

CRUDE UNDERSTANDING OF DISBELIEF

*Do they then seek after a judgment
of (the days of) ignorance? But who,
for a people whose faith is assured,
can give better judgment than Allah?*

Surah Al-Maeda: 50

H A R U N Y A H Y A

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To the Reader

The reason why a special chapter is assigned to the collapse of the theory of evolution is that this theory constitutes the basis of all anti-spiritual philosophies. Since Darwinism rejects the fact of creation, and therefore the existence of 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 deen. It is imperative that this important service, is rendered to all people. 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.

Another point to be stressed is related to the content of the book. In all the books of the author, faith-related issues are told in the light of the Qur'anic verses and people are invited to learn Allah's verses and 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 way of recounting makes the books read quickly. Even those people 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 by individuals or studied in a group at a time of conversation. The reading of the books by a group of readers willing to profit from them will be useful in the sense that readers can relate their own reflections and experiences to one another.

In addition, it will be a great service to the deen 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 deen to other people, one of the most effective methods is to encourage them to read these books.

Introduction

Allah created life and death for a particular reason. He communicated this to man by sending Books which clearly differentiated between rightful and wrongful actions. This purpose of life is stated in the following verse:

He created Death and Life, that He might try which of you is best in deed: He is Exalted in Might and Oft-Forgiving.

Surah Al-Mulk: 2

The essence of this purpose is to honour Allah with the honour that is due to Him, to observe the limits set by Him, to have an understanding of the temporary nature of this world and to reorient all the deeds and conduct of one's life in the light of the will of the Creator.

The individual who conducts himself responsibly towards his Creator will attain grace, comfort, security and also peace in this world. The most appropriate type of life, meeting all needs of the human soul is related in the Qur'an. Being heedful of following the commands of the Qur'an, he can turn his life into the very image of Heaven.

Whoever does what is right, man or woman, and has Faith, to him will We surely give a new life, a life that is good and pure, and We will bestow on such people their reward according to the best of their actions.

Surah Al-Nahl: 97

In the aforementioned verse, Allah gives the glad tidings to the believers that those complying with the commandments of the Qur'an will attain a joyous life, thereby conveying an important mystery of life to human beings. Fame, prosperity or good looks never promise a rewarding and ineffably peaceful life unless the individual adheres to the moral principles of the Qur'an.

This actually constitutes the main objective of this book; to provide a vivid illustration of the trouble and unrest one experiences unceasingly in the course of one's life, where one leads a life other than that deemed proper by Allah, and the "joyous life" one can attain by complete obedience to Allah's commandments...

Allah defines the way of living prior to the advent of the Prophet Muhammad as "ignorance", or the "the period of ignorance."

The word "ignorance," as used in the Qur'an, conveys quite a different meaning from its normally accepted connotations. In its common use, "ignorant" means "illiterate", "uneducated" or "having no manners". Ignorance in the Qur'anic sense, however, defines a state of mind in which a person is completely unaware of the purpose of his existence in this life, the attributes of his Creator and the information revealed in the Divine Book sent to him regarding his eternal life. The term, hence, refers to the state of unconsciousness and the particular way of living which is a mere consequence of this type of ignorance. Surely, lack of comprehension of one's Creator, the world one lives in and the system surrounding one, is the most extreme form of ignorance. Nothing, neither the modern way of living a person adopts, nor

the foreign languages he speaks, nor the shelves of books he reads or his good manners can compensate for this ignorance.

The “ignorant society” is a society where such an unawareness and ignorance prevail. The concept of the “ignorant society”, however, does not necessarily apply merely to the people who lived before the Qur’an was revealed. Rather, the term refers to all people who swerved from the moral manners and the way of living enjoined by the Qur’an after it was revealed. Thus the definition of the term is quite extensive.

The basic rationale underlying the “ignorant society” amounts to people forming their own personal ideas of right and wrong upon which they base their entire lives. What consequences ensue from such a stance? The answer is simple: the development of an apathetic attitude towards the most crucial subject of one’s life: the life beyond death. Such an attitude, however, is the most detrimental to man’s eternal life as well as to any hope of a rewarding and peaceful life in this world. The sole reason for this is that the moral system prevailing in the ignorant societies is firmly established on the basis of a rather “crude understanding.” The fundamental goal of life is more or less alike for every individual: to attain the best standard of living throughout a life which is limited to an average of 60-70 years...

Surely this is an ideal so lacking in “vision” that it inevitably causes man to drift into a “small” world. Such a world embraces the type of people, who are narrow in outlook and limited in their thinking. These people display simple and primitive attitudes and pay too much attention to petty details. That is entirely due to the fact that this ideal neglects concerns like why and how man has been created. Finding out the truth beyond life, taking into account the life after death and getting prepared for it are totally disregarded in this type of ideal.

For a member of the ignorant society, life is a competition, or a struggle to maintain one’s existence in the most favourable way; the main goals are being successful and powerful. To this end, the individual builds a self-centred consciousness. Once he gains prosperity, he develops an even stronger attachment to money and material prosperity. Moreover, a desirable status once attained is followed by the desire for a more favoured status. This ambition enslaves man so deeply that he cannot arrive at a genuine understanding of the ignorance he falls into and thus he never succeeds in breaking free of it.

Only a comparison to the way of living, thought and moral values encouraged by the Qur’an would reveal the primitive and unsound nature of this life.

The purpose of this book is to proceed further with this comparison and to demonstrate to what extent the “crude understanding” has the members of the ignorant society in its grip. Furthermore, this book thoroughly examines the moral values of this crude understanding and introduces the way of living, chosen and enjoined by Allah, as the only solution to eliminate this mentality.

Allah addresses the people of the ignorant society in the following verse:

Do they then seek after a judgment of (the days of) ignorance? But who, for a people whose faith is assured, can give better judgment than Allah?

Surah Al-Maeda: 50

Getting to Know the Ignorant Society

The foremost and inherent characteristic of the members of an ignorant society is their unwillingness to develop a consciousness of Allah. Thus, people in this state of ignorance simply avoid complying with the commandments of Allah, having developed their own moral principles and a way of thinking contrary to everything approved of as being right by the Qur'an. The Qur'an, the last Divine Book, provides all the answers to all possible questions the individual might raise throughout his life. It offers all the key explanations and solutions which he needs in every aspect of his life.

Despite the existence of the Qur'an ó the only guide to the true path for humanity ó people in this state of ignorance abandon this precious source of wisdom and resort to their own limited thinking faculties to determine how to spend their lives so as to make them rewarding. Considering this fact, the mentality of such a society definitely proves to be “ignorant” when compared with the ideal mentality described in the Qur'an. In the following sections of the book, further scrutiny of the way of living favoured by the ignorant society will give us a better understanding of its primitive nature.

Before proceeding with the way of living and the moral understanding of the ignorant society, however, it would be beneficial to have an opinion of its general traits.

In Every Age there Existed an Ignorant Society

From the time man was created, there have always been two distinct societies: the ignorant society and the community of believers. All those who fail to observe the limits set by the religion, constitute the ignorant society. Despite discrepancies in beliefs, thoughts and ways of living, one fundamental rationale lays the groundwork for the life of all ignorant societies: not to adhere to true religion. The members of the ignorant society, merely limited strictly in their outlook to the worldly life, are defined in the following verse:

*Those who entertain no hope of meeting Us, but desire the life of the world and feel secure therein, and those who are neglectful of Our revelations. (Surah Yunus: 7)
Those who love too well this fleeting life, and put behind them (the remembrance of) a grievous day.*

Surah Al-Insan: 27

It is not in any way wrong to enjoy the favours of this world. Allah created these favours and gave them to the service of mankind. However, members of the ignorant society fall into an error at this point: they never take satisfaction in what they possess and always want to have more. In the words of the Qur'an, “they are deceived by this world.” What is more important, they never

feel grateful to their Creator, the only One who bestows these favours upon them.

This is exactly why throughout history, regardless of the differences in their lifestyles, prosperity, races, colours and languages, all ignorant societies have displayed an astonishing similarity in terms of their fundamental reasoning and mentality. Whether a community is the most primitive tribe in history or the most glorious civilisation dating back to time immemorial, or a contemporary society, the goal for all societies maintaining an existence rooted in “ignorance” has always been one and the same: worldly gain.

The Morality of Ignorance is a “System of Beliefs” Inherited from One Generation to Another

Another trait of the ignorant societies is the way they acquire information regarding life. Rather than from the Divine books revealed by the Creator, members of the ignorant societies gather all their knowledge pertaining to life from their ancestors (parents, grandparents, etc...) Ancestors, the unchanging mentors of the members of the ignorant society, instruct their younger generations in the “religion of ignorance” and the moral values it encourages, and thus maintain the continuity of this primitive religion. These “mentors” themselves were likewise informed about the “fundamentals” of this corrupted religion by preceding generations.

Surprisingly, this system, inherited by one generation from another, is never questioned. Every item of information is accepted as a certain fact. All values of judgment, both right and wrong, are all passed on to the next generation, ready for their use. Such an attitude naturally never encourages the younger members to question the system or to find out anything about its reliability.

The Qur’an calls attention to the unquestioning support provided to this system and how ignorant people turn their faces away from the guidance of Allah without even feeling the need to ponder over it:

And when it is said to them: Follow that which Allah has revealed, they say: We follow that wherein we found our fathers. What! Even though their fathers were wholly unintelligent and had no guidance?

Surah Al-Baqarah: 170

The Fact that They Make Up the Majority of the Society does not Indicate the Reliability of Their Rationale

The Qur’an provides another important fact about the ignorant societies: they always constitute the majority of the population as compared to the community of believers. The Qur’an informs us that the believers are always in the minority:

Yet strive as you may, most men will not believe.

Surah Yusuf: 103

But for a few of them, they have no faith.

Surah An-Nisa: 46

And most of them believe in Allah only when they can attribute partners (to Him).

Surah Yusuf: 106

Surely this is not a coincidence but a special situation created deliberately by Allah for a certain cause. That believers are in the minority makes their virtuous conduct even more precious in this world. Furthermore, this is a factor enhancing their rewards in the Hereafter. This world surely has a lure as an essential part of the trial by Allah. Nevertheless, if concern for the Hereafter takes complete hold of one's mind and, in consequence, one's actions, one would surely be superior to the majority deceived by the attraction of worldly goods.

Besides, this is an important matter of trial for unbelievers. For the majority of the people it is customary to follow the general way of doing things in society. They simply take it for granted that the general attitude of the society is the righteous one. The same rationale further holds that the majority represents the absolute truth while the standpoint of the minority is to be approached with doubt and concern. Our point, put briefly, is: when summoned to the true path, by the guidance of Allah, people in a state of ignorance refuse to comply with this call on the flimsy pretext that it does not conform with the recognised social order. However, popular acceptance can by no means be an argument for truth.

This social criterion is surely nothing but an unsound judgment of the aforementioned crude understanding. Ignorant people make up the majority of the community merely because they all turn away in total ungratefulness from their Creator, simply preferring this world to the next. Surely those who adopt the attitude of such a society merely deceive themselves.

In the Qur'an Allah informs us about the reasons why these people in their state of ignorance make up the majority of the society and warns believers against taking this as a criterion for themselves:

And if you obey most of those on the earth, they will lead you astray from Allah's way; they follow nothing but conjectures and they preach nothing but falsehoods.

Surely your Lordó He best knows who goes astray from His way, and He best knows those who follow the right course.

Surah Al-Anaam: 116-117

Most of them follow nothing but mere conjecture. Assuredly, conjecture can by no means take the place of truth. Allah is Aware of what they do.

Surah Yunus: 36

The attitude assumed by believers to find out the truth is explained in the Qur'an:

And there are among us some who have surrendered (to Allah) and there are among us some who are unjust. And whoever has surrendered to Allah has taken the right path purposefully.

Surah Al-Jinn: 14

Ignorant Societies have Always been Warned Throughout History

Whoever goes aright, does so for his own soul; and whoever goes astray, does so to its detriment; no soul shall bear the burden of another, nor do We chastise a nation until We have sent forth a messenger to warn it.

Surah Al-Isra: 15

And never did your Lord destroy the nations, till He had sent to their capital cities a messenger reciting to them Our revelations. And never did We destroy any nations unless its people were evil-doers.

Surah Al-Qasas: 59

The above verses point to one single fact: to every ignorant society a messenger was sent to communicate the message of Allah. Out of His infinite mercy, Allah does not punish a society to whom His divine message has not been communicated. Through messengers, Allah informed man that there is no god other than Him and reminded them about the Day of Judgment.

And We sent to them a messenger from among themselves, (saying), "Worship Allah! You have no other god but Him. Will you not fear (Him)?"

Surah Al-Mumenoon: 32

Another point deserves mention here: members of the ignorant society deliberately insist on maintaining their primitive thinking. They display an incomprehensible persistence in adherence to the religion of ignorance, although messengers provide them with clear explanations of the existence of Allah and the Hereafter. In another verse, the common attitude of prominent people of the ignorant society to the Divine message is recounted:

Just in the same way, whenever We sent a Warner before you to any people, the wealthy ones among them said: "We found our fathers following a certain religion, and we will certainly follow in their footsteps."

Surah Al-Zukhruf: 23

They Spend Their Lives in Trouble and Anguish

People in a state of ignorance invest all their hopes and dreams in this world alone and forget the Hereafter. However, the attachment they form for this life often turns into an unbridled ambition. At this point, fortune, fame or status cease to satisfy the individual's worldly whims and desires. Success and prosperity only engender further ambition and greed rather than induce a peaceful state of mind. Such ambition, however, is detrimental to man's physical well-being. Ambitions also make him lose his moral values. Self-interest finally isolates him. Though surrounded by a lot of people, people in a state of ignorance feel lonely and insecure, never finding a true companion. These factors together with other troubles (examined in the following sections) become a major source of disappointment. Under such circumstances, life becomes a burden rather than a source of joy and pleasure.

This is exactly what befalls the ignorant as a result of their own preferences. However, no matter what befalls them, they do not realise what is happening to their lives. Most of them only realise it after spending a whole life devoted to worldly pleasures, at the very time when they feel death is close. To their sorrow, however, it is too late. Even then, the grief does not stop there. Allah informs us that it is not only this life that they lose. Because of their adherence to primitive reasoning, these people will meet a grievous end in the Hereafter:

They indeed are losers who deny their meeting with Allah until, when the Hour comes on them suddenly, they cry: Alas for us, that we neglected it! They bear upon their backs their burdens. Ah, evil are the burdens which they bear!

Surah Al-Anaam: 31

On the other hand, believers who spend their lives in the cause of Allah are rewarded with a beautiful life both in this world and the Hereafter:

So Allah gave them the reward of this world and the glorious reward of the Hereafter. Allah loves those whose deeds are good.

Surah Al-e Imran : 148

Say: Who has forbidden the adornment of Allah which He has brought forth for His bondmen, and the good things of His providing? Say: Such, on the Day of Resurrection, will be only for those who believed during the life of this world. Thus do we make plain Our revelations for peoples who have knowledge.

Surah Al-Araf : 32

This is the ayah starting with:

Those who believe and carry out their duty to Allah, theirs are good tidings in the life of the world and in the Hereafter. There is no changing the Words of Allah ó that is the Supreme Triumph.

Surah Yunus : 63-64

Why do They Prefer a Primitive Life?

1 Because They Assume Everything is Restricted to this Life

One inherited characteristic of the ignorant is their way of thinking, which limits their existence to this world. This has one meaning: accepting this “temporary world” as the “real” one, and hence not getting prepared for the next...consequently, such an attitude makes us believe that these people do not have faith, or rather a poor faith, in the Hereafter. Satisfied with a life to which death will ultimately put an end, those in a state of ignorance struggle to hold on tightly to the worldly life. The mentality of these people is expressed in the Qur’an in their own words:

There is nothing but our life in this world! We shall die and we live! But we shall never be raised up again!

Surah Al-Mumunoon: 37

Those who have such a conviction do not observe the limits set by Allah and, accordingly, do not demonstrate obedience to His commandments. Such an understanding is based on the desire to be superior merely in this world, while forgetting the next.

At this point, there is one fundamental mistake these people make: they prefer such a way of living on the grounds of making more of this life. However, its consequences prove to be otherwise. Let alone enjoying material and spiritual benefits, they hardly take pleasure from worldly gains.

That is solely because, due to their insensitiveness to the need to occupy themselves with the remembrance of Allah, Allah either takes back His favours from them or gives their hearts an everlasting fear of losing these favours. This is indeed a troublesome situation since they can never ease their fears about the future. The thought of it occupies every moment of their lives.

The only way to benefit from the favours of this world is to have a thorough grasp of the fact that they are bestowed by Allah. One who understands this surely knows that these favours are temporary and inferior compared to the favours in the Hereafter.

Here an important question arises: “Don’t they feel frustrated and finally understand this mystery of life?” Alternatively, “Once they understand that they cannot take pleasure in this life, why do they still have this mentality?” The answers provided by the Qur’an to these questions are explicit:

This is because they love the life of this world better than that of the Hereafter: and Allah will not guide those who reject Faith.

Surah Al-Nahl: 107

Allah gives abundantly to whom He will, and sparingly (to whom He pleases); and they rejoice in the life of this world, whereas the life of this world is but brief comfort as compared with that of the Hereafter.

Surah Al-Rad: 26

These verses reveal the rationale lying behind the primitive way of thinking prevalent in the ignorant societies: “To feel an attachment to this life and to forget the Hereafter”. Contrary to this conviction; however, this life is merely a scenario designed to put man on trial. The real life is actually the one that will start once a person breathes his last. This reality is related in the verse below:

This life of this world is but a pastime and a game. The home of the Hereafter ó that is Life, if they but knew.

Surah Al-Ankaboot: 64

Beautified for mankind is love of the joys (that come) from women and offspring; and stored-up heaps of gold and silver, and horses branded (with their mark), and cattle and land. That is the comfort of the life of this world. Allah! With Him is a more excellent abode.

Surah Aal-e Imran: 14

Allah describes in these verses the particular lures over which man becomes the most impassioned, viz. Money and possessions. But material prosperity does not bring peace and satisfaction. Efforts to find real love and respect often prove to be vain. True companionship also remains desperately sought after yet is never attained in the ignorant society. They can never be achieved because love, respect and companionship are attainable only when the individual conducts himself responsibly towards his Creator, thus attaining moral perfection. A sincere believer having moral values leaves a positive impression on other people and builds a bond of trust; this is actually the basis of true love and respect. One bereft of these moral values might quickly amass a fortune, have the most glorious villa in the world, or travel to the world’s best holiday resorts. In brief, he might indulge his taste for every “joy” that money can bring. Yet such material prosperity never provides the peace of mind and sense of security he needs. His achievements never satisfy his cupidity and hence make him happy. Despite possessing everything he needs, he still finds reasons to complain.

Ambitions inevitably become the source of a profound moral corruption. The urge for money pushes man into forgery, lying, selfishness, unjust practices, and other misbehaviour, which cause him to rage and to suffer feelings of tension and distress.

In the Qur’an, another reason for the ignorant society’s insistence on this crude understanding is stated to be fondness for boasting which it fosters:

Know that the life of the world is only play, and idle talk, and pageantry, and boasting among you, and rivalry in respect of wealth and children.

Surah Al-Hadid: 20

Any issue related to this worldly life becomes a “subject” for boasting. People attach so much

importance to being appreciated by other people that their life becomes a search for having “things” to boast about. A good education, having an admirable status in society, marrying a member of a prominent family or even having children are for ignorant people among the important “materials” to boast. The good looks or intelligence of the child, the schools he/she attends become issues to boast about. A life limited to only six or seven decades is thus spent in soothing one’s ambitions for wealth, success or any form of prosperity. Considering that the major reason for this desire is to show off to other people who are weak and mortal like any other person, is something to give thought to. After all, one should not dare to lose eternal life at the cost of making a good impression upon others in this world.

1 Because Rather than Behaving Conscientiously, they Endeavour to Fulfil Their Own Vain Desires

If one thing is remembered about the reasons for pursuing a primitive life when all else is forgotten, it should surely be the inclination of the ignorant to follow their own desires.

Allah inspired in man’s soul two voices, exactly contrary to each other in nature” One of these voices inspires the soul with a consciousness of what is wrong and what is right. If one listens to the voice of this divine guide, which is his conscience, he will not diverge from the right way and will remain wise and clear-sighted. The other voice, on the contrary, calls one to a life conforming to the negative side of one’s soul. These two voices are actually the conscience and the soul (an-nafs). This fact is related in the Qur’an:

By the Soul, and the proportion and order given to it; and its enlightenment as to its wrong and its right : truly, he succeeds that purifies it, and he fails that corrupts it!

Surah Al-Shams: 7-10

In a work devoted to identifying and defining the ignorant society from every aspect, the distinction between conscience and the soul deserves a special mention. Because the foremost reason for a person being “ignorant” is his inclination to pursue his whims and desires and his complete indifference to the whisper calling him to the divine guidance.

Contrary to high expectations, a life marked by fondness for worldly gain is spiritually unrewarding.

The Lifestyle Ignorance Exposes

Would you like to have a perfect life of grace, security and comfort, where the concept of time does not matter or an inherently flawed life limited to five or six decades? Meanwhile, keep in mind that the first decade of this life will be passed in the unconsciousness of childhood and the last one in dealing with declining health and other age-related problems.

