

SATAN'S SLY GAME: THE FALSE RELIGION OF PEOPLE-WORSHIP

Harun Yahya- Adnan Oktar

Published by Global Publishing at Smashwords
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Allah has made a metaphor for them of a man owned by several partners in dispute with one another and another man wholly owned by a single man. Are they the same? Praise be to Allah! The fact is that most of them do not know. (Surat az-Zumar: 29)

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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

Harun Yahya's works, translated into 63 different languages, constitute a collection for a total of more than 55,000 pages with 40,000 illustrations.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

TO THE READER

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

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

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

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

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

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

INTRODUCTION

What Is "The Religion of Worshipping People?"

Throughout history, in some societies what people expect from one another has been more important than what Allah (God) expects from people. With no awareness of the Qur'an's decrees or of the way of life enjoined in that book, people have strived to fulfill the expectations of the societies and social environments in which they live.

When we look at our present social environment, we can easily see that people are not fully aware of what Allah has commanded and forbidden, and so do not practice these precepts in their lives. More importantly many people do not feel uncomfortable about such a situation. A great majority of people do not appreciate Allah's power, the importance of earning His favor, or the penalty they will receive in return for not obeying His commands. Most people do not let these thoughts even cross their minds. Instead, they wonder what other people think about them and expect of them, and they are most interested in doing everything they can to ingratiate themselves with others. These individuals live in a system that

directs more love and devotion toward their fellow men than toward Allah, and they cannot even imagine how this may be wrong.

This ingrained and very distorted way of thinking and living leads some individuals to squander their material and spiritual resources, even spending their lives in this pursuit. This worldly way of thinking develops into a kind of false religion with its own commandments and prohibitions, truths and falsehoods, obliging everyone to conform to them. In societies where people abide by this superstitious religion, every individual is required to accept the ready-made program of what society expects of him. Only in this way can he live among others without being rejected and humiliated. Any individual who does not conform to what is expected of him gets a clear sense from the way others speak to him and behave that they look down on him.

In order not to get themselves into this situation, people hold in mind a few slogans that they are careful to repeat to themselves every day. For example, "They can call me smart (or intelligent, good-looking, happy, talkative or successful). But don't let them call me selfish (or naïve or ignorant...)" Those who believe in such "commandments" treat their fulfillment like an act of worship and apply their principles without fail. They put forth every effort into developing the sort of character that their associates will admire. As a result of these carefully studied schemes, they reach the point where they value other human beings more than Allah, accepting every proposal that will please those around them and focusing on them all their attention and devotion. From then on, they are caught up in a system of false beliefs in which one individual becomes the slave of others and become a devoted adherent of this secret religion.

This superstitious religion encourages you to abandon Allah and worship people instead—which false religion is the theme of this book. This passionate attachment to other human beings we call "The Religion of Worshipping People." In many places in the Qur'an, Allah invites humans to save themselves from this errant belief and serve only Him. In one of these verses, He says:

[Abraham said,] "Instead of Allah you worship only idols. You are inventing a lie. Those you worship besides Allah have no power to provide for you. So seek your provision from Allah and worship Him and give thanks to Him. It is to Him you will be returned." (Surat al-'Ankabut, 17)

This book will show how this satanic system puts people in great danger, both in this world and in terms of their eternal life to come. We will explain how it coerces them into rejecting Allah, Who created them, and deifies people in His place (Allah is beyond that). In various examples from daily life, we will demonstrate how people fall under the control of this system. Using verses from the Qur'an, we will explain what people must do to save themselves from the spell of this false religion while they still have time.

No matter how great this distorted religion's influence on society, it must be remembered that a person with willpower and intelligence will find it very easy to renounce this superstitious system. The solution is simple: Have sincere faith in Allah and believe in no other gods besides Him. For His faithful servants, Allah opens the way and guides them along the right path. He has made the Qur'an the means by which they can escape the darkness of their lives. In many verses like this, Allah gives good tidings to those who believe in Him:

Allah is the Protector of those who believe. He brings them out of the darkness into the light... (Surat al-Baqara, 257)

HUMAN BEINGS WERE CREATED TO SERVE ALLAH

We are conscious beings who have the ability, created in us by Allah, to distinguish between right and wrong. As a result, we can understand His great power and the proofs for His existence, as well as the real purpose of this life and our life in the world to come.

But these abilities entail certain responsibilities. Anyone who can conceive of all these things is aware that Allah is the only power Who must be served, and that there is no other deity besides Him. Also, he is aware that our basic responsibility in this world is to have faith in Allah. In the Qur'an, Allah says this of Himself to His servants:

He is the Originator of the heavens and the earth. How could He have a son when He has no wife? He created all things and He has knowledge of all things. 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, 101-102)

Plainly, the foundation of a happy and successful life lies upon a person's knowing his responsibility and serving only Allah. This attitude also provides for balance in society as a whole. If it were otherwise—that is, with an increased number of those who deny Allah's existence and do not fear the final punishment He will give—this balance would be ruined. If people forget they are Allah's servants and turn to other creatures, there are serious consequences, such as the degeneration of morals in society and the degradation in human relationships. In such a situation, relationships are based on profit. The powerful oppress the weak; and mercilessness, cruelty, hypocrisy and hostility find an easy place to grow. As a result, family and social life, national well-being and even world peace are endangered.

In the Qur'an, Allah says that those who reject His commandments to follow their own desires will cause serious degeneration among humanity.

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

Today, a large number of people do not realize that the causes of the degradation they live in and complain about constantly arise from their following their own passions and setting up partners beside Allah. For this reason, they look for remedies in various places. They believe that if only they made some economic, social and cultural changes, their nation's wealth would increase, and developing technology would solve all their problems. But these initiatives can have no effect unless people purify themselves entirely from putting other objects of worship beside Allah and come to a firm faith in Him alone. Even though new solutions are being developed all the time, they are of no avail since people keep acting in opposition to the high standards of morality enjoined by Allah.

There is only one way for people to escape the dark and frightening lifestyles they live and enter a content, secure environment. This is to get free from the clutches of the "religion" of worshipping people that pervade society, to have faith only in Allah and to obey the commands and prohibitions He has given in the Qur'an. This would result in happiness and salvation for all peoples, in as much as Allah, having created human beings, knows best what the human spirit needs. This fact is revealed in the Qur'an:

By it, Allah guides those who follow what pleases Him to the ways of Peace. He will bring them from the darkness to the light by His permission, and guide them to a straight path. (Surat al-Ma'ida, 16)

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN A SOCIETY TURNS TO IDOLATRY?

A few signs let us better understand the "religion" of worshipping people pervading a society. Of these, the most basic is the heedless behavior exhibited by those who forget the existence of Allah and that He is with them at every moment. Instead of seeking Allah's favor, a person who adopts such a pattern of behavior blindly does what others ask of him—even if it is contrary to religious morality—and will be prepared to suffer every humiliation and degradation.

For example, some behave in a way contrary to the teaching of the Qur'an because they want certain others to accept them and be taken into their group. Though they know their behavior is wrong, still they are willing to do every sort of disgraceful thing to get others to like them. As a result, they experience pangs of conscience in this life and will be repaid for their insincerity in the life to come.

Such people think they are ingratiated themselves with others, but Allah knows their real intentions. They forget Allah, but He sees them every moment and knows what they conceal in their hearts. And though other people may hold positive views about them, Allah knows their insincerity.

For example, a person may see that his boss's moral character is corrupt, that he treats the poor and needy unjustly and has made the kind of profit forbidden by Allah. Yet for the sake of a promotion, this employee pretends not to notice his boss's behavior. He tries his best to make his boss think he is a loyal, hard worker and so he turns a blind eye to actions that Allah has forbidden. But Allah sees him, and

knows everything he thinks and everything he says. He does nothing to win Allah's favor, but all the things he does to curry the approval of others is written down in the Presence of Allah.

In fact, people with such errant beliefs, seeking to influence others in their own favor become like puppets. Others control their strings, and they carry out to the letter what is wanted of them, regardless of whether it is right or wrong, lawful or forbidden. In order to satisfy only a few worldly desires and selfish passions, they agree to become a part of a superstitious system that ignores Allah and cares nothing for earning His favor. They are ready to behave in ways that humiliate themselves and degrade their humanity; they live under others' control, without the human dignity that faith affords. As a result, they comprise a frightening group of people who are insincere, disrespectful and hypocritical towards others. They do not know what love really is and live only for their own gain. They lock themselves into a system where real friendship is absent and every relationship is based on profit. Within this system, have created with their own hands, they are—as Allah tells in Surat al-Isra'—lonely and helpless, far from the mercy and assistance of Allah.

Do not set up any other god together with Allah and so sit there reviled and forsaken. (Surat al-Isra', 22)

Why do they turn to the idolatry of worshipping people? Some of the basic reasons can be listed as follows:

They Forget Allah and Want to Earn the Favor of Others

People who set up other idols beside Allah ignore His existence and absolute control over the universe. As a result of their heedless attitude, they think themselves autonomous. They believe that they can do whatever they want, live the kind of lives they desire according to their own plans; think that they have all total free will and that no one can interfere with them. They are rebels who accept no authority. They disregard the facts that everything is under the eternal power of Allah and that they are servants. They don't understand that the whole universe has a fate that Allah has determined for it and that no creature can escape its pre-ordained fate. As a result, they live their lives trying to fulfill their desires and passions in this world and forget about earning the favor of Allah.

