

الله
رسول
محمد

HARUN YAHYA

PERFECTED FAITH

**They believe in Allah and
the Last Day, and enjoin the right
and forbid the wrong, and
compete in doing good. They are
among the righteous.**

(Qur'an, 3: 114)

The adjective "kamil" in Arabic means perfect, genuine, and complete. The "perfected faith" (*kamil iman*) discussed in this book represents the highest level of maturity and depth of faith an individual can ever attain. Everyone is responsible for aiming at moral perfection and striving towards that end. No boundaries limit such a noble human endeavour. Each believer who has a deep-seated faith in Allah and strives sincerely to draw closer to Him can display this moral perfection and thus attain the "maturity of faith". One of the purposes of this book is to define the "perfected faith" one can attain through turning to Allah for every deed, striving to earn the approval and friendship of Allah and displaying moral perfection under all circumstances. Another purpose is to make it clear that nothing hinders man from attaining the moral perfection displayed by prophets, provided that he fears and reveres no one but Allah and strives sincerely for His cause. Over and above this, the intention in writing this book is to stress that putting forth a "sincere" effort to attain the hereafter is a praiseworthy act in Allah's sight. In one verse, Allah states the following about this issue:

But as for anyone who desires the hereafter, and strives for it as he ought to, being a true believer, shall have his endeavours be gratefully acknowledged.

(Surat al-Isra', 19)



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

The author, who writes under the pen-name Harun Yahya, was born in Ankara in 1956. He studied arts at Istanbul's Mimar Sinan University, and philosophy at Istanbul University. Since the 1980s, the author has published many books on political, faith-related and scientific issues. Greatly appreciated all around the world, these works have been instrumental in helping many to return their faith in Allah, and, in many others, to gain a deeper insight into their faith. Harun Yahya's books appeal to all kinds of readers, regardless of their age, race, or nationality, for they focus on one objective: to broaden the readers' perspective by encouraging them to think about a number of critical issues, such as the existence of Allah and His unity, and to live by the values He prescribed for them.

Goodword
BOOKS

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ



To The Reader

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

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

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

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

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

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

PERFECTED FAITH

They believe in Allah and the Last Day, and enjoin the right and forbid the wrong, and compete in doing good. They are among the true believers.

(Surah Al 'Imran, 114)

HARUN YAHYA

Goodword
B · O · O · K · S

About The Author

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

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

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

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

Greatly appreciated all around the world, these works have been instrumental in many people recovering their faith in Allah and in many others gaining a deeper insight into their faith. The wisdom, and the sincere and easy-to-understand style gives these books a distinct touch which directly effects any one who reads or studies them. Immune to objections, these works are characterized by their features of rapid effectiveness, definite results and irrefutability. It is unlikely that those who read these books and give serious thought to them can any longer sincerely advocate the materialistic philosophy, atheism or any other perverted ideology or philosophy. Even if they continue to do so, it will be only a sentimental insistence since these books refuted such ideologies from their very foundations. All contemporary movements of denial are now ideologically defeated, thanks to the collection of books written by Harun Yahya.

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

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

Meanwhile, it would just be a waste of time and energy to propagate other books which create confusion in peoples' minds, lead man into ideological chaos, and which, clearly have no strong and precise effects in removing the doubts in peoples' hearts, as also verified from previous experience. It is apparent that 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 moral values of the Qur'an. The success and impact of this service are manifest in readers' conviction.

One point should be kept in mind: The main reason for the continuing cruelty, conflict, and all the ordeals the majority of people undergo is the ideological prevalence of disbelief. **This state can only be ended with the ideological defeat of disbelief and by conveying the wonders of creation and Qur'anic morality so that people can live by it.** Considering the state of the world today, which leads people into the downward spiral of violence, corruption and conflict, it is clear that this service has to be provided more speedily and effectively. Otherwise, it may be too late.

It is no exaggeration to say that the collection of books by Harun Yahya have assumed this leading role. By the will of God, these books will be a means through

which people in the 21st century will attain the peace, justice and happiness promised in the Qur'an.

The works of the author include *The New Masonic Order, Judaism and Freemasonry, Global Freemasonry, Knight Templars, Islam Denounces Terrorism, Terrorism: The Ritual of the Devil, The Disasters Darwinism Brought to Humanity, Communism in Ambush, Fascism: The Bloody Ideology of Darwinism, The 'Secret Hand' in Bosnia, Behind the Scenes of The Holocaust, Behind the Scenes of Terrorism, Israel's Kurdish Card, The Oppression Policy of Communist China and Eastern Turkestan, Palestine, Solution: The Values of the Qur'an, The Winter of Islam and Its Expected Spring, Articles 1-2-3, A Weapon of Satan: Romanticism, Signs from the Chapter of the Cave to the Last Times, Signs of the Last Day, The Last Times and The Beast of the Earth, Truths 1-2, The Western World Turns to God, The Evolution Deceit, Precise Answers to Evolutionists, The Blunders of Evolutionists, Confessions of Evolutionists, The Qur'an Denies Darwinism, Perished Nations, For Men of Understanding, The Prophet Musa (as), The Prophet Yusuf (as), The Prophet Muhammad (saas), The Prophet Sulayman (as), The Golden Age, Allah's Artistry in Colour, Glory is Everywhere, The Importance of the Evidences of Creation, The Truth of the Life of This World, The Nightmare of Disbelief, Knowing the Truth, Eternity Has Already Begun, Timelessness and the Reality of Fate, Matter: Another Name for Illusion, The Little Man in the Tower, Islam and the Philosophy of Karma, The Dark Magic of Darwinism, The Religion of Darwinism, The Collapse of the Theory of Evolution in 20 Questions, Allah is Known Through Reason, The Qur'an Leads the Way to Science, The Real Origin of Life, Consciousness in the Cell, Technology Imitates Nature, A String of Miracles, The Creation of the Universe, Miracles of the Qur'an, The Design in Nature, Self-Sacrifice and Intelligent Behaviour Models in Animals, The End of Darwinism, Deep Thinking, Never Plead Ignorance, The Green Miracle: Photosynthesis, The Miracle in the Cell, The Miracle in the Eye, The Miracle in the Spider, The Miracle in the Gnat, The Miracle in the Ant, The Miracle of the Immune System, The Miracle of Creation in Plants, The Miracle in the Atom, The Miracle in the Honeybee, The Miracle of Seed, The Miracle of Hormone, The Miracle of the Termite, The Miracle of the Human Body, The Miracle of Man's Creation, The Miracle of Protein, The Miracle of Smell and Taste, The Miracle of Microworld, The Secrets of DNA.*

The author's childrens books are: *Wonders of Allah's Creation, The World of Animals, The Glory in the Heavens, Wonderful Creatures, Let's Learn Our Islam, The World of Our Little Friends: The Ants, Honeybees That Build Perfect Combs, Skillful Dam Builders: Beavers.*

The author's other works on Quranic topics include *The Basic Concepts in the Qur'an, The Moral Values of the Qur'an, Quick Grasp of Faith 1-2-3, Ever Thought About the Truth?, Crude Understanding of Disbelief, Devoted to Allah, Abandoning the Society of Ignorance, The Real Home of Believers: Paradise, Knowledge of the Qur'an, Qur'an Index, Emigrating for the Cause of Allah, The Character of the Hypocrite in the Qur'an, The Secrets of the Hypocrite, The Names of Allah, Communicating the Message and Disputing in the Qur'an, Answers from the Qur'an, Death Resurrection Hell, The Struggle of the Messengers, The Avowed Enemy of Man: Satan, The Greatest Slander: Idolatry, The Religion of the Ignorant, The Arrogance of Satan, Prayer in the Qur'an, The Theory of Evolution, The Importance of Conscience in the Qur'an, The Day of Resurrection, Never Forget, Disregarded Judgements of the Qur'an, Human Characters in the Society of Ignorance, The Importance of Patience in the Qur'an, General Information from the Qur'an, Perfected Faith, Before You Regret, Our Messengers Say, The Mercy of Believers, The Fear of Allah, Jesus Will Return, Beauties Presented by the Qur'an for Life, A Bouquet of the Beauties of Allah 1-2-3-4, The Iniquity Called "Mockery," The Mystery of the Test, The True Wisdom According to the Qur'an, The Struggle with the Religion of Irreligion, The School of Yusuf, The Alliance of the Good, Slanders Spread Against Muslims Throughout History, The Importance of Following the Good Word, Why Do You Deceive Yourself?, Islam: The Religion of Ease, Enthusiasm and Excitement in the Qur'an, Seeing Good in Everything, How do the Unwise Interpret the Qur'an?, Some Secrets of the Qur'an, The Courage of Believers, Being Hopeful in the Qur'an, Justice and Tolerance in the Qur'an, Basic Tenets of Islam, Those Who do not Listen to the Qur'an, Taking the Qur'an as a Guide, A Lurking Threat: Heedlessness, Sincerity in the Qur'an.*

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INTRODUCTION

Allah sent down the Qur'an as guidance to man. Living by the "morality of the Qur'an" in its true sense can only be possible through practicing all that is enjoined in these verses.

There are some who fail to recognise this fact and pay meticulous attention to complying with some commands of the Qur'an while disregarding others. They perform some forms of worship to the letter, yet fail to display the moral perfection of which Allah gives a clear picture in the Qur'an. According to such people, saying, "I believe in Allah" alone is sufficient. However, in the Qur'an Allah warns people against this rationale: **"Do people imagine that they will be left to say, 'We believe,' and will not be tested?"** (Surat al-'Ankabut, 2) This verse makes it clear that, as well as what he professes, the way a believer conducts himself must also prove that he truly lives to earn Allah's approval. That is to say that he must display the morality that he hopes to please Him.

That is the way to become a true believer. One's sincere endeavour to display the values that pleases Allah is the sole criterion of one's sincerity.

There is a misconception prevalent among people about this. The majority of them believe that displaying the values of the Qur'an is a virtue peculiar to the prophets and the believers with moral perfection exemplified therein. This is simply not so. The lives of these people are exemplified in the Qur'an so that others may also adopt the same values and follow in their footsteps. In this way, Allah summons all believers to comply with the commands of the Qur'an and to live scrupulously by Islamic principles.

When one sincerely follows the voice of one's conscience and strives for the cause of religion, one can live by the values of the

Qur'an just as well as the true believers described in its verses. One verse reads:

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

As the above verse maintains, some people may either fail to follow the path to which Allah invites him and thus suffers loss, or some become the forerunners in moral perfection and hope for salvation.

A believer of strong faith strives to attain the highest levels of moral perfection of which he is capable. He knows that he can please Allah and earn His love and pleasure only in this way. This is indeed the purpose of his existence on earth; to be able to earn the good pleasure of Allah and His consent through properly appreciating Him.

Everyone is responsible for aiming at moral perfection and striving towards that end. No boundaries limit such a noble human endeavour. Each believer who has a deep-seated faith in Allah and strives sincerely to draw closer to Him can display this moral perfection and thus attain the "**maturity of faith**".

One of the purposes of this book is to define the "perfected faith" one can attain through turning to Allah for every deed, striving to earn the approval and friendship of Allah and displaying moral perfection under all circumstances. Another purpose is to make it clear that nothing hinders man from attaining the moral perfection displayed by prophets, provided that he fears and reveres no one but Allah and strives sincerely for His cause. Over and above this, the intention in writing this book is to stress that putting forth a "**sincere**" effort to attain the hereafter is a praiseworthy act in Allah's sight. In one verse, Allah states the following about this issue:

But as for anyone who desires the hereafter, and strives for it as he ought to, being a true believer, shall have his endeavours be gratefully acknowledged. (Surat al-Isra', 19)

WHAT IS PERFECTED FAITH?

"Such people (the pious) are truly racing towards good deeds, and they outstrip (others) therein."

(Surat al-Mu'minin, 61)

The adjective "*kamil*" in Arabic means perfect, genuine, and complete. The "perfected faith" (*kamil iman*) discussed in this book represents the highest level of maturity and depth of faith an individual can ever attain. But how does a believer's faith grow mature and become perfect?

"Having faith in Allah" is to grasp that Allah is the sole Creator and Owner of everything and that He is the only Judge. It is one's submission to Allah at every moment of his life; it is being aware that one is in need of Him, that Allah is rich beyond need and that He creates all things in compliance with a specified destiny.

"Submission to Allah" becomes possible only through having a profound fear of Allah, being deeply attached to Him and loving Him more than anything or anybody else. One who submits himself to Allah, in the real sense, takes Allah alone as his intimate friend. Throughout his life, he knows that each event he encounters occurs by Allah's will and that behind every one of them there are particular divine purposes. For this reason, he never strays from his submissive attitude and always remains obedient and grateful to Allah.

To attain perfected faith, one needs to comply strictly with the commands of the Qur'an, the revelation of Allah through which He introduces Himself and conveys His commands to His servants. For this

reason, a believer pays the utmost attention to observing Allah's limits till the day he dies. Throughout his life, he displays the qualities of the true believer without departing from patience. The determination a person of perfected faith shows in living by the values of the Qur'an is a very important and distinctive quality. Because, it is with this very quality that a man of perfected faith excels others in his efforts to do good. The Qur'an also refers to those **"who become foremost in good deeds"** (Surah Fatir, 32) in their efforts to earn the approval of Allah. The Qur'an however, refers also to those who do not fully live by religion: **"Among the people there are those who profess to worship Allah, but who stand on the very fringe of true religion..."** (Surat al-Hajj, 11)

Here appears the distinctive feature of perfected faith. Those who do not embrace faith wholeheartedly worship Allah right on the "very fringe" while the people of perfected faith adopt the Qur'an as an essential guide for themselves at every moment of their lives. While insincere people stipulate certain conditions for keeping their faith, people of perfected faith are truly unconditional in their observances. The former group remain devoted to the religion and pretend to display the values praised by the Qur'an as long as they enjoy the blessings given to them and everything goes their way. Yet, whenever they are deprived of blessings or adversity befalls them, they simply turn away from religion or show disloyalty to it. The people of perfected faith, however, show an unshakable commitment to their faith and loyalty. The basic impetus behind this commitment is their "assured faith." "Assured faith" is true acknowledgement of Allah's existence and the hereafter with one's wisdom, heart and conscience. Believers who possess this character trait are described in the Qur'an as **"those who have faith in what has been sent down to you and what was sent down before you, and are certain about the hereafter."** (Surat al-Baqara, 4)

Perfected faith manifests itself through unceasing attention to one's

conscience. Conscience is a spiritual quality that engenders a good attitude and worthy thoughts, and helps man think straight and tell right from wrong. A person of perfected faith listens to the voice of his conscience under all circumstances. Such inclination ensures the morality and attitudes that comply with the Qur'an. The Prophet Muhammad (saas) pointed out the importance of conscience in this way:

A person asked Allah's Messenger (saas): What is faith? He said: When a good deed becomes a source of pleasure for you and an evil deed becomes a source of disgust for you, then you are a believer. He again said Allah's Messenger (saas): What is a sin? Whereupon he said: When something pricks your conscience, give it up. (Abmad)

Of the alternatives he encounters, the believer chooses the attitude with which, he hopes, Allah will be pleased. He never stoops to baseness. The difficulties he encounters while displaying the ideal attitude never make him feel frustrated. He does not compromise the most appropriate attitude by being overtaken by the whims and desires of his lower self.

An example from daily life will make this issue clear. Let's assume that a big factory is on fire. Beset with such adversity, the owner of the factory is faced with many alternatives. He may, for instance, remain inside and, mobilizing the workers, struggle to put out the fire. Another course would be to leave the building and save his own life without notifying the workers. Or, he can do everything to save all his workers and meanwhile call the fire department.

All these alternatives may seem reasonable from different points of view. The conscience, however, guides man to the choice that would please Allah most. Perfected faith is the faith of one who unconditionally assumes the most noble attitude to which his conscience guides him, without feeling any trivial regret or disappointment.

THE BELIEF IN ALLAH OF THOSE OF PERFECTED FAITH

They fear Allah

*"... they stand in awe and reverence of His Glory."
(Surat al-Anbiya', 28)*

People of perfected faith who grasp the greatness, might and eternal wisdom of Allah, feel a "fear full of respect" for our Lord. Keeping in mind the verse of the Qur'an, "**So have fear of Allah, as much as you are able to...**" (Surat at-Taghabun, 16), they set no limit to their fear.

Every event they encounter, everything they see around them draw them nearer to Allah and deepen their faith and thus their fear.

Such deep fear ensures that the highest degree of attention is paid to the observance of the limits Allah has determined. The standard of these observances manifests itself in the meticulousness of one's obedience to all of Allah's commands and advice and the strict avoidance of the things He forbids. This attitude of the people of perfected faith is referred to in the following verse:

They fear their Lord above them and do everything they are ordered to do. (Surat an-Nahl, 50)

In the Qur'an, Allah gives an example that will help us attain a better understanding of those points, and draws our attention to the kind of fear that will please Him most:

If We Had sent down this Qur'an upon a mountain, you would have seen it humbled, crushed to pieces out of fear of Allah. In such parables We speak to people so that hopefully they may reflect. (Surat al-Hashr, 21)

As the above verse states, the fear of those who have a deep faith in Allah is intense and deep.

The fear of Allah that the people of perfected faith feel is very intense yet, by no means, distressing such as the false fears experienced by those who do not live by the values of the Qur'an. This is the kind of fear which is based on the profound respect and inner love that caused believers to be devoted to Allah, their Creator. This is a fear that gives man zeal, excitement and determination. This is, moreover, the kind of fear that makes man avoid any deed that would not please Allah. This is the fear that prompts believers to engage in good deeds, imbues them with the good morals prescribed by Islam and thus is a feeling that provides "spiritual satisfaction". This fear can be felt only through the deep love one has for Allah. People of faith love Allah as much as they fear Him. These two concepts remain side by side in a believer's heart and remain as two important signs of perfected faith.

What makes people of perfected faith apprehensive about their Lord is their proper appreciation of Him. Allah is *al-Qahhar* (the All-Conquering, the One Who, by His Might, has subdued everything He created to His Authority and Power), *al-Mu'adhdhib* (the Tormentor), *al-Muntaqim* (the Avenger), *as-Sa'iq* (He Who drives to hell), *al-Muthill* (the One Who debases or humiliates whomsoever He pleases). Believers, who are aware of these attributes of Allah, know that He can inflict any form of punishment on anyone at any time He wills. They are aware that only those who carry out their duty to Allah can be saved from this punishment. For this reason, they fear nobody but Allah, the Almighty.