No doubt a person of wisdom would prefer “a perfect life of grace, security and comfort”; for the sake of a few decades, he would not like to lose an eternal life. However, there are also some who become enthralled and blinded by the spell of this world, which passes in the blink of an eye.

Preferring such a life in pursuit of personal benefits, these people soon realise that this is not a reliable way of attaining their goals. After all, in the course of their lives, whatever they do or wherever they go, they never succeed in escaping from anguish and trouble. But an understanding of this reality often comes too late; usually, the moment one meets one’s death, one conceives of the irreversible wrong choice one has made.

The life of this world, with its very strong attachments, gives only moderate satisfaction; it offers nothing more than some subsistence and shelter. In the Qur’an, Allah gives the reason for such a preference: the lack of wisdom. So, what are the traits of this lifestyle, which is merely a source of unrest and trouble and which leads to the sheerest torture for all eternity? What kind of a life do ignorant people lead?

In the subsequent pages, a general framework of the environment surrounding such ignorant people is provided. The purpose here is to reveal the crude understanding it inherits and to show how detrimental this lifestyle is to an individual’s well-being in the long and short run.

However, before going into details, one should remember that the lifestyle depicted here is seen in terms of a general understanding of ignorant societies. Hence, though very commonly practiced in society, it may not be true for all individuals. There may be people who do not involve themselves in the practices mentioned in subsequent sections of this book. However, the intention here is to stress the “primitive nature” of this reasoning which reveals itself in the human soul in a number of ways: sometimes we observe it in individual’s approach to moral values; alternatively, it may well be apparent in the lifestyle or self-centred world a person builds for himself. No matter how this lifestyle discloses itself, there is one fact which needs to be underlined: people who abandon themselves to this worldly life, totally forgetting the Day of Judgment unconditionally display this “primitiveness” in one way or another.

A Monotonous Life

Those who accept ignorance sooner or later become entrapped by monotony. Unable to find out its reasons, they finally surrender themselves to this monotony and simply embrace it as a way of living. From then on, they make no effort to enrich their lives, by making them healthier, more comfortable and more satisfying. They spend their lives just “waiting for the day they will meet their death.”

At this point the monotony starts for the ignorant. The moment they open their eyes to a new day, they find themselves engrossed with everyday routines. Many people see their long hours at home or work as somewhat vacant. There is not a great deal they can hold fast to in society when they are looking for something to give their lives some meaning. Early in the morning they leave home for work where they meet the same people talking about the same issues. Once the work is over, they ride back to home in the same car, taking the route they always take. At home, nothing different happens; the family gathering at the supper table engage in their everyday conversation. No sooner do they start watching television, than they fall asleep. And thus they prepare themselves for another day that will bring nothing new.

Knowing that nothing will change in the course of time makes everything even more unbearable and troublesome. They start to dislike their house, for instance, albeit decorated with care and enthusiasm. Time eventually erases the attraction of the house, furniture, decor, in brief, everything they like. Time also makes people lose their affection for the people surrounding them; after some time they do not derive as much pleasure from their relations as they did in the old days. Immediate family members and close friends no longer give the happiness and excitement they used to give; people in their state of ignorance want them around solely out of habit.

A major reason for this monotony is surely the “minor goals” they have. Even the most ambitious person in the world has ordinary targets, this all being the outcome of living in a “small world”: graduating from a prestigious university, getting a good job, being happily married, getting the kids through school, improving living standards and finally waiting for death... To put it concisely, “coming into existence, growing old and dying.”

Stepping out of the boundaries of these targets, imposed by the culture of ignorance, is almost impossible. All ideals are set for a few decades of this life.

The individual, however, should devote his resources to fulfilling the commands of Allah in order to secure His pleasure. A life spent for the cause of Allah never gets monotonous. Each moment becomes a source of excitement and zeal. He will stay in this world for a while, but in Heaven, a place of eternal happiness, he will eventually receive the rewards for what he has done. Therefore, for a believer, it is unwise to “kill time”. On the contrary, a person finds every moment of this limited life to be precious.

One who follows the commandments of the Qur’an never experiences monotony. He is a man of wisdom who constantly brings something new to his life. He never lets the people surrounding him or his own life go on a vicious circle. Even with limited resources and in difficult times, he always finds ways to improve his life. In his old age, too, his enthusiasm for the betterment of his life never disappears. His determination to follow the righteous path eventually brings him a great life in this world and Paradise in the Hereafter:

And they will say: "Praise be to Allah, Who has removed from us (all) sorrow: for our Lord is indeed Oft-Forgiving and ready to appreciate (service). He has, out of His Bounty, settled us in a Home that will last: no toil nor sense of weariness shall touch us therein."

Surah Fatir: 34-35

Despite such rewards, ignorant people accept the dullness of their life. Allah, in the Qur'an gives the reasons for such an attitude.

"that is because they are a people who have no sense. Just like those (who suffered) a short time before them, they taste the ill-effects of their own conduct, and theirs is a painful punishment."

Surah Al-Hashr: 14-15

A Troublesome Environment

In the ignorant societies people lead troubled lives. This is surely a direct consequence of not putting one's trust in Allah. Not believing in Allah, they assume they can avoid their responsibilities towards Allah and still enjoy all the worldly pleasures of life. But to their disappointment, one thing bothers them greatly: "stress." Their choice of "disbelief" rests solely on the assumption that an environment where proper behaviour is not enforced by an absolute sense of right and wrong but by devotion to one's own principles would afford them peace, comfort and a life of joy and happiness. Yet, contrary to their expectations, their experience proves to be otherwise.

The main source of this trouble is insecurity. This insecurity is a consequence of not putting one's trust in Allah. People, who cannot conceive of the power and control of Allah over all men and incidents, feel a constant fear and a sense of uneasiness. Not aware of fate, which is only under the total control of Allah, they struggle to cope with the whole of life. This rationale holds that, at every moment, misfortunes may befall them and they are weak and helpless against them.

They have a negative approach towards all happenings. Mostly fear surrounds them on all sides. Blurred with stress, their mind fails to bring solutions to problems. If dealt with in a peaceful state of mind, however, these surely would be minor issues to resolve. They are mostly unhappy; everything they meet with in the course of their lives, whether important or trifling, makes them easily tense. Especially situations which they describe as "misfortunes" become the main sources of stress.

Yet, what is most common to these people is the harm they do to their own mental health. Statements starting with "What if...?" keep their minds occupied with "disaster scenarios". A businessman, for instance, considers all the possible consequences of missing an important meeting that will be held the following week: "What if he misses the plane and cannot arrive at the meeting on time?"; "what would be his loss in such a situation?"; "how can he explain this situation to his boss?" are only a few of the questions that cross his mind. This attitude, however, is not restricted to one subject only. Such an approach holds true for every aspect of life, like health, family and friends, social and economic affairs, to name a few. The imaginary problems of their spouses, children and friends increase their distress.

Believers complying with the commandments of the Qur'an, on the other hand, feel peace, comfort and happiness deep in their hearts. Being conscious of Allah's existence and power,

they are never overwhelmed by trouble and distress. They handle problems with wisdom. If they face any difficulty in solving a problem, this does not break their spirit. They know that, whatever happens, there is goodness in it. Again, in a peaceful state of mind, they look for ways to improve the situation. With such an attitude, the direct consequence of their faith in Allah, they stay away from all the harm that stress and tension give to the human body and soul.

Believers never lose their trust in Allah; material loss, an accident or illness does not affect their trust in their Creator, since they know that there is goodness in everything. They know that, besides Allah, people have no other protector or helper... In situations particularly where circumstances are not favourable, they quickly acknowledge this to be a trial by Allah. Allah provides the underlying reason for this attitude in the following verse:

“but it may happen that you hate a thing which is good for you, and it may happen that you love a thing which is bad for you. Allah knows, but you do not know.

Surah Al-Baqarah: 216

Ignorant people are exceptionally vulnerable. Stress, a consequence of their senseless rationale, causes irreversible damage to body and soul. While endlessly pursuing the pleasures of life, they find themselves overcome by the grief of their unreasonable worries. Besides this world, they also lose the eternal life. If, however, they devoted their time to contemplating the Hereafter, rather than producing negative scenarios, which are mere figments of the imagination, they would certainly attain happiness both in this world and the Hereafter.

Surely Allah has bought from the believers their persons and their property and in return has promised them, that they shall have the Garden; they fight in Allah’s way, so they slay and are slain; a promise which is binding on Him in the Taurat¹ and the Injeel² and the Qur’an; and who is more faithful to his covenant than Allah? Rejoice, therefore, in the pledge which you have made; and that is the supreme achievement.

Surah At-Tawba: 111

Attaching Importance to People According to Their Wealth, Status and Good Looks

Wealthy people are held in high esteem by the ignorant. The more money a person has, the more respected he becomes.

Moral values, honesty, reliability and modesty do not earn honour in the ignorant society. These are actually not the virtues ignorance attaches importance to. Money, being the sole basis of all relations and values, introduces a completely different set of moral values and standpoint to the ignorant society; in this system “everyone and everything has a price” and “there is nothing you cannot attain as long as you pay the due price.”

Due to this “so-called” superiority, people in a state of ignorance feel an inconceivable admiration for the “elite” of the society. No matter how morally corrupted, their lifestyle is appreciated, moreover imitated. According to this philosophy, a person, albeit a totally morally corrupted, might easily occupy a high and respectable status in society.

As well as wealth, status and good looks, too, earn admiration in a society blighted by ignorance. Often, the ignorant deem a person to be superior due to his good looks or his prestigious position in business, without having the slightest idea about his character. This is actually the system an ignorant society rests upon. Early in childhood, all members of such a society learn these values and start to live according to them. Everyone knows of which social class they are a

member, and what benefits and advantages accrue from belonging to this particular class. Wealth has an obvious advantage over poverty, for instance, like the advantage which well-educated people have over illiterate and well-known people over ordinary citizens. This is the major source of a ridiculous envy of and a sense of inferiority felt towards these people who appear to be better placed in life than others. Such feelings inevitably push people into meaningless competition. They devote all their energy, thinking faculties and time to engaging in this struggle for status. Such a competition inevitably makes individuals forget about the purpose of their existence.

As a consequence of social indoctrination, the ones deemed to be superior, assume the right to exercise oppressive control over others. The unwritten hierarchy prevailing in society makes it possible for a landlord to trouble his tenant, for instance. Similarly, the tenant feels he has the right to trouble his doorkeeper. The doorkeeper exercises authority at home, over his wife, and in like manner the wife of the doorkeeper over her children. In their own world, there is a hierarchy of superiority. In this hierarchy everybody knows his individual rights and limits of his “authority.”

Surely this is inherently a flawed system of social conduct. People in this state of ignorance establish a system and then face difficulty in complying with the rules of the system they have themselves created. This is the direct outcome of a crude understanding. However, rather than eradicating this fundamental mistake, ignorant people struggle to find ways of being successful in this relentless competition.

Contrary to the ignorant society’s criteria laid down for superiority ó in other words property, power and status ó the real superiority calls for faith in Allah and fear of Allah. The colour of one’s skin, good-looks or prosperity have no importance in the presence of Allah. One day, everyone, be he poor or wealthy, beautiful or ugly, will be wrapped in a simple shroud and placed in a pit ó which will reduce his body into insignificance.

The Qur’an sets the real criteria for man:

O mankind! We created you from a single (pair) of a male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes, so that you might know each other. Indeed, the most honoured of you in the sight of Allah is (he who is) the most righteous of you.

Surah Al-Hujraat: 13

Living in a community of people, who have an inner grasp of this Qur’anic understanding, is no doubt a great source of comfort. An environment where the concepts of love and respect are isolated from material values and replaced by virtues like honesty, moral awareness, etc., naturally puts an end to this relentless competition. Such competition should be replaced by striving in the way of Allah. Allah states the superiority of those who strive in the way of Allah:

These vie with each others for salvation and shall be the first to attain it.

Surah Al-Mumenuun: 61

And everyone has a direction to which he should turn, therefore hasten to (do) good works; wherever you are, Allah will bring you all together; surely Allah has power over all things.

Surah Al-Baqarah: 148

They believe in Allah and the Last Day, and enjoin right conduct and forbid indecency, and vie with one another in good works. These are of the righteous.

They Live in an Environment where Wisdom and Conscience have No Place

The system of ignorance leaves no room for thought; it means living without thinking, speaking without thinking, giving decisions without thinking, implementing without thinking... Ignorant people regard thinking as a waste of time, and more importantly, perceive it as troublesome, since it definitely calls for conscience and wisdom, two concepts honoured only in theory but never in practice in the ignorant way of living. Instead, without subjecting them to thorough investigation, people apply and observe rules, principles and customs of their own making, surely an easy way of living never demanding thought.

For instance, they know exactly what to do as long as they are “instructed.” In case of an emergency or an unexpected situation, they lack the initiative to provide solutions to problems. That is merely because they are used to “ready-made” solutions. Astonishment and acting indecisively are only a few of the consequences of not applying wisdom or conscience.

Similarly, the ignorant show apathy towards “innovation.” Unless under compulsion, they display reluctance to produce anything new, no matter what the subject. An example from daily life would make these explanations more explicit. Ignorant people are ready to buy whatever designers serve up, however ridiculous. Just for the sake of being in fashion, they wear clothes which look ridiculous. They seldom use their common sense to look good. Likewise, preferences regarding home decoration, movies, entertainment, TV shows, etc. are all determined by the general tendencies in fashion.

This point of view reveals itself in many ways in daily life. Meeting a beggar with outstretched hands on the street, they cannot sidestep, but give some money. This, however, is a “reflex action”, which is the outcome of a “learning process” rather than a conscientious decision. In a totally different situation, however, it is quite possible that they would behave in a thoughtless and senseless way. In the course of daily life, it is possible to witness hundreds of other examples of these “reflex actions”. The essence of the issue is that the consequences of habitual thoughtlessness can be more serious than one can ever imagine. Surely the most serious deficiency of all, however, is having a poor grasp of the greatness of Allah and the existence of the Hereafter. In the Qur’an, the reason for these characteristics of the ignorant society is simply stated:

That is because they are people who have no sense.

Surah Al-Hashr: 14

Believers are those, on the other hand, who have an insight into the importance of wisdom and conscience. In every aspect of life, they take advantage of this favour to the fullest possible extent. They ponder upon every incident which befalls them and take wise and thoughtful action. Believers also draw lessons from these incidents and gather enlightening experience to be used later in life. Never do they engage in inherited practices without questioning them. If the system handed down to them offers something really favourable, they embrace it. Meanwhile, they don’t allow the non-workable components of this system to influence their lives, and lose no time in changing or improving conditions, if a renovation is required. What is more important, they live a peaceful and rewarding life in this world, and also attain happiness for all eternity thanks to their considerate behaviour.

These are the actual favours brought by conscience and wisdom.

Degeneration

What we refer to as “moral values” are the concepts introduced by religion that make life beautiful and rewarding. Whenever these values are distorted, we face a really disturbing picture in society. First of all, in an environment where no rules and limits are observed, “lawlessness” prevails. In this system, everyone lays down his own rules and principles, based on highly variable criteria. In the ignorant society the basic principle that is applied is not to go to extremes in social conduct and hence not to incur any reaction from the society. It is wholly acceptable to do anything wrong, as long as it is not publicly disclosed. Ignorant people deliver speeches about virtuous conduct and morals, or severely condemn those who hold a contrary view. However, they themselves violate these values when they are convinced that nobody sees them.

This is actually the main basis upon which their philosophy rests. They never think that Allah surrounds them all at every moment; they never conceive that He sees every deed they commit and hears every word they utter. They perceive degeneration as a “modern” way of living.

They fear being humiliated if they do not project the image of a “modern person.” This image essentially calls for the flouting of such moral values as honesty. Someone, for instance, who returns the money he found on the street to its owner is ridiculed. In such a situation, acceptable behaviour according to ignorant people would be not to give the money back. This example reflects only one aspect of the ignorant society’s understanding about moral values however. Concepts like honesty and chastity also lose their importance. Forgery and lying are accepted as normal. A person may commit burglary since he finds nothing wrong with it. Likewise, anyone can tell a lie whenever he wishes. In this system other people have no right to object because they also have the right to behave “freely”(!) in accordance with their own moral values.

The Qur’an makes it clear that people who adhere to the moral values of the age of the ignorant suffer for doing so:

Indeed, Allah will not deal unjustly with man in any way. It is man who wrongs his own soul.

Surah Yunus: 44

In a society where people adhere to religious values, they conduct themselves responsibly towards each other since they go in fear of Allah. They never deign to be dishonest or insincere, and certainly never push things to such extremes as to make life difficult for others. Moral values become the basis of all acts and conduct.

Relations Based on Interest Rather than on Honesty and Sincerity

Interest-ridden relations, also a trait of the ignorant society, do not allow the forming of true friendships. True friendships demand sacrifice and thought; one has to consider the needs and interests of the other person rather than one’s own and seek ways to provide peace and comfort to him/her. Such a sensitive approach is, however, entirely contrary to the understanding of ignorant people. Their primitive rationale calls for a non-appeasing obedience to self-interests on the misconception that life is short and the world is a temporary place.

This rationale however brings harm rather than benefit. The trouble caused by this selfish approach affects them the most. All throughout their lives, they have to spend time in an environment where they never experience true love and respect. They are always aware that their friendships are based on mutual interests. They feel no doubt that in times of trouble their “friends” will just disappear. They also approach other people with the same mentality. Yet all their lives they complain that they have no true friends around them..

People who are ignorant assume a self-sacrificing attitude towards their friends only when they believe it is “advantageous”. For a temporary period of time, they pretend to be a loyal friend. Yet, once the advantage have been derived from this relationship they assume a cool and distant attitude, implying that they no longer need such a bond.

This is indeed a very well known process. It is interesting that nobody condemns others or opposes this system since all members of the ignorant society think in the same way. Even marriages or relationships between immediate family members are based on this system. Rather than offering trust, love and respect, the two sides approach each other with the intention of drawing some benefits from the other. Women generally see marriage as a guarantee for their future. The bank account of the prospective husband in most of the cases serves as a life insurance. Though never openly voiced, marriage is considered as a contract. If the man is wealthy, the woman assumes herself to have made a good deal. The man feels the same and assumes himself to be the one who “deceives” the other. As in all dealings, he stands to reap some benefits; his beautiful wife becomes something to boast about. At least he guarantees the existence of someone at home who for the rest of her life will patiently do the housework, iron his shirts and take care of the children.

Such a system is surely the inevitable consequence of being away from the Islamic standpoint. Seeing people as a means to attain particular goals is assuredly a major part of the significant detriment caused by disbelief to a society steeped in ignorance.

This distorted rationale is also conveyed to new generations. Influenced by their parents, children start to see their parents as “providers” who look after them, get them through schools and finally arrange for them to have a respectable profession. In return, parents see their children as possessions to “invest in.” Their ultimate aim is to have someone who will take care of them when they grow old. These intentions, never pronounced loudly, but intensely felt and experienced, occupy the minds of all individuals in the ignorant society.

As we have seen, believing to have done the best for their lives, all members of such a society, without exception, conform with this order. However, it is a great loss not to experience real intimacy and honesty even with one’s own spouse or children. Knowing that immediate family members, too, approach each other with materialistic intentions certainly causes inner pain.

However, the ills stemming from the corrupted mentality of the ignorant society are not restricted only to the aforementioned cases. The loneliness felt here in this world also lasts for all eternity. Allah warns man against such a disappointment beforehand:

Now you have come to Us solitary as We created you at first, and you have left behind you all that We bestowed upon you, and We do not see with you your intercessors, those whom you claimed to be Allah’s equals. Now the bond between you is severed, and that which you presumed has failed you.

Surah Al-Anaam: 94

When a person submits himself to Allah, He protects him. Such a person becomes the everlasting companion of all prophets, angels and all believers

Those who obey Allah and the messenger shall dwell with those to whom Allah has shown favour: the prophets, the saints, the martyrs and the righteous. The best of company are they!

Surah Al-Nisa: 69

Living in Unsanitary Conditions

The primitive rationale, making “to survive” the ultimate goal of life, causes its members to drift into a “disorganised” lifestyle. One of the grounds of this mentality is to have more time to take pleasure from life. This goal, manifesting itself in common phrases like “to make the most of life” or “to savour the moment”, is eagerly promoted and encouraged, as being the “contemporary lifestyle.”

There is another point that deserves mention here: the fact that individuals attach importance to nobody but to themselves, and thus show no true love and respect to anybody, eventually introduces such a way of living. This situation becomes most apparent in marriages in which couples lose mutual respect. Just after marriage, both sides do not hesitate to behave in a way they never dared before the wedding. Spending all day in pyjamas with unwashed face, uncombed hair and bad breath, or living in a house where the kitchen surfaces overflow with dirty dishes the whole day long are all the outcome of this mentality.

Indeed, this mentality brings nothing but difficulty, disorder and chaos to the lives of ignorant people. On the pretext of not wasting time, they avoid many things that would bring an aesthetic touch to their lives. They deal with only the essentials and do not exert themselves to make their environment beautiful. For instance, they do not pay attention to details while doing housework. They often find it difficult to clean up; just not seeing the dirt all around is most of the time a sufficient excuse for not doing any cleaning. Some people perceive ironing, taking a shower, changing dirty linen, towels, clothes or tidying their room as a waste of time. They don’t wash their clothes unless an obvious stain or dirt appears on them. They can’t be bothered to shave. Especially in cold weather they dislike taking a bath. Mostly they only wash their hair. In some cultures, women have a “practical” solution for this: they visit a hair-dresser once a week and never feel the need to wash their hair until the next visit to the hair-dresser. Instead of taking a shower, they generally camouflage any undesirable odour with scents and deodorants, which makes it even more disturbing. Ignorant people give importance to the outer appearance of their clothes, yet they don’t feel the necessity to wash clothing which gives off a strong smell of sweat, food or cigarettes.