In feeling irresponsible, however, they are quite wrong. Even though they may disregard Allah's existence, He is always with them. He sees everything they do and knows their eagerness to please others instead of Him. For example, He sees their efforts to show affection towards others in order to win their affection in return; and He sees the pains they take to persuade others to like them. Allah tells in the Qur'an about the efforts of those to please others besides Him:

Some people set up equals to Allah, loving them as they should love Allah. But those who believe have greater love for Allah... (Surat al-Baqara, 165)

Such people work very hard to get the object of their affection to think that they really love and value him. But were they asked to show the same eagerness and determination towards Allah, they would refuse. For example, if asked to pray five times a day, they would most probably decline, making the excuse that they have little time to do this and cannot allot times for prayer in the course of a busy workday. They realize that if they did establish their prayers, none of their associates would appreciate them. In other words, according to his distorted view, fulfilling this act of worship would bring them no concrete benefits. Furthermore, they may be heedless only because they wouldn't want anyone to say that they have converted and turned to religion. As a result of such choices, they will earn the approbation and superficial love and appreciation of a handful of people. On the other hand, they do not realize that by not fulfilling an act of worship that Allah has required of all His servants, they have lost His eternal love and mercy.

For this reason, Allah warns His servants in the Qur'an against the danger of neglecting to seek His pleasure and trying to please other people instead. In the Qur'an Allah says that He has commanded human beings to purify themselves from all kinds of idolatry and to turn to Him in prayer:

Turning towards Him. Fear Him and establish prayer. Do not be among the idolaters. (Surat ar-Rum, 31)

They Fear People More Than They Do Allah

To be terrified of some power or event often gives a person the will to perform many things in the very best way. The intensity of this fear leads a person to make unexpectedly clear decisions even if he feels inadequate to face the threat.

People with deep, intense fear in their hearts will do anything they have to. For example, a hungry person with no money will do everything he can to accept a job offer. He will not miss the opportunity, but beforehand, will try to learn about the rules of the company and the kind of people who work there. At his interview, he will take pains not to make any mistakes and to present himself well. He will be very respectful towards the interviewers to make sure that his personality and experience make a good impression; and will be careful not to say anything that conflicts with this. He will not lose his train of thought or act inappropriately. His urgent fears and anxieties for the future keep him alert. He will do everything to convince the company officials that he is just the person they need.

On the job, another individual will be very afraid of getting caught doing something that the owner of the company frowns on. He won't be late for work, make personal phone calls or do other such things not acceptable in the company. He also warns other workers to be careful about these rules and regulations. As a worker, he is afraid of being called undisciplined or lax, because such negative opinions may result in material loss and stand in the way of a good life in this world. Discipline in work and appropriate behavior are of course important, but the error lies in acting appropriately only out of fear of others. Such good behavior, determined only by a situation will not last. A person who doesn't fear Allah will easily do all matter of things contrary to His discipline, if he assumes his so doing will not raise any eyebrows.

For this reason, the individual who behaves appropriately should never forget the important fact that the only power to be feared is Allah. It is He Who has created and controls the people and events that he gets excited about, fears and whose importance he exaggerates. In Allah's Sight, neither wealth nor power has any significance; all that is important is people's moral excellence and fear of Him. Moreover, people encounter only those events that are written in their destiny. If the man in our example was fated to take that job, no power apart from Allah's could change the course of events. No matter how many errors or mistakes he might make, that person is accepted for that job if Allah has determined it. But if his fate has been determined otherwise, he won't land that job, no matter what efforts he puts forth, because he cannot avoid the fate that Allah has determined for him.

In the Qur'an Allah says that all events happen with His knowledge:

Nothing occurs, either in the earth or in yourselves, without its being in a Book before We make it happen. That is something easy for Allah. (Surat al-Hadid, 22)

Always remember, this individual in our example may die before he can take that job. In that case, the worldly fears he has experienced all his life and the autonomy he has imputed to other people would have no further meaning. All his efforts will have been in vain. On the Day of Judgment, none of those whose opinions he valued so highly will be of any support to him. As a punishment for neglecting to win Allah's favor throughout his life and trying to please other people instead, he will spend not a thousand—not ten thousand, not a million or even a billion years, unless otherwise willed by Allah—but an eternity suffering the pangs of Hell. If he doesn't repent and ask Allah's forgiveness in his lifetime, for his sins and evil deeds Allah will condemn him to live in Hell for all eternity.

Our Prophet's (May Allah bless him and grant him peace) advice to the faithful further explains the importance of fear of Allah and repentance:

O Muadh, I give you instruction: Fear Allah while passing by each stone, tree, and heaps of earth. Make repentance anew after committing any sin. Repent secretly for secret sin and openly for open sin. (Imam Ghazzali, Ihya Ulum-Id-Din (The Book of Religious Learnings), Islamic Book Service, New Delhi, 2001, Volume II, p. 236)

So, when we think about these realities, we can more easily understand that the fear of Allah is much more important than all these other fears. In the Qur'an Allah speaks about this great reality in these words:

... So fear Allah. And know that you will be gathered back to Him. (Surat al-Baqara, 203)

DISTORTED REASONINGS THAT LEAD PEOPLE TO FOLLOW THIS SUPERSTITIOUS RELIGION

Some people show no interest in following the commandments of the Qur'an or in leading their lives according to its commands and prohibitions. But when it comes to living within a system that deifies other human beings (Allah is beyond that), they are all too willing. This contradiction immediately begs the question of the deceptive promises made by the "religion" of worshipping people. Considering this question, we find that those who reverence other people have very little concept of Allah's power.

Those who do not understand the limitless power of Allah and the purpose of the universe's creation try to live their lives according to rules of their own making, and based on an ignorant way of thinking incompatible with the Qur'an. This is the foundation of the cult of worshipping people and also supplies the excuses why anyone follows this superstitious religion. In the Qur'an, however, Allah tells us about those who, in their foolishness, propose false facts and reasoning to justify their rejection of true religion:

Do they then seek the judgment of the Time of Ignorance? Who could be better at giving judgment than Allah for people with certainty? (Surat al-Ma'ida, 50)

In this section, we will look at the falsehoods put forward by those who practice the superstitious "worship" of people instead of living according to the religion that Allah has revealed. Some of these distorted ideas include:

The Error of the "Facts of Life"

Allah wants people to live every moment of their lives according to the laws, commandments and prohibitions He told us in the Qur'an. The Qur'an is a guide that lets human beings distinguish between right and wrong, appropriate and inappropriate behavior, and those acts that please Allah and those that don't. For these reasons, Allah commands people in Surat al-An'am, to follow this Holy Book:

And this is a Book We have sent down and blessed, so follow it and fear Allah so that hopefully you will gain mercy. (Surat al-An'am, 155)

But the majority does not organize its lives according to the edicts of the Qur'an or its moral precepts. They do not even consider that they should follow a book containing Allah's commandments. They do not understand how important religious morality and the Qur'an are, for their entire lives. They are deluded to assume that the morality of religion can offer occasional guidance in some limited areas of life. Apart from times of worry and distress, moments of great danger, serious pain, discomfort and insurmountable fear—and at the hour of death—with their shallow minds they see no need to turn to Allah. They fail to grasp that everyone must live a life according to the dictates of religious morality. For this reason, people of such morality prefer to lead their whole lives as far away from religion as possible, not even discussing it among themselves. They even avoid mentioning the name of Allah.

For a person to live his life, however, he definitely needs the commands of Allah and the moral qualities revealed in the Qur'an. It is good and easy for us to live according to the moral teachings in the book of our Lord and Creator. Without this morality, a healthy society is unthinkable; because laws decreed with no regard for human nature (that is, the character that human beings were created with), will have a detrimental effect on both individuals and on society and bring about social degradation. Relations between humans will deteriorate, and society will be plunged into disorder. As a result, war, confusion and oppression will be unavoidable throughout the world. Individuals divorced from religion, trying to follow the dictates of their own ignorant systems, will be overwhelmed by spiritual and physical distress.

Today, despite the fact that in many countries people suffer from all this rampant negativity, some individuals—not including sincere believers—continue to insist on the error that along with religion, there are also the "facts of life." This delusion is based on rejecting the absolute necessity of religious morality in human life. According to such distorted thinking, to follow the rules of religious morality is practically impossible. These people are deluded to assume that were the morality of religion allowed into daily life, they would be deprived of all kinds of worldly blessings and lead a life of monotony. They think that living a life of religious morality will prevent them from enjoying life. Of course, this idea has nothing to do with reality. Religious morality creates the most comfortable social life in which the individual human spirit will be the most content and the most productive. Those who adopt this high

morality and escape the "facts of life" deception possess the soundest mood in their society. They will take pleasure in the beauties of life and play a major role in bringing about a society of peace, tolerance, and self-sacrifice.

But the shallow mentalities of those divorced from religious morality permit them to think of practicing virtue as a sign of weakness and naiveté. For example, they believe that, no matter how much a person sacrifices himself for another, he will always get selfishness and unfairness in return—and therefore, it would be silly to act in such a way. For this reason in many societies a person who makes self-sacrifice is regarded as "a well-intentioned but naive" one—a person doing a good deed for someone else free of charge and getting no acknowledgement for what he has done. In real life, as far as they are concerned, one should return selfishness for selfishness, grudge for grudge, hostility for hostility and enmity for enmity.

Ignorant society regards it as silly to be kind and make amends with anyone who constantly does you wrong, and to forgive that person for the bad things he has done. In response to such moral virtue, people in that society would belittle the good person, asking, "How gullible can you be? If that were me, he'd soon get what's coming to him!" According to the "facts of life" espoused by those who ignore the moral teachings of the Qur'an, it is right to exchange evil for evil. This erroneous rationale is commended in ignorant religions, which assert that no enemy can ever be a friend; no matter how much good one person does for another, underlying enmity still remains. The only one who loses is whoever does the favor. Society holds the well-intentioned to be a weak person who doesn't realize when he is being abused.

People with this distorted way of thinking believe that they have to embrace "the facts of life" even more tightly to keep themselves from falling into traps. They fear that they have to pay close attention to what people are thinking and to how they react. These individuals lay great importance on what others say; assuming that the more they get others to like them, the better will be their place in society. They think that once society likes them, they should absolutely resort to every sort of unseemly behavior on the way to attaining their worldly ambitions.