They love Allah more than anyone and anything else

"... they said, 'Allah is enough for us and the Best of Guardians.'" (Surah Al 'Imran, 173)

The love of those who have perfected faith is as strong as the fear they have for Him. They know that Allah is the One Who has created them out of nothing and bestowed upon them countless blessings. They are also aware that He watches and protects them at every moment. They believe that all living things have come into existence solely by His permission, and that one day they will perish at His will. They know that He is the only Being Who will exist for all eternity.

Having grasped this fact, they direct all their love to Allah, their Creator and Owner in accordance with the counsel of Allah's Messenger (saas), *"Love Allah because He nourishes and sustains you..." (Tirmidhi)*. They love Allah more than anyone or anything else they see, know or comprehend. They are aware that there is no friend and helper better than Allah, **"... the Best of Masters, and the Best of Helpers!"** (Surat al-Anfal, 40) In a prayer of the Prophet Ibrahim (as), who was a devoted believer, this awareness is abundantly clear:

It is He Who created me and guides me; He Who gives me food and gives me drink; and when I am ill, it is He Who heals me; He Who will cause my death, then give me life; He Who I sincerely hope will forgive my mistakes on the Day of Reckoning. My Lord, bestow upon me right judgement and unite me with the righteous. (Surat ash-Shu'ara', 78-83)

As the verses state, the Prophet Ibrahim (as) is well aware that it is Allah Who gives him life, governs every event on earth, gives him food, causes illness and creates the means of recovery and that He is the only Ruler of the earth. So, he is attached to Him with love. This is the type of love felt for Allah that people of perfected faith take as an example.

The love the people of perfected faith have for other created beings is in direct relation with the love they have for Allah. The criterion for loving people depends on the extent to which they exhibit the good morals that please Allah. Believers nurture a great love for those people who pay attention to the commands and prohibitions of Allah and strive hard to live by good moral standards. The main reason why they love these people is the deep love they feel for Allah and their commitment to take Him as their sole friend.

True faith makes believers genuinely grasp that all beauty, wisdom and the faculties they see in this world belong to Allah. When believers meet a good-looking, wise and talented person, for instance, they derive great pleasure from these qualities, remembering that Allah is the Creator and Giver of all these traits. For this reason, the pleasure they take in these qualities is not a pleasure apart and distant from the love they feel for Allah. On the contrary, it is a source of profound love and respect for Allah.

Those who have no deep faith have no great love for Allah. These people, in actuality, know that it is Allah Who gives them life, guards them at every moment, bestows upon them countless blessings and forgives them. However, for the greater part of their lives, they forget these facts or simply disregard them. Assuming that the living things Allah created possess a power independent from Him, they feel a separate love towards these created beings. In the Qur'an, the situation of these people is stated as follows:

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

In another verse, the difference between these people and people of perfected faith is explained as follows:

Allah is the Protector of those who have faith. He brings them out of the darkness into the light. But those who disbelieve have false gods as protectors. They take them from the light

into the darkness. Those are the Companions of the Fire remaining in it timelessly, for ever. (Surat al-Baqara, 257)

They do not set up any other god beside Allah

... *"They worship Me, not associating anything with Me." ... (Surat an-Nur, 55)*

The belief of people of perfected faith is a strong credo based on wisdom and conscience. In the words of the Qur'an, **"they believe in Allah and His Messenger, then they have no doubts..."** (Surat al-Hujurat, 15) Since they have a full grasp of the might and greatness of Allah, they affirm from the beginning that there is no god that is equal or similar to Him. In the Qur'an, the sole guide of believers, Allah states this fact as follows:

Allah: there is no god but Him, the Living, the Self-Sustaining. He is not subject to drowsiness or sleep. Everything in the heavens and the earth belongs to Him. Who can intercede with Him except by His permission? He knows what is before men and what is behind them, but they can grasp only that part of His knowledge which He wills. His throne encompasses the heavens and the earth and their preservation does not tire Him. He is the Most High, the Magnificent. (Surat al-Baqara, 255)

Beside this, some people, despite believing in the existence of Allah, also assume that some worldly living beings possess a power apart and separate from Allah and take them, in a sense, as "idols". We should not, therefore, limit the concept of the "idol" to pieces of sculptured stone or wood, or fake gods fabricated by false religions. Today, there are many material or nonmaterial things that are not so named, but which are taken as idols.

Any endeavour in the part of an individual to please a being other than Allah—assuming that that being is capable of helping him and

re-orienting his life according to will of that being—can be described as taking it as "an idol". Some people, for instance, aim at attaining money, beauty, respect, a career or satisfying the desires of their lower selves. Such people neglect to work towards attaining the approval of Allah, which should ideally be their main purpose. These are the ones who set up gods beside Allah.

This is the point on which the distinctive quality of the people of perfected faith becomes most obvious. That is because, unlike those mentioned above, the people of perfected faith confirm with their hearts and entire lives that there is no God but Him. They turn to Him and do not set up partners with Him, thus **"making religion pure for Him alone."** (Surat az-Zumar, 11) Allah describes His sincere servants as:

... Those who repent and mend their ways, who hold fast to Allah and dedicate their religion to Allah alone; they are with the believers. Allah will give the believers an immense reward. (Surat an-Nisa', 146)

THE ACTS OF WORSHIP OF PEOPLE OF PERFECTED FAITH

A man of perfected faith also distinguishes himself through the meticulous attention he pays to his acts of worship. Throughout his life -as long as he is able-, he zealously performs his salat (regular prayers), fasts, pays his alms, that is, fulfills the acts of worship Allah made obligatory. In many verses, Allah informs us about the excitement true Muslims feel while performing their acts of worship:

Those who are steadfast in seeking the face of their Lord, and establish salat 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)

...(Those) whose hearts quake at the mention of Allah, and who are steadfast in the face of all that happens to them, those who establish salat and give of what We have provided for them. (Surat al-Hajj, 35)

The importance of salat

Salat (*obligatory prayers which are performed five times a day*), is one of the most important acts of worship after faith. A believer is obliged to perform salat, which is an act of worship prescribed at specific times, throughout his life.

Man is prone to forgetfulness. Engrossed in everyday routines, he may easily become distracted from the real issues to which he actu-

ally needs to pay attention. He may easily forget that Allah encompasses him all around, that He watches him at every moment, that He listens to him, and that he will one day have to give an account of his actions to Allah. He may well forget about the certainty of death, the grave, Paradise and Hell, that nothing happens other than that which is Allah's will, and that there is ultimately a reason for everything.

Performing salat five times a day, however, removes this state of forgetfulness and keeps the believer's will and conscious vivid. Salat makes him constantly turn to Allah and live by the commands of our Lord. A person of perfected faith who stands before the presence of Allah to perform his salat secures a strong spiritual bond with Allah. That salat reminds man of Allah and that it hinders him from all kinds of evil is stated in a verse as follows:

Recite what has been revealed to you of the Book and establish salat. Salat precludes indecency and wrongdoing. And remembrance of Allah is greater still. Allah knows what you do. (Surat al-'Ankabut, 45)

Salat is an act of worship that is obligatory upon all prophets and believers. The prophets sent to humanity throughout history summoned their people to this obligatory act of worship. Meanwhile, they performed it themselves in the most accurate manner and became role models to follow for all believers. In this respect, salat is a form of message communicated by Allah's prophets to their individual peoples.

In the Qur'an, there are several verses about Allah's commands to His prophets about establishing salat, the importance attached to this act of worship, the prophets' meticulous observance of it, and their commands to their peoples about establishing salat:

- In one verse, Allah relates the following about the Prophet Ibrahim (as):

My Lord! Make me and my descendants people who establish salat. My Lord! Accept my prayer. (Surah Ibrahim, 40)

- In the Qur'an, the Prophet Isma'il (as) is related thus:

Mention Isma'il in the Book. He was true to his promise and was a Messenger and a Prophet. He used to command his people to do salat and give zakat and he was pleasing to his Lord. (Surah Maryam, 54-55)

- In another verse, Allah says to the Prophet Musa (as) the following:

I am Allah. There is no god but Me, so worship Me and establish salat to remember Me. (Surah Ta Ha, 14)

Allah also commanded Maryam, who is given as an example in the Qur'an to all women in the world, to establish salat:

Maryam, obey your Lord and prostrate and bow with those who bow. (Surah Al 'Imran, 43)

'Isa (as), who is described as the "word of Allah" in the Qur'an also received the same command:

He said, "I am the servant of Allah, He has given me the Book and made me a Prophet. He has made me blessed wherever I am and directed me to do salat and give zakat as long as I live." (Surah Maryam, 30-31)

What are The Times of the Salat?

In the Qur'an, salat is described as an obligatory act of worship that is prescribed for believers at certain times. The related verse reads:

When you have finished salat remember Allah standing, sitting and lying on your sides. When you are safe again do salat in the normal way. The salat is prescribed for the muminun at specific times. (Surat an-Nisa', 103)

The times of the five obligatory salats are "morning", "noon", "mid-afternoon", "evening" and "night". The times of salat are made explicit in many verses of the Qur'an. One of them reads:

So be steadfast in the face of what they say and glorify your Lord with praise before the rising of the sun and before its setting.

And glorify Him during part of the night and at both ends of the day, so that hopefully you will be pleased. (Surah Ta Ha, 130)

Our Prophet (saas), who best understood and interpreted the Qur'an, thanks to the revelation and inspiration of Allah, described to believers the beginning and ending times of the five performances of salat during the course of a day. The following hadith narrated by Abdullah b. Amr b. Al- As is one of the most well-known of these hadiths:

Our Prophet (saas) said:

The time for the morning prayer (lasts) as long as the first visible part of the rising sun does not appear, and the time of the noon prayer is when the sun declines from the zenith and there is not a time for the afternoon prayer and the time for the afternoon prayer is as long as the sun does not become pale and its first visible part does not set, and the time for the evening prayer is that when the sun disappears and (it lasts) till the twilight is no more and the time for the night prayer is up to the midnight. (Muslim)

Both the verses of the Qur'an and the hadiths of our Prophet (saas) and the explanations of Islamic scholars make it certain that the obligatory salat is to be performed five times a day.

The total number of rakats for the five obligatory prayers is 40. The allocation of these rakats according to the times is as follows:

- Morning prayer: 2 rakats sunnat, 2 rakats fard
- Noon prayer: 4 rakats initial sunnat, 4 rakats fard, 2 rakats last sunnat
- Mid-afternoon prayer: 4 rakats sunnat, 4 rakats fard
- Evening prayers: 3 rakats fard, 2 rakats sunnat
- Night prayers: 4 rakats initial sunnat, 4 rakats fard, 2 rakats last sunnat, 3 rakats witr.

A Person of Perfected Faith Prays in Awe

Awe is a kind of fear mixed with respect. Feeling awe while pray-

ing, on the other hand, is to feel the majesty and might of Allah before His presence and harbour a deep seated fear while performing this act of worship. A believer who is aware that he is before Allah, the Lord of all the worlds, will surely feel this might and draw near to Allah in relation with the fear and respect he feels for Him.

A believer who aims to perform his prayer with due care must take all measures against the obstacles likely to hinder his concentration and pay the utmost attention to ensure the required mood and concentration. Before His presence, our Lord commands us to remember and glorify Him alone and be people of pure, natural belief in Him. Praying with due care is a great opportunity to realize all these. Indeed, Allah commands us to perform prayers to remember Him:

I am Allah. There is no god but Me, so worship Me and establish salat to remember Me. (Surah Ta Ha, 14)

Fards (obligations) of salat

A- There are seven fards (obligations) a believer must fulfill before he establishes his prayer. These are:

- Ritual Cleanliness
- Actual Cleanliness
- Covering the Private Parts of the Body
- Facing the Qiblah
- Proper Time
- Intention
- Glorifying

B- The other five fard actions, called the Pillars of Prayer, are executed during the actual performance of prayer.

- Qiym
- Qirah
- Rükû'
- Sajdah
- Qadah

Ritual Cleanliness: Cleansing by performing the minor ritual ablution or major ritual ablution.

Actual Cleanliness: Cleansing actual impurities on the body, clothes or the place that are likely to hinder the prayer.

Time: Performing the prayers within the prescribed times.

Facing the Qiblah: Performing the prayer by turning to Mecca.

Intention: is the remembrance and inner declaration of the believer's intention to perform the specific prayer.

Glorifying: Glorifying Allah with the words, "Allahu akbar".

Qiyam: Standing position (for those who are able)

Qirah: Reading a few verses from the Qur'an while in qiyam.

Rükû': Bowing Position, in which the knees are grasped by the palms of both hands, thus supporting the body

Sajdah: Prostration, in such a way that only the nose, forehead, both palms of hands, knees and toes are touching the ground

Qadah: Sitting in the last rakat of the prayer as long as reading "Ettehiyyatu."

Below, we will expand on ablution, Covering the Private Parts of Body and Qiblah.

What is covering the Private Parts of the Body?

Every person who is liable to religious duties needs to cover her/his private parts of her/his body that need to be covered during prayer and forbidden to exposure to others at other times. Dress for men should be such that it covers from the navel to the knees at least. The dress of the woman should be such that it covers her whole body, from head to feet, leaving only the face and the hands uncovered.

Ablution

Before offering prayers, a believer must first perform ablution. There are certain conditions of ablution. There are:

-Washing the face once

- Wash the hands up to the wrists once
- Wiping the one fourth of head
- Washing the two feet up to the ankles once

There are also sunnats of ablution. The sunnats of ablution that must be performed by a believer of perfected faith is as follows:

- Starting by saying "Bismillah."
- Washing the hands up to the wrists, three times
- Rinsing out the mouth with water, three times
- Cleansing the nostrils of the nose by sniffing water into them, three times
- Wetting the hidden skin below eyebrows, beard and mustache
- Wetting below the eyebrows
- Wetting the protruding part of the beard
- Cleansing the teeth, rubbing them with something if possible
- Wiping both sides of the head once
- Wiping both ears once
- Wiping the back of the neck once with three fingers joined
- Thoroughly wetting the spaces between fingers and toes
- Thoroughly wetting all the organs that needs to be washed.
- Making an inner intention while washing the face
- Washing and wiping both hands, mouth, nose, face, arms, head, ears and scruff and feet one after the other
- Rubbing the organs that are washed
- Washing every organ one after the other, without any interruption.

Qiblah

In the Qur'an, it is stated that Muslims have to face Kabah in Mecca while performing their prayers. It is sufficient for those who are not in Macca to stand in a direction that makes one say "he is standing in the direction of Qiblah."

The religion of Islam introduces Kabah as the center of worship of Allah and Muslims are commanded to turn to Qiblah wherever they

may be on earth, so that solidarity, unity and order can be maintained among them.

Praying in the direction of Qiblah is an opportunity to bring the memories of the Prophet Ibrahim (as) and the Prophet Isma'il (as), the noble messengers of Allah who built the Kabah, to mind and turning to Allah for worship. Also, turning in the direction of Kabah while eating and sleeping is good. In addition, the deceased are also buried with their faces turned to the **Qiblah**.

How is the Qiblah determined?

Qiblah is not the building of Kabah but the land on which it stands. That is to say, that space from the earth to the sky is the Qiblah. For this reason, if one is under the water or in the sky, he can still pray.

It is possible to determine the direction of the Qiblah through mathematical calculations. This can also be accomplished by a compass. Even if a very accurate determination of the Qiblah can not be made by calculations and equipment, one can have a strong conviction of the true direction, and this conviction is acceptable.

At places where equipment, compass, stars etc. are not available, believers must consult Muslims who know the direction of the Qiblah.

In moving vehicles such as ships or trains, one must stand in the direction of the Qiblah and put a compass next to the place of the sajdah. In this way, as the vehicle turns, the person must also turn to the Qiblah. Alternatively, another person may turn him in the right direction.

If a person performs his prayer without consulting a Muslim who knows the direction of the Qiblah, establishing the direction himself or exhausting all the other methods to learn it, he will not totally fulfill the obligations of prayer, even if he has coincidentally prayed in the right direction.

THE SUBMISSION OF PEOPLE OF PERFECTED FAITH TO DESTINY

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

"Indeed, all things We created with predestination." (Surat al-Qamar, 49) As the verse states, Allah has created every thing, living or non-living, with its own destiny. This destiny that Allah ordained is invariable; any good or evil that is preordained can in no way be prevented or diverted by anyone. The people of perfected faith are those who are aware that **"nothing can happen to them except what Allah has ordained for them."**

This fact is, in actuality, a source of infinite comfort. Each event on earth, whether important or insignificant, is planned, in all its details, by an infinite intelligence. Therefore, each one of them develops in a controlled way, to bring the best of benefits to believers.

Aware that Allah creates each event to the advantage of the religion and for the benefit of the believers' lives in the hereafter, the people of perfected faith live in sincere submission to Allah's eternal wisdom and the destiny He has preordained. As the verse, **"... Allah will not let the disbelievers triumph over the believers"** (Surat an-Nisa', 141) makes clear, all events culminate in a way which is, in all cases, in

favour of believers. "**... Allah will certainly help those who help Him,**" (Surat al-Hajj, 40) for Allah is the friend and protector of believers.

The people of perfected faith who take Allah as their Protector and put their trust in Him never despair of Allah's help. Especially in the case of a seemingly disadvantageous situation, they never swerve from this stance, aware that there is goodness in whatever happens.

The world is a setting in which Allah puts human beings to the test. The majority of the people display submission to Allah and feel grateful to Him when they receive some form of goodness or blessing, thinking that it is bestowed upon them by Him. But when it comes to an unfavourable event that is not going their way, they suddenly lose their submissive attitude. They display mistrust and ungratefulness that may at times be as serious as rebelling against Allah. This attitude is referred to in the Qur'an as follows:

... When We let a man taste Our mercy, he exults in it. But if something bad strikes him for what he has done, he is ungrateful. (Surat ash-Shura, 48)

The people of perfected faith, however, have grasped the secret revealed by the verse, "**... We put you to the test with both good and evil. And you will be returned to Us.**" (Surat al-Anbiya', 35) Never forgetting that any event that seems favourable or unfavourable is specially created to test their faith, they are never lacking in the submission they display to the will of Allah and their trust in their Creator never lessens. They know that any seemingly unfavourable event befalling them may, in actuality, produce very good results when the next life is considered, since Allah creates every event with many hidden purposes that man fails to see. This fact is recorded in a verse as follows:

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

As stressed in the above verse, an event initially deemed to be bad might do good to man, because Allah, the Possessor of infinite wisdom, has planned all events befalling him. Man's wisdom and faculty of thinking are limited. This being the case, what a man is expected to do is to submit himself to the destiny Allah has preordained with His eternal wisdom. That is what will benefit man in all cases.