This primitive “understanding of hygiene” is especially widespread among young people. Their favourite clothes are worn-out or ripped jeans “soaked” in dirt. In universities and discos or on the streets, it is very popular to sit on pavements or steps, wearing dirty leather jackets and, muddy boots, and to carry faded satchels. They generally do not tidy their wardrobes; dirty clothes are thrown crumpled into the wardrobe, right next to the clean ones. The cleaning lady does all the cleaning once a week; and so as not to spend time on dish-washing, they generally prefer “fast food”.

Encouraged on the pretext of “modernism”, this understanding and lifestyle enjoy a special

popularity among the section of society called “intellectuals.” The majority of these people, mostly made up of journalists, authors, painters, actors, poets and people in show business, project the image of the “intellectual” with dirty beards, greasy hair and untidy clothes. A next appearance with clean and well pressed clothes, they believe, is something incompatible with their “charisma.”

Such unsanitary conditions surely negatively influence these ignorant people. Be they young or old, they develop diseases caused by malnutrition and unsanitary conditions. Always inhaling cigarette smoke in their offices, shopping malls, caf’es, etc., their skins turn yellowish and they suffer serious lung problems. However, these are the negative affects observed only on the body. Living in dirty and untidy places along with other people who likewise do not care about sanitary conditions has a negative effect on their psychology too. In time, they become entirely insensitive to beauty and aesthetics. This is actually the consequence of a choice they willingly make.

The Qur’an, on the contrary, encourages man to live in the cleanest and most beautiful places possible. Allah gives a detailed account of how believers should lead their lives in the Qur’an;

And your garments keep free from stain!

Surah Al-Muddassir: 4

You could possibly substitute : “Allah loves those that turn to Him in repentance and strive to keep themselves (pure and) clean.

Surah Al-Baqarah: 222

O mankind! Eat of that which is lawful and wholesome in the Earth.

Surah Al-Baqarah: 168

They ask you as to what is allowed to them. Say: The good things are allowed to you.

Surah Al-Maeda: 4

He will make lawful for them all good things and prohibit for them only the foul.

Surah Al-Araf: 157

Remember We made the House (The Ka”ba in Makka) a place of assembly for men and a place of safety; made the station of Abraham a place of prayer; We covenanted with Abraham and Isma”il, that they should purify My House for those who walk round it, or use it as a retreat, or bow, or prostrate themselves (therein in prayer).

Surah Al-Baqarah: 125

(Others) said: Your Lord best knows how long you have tarried. Now let one of you go with this silver coin into the city, and let him see what food is purest there and bring you a supply of it.

Surah Al- Kahf: 19

To John we said: ‘Observe the Scriptures with a firm resolve’. We bestowed on him wisdom grace and purity; and he was devout.

Surah Maryam: 12

In the name of “modernism”, ignorant people create unsanitary and disorganised environments with their own hands. On the other hand by complying with the principles of the Qur’an, believers enjoy the beauties of this life before attaining the Hereafter.

The Moral Values of Ignorance

In a society steeped in ignorance, there is a single type of human character. Though changing in details from one person to another, the attributes of this character are fundamentally the same. The main reason why ignorant people have this common character is evident: their disbelief in Allah and the Hereafter.

It is quite pointless to expect someone, who feels no fear of Allah, to conduct himself honestly and responsibly. That is simply because these people assume that Allah is unaware of what is in their minds or whatever they do in secret.

In this section, we will further analyse the reprehensible moral values indoctrinated by the primitive rationale of ignorance. Yet, one point needs to be clarified before going into details: the characteristics that will be mentioned below do exist in every man's soul. Allah informs man in the Qur'an that these are inspired in the soul for man's essential trial on earth:

By the soul and the proportion and order given to it; and its enlightenment as to its wrong and its right; truly he succeeds that purifies it, and he fails that corrupts it!

Surah Al-Shams: 7-10

Only men of understanding endued with faith do not allow themselves be led astray by the negative commandments of their soul. They demonstrate a very strong commitment to purifying their souls.

Ignorant people, who never ponder on the Day of Judgment, naturally find no reason to condemn reprehensible moral values and replace them with values deemed to be righteous in the presence of Allah.

There is another point that deserves mention: among ignorant people, there may be some who, for certain reasons, discard the above-mentioned reprehensible qualities. It may well be that these people, for personal benefit or other reasons, avoid conducting themselves as ignorance commands. However, it should be well understood that these people conduct themselves responsibly not because they fear Allah. In other words, they do not restrain themselves from indulging in the ignorant way of conduct because they are God-fearing. This is rather an important point, since a person who feels no fear for Allah may well abruptly change his attitude once changing conditions contradict his interests. An apparently generous and tender person may, therefore, suddenly turn out to be mean and rude. Feeling no fear for Allah, he is prone to evil and apt to commit misdeeds at any time.

In brief, all individuals of the ignorant society may not display the attitudes described in the following pages. However, there is no reason to believe that they will never change their minds and suddenly start to behave ignorantly. The fact that one has no fear for Allah makes him open to the inculcation of ignorance. On the contrary, adherence to Qur'anic principles, firmly based

on fear of Allah, never allows for indoctrination of any kind and makes man committed to His Will.

In this section, some aspects of the reprehensible aspects of ignorance will be described:

Laziness

People consider laziness as having rather limited connotations. Mostly they never accept the idea that they, too, may be lazy. Laziness is only attributed to people who are relatively less sensitive to the undertaking of any responsibility as compared to the rest of the individuals in a society. This aside, what is meant by “laziness” here is a behavioural disorder, having serious negative consequences, both spiritual and material, on society. Ignorant people are very likely to have this “disorder.”

There is one major harm laziness does to man: it is to put him into an idle state of mind. However, what imbues a man with the virtue of being a human being is his ability to think. If he never employs this ability, he becomes a mere mechanical being, completely bereft of wisdom and insight. Reduced to this level, the individual adheres to a rather static lifestyle, bound by given rules and principles. Making something different for the betterment of life becomes almost impossible for such a person. Rather than being scrupulous and committed to improving the current conditions, it is perceived as being easier to comply with the status quo without judging or questioning.

The influence of slothfulness over conscience and willpower is observable in all dimensions of life. Those who find pondering a burden never seek answers to some of the most essential questions such as: “Why do we exist in this world?” Though acknowledging the importance of these issues, they prefer other people to cogitate on their behalf. This state of mind may even at some point jeopardize a person’s spiritual and material well-being.

He fails, for instance, to take measures to maintain perfect health. For instance, he delays seeing the doctor when he is suffering from a serious illness. Moreover, he makes every effort to avoid undergoing the treatment advised by his doctor.

Laziness keeps him away from enjoying himself, or having a good time. Rather than enjoy himself, he watches others enjoying themselves, since this does not require any effort.

Having the opportunity to prepare a comfortable place for himself, he prefers to live in an uncomfortable one, only because he finds it difficult to think.

Rather than cook healthy food, ignorant people prefer fast food, just because it is easy to obtain. They find it difficult to read and widen their horizons, and hence always confine themselves to a narrow way of thinking. They are very willing to earn a lot of money, yet rather than concentrate on honest ways of making money, they try effortless and illegal ways. Where they face a serious difficulty, they prefer suicide which is the easiest way out. Infinite examples can be given on this subject; the main idea here, however, is the ultimate aim of ignorant people to survive by making the minimum effort.

The best way to do this is to allow the status quo to perpetuate itself. This is why productivity and creativity continuously decline in ignorant societies. As well as on the personal level, such a regression takes place on the social level as a whole. No sooner does something gain popularity

in one country than it also becomes fashionable in others. Songs, movies, commercials or propaganda methods are immediately copied. The main rationale lying behind this is surely “laziness”, the lack of commitment to innovation.

As we have seen, laziness is one of the important “behavioural disorders” which ignorant people suffer from. However, it is interesting that this behaviour is never condemned in society; rather it is accepted as a normal trait. People who are involved in this system are not even aware of the detriment it brings into their lives and the beauties they miss. Therefore, they find no reason to change this situation.

Adherence to Qur’anic principles removes all these features which are peculiar to the ignorant. What makes a person take action is his belief in Allah and the Hereafter; this causes him to make serious efforts to engage in good deeds. For such a person there is no time to lose in this world. Every passing moment brings an opportunity to do good deeds. He has important targets to achieve. Therefore, rather than being lazy, he tries to be productive and demonstrates a relentless dedication to work. Allah states in the Qur’an that this is the type of person He appreciates:

Vie with one another for forgiveness from your Lord and a Garden as vast as the heavens and the earth, which is in store for those who believe in Allah and His messengers. Such is the bounty of Allah, which He bestows upon whom He will. Allah is of Infinite Bounty.

Surah Al-Hadid: 21

And whoever desires the Hereafter and strives for it with the effort necessary, being a believer for such, their effort shall find favour (with their Lord).

Surah Al-Isra: 19

Jealousy

One of the basic features of the ignorant society is jealousy. One, having no belief in the Hereafter, embraces this world ambitiously. He desires to take advantage of all the opportunities this world offers and to satisfy the infinite passions he has. This ambition is felt so intensely that he always wants to be the best in every aspect of life. Such a target inevitably makes him perceive the people surrounding him as potential rivals.

This standpoint, the main basis of jealousy, shapes almost the whole life of a person from his birth. He learns the competition rules by heart and puts them into practice with no difficulty. At some point in his life, this passion reaches such extremes that he can’t accept others being superior to him or simply can’t stand others being successful.

Ignorant people with such an outlook devote all their energies to excelling in their professional lives or in any other aspect of social life. They should be married to the most beautiful woman or to the most handsome man. The most gorgeous house, the most luxurious furniture, the best car, the most successful children, the best quality clothes should always belong to them. They should be the ones travelling to the most beautiful places in the world. This outlook ultimately leads to a vital competition for ignorant people. Out of jealousy, they don’t want others to prosper. This surely demonstrates a flawed mentality, since the beauty, wealth or relatively better living standards of others is not an impediment to one’s own improvement.

The flawed rationale of the ignorant society is not only limited to these examples. Being jealous is accepted as being a greatly appreciated characteristic in public. Those who claim not to be jealous are believed to be somewhat abnormal and extraordinary. According to what the convictions of ignorance demand, relationships should be driven by jealousy. If an ignorant individual, for instance, has someone he really loves, he feels he must not allow anybody else to approach him, to feel attachment to him or to become a good friend of his; he should remain that person's one and only friend. However, an individual may be loved by more than one person. The love of one by no means affects the love of another. On the contrary, if that particular individual has a remarkable personality, it is natural that many people would like to love him.

Never feeling content with what they have, those who suffer from jealousy cannot attain real happiness. The existence of better things around them always make them feel restless and depressed. This is a rational explanation of the harm which can be done by jealousy.

Rather than adhering to such a difficult and troublesome system, it is much more convenient to comply with what is revealed by Allah and purge the mind of jealousy, envy and greed and keep away from temptation. The soul of man is prone to jealousy, yet it is quite possible and, in fact, easy to rid oneself of this feeling through wisdom and conscience. This fact is explained in the Qur'an as follows:

Greed is ever present in the minds (of men). But if you do good and keep from evil, Allah is ever informed of what you do.

Surah Al-Nisa: 128

Allah commands man to purify his soul of jealousy and replace it with a totally different attitude, giving priority to the wishes and needs of other people rather than one's own soul.

This is indeed a self-sacrificing attitude. In a number of verses in the Qur'an, the actions of a spirit completely purified of jealousy are indicated:

They give food, despite their love for it, to the poor and orphans and captives.

Surah Al-Insan: 8

Those who, despite their love for it, give away their wealth to their relatives and to orphans and the very poor, and to travellers and beggars and to set slaves free.

Surah Al-Baqarah: 177

Muslims give everything ó even the things to which they attach much importance ó to others, and while doing so, they are never diverted by any kind of ambition or jealousy. Following the moral principles of the Qur'an will certainly remove all the grief from one's heart and will enable one to attain the good pleasure of Allah.

Arrogance

Ignorant people are often possessed by "delusions of grandeur", due to the favours given to them by Allah. One who is "contaminated" with this evil called "arrogance" soon sees himself as the wisest or the most talented man on earth.

Moreover, the possession of money, status or beauty is not essential for one to be arrogant; once an individual sees his intelligence as superior to that of others, he may well be caught up in ignorant self-confidence. An arrogant person believes that all people surrounding him are

incapable whereas he, himself, is very gifted and therefore impressive.

In time, these convictions become the underlying philosophy of all behaviour. In this state of mind, arrogant people disregard all advice or criticism that might help them to think more clearly. They often humiliate other people by frequently expressing their dislike for them and their ideas. Furthermore, they carry the conviction that, as other people's mistakes become apparent, so does their own "perfection."

Such a misapprehension is actually detrimental to man. Arrogance blurs the mind to such an extent that one can never realise to what degree. While, due to a lack of proper understanding, everybody surrounding him almost pities him, he believes himself to be a "remarkable" person. He further believes that he is a person who earns the respect of others. However, contrary to what he believes, such an attitude displayed with the mere intention of appearing superior makes one inferior in the eyes of other people; people of this sort are merely disliked, disrespected and are ultimately left alone in society.

An arrogant person can never make an intimate friend; lacking in wholeheartedness and modesty, he displays no respect for others. Such manners inevitably cause uneasiness among the people surrounding him.

Not only for the people around him, but also for the person himself, arrogance is surely a major source of trouble. First of all, a person claiming superiority over others should always be cautious; he should never make mistakes. Otherwise, he may lose the so-called "respect" he has earned in the eyes of other people. Such an attitude certainly requires painstaking efforts. He cannot express himself freely or treat people as he likes; he has to consider all the consequences of any behaviour that is likely to tarnish his image. If a particular kind of behaviour fits in with his image, or has an improving effect on it, he decides to indulge in it. If not, he simply remains quiet. He can neither laugh, enjoy himself nor participate in an intimate conversation as he would like to do. This meticulous attention to such details eventually reveals itself in his body and on his face in the form of spasms. Such an appearance renders the expression on a face, albeit very pretty, ugly and meaningless. Furthermore, despite the fact that the human soul was created as a social being with a natural enjoyment of companionship, an arrogant person remains distant and cool towards people, and thus never experiences a close relationship.

Such a manner is, however, both meaningless and detrimental to the human soul. Man is only a servant of Allah, inherently weak and dependent on his Creator for all his needs. He has no control over the shape of his body or his talents. These are all shaped under the control of Allah.

"Arrogance" creates a mentally unhealthy person, unable even to have a grasp of the greatness of Allah. He cannot think that he himself is merely one of the billions of living things on this planet. The capacity of an arrogant person to think becomes so limited that he cannot comprehend that he can never create something similar to the creation of Allah. Nor can he ever think that he is vulnerable to the diseases caused by viruses and microbes, all invisible to the naked eye. Considering these facts, to avoid being the servant of Allah is incomprehensible for a wise man.

The harm caused by arrogance to the human soul is quite apparent. However, the destruction it brings is not restricted only to this world. Allah proclaims that, in the Hereafter, those having conducted themselves arrogantly will face a bitter punishment.

Enter the gates of Hell, remaining in it timelessly, for ever. How evil is the abode of the arrogant!

Surah An-Nahl: 29

And when it is said to him: Be careful of your duty to Allah, pride carried him off to sin. Hell will settle his account, an evil resting-place.

Surah Al-Baqarah: 206

Being Vindictive

There is no reason for a person whose mind has no complete grasp of the Hereafter to be forgiving and tolerant. The rationale commanding him merely suggests that this life is short and temporary, and thus one has “to make the most of it.” Under such circumstances, personal interests should be guarded resolutely and “a good lesson” should be given to those who are a hindrance to the furtherance of these interests. This rationale further commands that a person should never forget any misbehaviour. With a sense of grievance, he should always occupy his mind with the remembrance of unjust conduct towards him and make plans to take his revenge as soon as possible.

Nursing grievances almost becomes a habit with such a person; sometimes a minor mistake is not forgotten for decades. Mostly, misbehaviour is really quite minor; so minor that it is not recalled by the perpetrator. Yet the “supposer” believes that a wicked intention lies behind the mistake. In the ignorant society, the passion to take revenge often results in undesirable incidents like injury or murder.

However, such an attitude does the most harm to the person himself. He feels anxious and believes that the people around him feel enmity towards him. He evaluates every incident in the light of this baseless distrust. Devoting all his energy and skills to following the negative inspirations of his soul, such a person eventually becomes bereft of creativity and productivity. Moreover, he is set adrift by hatred and grief, and totally loses his joy in life.

Nevertheless, the joy that forgiveness and tolerance gives to man is incomparably greater than any satisfaction arising from being in a furious state of mind, ó the consequence of hatred and the desire to take revenge. Forgiving people, contrary to how it is perceived in the ignorant society, is a virtue and is conduct worth praising. In the Qur’an, forgiveness is praised thus:

Keep to forgiveness (O Muhammad), and enjoin kindness, and turn away from the ignorant.

Surah Al-Araf: 199

Let evil be rewarded with like evil. But whoever pardons and seeks reconciliation, his wage is the affair of Allah. He does to love the wrong-doers.

Surah Al-Shura: 40

Contrary to this gloomy life of ignorance, the principles of the Qur’an offer a very “warm” environment. This is also shown to be a characteristic of Heaven. Hence it reminds us that forgiveness is conduct of the highest virtue:

And We shall remove from their hearts any lurking sense of injury. Beneath them will be rivers flowing, and they shall say: “Praise be to Allah, who has guided us to this (felicity): never could we have found guidance, had it not been for the guidance of

Allah: indeed it was the truth, that the Messengers of our Lord brought to us.” And they shall hear the cry: “Behold! The Garden before you! You have been made its inheritors, for your deeds (of righteousness).”

Surah Al-Araf: 43

Being Displeased and Bored

Those adhering to “moral principles” grounded in ignorance have one attribute in common: being bored and depressed. Such people constantly express complaints. What is more, those who have nothing wrong with them try to find something they can complain about. In the ignorant society, this has become an absolutely natural habit, like eating or drinking. Besides, it is readily accepted by society since it is the habit of so many people.

From the moment one wakes up in the morning, anything can be the subject of complaint. Not having had a sound sleep, hot weather or the loud noise neighbours make may well be the cause of that day’s complaint. Ignorant people relentlessly complain about traffic jams, the grim life in a big city, the ill-natured people all around, being tired, having a monotonous life, bad neighbours, not being understood by other people and many other things one can imagine. If there is no reason to complain, the habitual complainant finds “pseudo-reasons” to complain; if a woman, she complains because she is a woman. If she is dark, she expresses displeasure because she is not blonde or blue-eyed.

There is no end to these reasons... this is a state of mind and people display reluctance to change it.

In this state of mind, ignorant people never feel happy with anything. Never staying positive about life and seeing the good side of things, they never feel contented, even if they have the best of everything.

Though endowed with infinite favours, man feels unsatisfied and shows ingratitude. This is mentioned in the Qur’an in the following words:

He gives you all you ask of Him, and if you reckoned up the favours of Allah, you could not count them. Man is truly a wrong-doer, an ingrate.

Surah Ibrahim: 34

This primitive rationale stemming from ignorance dulls people’s senses and causes them to remain apathetic towards the favours surrounding them.

The moral principles of Islam, the system best meeting the spiritual and physical needs of man, has just the contrary effect. A believer, perceiving every detail of creation surrounding him as a kindness and gift of Allah, unceasingly shows his gratitude to Him. He evaluates every incident positively and finds the goodness in it. Furthermore, he devotes all his abilities to refurbishment. Hence, he will be rewarded by Allah with more favours. Allah states in the Qur’an that those who complain and thus show ungratefulness to Him will be deprived of all these favours.

And remember! Your Lord declared: “If you are grateful, I will bestow more favours upon you. But if you show ingratitude, truly My punishment shall be terrible indeed.”

Surah Ibrahim: 7

Hopelessness

A person, who does not adhere to religious principles, believes that every incident takes place by pure chance. He attributes everything to “good luck” or “bad luck.” A desperate state of mind is the inevitable consequence of this spirit; doubtless, “luck” is not something to rely on or to invest hopes and dreams in.

This state of mind is actually a misfortune befalling the ignorant. This is a natural consequence of not having a thorough grasp of the extent of Allah’s Power and not understanding that everything is predestined by Him. A believer never loses hope and always stays positive about life, since he firmly believes there is no single incident that does not occur under the control of Allah. There is one and only one Power who creates everything, living and non-living, and who controls them every moment; this is the Power of Allah. A person who is well aware of this fact understands that nothing is impossible and that everything can change in a moment by the Will of Allah. It is therefore very natural that a person, having no faith in Allah and believing in “coincidences” cannot overcome despair. This is actually a state of mind, a mere consequence of his standpoint.