In the Qur'an, however, Allah says that He wants human beings to be sincere in seeking His pleasure only and not to consider what other people might say. Our Lord commands His servants' moral character to be the opposite to that of the ignorant people we have been describing. In the Sight of Allah, a good person is one who returns good for a wrong committed against him. Moreover, this kind of behavior is an important step on the way to creating friendship out of enmity. In the Qur'an, Allah tells us of this happy result:

A good action and a bad action are not the same. Repel the bad with something better and, if there is enmity between you and someone else, he will be like a bosom friend. (Surah Fussilat, 34)

Practicing the Qur'an's moral teachings is the only way to salvation; this is true in forgiving others for the wrongs they have committed and in everything else we do. The real purpose of life is to be a servant who wins Allah's favor; who does good without hope for reward, sacrifices himself for others and gives of himself freely. He is just, patient, determined to urge goodness and dissuade from evil, and totally and unconditionally given to winning the favor of Allah.

But ignorant people who do not espouse the Qur'an's moral teachings spend their whole lives in conflict, strife and unhappiness, and they think that such are the facts of life. They cannot imagine living a quiet life of moral virtue, free from falsehood, opportunism, insincerity and hypocrisy. They believe that the world is a place where only the strong survive. They ignore the reality of the eternal world to come; they live their lives only in relation to the short life in this world. They reject religious morality, and are mistaken to think, "Whatever I do in this world is for profit." Caught in this false world of man-made rules, they actually regard some human beings as deities (Allah is beyond that) and feel enslaved to them. As a result, they are bound to suffer for not obeying Allah's commands; they will live a degrading life in this world, and their pains will be much more severe in the world to come. Allah tells us about their state as follows:

When those who associated others with Allah see those they associated, they will say, "Our Lord, these are our partner gods, the ones we called upon apart from You." But they will fling their words back in their faces: "You are truly liars!" On that Day they will offer their submission to

Allah and the things they invented will abandon them. As for those who disbelieved and barred access to the way of Allah, We will heap punishment on top of their punishment because of the corruption they brought about. (Surat an-Nahl, 86-88)

Then they will be asked, "Where are those besides Allah you associated with Him?" and they will reply, "They have forsaken us. Or rather we were not calling to anything at all before." That is how Allah misguides the disbelievers. "That is because you exulted on the earth, without any right to do so; and strutted about. Enter the gates of Hell, remaining in it timelessly, forever. How evil is the abode of the arrogant!" (Surah Ghafir, 73-76)

The Misconception that the Majority Is Right

As we've said from the beginning, one reason that prevents many people from practicing religious morality is the "religion" of worshipping people that makes them fear what other people will say and think about them. This misapprehension draws its strength from the error that "the majority is always right," and a huge segment of society has adopted a lifestyle that goes with idolizing people—an undisputed tradition passed down from father to son. Declaring themselves to be part of the majority, they misguide others into believing that the unjust ways of the "majority" and the rules they invent are correct. However, Allah gives this command to all Muslims:

Judge between them by what Allah has sent down and do not follow their whims and desires. And beware of them lest they lure you away from some of what Allah has sent down to you... Many of mankind are deviators. (Surat al-Ma'ida, 49)

As it is stated in the verse, Allah commands people not to follow the unjust majority or obey the fanciful rules they make up. He tells them that their only way to salvation is via the Qur'an and its ordinances.

But the great majority of people feel obliged to conform to the majority's lifestyle, even if it does not fit with their conscience. As members of society, they feel this is their duty; that since they live in a particular society, they are bound to follow its laws and the way of life it prescribes as if it were a commandment of a true religion.

These people, who fail to appreciate the real essence of the morality of religion, believe that apart from the commands of Allah, there are rules that everyone must obey—because man is a social creature. According to their own rationale, they assume that their most important duty is to please others. For this reason, they cannot escape the fruitless circular reasoning of "What do others say? What do they think? I hope they speak well of me and see me as intelligent, rich and generous. I don't want anyone to say or think ill of me."

However, the way most people live, the artificial rules they have invented and structures they've set up do not lead to truth. On the contrary, Allah tells us in the Qur'an that conforming to the majority is a danger that threatens to divert one from the right path:

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

As a result, the majority chooses a way of life at odds with the Qur'an's moral teachings: They are sarcastic and cruel to others, apt to betray their families and even their country. Without thinking, they commit acts that Allah has forbidden. But this should not be allowed to influence others. The fact that this sort of people make up the majority of a society should not justify everyone's behaving the same. For instance, even though an entire society has ignorantly taken fire, the Sun or stars as deities, practicing the perversion of worshipping them, this by no means becomes a justification for someone else to adopt the same perversion. Or say that a society is silent about prostitution, fraud, injustice, thievery and other such amoral acts. No individual has to display the same immorality just because everyone else does. Or if the rich in a society are respected and the poor—possessing nothing besides their good names—are oppressed, there is no reason to spark this errant mentality in others. On the contrary, condoning injustice out of fear of society's criticism is itself a behavior non-conforming to wisdom and conscience. It's unreasonable for a person to refrain from behaving as his conscience demands, just because he fears being criticized, rejected and despised by society. In the Qur'an, Allah tells us that one of the greatest qualities of Muslims is that they do not fear criticism:

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

In another Surah Allah gives us the example of the Prophet Abraham (pbuh) and the believers who were with him, who remained determined in the face of those who criticized them. The Prophet Abraham (pbuh) and his followers lived in a society composed mostly of idolaters. But despite other humans' hostile threats, they only feared Allah, and so reacted strongly to this society's perverse leanings of. Allah describes this episode as follows:

You have an excellent example in Abraham and those with him, when they said to their people, "We wash our hands of you and all that you worship apart from Allah, and we reject you. Between us and you there will be enmity and hatred for ever unless and until you believe in Allah alone."... (Surat al-Mumtahana, 4)

In response, this idolatrous people decided to punish the Prophet Abraham's (pbuh) determination. But despite this, the Prophet Abraham (pbuh) continued determined in his attachment to Allah. In return for this, Allah saved him from the oppression of these people:

He [Abraham] said, "Do you worship something you have carved when Allah created both you and what you do?" They said, "Build a pyre for him and fling him into the blaze!" They tried to outwit him but We made them the lowest. He said, "I am going towards my Lord; He will be my guide." (Surat as-Saffat, 95-99)

But most people cannot muster the determination we see in this example. Because their hearts are far from Allah, they do not act according to their consciences. They cannot resist the ignorant mentality that says, "Everyone does it, so it must be right." And in pure heedlessness from Allah, they live out their lives in error, preferring to please other human beings and to fear their censure. Thoughts like, "What will people say?" and "If my friend says one more word, they'll find me out," and "Everyone does it, so I'll do it too," may turn a person into someone who worships people (Allah is beyond that) and not Allah, who is devoted to the pursuit of the world and totally removed from the moral teachings of the Qur'an. As a result, some see no wrong in showing no sense of compassion, mercy or love, and enjoy oppressing others. Those interested only in money and social position see nothing wrong with a mentality that leaves no room for moral virtue. If most of his social class is unjust, fraudulent, with no moral virtues—knowing that he will be thrown out if he acts any differently, he behaves like the others. He will think positively about even an immoral person, if his boss thinks well of him. Conversely, if his director does not have a good opinion of this individual, our example may say negative things about him, without even having looked into the person's real character. These people have completely disregarded Allah and religious morality, and as a natural result, most continue to live according to the axiom that "the majority is right." They demonstrate no independence of character. They become members of a circle similar to those social groups mentioned above, for they think that everyone lives, acts and thinks in a certain way. Wherever they turn, they find people like themselves conforming to the majority; and they cannot detect the error of their mental state because they mix with people whose main aim is pleasing others.

As these brief examples show, if people adopt a lifestyle with no concern for winning Allah's favor, they will gain nothing. A society of intellectually and morally corrupt individuals will plunge the world into disorder. Thoughts and feelings that have no place in society will become rampant—fights over profit-taking, enmity, anger, hatred and jealousy. Such a world—a place dominated by misery and disorder—will become hard to live in. This is the reward in this world that Allah will give to those who ascribe equals to Him. In the hereafter a more tragic end awaits them. In the Qur'an Allah says:

They were not able to thwart Allah on earth, and had no protectors besides Allah. The punishment will be doubled for them. They were unable to hear and could not see. Those are the people who have lost their own selves. What they invented has abandoned them. Without question they will be the greatest losers in the hereafter. (Surah Hud, 20-22)

The Delusion of "Howcome No One Else Sees the Truth But You!"

Another delusion this superstitious system which encourages not believing in Allah and idolizing others (Allah is beyond that) puts forward as an excuse is to refuse to see the truth or reject it completely. Along with conforming to the majority evident in ignorant societies, comes a refusal to listen to people with faith. While Muslims invite such people to believe in Allah and obey His commands, they affirm their perverted belief in their ancestors and superstitious laws they have passed down. They aver that they will never compromise the superstitious laws and way of life their society has taught them. Allah describes this errant mentality in the Qur'an as follows:

When they are told, "Follow what Allah has sent down to you," They say, "We are following what we found our fathers doing." What, even though their fathers did not understand a thing and were not guided! (Surat al-Baqara, 170)

In ignorant societies, people determined to live according to their ancestors' teachings directly oppose those others who want to stop this pervasive pseudo-religion, favored by the ignorant, which has gained dominance over their lives. They don't want these people of faith, who have brought them the truth, to destroy the favorable relationships they've forged with others or to break their religion's superstitious rules. They want to invalidate the truth that sincere people of faith have patiently explained to them, by asking such ignorant things as, "Is it only you who understand these things?" or "Are so many people wrong?" or "Until now, no one has been aware of these things, but you are!" They think that such a response will intimidate their opponent and make him lose self-confidence. (This may be effective in their own system of superstition, but no real Muslim would be daunted by such a simple tactic.) As a result, the truth would remain hidden. But when they are overwhelmed by concerns such as, "What do people think about me? What can I do to please them? How can I make them like me and take me in?" the person who knows the truth will remind them and that they have no power to do anything apart from the fate that Allah has determined for them. This reminder means the collapse of their superstitions and the invalidation of their laws.