An event might seem to be unfolding unfavourably; but never forget that it may well be a trial of one's submission to Allah. This event may turn out to be a great blessing at some time. People failing to put their trust in Allah initially forget this fact and thus suffer great loss. Those, on the other hand, having perfected faith, and displaying a good attitude, both gain the pleasure of Allah and ultimately enjoy the beneficial consequences of so doing.

The Qur'an provides us with some excerpts from the lives of those prophets, who became role models for all humanity in the perfected faith they displayed. One of these concerns the seemingly hopeless situation of the Prophet Musa (as), who led his people out of Egypt to escape the Pharaoh's oppression. As they reached the shore, Pharaoh and his army were almost upon them. This difficult situation, which in no way inspired the faintest hope of salvation, became a means by which those who sought goodness in destiny under all circumstances and the ones who doubted were set apart from each other. In the Qur'an, Allah relates this event as follows:

So they pursued them towards the east. And when the two hosts came into sight of one another, Musa's companions said, "We will surely be overtaken!" He said, "Never! My Lord is with me and He will guide me." So We bade Musa strike the sea with his staff, and it split in two, each part like a towering cliff. In between We made the others follow up. We rescued Musa and all those who were with him. Then We drowned the rest. There is certainly a Sign in that, yet most of them do not believe. (Surat ash-Shu'ara', 60-67)

As the verses also inform us, some of the Prophet Musa (as)'s people quailed and thought, "We will surely be overtaken." The Prophet Musa (as), however, did not despair for a moment. He remembered that Allah's help was at hand. Following this trial, Allah miraculously divided the waters of the sea, leaving a dry path in the middle, and guided them to the other shore. Meanwhile, the waters suddenly began to close in on the Pharaoh and his soldiers, who blindly set foot on the same path, and they all drowned. Once the submission of believers became obvious, Allah turned a bad situation into a great blessing.

In the Qur'an, Allah also gives the submission of Our Prophet (saas) to His will as an example:

If you (the believers) do not help him (the Prophet), Allah will help him as He did when the disbelievers drove him out and there were two of them in the Cave. He said to his companion, "Do not be despondent, Allah is with us." Then Allah sent down His serenity upon him and sent to his aid invisible warriors. He routed the unbeliever and exalted the word of Allah. Allah is Almighty, All-Wise. (Surat at-Tawba, 40)

In times of difficulty, the Prophet Muhammad (saas) put his trust in Allah and called upon his companions to be submissive to Him.

People of perfected faith take the Prophet (saas)'s good conduct as their example. Never swerving from this standard of moral perfection, they meet every difficulty they face with the words:

... "Allah is enough for me. All those who truly trust put their trust in Him." (Surat az-Zumar, 38)

THE OUTLOOK OF PEOPLE OF PERFECTED FAITH ON THE LIFE OF THIS WORLD

"The life of the world is nothing but a game and a diversion. The abode of the hereafter—that is truly Life, if they only knew it." (Surat al-'Ankabut, 64)

Allah has created this world as a temporary place to put man to the test, to purify him of his wrongdoings, to make him attain a soul worthy of paradise and to reveal the evil of disbelievers... Very few people, however, ponder upon and grasp this truth: it is they who are the people of perfected faith.

The outlook on life of a believer who has attained perfected faith is based on this very important fact which is stressed in the Qur'an. Unlike disbelievers, such a person does not feel attached to the life of this world. On the contrary, he strives for the life in the hereafter. Aware that he is created "to serve Allah alone", he remembers the verse, **"I only created jinn and man to worship Me."** (Surat adh-Dhariyat, 56)

As mentioned earlier, serving Allah is not limited to observing some forms of worship such as the regular saying of prayers or fasting. On the contrary, being Allah's servant encompasses the entire life of the individual. A believer of perfected faith is one who may be de-

fined as spending his entire life serving Allah. He lives for Allah alone, works for Allah alone, and devotes all his resources to the cause of Allah. He is truly aware that this world is but a place of trial. In the Qur'an, Allah draws attention to this: **"We created man from a mingled drop to test him, and We endowed him with hearing and sight."** (Surat al-Insan, 2)

Allah, moreover, draws attention to the deceptive nature of this world and warns people:

Mankind! Allah's promise is true. Do not let the life of the world delude you and do not let the Deluder delude you about Allah. (Surah Fatir, 5)

People of perfected faith are those who are not deceived by the beauties of the life of this world, no matter how enticing they may seem. This is because the book of Allah has shown them the true face of the life of this world. As the Qur'an puts it, the life of this world is "a game", "an amusement", "pomp", "boasting among people" and "a vying in the multiplication of wealth and children". The following analogy in the Qur'an makes the nature of this world clear:

Know that the life of this world is merely a game and a diversion, ostentation and a cause of boasting among yourselves and trying to outdo one another in wealth and children. It is like the plant-growth after the 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 pleasure. The life of this world is nothing but the enjoyment of delusion. (Surat al-Hadid, 20)

As this example reveals, nothing in this world can resist the detrimental effects of time; neither beautiful mansions, eye-catching cars, gorgeous landscapes, nor young people with brilliant careers can save themselves... Everything new wears out, young people grow old... Time crushes the most precious of good things and makes them

lose all their charm. The most cherished moments pass quickly and become history. After some time, everything good becomes a faint memory. In one verse, Allah informs us of the passions that make man feel attached to this world:

To mankind the love of worldly appetites is painted in glowing colours: women and children, and heaped-up mounds of gold and silver, and horses with fine markings, and livestock and fertile farmland. All that is merely the enjoyment of the life of this world. The best homecoming is in the presence of Allah. (Surah Al 'Imran, 14)

The common trait of the worldly blessings stressed in the verse above is their temporary and limited nature. For this reason, nothing exists in this world to which man can greedily attach himself. Neither the physical make-up of man, which is simply of bones and flesh, nor other material things, all of which are very vulnerable and ultimately perishable, allow man to attach himself to this world. The blessings we see around us are but imperfect copies of the blessings of paradise and are created with the purpose of foreshadowing the hereafter.

People of perfected faith who have grasped this important fact receive the best benefits possible in this world. But there is one essential difference between them and those who are allured by this world; they don't feel greedy for these blessings. On the contrary, they feel grateful to Allah for what He has bestowed upon them, because, they know that the real owner of all things on earth is Allah.

Those who assume that they possess property, beauty or power in fact deceive themselves, because it is not they who have created all these things. They are incapable of creating even a single one of them. Furthermore, they cannot prevent them from disappearing. They are beings who are created themselves... One day, they will certainly taste death, leaving behind everything that belongs to this life. Awareness of the verse, **"These people love this fleeting world and have put the thought of a Momentous Day behind their backs"**.

(Surat al-Insan, 27) is what distinguishes people of perfected faith from those who live in a state of heedlessness. People of perfected faith prepare themselves for the next life rather than for this one. The Qur'an records the prayers of such people:

And there are others who say, "Our Lord, give us good in the world, and good in the hereafter, and safeguard us from the punishment of the Fire." (Surat al-Baqara, 201)

In return for their sincere behaviour and prayers, Allah gives them the blessings of this world and the hereafter alike. Allah gives the glad tidings of this in the Qur'an as follows:

So Allah gave them the reward of this world and the best reward of the hereafter. Allah loves the righteous. (Surah Al 'Imran, 148)

There is good news for them in the life of this world and in the hereafter. There is no changing the words of Allah. That is the great victory! (Surah Yunus, 64)

THE OUTLOOK OF PEOPLE OF PERFECTED FAITH ON DEATH

"Every soul shall taste death. You shall receive your rewards only on the Day of Resurrection. Anyone who is spared the Fire and admitted to the Garden will surely triumph. The life of this world is just the enjoyment of delusion." (Surah Al 'Imran, 185)

Death will come upon every man existing in this world at a predestined time in compliance with the verse, **"Every soul shall taste death. In the end you shall return to Us"**. (Surat al-'Ankabut, 57) Nothing a man possesses, neither property, fortune, status, fame, grandeur nor good looks can ward off death. Death is a law of Allah; no one can escape this absolute and unavoidable fact. As the verse, **"Wherever you are, death will catch up with you, even if you are in impregnable fortresses..."** (Surat an-Nisa', 78) reminds us, there has never been anyone who could succeed in escaping from death.

This fact is an issue about which people of perfected faith attain a profound understanding. Once they comprehend the certainty and closeness of death, they understand that they need to prepare for the life after death. Fearing an imminent death that may come upon them before attaining the moral perfection Allah demands from His servants and earning His approval, they embrace the religion of Allah with great sincerity and enthusiasm. They lose no time in drawing

nearer to Allah and earning His approval, since they realise that they may meet death at any moment. The prayer of the people of perfected faith in the Qur'an is as follows:

... Our Lord, give us patience and take us back to You as Muslims. (Surat al-A'raf, 126)

... Originator of the heavens and earth, You are my Protector in this world and the Next. So take me as a Muslim at my death and unite me with those who are sincere. (Surah Yusuf, 101)

The people of perfected faith accept death with full submission, since it is a law of Allah. Over and above this, they consider it as a gate through which to attain paradise. Meanwhile, they never forget that they must strive hard to avoid the punishment of hell and earn the approval of Allah. Believers unceasingly feel fear and hope until they meet death. They hope for paradise because they believe. Likewise, they fear hell since they never find themselves self-sufficient. Their fear of evil reckoning, the good behaviour they display and the good results they attain are stated in the Qur'an as follows:

Those who fulfill the covenant of Allah and do not break their pledge; those who join what Allah has commanded to be joined and are afraid of their Lord and dread the terrors of an evil reckoning; those who are steadfast in seeking the face of their Lord, and attend to their prayers 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—The Gardens of Eden which they will enter, along with all of their parents, wives and children who were true. Angels will enter to welcome them from every gate: "Peace be upon you because of your steadfastness! How wonderful is the reward of the Ultimate Abode!" (Surat ar-Ra'd, 20-24)

THE BELIEF IN THE HEREAFTER OF THOSE OF PERFECTED FAITH

"Those who have faith in what has been sent down to you and what was sent down before you, and are certain about the hereafter."

(Surat al-Baqara, 4)

The severity of the pain and punishment experienced in hell is incomparable to any pain suffered in this world. The torment of fire is of various kinds. The people of hell constantly scream to be saved from fire, they are crammed into narrow places; their hands tied to their necks, they writhe in pain. They are whipped with iron whips. Their hunger and thirst become unbearable. Their pain never abates. This dire situation is exacerbated by profound regret, a feeling of desperation and hopelessness. They wish to disappear for all eternity but to no avail. They are addressed as follows:

Roast in it! And bear it patiently or do not bear it patiently. It makes no difference either way. You are simply being repaid for what you did. (Surat at-Tur, 16)

People of perfected faith continuously contemplate the torment of hell depicted in the Qur'an and turn towards Allah. One of perfected faith always keeps in mind that he can, at any moment, meet the angels of death and thus pass on to the hereafter. His decisions, atti-

tudes, behaviour and the way he speaks reflect his commitment to being worthy of paradise and staying away from hellfire, because no one in this world can be exempt from divine retribution.

Aware that "**scales of justice**" (Surat al-Anbiya', 47) will be set up on the Day of Judgement, he does not want to miss an atom's weight of good. Allah has warned people on this subject as follows:

That Day people will emerge segregated to see the results of their actions. Whoever does an atom's weight of good will see it. Whoever does an atom's weight of evil will see it. (Surat az-Zilzal, 6-8)

Similarly, he strictly abstains from any act that would incur the disapproval of Allah, because each act he commits will draw him closer either to paradise or to hell. Nothing exists beyond these two places.

People of perfected faith who have a certain awareness of these facts feel constant "fear and hope" throughout their lives. They never forget the state of people awaiting to be taken either to paradise or to hell on the Day of Judgement.

How would someone behave if he were at the crossroads of paradise and hell right at this moment and realised that his eternal life would begin in earnest after his being judged?

Being right on the verge of hell, would he ever dare to display a displeasing attitude, which would immediately be taken into account?

Certainly not! On the contrary, anybody in such a dire situation would do anything to attain paradise and would draw on his wisdom and conscience to display the attitude most pleasing to Allah. Even a person who had never engaged in such a serious effort throughout his life, deeming the Day of Judgement distant from himself, would feel great panic and strive to make up for his misdeeds. But on that day, no time is granted to make amends. The time granted terminates with death and records are thereupon finalised. From that moment on, no one will be requited for anything other than what he has done.

Having an unshakable faith in the hereafter, paradise and hell, and

keeping their minds occupied with the remembrance of death, account for the unflagging efforts of people of perfected faith. To avoid fear and regret in the hereafter, they consider themselves as if awaiting Allah's verdict on them on the Day of Judgement at every moment of their lives. They prepare themselves for the afterlife with clear consciousness and faith, in the manner of one who has seen the beauty of paradise and the horrors of hell with his own eyes and returned to this life. Therefore, in the face of each situation, they strive to display the best attitude, since they know that any minor heedlessness or unscrupulousness may set them on a course of regret for which there is no remedy.

To conclude, the utter conviction of those of perfected faith ensures an unswerving commitment to draw nearer to Allah and to stand in fear of Him. In the light of the verse, **"So fear Allah, as much as you are able to..."** (Surat at-Taghabun, 16), people of perfected faith fear Allah as much as they can and hope to be worthy of paradise.

THE MORAL PERFECTION CONFERRED BY PERFECTED FAITH

*"Indeed, you are truly exalted in character."
(Surat al-Qalam, 4)*

Every human being who wholeheartedly believes in Allah fulfils His commands unconditionally. This commitment ensures the formation of a form of moral perfection. It is meticulous observance of the commands of the Qur'an that accounts for this moral perfection which is peculiar to those of perfected faith.

Man can attain all good and precious qualities only by complying with the commands of the Qur'an. In the Qur'an, Allah commands righteousness, justice, patience, self-sacrifice, loyalty, devotion, commitment, submission, humility, tolerance, mercy, compassion, keeping anger under control and various other moral traits. Displaying this moral perfection as presented in the Qur'an depends on one's fear of Allah and thus following the voice of one's conscience. The more a person fears Allah and meticulously complies with what his conscience enjoins, the more obedient he becomes to Allah's commands. A person lacking in these qualities, however, fails to show commitment to live by the morals of the Qur'an. He may display some of the moral attributes that Allah approves but, when he encounters situa-

tions in which he feels his interests are at stake, he may well become a totally different person.

Such situations clearly reveal the superiority of those who have attained maturity of faith. One of perfected faith unflinchingly displays moral perfection at every moment of his life. The greatest patience, the highest degree of self-sacrifice and submission, the strongest love for Allah are manifest in his behaviour. These qualities make him a distinguished person. In the words of the Qur'an, he becomes a **"leader (i.e., example) for the righteous."** (Surat al-Furqan, 74)

The major goal of every Muslim is to attain such moral perfection. Setting limits for oneself leads man to be contented with himself, which is an attitude a man should strenuously avoid. In one verse, Allah stresses that the feeling of self-sufficiency is a serious depravation:

No indeed! Truly man transgresses all bounds in seeing himself as self-sufficient. (Surat al-Alaq, 6-7)

For this reason, everybody who has faith in Allah and the hereafter must make his major goal to live by the values of the Qur'an in the best way possible. Only one with such a noble goal can hope to attain paradise and be united with the prophets, the saints, the martyrs and the truthful. Allah informs us that only strict obedience makes man successful in this noble effort:

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

In the following pages, we will dwell on this kind of moral perfection of which Allah gives a detailed account in the Qur'an and see the great zeal and enthusiasm man should show in order to be successful in this cause.

The Conscience of The People of Perfected Faith

From the day a man is born, a voice that always perpetually whispers evil accompanies him. This whisper belongs to one's lower self (*an-nafs*). Next to this voice, however, there exists an infallible voice that forbids evil and guides him to the right path. This voice that leads man to righteousness is called "conscience". Allah introduces to us these two aspects of the self as follows:

By the soul and the One Who proportioned it and inspired it with knowledge of depravity and with its sense of duty, he purifies it has succeeded, he who covers it up has failed. (Surat ash-Shams, 7-10)

As stated in the above verse, Allah also inspires man to avoid the evil of his self. This inspiration is provided through the conscience. Therefore, conscience is, in a sense, the voice of Allah that summons believers to what is good and right. For this reason, the conscience is a key to perfected faith.

Those of perfected faith unceasingly give ear to this voice. They have a quite different understanding of conscience from that prevalent in society. Helping needy and old people or making contributions to aid organisations is generally regarded as a sign of a good conscience. But except for such examples, the conscience is excluded from almost all other fields of life; people generally do not feel the need to employ their conscience and they lead their lives in compliance with their lower self.

Those who heed their conscience as commanded in the Qur'an are only those who are of perfected faith: throughout their lives, they listen to their conscience on every issue. Drawing near to Allah and earning His approval being their sole goal in life, they unceasingly bow to their conscience, whatever the conditions or circumstances may be. Neither exhaustion, sleeplessness nor the rush of daily life distracts them from following this voice. Their busiest moments or

hard times are no exceptions; a single warning from their conscience suffices to make them immediately see the good and turn to it.

An example will clarify this issue: Think of a believer who has just returned from a long tiresome journey; having had only a few hours sleep, he is exhausted and hungry. Just at the time he is about to rest to regain his strength, he meets a person in a desperate situation who asks for help. This believer feels no hesitation in setting aside all his personal needs and rushes to his assistance. If he is physically too weak to help himself, then he finds someone who will replace him. Meanwhile, in return for all this help, he avoids any such attitude as would arouse feelings of indebtedness in the other person; he does not stoop to mentioning his needs or the sacrifices he has made. That is because, he has performed all these services to earn Allah's approval. He does not expect anything in return. The attitude of such people is stated in the Qur'an as follows:

We feed you only for the sake of Allah. We do not want any repayment from you or any thanks. Truly, We fear from our Lord a day of anguish and of woe. (Surat al-Insan, 9-10)

This is the understanding of conscience of a person of perfected faith. No matter how dire the circumstances may be, he does not swerve from following his conscience and never does a good deed in expectation of a reward. The thought that Allah is aware of that deed is sufficient for him.