Ignorant people are inherently prone to see a mundane event as a sinister steamroller that would flatten their lives. Therefore, they are never “on good terms with life.” They entirely abandon themselves to negative convictions and conceive almost all circumstances to be ripe for tragedy. They are disgruntled to an extreme degree. From the very beginning, they approach problems with a defeatist attitude. Always carrying the conviction that “nothing will be all right”, they believe their lives will be full of misery. They always see their prospects as being grim. For instance, they assume that they will not go on to a brilliant academic career. Even if they manage to earn a graduate degree, their fear in this occasion will be of not making a remarkable career. They are also apprehensive about their marriages. They have deep misgivings about marriage, children, their children’s education and all plans regarding the future. Their unfathomable misgivings go to great lengths indeed. For instance, they give themselves up to such thoughts as how once they die, they will be soon forgotten and there will be no one visiting their graves. This desperate mood is recounted in the Qur’an thus:

And when We make life pleasant for man, he turns away and is averse; and when ill touches him he is in despair.

Surah Isra: 83

Man does not weary of asking for good (things), but if adversity touches him, he gives up all hope (and) is lost in despair.

Surah Fussilat: 49

The ignorant are also known as disaster-mongers. They always predict the worst and so lead other people also to despair. For instance, just when their friends are about to board a plane, they talk about the dangers of travelling by plane. Or, rather than wish others well in a new investment, they express concern about the declining market situation and the chances of being unsuccessful.

These are doubtless only a few examples. Yet what deserves mention here is the system ignorance introduces: people who adhere to the morals of ignorance not only suffer themselves but also become a major cause of unrest for others. This is surely a predictable outcome of any system rooted in ignorance. What is more interesting is that ignorant people knowingly give

their seal of approval to a system that creates trouble and restlessness both in this world and the Hereafter.

The moral values of religion give man a much more elevated standpoint, in no way comparable to this ignorant rationale. Knowing the Power of Allah makes people hopeful and happy, both in this world and after. That is due to the fact that they comply with the commandments of Allah:

Do not despair of the solace from Allah. No one despairs of solace from Allah except for the disbelievers.

Surah Yusuf: 87)

Being Indifferent

The word “indifference” expresses the unconcerned and insensitive attitude people assume towards events. Misled by ignorance, people conceive “indifference” to be perfectly sound behaviour. After all, they have been born into a society of ignorant people who habitually display this manner. However an objective outlook, entirely purified of the misapprehensions of ignorance, asserts just the contrary: being unconcerned is surely not as innocent a standpoint as it sounds; the reality is, indifference is a state in which the conscience is “numbed”.

A person who wants to have a clear conscience has to be ready at all times to undertake any responsibility he meets. This is no doubt a burden for those who have no faith in the Hereafter. Therefore, in order to avoid having to carry out tasks, they make this state of mind the fundamental philosophy of their existence. In such a state, the individual primarily does not shoulder his own responsibilities. The people around him have to do so on his behalf.

No less than the person himself, the people surrounding him also suffer from this attitude. Such a person makes promises, but never keeps them due to his inconsiderate attitude. Likewise, he borrows money, but never gives it back; not because he has no money, but because he simply forgets it. Sometimes his inconsiderate manners go to great lengths and become a threat to his health as well as to the health of others. He neglects taking a vital drug, for instance. Or, he leaves his toddler alone on the beach, never considering that he may drown. One can observe thousands of similar examples in daily life.

For instance, encountering a severely wounded person in a traffic accident, what a person of clear conscience does is to take him to the hospital, no matter how great a hurry he is in. However, a person who remains indifferent just glances at such a scene and keeps on driving. Or, he simply thinks that someone else would come and help the wounded person.

As we have seen, “being indifferent” is another way of saying “lacking in conscience.” In such a mood, due to insensitiveness, the indifferent person simply disregards many issues and does not suffer the slightest pangs of conscience. Moreover, he inwardly thinks for himself as the smartest man on earth. Such an attitude causes an irreplaceable loss to one’s eternal life; he loses all the opportunities in this world to attain the good pleasure of Allah.

A believer, on the other hand, who displays considerate behaviour, does the best for his eternal life. His sensitivity also makes it possible for him to lead a comfortable life in this world.

Greediness

Attachment to this life and craving for possessions cause ignorant people to go all out to attain their worldly goals. A person aiming to “make the most of this life” surely shows no hesitation

in displaying a greedy attitude. Life is short, he thinks, and rather than engage in good deeds to attain the eternal life, he believes it to be wise to make the most of this life. With this goal in mind, he takes every opportunity to have more of everything.

This structure, though obviously seen in all sections of the ignorant society, is said to apply only to a particular section of it. In this context, it is widely believed that only some people are prone to greediness. Yet the facts are otherwise. Being one of the prevalent characteristics of the morality of ignorance, greediness reveals the standpoint of the people and the ignorant society in the clearest way.

Be they wealthy or poor, ignorant people, indoctrinated with a philosophy based on worldly benefits, are driven by greed. For instance, at social gatherings, and parties, they overeat and drink too much, even when they are not hungry. At work, they make dozens of unnecessary telephone calls just because they are free. Or, they browse for hours in shopping malls and pricey boutiques to buy goods they don't really need. This is indeed a deep-rooted "disease" influencing relations even among immediate family members. A woman, for instance, demands that her husband dedicate himself ambitiously to his work, so that she can maintain her expensive tastes. Ambition and greediness dominate society to the extent that it numbs the ignorant into becoming burglars or swindlers.

This morality, making a man greedy for every kind of trifle, is perceived by ignorant people as a sign of smartness. Yet it obviously degrades him.

Being sincere and honest is much easier and more enjoyable than using low cunning to attain certain goals. A faithful person takes the benefit of all the favours in this world in the best way. He knows that all favours belong to Allah and that He rewards man unceasingly if He Wills. Hence, he neither feels ambitious nor becomes greedy. Such an attitude rewards man with nobility and respectability, and, more importantly, the approval of Allah.

Selfishness

In the ignorant society one man cares for another only when he believes that he is someone from whom he can derive benefits. Otherwise, there is no reason why a person should devote all his energy to the care of another. Occasionally, there may be some instances for his doing someone a favour; yet ignorance demands that this should not be adopted as a principle. Due to this viewpoint, ignorant people become inconsiderate and egoistic. A deep sense of egoism is implanted in children by their parents when they are still very young. Children refusing to share their favourite toys, food or beloved family members is the initial sign of this attitude. In the latter years of life this negative attitude is buttressed by inhumane and thoughtless manners.

An egoistic person thinks only about himself. The needs and problems of others never bother him. Sitting next to a hungry person, he enjoys his meal, never thinking to share it. When he is sick, he looks after himself very well, yet fails to care for some other person when he is sick. He pretends not to see his friend dripping wet in the rain on the street, thinking that seats of his car would get wet if he offered him a lift. He just side-steps someone falling next to him.

Ignorant people also display inhumane behaviour when conditions call for prompt action. For instance, they refuse to donate blood for a wounded person who urgently needs it.

In religion, however, egoism, selfishness and inhumanity are replaced by mercy and considerate behaviour. Whenever there is need, a believer comes to help. A call for help is immediately responded to. Nor does a believer ever give trouble to the opposite side. A striking example of such conduct is recounted in the Qur'an as follows:

They give food, despite their love for it, to the poor and orphans and captives: "We feed you only out of desire for the Face of Allah. We do not want any repayment from you or any thanks. Truly we fear from our Lord a glowering, calamitous Day."

Surah Al-Insan 8-10

Being Bad-Tempered

In the ignorant society, only the people who really make a nuisance of themselves are referred to as "difficult people". People who stir up a dispute or provoke a conflict in daily life are wholly excluded from this description. However, tolerant and seemingly quiet people also show intolerance and become bad-tempered in particular situations. There are definitely some people they dislike and whom they cannot get along with. However, the rationale of ignorance accepts such an attitude to be perfectly "reasonable" and "normal."

In family life, unceasing quarrels among family members are also regarded as "ordinary." Impudent manners are played down or even covered up by using expressions like "these are family problems," or "this happens in every family." The same mentality holds true for relations among friends. They say, for instance, "just because we have a few disagreements, this does not mean we are not friends". There is constant disagreement between teachers and students in school, bosses and employees, employees and other employees at work. Drivers, for instance, dispute with other drivers in traffic. There is dissension among neighbours, relatives, in brief, among all those in social contact with each other.

Mostly these arguments rest on ridiculous bases. Even if there is nothing to argue about, they "invent" one. For instance, a man sees the absence of his favourite dish at supper as a good reason to argue with his wife. A woman, unable to convince her husband to take a stroll, may well pick a quarrel. Every moment of daily life is a source of unrest and discussion for ignorant people; the noise neighbours make, a crying child, a barking dog, a car occupying the private parking lot, a honking horn, or a low increase in salary, in brief, everything...

These people who become tense over even minor situations do not see anything wrong with this or the unbearable environment they live in. Sometimes spending too much time together with a person becomes " a good" reason for an argument. They become bored with each other, and even their acceptable wishes become upsetting. This relationship in time becomes intolerable. What is more interesting is that they are well aware of the fact that a change in circumstances and people would not alter this situation. Wherever they go and whatever they do, intolerance is always a factor.

At this point the following question arises: "What are the underlying reasons for this intolerance?"

In ignorant societies, all members believe that they are absolutely right. Not displaying tolerance, they never think of being gentle to someone who is harsh. Instead, they remain contentious and create more tension.

Yet the Qur'an is quite clear on this point and those adhering to the Qur'an see what is right and immediately follow it. Consequently, the "conflicting opinions of individuals" are replaced by "what is commanded by Allah in the Qur'an." The commandments of Allah provide solutions to problems. Hence, rather than contradictions and problems, solutions are inevitably forthcoming. One who is totally obedient to the moral principles of the Qur'an respects and loves people. Adherence to the Qur'an demands being thoughtful and respectful to the opinions of others. With such an attitude, no trouble arises. While ignorant people constantly bother each other over minor issues, believers live a life of adhering to the Qur'an. Therefore, in a society of believers nothing happens to trouble people and make them restless.

Being Contentious

One of the characteristics of a person who sticks to the principles of the morality of the Qur'an is that he does not "indulge in idle talk." No doubt, such an avoidance offers much gratification, both spiritual and material. Rather than joining in a conversation that is pointless, a believer spends his time on important and beneficial tasks. In that way, he also avoids the numbing effect of idle talk.

On the contrary, ignorant people have the incorrigible habit of "killing time" in long and unwise conversations. The underlying reason for this irrational tendency is to free their minds from the serious problems of daily life. However, the obstinate and arrogant attitude they assume in conversations generally changes a frank talk into a heated argument. Mostly, they argue for hours about a subject they know little about and generally arrive at nothing conclusive. During these arguments they try to impose their opinions on others. Sometimes they become so obstinate that they don't change this attitude even when they are talking to an expert. In their "small" world, they know more than a doctor and are wiser than a philosopher.

The comments they make in these arguments commonly rely on assumptions or hearsay. This is also a characteristic for which people are never taken to task in the ignorant society. These people are only referred to as "a little bit stubborn" or "people of fixed ideas." Furthermore, these are thought to be personal characteristics particular to that person.

However, the fundamental reason for people getting into heated arguments is the fact that their souls are inclined to contention. Allah addresses this characteristic in the Qur'an:

"...but man is, in most things, contentious."

Surah Al-Kahf: 54

People may argue to defend their standpoint. However, what is striking about them is the agitated style they use in their arguments. The most prominent feature is the tone of voice they use. Ignorant individuals assume that if they shout loudly and drown out the voice of the other speaker, they will emerge victorious. Therefore, they speak in a high-pitched tone. In the charged atmosphere which this creates, contention also affects the arguers physically. Their agitation becomes apparent from their blushing or the swelling of the veins on the neck. Their faces turn wild with anger, which gives an ugly expression to their features. They cannot keep calm; they try to intimidate the other side. They interrupt each other, or rather, speak at the same time, not paying attention to anyone. If one side remains calm, then the other provokes him, trying to involve him in an argument. They free themselves from this tense mood and find relief only when their opponents give up.

Believers, on the other hand, never experience such a state of mind. They acknowledge that there are always some people of superior understanding and never insist on maintaining their convictions when they are told the truth. If they are not knowledgeable about a subject, they simply refrain from expressing opinions. Likewise, they shun baseless conversations and take no notice of hearsay. With such an attitude, believers from the very outset make a point of not engaging in an argument. Their talks never reach a deadlock. They find complete relief and peace in providing solutions to problems, and resolving conflicts. If they don't have any information about an issue, rather than stating their opinion and involving themselves in an argument, they prefer to gather information in order to arrive at a healthy conclusion. This is also what is advised by Allah in the Qur'an:

"and over every lord of knowledge there is one more knowing."

Surah Yusuf: 76

Are those who know the equal of those who do not? But only men of understanding will pay heed.

Surah Al-Zumar: 9

Hypocrisy and Pretension

In the ignorant society, what bothers people most is the hypocritical and insincere type of behaviour displayed. What is interesting, however, is the fact that those who complain about it are likewise hypocrites themselves. This is surely a clear manifestation of the cruelty of the system created by the ignorant.

Hypocrisy is displaying two separate characters; one displayed outwardly and the other hidden inside. The one for the outer world, embodies the bogus aspects of the character artificially shown to others. The inner one harbours the deep, real thoughts. Surprisingly, in the ignorant society, everybody knows this fact and acknowledges it. Allah relates one of the features of hypocrites in the Qur'an:

"They speak with their tongues that which is not in their hearts."

Surah Al-Fath: 11

Nevertheless, everybody knows when and where people reveal their true opinions. While gossiping, for instance, people express their sincere thoughts about others. However, even at that moment people do not conduct themselves completely honestly since they still hide their inner thoughts about the person they are speaking to at that moment. Most probably, their personal opinion about that person will be later disclosed to somebody else.

Similarly, ignorant people reveal their inner thoughts when they believe their interests are at stake. For instance, people cannot help hiding their true feelings when they are furiously arguing with somebody.

Hypocrites also continuously deceive others and never conduct themselves honestly in order to hide their real faces and inner thoughts. The weapon they often employ for this end is pretension. Rather than being sincere and being the way they are, they try to give an imitation of sincerity. Yet since they fail to do this also, they conduct themselves in a wholly unnatural manner.

It is evident that in an environment where people are pretentious, true love and respect can never be attained. Ignorant people are also aware of this fact and quite disturbed by it, yet, because of their crude way of thinking, they still foster this system. It is really difficult and troublesome for a person to try to act like someone else believing in a totally different system and set of values.

Being honest and conducting oneself as a “single” person, both deep inside and outwardly, brings great relief to the individual who then becomes reliable and truthful, respected and loved by everybody. Honesty and truthfulness are the rewards of the morality of Islam to the human soul. Complying with the commandments of Allah brings relief and peace of mind, since one does not have to behave like something one is not. It eliminates the superstitions of ignorance and offers an easy life to believers. Contrary to the gloomy environments of ignorance, Islam makes it possible to have sincere and warm relations and hence a life to be content with.

Mocking

Rather than negative behaviour that should be eliminated, mocking is considered a way to have fun or to have a good time in the society of ignorance. Therefore, it is socially acceptable and never considered a misdeed. The members of the ignorant society assume that they can attain superiority by degrading others.

People mock others not only by words but also by “sophisticated” methods like gestures, mimicry, body language or other covert ways of communication.

How these sophisticated methods are transferred from one generation to another and how every member of the ignorant society is knowledgeable about them remains indeed a mystery. There is neither a book nor a school to instruct youngsters about these “refined” ways to mock. Yet everybody knows what meanings lie behind a piece of mimicry or a gesture. No one openly speaks about mockery, although it is widely known and insidiously used.

In the ignorant society, everything can be a subject of mockery. There is no limit to it. Disabled people, the mispronunciation of a word, the physical make-up of an individual or even sneezing and sobbing can be made a mockery of. According to the ignorant society stumbling and falling is something to laugh at for hours on end. A person who is laughed at for this reason feels humiliated. For this reason, even if it hurts a lot, he pretends that it does not hurt. Furthermore, to imply that he is not bothered by being mocked, he too laughs at himself.

People always feel anxiety about the possibility of looking ridiculous because of their failures or appearance. For instance, someone stammering does not feel comfortable even talking to his closest friend. Therefore, he mostly remains quiet. In such an environment, everyone has to be cautious about being ridiculed.

Mocking is not specific to a particular section of society, however. It is widespread in high society, in ghettos, at work, in schools, in brief, everywhere where the “moral values” of ignorance are prevalent. It does not change according to culture or the level of civilisation. Quite conclusively, it makes life troublesome with the individual required at every moment to pay attention and make efforts to avoid being mocked.

People adopting the moral values of the Qur’an, however, never annoy others. Believers know that weaknesses are specially created for human beings by Allah. This fact establishes the

grounds of communication among people. Accordingly, instead of contempt, mercy is shown to the disabled, to sufferers or to anybody who has a weakness. Allah enjoins careful attention to this fact in the following verse:

O you who believe! Let not a man deride another man who may be better than he (is), let not a woman deride another woman who may be better than she is; neither defame one another, nor insult one another by nicknames. It is an evil thing to be called by a bad name after embracing the true faith. Those who do not repent are evil-doers.

Surah Al-Hujraat: 11

What deserves specific mention here is that being in the mood to make fun of everything may well distract a person's attention from religion, death or the Day of Judgment. Of the sceptics who assume the same attitude the Quran says:

"What!" they say. "When we are turned to bones and dust, shall we be restored to life?" Say: "You shall, whether you turn to stone or iron, or any other substance which you may think unlikely to be given life.' Then they will say: "Who shall bring us back (to life)? Say: "He Who created you at first." Then they will shake their heads at you, and say: "When will this be?" Say: "It will perhaps be soon."

Surah Al-Isra: 49-51

A person who mocks people should, however, keep in mind that he will face a bitter end for all eternity:

Then evil was the consequence to those who dealt in evil, because they denied the revelations of Allah and made a mockery of them.

Surah Al-Rum: 10

Emotionalism and Being Romantic

In the ignorant society, emotionalism and being romantic are recognised to be essentially humane behaviour and a reality of life. People who are not emotional are regarded as ruthless and somewhat odd. Being romantic is associated with a certain idealized image tinged with magic and beauty.

Yet emotionalism is a state in which a person remains completely under the influence of his emotions and surrenders himself entirely to his instincts. Bereft of thinking faculties, such a person fails to make sound judgements. Nobody, not even he himself, can predict how his emotions will affect his decisions. An emotional person is simply at the mercy of his feelings. During the course of events, he fails to take into consideration the latter stages or the detrimental consequences of a decision and he becomes aware of his mistakes only when everything is over and done with. He takes sudden and thoughtless action. His mood also changes abruptly; he feels plunged into gloom or despair at one moment, while he is seized by jealousy at another. He feels easily offended and becomes furious. His life is like a roller-coaster.

This is actually an attitude distressing to those who seek emotional satisfaction in their relations. Not knowing what kind of moods other people experience, they always wait for a "good time" to communicate. In this way, their life is spent in meeting the emotional expectations of others. Meanwhile, they expect the same from others. Though they dislike the trouble it gives, to one's astonishment, ignorant people enjoy the grief and gloomy moods brought by emotionalism.

Furthermore, they find a life bereft of emotionalism “too monotonous and gloomy to live.” This is actually a pretext to cover up their unsound behaviour, and to make this behaviour socially acceptable.

This emotional state of mind inevitably creates “mentally unstable” people. Being constantly under the influence of melancholy, nothing gives them pleasure. In an environment where everybody has something to enjoy, they inevitably find something to grieve over. Sometimes they try to further intensify their grief by imaginary scenarios made up in their own minds. For this reason, even though they try to look good, they feel an unceasing restlessness deep inside. Rather than living in peace, they live in trouble and anguish.

In a romantic world, people remain under the influence of events for a prolonged period of time. For instance, they cannot easily escape from the influence of the bad incidents they encounter, and are not emotionally strong enough to eliminate their negative effects. Rather, they find such incidents to be a good reason to become emotional.

Wisdom is the only basis on which to take pleasure from life, to succeed and lead a life in peace. This understanding is only attained by complying with the commandments of Allah. Adherence to the Qur’an eliminates emotionalism and provides a positive perspective enabling man to resolve problems rather than exaggerating and turning them into a source of trouble.

Crying

The urge to shed tears is one of the troubles emotionalism brings. This urge rests on no rational grounds, however. There is simply no reason for it. Ignorant people, especially women, believe that crying is simply a fundamental need like eating, drinking or sleeping. The same superstition maintains that if a person does not do so, he is likely to develop various diseases out of grief and trouble. Therefore, ignorant people rely on weeping as a relief provider.

Over and above this, the negative and desperate outlook of ignorant people is a factor prompting them to cry. With this outlook, they always find a reason to do so. Rather than solve problems or eliminate the likely causes that may lead one to grief, they prefer only to weep. They have a strong interest in letting themselves go and like to have this experience whenever they find a “proper” reason.

This belief is held by all sections of the ignorant society, especially by women, due to their intensive conditioning by society. In most cultures, the image of the male is associated with “not crying”. Contrary to this image, women are encouraged to cry. It is an ignorant conviction maintain that since women are physically weaker than men, they should also be weak spiritually. Therefore, ignorant people expect a woman to be strongly influenced by events and to remain so for a prolonged period of time. Women, in turn, readily adopt such a model and show no objection to such inculcation by society.

Crying is never perceived as a sign of helplessness or a weak-willed personality in the ignorant society. Nobody blames a person for breaking down. Rather, in daily life people are encouraged to relieve their feelings in this way by TV-series, movies and magazines. People feel sympathy for people in dramatic scenes who show their happiness, love and pain by shedding tears.