But no matter how hard the "people worshippers" work, Allah will never allow the truth to remain hidden. In the face of truth, superstition will be defeated and rendered ineffective. Allah will vindicate those who stand up for Him, no matter how few their numbers may seem. In the face of all the pressures they are subjected to, He will give them determination and resilience.

In the Qur'an Allah speaks of the warnings that some prophets gave to prevent the societies in which they lived from living perverse, immoderate lives. Members of these societies disregarded the prophets, undertook to undermine their power and vigor, and finally expelled them. But on devout Muslims of course, this kind of opposition has never had an adverse effect... For example, when the Prophet Shelah (pbuh) tried to get people to abandon their false religion, he received the following reaction:

They said, "Shelah, we had great hopes in you before this happened. Do you forbid us to worship what our fathers worshipped? We have grave doubts about what you are calling us to." (Surah Hud, 62)

This is the determined answer that the Prophet Shelah (pbuh) gave to the people:

He [Shelah] said, "My people! What do you think? If I were to possess a Clear Sign against Allah if I disobeyed Him? You would not increase me in anything but loss." (Surah Hud, 63)

Never forget, sometimes people cannot see facts that are very plain. Because they've been conditioned by the laws of their societies and have lived according to these laws for a very long time—like the Prophet Shelah's (pbuh) people—they do not want to upset their accustomed superstitious order. As a result, even though they see the great dangers to which their unseemly moral character exposes them, still they continually prefer what is false to what is true. They cannot imagine that any model of living could afford them comfort and well-being, so, they are not prepared to abandon their ignorant religion, thinking it is the best of the worst.

For them to experience real happiness and salvation in life, however, there is one very easy way. In order to find it while there is still time, they should listen to believers who warn them and show them the distortion of the system they live in. Until that day, they must listen to the voice of their conscience and consider that up until then, no one might have told the truth. They should remove the focus of their

attention from human beings, who have no power to create or destroy, and direct it only towards Allah. This will allow them to open their minds and understanding so that they may grasp life's real purpose; and as a result, they will seek to please Allah rather than their fellow humans.

In the Qur'an, Allah announced that only those who fear and obey Him will find happiness and salvation.

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

THE "LET THEM SAY" AND "DON'T LET THEM SAY" PRINCIPLES IN THE "RELIGION" OF WORSHIPPING PEOPLE

The basic rules of this "religion" are founded on two principles: "Let them say," and "Don't let them say." At these principles' root is the error of seeking to please others and feeling one has to assume the identity and lead the kind of life that others expect. In other words, a person who adopts such a goal has ceased to use his mind and his freedom of thought. He will have to change himself constantly in relation to other people's expressions of praise, affection, interest, intimacy and friendship. Such concerns as, "I want people to say this about me", and "I don't want anyone to say that about me" prevent him from using his mind and cause him to make every effort towards the impossible goal of trying to please everyone. He is forced to live not in accordance with what he sees as very true and of which he does not have the slightest doubt, but in accordance with what society demands. However, in the Qur'an Allah says that a life not founded on seeking to please Him will certainly lead to Hell the one who lives it.

Who is better: Someone who founds his building on fear of Allah and His good pleasure, or someone who founds his building on the brink of a crumbling precipice so that it collapses with him into the Fire of Hell? Allah does not love wrongdoers. (Surat at-Tawba, 109)

Despite the clear truth revealed in this verse, the importance of winning Allah's favor has been almost totally lost in today's many societies. A majority of people have come to see themselves as attached to others rather than to Allah. At the root of this is human beings' endless desire to show off and receive praise.

People's Passion for Showing Off and Earning Praise

The human ego wants to show off and receive praise from others. People, still unaware that Allah has created them as His servants and that they survive by what He gives them, want to receive praise and are eager to obtain a selfish superiority by doing all they can to show off to others. They believe that they possess their talents by their own power and that can obtain everything they want with their own hands. Allah gives us an example of this wrong state of mind in the person of a vineyard owner:

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." [He said,] "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, 34-36)

As Allah relates in the verses this man thinks that he is really the owner of the vineyard and makes a display of it, believing that this land will forever be in his possession. However, it is Allah Who will decide what it to happen. Whatever fate He has determined for this vineyard and this individual will come to pass. No other being apart from Allah can change the future. But the vineyard owner, unaware of this and with an ignorant mind-set, was proud of his possessions. Because he did not consider the reality of fate, he was making predictions about his vineyard and his own future. Probably he wanted to dazzle others with his wealth and win their adulation. Because he placed all these things above gaining Allah's approval, Allah destroyed his vineyard and left him with nothing to garner praise from others. Because of what happened to him, the owner of the vineyard woke from his heedless sleep and came to understand that his error was choosing another priority besides Allah. This situation is described in the Qur'an:

The fruits of his labor were completely destroyed and he woke up wringing his hands in grief, ruing everything that he had spent on it. It was a ruin with all its trellises fallen in. He said, "Oh, if only I had not associated anyone with my Lord!" (Surat al-Kahf, 42)

From these examples in the Qur'an, we can see that a life based on ostentation and praise is the selfish passion of faithless people. They think that the purpose of life is to receive praise from others, show off their wealth and become richer; and when they are able to do so, they believe they have gained something. Elsewhere in the Qur'an, Allah tells us about people who have this distorted way of thinking:

Fierce competition for this world distracted you, until you went down to graves. (Surat at-Takathur, 1-2)

The reality is not as it appears, however, to those who think it a virtue to be in the majority. Allah did not create the world so that individuals could contend with one another and gain superiority in selfish pursuits; He created it to test who would do the best things in their service to Him. Allah says in the Qur'an as such:

He Who created death and life to test which of you is best in action. He is the Almighty, the Ever-Forgiving. (Surat al-Mulk, 2)

For this reason, the most pleasurable, happy and joyful things are those that are done to win Allah's favor, because a human being can be basically satisfied by the joy that faith brings. All else brings a short-lived sense of satisfaction that will be of no benefit in the hereafter.

Yet some individuals reject true morality of religion and prefer to worship people they idolize other beings apart from Allah (Allah is beyond that) and as a result, base everything they do on this erroneous foundation. They are always ostentatious, showing off to others the things they have been given. But ostentation puts great material and spiritual burdens on an individual. It wearies his mind and body and distances him from his very nature, turning him into someone who acts inhumanely towards others, treating them harshly, with anger, grudging insincerity and hypocrisy. This person may even start performing acts of worship that require sincerity of heart so that others will say that he is a devout Muslim. In the Qur'an, Allah tells us of people who practice religion as lip service to others.

So woe to those who perform prayer, and are forgetful of their prayer, those who show off. (Surat al-Ma'un, 4-6)

As in the practice of their prayers, these individuals spend for Allah's cause for purposes of which He does not approve such as ostentation and seeking praise from others, although these acts of worship are founded on the Qur'anic ideal of "giving to those in need what is left after one's own needs have been met." The Qur'an describes the condition of those who use their material possessions for ostentation:

You who believe! Do not nullify your charity by demands for gratitude or insulting words, like him who spends his wealth, showing off to people and not believing in Allah and the Last Day. His likeness is that of a smooth rock coated with soil, which, when heavy rain falls on it, is left stripped bare. They have no power over anything they have earned. Allah does not guide disbelieving people. (Surat al-Baqara, 264)

As Allah says in the Qur'an, combining the desire to please others with faith in Allah is a breach of religious sincerity. In His Sight, it makes an individual insincere. By paying too much attention to what people think of him, he sullies his faith with ostentation and hardens his heart with the selfish desire for praise. As a result, he lives for worldly gain and profit and loses his fear of Allah. Totally unaware of the punishment He will give, he will employ the fine moral qualities he should use to earn Allah's favor as currency for worldly gain and to bring opportunities his way. Everyone who "worships" people adjusts his life to these principles.

We'll give some examples of his distorted mentality as it appears in daily life.

THE "LET THEM SAY" PRINCIPLE

In an ignorant society, people feel continually obliged to live with regard for what others say, will say, or have said. As a result, they do not think about Allah and are far from acting according to sound moral principles. Their thoughts are divorced from religious morality, and they know nothing about the well-being that religion can give, having fallen into a disordered, contentious environment where right and wrong are confused.

According to this distorted mentality, only human beings have the right to make laws and establish rules. All the things that Allah has commanded or prohibited are removed from human life, one by one. For this reason, an individual who practices the precepts of true morality of religion and disregards

any argument that detracts from the importance of winning Allah's favor, will immediately attract notice of ignorant people and who will treat him badly. But a person who is sincere in his religion will take no notice of this adverse behavior because his only goal in this world is to win Allah's favor.

But concerns for what others will say or think may influence those whose faith is weak. This is why they cannot fully practice the moral virtues of the Qur'an and in their thoughts and actions, why they resemble idolaters more than real Muslims. These individuals live their whole lives greatly deceived by a perverse understanding of the "facts of life" that prevents them from embracing the real spirit of religion. In the Qur'an Allah describes those people whose hearts are sick with regard to faith:

They vacillate between the two—not joining these or joining those. If Allah misguides someone, you will not find any way for him to go. (Surat an-Nisa', 143)

This false religion affects people like an infectious disease, preventing the many of weak will or personality from remembering Allah or seeking His favor. Under the influence of the majority, they regard their erroneous thinking as so normal that they don't even feel the need to distance themselves from it.

Describing the fundamental rationale of this false religion, which holds sway over its members and people of weak faith, would help people discover the distorted thinking they had fallen into. And by the Will of Allah, the sincere could save themselves from this false religion. The following pages give some false stock examples of the "Let them say" mentality characteristic of the "people- worshippers."

"Let Them Say I Am Good-natured"

Allah has many statements about the importance of being morally virtuous in the Quran. Allah says that the Prophets had a good and gentle nature, returned good for evil, were patient, enduring and feared Allah. For example, the Prophet Abraham (pbuh) sincerely turned to Allah and was renowned for his moral virtue:

Abraham was forbearing, compassionate, penitent. (Surah Hud, 75)

The basic morality of all the prophets and devout believers comes from their reverent submission to Allah. Believers serve only Him and seek His favor above that of any other being. They have the moral virtue of which Allah, Creator of the whole universe, approves. But the basis of their good nature lies in their desire to win Allah's favor.

