topic of the world of science was Charles Darwin's *The Origin of Species*, published in 1859. In this book, he denied that God created different living species on Earth separately, for he claimed that all living beings had a common ancestor and had diversified over time through small changes. Darwin's theory was not based on any concrete scientific finding; as he also accepted, it was just an "assumption." Moreover, as Darwin confessed in the long chapter of his book titled "Difficulties 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, worms developing in 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.*"⁴

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

Inconclusive Efforts in the 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.⁵

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.⁶

After a long silence, Miller confessed that the atmosphere medium he used was unrealistic.⁷

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?⁸

The Complex Structure of Life

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

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

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

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

It is extremely improbable that proteins and nucleic acids, both of which are structurally complex, arose spontaneously in the same place at the same time. Yet it also seems impossible to have one without the other. And so, at first glance, one might have to conclude that life could never, in fact, have originated by chemical means.⁹

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

Imaginary Mechanisms of Evolution

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

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

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

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

Natural selection can do nothing until favourable individual differences or variations occur.¹⁰

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.¹¹

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.¹²

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.¹³

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.¹⁴

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.¹⁵

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.¹⁶

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."¹⁷

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.¹⁸

Moreover, a certain segment of humans classified as *Homo erectus* have lived up until very modern times. *Homo sapiens neandarthalensis* and *Homo sapiens sapiens* (modern man) co-existed in the same region.¹⁹

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.²⁰

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.²¹

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

Technology in the Eye and the Ear

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

Before passing on to the subject of the eye, let us briefly answer the question of how we see. Light rays coming from an object fall oppositely on the 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, if the sound level in your brain was measured by a precise device at that moment, it would be seen that only a complete silence prevails 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 a 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.²²

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

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

As we have seen, Pharaoh's magicians were able to deceive everyone, apart from Musa (as) and those who believed in him. However, his evidence broke the spell, or "swallowed up what they had forged," as 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: 117-119)

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, Malcolm Muggeridge, an atheist philosopher and supporter of evolution, admitted he was worried by just that prospect:

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.²³

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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