Crying is so common in the ignorant society that people will indulge in it, even for unnecessary

things. They do cry while listening to the news on TV or watching a dramatic movie. They even cry when they are happy. At graduation ceremonies, weddings etc. it has become almost conventional to weep.

People who are “instructed” about the benefits of crying very soon realise that it is also a strong weapon to use in particular situations. Indeed, it is an insincere way of attaining goals that cannot be otherwise accomplished. That is because crying speaks directly to the emotions and evokes the feelings of mercy in the ignorant society. Therefore it is an efficient method of abusing the feelings of other people. It is an established fact that when crying is involved, ignorant people mostly accept proposals they would normally decline.

From experience, “criers” become well aware of the benefits this behaviour offers. Starting from early childhood, each member of the ignorant society resorts to it maybe hundreds of times and each time he contrives to get what he wants. Such experience gives an unyielding determination to use this weapon; to justify a particular kind of behaviour, to seem innocent, sincere etc., or sometimes just to attract attention.

However, the Qur’an relates that crying is a misfortune befalling man rather than a favour given to him. This is further explained in the following verse:

Let them laugh a little: much will they weep in recompense for the (evil) that they do.

Surah Al-Tawba: 82

In the Qur’an it is clearly stated that the people of Hell will not be able to attain happiness, peace and quietness even if they want to. Therefore, it is surely not wise to emulate the people of Hell in this world. In many sections of the Qur’an, it is repeated that wretchedness is only an attribute of ignorant people:

The admonition will be received by those who fear Allah, but it will be avoided by those most unfortunate ones who will enter the great Fire.

Surah Al-Ala: 10-11

Therefore, I have warned you of the flaming Fire, which only the most wretched must endure.

Surah Al-Lail: 14-15

On the day when it comes, (the Day of Resumption), no soul will speak except by His permission; some among them will be wretched, others glad.

Surah Hud: 105

Being Offended

One of the manifestations of emotionalism is being offended easily. As the word “emotionalism” suggests, the factors dominating the behaviour of a highly strung person are his feelings. When the emotions rule, no room remains for wisdom. In this case, it becomes almost impossible for the emotional individual to deal with issues with a sound rationale. This is actually the reason for being easily offended.

A person perceiving events with an irrational bent of mind assumes everything to “revolve around himself.” He assumes that everyone talks about him and makes plans against him. This tendency which especially governs the behaviour of all members of the ignorant society becomes

almost an obsession for some. As a person grows old this tendency becomes remarkably observable. Related or unrelated, elderly people take everything as an offence. Furthermore, they generate imaginary scenarios; they may be cared for very well, but they assume that their children do not love them and want to send them to a nursing home. They further presume that they are perceived as a burden by their children.

This is, in fact, a natural outcome of the insecure environment the morals of ignorance creates. The way the members of the ignorant society conduct themselves can indeed be easily perceived as offensive. Merciless, hypocritical and vindictive behaviour is surely very disturbing, especially when one considers the probability that such behaviour may be intentional. Yet these explanations do not justify the misconduct of being easily offended. However, this is important in the sense that it reveals the rotten base the morals of ignorance rest upon. An elderly person staying with his son and grandchildren feels offended, but there are surely reasons why he feels so. Old people are generally perceived as a burden in the house and disliked. However these feelings are only implied, and never directly stated.

Once ignorant people adopt this emotional character, they live with it until they die. Moreover, they suffer greatly from the negative side of this character. In an environment where everybody treats each other in an intimate and friendly manner, those who are offended easily never live in real happiness and peace. When all others are enjoying themselves, they sit all alone in a corner.

As we have seen, every aspect of ignorance creates dreadful environments.

On the other hand, in adherence to the Qur'an, people develop a "transparent" character. In other words, they say what they think. If there is something they dislike, they express it explicitly and never try to imply it with looks, gestures or attitude. Besides, since they are surrounded with people who are also endowed with these morals, nobody feels offended by the attitude of others. In the Qur'an, Allah commands man to "**enjoin right conduct and forbid evil.**" Such an approach completely eliminates undesirable situations likely to result from emotionalism.

Lying

Ignorant people very frequently tell lies. Almost all social relations are based on deceit.

An honest and sincere person never lowers himself to tell lies. On the other hand, a person who establishes his life on the rules introduced by a hypocritical system must inevitably employ dishonest methods to attain success. Lying is one of these dishonest methods which is extensively employed. Once a person believes it to be a workable method, he starts to resort to it constantly and almost makes a lifestyle out of it. His tongue and mind get quite used to the idea of lying, so that he indulges in this practice whenever he faces a tough problem. In the ignorant society this is a habit which meets with societal approval, as long as it does not have detrimental consequences. Even telling lies to one's closest friend is regarded as normal. Only when these lies start to pose a threat to material or spiritual well-being and especially personal interests, do sufferers begin to express their distaste for it. In brief, though lying is extensively employed, it also causes grave suffering in the ignorant society. Yet, the suffering it will cause in the Hereafter will be much more serious.

Allah warns man against this mischief by His injunction: "**shun lying speech.**" (Surah al-

Hajj: 30). He explains the nature of people who tell lies in another verse: **“Only they invent falsehood who do not believe Allah’s revelations, and (only) they are the liars.”** (*Surah Al-Nahl: 105*)

In the society of believers, however, any grounds for lying are completely eliminated. For instance ignorant people lie because they simply want to cover up their mistakes or indiscretion or just to make a good impression on others. They tell lies in order to deceive people to gain benefits, in brief to attain any kind of worldly gain. A believer, on the other hand, corrects his mistakes and makes up for them rather than trying to cover them up. He does not develop friendship with people whom he dislikes. His friends are only those who seek the good pleasure of Allah and hence conduct themselves honestly and responsibly towards Allah. Therefore, there are no grounds whatsoever for a believer to lie. He does not approach people in expectation of benefits. He is frank about his life; he actually has nothing to hide and hence does not feel the necessity to lie. Therefore, a believer lives in the comfort of being truthful all through his life.

Shallow Manners

In order to achieve a goal, ignorant people will stoop to anything, even though they are aware that it is morally wrong. This is basically the reason why shallow manners are quite common. Contrary to the prevalent belief that shallow manners are particular to a certain section of society, they commonly match the behaviour of all members of the ignorant society. People generally believe that such behaviour is specific to uncultured, uneducated people. However, these manners are the consequence of one fundamental flaw in reasoning. Therefore, regardless of intelligence, culture or education, all people adhering to the principles of ignorance display these manners.

Shallow manners, in reality, signal all sorts of attitudes and behaviour stemming from the morals of ignorance. Once having fallen to this level, the individual shows a natural tendency to demonstrate all the primitive behaviour of ignorance. Provided that misconduct serves his purposes well, a person coming from the ignorant society does not show the slightest hesitation about telling lies, showing greediness, or being jealous or selfish. The main reason prompting the ignorant person to conduct himself so meanly is the fact that, in pursuit of worldly gains, he all too quickly allows himself to leave off right and noble behaviour and embrace the low principles of ignorance all too quickly.

Like all characteristics of ignorance, shallow manners are also indoctrinated in early childhood years. “Don’t share your candy with other children”, or “don’t trust even your father” are the typical pieces of advice parents give to their children when they are still very young. Given such an outlook, ignorant people inevitably base their moral principles on superficial reasoning utterly bereft of noble and virtuous values. Later in life they demonstrate “improved” versions of this mean behaviour which is lacking in breadth of thought.

For instance, in business life, a company director who is always mean to his subordinates ó who when he gives orders, shouts at the employees, displays a totally different character when the owner of the company visits the office. When the boss arrives, the director suddenly becomes a “poor fellow”, ready to obey any order given by his boss. Meanwhile, he becomes kind towards his subordinates. He does anything to flatter his boss. To this end, he dares to do inconceivable things. Such people surely take the risk of being degraded or humiliated in society. Yet, they never feel offended.

It is interesting that these people are well-educated and have college degrees. Yet the desire to be promoted makes them conduct themselves in such a degrading manner. They believe that this is a reality of life. Although they know that it is a mean way of conducting oneself, they see it as an essential part of “getting promotion in business life.” Surely it is not their bosses they respect but their money and status.

The same approach is observed also at home. Let’s take the attitude of ignorant people towards “unwanted” visitors as an example. A visit by such an unwanted friend is avoided by lies on the telephone. If a visitor comes unannounced, they just remain still in the house, making no noise, waiting for him to leave. They see playing host to a guest as a burden and express the distaste they feel for it openly. Despite all efforts to the contrary, if they still have to entertain someone, they start talking behind his back as soon as he leaves. They know full well that it is immoral to talk as an intimate friend to someone’s face and then to gossip behind his back, yet they cannot help indulging in such low behaviour.

In daily life, various other examples can be given pertaining to this shallow rationale. It is, for instance, ordinary behaviour for ignorant people to rush into a bus, pushing aside other people, to get the seat next to the window. Or in a bus they do not give up their seats to old or sick people who have to travel standing. Though they are not hungry and can afford good food, they greedily eat something just because it is being distributed free. Similarly, in the shopping malls, where free samples of goods are distributed, they wait in queues several times to get more samples. Worse, they make it a habit to jump a queue. They think such behaviour is a sign of smartness and label as ‘stupid’ those who are decent enough not to behave in this worthless manner.

Surely, what they call “smartness” is merely being selfish and protecting their own interests. The people they call “stupid”, on the other hand, are those noble people who do not allow themselves become degraded.

A person adhering to the moral principles presented by the Qur’an conducts himself in the most honourable way. No matter how compelling the conditions may be, he never stoops to anything degrading to himself or to others.

Yearning

One striking feature of all sections of the ignorant society, from the people of the ghettos to the members of high society, is the fact that they yearn for things they cannot attain. In contradiction to the commonly held view, such yearning is not a feature peculiar to specific sections of society. Rather, it is an attribute prevalent in all social strata. However, finding this to be somewhat degrading, people generally avoid acknowledging that they have a tendency to yearn for things they cannot have and simply attribute this shortcoming to others.

As with every other issue, the ideal model is determined not by the people themselves but by the ignorant society. The features that are essential to attain a certain level of “**distinction**” in the society are well known to everybody: to be well-educated, to be fluent in a few foreign languages, to travel abroad frequently, to go to popular cafes or restaurants, to be fashion-conscious, to possess luxury cars and to have prestigious credit cards. These are the factors that make you appear to be someone of importance in society. This is also the way of living ignorant people yearn for. (Incidentally, we need hardly mention that being well-educated and the ability

to speak a few foreign languages are personal assets. Yet, it is a mistake to use one's capabilities simply to show off.)

For the majority of people, however, the attainment of a high standard life-style is inconceivable. This is actually the point where yearning for the lives of other people starts. Those unable to attain such a life try to earn respect among those better endowed by at least pretending to be like them.

Those who follow the guidance of the Qur'an, however, are aware that all the things, everything people yearn for in this life are not perpetual. This fact, which will be grasped by some people only when they attain the Hereafter, is well understood by believers. Therefore believers never yearn for a lifestyle other than that projected as being good by the Qur'an. Even if they are the wealthiest or the wisest people in the world, they do not use their gifts to impress others. Knowing that wealth and power are given by Allah as gifts, they put these things to good use and feel grateful to their Creator. Allah, in the following verse, makes it clear that the only things of value in the presence of Allah is the fear of Allah.

O mankind! We have created you male and female, and have made you nations and tribes that you may know one another. The noblest of you, in the sight of Allah, is the best in conduct. Allah is All-Knowing and Aware.

Surah Al-Hujraat: 13

Fears and Obsessions of Ignorance

Ignorant people are unable to grasp the fact that it is Allah who has absolute power over all things. This is why, starting from childhood, they develop irrational fears about everything. Later in life, this fear becomes a permanent source of trouble and difficulty. Every incident they encounter in life becomes a sheer source of unmitigated anxiety; they are always rather vulnerable. They fear other people, for instance. Likewise, random events such as, earthquakes, lightning and tornadoes strike mortal fear into their hearts.

In the Qur'an, Allah gives the example of those who worship gods other than Allah:

Allah made this comparison : There are two men; one has several part-owners, who are always quarrelling, and the other belongs wholly to one man. Are the two equal? Praise be to Allah! But most of them do not know. You will die, and they will die; then on the Day of Resurrection, before your Lord you will dispute with one another.

Surah Al-Zumar: 29-31

One can actually make a list of situations feared by the “people steeped in ignorance with many gods”. These are the situations they perceive to be a real threat to their well-being. Getting sick, being fired, going bankrupt, not getting married or not having any children, together with many obsessions, doubts, fears, images, thoughts or worries about the future turn their lives into a hellish state. Apart from these, they have recurrent thoughts and fears which they are unable to control, even though they realise them to be unnecessary and irrelevant. Superstitions are among these irrational fears; they fear darkness, for instance, they avoid black cats or walking under ladders, believing they bring bad luck.

In the following pages we will further examine various aspects of these fears and the confusion and loss they cause both in this world and the Hereafter.

Fear of Unfaithfulness

Ignorant people trust nobody, including their immediate family members. For them, it is quite likely that anyone can betray them one day once they feel their interests are at stake. Given the fact that they have not surrendered themselves to Allah like the people who adhere to the Qur'an, they are right about it.

Indeed, it would be wrong to expect complete reliability and faithfulness from someone who has no fear of Allah or belief in the Hereafter, since it is only faith in one's heart that paves the way for truthfulness.

One essential measure ignorant people take to combat the baneful effects of unfaithfulness is

“not to put their trust in anyone.” The lifelong fear of unfaithfulness almost becomes an obsession for them and manifests itself in popular phrases like, “Don’t even trust your father.”

Always keeping in mind this phrase, they put their trust in nobody except themselves; still this is not a deterrent to the unfaithfulness of the people surrounding them. Every day, newspapers abound in various cases of unfaithfulness. In business life, partners cheat one another. It is not surprising to hear that an accountant who has rendered years of service to a company has defrauded his boss of thousands of pounds. Sometimes even the sons of a father may attempt to cheat him.

Such cases are not restricted to material issues only. A woman, for instance, feels free to disclose a secret of her husband to her friends. Or couples, during their conversations with intimate friends, talk behind each other’s backs. Similarly, though married, they remain unfaithful to each other.

There are surely countless examples to give. Frequently encountering these cases, ignorant people feel the constant fear that one of these calamities might befall them one day.

Fear of Poverty

One significant weakness of the ignorant is their fear of poverty. A major cause of such a fear is the unenlightened system which rests upon material wealth. They maintain that, with the help of money, they can live a full, rewarding and healthier life. Otherwise, they believe they will be deprived of many essentials of life as well as various benefits, like social status, which are associated with prosperity.

What is interesting is the existence of wealthy people who also suffer from this fear and are always under great stress. Often these people go to great lengths; for instance they avoid spending money, even for essential needs. They work strenuously, though they have already a sufficient amount of money that will last for a lifetime. They believe it is prudent to pile up their money in their bank accounts. This is actually the way they try to ease their fears about the future.

Nevertheless, their attainments never match their expectations; while their intention is to have a rewarding life here in this world, events progress otherwise and they find themselves in a state of utter boredom that merely unsettles them.

Both fear of poverty and being stingy are the consequence of not putting one’s trust in Allah. Allah warns man against being seized by this fear:

The devil threatened you with destitution and enjoined on you lewdness. But Allah promised you forgiveness from Himself with bounty. Allah is All-Embracing and All-knowing.

Surah Al-Baqarah: 268

The only way to ease these fears is complete obedience to Allah, since fear of Allah renders all other fears meaningless.

A true believer fully understands the fact that it is Allah who provides him with all the needs. Therefore, he never nurses a grievance about such an issue. Knowing that Allah is most

generous to His servants, his mind becomes occupied only with the remembrance of Allah and never feels fear about the future.

Fear of Growing Old

Being young and beautiful are the top issues to which the ignorant society attaches importance. All through his life, it is the main ambition of man to maintain his health. Yet, it has to be admitted that this often proves to be a vain effort. Getting old and therefore losing one's looks and being in poor health are inescapable facts of life and thus important sources of grief for ignorant people. Women feel free to express their fear, while men often avoid disclosing what they feel deep inside. The apparent signs of growing old affect them profoundly. In a way, growing old puts an end to all extravagant manners. Therefore each day, the signs of growing old becoming more apparent on their faces and bodies, gives them more grief. Yet, no matter how hard they try, they can never resist this natural process.

Life in old age is surely totally different from what it used to be. Old age is a period of one's life when one is perceived as a burden. Those taking care of old people make them feel that they are a source of trouble. Such an approach creates various feelings of anxiety in them. They fear being sent to nursing homes or remaining all alone. There is indeed a reason why they feel this fear, however. In a society where people have no obedience to Allah, the system is entirely lacking in mercy and justice. For this reason, what they fear most often becomes a reality.

Another reason for the fear of growing old is the fact that it reminds man of death and the end of this life. Each glance at the mirror signals the shortening of time in this world. This is surely a torment for an unbeliever. For a man having no faith in the life beyond, the termination of this life and the decaying of body under the earth is an end with no return. Since he has staked his all upon this life, he greatly fears losing it.

Believers, on the other hand, fear neither getting old nor the weaknesses they are likely to suffer in old age. That is because, they do not try to gain recognition or social status through good looks. They are aware that, in the presence of Allah, a believer is praised for his moral perfection rather than his appearance. Among friends, on the other hand, they are loved for being close to Allah.

Neither does the close link between old age and death make believers terrified. For them, the Hereafter is a beginning; a beginning of an incomparably and unprecedentedly better and fulfilling life which will last for all eternity. A person who spends his early years engaging in good deeds to attain Paradise and the good pleasure of Allah enters old age with joy and happiness.

Fear of Getting Sick

Those who have a deep attachment to this life harbour an inner restlessness and a great fear that unsettle them when they think about the possibility of becoming sick. They believe the disease-producing agents ó microbes and viruses ó to be separate beings apart from and independent of Allah. That is why, these microscopic agents become a nightmare for ignorant people.

Essentially, being sick is being deprived of the favours of this world. Even influenza is a hindrance to many activities and a waste of some part of their lifetime, which is already limited.

Diseases hinder man from travelling, entertainment, business” This is surely a major flaw in their established system.

Perceiving diseases as such a misfortune, ill-informed ignorant people often feel anxiety about becoming sick. However, the viewpoint of believers about this issue is totally different: primarily, they are aware that, in one way or another, this life will definitely end one day. Therefore, if they manage to escape a disease, for instance, they know that an accident can alter their lives at any moment. Or they never forget that the natural process of becoming old will sooner or later do irreversible damage to their health. Apart from this, they keep in mind that, except by the will of Allah, no virus or bacteria can do any harm to anyone. Therefore, when they become sick, they know that it is ordained by Allah for a specific purpose. Submission to Allah provides complete relief from fear of diseases. Certainly, they take all possible measures to enjoy good health. But if they do become sick, they show patience and display moral perfection as the verse below relates:

“And those who keep their treaty when they make one, and the patient in tribulation and adversity and times of stress, such are they who are sincere. Such are the Allah-fearing.

Surah Al-Baqarah: 177

The Ignorant Society is in Fear of Death

One of the major shortcomings of the ignorant society is the fear of death. Yet, while living with this fear and trying to avoid even the thought of it, they neglect one crucial fact: no matter how hard they struggle, life slips away second by second. That there is no escape from death is thus recalled :

Wherever you may be, death will overtake you, even though you may be in lofty towers. Yet if a happy thing befalls, them, they say: ‘This is from Allah’. And if an evil thing befalls them, they say: ‘This is of your doing (O Muhammad)’. Say (to them): ‘All is from Allah’. What is amiss with these people that they can hardly understand a word?

Surah Al-Nisa: 78

Say (to them, O Muhammad): ‘The death from which you shrink will surely overtake you, and afterward you will be returned to the Knower of the Invisible and the Visible, and He will tell you what you used to do.’

Surah Al-Jumua: 8

As explained by the verses, death is an unavoidable end. Like all other people, the richest, the most beautiful or the most respected individual in the world will die. Nobody, without exception, can escape it. Those currently living and those who will ever live will also face death on a predestined day.

Knowing this fact, ignorant people make a great effort to delay this end and thus try to make more of this life. Death would separates them from their dearest relatives or friends and reduces all worldly efforts to insignificance. Moreover, they avoid pronouncing the word “death.” Those who remind others of it are labelled as “thoughtless” and conversations about death are often interrupted on the pretext that it is not the proper time or place to talk about it.

Man's mental process is inclined to disregard what he does not like or want. He is even inclined to deny the existence of things he avoids confronting. This tendency seems to be most apparent when death is the issue. He shuns issues like diseases or old age, which remind him of death. His fear is so great that even seeing the doctor makes him restless. He fears being diagnosed with a fatal disease. At times, such anxiety even dissuades him from seeing the doctor. Naturally, funerals are the events which cause the deepest concern. The act of placing an immediate family member or a dearest friend in the grave inevitably reminds one of the time one will encounter one's own death.

This fear, however, brings them nothing positive. They fear losing the life of this world. Yet, though they live long, they spend all these years subject to this fear. This is really a misfortune from Allah for those who persist in this superstitious fear and do not replace it with the fear of Allah.