However, ignorant people live in a system that works in just the opposite way. An individual who practices People-ism has memorized the rules of his superstitious religion and assumes that by telling people what they want to hear, he is doing the right thing. Even if he is good natured, at the basis of this behavior is the desire to exert a positive influence on others, get them to like him, and gain from them something of material value.

He will do everything he can to achieve this goal; he will be perfectly good-natured. For example, if need be, he will help his neighborhood poor to display of his compassion; and will tell everyone how important honesty is for human beings. He will let himself seem to be modest. He will speak about the great harm evil brings upon humanity, appearing all the while to be happy, loving and patient. People trust him for the appearance he presents; they like him and befriend him. They will tell all their friends how good-natured he is, give many examples of how he has helped others, shown compassion to a poor child or respect for some elderly person he met on the road. They describe to others how he took to the police station a wallet he found on the street, gave his seat on the bus to a pregnant woman even though his own feet were sore, turned up on time for work in the morning without seeming tired even though he stayed late at work the night before. This individual performs all these acts of self-sacrifice merely so that people will say he is good-natured, hardworking, compassionate and honest.

Another person will go to a rehabilitation center and bring little gifts to the people that live there. He will bring homeless children various things to make their rooms homey. Then, so that other people will know what he has done, he advertises his kindness to his close associates in an appropriate way. Or he may make a considerable donation for the renovation of a particular department of a hospital.

All these acts are laudable, of course, but it must be remembered that they are "good" only if performed to earn Allah's favor. If done to bring an individual praise or appreciation, to make him appear good, generous and just, they will bring him no benefit beyond a small worldly gain. If conditions grow bad for him, or if acting good-natured turns to his disadvantage, he can immediately give up being "good."

But things done to gain Allah's approval are permanent and enduring, because they are done unconditionally.

Moreover, it is very easy for anyone to turn from his error and change his intentions. An individual who realizes that "people worship" brings him nothing but harm must simply repent and intend to seek Allah's favor. This decision takes only a moment and from that moment, all the good things a person does with good intent hardly count for nothing, but are written in Allah's Sight to be rewarded. The important thing is, that person fears Allah and strives to do His will.

It's very important to recognize the power of Allah and to fear Him as one should, because when a person does not fear Allah, it is not clear how he will act or what kind of decisions he will make. If he requires rewards for doing good, he becomes instantly ill-natured. It does not occur to him that his behavior will receive punishment from Allah. He may exhibit one character one week and a wholly different one the next. According to the laws of people-worship, he may return evil for evil and injustice for injustice. He also begins to apply the merciless laws of the superstitious religion he believes in. And because, as we said before, the so-called deities this superstitious religion worships are only human beings (Allah is beyond that), his human conscience functions accordingly. For this reason, he gives no importance to the kind of moral behavior expected by Allah. However, Muslims also treat pitiless, cruel and unjust individuals who behave badly towards them as their moral virtue dictates—and under no conditions do they compromise the virtuous behavior that pleases Allah.

Therefore, never do believers diverge or withdraw from their path of moral virtue. Always humane, they never lose their religious convictions, because their life aim is based on their desire to be servants of Allah. In the Qur'an, Allah describes this kind of moral virtue:

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

Let Them Say that I Am Rich, Generous and Like to Spend Money

In "people-worshipping religion", much importance is placed on wealth. In this false religion, wealth means power. A person with power in society has a few highly valued privileges; the richest person is the most popular, most deferred to, and enjoys the most friends. Such a person thinks that wealth will open wide all the proverbial doors for him. For this reason, some individuals expend lots of effort putting this aspect of themselves in the foreground. They have a number of ways to get people to notice how rich they are and how they like to spend money. They never miss the opportunity to strengthen the impression of how wealthy they are, they are lavish, sometimes extravagant, in spending money on clothes, cars and houses. They decorate their homes in a way that society, especially other wealthy people, would appreciate.

If society chose to decorate with the color green for a particular year, these individuals choose green too, even if they don't like it; and if red is in vogue, they use red. Wanting everything to be just right becomes a matter of pride for them. Influenced by the "let them say" and "let them think" mentality, they spend their whole lives doing things to display their wealth. They spend their summers in the most popular vacation spots and go skiing in the most stylish winter resorts. They send their children to school abroad and buy their clothes from other countries. In their circle of acquaintances they let it be known that "they have money too" and so buy an expensive yacht. Even if they do not sail it themselves, they moor it in a harbor to show it off. If there are people they want to impress, they take them sailing, treating their guests to the best food and drink to emphasize that they do not lack for anything.

If a person has money, of course there is nothing wrong with acting in this way if one wants to; in fact, if he takes real pleasure in doing these things, they are blessings. But most of the people we have been talking about think in this distorted way. They want only one thing: For people to observe that they are wealthy, generous and like to spend. This gives them a sense of selfish satisfaction, boosts their morale and increases their motivation. If they do not hear what they want to, they become upset, discouraged, depressed and take no pleasure in anything. But were they asked to show the same eagerness in teaching others religious morality and increasing the number of believers in Allah, probably they would decline the invitation. Because they act in compliance with an ignorant rationale they are more interested in winning

others' approval than earning the favor of Allah. In this, they would find nothing in terms of material gain or earning others' praise.

But on the Day of Judgment, they will leave behind all their possessions and enter our Lord's Presence alone. They will leave behind all those individuals they tried to please and ingratiate themselves with, to the point of deifying them none of whom will be of the slightest assistance. They will defend themselves before Allah, Who tells us what awaits these adherents of false religion on the Day of Judgment.

You have come to Us all alone just as We created you at first, leaving behind you everything We bestowed on you. We do not see your intercessors accompanying you, those you claimed were your partners with Allah. The link between you is cut. Those you made such claims for have forsaken you. (Surat al-An'am, 94)

Let Them Say I Am Their Friend

People who practice this false religion befriend with the most attractive, wealthy, and famous people in their social circle. They give no importance to their moral character. To be known as the friend of a beautiful woman, for example, they endure all her caprices. To shine in her social circle, they'll do everything they can to be known as of that particular person's best friend and try to be seen with her.

Anyone with this mentality does the same thing when he makes friends with someone wealthy. He feels pride to talk and laugh with him sitting at the same table; she loves it when that person is familiar enough to call him by his first name, joke with him, call him or visit his home. He likes to be seen getting into his friend's car. He counts it a great success when people say about him, "That rich man's friend is very nice. How lucky he is!" He thinks he is important for having that man as a friend and just to be called "his friend," is prepared to take part in all his whims, even if they are sometimes cruel and selfish.

However, human beings must found their friendships on Allah's will, because they can gain honor and power only by being His servants. In the Qur'an, Allah tells us that all the honors and positions that people seek belong to Him:

Do those who take the disbelievers as protectors, rather than the believers, hope to find power and strength with them? Power and strength belong entirely to Allah. (Surat an-Nisa', 139)

A person can be harmed and humiliated merely by forming worldly friendships based on the pursuit of these goals. Friendships established only to attract attention and stir up envy will never meet one's true expectations. So long as an individual does not live according to the moral teachings of the Qur'an, he will never know real friendship, faithfulness, or loyalty. Even if he appears to have gained a few worldly advantages, friends who do not practice the morality of the Qur'an will cause him great loss in the hereafter. In the Qur'an, Allah reveals this truth:

They debar them from the path, yet they still think they are guided so that, when he reaches Us, he says, "If only there was the distance of the two Easts between you and me! What an evil companion!" (Surat az-Zukhruf, 37-38)

Let Them Say, "He Always Knows What's Best"

Humans are helpless creatures; it is impossible for them to step outside the fate that Allah has determined for them. Everything in the universe continues its existence according to the fate that Allah has given it. As He reveals in the Qur'an:

We have created all things in due measure. (Surat al-Qamar, 49)

A person will live his life as Allah has determined. For example, it is determined beforehand where he will err, where he will be successful and unsuccessful and, when the time comes, he will live every moment of what has been determined for him. No matter what he does, he cannot escape this fate. If Allah has determined that he will commit the same error 500 times, he can do nothing either to increase or decrease that number—he will repeat that same error exactly 500 times. Under such circumstances, it would make no sense to claim that an individual knew what was best and did it while still in error.

But people of no faith, who are deluded to think that the universe came to be through a chance occurrence, cannot accept this plain fact. As a result they believe that they can exert an influence over others. This distorted thinking leads them to great efforts to prove themselves. They must appear intelligent, and everyone must think that they know everything about everything.

For example, for someone to be called an economic expert, that person must give correct answers to every question he is asked on this subject. To do so, he must read and follow current events day and night. A person supposed to know about history must know every detail about some important event and whom it affected. Again, this would require years of effort. Someone who claims to excel at sports must train for hours every day, win every competition and, if necessary, shunt his friends, family and social life to the background.

But it must be remembered, these are worldly pursuits. Of course it's a good thing to work hard and be successful in the world. But if, in the pursuit of these things, the will of Allah is forgotten a person has a lot to lose. If he gains a certain amount of success in this world but has not lived to win Allah's favor, he will—unless Allah wills otherwise—forever lose his place in the hereafter.

Before Allah's Sight, man is a feeble being. A person who is very successful in a given field may suddenly lose it all in the face of an unexpected event. For example, a person well versed in world politics who always keeps informed could fall into a pitiful state as the result of some illness. Such a person should remember that, compared to Allah's knowledge, he knows nothing; that **"Over everyone with knowledge is a Knower."** (Surah Yusuf, 76)

Our Lord has the highest knowledge; it is absolute. Therefore, a successful person supposed to know everything about everything in his chosen field must make an effort to win Allah's favor by being His servant and living a moral life. Real salvation is possible only in this way.