In the case of one who lacks the morality conferred by perfected faith, every inconvenience becomes a legitimate excuse that makes him ignore the right option to which his conscience guides him. Physical needs such as sleeplessness, exhaustion or hunger may well change his attitude, turning him into an intolerant, nervous and bad-tempered person. At such times, let alone helping someone, he becomes rude to the people around him who try to help him. If he agrees to help another—which is often an exceptional situation—he

definitely grumbles about it, reproaches the person and does much to make him feel obliged.

As is evident, there is a wide gulf between the morality and attitudes of those of perfected faith and those bereft of such noble character traits. This distinction becomes obvious at every moment of their lives and will make a considerable difference in the rewards they will receive in the hereafter.

The Patience of The People of Perfected Faith

For a person of perfected faith, the scope of patience is not limited to enduring difficulties and problems with calmness. In the light of the verse, "**You who believe, be steadfast; be supreme in steadfastness...**" (Surah Al 'Imran, 200), throughout his life, he shows an undeviating commitment to meticulously fulfilling all the commands of the Qur'an, to avoiding what is unlawful, to displaying moral perfection in every situation, without becoming daunted or losing heart. In short, he resolutely shows the patience and good manners prescribed by the religion. That is because one can develop these noble character traits only if one makes a steady effort. It is the people of perfected faith who exhibit patience when making such efforts. As the Prophet Muhammad (saas) informed Muslims in the following hadith, they know that patience is a gift for them from Allah:

*"No-one can be given a better and more abundant gift than patience."
(Bukhârî and Muslim)*

That is why patience permeates the entire life of a man of perfected faith and manifests itself in all his acts and attitudes. A man of perfected faith shows profound patience in compliance with the command of our Lord, "**So be patient with gracious patience.**" (Surat al-Ma'arij, 5) He shows patience in humility and becomes the most humble person; he shows patience in spending for the cause of Allah and becomes the most generous person; he shows patience in not pre-

ferring his own self and becomes the most self-sacrificing person...

The following example in the Qur'an about the patience evinced in displaying moral perfection will give us a better understanding of this concept:

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

As the verse points out, Allah commands man to respond to an evil act in the best manner possible and stresses that only those who are patient can be successful in doing so. This example clearly shows that if moral perfection is to be displayed, it is important to be patient.

Never feeling frustrated in the face of events that are seemingly negative is another attribute of a believer of perfected faith. Alternatively, when he has a blessing bestowed upon him he never becomes spoiled.

An individual can be very generous, self-sacrificing and very humble at certain times of his life. Or, he may remain strong in the face of hardships. However, failure to demonstrate these favourable character traits under certain conditions, and thus having some limits or weak points, may invalidate one's preceding efforts to conducting oneself correctly. One must incorporate all these values in one's character. These qualities must be far from being imitative, fake, shallow or temporary; they must be components of an established Qur'anic structure. Allah also states that consistently displayed good values that have become an integral part of one's character are worthy in Allah's sight: "... **But, in your Lord's sight, right actions which are lasting bring a better reward and are a better basis for hope of salvation.**" (Surat al-Kahf, 46)

Patience is one of the most important signs of a believer's sincerity and efforts to draw near to Allah: one can only show patience in relation with his sincerity and closeness to Allah. Those of perfected faith who are committed to displaying these traits compete with other believers in being patient. If making a sacrifice is in question, they conduct themselves most correctly and bring all their material and physical resources into play. Attention is drawn to this trait in a verse which reads: "**...those who are steadfast in seeking the face of their Lord ...**" (Surat ar-Ra'd, 22) Encountering a difficulty, such people turn to Allah without harbouring any feelings of distress or uncertainty in their hearts. This was also expressed by our Prophet (saas):

"Wondrous are the believer's affairs. For him there is good in all his affairs, and this is so only for the believer. When something pleasing happens to him, he is grateful, and that is good for him; and when something displeasing happens to him, he is patient, and that is good for him."
(Muslim)

People often misinterpret patience and think of it as "putting up with something." This is but a distant connotation of patience experienced and felt by a man of perfected faith, since "putting up with something" is an obligatory form of endurance shown in the face of a distressing and painful situation. The patience shown for the cause of Allah, however, is not a source of distress, but a great cause of pleasure and happiness. A man of perfected faith shows patience in order to earn the approval of Allah, and thus does not become depressed. On the contrary, with the hope of receiving the blessings and rewards Allah promises in return for his patience, he derives great pleasure from it. Allah informs us in the Qur'an that patience is distressing for disbelievers:

Seek help in steadfastness and prayer. But that is a very hard thing, except for the humble. (Surat al-Baqara, 45)

The patience of one of perfected faith is so profound that his pa-

tience and imploration never wavers, even though he cannot eliminate a problem or attain his wishes until death overtakes him. He knows that Allah keeps everything under His control and that he will earn great rewards in return for his patience. For this reason, he is content with Allah no matter which situations he encounters, he believes in His eternal compassion and mercy, and puts His trust in Him. If Allah does not answer his call immediately, he certainly knows a greater goodness and beauty are hidden in this. He never forgets that Allah answers all prayers and gives an excellent reward to those who are patient. And His promise is true. One verse reads: "... **And whose words could be truer than Allah's?**" (Surat an-Nisa', 87) A believer who is aware of this fact thinks that Allah will probably give him more blessings but, before that, He wants him to grow more mature. Through this, He might well be putting his loyalty and determination to the test. Believers who are exemplary in their submission are referred to in the Qur'an as: "**those who, when disaster strikes them, say, 'We belong to Allah and to Him we will return.'**" (Surat al-Baqara, 156)

Indeed, Allah advises His servants to be patient in the face of the hardships they encounter and gives them the glad tidings that they will eventually reap great benefits:

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

A believer exercises patience throughout his life. He obeys the command of his Lord: "**Be steadfast for your Lord**" (Surat al-Muddaththir, 7) at every moment of his life. Ultimately he will meet His Lord and be rewarded with His paradise. The angels at the gates of paradise will address him as follows:

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

The Understanding of Compassion by The People of Perfected Faith

*"...To be one of those who have faith and urge each other to steadfastness and urge each other to compassion."
(Surat al-Balad, 17)*

Man is, by nature, inclined to take pleasure from living by the values of the Qur'an and feels at ease with this set of ethics: **"So as a pure natural believer, stand firm in your devotion to the true faith, Allah's natural pattern on which He made mankind ..."** (Surat ar-Rum, 30) This being the case, a man of perfected faith naturally possesses the kind of compassion and mercy enjoined by the Qur'an. When believers adhere to the values of the Qur'an, He makes manifest His beautiful names, ar-Ra'uf (the Kind) and ar-Rahman (the All Merciful) to them. Allah is the Most Merciful of the merciful, and the Most Compassionate. Allah draws attention to His infinite mercy and compassion:

... He is All-Gentle, Most Merciful to them. (Surat at-Tawba, 117)

... He is the Most Merciful of the merciful. (Surah Yusuf, 92)

... Allah is All-Compassionate to mankind and Most Merciful. (Surat al-Hajj, 65)

Allah's Messenger (saas) described Allah's compassion to believers in this way:

"Allah shows compassion only to those among His slaves who are compassionate." (Bukhari, Muslim)

The people of perfected faith, having this moral perfection, are compassionate and merciful towards people. But their understanding of compassion is very different from that which is prevalent in society. Since their compassion is a manifestation of Allah's compassion, it takes a form that is worthy of Allah's pleasure and is in compliance

with the Qur'an. They know that an understanding of compassion shaped by the criteria of a non-Qur'anic system would be an "evil" compassion.

For instance, while helping someone, whether this help will be for the cause of the good or for a purpose that will displease Allah serves as the main criterion for the man of perfected faith. If this help is asked for a rightful purposes, then the compassion of a man of perfected faith steers him into providing all forms of help. But he would never agree to help someone who would make use of this help to commit an unlawful act. This is the true compassion with which Allah is pleased. Hindering a person from a mistake and guiding him to the right path is true goodness and compassion, for which the potential wrongdoer will be truly grateful in the hereafter, though he may fail to grasp its importance in this world.

Believers do not show compassion and mercy to those who have made it their major goal to oppose the values of religion. The criterion that the Qur'an lays down on this subject is as follows:

Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah, and those who are with him are fierce to the disbelievers, merciful to one another... (Surat al-Fath, 29)

Believers show compassion only to "believers", the devout servants of Allah. Their attitude towards disbelievers, on the other hand, is very firm and resolute. They do not show them compassion, since this is the kind of "evil compassion" we mentioned above. The attitude such people assume towards believers is made clear in the verse: **"If they come upon you, they will be your enemies and stretch out their hands and tongues against you with evil intent, and they would dearly love you to become disbelievers."** (Surat al-Mumtahana, 2) This being the case, it would obviously be unwise to show mercy to one who harbours deep hostility towards believers and seeks an opportunity to show it.

Beside this, the mercy and compassion people of faith show to other

believers is truly exemplary and unique. This compassion is accompanied by humane qualities such as self-sacrifice, considerateness, forgivingness, love and respect. People of perfected faith recognize any material, physical or spiritual needs of others even before they express them, and lose no time in meeting these needs, due to the deep compassion they feel for them. As is in every other subject, our Prophet (saas) set the best example with the moral perfection he displayed in terms of compassion and mercy. The mercy and compassion our Prophet (saas) felt for Muslims is described in the verse as follows:

A Messenger has come to you from among yourselves. Your suffering is distressing to him; he is deeply concerned for you; he is gentle and merciful to the believers. (Surat at-Tawba, 128)

As is seen in the above verse, the mercy and compassion our Prophet (saas) felt for believers was so profound that their suffering greatly distressed him. This is the understanding of compassion for which people of perfected faith strive.

The Self-sacrifice of The People of Perfected Faith

Only fearing Allah and having faith in the hereafter lead one to make sacrifices without expecting any reward in return; the God fearing expect their rewards only from Allah. For this reason, unlike those who pay no heed to the values of religion, those of perfected faith make no distinction between people or issues while making a sacrifice.

In an unenlightened society, however, the majority of the people lack a subtle understanding of sacrifice. The major reason is their selfishness, which is a character trait that originates from being distant from the values of Islam. In a society distant from the values of religion, everyone is chiefly or is solely concerned with himself and simply ignores the needs and priorities of others.

The attitude of a man of perfected faith is again entirely different; he is, above all, someone who has purified his self of such base desires.

Indeed, only a believer who has overcome the boundless desires of his self and has succeeded in controlling them can be self-sacrificing and considerate in the real sense. Indeed, perfected faith entails such moral perfection that believers hold the interests and needs of their brothers dearer than their own. This is the true faith, true submission and true conscience. The Qur'an provides the following example:

Those who were already settled in the abode, and had already embraced the faith, before they came, love those who have sought refuge with them and do not find it in their hearts to covet what they have been given and prefer them to themselves, even if they themselves are needy. It is those who are safeguarded from the avarice of their own selves who are successful. (Surat al-Hashr, 9)

As stated in the above verse, even if a man of perfected faith is in need himself, he prefers to meet the needs and priorities of his brothers. Furthermore, these noble preferences are not limited to some particular occasions; they stem from an attitude that permeates his entire life. Even if he is hungry, sleepless and exhausted, literally in a desperate situation physically, he gives priority to the needs of other believers and feels no difficulty in setting aside his own needs. While doing this, he never feels distress. Moreover, he meticulously avoids doing anything to make the other party feel grateful.

When people who do not live by the values of religion make a compulsory sacrifice, they certainly make the object of their "generosity" feel their discontent. They make evident the anger or impatience they feel deep inside by an indignant glance or a churlish attitude. However, a man of true faith never stoops to displaying a surly attitude to make the other party notice his sacrifice. On the contrary, he conducts himself most nobly and renounces his rights willingly, since Allah's knowledge of that sacrifice is enough for him. For this reason, most of the time, the other party never feels that a sacrifice has been made.

The Humbleness of The People of Perfected Faith

"... Your God is One God, so submit to Him. Give good news to the humble-hearted." (Surat al-Hajj, 34)

The Qur'anic sense of humbleness is acknowledgement of one's status as an imperfect servant of Allah and conducting one's entire life in acceptance of this fact. The opposite attitude is unthinkable for a man who can appreciate his Creator. He is the One Who creates man, Who gives and takes his life and Who regulates all affairs. There is no god but Him, He is the All-Merciful, the Most Merciful. He encompasses everything, He has power over everything, He is the One Who creates destiny, He it is Who hears, sees and knows everything. Allah is exalted above all things. He does not need anything. He neither errs nor forgets.

Man, on the other hand, is an imperfect being who is not capable of creating anything. Furthermore, he is himself created and does not know anything other than what Allah has taught him. He relies on the thousands of blessings Allah bestows upon him at every moment. Even if only one of these blessings is lacking, he becomes weak and desperate. He is an imperfect being who continuously needs Allah's blessings to survive.

Not being humble is against the very nature of a man who is a weak and imperfect being before Allah. Therefore, a man of perfected faith never loses sight of his own weakness. This consciousness which he builds through contemplation, is what imbues him with a humble spirit, and this manifests itself in his face, looks, conversations, as well as in each of his character traits. For instance, only a humble person can take warning. He likes to hear any criticism or advice that comes from believers. Indeed, a man of deep faith does not even object to criticism of something about which he is most meticulous; he takes the advice and strives for the betterment of his acts. When he is told he is

wrong about something when he is actually right, he meets this criticism with maturity, as in the example of the Prophet Yusuf (as):

I do not say that I myself was free from blame. The self indeed commands one to commit evil acts—except for one to whom my Lord has shown mercy... (Surah Yusuf, 53)

Because such an understanding of humbleness hinders him from being self-sufficient and thus boasting of his intelligence, he benefits from all warnings, advice and criticism.

One who, failing to remember his imperfection, boasts of his intelligence and haughtily turns away from Allah, assumes an attitude contrary to his very nature. Allah draws attention to the fact that this is an unattainable desire: **"Certainly those who argue about the Signs of Allah without any authority having come to them have nothing in their breasts except for pride which they will never be able to vindicate..."** (Surat al-Mu'min, 56) Allah does not love anyone who is boastful:

Do not avert your face from people out of haughtiness and do not strut about arrogantly on the earth. Allah does not love anyone who is vain or boastful. (Surah Luqman, 18)

The Prophet Muhammad (saas) also recommended believers to show humility towards one another:

"(Allah) has revealed to me that you should adopt humility so that no one oppresses another." (Riyadh-us-Salaheen)

The "vain" and "boastful" have forgotten their creation and their physical and intellectual weaknesses before Allah, which are attributes of the devil as described in the Qur'an. Allah created Adam and commanded all His angels to prostrate themselves before him. Deeming himself superior to man, the devil rebelled against Allah and disobeyed this command. This wicked attitude of the devil is described in the Qur'an:

Your Lord said to the angels, "I am going to create a human being out of clay. When I have formed him and breathed My

Spirit into him, fall down in prostration to him!" So all the angels prostrated themselves, except for Iblis, who was arrogant for he was one of the disbelievers. He said, "Iblis, what prevented you from bowing to what I created with My own Hands? Were you overcome by arrogance or do you think he is beneath you?" He said, "I am better than him. You created me from fire, but You created him from clay." He (Allah) said, "Begone! You are accursed! My curse shall remain upon you until the Day of Reckoning." (Surah Sad, 71-78)

This is the situation of those who treat people with arrogance because they turn away from Allah. Highly assured of their own capabilities, they do not credit the opinion of others. They insist on their own way of thinking, which is an inclination that causes them to drift away from the values of the Qur'an. More importantly, those failing to recognise their weakness before Allah will be sent to hell:

But as for those who reject Our Signs and are arrogant regarding them, shall be the Companions of the Fire, remaining in it timelessly, for ever. (Surat al-A'raf, 36)

People of perfected faith, on the other hand, will be rewarded with paradise, since they avoid such a reprehensible attitude:

As for the abode of the hereafter—We shall grant it to those who do not seek to exalt themselves this world or to cause corruption in it. Those who are righteous shall have a blessed end. (Surat al-Qasas, 83)

The Forgivingness of The People of Perfected Faith

"... (Those who) pardon other people..."
(Surah Al 'Imran, 134)

Man is prone to make mistakes. He is here in this world to be tested. He can only grow mature as he internalises the values of the Qur'an

and purifies himself of his mistakes. This is how he attains moral perfection. Indeed, the verses about repentance in the Qur'an indicate the weakness of man. Allah, the Creator of man, best knows these weaknesses and states that He will forgive those who do evil in ignorance but who then immediately repent and make amends for their mistakes:

Allah accepts the repentance only of those who do evil in ignorance and then quickly turn to Him in repentance. Allah will pardon such people. Allah is All-Knowing and All-Wise. (Surat an-Nisa', 17)

If an individual is sincerely guided by his own wisdom and conscience, but still cannot help committing a mistake, then he may hope for Allah's forgiveness. In many verses, Allah informs us that He is forgiving and merciful. One verse reads:

Tell My servants that I am the Ever-Forgiving, the Most Merciful. (Surat al-Hijr, 49)

As the verse informs us, Allah forgives human mistakes. This being the case, it would be improper for a man not to forgive mistakes. Besides, Allah advised believers to be forgiving:

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

In compliance with Allah's commands, people of perfected faith assume a forgiving manner towards believers. Undoubtedly, this is a sign of a superior conscience. That is because, ordinarily, people find it difficult to forgive a mistake since a mistake often causes material or spiritual damage. They cannot even control their anger and feel no hesitation in showing it. But as the verse maintains, believers "... **control their rage and pardon other people ...**" (Surah Al 'Imran, 134)

In compliance with Allah's command, believers do not give in their selves but prefer to forgive. The greatest favour they can do to someone who makes a mistake, they know, is to urge him to do better. One verse says; "**And remind them, for indeed, the reminder benefits the believers.**" (Surat adh-Dhariyat, 55)

In another verse Allah says, "... **They should rather pardon and overlook. Would you not love Allah to forgive you? Allah is Ever-Forgiving and Most Merciful.**" (Surat an-Nur, 22) When a believer makes a mistake and sincerely regrets it, he wants Allah and other believers to forgive him and wants to earn their trust. Encountering a forgiving attitude makes him realise how a great blessing forgiveness is from Allah and what a comfort this is. For this reason, people of perfected faith forgive others and want to be forgiven by others. Surely, this is the attitude that earns the approval of Allah:

... But if you pardon and exonerate and forgive, Allah is Ever-Forgiving and Most Merciful. (Surat at-Taghabun, 14)

The Understanding of Justice **by The People of Perfected Faith**

*"Allah commands justice and doing good and giving to relatives.
And He forbids indecency and doing wrong and tyranny.
He warns you so that hopefully you will pay heed."
(Surat an-Nahl, 90)*

In the Qur'an, Allah commands believers not to diverge from justice whatever the circumstances may be:

You who believe! Be upholders of justice, bearing witness for Allah alone, even against yourselves or your parents and relatives. Whether they are rich or poor, Allah is well able to look after them. Do not follow your own desires and deviate from the truth. If you twist or turn away, Allah is aware of what you do. (Surat an-Nisa', 135)

People of perfected faith meticulously comply with this command and uphold justice even if its consequences could afflict them or their loved ones. They never forget that they shall have to give account of their deeds in the hereafter and that they will be faced there with

every single good or wicked deed they committed. For this reason, none of the goals they are likely to attain in this world seem better than the approval of Allah they hope to attain in the hereafter.