Superstitious Beliefs

In the ignorant society, almost everybody is obsessed by superstitious beliefs. As the word "superstition" also suggests, such a belief is one which someone knows is irrational, but which nevertheless he insists on hanging to. However, this is a quite a natural phenomenon for someone who is not acquainted with the Qur'an, and thus is not familiar with religion.

One of the most important aspects of superstitious beliefs is that they are handed down from one generation to the next. No matter how irrational or groundless they may be, the majority of the societies have incorporated these beliefs into their way of living.

Furthermore, most societies accept these beliefs as rules and they painstakingly stick to them. They never walk under a ladder, for instance, believing that it brings bad luck. Seeing a black cat is also a sign of bad luck. They knock on wood to avoid an undesirable event. Countless such rules, which evoke a deep fear, are formulated by ignorant people. If they fail to observe these rules, they feel anxious about being hit by a disaster.

The major mistake these people make is actually to forget that each and every event occurs only by the will of Allah. Accordingly, neither a ladder nor a black cat has any individual power to bring bad luck. However, people whose minds are in darkness became obsessed by the "pseudo-fears" they themselves have invented.

The Obsession with Bad Luck

In an unenlightened society superstitious beliefs are to a great extent associated with bad luck. These beliefs have a deep influence on the daily lives of ignorant people. A number, a colour or even a person may be assumed to be cursed. It is almost universally accepted that the number thirteen equates with bad luck. Similarly, except for those who accept the Qur'anic way of life, all people around the world will take a different path in order to avoid black cats.

Ill-informed people also have fears about themselves, with which they have difficulty in coming to terms. For instance, they never wear a garment again if they have it on at the time of an accident. Alternatively, in such a case they hastily sell their cars.

The fear of being cursed is so strong among the ignorant that important decisions about their

lives, even their friendships, are shaped by it. It is entirely possible that such an irrational fear might pave the way to putting an end to a long-lasting friendship, for instance. However, not until they do not give up these fears, can they ever free themselves from these obsessions. Therefore, the solution is not to escape from them but to eradicate them. The only way to attain this, however, is by abandoning all beliefs rooted in ignorance and putting one's trust in Allah.

Phobias

Phobic anxiety or phobic fear is an irrational fear which the individual in question knows is unnecessary and out of proportion to the demands of the situation concerned, but which, nevertheless, he is unable to overcome. It occurs without logic in situations which ordinarily should not cause fear. Despite being a mental problem, however, ignorant people accept those suffering from phobic anxiety or phobic fear as normal people rather than patients who need treatment. Medical dictionaries list between 250 and 300 phobias. Indeed, the ignorant can become phobic about anything. It is not rare for a person to have a list of situations which cause phobic distress for him.

Some of the fears may be rational for all people. Yet, the fears of phobic individuals are quite extreme. A person with a phobic fear of snakes, for instance, screams, jumps on the sofa or faints at the sight of a snake on television or newspaper. Some associate enclosed places with a grave or a place under earth and hence develop agoraphobia, the fear of enclosed places. This is, in fact, a manifestation of the fear of death. In their minds, they equate darkness with disasters and hence feel restless even at home, a place where they should normally feel secure. They attribute a power to darkness, assume it to be separate and apart from Allah, and believe that it is the source of all evil. In darkness, they feel terrified, assuming that unseen forces lie in wait to assault or to kill them.

There is one main reason why these people feel terrified with no rational and apparent reason: they do not trust Allah and ascribe partners to Him. In the Qur'an, Allah relates that groundless fear is a temptation of evil and that there is neither fear nor grief for true believers who fear Allah.

It is only the devil who would make (men) fear his partisans. But do not fear them; fear Me, if you are true believers.

Surah Aal-e Imran: 175

But whoever surrenders himself to Allah while doing good, his reward is with his Lord; and no fear shall overtake them, neither shall they grieve.

Surah Al-Baqarah: 112

Deviant Beliefs of Ignorant People About Religion

Contrary to the commonly held view, ignorant people are not totally unaware of religion. Most of them acknowledge the existence of Allah, the All-Powerful, Who created themselves and the entire universe. Yet despite this, they develop a deviant understanding of religion. In many verses of the Qur'an, Allah relates that people cannot comprehend the existence of Allah, since they do not ponder upon His creation:

If indeed you ask them who has created the heavens and the earth and subjected the sun and the moon (to His Law), they will certainly reply, "Allah". How are they then diverted from the truth?

Surah Al-Ankaboot: 61

If you ask them, who created them, they will certainly say, Allah: How then can they turn away from the Truth?

Surah Al-Zukhruf: 87

Say (to them, O Muhammad): Who provided for you from the sky and the earth? Who has endowed you with hearing and sight? Who brought forth the living from the dead and brought forth the dead from the living? Who has ordained all things? They will say: Allah. Then say: Will you not then carry out your duty to Him?

Surah Yunus: 31

The main reason why these people stray from their Creator's path is the strong attachment they have for this life. Due to this attachment, they simply disregard the facts and deceive themselves by some flimsy reasoning. If they pondered profoundly, they would realise that they should remain as Allah's devoted slaves all through their lives. If they ever trusted Allah, they would comprehend the existence of the life beyond and know that they should prepare themselves for it. However, they strongly resist doing so since such an attitude calls for devotion to the next life rather than to this one. In such a situation, the course adopted by ignorant people is not to think about it.

At this point, perverted beliefs regarding religion come to their rescue. These beliefs help the unenlightened to avoid having a guilty conscience. Despite the variety of these beliefs, the rationale laying the ground for them is one and one only: to avoid being a slave of Allah.

Each of these perverted beliefs is explained in detail in the Qur'an, the last surviving guide to the

true path for humanity revealed 1400 years ago. These perverted beliefs, which will be explained in the following pages, will not save human beings from an eternal punishment, though they may well serve to deceive them in this life. On the Day of Reckoning everybody will be judged according to his deeds and nobody will have the chance to conceal his wrongful actions. By virtue of the divine judgement, those adhering to the right path will be rewarded with Paradise for all eternity. Wrongdoers, they will have everything to regret and will face a fearsome end:

If you could see them when they are set before the Fire. They will say: Oh, would that we might return! Then we would not deny the revelations of our Lord but we would be of the believers!

Surah Al-Anaam: 27

Again and again those who disbelieve will, wish that they had bowed to Allah's will in Islam.

Surah Al-Hijr: 2

They think what the majority thinks is true

One of the perverted beliefs prevalent among ignorant people has it that "what is accepted to be right by the majority is valid and true." What deceives them is often the same rationale: "Since so many people do it, they should have a point." If these principles are shaped within a highly respected group of elite people, then the influence of these principles is felt even more profoundly among ignorant people. In this case, the latter raise no doubts whatsoever about the validity of these principles, which then serve them as "life-guides" ever after.

However, being accepted as true by the majority by no means legitimises these views. This is surely a dangerous trap to avoid for those whose faith in the Qur'an is not firm. Allah warns believers against adhering to the path of the majority:

If you obeyed the greater part of mankind, they would lead you away from Allah's path. They follow nothing but idle fancies and preach nothing but falsehoods. Allah knows best the men who stray from His path, and the best knows the rightly guided.

Surah Al-Anaam: 116

Complying with this warning, believers follow only the commandments of the Qur'an and their own consciences. Ignorant individuals, however, seek refuge in the power of the majority in this world. They hope, too, that in the Hereafter following the majority would serve as a proper pretext for not conducting themselves responsibly towards their Creator. However, that is only wishful thinking. Those who neglect their religion in this world shall remain all alone and helpless in the Hereafter:

And no friend will ask after a friend.

Surah Al-Maarij: 10

On that day, all excuses made up for avoiding Hell will prove to be invalid. The rationale behind the statements: "Everyone was doing the same", or "I assumed the majority to be true", will not save one from torment:

On that day their excuses will not profit those who did injustice, nor will they be allowed to make amends.

Surah Al-Rum: 57

As Allah makes clear in the verse:

"That which is revealed to you from your Lord is the truth but most men do not believe."

Surah Al-Rad: 1

What the majority imposes prevails as long as they are not in compliance with the commandments of the Qur'an. Those who have faith in the Qur'an have always been in a minority throughout history.

They Think They will Perish After Death

Ignorant people believe only in what they perceive through their five senses. This materialistic approach lays the groundwork of the denial of the life beyond. Yet such a denial is nothing but a poor excuse they invent for their disbelief. Every man bestowed with the faculty of thinking conceives that there is technically no difference whatsoever between the creation of this life and the Hereafter. That man came into existence from nothingness proves that everything's existence is consequent upon the exercise of Allah's will.

Nevertheless, people bent on remaining ignorant simply treat this reality as though it did not exist. In the Qur'an, Allah deplors the excuses they make up to support their denial:

Man answers us back with arguments, having forgotten the fact of his own creation, saying: Who will revive these bones when they have rotted away? Say: He will revive them Who produced them at first, for He has knowledge of every creature.

Surah Ya-Seen: 78-79

And they say: When we are lost in the earth, how can we then be re-created? But they are disbelievers in the meeting with their Lord.

Surah Al-Sajda: 10

Surely there is a reason for their denial. After all, renouncing the existence of the life beyond justifies their attachment to this life. Acceptance of the resurrection is committing oneself to the notion that one will be summoned to account for one's good and wicked deeds on the Day of Judgement. This fact is surely unacceptable in terms of their inherently groundless system.

A person attesting to the existence of the life beyond also has to acknowledge that he should prepare himself for it. However, due to the unbridled ambitions of ignorant people, this is rather a difficult thing to do. Therefore, the only solution provided by their primitive rationale is a denial of the Hereafter.

Nevertheless, such an approach is to the detriment of the ignorant; as a consequence, they live troubled lives and deserve unceasing torment in the Hereafter. It is apparent then that denial of the life beyond is by no means in man's best interests. On the contrary, it entails great loss both in this life and beyond.

They Expect a Miracle to Happen Before They Believe

Before believing, some people expect supernatural events to happen. However, this is only a method of evading the truth and, throughout history, it has been employed by all communities who were resolute in their disbelief. These people who simply demanded that messengers show

miracles are mentioned in the Qur'an:

Those who do not look for a meeting with Us say: Why are angels not sent down to us and why do we not see our Lord!

Surah Al-Furqan: 21

We have set forth for mankind in this Qur'an all manner of arguments, but most of them persist in disbelief.

They say: We will not put our faith in you till you cause a spring to gush forth from the earth for us; or you have a garden of date-palms and grapes, and cause rivers to gush forth therein abundantly; or you cause the heaven to fall upon us piecemeal, as you have threatened to do or bring down Allah and the angels in our midst as a warrant; or you build a house of gold; or you ascend to heaven, and even then we will put no faith in your ascension till you bring down for us a book that we can read. Say (O Muhammad): Glory be to my Lord! Am I anything but a human messenger?

Surah Al-Isra: 89-93

And those who have no knowledge say: Why does Allah not speak to us, or some sign come to us? The same demand was made by those before them. Their hearts are all alike. We have made clear our revelations for those people who are steadfast in faith.

Surah Al-Baqarah: 118

As the verses relate, those who expect Allah's messengers to show miracles have always been disbelievers. They want miracles because, deep in their hearts, they know that messengers have had bestowed upon them what is right and true. Yet, to avoid this fact, they simply make up excuses to deny. This dishonest attitude is related in the following verse:

And they swear a solemn oath by Allah that if there come to them a portent they will believe in it. Say: Portents are with Allah. And how can you tell that if a sign be given them, they will indeed believe in it?

Surah Al-Anaam: 109

They Believe Allah is Up in the Beavens

Ignorant people have various perverted beliefs about religion, since they base their decisions about what is right and wrong upon their primitive rationale rather than on the Qur'an. Mostly they gather these beliefs from their parents or other people immediately surrounding them, who influence them deeply during their early years. Yet these beliefs, especially the ones regarding the existence of Allah, misguide them all through their lives.

Many people, who in fact do not really deny the existence of Allah but have a wrong perception of Him, share the basic mistake of those who deny Allah. They do not deny creation, but have superstitious beliefs about "where" Allah is. Most of them think that "Allah is up in the sky." They imagine that Allah is behind a very distant planet and interferes with "worldly affairs" only once in a while. Or, perhaps, that He does not intervene at all: He created the universe and then left it to itself and people are left to determine their fates for themselves. Still others have heard that in the Qur'an it is written that Allah is "everywhere", but they cannot perceive what exactly this means. They think that Allah surrounds everything like radio waves or like an invisible, intangible gas. For some, on the other hand, Allah evokes the image of an old wise man.

However, those who interpret and evaluate all happenings according to the Qur'an have an

accurate grasp of Allah. Such people understand that the entire universe has a single Sovereign, that He changes the entire physical world, including all human beings, as He pleases, and that He is not confined to a particular place and time. They know that even a dust particle, invisible to the naked eye, is under His control. Allah's existence encompasses all things and "reason" apprehends this. As the verse suggests: "Allah is nearer to man than his jugular vein." (Surah Qaf, 16). Just as He has created this all-pervading order, He is the One Who also maintains it incessantly. He encompasses all things and all places as stated in the Qur'an:

To Allah belong the East and the West, and wherever you turn, there is Allah's Countenance. Allah is All-Embracing, All-Knowing.

Surah Al-Baqarah: 115

To Allah belong whatever is in the heavens and whatever is on the earth. Allah ever surrounded all things.

Surah Al-Nisa: 126

They Think it is Sufficient to Practise Regular Acts of Worship in the Latter Years of Life

Chasing vain pursuits, ignorant people spend their lives doing nothing for the life beyond. However, the fact that they fail to give due consideration to the Hereafter gives them an inner restlessness. Now and then, such a spirit prompts them to remorse. Yet, at this point, they feel the urge to ease this feeling by some pretexts like: "It is still too early to give in myself up to religion", or "now I have set my mind on a list of priorities, yet *one day* I will take my religion seriously." The "*one day*" mentioned here, however, is the latter years of one's life, when one feels death to be very close.

These people delay commitment to their religion to the last years of their lives. They believe adulthood should be spent in "making the most of one's life." Otherwise they think their lives would be spent in vain. Besides, due to the physical disability accompanying old age, it would be difficult to enjoy life. Therefore, only in the latter years do they decide to show commitment to their religion. Meanwhile, they feel the inner pain of not following the true path.

This stance receives support among ignorant people. However, if it is only old age which can bring such a change of course, the sincerity of these people becomes highly questionable. After all, this is not the honest way of conducting oneself: never allowing concern for the Hereafter to take hold of one's mind in one's young days, and never sparing time for the remembrance of Allah until one has reached extreme old age. Even so, they expect their wrong actions to be forgiven.

No doubt, it is all possible to turn at times to Allah in repentance. Allah forgives anyone who sees the right path and mends his ways sincerely. The relevant verse about repentance is as follows:

Forgiveness is only incumbent on Allah toward those who do evil in ignorance (and) then turn quickly (in repentance) to Him. Allah will pardon them. Allah is All-Knowing and Wise. Forgiveness is not for those who do ill-deeds until, when death attended upon one of them, he said: I repent now; nor yet for those who die while they are disbelievers. For such We have prepared a painful doom.

Surah Al-Nisa: 17-18

Those who are set astray by such perverted beliefs should acknowledge that they may have no time left to grow old and repent for the wrong actions they engaged in their young days. Their lives may end abruptly, giving them no chance to repent. In this case, one would have deep regrets. This fact is recalled in many verses:

Could you but see when the guilty hang their heads before their Lord, (and say): Our Lord! We have now seen and heard, so send us back; we will do right, now we are sure.

Surah Al-Sajda: 12

If you could see them when they are set before the Fire and say: Oh, would that we might return! Then we would not deny the revelations of our Lord, but would be of the believers!

Surah Al-Anaam: 27

They Think They will be Forgiven Under Any Circumstances

Though basically having faith, the majority of the people raise doubts about the existence of the Hereafter. They avoid thinking seriously about the Day of Judgement, since thinking draws them to the recognition of death and the life beyond. The probability of the existence of life beyond death is an incentive to them to make up excuses since they know that they shall have to account, in the presence of Allah, for all the wrong actions they have committed during their lives in this world. Alternatively, they realise that they will ultimately be doomed to an eternal life of torment in Hell. At this point, they alternate between complying with the commandments of Allah and finding a way to ease their remorse at being strongly attached to this life.

The rationale of ignorance indisputably imposes the second alternative. Ignorant people deceive themselves into thinking that "they will be forgiven no matter how irresponsibly they conduct themselves towards their Creator." Seeking refuge in the mercy of Allah, they assume that Allah will in any case bestow His mercy upon them and forgive their ungratefulness, wrong actions and disbelief.

The same attitude evinced by others also misguides a person. They comfort and support each other saying "We will be forgiven anyhow." Allah expresses disapproval of this indoctrination of ignorance in the Qur'an:

And a generation has succeeded them who inherited the Scripture. They grasp the goods of this low life (as the price of evil-doing) and say: It will be forgiven us. And if there came to them (again) the offer of the like, they would accept it (and would sin again).

Has not the covenant of the Scripture been taken on their behalf that they should not say anything about Allah save the truth? And they have studied that which is therein. And the abode of the Hereafter is better for those who ward off (evil). Have you then no sense?

Surah Al-Araf: 169

However, as stated in the Qur'an, this understanding of the ignorant society has by no means any validity in the sight of Allah and on the Day of Judgment. Allah is surely Ever-Forgiving, Most Merciful. Yet this is valid only for those who immediately comprehend their wrongful actions and repent, and not for those who devise cunning plans to evade divine retribution. Allah

describes really sincere believers as:

Those who, when they do an evil thing or wrong themselves, remember Allah and implore forgiveness for their sins ó Who forgives sins save Allah alone? - and will not knowingly repeat (the wrong) they did. The reward of such will be forgiveness from their Lord, and Gardens underneath which rivers flow, wherein they will abide for ever ó a bountiful reward for those who do good works!"

Surah Aal-e Imran: 135-136

They Think They Deserve Paradise

"**To have good intentions deep in one's heart**" is a phrase that best describes a method commonly employed by ignorant people to ease their remorse. Though this is a way of expressly straying from the Creator's path, ignorant people assume that they deserve an eternal reward just because of this so-called "purity of heart". They assume themselves to be good since they cause no harm to anyone. Given this mentality, they see no hindrance to attaining Paradise ó if they ever meet the Hereafter. However, in terms of the Qur'an, such a conviction is completely groundless. This is merely a superstitious belief as stated in the following verse:

And indeed, if We show him to taste mercy after some hurt that had affected him, he will say: This is my own; and I do not think that the Hour of Doom will ever come. And even if I am brought back to my Lord, He will surely reward me well. But We shall certainly tell those who disbelieve (all) that they did, and truly We shall make them taste hard punishment.

Surah Fussilat: 50

Indeed, these people fail to demonstrate sincere faith. They even raise doubts about the existence of the Day of Judgement. This is actually a sub-conscious psychological method to cope with remorse: if there is the probability of resurrection, they comfort themselves with the conviction that they will be rewarded for all eternity in Paradise rather than being meted out harsh punishment.

One to whom Allah gives the glad tidings of an eternal reward displays particular attributes. He loves Allah very much and fears Him. Such a person is mindful of the commandments of Allah. He expresses his gratefulness to Him, turns to Him and repents to Him. He always seeks Allah's guidance and illumination by engaging in good deeds. Allah avers that only those who demonstrate commitment to His way will be rewarded.

As we have seen, "a purified heart" is not a Qur'anic notion. It is a method invented by ignorant people to escape their divine responsibilities and ease the fear of eternal punishment. Moreover, the grounds for such reasoning are unknown. The criteria it rests upon surely change from one individual to another. For instance, a person may justify theft, stating that he engages in it, not because he wants or likes it, but because he is in need of it. This is surely a failure of reasoning.

Then we can conclude thus: the system of ignorance rests entirely upon dishonesty and is by no means acceptable by the Qur'an. The criteria by which people earn the Paradise are explicit: to fear nobody but Allah, to love Allah and to observe His limits. In the Qur'an Allah states:

And the Garden no longer distant, is brought near for those who kept from evil. (And it is said): This is what you were promised. (It is) for every penitent and heedful one, who feared the Beneficent though He is unseen, and came before Him with a contrite

heart. Enter it in peace. This is the day of immortality.

Surah Qaf: 31-34

They Believe They will Attain the Garden After being Punished Temporarily in Hell.

People who adhere to their own values always find comfort in the wishful thinking that any wrong actions will be punished temporarily in Hell. Moreover, this rationale encourages one to transgress, since it suggests that eternal life in the Garden will follow this period of torment. Such a mentality unwittingly eases fears of the grievous penalty at the end of life. However, the irrationality of this mindset is thus described in the Qur'an:

That is because they say: The Fire will not touch us save for a certain number of days. Their own lies have deceived them regarding their religion.

Surah Aal-e Imran: 24

It is apparent that this is a scenario which brings relief to the heart. Ignorant people accept that they have sins, yet they find them to be minor and not a hindrance to attaining Paradise. Though having the opportunity to repent and change their ways, they are unlikely to depart from their own stance.

This is surely a manifestation of the poor grasp they have of Hell. Hell, where disbelievers will remain for all eternity, is specially created to give pain to the human body and soul. That is solely because the disbelievers are guilty of great wrong and Allah's justice entails their punishment.