Let Them Say, "He Adapts Himself to Every Environment"

As we have been saying from the beginning, a person in an ignorant society feels obliged to follow its rules and lifestyle. He tries to do what his circle of acquaintances want him to and be the model of the sort of individual they want him to be. Often he won't hesitate to do something against the Qur'an's moral teachings or act in a way that will bring him harm. He does not want to go contrary to one of the mantras of the religion of people worship, and wants others to say of him that "he adapts to every environment."

For example, a polite young man may have rebellious and disrespectful friends; although he may not be that way himself, he will try to conform to their lifestyle. He compromises his character because he does not want to be thrown out of the group and accused of being "not with it" or a "mommy's boy." Even though he knows that cigarettes are bad for his health, he will start smoking because his friends do. Some may even believe in Allah but, because their social circle is not religious, may present themselves quite differently to his group. They will stop saying their prayers in order so as not to be expelled from the circle, all to win and keep the favor of others and keep them on his side. Those who behave in this way must consider the harm they are doing to themselves in this world and the world to come; they must fear that day when they will give their accounts to Allah.

To close one's eyes to immorality and turn away from what is right, with the excuse of fitting in with one's social group is very dangerous—even from the point of view of the community. This distorted thinking lies especially at the root of the moral degeneration of young people. Suppose you met some who used drugs, were undergoing treatment for alcoholism or earned their living by prostitution. Ask why they live the way they do, and one major reason they gave would be that they "had to fit in" with their friends.

In the Sight of Allah, however, no human being has any such duty towards another. Allah holds people responsible only for earning His favor and obeying the moral edicts of the Qur'an. Everything else done apart from this purpose will simply put people on the wrong path and induce them to do things against creation. And their lives will be consumed by pangs of conscience and anxiety. In the Qur'an, Allah tells us about the state of those who make bad friends:

Instead of Allah, he calls on something which cannot harm him or help him. That is extreme misguidance. He calls on what is far more likely to harm than help. What an evil protector! What an evil associate! (Surat al-Hajj, 12-13)

So far we have considered a few basic examples of the "let them say" principle of people-worship. But this false religion is not limited to these non-believers. Nearly every step taken by people who practice this superstitious "religion" is to get others to think well of them and win their approval. Their thoughts are obsessed with this goal, and they spend every moment in this pursuit.

But even though they live in the same community, individuals with sincere faith are different from those in the society of ignorance. They may appear to do the same things, yet their intention is not directed towards other people, but towards Allah. They realize that no human being has any power, and that all power belongs to Him. They may do things to please others also, but their purpose is to win Allah's favor. As Allah has commanded, they act with moral propriety towards others—and by so doing, they win Allah's approval and also make others happy.

THE "DON'T LET THEM SAY" PRINCIPLE

Those with this mentality fail to consider the reason why they are in the world and make it their aim to please people instead of the Creator.

A person who thinks in this way work hard so that his acquaintances will not say, "He doesn't even have a car," or "He doesn't have a house of his own." He'll devote his entire life to attaining those material possessions regarded as indispensable by his society.

If he owns a business, this individual will try to act in an authoritarian way towards those around him. He will be harsh to his employees so that no one can say that he "can't get anyone do to what he says."

A woman would not want her friends to gossip that she's not good at housecleaning. So, even though she may sometimes neglect her housework, every time her friends are coming over, she will clean it down to the last speck of dust and prepare various lavish foods. But she doesn't care about places that her friends will not see.

Another person will fill his library with books he has no intention of reading so that people will not think him ignorant or uncultured. Or he will take a book with him on vacation and pretend to read it, so that people will not say that they have never seen him open a book.

A member of the religion of people worshippers will pretend to be interested in the same things that interested his social circle, because he feels obliged to follow their rules. For example, even though an art exhibition doesn't appeal to him, he will attend as if it were a homework assignment; just as he will go to an auction, a car race, or learn to play the piano. He will force himself to do things he doesn't like so that people will accept him, like him, and not say, "He doesn't fit in," or "He's a dilettante." (Of course, there is nothing wrong if he likes doing these things. The kind of person we refer to here pretends to like things even though he does not—and feels obliged to do them in order to be liked.)

These are only a few examples. In every society of ignorance that does not practice the moral teachings of the Qur'an, it is possible to find others—at every level, in every city and in every school. As a result of these feelings of obligation, a person may find himself following the same rules as people with whom he has nothing in common and he does not get along. He is condemned to live a nightmare of a life from which there is no awakening. Besides, the rules he has to follow go very much against his grain. Usually what one person thinks or wants is not the same as what someone else does. Clearly these rules will not bring about like-mindedness on any point and offer no intelligent solution to the problems that arise from human nature. For this reason, a person who avidly practices the religion of people worship can never get what he wants and he will never be able to please everyone at the same time. What he does to please one person, will displease someone else. In short, this false religion condemns him to a vicious circle.

However, those who seek Allah's favor have no experience with this kind of confusion. Since their only goal is pleasing Allah, they do not run across such difficulties. Allah wants people to live the kind of life that is completely suited to their nature. Our Lord has sent down the Qur'an to show us how to live together in harmony and as a guide to direct our lives towards happiness in both this life and the next. Those who practice the Qur'an's moral teachings experience the unlimited freedom that comes from turning to Allah. In their lives, there is no room for confusion or darkness. Their consciences always know what is right, and they strive to behave in the best possible way. For this reason, they are satisfied spiritually and have a contented and consistently positive state of mind.

In the Qur'an Allah gives this example comparing these two groups of individuals:

Allah has made a metaphor for them of a man owned by several partners in dispute with one another and another man wholly owned by a single man. Are they the same? Praise be to Allah! The fact is that most of them do not know. (Surat az-Zumar, 29)

As Allah relates in the Qur'an, there is nothing in common between those who strive to win Allah's favor only and those who follow rules set by people who, among themselves, share neither harmony nor communality. There is no misunderstanding or dissention among only those who believe in Allah, obey only what He commands and follow His book. For this reason, they are not obsessed about what people do or do not say, or about what people do or do not think. They think deeply, believing that the most important thing is not to conform to this world or the people in it, but to please our Lord in this world and the next.

In another verse, Allah reminds people that it would be a great error for them to accept any other guide besides Him:

Say: "Have you thought about your partner gods, those you call upon besides Allah? Show me what they have created of the earth; or do they have a partnership in the heavens?" Have We given them a Book whose Clear Signs they follow? No indeed! The wrongdoers promise each other nothing but delusion. (Surat al-Fatir, 40)

But as we already explained in detail, this belief is rooted in people living in societies of ignorance. They are condemned to live according to the principles of "Let them say" and "Don't let them say" and, on the other hand, this leads them to behave in wrong ways, some of which include:

Telling Lies

Sooner or later, anyone who adjusts his life to others' expectations will be forced to tell lies to hide his mistakes. People worshippers try to make it appear that they are perfect and never make mistakes. But as human beings, they often do violate social criteria and can cover up their errors only by telling lies. As a result, they will try to deceive people by always trying to make themselves appear to be something they are not.

For example, a young person entering a new school wants to be accepted by a particular group of friends and, to that end, will present himself as being quite rich, from a very good family. He will emphasize this in every conversation, make it appear that he goes abroad for vacations and frequents very expensive places. However, he's just inventing all this to influence his schoolmates. When the truth comes out, they'll learn that he comes from a middle-income family and has never gone abroad. But the requirements of people worshipping led him to tell these lies, assuming a false identity according to the standards expected by his society. He did not consider that all along, Allah was aware of every lie he told and that when the time comes, he must give our Lord an accounting. These kinds of examples are frequently encountered in society. Today, many people present themselves differently from how they really are, resorting to exaggerations, if not outright lies to make themselves seem more important.

However, a devout Muslim always keeps it in mind that Allah sees everything he does, and knows when anyone lies. He knows that even if a person can hide the truth from others, he cannot hide it from Allah. As He tells us this in the Qur'an:

... Nothing is hidden from Allah either on the earth or in heaven. (Surah Ibrahim, 38)

In one of his hadiths, our Prophet (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) contain the excellent advice he gave about speaking the truth:

O Muadh, I advise you: Fear Allah, speak the truth, fulfill promise, pay up trust, give up breach of trust, save your neighbor, show kindness to orphans... (Imam Ghazzali, Ihya Ulum-Id-Din (The Book of Religious Learnings), Islamic Book Service, New Delhi, 2001, Volume II, p. 236)

But the religion of people worshipping distances the hearts of individuals from Allah and impels them to tell lies as a fact of life making its members believe that immorality is almost a natural trait of human beings. This is why they disregard the fact that Allah knows everything that humans keep inside themselves and fail to reveal. In their conversations, they are forced to deceive others to make it appear that they are not hiding something inside, and make a show of affection even though they do not feel it. As a result of all this, deep insincerity dominates their friendships and all their other personal relationships. Large numbers of people who practice ignorant religion live out their lives and finally die without

experiencing the real affection and sincerity that faith in Allah brings. They have never known a real friendship that is not opportunistic but based on unconditional love and focused on the life of paradise, which is, in the words of our Prophet is, "*nearer to any of you than the strap of his shoe, and so is the [hell] Fire.*" (Imam Ahmad, Volume 1, Number 387)

Keeping up Appearances

Fierce competition for this world distracted you. (Surat at-Takathur, 1)

In a society of ignorance, people emphasize the value given to possessions, power, money and property. As mentioned in the previous section, they feel constrained to present themselves as much richer and more powerful than they actually are. As a result, society develops a kind of person who overstates in everything. For instance, a person who does everything to win the favor of others so that people will say he "has the best of everything" cannot lead a normal life. The clothes he buys, the way he decorates his house and his life style are all dedicated to keeping up appearances. When he is with others, he will make an extravagant show of his wealth so that people will want to be in his place. In conversations, he makes it a point to make people notice him. His aim is to get people to talk about his wealth and gossip about the fine things he possesses. To this end, he will insist on mentioning the extent and value of his wealth and say that he chooses his clothes from among the best designer labels; creating the impression that he frequents the best places.