One of the most important attributes of sincere believers is that they have chosen the way of "those who are the forerunners". For this reason, they always display the attitude with which they hope to earn Allah's pleasure. They act with the awareness that "*for every day on which the sun rises there is a reward of a charitable gift (sadaqa) for the one who establishes justice among people.*" (Bukhari) as stated by Allah's Messenger (saas). Therefore, neither family ties nor their worldly benefits hinder them from exercising justice. In the Qur'an, Allah commands as follows:

Allah commands you to return to their owners the things you hold on trust and, when you judge between people, to judge with justice. How excellent is what Allah exhorts you to do! Allah is All-Hearing and All-Seeing. (Surat an-Nisa', 58)

In another verse, Allah commands believers to be just even towards those for whom they feel enmity, and thus not to swerve from righteousness and piety:

You who believe! Show integrity for the sake of Allah, bearing witness with justice. Do not let hatred for others to turn you away from justice. Be just. That is closer to true piety. Fear Allah. Allah is aware of all that you do. (Surat al-Ma'ida, 8)

Having these attributes, the people of perfected faith, who meticulously comply with the commands of Allah, become distinctive by the noble attitude they assume. The members of a society where the values of religion are not observed are consumed with the desire to take revenge upon those against whom they nurse anger and hold grudges. They cease to appeal to their consciences and their lower selves steer their decisions. The anger they feel and the grudges they bear deep inside obscure their reason and judgement. Therefore, they often take unsound decisions.

To attain an understanding of justice in the Qur'anic sense, the individual should be able to resist the desires of his lower self and follow his conscience. Besides, he should have the willpower to restrain his anger and think in compliance with the Qur'anic rationale.

Indeed, people of perfected faith possess all these characteristics. In accordance with the verse, "... Allah loves those who are even-handed." (Surat al-Hujurat, 9), they never diverge from justice.

The People of Perfected Faith Call to The Good

*"Let there be a community among you who call to the good,
and enjoin the right, and forbid the wrong.
They are the ones who have success."
(Surah Al 'Imran, 104)*

The people of perfected faith meticulously comply with this command of Allah. They "enjoin the right and forbid the wrong" throughout their lives. The Qur'an provides us with the accurate meaning of "enjoining the right and forbidding the wrong".

"Enjoining the good" in the Qur'anic sense is to teach a person the attributes of Allah, and make him understand that he needs to love Allah and fear Him. It is to make him comprehend that the hereafter is an absolute truth and that he will be judged according to the Qur'an. It is to encourage him to listen to his conscience and become a sincere, wholehearted, loving, respectful, compassionate, merciful, tolerant, forgiving and self-sacrificing believer. In brief, "enjoining the good" is to exhort others to truly live by the values of the Qur'an. This is real goodness. That is because, such encouragement will ensure the best life both in this world and beyond and save a potential wrongdoer from eternal torment in hell.

"Forbidding the wrong", on the other hand, is to deter a person from following Satan, to make him purify himself of selfish desires,

insincerity, hypocrisy, haughtiness, arrogance against Allah, unscrupulousness, and the assumption of an attitude that will displease Allah.

This is how the people of perfected faith call one another to accept the truth. Allah defines such people in the Qur'an as follows:

They believe in Allah and the Last Day, and enjoin the right and forbid the wrong, and compete in doing good. They are among the true believers. (Surah Al 'Imran, 114)

In return for their efforts, they do not expect any rewards. They aim only to comply with the commands of the Qur'an and thus to attain the pleasure of our Lord. Throughout history, Allah's messengers admonished their people as the Prophet Nuh (as) did:

I do not ask you for any recompense for this. For none can reward me but the Lord of all the worlds. (Surat ash-Shu'ara', 109)

Another example mentioned in the Qur'an is the Prophet Musa (as)'s address to Pharaoh. Allah commands thus:

When his Lord called out to him in the holy valley of Tuwa saying: "Go to Pharaoh—he has overstepped the limits—and say: 'Do you resolve to purify yourself? I will guide you to your Lord, so that you may fear Him.'" Then he showed Pharaoh the Great Sign. But he denied it and disobeyed, and then he hastily backed away. But then he rallied all his men and called out, saying, "I am your Lord Most High!" So Allah made an example of him, meting out punishment to him in this world and the hereafter. There is certainly a lesson in that for those who fear Allah. (Surat an-Nazi'at, 16-26)

As described in the verses above, the Prophet Musa (as) called Pharaoh to believe in Allah but he refused outright and rebelled against Allah. This reprehensible attitude of Pharaoh exonerated Musa (as) from his responsibilities towards him, since he was only held responsible for enjoining right and forbidding evil. It is Allah Who guides a man's heart to the true path or leads him astray.

However, a believer's duty to enjoin the good is not limited solely to calling people to the right path. They also enjoin the good upon other believers to urge them to attain a deeper understanding of the values of the Qur'an, to purify them of their mistakes and to make them display moral perfection. A believer enjoins good upon his brothers and sisters and forbids evil. He wants them to attain the approval of Allah and be rewarded by being ranked the highest in paradise.

The people of perfected faith do not communicate the morality of the religion through words only; the way they conduct themselves and their entire lives are also a manifestation of this morality. Rather than just talking about the meaning of friendship, wholeheartedness or sincerity, they display sincerity and wholeheartedness themselves and thus become role models to follow. Their behaviour conveys the meaning of sincerity far better than words. This holds true for all of the moral traits mentioned in the Qur'an. A man of perfected faith shows a willingness to be self-sacrificing, humbleness, forgiveness, justice, compassion, honesty—in brief, anything and everything to do with moral perfection by living by these values. This is what most impresses others. Indeed, one who talks about the importance of self-sacrifice at length, yet acts selfishly now and then would never be credible or appear sincere in the eyes of others.

It is obvious that one who sincerely lives by the values he preaches will surely appeal to others' conscience.

People of Perfected Faith's Turning Towards Allah

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

Allah surrounds everything. He is nearer to man than his jugular

vein. He is the All-Hearing and All-Knowing. Allah knows everything that happens to a human being; not a single thought can remain hidden from Him. A believer knows this and acknowledges that he only needs to think in order to ask Allah for something. Even if this thought is hidden in one's breast, Allah hears it and indubitably answers one's prayer, because Allah is the friend, protector and helper of believers.

According to the Qur'an, prayer is man's turning towards Allah in all sincerity, taking refuge in His infinite and unbounded might, and asking help from Him. It is the acknowledgement of one's weakness before the infinite might of Allah. Prayer is one's personal relation with Allah. All thoughts and wishes of a man remain concealed between the man and Allah. Therefore, there is not the slightest possibility of showing off in this form of worship. It is worship founded entirely on sincerity.

Those who deeply feel that Allah is nearer to them than anybody and anything, that He hears all prayers and answers them all and who live by these truths, are the people of perfected faith. They are again those who turn towards Allah with a sincere heart and know their weaknesses as human beings before His omnipotence. They further know that it is Allah alone Who answers all prayers and saves man from all difficulties and trouble.

Not only in times of trouble or affliction, but at any time and in any situation the people of perfected faith turn to Allah, because, they know that there is not a single moment in a man's life when he is not in need of Allah. They do not wait for an affliction to befall them before they pray to Allah. They know that this is a form of worship, a servant's duty to his Creator, and an important way to draw nearer to Allah. This is, in actuality, one of the most important attributes that distinguishes them from other people. The morality displayed by those who pray to Allah when they are in trouble, but immediately turn their backs soon after they are freed from trouble is described in

the following verse:

When harm touches man, he calls on Us, lying on his side or sitting down or standing up. Then when We relieve his affliction, he carries on as if he had never called on Us when first afflicted. Thus their foul deeds seem fair to the transgressors. (Surah Yunus, 12)

The people of perfected faith, on the other hand, are the ones who turn towards our Lord whether they are at ease or in trouble, because, they comprehend the insight provided by the verse "... **What has My Lord to do with you if you do not call on Him? ...**" (Surat al-Furqan, 77)

They pray as described in the Qur'an. In one verse Allah commands the following:

Remember your Lord in deep in your soul humbly and fearfully, without loudness of voice, morning and evening. Do not be among the heedless. (Surat al-A'raf, 205)

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

As is evident, Allah demands a humble and fearful prayer from His servants. Because, in their prayers, the only criteria Allah sets for His servants is sincerity. Our Lord, whom we implore, knows and hears what we utter as well as our innermost thoughts. Aware of this and, following their instincts, people of perfected faith sometimes pray secretly and sometimes aloud, but never make their prayers a matter of ostentation, because, in the Qur'an, Allah draws attention to the importance of "calling on Allah, making religion sincerely His":

He is the Living—there is no god but Him—so call on Him, making your religion sincerely His. Praise be to Allah, the Lord of all the worlds. (Surat al-Mu'min, 65)

Believers "feel Allah's existence" while they pray. While praying, they not only make their requests of Allah but also deeply feel the

unity of Allah, His existence, His greatness and His infinite might. In the Qur'an, Allah commands as follows:

Remember the Name of your Lord, and devote yourself to Him completely. (Surat al-Muzzammil, 8)

While praying, the people of perfected faith keep their minds occupied with the remembrance of Allah's beautiful names. Allah's names make us attain a better understanding of Allah's attributes. Believers who call on Him, aware that He is the most Merciful and All-Compassionate, truly grasp His nearness to His servants and His mercy. Indeed, man can pray to Allah by uttering His beautiful names:

To Allah belong the Most Beautiful Names, so call on Him by them and abandon those who desecrate His Names. They will be repaid for what they did. (Surat al-A'raf, 180)

As is true of all other issues, sincere prayer is a quality best exhibited in Allah's prophets. In the Qur'an, the sincerity of the prophets' prayers are especially stressed:

He (Sulayman) said, "My Lord, forgive me and give me a kingdom the like of which will never be granted to anyone after me. Truly You are the Ever-Giving." (Surah Sad, 35)

He (Musa) said, "My Lord, forgive me and my brother and admit us into Your mercy. You are the Most Merciful of the merciful." (Surat al-A'raf, 151)

In a hadith, we read the following prayer of Allah's messenger (saas):

"My Lord! The Lord of the Seven Heavens and The Lord of the great Throne, our Lord and The Lord of all, The Creator of plants and trees: I seek refuge in You from the evil of all creatures; You are the First; Nothing is before You. You are the Last; Nothing is after You."
(Muslim)

Believers are also steadfast in their prayers. As the verse says, they

"seek help in steadfastness and prayer" (Surat al-Baqara, 45) from Allah. Their submission to Allah and the trust they put in Him accounts for such steadfastness and commitment. A believer feels assured that Allah will certainly answer his prayers. He never despairs and keeps on imploring Him: **"... Do not despair of solace from Allah. No one despairs of solace from Allah except for those who disbelieve."** (Surah Yusuf, 87)

A man of perfected faith fears Allah and prays to Him with profound respect and patience. He prays to his Lord at any moment; at an unanticipated time of the day or an unexpected place, a believer takes the time to pray to his Lord in earnest. Even in his busiest moments, he takes refuge in Him, implore Him and asks for His guidance. He does all this because he knows that this is the easiest way to draw nearer to Allah, to attain His approval and paradise. There is no obstacle that would hinder such a one from drawing near to his Creator. Allah only wants His servants to turn towards Him with a sincere heart. Allah commands as follows in the Qur'an:

Those who shun the worship of false gods and turn towards Allah will have good news. So give good news to My servants.
(Surat az-Zumar, 17)

The Exemplary Attitudes the People of Perfected Faith Assume in Times of Difficulty

Before discussing the attitudes the people of perfected faith assume in times of difficulty, we need to have a true understanding of the way they perceive difficulties. People of perfected faith are those who truly grasp that this world is a place specially designed to put man to the test. They also truly know that the concept of "difficulty" is created to distinguish between "people who really believe" and "those in whose hearts is a disease". Times of difficulty and trouble are important moments for believers that enable them to prove their sincerity in faith. This being the case, contrary to its general meaning, "difficulty"

is truly a "blessing" for a man of perfected faith.

Owing to this perception, they put their trust in Allah when they meet with hardship. Meanwhile, they never forget to pray that Allah may not burden them with more than they have the capacity to bear:

Allah does not impose on any soul more than it can stand. It shall be requited for whatever good and whatever evil it has done. Our Lord, do not take us to task if we forget or make a mistake! Our Lord, do not place on us a load burden like the one You placed on those before us! Our Lord, do not charge us with more than we can bear! And pardon us; and forgive us our sins; and have mercy on us. You alone are our Protector, so help us against the disbelievers. (Surat al-Baqara, 286)

In the face of a difficulty, they understand that it is a trial "which they have the strength to bear" and thus try to show their submission to Allah and their trust in Him in the best way possible. They know that the attitudes they assume in times of ease and those they display in hardship are not the same in the sight of Allah. On this subject, Allah gives the following example:

Those believers who stay behind—other than those forced to by necessity—are not equal to those who strive for the cause of Allah, sacrificing their wealth and themselves. Allah has given those who strive with their wealth and themselves a higher rank than those who stay behind... (Surat an-Nisa', 95)

As the above verse also stresses, people who seek Allah's approval in times of hardship are superior to those who do not make any effort. Their holding fast to their religion in such hard times reveals the profoundness of their faith. It is difficult to judge the sincerity of a person who makes sacrifice in times of ease. Putting people to the test through hardship is a way by which Allah distinguishes between those who are truthful and those who are liars.

Allah's testing believers with difficulties serves another purpose. Having experienced a difficulty makes an individual appreciate the

value of a blessing much better and this makes him feel more grateful. This is because, difficulty and pain matures the human spirit. Difficulties in this world enable man to make the comparison between the good and bad, abundance and scarcity, comfort and inconvenience. Only through these comparisons does a man appreciate the worth of the material and spiritual blessings he enjoys. More importantly, these difficulties enable him to truly understand how much he is in need of Allah and to comprehend his weakness before Him.

The kind of hardships through which a person can be put to the test in this world are specified as follows:

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

A believer who bears this verse in mind prepares himself for difficulties even before he encounters them and promises Allah that he will show determination in patience and submission, and remain devoted, whatever the circumstances may be. His perfected faith accounts for this noble attitude. In the face of fear, unbearable hunger, poverty, an injury or loss of a loved one, he remains committed to being contented with Allah and to assuming a grateful manner towards Him. He sees all such circumstances as a means to draw nearer to Allah and to attain paradise. One verse reads:

Allah has bought from the believers their lives and their wealth and in return has promised them the Garden. They will strive for the cause of Allah, kill and be killed. It is a promise binding on Him in the Torah, the Gospel and the Qur'an and who is truer to his pledge than Allah? Rejoice then in the bargain you have made. That is the greatest victory. (Surat at-Tawba, 111)

A believer who has reached this maturity of faith is aware that one cannot attain a great reward like paradise merely by only saying: "I believe":

Do people imagine that they will be left to say, "We believe," and will not be tested? We tested those who have gone before them, so that Allah would know the truthful and would know the liars. (Surat al-'Ankabut, 2-3)

Again in another verse Allah draws our attention to this important truth:

Or did you suppose that you would enter the Garden without facing the same suffering as those who came before you? Poverty and illness afflicted them and they were shaken to the point that the Messenger and those who shared his faith cried out: "When is Allah's help coming?" Be assured that Allah's help is ever near. (Surat al-Baqara, 214)

These verses reveal that, in compliance with the immutable law of Allah, all human beings who have ever appeared on earth have faced these difficulties. They were also tested by having their wealth and life put at stake; they were also subjected to the cruelty and pressure of disbelievers and thus the difference between true believers and insincere ones became apparent. That is why, the moment a believer becomes acquainted with the Qur'an, he starts to prepare for these events. However, these events, which occur in compliance with the essence of trial, may not be exactly the same as those under the conditions of our Prophet (saas)'s time. In our day, we probably meet difficulties under very different circumstances.

A man who has attained perfected faith knows that each and every untoward event he experiences is, without exception, a trial from Allah. The kind of adversity he is faced with may be hunger, loss of wealth or life as well as the trials he may encounter in daily life. Sometimes all kinds of adversity come one after another. One may lose a loved one at a quite unexpected time. At the same time, one may have financial problems. All this distress may be coupled with serious health problems. Seeing all these as an opportunity, the devil may meanwhile seek ways to tempt the afflicted person. In the midst

of such distress, another believer may ask for his help. Under all conditions, a man of perfected faith responds with an attitude that best pleases Allah and never makes anyone who seeks assistance become conscious of the difficulties with which he grapples. The tone of his voice, the expression on his face or his manner conveys his willingness to help.

A man of perfected faith displays all this patience and these fine moral virtues because of his devotion to, respect for and fear of Allah and his submission to Him.