Being ungrateful and rebellious to the Creator, the One who gives man a soul, is the greatest wrong that can be committed in the whole universe. Therefore, in the Hereafter there is grievous punishment for such a deadly sin. That is the purpose Hell serves. Man is created to be a slave of Allah. If he denies the main purpose of his creation, then he surely receives what he deserves. Allah states the following :

And they say: The Fire (of punishment) will not touch us save for a certain number of days. Say: Have you received a covenant from Allah ó truly Allah will not break His covenant ó or do you assert about Allah that which you do not know? Truly whoever has committed evil and become eugrossed in sin are the heirs of the Fire; they will abide therein forever.

Surah Al-Baqarah: 80-81

A person can easily deceive himself in this world. Yet, the Hereafter will be the place where all the facts about him will be disclosed. What is more important, it is surely a place of no return.

They Believe Only a Limited Number of People will be Punished in Hell

There is one another rationale which lays the ground for ignorant thinking. They assume Hell to be a place of limited capacity. Compared with the number of people that have ever lived on earth throughout the ages, they find it unlikely that all these people can be punished. Consequently, they find it unlikely that they will be the ones who will be exposed to torment, since there are many other guilty people who deserve it more.

However this reasoning is totally wrong. Those who carry such a conviction do not truly grasp

the power of Allah. Surely Allah has the power to gather all men of all ages in Hell, a place of huge dimensions beyond the grasp of the human mind. The following verse gives an idea of Hell:

On the day when We say to Hell: Are you filled? and it answers: Can there be more to come?

Surah Qaf: 30

*Ah, what will convey to you what that burning is! -
It leaves nothing; it spares no one.
It shrivels the man.*

Surah Al-Muddaththir: 27-29

One who fears Allah and who believes without doubt in the Hereafter, knows for certain that he will be resurrected and judged along with his soul. This judgement is the ultimate justice of Allah. Therefore, those heedless of Allah's commandments in this world will not be saved from torment in Hell. In the Qur'an, the absolute justice of Allah is explained thus:

*Have you not seen those who praise themselves for purity? Allah purifies whom He will, and they will not be wronged in the slightest degree. (Surah Al-Nisa: 49)
On that day Allah will pay them their just due, and they will know that Allah, He is the Manifest Truth.*

Surah Al-Noor: 25

An Important Characteristic of The Ignorant Society: The Impossibility of their Not Being Convinced of

No matter what his original stance is, given all the evidence, a person of sound mind and clear understanding submits to the truth provided that he finds the evidence convincing. That is because he knows that, as a human being, he is inherently fallible. He further acknowledges that learning is essential to expand one's horizons. A person of clear understanding, therefore, by no means finds anything humiliating in learning and accordingly changing one's mind.

There are some people, however, who hold an ingrained prejudice which is almost impossible to eliminate. These people are inclined to approach and evaluate valid evidence with prejudice. The personal experience they acquire over time is shaped within the ignorant system and is of crucial importance to them. Therefore, it is almost impossible to change their viewpoint. These people are known to be stubborn. Rather than being open to new ideas and hence finding the truth, they insist on holding on to traditional beliefs. They never think that they can be erroneous. Furthermore, they think they are wise. Sometimes even concrete evidence fails to change their minds. However, this is not because they are unable to discern between right and wrong, but because they pretend not to understand the truth. In the Qur'an, Allah alludes to this shortcoming in the ignorant in the following verse:

Have you any hope that they will be true to you when a party of them used to listen to the word of Allah, then used to change it, after they had understood it, knowingly?

Surah Al-Baqarah: 75

It is not possible to convince these people of the truth. All evidence and efforts to make them see the truth would prove to be useless. This insensitivity becomes even more severe when faith is the issue. Allah describes this as follows:

As for the Disbelievers, whether you warn them or not, it is all one for them; they do not believe.

Surah Al-Baqarah: 6

How is it that evidence makes some people see the truth, while it fails to be convincing for others? What makes them so stubborn and insensitive?

Earlier in this book, we repeatedly mentioned the strong attachment which ignorant people have for this life. This "attachment" surely explains the motives behind this incomprehensible attitude. Although they clearly see the truth, they follow their vain desires, since they know that they

would otherwise have to abandon their ambitions and make earning the good pleasure of Allah the basic purpose of their life. This is actually the last thing they want to do and accordingly they resist it by suppressing the "voice of their conscience." These people adhere to the negative side of their soul: such behaviour is to the detriment of man, as explicitly stated in the following verse:

I do not exculpate myself. The (human) soul is prone to evil, save his to whom my Lord has shown mercy. My Lord is Forgiving and Merciful.

Surah Yusuf: 53

For this reason the soul plays an important role in making a man resist the truth.

Another being who misguides those who have strong ambitions for this life is the Satan. Allah indicates this in the following verse:

He said: Now, because You have sent me astray, I shall certainly lurk in ambush for them on Your Right Path. Then I shall come upon them from before them and from behind them and from their right hands and from their left hands, and You will not find most of them beholden (unto You).

Surah Al-Araf: 16-17

To convince these people who are led by Satan and the negative side of their souls has been the main struggle of all messengers throughout history. All messengers always summoned man to the right path, the path of Allah, yet their people declined except for a minority. One striking example given in the Qur'an regarding this issue is Prophet Noah and his people. Despite Prophet Noah's commitment to summon his people to the right path, they persisted in disbelief:

He said: My Lord! I have called unto my people night and day, but all my pleas have only added to their repugnance; And whenever I call to them, so that You may pardon them, they thrust their fingers in their ears and cover themselves with their garments and persist in their refusal and in bearing themselves with insolent pride. I have called to them aloud, I have made public proclamations to them, and I have appealed to them in private.

Surah Al-Nooh: 5-9

Noah said: My Lord! My people have disobeyed me and followed those the increase in whose wealth and children will only hasten their perdition.

Surah Al-Nooh: 21

The insincere attitude of ignorant people is revealed in the Qur'an. No matter how strong the evidence provided, they turn their faces away from the truth and show a strong attachment to this life. And then they make up many excuses to justify their defiant attitude. In the Qur'an, Allah gives an account of the issues and situations ignorant people pretend not to understand. These are actually the issues about which they never change their opinion. Allah also mentions the excuses they make and their show of insincerity to the believers.

Before proceeding with this issue, one of the principal methods ignorant people employ to justify their dishonesty will be further clarified.

One of the Teachings of Satan: Demagogy

Ignorant people often resort to demagoguery to justify themselves. This is a method by which they maintain their rights, or prestige, by using emotional, dishonest or oblique arguments rather than reason. Apart from these ploys, the way people conduct themselves is also an efficient element of demagoguery. Interrupting, shouting and telling lies are well-known methods of demagoguery. Disbelievers demonstrate a remarkable capacity for this "art". To justify their point of view or to establish superiority over others, they resort to inconceivable methods. The main purpose of all these efforts is to oppose the truth. They make all these efforts to justify themselves and thereby to find a pretext to ease their remorse.

This, however, is not a method developed by the individuals themselves. As in many other issues, Satan guides them. The statement of Satan in the following verses shows that Satan was the first demagogue in history.

(Allah) said: "O Iblis! What prevents you from prostrating yourself to one whom I have created with My own hands? Are you haughty?"

Or are you one of the high (and mighty) ones?"

He replied: "I am better than him. You created me from fire, while him You created from clay."

He said: "Go forth from hence, for you are outcast."

Surah Sad: 75-77

When he was told to prostrate himself before Adam, Satan arrogantly refused, and offered wicked explanations. This was typical demagoguery; his pretext for not following the command of Allah is stated in the following statement of Satan: **"You created me from fire, while you created him from clay."** However his main purpose is to revolt against Allah. The comparison between fire and clay is only a pretext.

The attitude of ignorant people is exactly the same. They first decide to disobey and then find excuses for their disobedience. At this point, they do what Satan did and employ the various methods of demagoguery to cover their dishonesty and to comfort themselves.

Satan indoctrinates them by stealth and constantly whispers methods of demagoguery to their souls. Meanwhile, the individual struggles to choose between the voice of his common sense whispering the truth and the voice of his soul, that speaks for Satan. In this way, Satan approaches man in all circumstances and tempts him.

That is why for ages people all around the world employ exactly the same tactics and methods against religion. This fact is underlined in the Qur'an:

But they say what the ancients said before them.

Surah al-Mumunoon: 81

However, one point deserves mention here: Satan is a being completely under the control of Allah like all other creatures, such as the djinns, the angels and human beings. Contrary to the commonly held view, Satan is not a separate being, apart from and independent of Allah. He is in the service of Allah to test man in this world. This fact is explained in the following verse:

He said: Then you are of those reprieved till The Appointed Day. He said: My Lord! Because You have sent me astray, I shall truly make pleasant the path of error for them on the earth, and shall mislead them every one. Save such of them as are Your

perfectly devoted slaves. He said: This is a right course incumbent upon Me. As for My slaves, you have no power over any of them, save such of the sinners as follow you.

Surah al-Hijr: 36-42

All through history, many societies have applied the classical methods of demagoguery when they were reminded of the commandments of Allah. In this way, they thought they could avoid facing the truth. In the Qur'an, Allah gives an account of this psychology of disbelievers and the type of demagoguery they employ, so as not to be convinced of certain truths.

They are Not Convinced of the Closeness of Death

It is not possible to convince ignorant people that death is very close. Though this is a dire reality, the majority of the people strive to forget about the imminence of death. Death inevitably puts an end to this life to which they are so strongly attached. It also reminds people of the Hereafter and their responsibilities towards Allah and the reality of Hell. Therefore, they simply avoid the thought of it by "not thinking."

Ignorant people, who resolutely keep their minds off the thought of death, unreservedly express their distaste for it. Forgetting that it is also a commandment of Allah, they fail to see that it is a predestined event. "Not thinking" simply prevents them from seeing that such attitude is an overt opposition to the will of Allah.

Ignorant people harbour many other irrational convictions regarding death. For instance, according to them, the death of an old and sick person is reasonable. Moreover, they assume dying in bed without suffering is the best thing an old man can experience. However, they cannot stand the sudden death of a young person. At this point they fail to understand that his death is predestined.

Another irrational belief about death suggests that death occurs as a consequence of certain events. For instance, of someone who dies in a traffic accident, they say, "He would not have died, if he had not been driving on that busy highway." In the Qur'an the same mentality is underlined in the verse "**If they had been (here) with us, they would not have died or been killed:**" (Surah Aal-e Imran: 156) and believers are seriously warned against such a corrupted mentality. That is due to the fact that no death occurs coincidentally. Even before one's birth, the place and time of death are predetermined. This fact is stated in the following verse:

*We have decreed death among you, and
We are not to be frustrated, outrun.*

Surah Al-Waq'a: 60

For ignorant people, the death of a person, especially a member of one's immediate family, is a highly unexpected incident. Moreover it is frightful. Seeing the body of person with whom one dined a few days ago, terribly crushed in a car, is surely a scene one can never forget during one's lifetime. Watching officers putting his remains in a corpse bag inevitably reminds one of many facts that one is persistently encouraged to forget by the mentality of ignorance.

The person who is now being carried to the morgue in a plastic bag was perhaps a few hours ago enthusiastically talking about his new enterprises or his plans for the weekend. While

outlining these plans, the last thing that came to his mind was most probably death. Yet now, his body, reduced only to bones and flesh facing a rapid process of corruption, is being hurriedly carried to the morgue. In the morgue, he will be left in a cooler among the other corpses. In a few days, wrapped in a shroud, his corpse will be put in a grave.

The observer is plunged into despair, since such a scene reminds him of the day he will meet his own end.

Nevertheless, the influence of such an event on the human soul lasts only for a short while. Before long, ignorant people return to their old way of living and begin to see death as a quite unlikely incident. As soon as they busy themselves with everyday hassles ñ in their own words "when they face the reality of life" ó they immediately return to their old habits again as if they were not those people who experienced death at such close quarters only a few days ago. They even make demagogy speeches about death thus attempting to alleviate the seriousness of the matter. They frequently mention the shortness of life, yet never truly think about it. Moreover, they encourage each other not to think about it.

Soon after the grief over an immediate family member"s death becomes bearable, his relatives begin to think about the property they will inherit from him. In this way, they find a way to attach themselves to this life, even when death is the issue.

They are not Convinced of the Qur'an being the Revelation of Allah

The fact that ignorant societies are not convinced that holy books are revealed by Allah has been another of their traits throughout history. The main purpose lying behind this attitude is their unwillingness to adhere to the commandments of Allah. They simply want to forget about the Day of Judgement and the fact that they will be held responsible for all of their behaviour, since they want to live as they like. Therefore, even though they see the truth, they simply ignore it.

The typical attitude of ignorant societies towards the Bible and other holy books has likewise been assumed towards the Qur'an. Our Prophet summoned people to the true path in various ways, yet they insisted on disbelief. Meanwhile, in order to overcome remorse, they employed many methods. One of these methods, which employ demagogy, is stated in the following verses:

Those who disbelieve say: This is nothing but a lie that he has invented, and others have helped him with it, so that they have produced a slander and a lie. And they say: Fables of the men of old which he has had written down: and they are dictated to him morning and evening.

Surah Al-Furqan: 4-5

Some say these are but muddled dreams; others say he has only invented them. Indeed he is but a poet. Let him bring us a portent, just as those of old (who were Allah's Messengers) were sent with portents.

Surah Al-Anbiya: 5

It is evident that, despite being aware of the superiority of the Prophet, ignorant people accused him of sorcery. Moreover, the majority of them claimed that the Qur'an had been written by him. However, they quite definitely know that the Qur'an is a revelation of Allah. Likewise, they know for certain that the Prophet is neither a poet nor a sorcerer. Yet, as stated repeatedly in this

section, ignorant people simply use pretexts to attract more people who will comply with their own way of living.

In the Qur'an Allah provides explicit answers to the idle talk of the ignorant :

I swear by all that you can see and all that is hidden from your view, that this is truly the word of an honoured Messenger,

It is not the word of a poet: scant is your faith.

*Nor is it the word of a soothsayer: how little you reflect!
This is a Message sent down from the Lord of the Worlds.*

Surah Al-Haaqqa: 38-43

Or do they say: He had invented it? Indeed, they will not believe! Then let them produce a scripture like it, if they are truthful.

Surah Al-Tur: 33-34

This Qur'an could never have been devised by any besides Allah. Rather it is confirmation of what came before it and an elucidation of the Book which contains no doubt from the Lord of all the worlds. Do they say, "He has invented it"? Say: "Then produce a sura like it and call on anyone you can besides Allah if you are telling the truth." No, the fact is that they have denied something which their knowledge does not embrace and the meaning of which has not yet reached them. In the same way those before them also denied the truth. See the final fate of the wrongdoers!

Surah Yunus: 37-39

Getting Away from the Crude Understanding of Disbelief

Throughout the book, we have underlined the fact that all the plans made by ignorant people made them drift into trouble that they can never overcome. Even though they attain the best standards of living, they still feel the restlessness of not being able to attain true happiness. There is, however, only one way to save oneself from monotony, discontent, purposelessness, fears and anxiety. Allah informs man about this important secret in the following verse:

“Surely in the remembrance of Allah all hearts are comforted. Blessed are those who have faith and do good works; blissful is their end.

Surah Al-Rad: 28

As stated in the above verse, the individual attains real happiness and peace only when he keeps his mind occupied with the remembrance of Allah and spends his life doing good deeds to earn His good pleasure. Ignorant people, unaware of this most essential secret of the Qur’an, believe the trouble they go through to be a "reality of life" and simply resign themselves to "living through times," since they cannot find a way to rid themselves of their difficulties. At this point, believers who are aware of this important secret, undertake the important responsibility of showing **"how to purify oneself of the rationale of ignorance and to live a happy and rewarding life, both in this world and the Hereafter"**, in other words, of summoning people to the true path of Allah.

Another point deserves mention here: Allah promises all people from the ignorant society that their misdeeds will be forgiven provided they truly believe in Him and submit to the guidance of the Qur’an. In this way, for all people Allah points to an escape route from the ignorant society.

A person who abandons the ignorant way of living and submits himself to Allah, meets forgiveness in His presence. Meanwhile, believers embrace such a person with no prejudice on account of his former way of living. Among believers, a person is assessed according to his recent stance. Therefore, even though he indulged himself in extravagant pleasures in his former life, his old way of living never becomes a matter of interest for believers.

Hence, Allah makes it easy to lead a good life with the guidance of the Qur’an. Under such circumstances, it would be the wisest course to surrender oneself to Allah. Keep in mind that man is free to make his choice: 60-70 years of a troublesome life which will eventually be concluded in Hell, the place, which is specially created to give pain to the body and soul of disbelievers. Alternatively, a life spent among the most trustworthy people, in the most beautiful places, having the best of favours which will extend to heaven, a place of beauty beyond imagination. Surely the wise man will choose the latter; not only because it is the logical

alternative but because it is what the human conscience commands. To turn to the Creator to Whom we owe our existence is surely what satisfies the human soul.

Despite what has been said so far, there may be still be certain people who are raising doubts about complying with the Qur'anic way of living. In the Qur'an, Allah states that people feel attachment to this life rather than the next as they consider it closer:

But you love this fleeting life and neglect the Hereafter.

Surah Al-Qiyama: 20-21

At this point, the Qur'an advises such people to "ponder death." One of the major reasons why people feel a profound sense of attachment for life and cast religion aside is the assumption that life, actually limited to 60-70 years, is eternal. However, death is likely to put an end to this life at any moment. When death comes, a person will leave behind him his prestige, diploma, wealth, bank accounts, credit cards, in short, all the forms of prosperity he either possesses or strives to possess. Soon after he will be buried under the earth, his body will be consumed by worms and he will be simply reduced to bones. His only gain in the Hereafter will be the good deeds he engaged in to earn the good pleasure of Allah.

Therefore, those involved in the ignorant way of living should see this fact as soon as possible. Beyond death, there is an eternal life. On the Judgment Day, everyone will face the consequences of his behaviour. Those who did not conduct themselves responsibly towards Allah will be driven into Hell, a place of grievous punishment. There they will have no one to help:

So taste (the evil of your deeds). For as much as you forgot the meeting of this day, We will forget you. Taste eternal doom because of what you used to do.

Surah Al-Sajda:14

Those, on the other hand, who sincerely repent and ask forgiveness of Allah and follow His guidance will attain salvation, both in this world and beyond.

They shall have what they will of their Lord's bounty. That is the reward of the good:

Allah will remit from them the worst of what they did, and will reward them according to their noblest actions.

Surah Al-Zumar: 34-35

Be they men or women, those that embrace the Faith, and do what is right We shall truly grant a happy life, and We shall pay them a recompense in proportion to the best of what they used to do.

Surah Al-Nahl: 97

Conclusion

All through the book we have discussed the viewpoint, purpose of existence, moral values, beliefs, fears and characters of the people who adhere to the ignorant way of living. The purpose in examining them in details was to show how a life bereft of religion causes man to drift into a "crude understanding." Another, yet more important purpose, was to make them think rationally of the detrimental consequences of their preference both in this world and the life beyond, with a sound mind.

The *Qur'an* draws our attention to the fact that at the end, for those who follow their desires there will be a grave disappointment:

And if the Truth had followed their desires, truly the heavens and the earth and all who dwell whosoever is therein would have been corrupted. We have brought them their Reminder, but from their Reminder they now turn away.

Surah al-Muminun: 71

Because following vain desires is so pernicious, one should seek ways to avoid doing so. And there is only one way to avoid disappointment: to live up to the moral values of the Qur'an. That is because only the Qur'an grants the "honour" human beings deserve. The Qur'an saves the human soul from the ignorance, crude understanding, negative inspirations, irrational fears, and all perverted beliefs and provides relief from anxiety as well as from the eternal torment in Hell. It grants man wisdom, good conduct, a peaceful environment very similar to Paradise and most importantly, a life in Paradise for all eternity.

This book includes extensive reference to the "**gloomy environment**" ignorant people are surrounded with as well as the "**rewarding life**" presented by the Qur'an. A comparison between these two, by nature, summons man to the guidance of the Qur'an. The verse "**He it is Who sent down clear revelations to His slave, so that He might bring you forth from darkness unto light**" " (Surah Al-Hadid: 9) suggests that those adhering to the Qur'an will attain eternal salvation.

This book is a reminder and a warning to the ignorant. As the verse "**This is a Reminder. Let him who will, then, choose a way to his Lord,**" (Surah Al-Muzzammil: 19) suggests, those willing to follow divine guidance should take warning and take heed.

This life is short and temporary. For all men, without exception, the time spent in this world is as short as "the blink of an eye". It is surely unwise to neglect the next world just for the sake of the temporary joys of this one. The only way to attain eternal salvation is to purify oneself of the teachings of the ignorant society and to adhere to true religion, in other words, the religion enjoined by Allah. What is expected of the readers of this book is that they should make this right choice.

And say: "Truth has (now) arrived, and Falsehood has been overthrown: for Falsehood is bound to perish."

The End of Materialism

Today, in many local and foreign press and media organs, an evolutionary propaganda is in play either directly or covertly. Sometimes in the form of a flash news, this sometimes takes the form of a few sentences referred to in between the lines of a totally irrelevant subject. The important thing is to keep the subject always on the agenda and to impose on people as if the theory of evolution is an indisputable fact, the truth of which has been proved over and over again.

In truth, it is not difficult to understand the real purpose of this campaign. That ideological rather than scientific concerns lie behind the theory of evolution became self-evident the first time the theory was advanced by Darwin. Darwin's evolutionary theses provided considerable support for materialism. The founder of dialectic materialism, Karl Marx, dedicated his famous book *Das Kapital* to Darwin and he noted in the copy he sent to him: "From a devoted admirer to Charles Darwin."