People worshippers' passion for ostentation leads them into great error as they live their lives in this world. In the Qur'an, Allah reveals that ostentation distracts people and puts them in a stupor in which they cannot see reality:

Know that the life of this world is merely a game and a diversion and ostentation and a cause of boasting among yourselves and trying to outdo one another in wealth and children: Like the plant-growth after rain which delights the cultivators, but then it withers and you see it turning yellow, and then it becomes broken stubble. In the hereafter there is terrible punishment but also forgiveness from Allah and His good pleasure. The life of this world is nothing but the enjoyment of delusion. (Surat al-Hadid, 20)

The real lives of people with this passion are quite different from how they try to display themselves. They spend their entire day in the simplest and smallest room of the house they have described so lavishly. Instead of wearing their lavish clothing, they put on plain, simple, comfortable things. They do not want to show off to themselves, only to others. That is, they do not live showy lives where they are not going to be seen. Only with other people do they feel constrained to give themselves unnecessary anxiety by the desire to prove themselves.

However, the important thing is not for a person to win praise from his social circle, but to live in accord with the moral teachings of the Qur'an and his own human nature. Living otherwise wears a person, and he quickly grows old. Ignoring the moral virtues of the Qur'an, he turns into a hypocrite who speaks and behaves disingenuously to affect others. The insincere individual does not enjoy true affection or respect, nor can such a character be happy and content in life. And in this world, our Lord will inflict spiritual misery on anyone who disregards Him and serves His servants instead. Allah tells us in the Quran that the suffering in the hereafter will bring sadness and disgrace:

But as for those who have earned bad actions—a bad action will be repaid with one the like of it. Debasement will darken them. They will have no one to protect them from Allah. It is as if their faces were covered by dark patches of the night. Those are the Companions of the Fire, remaining in it timelessly, for ever. On the Day We gather them all together, We will say then to those who associated others with Allah, "To your place, you and your partner-gods!" Then We will sift them out, and their partner-gods will say, "It was not us you worshipped. Allah is a sufficient witness between us and you. We were unaware of your worship." Then and there every self will be tried for what it did before. They will be returned to Allah, their Master, the Real, and what they invented will abandon them. (Surah Yunus, 27-30)

Insincerity

Previous sections have shown how ignorant individuals' desire to be well regarded makes them act without sincerity. But this insincerity is a negative quality of behavior that pervades every moment of their

lives. Their inability to be sincere—that is, the inconsistency between what they know to be true and how they present themselves—makes it problematic for them to speak in a natural voice and show unself-conscious facial expressions.

So when such a person smiles, it is not because he is enjoying some inner sensation; he smiles only because the person he is with expects it of him. Where he thinks he will earn points for showing interest, he will speak and use facial expressions to give the impression of being attentive. What he says does not reflect what's really on his mind. Thus a curtain descends between people and prevents a natural exchange of ideas. This curtain allows him to play roles like an actor throughout his whole life, changing his appearance according to the situation and the expectations of the person he's with. He regards everyone as an autonomous individual independent of Allah and so, does his best to win their favor. Having memorized a few reactions that society has taught him, he uses them because they are what other people expect.

But in a society of ignorance, this problem situation is so widespread that no one is aware of its extent. People seldom realize that this artificial identity is the source of the anxiety and discontent in which they live. Only a person devoted to Allah, who practices the moral teachings of the Qur'an and does not seek to please others, can detect all this artificiality and correct the cause of this distressingly insincere behavior. Those who believe in the religion of people worship and others who accept similar superstitious rules regard all these things as "facts of life" and the "responsibilities that life heaps on a person."

Allah keeps His servants away from the distress that insincerity brings. He lets them taste the blessings of freedom brought by living in accord with human nature. No matter where or with whom a believer finds himself, and no matter how easy or difficult the conditions he must deal with, he is always aware that Allah is at his side. If three persons are gathered in one place, he knows that Allah is the fourth. Allah reveals this truth to us in the Quran as thus:

Do you not see that Allah knows what is in the heavens and on the earth? Three men cannot confer together secretly without Him being the fourth of them, or five without Him being the sixth of them, or fewer than that or more without Him being with them wherever they are. Then He will inform them on the Day of Resurrection of what they did. Allah has knowledge of all things. (Surat al-Mujadala, 7)

For this reason, they believe with all their heart that Allah is the One Who must be feared and that they must do everything they can to win His favor. This strong faith produces a natural, sincere behavior in believers. Even when they are with other people, they are aware that they are in Allah's Presence. In what they say and do, He keeps them from every kind of artificiality and protects them from insincere thoughts and ostentatious acts.

The Tendency to Hide What They Believe

Some people of faith feel the need to hide their beliefs in a superstitious belief system in which people exclude devout people who fulfill their religious obligations, consider them with their own foolish minds as backward and outdated people. They think that society will reject them for their faith, and so many are mistaken to compromise their acts of worship in order to avoid losing their jobs or worldly social status.

With an outlook totally divorced from the facts, societies that do not know Allah and generally ignorant about religion view religion as the same as being closed off from the world, out of step with modern times and opposed to every new development in the world—a longing for an imaginary description of the sort of life people lived thousands of years ago. As the general prejudice has it, religious people share this view of the world.

This is why some individuals avoid religion and devout people entirely; why they refuse to learn the morality of religion at all. And even if they do believe in Allah, they will keep their faith secret because they do not want to be known in society as a "religious fanatic." They fear that if other people learn the truth, their mutual ties will be broken, leaving them to suffer both materially and spiritually.

However, a person who really believes in Allah understands the essence of the Qur'an. He knows very well what Allah will and will not ask of His servants. He knows that real Muslims conceive and understand things quite differently from those others described above. He understands that religious

morality transforms a person and spreads before him all the blessings of this world and the next. In the Qur'an, Allah warns people against ignorance and against making judgments out of ignorance:

Do they then seek the judgment of the Time of Ignorance? Who could be better at giving judgment than Allah for people with certainty? (Surat al-Ma'ida, 50)

In the Qur'an, moreover, believers are commanded to avoid those ignorant people who tend to hold on to their old false ideas about Allah and religion, even though they have been told differently. It says:

Make allowances for people, command what is right, and turn away from the ignorant. (Surat al-A'raf, 199)

From these verses, we can see that the religion of Islam contends against ignorance. Individuals who have acquired this spirit have the Knowledge of the Qur'an together with a high level of culture and experience, and do not care what others think of them. Having the assurance of doing the most correct thing, they only seek Allah's mercy and favor and to attain paradise.

Conclusion

It is all very simple. People can enjoy a healthy mind and spirit only by practicing true morality of religion, which frees them from material attachments. It makes them responsible only to Allah and to the commands in His true book. In many verses of the Qur'an, Allah mentions the simplicity of Islam, saying that human beings will find success in this simplicity:

We will ease you to the Easy Way. (Surat al-A'la, 8)

In another verse, He says that one major characteristic of the Messengers sent is that they free believers from the heavy burden of laws and false beliefs loaded on them. And another verse announces the good news that those who obey these commands will attain salvation:

... 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 which were around them. Those who believe in him and honor him and 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)

The only person who can have freedom of thought is one who has been released from his worldly chains, whose mind has been cleansed and purified of ignorant ideas. Such a person is not bound by what others think or the courses they pursue and so, can make decisions of which Allah will approve. The reason is that he keeps himself within the limits revealed in the Qur'an as the proper measure for him. Besides this, as we have been saying from this book's beginning, he doesn't care what people say or think about him or about any opinion they may form. For a person of faith, there is no way of living other than winning Allah's favor and abiding by His commands. So devout Muslims who understand this truth could never practice people worship—one of the false religions of a society of ignorance.

In the Qur'an, Allah gives many examples of individuals who avoided non-Islamic immorality in the societies they lived in and devoted themselves to Allah. One group that attained this honor was the Companions of the Cave, described in detail in Surat al-Kahf:

We will relate their story to you with truth. They were young men who had faith in their Lord and We increased them in guidance. We fortified their hearts when they stood up and said, "Our Lord is the Lord of the heavens and the earth and We will not call on any god apart from Him. We would in that case have uttered an abomination. These people of ours have taken gods apart from Him. Why do they not produce a clear authority concerning them? Who could do greater wrong than someone who invents a lie against Allah? When you have separated yourselves from them and everything they worship except Allah, take refuge in the cave and your Lord will unfold His mercy to you and open the way to the best for you in your situation." (Surat al-Kahf, 13-16)

Throughout history, many devout individuals like the Companions of the Cave have dedicated themselves to Allah and saved themselves from false beliefs and worldly passions directed towards winning the favor of others. One of these noted individuals blessed by Allah and praised in the Qur'an is Mary, of high moral virtue that made her "most honored among all women."

A Good Example from the Qur'an: The Character of Mary

Allah gives the example of Mary, mother of the Prophet Jesus (pbuh), as a servant devoted only to Him. Before she was born, Mary was dedicated to Allah by her mother with prayers that she would be a good servant and free from all worldly attachments:

Remember when the wife of 'Imran said, "My Lord, I have pledged to You what is in my womb, devoting it to Your service. Please accept my prayer. You are the All-Hearing, the All-Knowing." (Surah Al 'Imran, 35)

Other verses in the Qur'an, show that Allah accepted her mother's prayer about Mary. We are told that she was morally pure and virtuous:

Her Lord accepted her with approval and made her grow in health and beauty... (Surah Al 'Imran, 37)

Allah chose her and gave her great honor:

And when the angels said, "Mary, Allah has chosen you and purified you. He has chosen you over all other women." (Surah Al 'Imran, 42)

Moreover, we are told that Allah commanded her to be sincerely submissive and obedient to Him. **[The Angels said,] "Mary, obey your Lord and prostrate and bow with those who bow." (Surah Al 'Imran, 43)**

At a certain point in her life, Mary left her family and moved east.

Mention Mary in the Book, how she withdrew from her people to an eastern place. (Surah Maryam, 16)

There she lived alone and received the marvelous message of the birth of the Prophet Jesus (pbuh). This good news was brought to her by Gabriel.