The above example succinctly conveys the point that no matter how dire the circumstances may be, a man of perfected faith never deviates from virtuous conduct and manners. Aware that all afflictions befall human beings at the will of Allah, he seeks relief and solutions from Allah alone. This world is but a temporary abode for him; he will remain here for a specified period of time and then depart; what really matters is to exercise patience under all conditions, to live by the values that please Allah and obtain His approval.

Everything in the life of this world is transitory. A man must principally keep in mind that he is being tested with these temporary events and, based on the results of this trial, an eternal abode awaits him in the hereafter. The real abode of man is the hereafter. Even if one experiences the severest pain, difficulty or distress in this world, all of these will ultimately abate or death will put an end to them.

This also holds true for the contrary. None of the blessings the individual enjoys in this world belong to him. When death comes upon him, he will leave them all behind. It may well be that one who led an ostentatious life in this world will end up in the torment of hell. What we mean here is that, the favourable quality of the life a man enjoys in this world is by no means a criterion; such a life is but a trial. One who has undergone difficulties in this world may well be someone who is worthy of a blissful life in paradise. That is because in this world, he took Allah as a friend, and exercised patience in order to earn His ap-

proval. These people will say the following in the hereafter:

They will say, "Praise be to Allah who has taken away all sadness from us. Truly, our Lord is Ever-Forgiving and ever bountiful in his rewards. Through His grace He has admitted us to the Eternal Abode where we shall endure no toil, no weariness." (Surah Fatir, 34-35)

The Attitude Displayed by A Person of Perfected Faith When A Blessing Is Bestowed Upon Him

The majority of people—in the words of the Qur'an—"exult" when Allah showers them with blessings after some distress they have gone through. Forgetting the Granter of these blessings, they immediately turn their faces away. However, Allah says, "... **Do not exult, in your riches; surely, Allah does not love the exultant.**" (Surat al-Qasas, 76)

The people of true faith are those who never exult in the blessings they enjoy and who are aware that they are from their Lord. They never lose sight of the fact that they are in need of Allah in times of welfare and peace as well as in times of difficulty. That Allah can take back His blessings any time He wills and leave them in need is a fact they never forget. With this mindset, in poverty or abundance, in ease or difficulty, they always assume a grateful manner towards Allah.

People of perfected faith fear the punishment of the dreadful Day. They know that Allah will punish those who are ungrateful to Him. That Allah will punish those who are ungrateful is stated in a verse:

That is how We repaid them for their ingratitude. Are any but the ungrateful repaid like this? (Surah Saba', 17)

Just like difficulties, blessings are also a part of the test to which Allah puts His servants in this world. As the Prophet Sulayman (as) expressed it:

... This is part of my Lord's favour to test me to see if I will give thanks or show ingratitude. Whoever is grateful—his gratitude is only for (the benefit of) himself. And whoever is ungrate-

**ful—then indeed, my Lord is Rich Beyond Need and Generous!
(Surat an-Naml, 40)**

The attitude a believer of perfected faith adopts towards blessings is that he immediately takes refuge in Allah and feels grateful to Him, aware that this is a trial. And then he turns these blessings to good account in order to earn the approval of Allah.

However, one needs to keep in mind that the blessings Allah heaps upon His servants are not limited to the purely material. Faith, beauty, wisdom, the faculty of judgement, and good health are also great blessings for which believers should be grateful. In the Qur'an, Allah draws our attention to the infinite blessings a man enjoys: **"He has given you everything you have asked Him for. If you tried to number Allah's blessings, you could never count them..."** (Surah Ibrahim, 34)

A scrutiny of the Qur'an and the lives of the prophets reveals that the riches and power bestowed upon them never diverted them from exercising justice or displaying moral perfection. They maintained their humility before Allah under all circumstances. In the Qur'an, Allah praises this fine moral virtue of His servants and defines them as being:

Those who, if We establish them firmly in the land, will regularly say their prayers and give alms, and will enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong. And to Allah belongs the outcome of all matters. (Surat al-Hajj, 41)

THE BEAUTIFUL LIVES OF THE PEOPLE OF PERFECTED FAITH

"Those who say, 'Our Lord is Allah,' and then follow the straight path shall have nothing to fear or to regret. Such people shall be the Companions of the Garden, remaining in it timelessly, for ever, as a reward for what they did." (Surat al-Ahqaf, 13-14)

Muslims are those who put their faith in Allah and then follow the straight path, showing determination in their faith.

Knowing that there is good in everything that comes from our Lord, they always remain grateful to Him and show wholehearted submission to Him.

They are the righteous in the sight of Allah.

In return for their sincerity, Allah has promised them goodness both in this world and beyond. He has surrounded them with His mercy. He has been pleased with them and given His love and approval to them. In the Qur'an, Allah gives the glad tidings of this honourable reward:

... Allah is pleased with them and they are pleased with Him. He has prepared Gardens for them with rivers flowing under them, where they shall remain in them timelessly, for ever and ever. That is the great victory. (Surat at-Tawba, 100)

They do not harbour ambitions for the life of this world. They turn to the hereafter to attain the approval of Allah and His paradise. In return for their wholehearted submission, Allah proffers His worldly blessings to them as well as paradise:

So Allah gave them the reward of this life and the glorious recompense is of the hereafter. Allah loves the righteous. (Surah Al 'Imran, 148)

... There is good in this world for those who do good, but the abode of the hereafter is even better. How wonderful is the abode of the righteous. (Surat an-Nahl, 30)

... There is good news for them in the life of this world and in the hereafter. There is no changing the words of Allah. That is the great victory! (Surah Yunus, 64)

In the face of hardships in this world, they show patience and remember that there is no friend or supporter for them other than Allah.

They take refuge in Him alone, and ask for His guidance.

In return, our Lord encompasses them with His mercy and undertakes their protection. Thanks to Him, every event brings goodness to them. Allah clears their path, and wishes ease for them. More importantly, as long as they remain His friends, He gives them total success and makes them the inheritors of this life as well as the hereafter.

Musa said to his people, "Seek help in Allah and be steadfast. The earth belongs to Allah. He bequeaths it to any of His servants as He wills. And the best outcome is for the righteous." (Surat al-A'raf, 128)

They will say, "Praise be to Allah Who has fulfilled His promise to us and made us the inheritors of this land, letting us settle in the Garden wherever we want. How excellent is the reward of the righteous!" (Surat az-Zumar, 74)

They sincerely desire to be granted the mercy of Allah and tremble in awe of Him.

They call on Allah, making their religion sincerely His.

With a deep-seated awareness of their weaknesses before Allah, they wholeheartedly implore to Him to grant them salvation, to save them from the punishment of hell and to make them people worthy of paradise. Their Lord then answers their sincere prayers and admits them into His paradise, where they will reside with the blessing of His mercy for all eternity:

The righteous will be in a safe place amid gardens and fountains, wearing fine silk and rich brocade, face to face with one another. So it will be. We will marry them to dark-eyed maidens. They will call there for fruit of every kind, in complete security. They will not experience death there—except for the first one. In His mercy, He will safeguard them from the punishment of the Blazing Fire. A favor from your Lord. That will be the Supreme triumph. (Surat ad-Dukhan, 51-57)

The Companions of the Garden will be busy enjoying themselves that day, they and their wives reclining on soft couches in shady groves. They will have fruits there and whatever they request. "Peace!"—A word from a Merciful Lord. (Surah Ya Sin, 55-58)

They are the people of perfected faith who have attained the approval of Allah.

EXAMPLES OF PERFECTED FAITH IN THE QUR'AN

*"You have an excellent model in the Messenger of Allah,
for all who put their hope in Allah and the Last Day and
remember Allah always." (Surat al-Ahzab, 21)*

Allah has sent mankind an all-inclusive book that guides them on every issue they will need to resolve throughout their lives. How to attain maturity in one's faith, how to think, by which values to live and the goals to adopt in life are all revealed in this noble book... Over and above this, He sent prophets as role models who exhibited moral perfection. By looking at the lives of these noble people, we can see how a person of perfected faith conducts his life. By enjoining what is right and forbidding what is wrong, the prophets helped their people to live by the principles of perfected faith. Besides, by telling the stories of the prophets of the past, Allah provided believers with examples of noble behaviour and the attitudes a believer should adopt.

As mentioned earlier, no limits can be placed on one's faith and the love and fear one has for Allah. If one wills, one can find a way to one's Lord and draw nearer to Him. This being so, the people of perfected faith aim to attain the faith and wisdom of the prophets and of the righteous people exemplified in the Qur'an. This is still not an ultimate goal, however. In the Qur'an, Allah stresses that believers should not set a

limit to the fear they have for Allah: **"So heed Allah, as much as you are able to..."** (Surat at-Taghabun, 16)

For this reason, every believer's sole aim is to become Allah's dearest and nearest servant.

In this section, we shall recall to those who are in search of such a noble and perfect morality the stories of the prophets and believers of perfected faith as exemplified in the Qur'an and shall dwell on the ways to attain moral maturity.

The Prophet Yusuf (as)

As related in the Qur'an, in his early life, the Prophet Yusuf (as) was put through many tests, to which he responded with the utmost maturity and submission. No matter how dire the circumstances or how cunning the plots against him were, the Prophet Yusuf (as), never diverged from his faith, devotion, trust and submission to Allah, but rather drew nearer to Him and showed absolute submission.

For those who seek ways to draw nearer to Allah, there are really striking examples of moral perfection in the life of the Prophet Yusuf (as). The first thing we learn about him is the important dream he saw in his early years and the comment his father, Ya'qub (as), made about this dream:

Yusuf said to his father: "Father! I saw eleven bright stars, and the sun and moon as well. I saw them all prostrate themselves in front of me." "My son", he replied, "don't tell your brothers of your dream, lest they devise some scheme to injure you. Satan is the sworn enemy of man. Accordingly, your Lord will pick you out and teach you the true meaning of events and perfectly confer His blessing upon you as well as upon the family of Ya'qub, as He conferred it perfectly before upon your forebears, Ibrahim and Ishaq. Most certainly your Lord is All-Knowing, and Wise." (Surah Yusuf, 4-6)

Taking this dream to be a sign from Allah and realising that Yusuf (as) would become a noble person in Allah's sight in future, his father wanted him to keep this dream to himself. His brothers, who felt that their father held Yusuf (as) more dear, became jealous of their father's love and hatched a plot against Yusuf (as). They tried to kill him and draw their father's love to themselves:

In Yusuf and his brothers there are Signs for those who ask. They declared, "Why! Yusuf and his brother are dearer to our father than we are, although we constitute a powerful group. Our father is clearly making a mistake." Kill Yusuf or expel him to some far-off land, so that your father will look to you alone and after that you can be honourable men. One of them said, "Do not take Yusuf's life, but, if you must, throw him to the bottom of a well, so that some travellers may discover him." (Surah Yusuf, 7-10)

His brothers left Yusuf (as) in the depths of a well. Then, they came to their father, telling him that a wolf had devoured him, and offered his shirt with false blood stains as evidence. Despite this evidence, the Prophet Ya'qub (as) realized this incident to be a plot, took refuge in Allah and asked Him for help. Thanks to countless conditions predetermined by destiny, some travellers passing by the well found the Prophet Yusuf (as) and sold him as a slave to a governor in Egypt:

... Thus We established Yusuf in the land to teach him the true meaning of events. Allah is in control of all things, though most of mankind do not know it. And then when he became a full-grown man, We gave him knowledge and right judgment too. That is how We reward all doers of good. (Surah Yusuf, 21-22)

The wife of the governor who bought him approached the Prophet Yusuf (as), who was remarkably handsome, with wicked intentions. However, she was refused outright by Yusuf (as). Upon this, the wife of the governor resorted to slandering Yusuf (as) to maintain her innocence:

His master's wife attempted to seduce him. She barred the doors and said, "Come over here!" "Allah is my refuge!" he (Yusuf) replied. "He is My Lord and has treated me with kindness. Those who do wrong shall surely never prosper." (Surah Yusuf, 23)

They both rushed to the door. She tore his shirt at the back. They met her husband by the door. She said, "How should a man whose intention was to harm your family be punished for what he did, except with prison or painful punishment?" Yusuf said, "It was she who tried to seduce me."... (Surah Yusuf, 25-26) The governor saw the shirt torn at the back and said, "The source of this is women's deviousness. Without a doubt your guile is very great. Yusuf, ignore all this, and you, my wife, should ask forgiveness for your evil act. There is no doubt that you are in the wrong." (Surah Yusuf, 28-29)

She said, "You see! It's him you blamed me for. I tried seducing him but he refused. If he does not do what I order, he will be put in prison and brought low." "My Lord", said Yusuf, "prison is preferable to me than what they call on me to do. Unless You turn their guile away from me, it may well be that I will yield to them and so lapse into ignorance." His Lord answered his prayer and turned away from him their female guile and deviousness. He is the One Who Hears, the One Who Knows. Yet, even after they had seen the Signs, they thought that they should still imprison him for a time. (Surah Yusuf, 32-35)

... and so he stayed in prison for several years. (Surah Yusuf, 42)

Now after being plotted against by his brothers and unjustly slandered by the governor's wife, Yusuf (as) had nothing to look forward to but several years of imprisonment. However, throughout all these long years, the Prophet Yusuf (as) did not despair even for a moment but, aware that there is good and wisdom behind these events Allah ordained, hopefully prayed to Him and showed determination in his

patience and faith. Indeed, years later, when the king sought for the interpretation of a dream he had had, an old prisoner recalled the Prophet Yusuf (as) as a person who had the faculty of interpreting dreams. Yusuf (as)'s interpretation of the dream greatly impressed the king. He thereupon called Yusuf (as) to his presence. Before the king had a chance to talk to him, the Prophet Yusuf (as) wanted the king to learn the facts about the incident for which he had been sent to prison so many years ago. So, for this explanation, the king returned to the governor's wife and the women to whom she had introduced Yusuf (as) at the time of the incident:

... (The women said:) "Allah forbid! We know no bad of him." The governor's wife then said, "The truth has now emerged. Indeed I tried to seduce him then and he has simply told the honest truth." (Surah Yusuf, 51)

After their confession, the Prophet Yusuf (as) gave the following explanation:

In this way he (i.e., the governor) will know at last that I did not dishonour him behind his back and that Allah most surely does not guide the deviousness of the dishonourable. I do not say that I myself was free from blame. The self indeed commands to evil acts—except for those my Lord has mercy on. My Lord, He is Forgiving and Merciful. (Surah Yusuf, 52-53)

These words of the Prophet Yusuf (as) are typical of his perfected faith. He always knew that Allah would help believers and those who are patient, and that He would certainly confound the schemes of those who betrayed Him. His trust in Allah manifested itself in his submission to his destiny. No matter how unfavourable the circumstances seemed, he could see that there was good and wisdom behind these events Allah ordained.

Another exemplary character trait of the Prophet Yusuf (as) was his refusal to indulge his lower self, even in situations in which he was absolutely right. He never trusted in his lower self and always re-

mained conscious of the fact that one's lower self is prone to evil. This is a form of morality peculiar to those having perfected faith who act with the awareness that employing the methods of the devil, the lower self stealthily approaches human beings and tempts those who ignore the voice of their conscience.

The attitude of the Prophet Yusuf (as) towards his lower self is a manifestation of his moral maturity. No doubt, the ultimate fate of a person who shows such deep-seated submission to Allah and trusts in Him will be infinite good. Indeed, in return for this meritorious submission to Allah, he was placed in authority over the treasures of Egypt. Granting him a good life in this world and giving the good news of paradise in the hereafter, Allah stated that "He would not allow to go to waste the recompense of those who do good":

And thus We established Yusuf in the land and he dwelt there as he pleased. We grant Our grace to anyone We will and We do not allow to go to waste the recompense of those who do good. But the reward of the hereafter is the best for those who believe and fear their Lord. (Surah Yusuf, 56-57)

The Prophet Sulayman (as)

In the Qur'an, Allah expresses the sincere faith of the Prophet Sulayman (as) as follows:

To Dawud We gave Sulayman. What an excellent servant! He truly turned to his Lord. (Surah Sad, 30)

One of the most important characteristics of the Prophet Sulayman (as) related in the Qur'an is his great power and glorious possessions. Beside these, Allah bestowed many special faculties upon him. In return for all these blessings, the Prophet Sulayman (as) always prayed to Allah and turned to Him in gratefulness. One of his prayers is as follows:

... My Lord, inspire me to be thankful for the blessing You have bestowed on me and on my parents, and keep me acting rightly,

pleasing You, and admit me, by Your mercy, among Your righteous servants. (Surat an-Naml, 19)

Another prayer of the Prophet Sulayman (as) is as follows:

My Lord, forgive me and give me a kingdom the like of which will never be granted to anyone after me. Truly You are the Ever-Giving. (Surah Sad, 35)

In return for his prayer, Allah granted the Prophet Sulayman (as) an unmatched knowledge and affluence in this world and promised the best rewards in the hereafter. One verse reads:

Indeed, for him is nearness to Us and a good place of return. (Surah Sad, 40)

His employment of his unprecedented affluence for the cause of Allah accounts for his exalted and distinguished position in Allah's sight. This attitude earned him nearness to Allah and made him constantly occupy his mind with the remembrance of Allah. Indeed Allah informs us in one verse that he said, "...**Truly do I love the love of good, with a view to the glory of my Lord...**" (Surah Sad, 32)

Turning to Allah alone while enjoying affluence, not becoming recalcitrant towards one's Creator due to the riches in one's possessions, is a character trait peculiar to the people of perfected faith alone. The moral perfection of the Prophet Sulayman (as) thus sets an example to all human beings.

The Wife of Pharaoh

The wife of Pharaoh, who was married to a man who has gone down in history as one of the most oppressive rulers in the world, has the honour of being remembered among the most superior Muslims in history. According to the destiny outlined for her, Allah had ordained this devout believer to share the same home with one of the cruellest men in the world, Pharaoh, who reigned over the children of Israel in Egypt during the Prophet Musa (as)'s time.

The perfected faith of this noble woman mentioned in the Qur'an

sets an example to all Muslims for all time:

Allah has made an example for those who have faith: the wife of Pharaoh... (Surat at-Tahrim, 11)

The perfected faith of the wife of the Pharaoh is exemplary, since she came to put her faith in Allah under very difficult conditions, by taking great risks. Moreover, unimpressed by a great fortune—the like of which was attainable by only a very few people in this world—she displayed a deep-seated devotion to Allah and evinced great strength of character.

At that time, the people of Egypt believed that Pharaoh was in possession of divine power. Abusing this belief of the Egyptian people, Pharaoh dared to "declare himself a deity." While surrounded with such imminent danger, the wife of Pharaoh showed her commitment to Allah. Truly convinced that the beliefs adopted by the Egyptian people until then were all false, she acknowledged the existence of Allah. Certainly, this was a path, which demanded great patience and only a heartfelt and sincere devotion to Allah would render this possible. A rational and strong-willed faith, quite remote from sentimentalism, could cope with the difficulties involved. Since the wife of Pharaoh was a person of perfected faith, she adopted a rational approach and concealed her faith from the Pharaoh. She was honoured by being held up as an example to all women:

To those who believe Allah has set an example in the wife of Pharaoh who said: "My Lord, build a house in the Garden for me in Your presence and rescue me from Pharaoh and his misdeeds and rescue me from this wrongdoing people." (Surat at-Tahrim, 11)

Although the wife of the Pharaoh could have exulted in her affluence, she instead chose a life devoted to Allah alone and considered the approval of Allah over and above all else. Her submission to Allah, her putting her trust in Allah, her patience and maturity made her an example to all humanity.

The Faith of The Magicians

The Prophet Musa (as) conveyed Allah's message to Pharaoh and supported his words with the performance of the miracles Allah granted to him. This forthright and convincing manner of Musa (as) made Pharaoh feel arrogant. In an effort to counteract the powerful influence of Musa (as) and to humiliate him in the eyes of his people, he held a competition between Musa (as) and his most trustworthy magicians. Pharaoh was actually afraid that all the Egyptian people would believe in Allah and abandon their false religions. His sole aim being the survival of his system, a fraudulent gambit, he thought, would suffice to protect and even consolidate his system.

When the appointed time arrived, the Prophet Musa (as) and the magicians appeared before the public. When the magicians performed their magic, their ropes and staffs appeared to slither. Then Musa (as) threw down his staff, which swallowed up the sorcery of the Pharaoh's magicians. The Qur'an relates this story as follows:

They said, "Musa, will you throw first or shall we be the ones to throw?" 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. Then We inspired to Musa, "Now throw down your staff." And it immediately swallowed up their false devices. So the Truth prevailed and all that they had done was shown to be false. They were defeated then and there, and put to shame. (Surat al-A'raf, 115-119)

Believing this to be a sign of the existence of Allah and evidence of Allah's support to Musa (as), the magicians embraced the faith:

The magicians prostrated themselves in adoration. They said, "We believe in the Lord of all the worlds, the Lord of Musa and Harun." (Surat ash-Shu'ara', 46-48)

The magicians' choice, consequent upon the Prophet Musa (as)'s exposure of their sorcery as fraudulent, was indeed a great defeat for Pharaoh, hence the fierceness of his reaction. After all, he had been

humiliated before his people, he had lost his most reliable men to Musa (as) and the position of the Prophet Musa (as) as a great threat to his system had been established. On all these counts, he decided to severely punish his magicians:

Pharaoh said, "Do you dare believe in him without my leave? He must be your master, the one who taught you magic. I will cut off your hands and feet on alternate sides and have you crucified on palm trunks. Then you will know for certain which of us can inflict the harsher and longer lasting punishment." (Surah Ta Ha, 71)

In spite of these dire threats of the Pharaoh, the magicians had faith in Allah from the very moment they grasped Allah's existence and prostrated themselves before Him. They sided with Musa (as) outright; they did not feel concerned over losing certain benefits from Pharaoh. Meanwhile, they asked for Allah's forgiveness for opposing the Prophet Musa (as) and for struggling against him:

They said, "We will never prefer you to the Clear Signs which have come to us nor to Him who brought us into being. Decide on any judgment you like. Your jurisdiction covers only the life of this world. We have put our faith in our Lord, so that He may forgive us for our mistakes and for the magic which you forced us to perform. The reward of Allah is better and longer lasting." (Surah Ta Ha, 72-73)

From the above, it becomes obvious that one's submission to Allah engenders strength of character, personal power and a sense of commitment. The magicians could have never assumed such a noble attitude if they had sought for any benefit from the Pharaoh's system. Under the circumstances of their time, their conversion to the true path seemed to conflict with their worldly interests.

However, all these devices for personal interest lose their significance for one who has faith in Allah. That is because, Allah is the One who commands the course of all these events related above. A person

of perfected faith does not stipulate conditions for being a servant to Allah. The sort of faith which is unbounded by any conditions is the true faith. In this sense, the faith of the magicians was a sincere, perfected faith, in that it was unconditional.

The Owner of Gardens

Allah revealed the story of two men to the Prophet Muhammad (saas). Thus all those who live until the Day of Judgment will learn about the story of these people who lived centuries ago:

Give them the example of two men, to one of whom We gave two gardens of grape-vines and surrounded them with date-palms, putting between them some cultivated land. Both gardens yielded their crops and did not suffer any loss, and We made a river flow right through the middle of them. He was a man of wealth and property ... (Surat al-Kahf, 32-34).

The conduct of the rich man is mentioned in the Qur'an as belonging to type of a character from which we need to learn a lesson. The moderate attitude of the second man, on the other hand, is typical of a person of perfected faith.

The wealthy man was extremely spoilt and self-assured because of the wealth he possessed. His fruitful gardens and the beauty of their appearance were the main source of his self-confidence. Just because he was richer and more powerful than the other man, he dared to act haughtily and arrogantly:

... and he said to his companion, debating with him, "I have more wealth than you and more people under me." (Surat al-Kahf, 34)

Seeing the beauty and fruitfulness of his gardens, this man thought he was not in need of Allah or His religion to be strong, and thus assumed a self-sufficient and unwise attitude:

He entered his garden and wronged himself by saying, "I do not

think that this will ever end. I do not think the Hour will ever come. But if I should be sent back to my Lord, I will definitely get something better in return." (Surat al-Kahf, 35-36)

As Allah stresses in this verse, the owner of the gardens attributed near-permanence to his gardens and dared to openly state that they were not vulnerable to any kind of devastating disasters. He yet failed to recognise the drastic end this outlook would bring about. His ignorant arrogance and his feelings of self-sufficiency made him one who "wronged himself."

Allah mentions another man who also owned gardens. This individual was also wealthy, though not as much as the first one... Yet, his wealth did not change his faith or personality, for which reason, he noticed his friend's disbelief and answered him thus:

...Do you then disbelieve in Him Who created you from dust, then from a drop of sperm, and then formed you as a man? He is, however, Allah, my Lord, and I will not associate anyone with my Lord. Why, when you entered your garden, did you not say, "It is as Allah wills, there is no strength but in Allah?"... (Surat al-Kahf, 37-39)

In the latter part of the verse, he immediately warns his friend not to be insolent towards Allah on account of his possessions and advises him not to grow arrogant:

..."Though you see me with less wealth and children than you possess, it may well be that my Lord will give me something better than your garden and send down upon your vineyard thunderbolts from heaven so that it turns into a barren waste, or drain its water deep into the earth, so that you will find none of it." The fruits of his labour were completely destroyed and he wrung his hands in grief, rueing 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!" There was for

him no company to aid him other than Allah, nor could he defend himself. There, the only protection comes from Allah, the True One. He gives the best reward and the best outcome. (Surat al-Kahf, 39-44)

The self-possessed attitude of the second man is the typical morality that pleases Allah. His rationale, manners and outlook are the signs of perfected faith. It is for this very reason that Allah commanded His Prophet (saas) to relate this event to all believers as an example. The reprehensible nature of the first man's morals becomes more and more obvious when compared with the moral perfection the other displays.

CONCLUSION

Throughout this book, we have stressed that merely saying, "We believe" or that worshipping Allah from the fringes of true religion would not suffice to please Allah. Rather, we said, Allah would be pleased with us when we were the foremost in piety, became an example to pious believers, and constantly displayed moral perfection. In this book, we called upon believers to have a deep-seated fear and love for Allah, never to consider their morality as perfect, to seek the attitudes and behaviour that most pleases Allah at every moment and to pay heed to their conscience.

Becoming a person of perfected faith is not a goal attainable after making strenuous efforts. As the verse, "**We shall guide you to the smoothest path**" (Surat al-A'la, 8) informs us, a person can attain perfected faith only with sincerity of intention, even if that intention is of very recent origin. In this sense, no matter how reprehensible a life one has led in the past, one can, at any moment, start a new life founded on the basis of earning Allah's approval.

After making these points clear, we now urge everybody to "hasten", that is, not to "defer" the taking of such a vital decision. The time granted to man is very short. Life is as brief as "the twinkling of an eye" or "part of a day". During the course of this limited time he is granted, man should race against time and hasten to acquire perfected faith by engaging in good deeds. Allah promised His Paradise to those of His servants who are committed to piety, who become "foremost in faith" and hasten

to draw near to Allah. There, they reside with the prophets, the faithful ones, the martyrs and the sincere believers. But most important, they will meet our Lord. Allah also gives them glad tidings that there will be a word for them from their Lord there: "Peace!", which is one of the best rewards for a believer:

The Companions of the Garden will be busy enjoying themselves that day, they and their wives reclining on soft couches in shady groves. They will have fruits there and whatever they request. "Peace!"—A word from a Merciful Lord. (Surah Ya Sin, 55-58)

Whoever obeys Allah and the Messenger will be with those whom Allah has blessed: the Prophets and the truthful, the martyrs and the righteous. What excellent company such people are! Such is the bounty of Allah. Sufficient is Allah's infinite knowledge. (Surah an-Nisa', 69-70)

So, hasten to attain this reward, to reside with prophets and people of perfected faith in the gardens of paradise as a believer who has earned the approval of Allah.

By being committed to live by the principles of perfected faith, be a good example for those who love and fear Allah. Allah exhorts all those who want to attain salvation to live by the values of the Qur'an. They are described as **"Those who, when they are reminded of the Signs of their Lord, do not turn their backs, deaf and blind to them; who say, 'Our Lord, give us joy in our wives and children and make us a good example for those who guard against evil.' Such people will be repaid for their steadfastness with the loftiest abode in Paradise, where they will meet with welcome and with 'peace'. They will remain in it timelessly, for ever. What an excellent lodging and resting place!" (Surat al-Furqan, 73- 76)**

PEOPLE OF PERFECTED FAITH IN THE QUR'AN

People of perfected faith are described in some of the verses of the Qur'an in these terms:

"Those who believe and constantly guard against evil." (Surah Yunus, 63)

"Those who believe and do not taint their faith with any wrongdoing..." (Surat al-An'am, 82)

"Those who convey Allah's message and fear Allah, fearing no one except Him." (Surat al-Ahzab, 39)

"...They stand in awe and reverence of His glory." (Surat al-Anbiya', 28)

"Those who say, 'Our Lord is Allah,' and then follow the straight path..." (Surat al-Ahqaf, 13)

"...they said, 'Allah is enough for us and the Best of Guardians.'" (Surah Al 'Imran, 173)

"Those whose hearts quake at the mention of Allah ..." (Surat al-Hajj, 35)

"Those who join what Allah has commanded to be joined and are afraid of their Lord and fear a terrible Reckoning." (Surat ar-Ra'd, 21)

"... They worship Me, not associating anything with Me..." (Surat an-Nur, 55)

"... They do not sell Allah's Signs for a paltry gain ..." (Surah Al 'Imran, 199)

"Those who are aware that they will meet their Lord and that they will return to Him." (Surat al-Baqara, 3)

"Those who affirm the Day of Judgement." (Surat al-Ma'arij, 26)

"Those who have faith in the Unseen ..." (Surat al-Baqara, 3)

"Those who fear their Lord in the Unseen and are apprehensive about the Hour of Judgement." (Surat al-Anbiya', 49)

"Those who believe in what has been sent down to you and what was sent down before you and are certain about the hereafter." (Surat al-Baqara, 4)

"Those who hold fast to the Book ..." (Surat al-A'raf, 170)

"Those who believe in the Unseen and say their prayers regularly..." (Surat al-Baqara, 3)

"Those who are humble in their prayer." (Surat al-Mu'minun, 2)

"Those who safeguard their prayers." (Surat al-Mu'minun, 9)

"Those who are constant in their prayers." (Surat al-Ma'arij, 23)

"They call on their Lord in fear and ardent hope." (Surat as-Sajda, 16)

"Those who are steadfast and put their trust in their Lord." (Surat an-Nahl, 42)

"Those who are mindful of their chastity." (Surat al-Mu'minun, 5)

"Those who are active in deeds of charity." (Surat al-Mu'minun, 4)

"Those who are steadfast in seeking the face of their Lord, and say their prayers regularly and give from the provision We have given them, secretly and openly, and stave off evil with good..." (Surat ar-Ra'd, 22)

"Those who fulfil Allah's covenant and do not break their agreement." (Surat ar-Ra'd, 20)

"Those who honour their trusts and covenants." (Surat al-Ma'arij, 32)

"... They command what is right and forbid what is wrong ..."
(Surat at-Tawba, 71)

"Those who stand by their testimony." (Surat al-Ma'arij, 33)

"The steadfast, the truthful, the obedient, the givers and those who pray for forgiveness before dawn." (Surah Al 'Imran, 17)

"Those who, when they indecently or wrong themselves, remember Allah and ask forgiveness for their wrong actions and do not knowingly persist in the wrong they have done." (Surah Al 'Imran, 135)

"Those who turn away from vain talk." (Surat al-Mu'minin, 3)

"Those who respond to their Lord and say their prayers regularly and manage their affairs by mutual consultation ..." (Surat ash-Shura, 38)

"Those who, when they are wronged, defend themselves." (Surat ash-Shura, 39)

"Those who are steadfast in the face of all adversity..." (Surat al-Hajj, 35)

"... You see them bowing and prostrating, seeking Allah's Grace and His pleasure ..." (Surat al-Fath, 29)

"Those who say, 'Our Lord, we believe in You, so forgive us our wrong actions and safeguard us from the punishment of the Fire.'" (Surah Al 'Imran, 16)

"Such people (the pious) are truly racing towards good deeds, and they outstrip (others) therein." (Surat al-Mu'minin, 61)

"... Their mark is on their faces, the traces of prostration ..." (Surat al-Fath, 29)

"... They are the best of creatures." (Surat al-Bayyina, 7)

"Such people will be in the Gardens, highly honoured." (Surat al-Ma'arij, 35)

WHAT IS A PERSON OF PERFECTED FAITH LIKE?

What Kind of A Belief in Allah Does He Have?

He knows that:

There is no god but Allah,
It is Allah Who created everything,
It is Allah Who directs all affairs,
Hearts are in Allah's hands,
Allah encompasses everything,
It is He Who determines man's destiny,
He is the Almighty and does whatever He wills,
Allah is All-Aware and All-Hearing,
Allah is the Preserver of all things,
He is the Knower of all unseen things,
He is Rich Beyond Need and is exalted above everything,
He has not given birth and that He was not born,
He does not misplace nor does He forget,
He is the Master of the Kingdom,
He is the sole Inheritor,
He is alive,
Might and honour belong to Allah,
He is always victorious and Almighty,
To Him belong the Most Beautiful Names,

He is the Mighty, the Wise,
He is nearer to His servant than his jugular vein,
Allah knows the slightest thing in our minds,
He knows what is secret and what is yet more hidden,
He is the Just,
He is the Most Merciful of the merciful,
He is the Ever-Forgiving,
He is the All-Loving,
He is the Acceptor of repentance,
He answers sincere prayers,
He is Ever-Thankful,
He is the One Who teaches everything,
He is a warner,
He gives life to the dead and creates the Day of Reckoning,
He helps those who help His religion, both in this world and the hereafter,
Allah's promise is true,
He creates hell for disbelievers and paradise for believers,

What Kind of A Fear of Allah Does He Have?

He fears Allah alone and observes only His limits,
He does not fear anything but Allah,
He fears Allah as much as he can,
He feels that it is He Who puts fear for Allah and faith in one's heart,
He experiences this fear not only in times of difficulty but also in times of ease,
He does not forget that Allah knows what the heart harbours, all secrets and what is even more concealed,
He remembers that Allah sees everything,
He conducts himself well, in the knowledge that he will give an account of everything to Allah,
He pays the utmost attention to what is lawful and unlawful,

Everything he does is based on his fear of Allah,
 He turns towards Allah for every deed in which he engages,
 He feels that it is Allah alone Who punishes,
 He feels fear of Allah, His threat and the punishment of Hell,
 He does not forget how Allah punished those wrongdoers who
 passed away before him,
 He has a respectful and strong fear of Allah.

What Kind of A Faith Does He Have?

He has a faith founded entirely on fear and love of Allah,
 Owing to his deep-seated fear and love of Allah;
 He worships Allah alone,
 He regards Allah over and above everything,
 He seeks no god apart from Allah,
 He does not associate any partners with Him,
 He knows that everything is from Allah,
 He knows Allah is always with him and sees whatever he does,
 He is aware that the main purpose in every moment of life is to earn
 Allah's approval,
 He devotes his entire life to Allah,
 He observes Allah's limits meticulously,
 He is conscious of his weaknesses before Allah,
 He assumes an obedient attitude towards Allah's words,
 He trusts Allah alone,
 He understands that Allah is his sole helper,
 He remembers Allah unceasingly,
 He meticulously adheres to the Qur'an,
 He is always grateful to Allah,
 He believes in the Day of Rising with certainty,
 He hinders others from being deceived by the life of this world,
 He feels no fear for the future,
 He perceives that there is good in everything,

He turns towards Allah in every deed,
He remembers all the qualities he possesses are from Allah,
He feels heartfelt obedience to Allah, His commands and His prophets,
He does not let Satan influence him,
He always acts in accordance with his conscience,
He has a state of spirit that turns solely towards Allah,
He takes only Allah and believers as his friends,
He strives to draw nearer to Allah,
He feels grateful to Allah at every moment,
He does not forget to secretly or openly spend for the cause of Allah,
He is firm in his resolution to exercise patience in any difficulty,
He displays moral perfection,
He constantly displays the attributes of believers,
He becomes foremost in good deeds.

What Kind of An Understanding of Fate Does He Have?