When the Angels said, "Mary, your Lord gives you good news of a Word from Him. His name is the Messiah, Jesus, son of Mary, of high esteem in this world and the hereafter, and one of those brought near." (Surah Al 'Imran, 45)

By a miracle from Allah, Mary became pregnant untouched by any man and gave birth to the Prophet Jesus (pbuh) in a remote place (Surah Maryam, 20). Mary humbly accepted the fate that Allah had prepared for her and, after the birth, trusted in Allah and took refuge in Him against all the accusations of the people. The people did not understand all the miraculous events that preceded and followed the birth of the Prophet Jesus (pbuh), and Allah tells us about the hurtful calumny directed against her.

She brought him to her people, carrying him. They said, "Mary! You have done an unthinkable thing! Sister of Aaron, your father was not an evil man, nor was your mother an unchaste woman!" (Surah Maryam, 27-28)

In another verse Allah tells us that the people rejected Allah and brought many false accusations against Mary:

And [We punished them] on account of their disbelief, and their utterance of a monstrous slander against Mary. (Surat an-Nisa', 156)

When Allah wanted Mary to take the Prophet Jesus (pbuh) and return to her people; without any concern for what they might think about her or the accusations they would make, she obeyed His command. Even though she found herself in a situation difficult to explain, she did exactly what was expected of her. She reacted to the accusations against her as becomes a Muslim. By obeying Allah's command and being unconcerned about what people thought of her, she showed her moral character to be quite different from those ignorant people who disregarded Allah and made deities out of their fellow men (Allah is beyond that).

With these examples in the Qur'an from the life of Mary, Allah shows us Divine wisdom. Mary was tested in this world with wondrous events. In a very difficult environment that demanded a lot of patience, she endured the onslaught of others' accusations. As a result of all this, Allah made the Prophet Jesus (pbuh) speak while he was still in the cradle and clear his mother of all the accusations against her.

Just like Mary, everyone sincerely attached to Allah is under His protection. Whatever people may say or think about him, a person who practices the morality of the Qur'an is not concerned, because just as in the case of Mary, the important thing is where he stands in the Sight of Allah.

THE DECEPTION OF EVOLUTION

Darwinism, in other words the theory of evolution, was put forward with the aim of denying the fact of creation, but is in truth nothing but failed, unscientific nonsense. This theory, which claims that life emerged by chance from inanimate matter, was invalidated by the scientific evidence of miraculous order in the universe and in living things, as well as by the discovery of more than 300 million fossils revealing that evolution never happened. In this way, science confirmed the fact that Allah created the universe and the living things in it. The propaganda carried out today in order to keep the theory of evolution alive is based solely on the distortion of the scientific facts, biased interpretation, and lies and falsehoods disguised as science.

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

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

The Scientific Collapse of Darwinism

As a pagan doctrine going 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 opposed, in his own eyes, the fact that Allah created different living species on earth separately, for he erroneously claimed that all living beings had a common ancestor and had diversified over time through small changes. Darwin's theory was not based on any concrete scientific finding; as he also accepted, it was just an "assumption." Moreover, as Darwin confessed in the long chapter of his book titled "Difficulties on Theory," the theory failed in the face of many critical questions.

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

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

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

The First Insurmountable Step: The Origin of Life

The theory of evolution posits that all living species evolved from a single living cell that emerged on Earth 3.8 billion years ago, supposed to have happened as a result of coincidences. 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 ignorantly denies creation, it maintains that the "first cell" originated as a product of blind coincidences within the laws of nature, without any plan or arrangement. According to the theory, inanimate matter must have produced a living cell as a result of coincidences. Such a claim, however, is inconsistent with the most unassailable rules of biology.

"Life Comes From Life"

In his book, Darwin never referred to the origin of life. The primitive understanding of science in his time rested on the assumption that living beings had a very simple structure. Since medieval times, spontaneous generation, which asserts that non-living materials came together to form living organisms, had been widely accepted. It was commonly believed that insects came into being from food leftovers, and

mice from wheat. Interesting experiments were conducted to prove this theory. Some wheat was placed on a dirty piece of cloth, and it was believed that mice would originate from it after a while.

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

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

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

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

Inconclusive Efforts of the Twentieth Century

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The Complex Structure of Life

The primary reason why evolutionists ended up in such a great impasse regarding the origin of life is that even those living organisms Darwinists deemed to be the simplest have outstandingly complex features. 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, no single protein of the cell, let alone a living cell itself, can 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. However, there is no need to explain the situation with these details. Evolutionists are at a dead-end even before reaching the stage of the cell. That is because the probability of just a single protein, an essential building block of the cell, coming into being by chance is mathematically "0."

The main reason for this is the need for other proteins to be present if one protein is to form, and this completely eradicates the possibility of chance formation. This fact by itself is sufficient to eliminate the evolutionist claim of chance right from the outset. To summarize,

1. Protein cannot be synthesized without enzymes, and enzymes are all proteins.
2. Around 100 proteins need to be present in order for a single protein to be synthesized. There therefore need to be proteins for proteins to exist.

3. DNA manufactures the protein-synthesizing enzymes. Protein cannot be synthesized without DNA. DNA is therefore also needed in order for proteins to form.

4. All the organelles in the cell have important tasks in protein synthesis. In other words, in order for proteins to form a perfect and fully functioning cell needs to exist together with all its organelles.

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

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

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

No doubt, if it is impossible for life to have originated spontaneously as a result of blind coincidences, then it has to be accepted that life was "created." This fact explicitly invalidates the theory of evolution, whose main purpose is to deny creation.

Imaginary Mechanism of Evolution

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

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

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

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

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

Lamarck's Impact

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

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

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

Neo-Darwinism and Mutations

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

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

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

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

Not surprisingly, no mutation example, which is useful, that is, which is observed to develop the genetic code, has been observed so far. All mutations have proved to be harmful. It was understood that mutation, which is presented as an "evolutionary mechanism," is actually a genetic occurrence that harms living things, and leaves them disabled. (The most common effect of mutation on human beings is cancer.) Of course, a destructive mechanism cannot be an "evolutionary mechanism." Natural selection, on the other hand, "can do nothing by itself," as Darwin also accepted. This fact shows us that there is no "evolutionary mechanism" in nature. Since no evolutionary mechanism exists, no such 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 the unscientific supposition of this theory, every living species has sprung from a predecessor. A previously existing species turned into something else over time and all species have come into being in this way. In other words, this transformation proceeds gradually over millions of years.

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

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

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

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

However, Darwin was well aware that no fossils of these intermediate forms had yet been found. He regarded this as a major difficulty for his theory. In one chapter of his book titled "Difficulties on Theory," he wrote:

Why, if species have descended from other species by insensibly fine gradations, do we not everywhere see innumerable transitional forms? Why is not all nature in confusion instead of the species being, as we see them, well defined?... But, as by this theory innumerable transitional forms must have existed, why do we not find them embedded in countless numbers in the crust of the earth?... Why then is not every geological formation and every stratum full of such intermediate links? ¹¹

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.*¹²

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.*¹³

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 man evolved from so-called ape-like creatures. During this alleged evolutionary process, which is supposed to have started 4-5 million years ago, some "transitional forms" between man and his imaginary 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.¹⁴

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."¹⁵

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.¹⁶

Moreover, a certain segment of humans classified as *Homo erectus* have lived up until very modern times. *Homo sapiens neanderthalensis* and *Homo sapiens sapiens* (man) co-existed in the same region.¹⁷

This situation apparently indicates the invalidity of the claim that they are ancestors of one another. The late Stephen Jay Gould explained this deadlock of the theory of evolution although he was himself one of the leading advocates of evolution in the twentieth century:

*What has become of our ladder if there are three coexisting lineages of hominids (A. africanus, the robust australopithecines, and H. habilis), none clearly derived from another? Moreover, none of the three display any evolutionary trends during their tenure on earth.*¹⁸

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.*¹⁹

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

Darwinian Formula!

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

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

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

Briefly, unconscious atoms cannot form the cell by coming together. They cannot take a new decision and divide this cell into two, then take other decisions and create the professors who first invent

the electron microscope and then examine their own cell structure under that microscope. Matter is an unconscious, lifeless heap, and it comes to life with Allah's superior creation.

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

Technology in the Eye and the Ear

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

A Materialist Faith

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

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

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

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

It is not that the methods and institutions of science somehow compel us accept a material explanation of the phenomenal world, but, on the contrary, that we are forced by our a priori adherence to material causes to create an apparatus of investigation and a set of concepts that produce material explanations, no matter how counter-intuitive, no matter how mystifying to the uninitiated. Moreover, that materialism is absolute, so we cannot allow a Divine [intervention]...²⁰

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 brought life into being. 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 ignorantly defend it just so as not to acknowledge, in their own eyes, the evident existence of Allah.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

As we can see, when people realized that a spell had been cast upon them and that what they saw was just an illusion, Pharaoh's magicians lost all credibility. In the present day too, unless those who, under the influence of a similar spell, believe in these ridiculous claims under their scientific disguise and spend their lives defending them, abandon their superstitious beliefs, they also will be humiliated when the full truth emerges and the spell is broken. In fact, world-renowned British writer and philosopher Malcolm Muggeridge, who was an atheist defending evolution for some 60 years, but who subsequently realized the truth, reveals the position in which the theory of evolution would find itself in the near future in these terms:

I myself am convinced that the theory of evolution, especially the extent to which it's been applied, will be one of the great jokes in the history books in the future. Posterity will marvel that so very flimsy and dubious an hypothesis could be accepted with the incredible credulity that it has.²¹

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)

- ¹ Sidney Fox, Klaus Dose, *Molecular Evolution and The Origin of Life*, W. H. Freeman and Company, San Francisco, 1972, p. 4.
- ² Alexander I. Oparin, *Origin of Life*, Dover Publications, New York, 1936, 1953 (reprint), p. 196.
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