He knows that:
Everything has been created in accordance with destiny,
Allah predetermines every event, from birth to death,
Every event occurs at the exact moment Allah preordains,
He should humble himself before his Lord,
Heartfelt obedience to Allah is of recognized worth,
Allah sees all times in a moment,
He needs to submit to Allah,
No matter what he does, it is Allah Who will determine the end,
If he submits to Allah completely, he will never become unhappy,
He should be contented with every image Allah creates.

Aware that everything that befalls him is from Allah alone:
He does not become agitated,

He feels neither sorrow nor distress,
 He does not panic,
 He does not despair,
 He does not feel anxious,
 He does not feel anger,
 He does not say "if only",
 He does not give sudden and exaggerated reactions,
 He does not grieve over death,
 He does not feel sorry for what he has lost or what has befallen him.

What Kind of Reason and Wisdom Does He Have?

He has such a reason and wisdom as enable him,
 to ponder over the Qur'an as is proper,
 to evaluate everything in compliance with the Qur'anic logic,
 to think that there is good in everything since it is from Allah,
 to adhere to his conscience in all his acts,
 to think that everything occurs by the will of Allah,
 to try to see the purpose and good that are hidden behind every event,
 to remember Allah, standing, sitting and lying on his side,
 to deeply reflect on the existence of Allah and the artistry in His creation,
 to primarily search out and reflect upon the subjects to which Allah draws attention and the signs of creation,
 to find answers to his questions in the Qur'an,
 to seek solutions to his problems in the Qur'an,
 to think always in favour of religion,
 to seek refuge in Allah, if temptation from Satan afflicts him,
 to think well of believers,
 to consider other people's needs,
 to prioritise matters in compliance with Allah's approval,

to make a fair judgement between right and wrong in compliance with the Qur'anic logic,
to think about his own creation,
to think about the Day of Reckoning,
to take admonition, thinking about paradise and especially hell,
to make a reckoning of his self.

What Kind of An Understanding of Love Does He Have?

He loves Allah more than anyone and anything,
The love he feels for the Prophet (saas) surpasses the love he feels for other people,
The love he feels for believers is a love based on Allah's consent,
The one he loves most is the one whom he hopes will strive most for the approval of Allah and is the most pious.
He does not nurture a passionate love for worldly pleasures,
He does not ask for any reward in return for his deeds other than Allah's love,
He does not like those who oppose Allah and His messenger,
The love or need he feels for something does not hinder him from giving it up.

How, and About Which Matters Does He Talk?

He glorifies Allah with His most beautiful names,
He advocates what is good,
Of the events that he expects to take place in the future, he says "Insh'Allah" meaning, "by Allah's will".
He glorifies Allah with the word "Maash'Allah" when he sees such beauty as reflects Allah's artistry,
He utters such words as he hopes will please Allah,
While talking, he recalls Allah's verses,
He speaks wisely,

He speaks concisely and in a comprehensible manner,
 He does not speak about vain, trivial issues,
 He considers the needs of people while talking,
 He does not lie,
 He speaks to his parents in a very respectful manner and never utters
 a word of contempt,
 He speaks in a gentle manner,
 He displays his trustworthiness in his speech,
 He speaks sincerely and plainly,
 He avoids secret talks,
 He warns people,
 In compliance with the Quran, he says "Salam" (peace) when he enters
 a house,
 He says "Salam" (peace) and, without talking, passes by when he
 meets ignorant people,
 He does not utter a word that includes slander,
 He does not participate in such conversation and passes by with dig-
 nity,
 By the way he speaks, he encourages good behaviour and discour-
 ages bad actions,
 He is moderate in tone and avoids speaking loudly,
 He knows that he is responsible for every word he says,
 He does not keep swearing oaths for vain and trivial purposes,
 He neither vilifies nor speaks ill of anybody when he converses,
 He does not backbite,
 He speaks so as to influence others to pay heed to their consciences.

How Does He Pray and What Does He Ask For?

He prays by turning towards Allah for everything.
 He prays to Allah alone and asks for help only from Him.
 He prays to Him, knowing that Allah answers every prayer.
 He prays knowing that Allah is nearer to him than his jugular vein

and that He knows what he thinks at all times.

He prays by glorifying Him with the most beautiful of His names and reflecting upon the meanings of those names.

He prays without putting a limit to his wishes from Allah.

He prays to Him, knowing that a prayer does not have to be in a certain form, and that every act he does to win Allah's approval is a prayer.

He prays to Him, knowing that there is no need for a special place to pray, for one can pray anywhere and at any time.

He prays to Him in the most respectful manner.

He prays not only in times of trouble or need, but also in times of abundance and richness.

He gives thanks for the blessings granted to him as an answer to his prayers.

His prayers are sincere.

He prays to Allah humbly and secretly.

His prayers are not intended to impress others.

He prays to Allah in fear and ardent hope.

He prays for the prophets and believers as much as he prays for himself.

He prays for the health, safety, comfort, wealth and power of believers.

He prays for being brought nearer to Allah, being successful, living by the morality of religion in the best way and being patient in displaying the moral values that please Allah.

He prays that Allah may give him whatever is best in this world and in the hereafter, and increase His blessings upon him.

He prays that his enemies will be disgraced and punished for what they have done.

He takes the prayers of the prophets that are mentioned in the Qur'an as an example for himself.

At the end of his prayers, he glorifies Allah, saying, "**Praise be to Allah, the Lord of all the worlds!**" (Surah Yunus, 10)

THE EVOLUTION MISCONCEPTION

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

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

Atheism, Darwinism, and virtually all the "isms" emanating from the eighteenth to the twentieth century philosophies are built upon the assumption, the incorrect assumption, that the universe is infinite. The singularity has brought us face to face with the cause – or causer – beyond/behind/before the universe and all that it contains, including life itself.¹

It is Allah Who created the universe and Who designed it down to its smallest detail. Therefore, it is impossible for the theory of evolution, which holds that living things are products of coincidences, to be true.

Unsurprisingly, when we look at the theory of evolution, we see that this theory is denounced by scientific findings. The design in life is extremely complex and striking. In the inanimate world, for instance, we can explore how sensitive are the balances which atoms

rest upon, and further, in the animate world, we can observe in what complex designs these atoms were brought together, and how extraordinary are the mechanisms and structures such as proteins, enzymes, and cells, which are manufactured with them.

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

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

The Scientific Collapse of Darwinism

Although a doctrine going back as far as ancient Greece, the theory of evolution was advanced extensively in the 19th century. The most important development that made the theory the top topic of the world of science was the book by Charles Darwin titled *The Origin of Species* published in 1859. In this book, Darwin denied that Allah created different living species on the earth separately. According to Darwin, all living beings had a common ancestor and they diversified over time through small changes.

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

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

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

- 1) The theory can by no means explain how life originated on the earth.

2) There is no scientific finding showing that the "evolutionary mechanisms" proposed by the theory have any power to evolve at all.

3) The fossil record proves completely the contrary of the suggestions of the theory of evolution.

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

The First Insurmountable Step: The Origin of Life

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

Since the theory of evolution denies creation and does not accept any kind of supernatural intervention, it maintains that the "first cell" originated coincidentally within the laws of nature, without any design, plan, or arrangement. According to the theory, inanimate matter must have produced a living cell as a result of coincidences. This, however, is a claim inconsistent with even the most unassailable rules of biology.

"Life Comes from Life"

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

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

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

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

However, five years after the publication of Darwin's book, Louis Pasteur announced his results after long studies and experiments, which 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.*"¹²

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

Inconclusive Efforts in the 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 1930's, he tried to prove that the cell of a living being could originate by coincidence. These studies, however, were doomed to failure, and Oparin had to make the following confession: "Unfortunately, however, the problem of the origin of the cell is perhaps the most obscure point in the whole study of the evolution of organisms."¹³

Evolutionist followers of Oparin tried to carry out experiments to

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

Barely a few years had passed before it was revealed that this experiment, which was then presented as an important step in the name of evolution, was invalid, the atmosphere used in the experiment having been very different from real earth conditions.⁴

After a long silence, Miller confessed that the atmosphere medium he used was unrealistic.⁵

All the evolutionist efforts put forth throughout the twentieth century to explain the origin of life ended with failure. The geochemist Jeffrey Bada from San Diego Scripps Institute accepts this fact in an article published in *Earth Magazine* in 1998:

*Today as we leave the twentieth century, we still face the biggest unsolved problem that we had when we entered the twentieth century: How did life originate on Earth?*⁶

The Complex Structure of Life

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

The conditions required for the formation of a cell are too great in quantity to be explained away by coincidences. The probability of proteins, the building blocks of cell, being synthesized coincidentally,

is 1 in 10^{950} for an average protein made up of 500 amino acids. In mathematics, a probability smaller than 1 over 10^{50} is practically considered to be impossible.

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

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

It is extremely improbable that proteins and nucleic acids, both of which are structurally complex, arose spontaneously in the same place at the same time. Yet it also seems impossible to have one without the other. And so, at first glance, one might have to conclude that life could never, in fact, have originated by chemical means.⁷

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

Imaginary Mechanisms of Evolution

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

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

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

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

*Natural selection can do nothing until favourable individual differences or variations occur.*⁸

Lamarck's Impact

So, how could these "favourable variations" occur? Darwin tried to answer this question from the standpoint of the primitive understanding of science in his age. According to the French biologist Lamarck, who lived before Darwin, living creatures passed on the traits they acquired during their lifetime to the next generation and these traits, accumulating from one generation to another, caused new species to be formed. For instance, according to Lamarck, giraffes evolved from antelopes; as they struggled to eat the leaves of high trees, their necks were extended from generation to generation.

Darwin also gave similar examples, and in his book *The Origin of Species*, for instance, said that some bears going into water to find food transformed themselves into whales over time.⁹

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

Neo-Darwinism and Mutations

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

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

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

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.¹⁰

Not surprisingly, no mutation example, which is useful, that is, which is observed to develop the genetic code, has been observed so far. All mutations have proved to be harmful. It was understood that mutation, which is presented as an "evolutionary mechanism," is actually a genetic occurrence that harms living beings, and leaves them disabled. (The most common effect of mutation on human beings is cancer). No doubt, a destructive mechanism cannot be an "evolutionary mechanism." Natural selection, on the other hand, "can do nothing by itself" as Darwin also accepted. This fact shows us that there is no "evolutionary mechanism" in nature. Since no evolutionary mechanism exists, neither could any imaginary process called evolution have taken place.

The Fossil Record: No Sign of Intermediate Forms

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

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

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

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

If such animals had really existed, there should be millions and

even billions of them in number and variety. More importantly, the remains of these strange creatures should be present in the fossil record. In *The Origin of Species*, Darwin explained:

*If my theory be true, numberless intermediate varieties, linking most closely all of the species of the same group together must assuredly have existed... Consequently, evidence of their former existence could be found only amongst fossil remains.*¹¹

Darwin's Hopes Shattered

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

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

*The point emerges that if we examine the fossil record in detail, whether at the level of orders or of species, we find - over and over again - not gradual evolution, but the sudden explosion of one group at the expense of another.*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, it is very strong evidence that living beings are created. The only explanation of a living species emerging suddenly and complete in every detail without any evolutionary ancestor can be that this species was created. This fact is admitted also by the widely known evolutionist biologist Douglas Futuyma:

Creation and evolution, between them, exhaust the possible explanations for the origin of living things. Organisms either appeared on the earth fully developed or they did not. If they did not, they must have developed

*from pre-existing species by some process of modification. If they did appear in a fully developed state, they must indeed have been created by some omnipotent intelligence.*¹³

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

The Tale of Human Evolution

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

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

Evolutionists call the so-called first ape-like ancestors of men "*Australopithecus*" which means "South African ape." These living beings are actually nothing but an old ape species that has become extinct. Extensive research done on various *Australopithecus* specimens by two world famous anatomists from England and the USA, namely, Lord Solly Zuckerman and Prof. Charles Oxnard, has shown that these belonged to an ordinary ape species that became extinct and bore no resemblance to humans.¹⁴

Evolutionists classify the next stage of human evolution as "homo," that is "man." According to the evolutionist claim, the living beings in the *Homo* series are more developed than *Australopithecus*. Evolutionists devise a fanciful evolution scheme by arranging differ-

ent 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 most important proponents of the theory of evolution in the twentieth century, 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 paleo-anthropologists 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* (modern man) co-existed in the same region.¹⁷

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

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

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

Lord Solly Zuckerman, one of the most famous and respected scientists in the U.K., who carried out research on this subject for years,

and particularly studied *Australopithecus* fossils for 15 years, finally concluded, despite being an evolutionist himself, that there is, in fact, no such family tree branching out from ape-like creatures to man.

Zuckerman also made an interesting "spectrum of science." He formed a spectrum of sciences ranging from those he considered scientific to those he considered unscientific. According to Zuckerman's spectrum, the most "scientific"—that is, depending on concrete data—fields of science are chemistry and physics. After them come the biological sciences and then the social sciences. At the far end of the spectrum, which is the part considered to be most "unscientific," are "extra-sensory perception"—concepts such as telepathy and sixth sense—and finally "human evolution." Zuckerman explains his reasoning:

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

Technology In The Eye and The Ear

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

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

The brain is insulated from light. That means that the inside of the brain is solid dark, and light does not reach the location where the brain is situated. The place called the centre of vision is a solid dark place where no light ever reaches; it may even be the darkest place you have ever known. However, you observe a luminous, bright world in this pitch darkness.

The image formed in the eye is so sharp and distinct that even the technology of the 20th century has not been able to attain it. For instance, look at the book you read, your hands with which you hold it, then lift your head and look around you. Have you ever seen such a sharp and distinct image as this one at any other place? Even the most developed television screen produced by the greatest television producer in the world cannot provide such a sharp image for you. This is a three-dimensional, 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 having depth.

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

Evolutionists claim that the mechanism producing this sharp and distinct image has been formed by chance. Now, if somebody told

you that the television in your room was formed as a result of chance, that all its atoms just happened to come together and make up this device that produces an image, what would you think? How can atoms do what thousands of people cannot?

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

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

As is the case with imagery, decades of effort have been spent in trying to generate and reproduce sound that is faithful to the original. The results of these efforts are sound recorders, high-fidelity systems, and systems for sensing sound. Despite all this technology and the thousands of engineers and experts who have been working on this endeavour, no sound has yet been obtained that has the same sharpness and clarity as the sound perceived by the ear. Think of the highest-quality HI-FI systems produced by the biggest company in the music industry. Even in these devices, when sound is recorded some

of it is lost; or when you turn on a HI-FI you always hear a hissing sound before the music starts. However, the sounds that are the products of the technology of the human body are extremely sharp and clear. A human ear never perceives a sound accompanied by a hissing sound or with atmospherics as does HI-FI; it perceives sound exactly as it is, sharp and clear. This is the way it has been since the creation of man.

So far, no visual or recording apparatus produced by man has been as sensitive and successful in perceiving sensory data as are the eye and the ear.

However, as far as seeing and hearing are concerned, a far greater fact lies beyond all this.

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

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

The stimulations coming from the eyes, ears, and nose of a human being travel to the brain as electro-chemical nervous impulses. In biology, physiology, and biochemistry books, you can find many details about how this image forms in the brain. However, you will never come across the most important fact about this subject: Who is it that perceives these electro-chemical nervous impulses as images, sounds, odours and sensory events in the brain? There is a consciousness in the brain that perceives all this without feeling any need for eye, ear, and nose. To whom does this consciousness belong? There is no doubt that this consciousness does not belong to the nerves, the fat layer and neurons comprising the brain. This is why Darwinist-materialists, who believe that everything is comprised of matter, cannot give any answer to these questions.

For this consciousness is the spirit Allah created. The spirit needs

neither the eye to watch the images, nor the ear to hear the sounds. Furthermore, nor does it need the brain to think.

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

A Materialist Faith

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

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

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

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

It is not that the methods and institutions of science somehow compel us

*accept a material explanation of the phenomenal world, but, on the contrary, that we are forced by our a priori adherence to material causes to create an apparatus of investigation and a set of concepts that produce material explanations, no matter how counter-intuitive, no matter how mystifying to the uninitiated. Moreover, that materialism is absolute, so we cannot allow a Divine Foot in the door.*²⁰

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

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

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

It needs to be made clear that anyone free of prejudice and the influence of any particular ideology, who uses only his 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 has been 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, university students, scientists such as Einstein and Galileo, artists such as Humphrey Bogart, Frank Sinatra and Pavarotti, as well as antelopes, lemon trees and carnations. Moreover, the scientists and professors who believe in this nonsense are educated people. That is why it is quite justifiable to speak of the theory of evolution as "the most potent spell in history." Never before has any other belief or idea so taken away peoples' powers of reason, refused to allow them to think intelligently and logically and hidden the truth from them as if they had been blindfolded. This is an even worse and unbelievable blindness than the Egyptians worshipping the Sun God Ra, totem worship in some parts of Africa, the people of Saba worshipping the Sun, the tribe of the Prophet Ibrahim worshipping idols they had made with their own hands or the people of the Prophet Musa worshipping the Golden Calf.

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

As for those who disbelieve, 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 they do not understand with. They have eyes they do not see with. They have ears they do not hear with. 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, the planet Earth with all its features so perfectly suited to life, and living things full of countless complex systems.

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

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

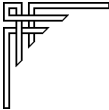

As we have seen, Pharaoh's magicians were able to deceive everyone, apart from the Prophet Musa (as) and those who believed in him. However, the evidence put forward by the Prophet Musa (as) broke that spell, or "swallowed up what they had forged" as the verse puts it.

We revealed to Musa, "Throw down your staff." And it immediately swallowed up what they had forged. So the Truth took place and what they did was shown to be false. (Surat al-A'raf, 117-119)


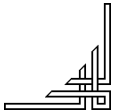
As we can see from that verse, when it was realized that what these people who had first cast a spell over others had done was just an illusion, they lost all credibility. In the present day too, unless those who under the influence of a similar spell believe in these ridiculous claims under their scientific disguise and spend their lives defending them abandon them, they too will be humiliated when the full truth emerges and the spell is broken. In fact, Malcolm Muggeridge, an atheist philosopher and supporter of evolution admitted he was worried by just that prospect:

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

That future is not far off: On the contrary, people will soon see that "chance" is not a god, 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 the true face of the theory of evolution are wondering with amazement how it was that they were ever taken in by it.

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

NOTES

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