Thereafter, although it has been put forward many times over that the theory of evolution has no ground whatsoever, many political and ideological trends crowned the idea of evolution. The theoreticians and advocates of such ideologies as fascism, savage capitalism, communism, which rest on materialism and anti-religionist grounds engaged in a race to keep the theory of evolution upstanding at all costs, and they have based their philosophical arguments absolutely on evolutionist foundations.

For this reason, in this booklet where we reviewed the Qur'an, the main source of religion, and the divine knowledge communicated in the Qur'an, we felt the need to dwell upon the propaganda of evolution and the theory of evolution which has turned out to become an ideological campaign directed to religion. In the following pages, we will very shortly explain why the theory of evolution is an ideological dogma having no scientific validity.

The Development of the Theory of Evolution

The person who originally put forward the theory of evolution, essentially in the form that it is defended today, was an amateur English biologist by the name of Charles Robert Darwin. Darwin first published his ideas in a book entitled *The Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection* in 1859. In this book, Darwin explained the evolution of living beings with a thesis he called "natural selection".

According to him, all living beings had a common ancestor and that they evolved from one another by means of natural selection. Those that best adapted to the habitat transferred their traits to subsequent generations, and by accumulating over great epochs, these advantageous qualities transformed individuals into totally different species from their ancestors. The human being was thus the most developed product of the mechanism of natural selection. Darwin

thought that he discovered "the origin of species": The origin of one species was another species.

The Level of Science and Technology in Darwin's Time

Darwin's fanciful ideas seemed reasonable and attractive to many at the first look. His book was highly promoted by certain ideological and political circles. The theory became very popular. The main reason was that the level of knowledge of those days was not yet sufficient to reveal that Darwin's imaginary scenarios were false. When Darwin put forward his assumptions, the disciplines of genetics, microbiology, and biochemistry did not yet exist. If the laws of inheritance and the structure of chromosomes had been discovered, Darwin might never have attempted his claim of "the transition of acquired physical traits to succeeding generations" which he inherited from Lamarck.

Similarly, the world of science in those days had a very shallow and crude understanding of the structure and functions of the cell. If Darwin had the chance to view the cell with an electron microscope, he would have witnessed the great complexity and extraordinary structure in the organelles of the cell. He would have beheld with his own eyes that it would not be possible for such an intricate and complex system to occur through minor variations. If he had known about bio-mathematics, then he would have realised that not even a single protein molecule, let alone a whole cell, could not have come into existence by chance.

If the above mentioned sciences had been discovered before Darwin put forward his theory, Darwin might easily have recognised that his theory was totally unscientific and thus would not have attempted to advance such meaningless claims: the information determining species already exists in the genes and it is impossible for natural selection to produce new species by altering genes.

While the echoes of Darwin's book reverberated, an Austrian botanist by the name of Gregor Mendel discovered the laws of inheritance in 1865. Although little known before the end of the century, Mendel's discovery gained great importance in the early 1900s with the birth of the science of genetics. Some time later, the structures of genes and chromosomes were discovered. The discovery, in the 1950s, of the DNA molecule, which incorporates genetic information, threw the theory of evolution into a great crisis.

Besides all these scientific developments, no transitional forms, which were supposed to show the gradual evolution of living organisms from primitive to advanced species, have ever been found despite years of search. Even this alone proved that the event called evolution could never have taken place.

These developments ought to have resulted in Darwin's theory being banished to the dustbin of history. However, it was not, because certain circles insisted on revising, renewing, and elevating the theory to a scientific platform. These efforts gain meaning only if we realise that behind the theory lie ideological intentions rather than scientific concerns.

No Mark of Intermediate Forms

The theory of evolution argues that the evolution of a species into another species takes place gradually, step-by-step over millions of years. According to this view, transition from the

primitive living being to the complex one covers a long time span and progresses in stages. The natural logical inference drawn from such a claim is that monstrous living organisms called "transitional forms" should have lived during these periods of transformation.

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. Of there should have existed some reptile-birds, which acquired some bird traits in addition to the reptilian traits they already had. Since evolutionists allege that all living things evolved from each other step-by-step, the number and variety of these transitional forms should have been in the millions.

If such creatures had really lived, then we should see their remains everywhere. In fact, if this thesis is correct, the number of intermediate transitional forms should be even greater than the number of animal species alive today and their fossilised remains should be abundant all over the world. Evolutionists have been searching for fossils and digging for missing links since the middle of the 19th century all over the world. Despite their best efforts, no transitional forms have yet been uncovered for almost 150 years.

Darwin himself was quite aware of the absence of such transitional forms. It was his greatest hope that they would be found in the future. Despite his hopefulness, he saw that the biggest stumbling block to his theory was the missing transitional forms. This is why, in his book *The Origin of Species*, he wrote:

Why, if species have descended from other species by fine gradations, do we not everywhere see innumerable transitional forms? Why is not all nature in confusion, instead of the species being, as we see them, well defined?" But, as by this theory innumerable transitional forms must have existed, why do we not find them embedded in countless numbers in the crust of the earth?" But in the intermediate region, having intermediate conditions of life, why do we not now find closely-linking intermediate varieties? This difficulty for a long time quite confounded me.

Charles Darwin, *The Origin of Species*,
London: Senate Press, 1995, p. 134

Since Darwin, evolutionists have been searching for fossils and the result has been for them a crushing disappointment. Nowhere in the world ñ neither on land nor in the depths of the sea ñ has any intermediate transitional form between any two species ever been uncovered. All the fossils unearthed in excavations showed that contrary to the beliefs of evolutionists, life appeared on earth all of a sudden and fully-formed. Trying to prove their theory, evolutionists have instead uncovered the evidence of the fact of Creation by their own hands.

The problem bothered other evolutionists as well. A famous British paleontologist, Derek V. Ager, admits this embarrassing fact:

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

(Derek V. Ager, "The Nature of the Fossil Record", Proceedings of the British Geological Association,
Vol 87, 1976, p. 133)

The gaps in the fossil record cannot be explained away by the wishful thinking that not enough fossils have yet been unearthed and that these missing fossils will one day be found. Another evolutionist paleontologist, T. Neville George, explains the reason:

There is no need to apologise any longer for the poverty of the fossil record. In some ways, it has become almost unmanageably rich and discovery is outpacing integration" The fossil record nevertheless continues to be composed mainly of gaps.

T. Neville George, "Fossils n Evolutionary Perspective", Science Progress, Vol 48, January 1960, pp. 1, 3.

Life Emerged on Earth Suddenly

When terrestrial strata and the fossil record are examined, it is seen that living organisms appeared simultaneously. The oldest stratum of the earth in which fossils of living creatures have been found is that of the "Cambrian", which has an estimated age of 530-520 million years.

Living creatures that are found in the strata belonging to the Cambrian period emerged in the fossil record all of a sudden without any pre-existing ancestors. The fossils found in the Cambrian rocks belonged to snails, trilobites, sponges, earthworms, jellyfish, sea hedgehogs, and other complex invertebrates. The vast mosaic of living organisms, made up of such great numbers of complex creatures, emerged so suddenly that this miraculous event is referred to as the "Cambrian Explosion" in scientific literature.

Most of the organisms found in this stratum have highly advanced organs like eyes, or systems seen in organisms with a highly advanced organisation such as gills, circulatory systems, and so on. There is no sign in the fossil record to indicate that these organisms had any ancestors. Richard Monestarsky, the editor of *Earth Sciences* magazine, states about the sudden emergence of living species:

A half-billion years ago the remarkably complex forms of animals that we see today suddenly appeared. This moment, right at the start of Earth's Cambrian Period, some 550 million years ago, marks the evolutionary explosion that filled the seas with the world's first complex creatures. The large animal phyla of today were present already in the early Cambrian and they were as distinct from each other then as they are today.

Richard Monastersky, "Mysteries of the Orient",
Discover, April 1993, p. 40

As may be seen, the fossil record indicates that living things did not evolve from primitive to advanced forms as evolution asserts, but instead emerged all of a sudden and in a perfect state. Put shortly, living beings did not come into existence through evolution, they were created.

Life is Too Complex to Have Been Formed by Chance

In fact, the theory of evolution collapses way before the stage of the fossil record. This is because fossils are marks left behind by multi-celled complex living beings. Evolution, on the other hand, is desperate in the face of the question how the first cell, and more, how the first protein have come into existence, let alone explaining the origin of multi-celled complex living beings.

The theory of evolution holds that life started with a cell that formed by chance under primitive earth conditions. It is actually sufficient to have just some basic knowledge about the composition of the cell to understand how irrational it is to ascribe the existence of the cell —a structure which still maintains its mystery in many respects, even at a time when we have just set

foot in the 21st century— to natural phenomena and coincidences.

Far from being formed under primitive earth conditions, the cell, which with its organelles and mechanisms is extremely complex, cannot be synthesised in even the most sophisticated laboratories of our day. Even with the use of amino acids, the building blocks of the cell, it is not possible to produce so much as a single organelle of the cell, such as mitochondria or ribosome, much less a whole cell. The first cell claimed to have been produced by evolutionary coincidence is as much a figment of the imagination and a product of fantasy as the unicorn.

Proteins Challenge Coincidence

And it is not just the cell that cannot be produced: the formation, under natural conditions, of even a single protein of the thousands of complex protein molecules making up a cell is impossible.

Proteins are giant molecules consisting of amino acids arranged in a particular sequence in certain quantities and structures. These molecules constitute the building blocks of a living cell. The simplest is composed of 50 amino acids; but there are some proteins that are composed of thousands of amino acids. The absence, addition, or replacement of a single amino acid in the structure of a protein in living cells, each of which has a particular function, causes the protein to become a useless molecular heap. Incapable of demonstrating the "accidental formation" of amino acids, the theory of evolution founders on the point of the formation of proteins.

We can easily demonstrate, with simple probability calculations anybody can understand, that the functional structure of proteins can by no means come about by chance.

The amino acids of an average-sized protein molecule composed of 288 amino acids, which are made up of 12 different types, can be arranged in 10^{300} (1 followed by 300 zeros) different ways. Of all of these possible sequences, only "one" forms the desired protein molecule. The other amino-acid chains are either completely useless or else potentially harmful to living things.

In other words, the probability of the coincidental formation of only one protein molecule cited above is "1 in 10^{300} ". The probability of this "1" occurring out of an "astronomical" number consisting of 1 followed by 300 zeros is for all practical purposes zero; it is impossible. Furthermore, a protein molecule of 288 amino acids is rather a modest one compared with some giant protein molecules consisting of thousands of amino acids. When we apply similar probability calculations to these giant protein molecules, we see that even the word "impossible" becomes inadequate.

When we proceed one step further in the development scheme of life, we observe that one protein alone means nothing by itself. One of the smallest bacteria ever discovered, "Mycoplasma Hominis H 39", contains 600 types of proteins. In this case, we would have to repeat the probability calculations we have made above for one protein for each of these 600 different types of proteins. The result beggars even the concept of impossibility.

To Accept the Impossible

If the coincidental formation of even one of these proteins is impossible, it is billions of times more impossible for approximately one million of those proteins to come together by chance in

an organised fashion and make up a complete human cell. Moreover, a cell is not merely a collection of proteins. In addition to proteins, cells also include nucleic acids, carbohydrates, lipids, vitamins, and many other chemicals such as electrolytes, all of which are arranged harmoniously and with design in specific proportions, both in terms of structure and function. Each functions as a building block or component in various organelles.

As we have seen, with its sole "explanation" of coincidence theory, evolution is unable to explain the formation of even a single protein out of the millions in the cell, let alone explain the cell.

Perry Reeves, a professor of chemistry from the U.S.A., states:

When one examines the vast number of possible structures that could result from a simple random combination of amino acids in an evaporating primordial pond, it is mind-boggling to believe that life could have originated in this way. It is more plausible that a Great Builder with a master plan would be required for such a task.

J. D. Thomas, *Evolution and Faith*. Abilene, TX, ACU Press, 1988. P. 81-82

Prof. Dr. Ali Demirsoy, one of the foremost advocates of evolutionist thought in Turkey, in his book *Kalitim ve Evrim* (Inheritance and Evolution), discusses the probability of the accidental formation of Cytochrome-C, one of the essential enzymes for life:

The probability of providing the particular amino acid sequence of Cytochrome-C is as unlikely as the possibility of a monkey writing the history of humanity on a typewriter ñ taking it for granted that the monkey pushes the keys at random.

Ali Demirsoy, *Kalitim ve Evrim*, Ankara: Meteksan Yayinlari 1984, p. 61

Well, is it not against reason to accept this nonsensical probability? Yes, it indeed is, but evolutionist scientists still accept this impossible. Ali Demirsoy explains why:

The probability of the formation of a Cytochrome-C sequence is as likely as zero. That is, if life requires a certain sequence, it can be said that this has a probability likely to be realised once in the whole universe. Otherwise, some metaphysical powers beyond our definition should have acted in its formation. To accept the latter is not appropriate to the goals of science. We therefore have to look into the first hypothesis.

Ali Demirsoy, *Kalitim ve Evrim*, Ankara: Meteksan Yayinlari 1984, p. 61

The above lines may also be read as follows: "The probability of the formation of a Cytochrome-C sequence is zero. However, if we say that it did not form by coincidence, then we have to accept that we have been created which means our confirmation of Allah's being. This is not appropriate to our goals."

As seen, the theory of evolution collapses even at its first step, but some scientists who know that this theory is the only alternative to creation, who have adopted the refusal of creation as a purpose for themselves dogmatically embrace the theory"

The Complexity of the Cell

As what we have examined so far reveals, the problem of the sequence of amino acids and the formation of proteins are enough to invalidate the scenario of evolution. However, the problem does not end with amino acids and proteins. These are only a beginning. Essentially, the perfect

structure of cell presents a giant impasse for evolutionists. This is because the cell is not a heap made up of amino-acid structured proteins. It is a living entity with hundreds of developed systems, the secrets of which have still not been entirely disclosed to man. However, as we have just stated, let alone these systems, evolutionists are even unable to explain how the building blocks of the cell are formed.

The renowned British mathematician and astronomer Sir Fred Hoyle confesses this fact in one of his statements published in *Nature* magazine dated November 12, 1981.

The chance that higher life forms might have emerged in this way is comparable with the chance that a tornado sweeping through a junkyard might assemble a Boeing 747 from the materials therein.

"Hoyle on Evolution", *Nature*, Vol 294,
November 12, 1981, p. 105

DNA: The Book of Life

The examination of not the whole cell, but even the DNA, which is a part in its nucleus, we easily understand why evolution is a falsehood.

DNA was not known in Darwin's time. The theory of evolution has been unable to provide a coherent explanation for the existence of the molecules that are the basis of the cell. Furthermore, developments in the science of genetics and the discovery of the nucleic acids (DNA and RNA) have produced brand-new problems for the theory of evolution.

In 1955, the work of two scientists on DNA, James Watson and Francis Crick, launched a new era in biology. Many scientists directed their attention to the science of genetics. Today, after years of research, scientists have, largely, mapped the structure of DNA.

Here, we need to give some very basic information on the structure and function of DNA:

The molecule called DNA, which exists in the nucleus of each of the 100 trillion cells in our body, contains the complete construction plan of the human body. Information regarding all the characteristics of a person, from the physical appearance to the structure of the inner organs, is recorded in DNA by means of a special coding system. The information in DNA is coded within the sequence of four special bases that make up this molecule. These bases are specified as A, T, G, and C according to the initial letters of their names. All the structural differences among people depend on the variations in the sequence of these bases. There are approximately 3.5 billion nucleotides, that is, 3.5 billion letters in a DNA molecule.

The DNA data pertaining to a particular organ or protein is included in special components called "genes". For instance, information about the eye exists in a series of special genes, whereas information about the heart exists in quite another series of genes. The cell produces proteins by using the information in all of these genes. Amino acids that constitute the structure of the protein are defined by the sequential arrangement of three nucleotides in the DNA.

At this point, an important detail deserves attention. An error in the sequence of nucleotides making up a gene renders the gene completely useless. When we consider that there are 200 thousand genes in the human body, it becomes more evident how impossible it is for the millions of nucleotides making up these genes to form by accident in the right sequence. An evolutionist biologist, Frank Salisbury, comments on this impossibility by saying:

A medium protein might include about 300 amino acids. The DNA gene controlling this would have about 1,000 nucleotides in its chain. Since there are four kinds of nucleotides in a DNA chain, one consisting of 1,000 links could exist in 4^{1000} forms. Using a little algebra (logarithms), we can see that $4^{1000}=10^{600}$. Ten multiplied by itself 600 times gives the figure 1 followed by 600 zeros! This number is completely beyond our comprehension.

Frank B. Salisbury, "Doubts about the modern Synthetic Theory of Evolution", American Biology Teacher, September 1971, p. 336

The number 4^{1000} is equivalent to 10^{600} . We obtain this number by adding 600 zeros to 1. As 10 with 11 zeros indicates a trillion, a figure with 600 zeros is indeed a number that is difficult to grasp.

Evolutionist Prof. Ali Demirsoy was forced to make the following admission on this issue:

In fact, the probability of the random formation of a protein and a nucleic acid (DNA-RNA) is inconceivably small. The chances against the emergence of even a particular protein chain are astronomic.

Ali Demirsoy, Kalitim ve Evrim (Inheritance and Evolution), Ankara: Meteksan Publishing Co., 1984, p. 39)

The Theory of Evolution Has Basically Collapsed

As clearly seen from what has been told so far, the theory of evolution is a theory that fails at its very core. The reason is that evolutionists are unable to explain even the origin of a single protein that is necessary for life, or how a living cell is protected under primitive atmosphere conditions without being damaged. Neither the laws of probability nor the laws of physics and chemistry offer any chance for the fortuitous formation of a protein molecule.

It is very interesting that while not being unable to explain the formation of only one of the millions of proteins essential for a living cell, evolutionists were able to fabricate many false scenarios such as transition from water to land, from land to air, and from ape to man. By covering the question of "the formation of life", to which they actually have to find an answer, they have built a giant wreckage with such baseless fabrications. They wanted to erect a baseless building on this wreckage, yet despite their best efforts, they could not help suffering under the wreckage of this building.

Does it sound logical or reasonable when not even a single chance-formed protein can exist, that millions of such proteins combined in an order to produce the cell of a living thing; and that billions of cells managed to form and then came together by chance to produce living things; and that from them generated fish; and that those that passed to land turned into reptiles, birds, and that this is how all the millions of different species on earth were formed?

Even if it does not seem logical to you, evolutionists do believe this fable.

However, it is merely a belief or rather a faith because they do not have even a single piece of evidence to verify their story.

Today, it is not possible to form a living cell from inanimate matters in the high-tech laboratories, with the supervision of the most distinguished scientists, with the most expensive equipment. Let aside the cell, it is not possible to obtain even the proteins in the cell under a controlled

laboratory environment with the same productiveness and success as the living cell has. To put forward that these structures form by coincidence is surely an unreasonable claim. The fact that life is created is very plain.

A professor of applied mathematics and astronomy from University College (Cardiff, Wales), Chandra Wickramasinghe describes the reality he faced as a scientist who had been told throughout his life that life had emerged as a result of chance coincidences:

From my earliest training as a scientist, I was very strongly brainwashed to believe that science cannot be consistent with any kind of deliberate creation. That notion has had to be painfully shed. At the moment, I can't find any rational argument to knock down the view which argues for conversion to God. We used to have an open mind; now we realize that the only logical answer to life is creation-and not accidental random shuffling.

Chandra Wickramasinghe, Interview in
London Daily Express, August 14, 1981.

Darwinian Formula

The truth so being, let us now for once, examine what kind of a superstition the evolutionists have with an example so simple as to be understood even by children:

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

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

Briefly, unconscious atoms cannot form the cell by coming together. They cannot take a new decision and divide this cell into two, then take other decisions and create the professors who first invent the electron microscope and then examine their own cell structure under that

microscope. **Matter is an unconscious, lifeless heap, and it comes to life with Allah's superior creation.**

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

Blind Materialism

The coincidences of evolution place atoms to such a stand that atoms supposedly form the human eye and open up to a luminous, three dimensioned, five sensed world from inside this pitch dark heap. This is such a world that even the technology of the 21st century has not attained the image and sound quality of these atoms that came alive by chance. It is so much so that even if you bring the most developed sound techniques together, you will see that they have a far more primitive quality than the human ear. Even if you put together the most developed image techniques, you will not be able to achieve the image quality of the eye.

When it is clear that all these technological products are brought about not by "coincidences", but by the conscious designs of conscious engineers, it would be nonsense to defend that living mechanism far more complex than these have come about by coincidences. For every design proves a designer. Evolution does not want to see the great design in nature, because to accept the Creator, that is, Allah, Who has brought this design into existence conflicts with the prejudices and ideologies of evolutionists.

The basis of all these ideologies is the philosophy known as materialism. Materialist philosophy is the thought holding that matter is not created, that it has been existing since eternity and there is no reality but matter. It is extremely opposed to the belief in Allah and religion. This is not science but a philosophy. Evolutionists are dedicated not to science but to this materialist philosophy and they distort science to suit to this philosophy. A well known geneticist and an outspoken evolutionist, Richard C. Lewontin from Harvard University, confesses this concrete fact:

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.

*Richard Lewontin, "The Demon-Haunted World",
The New York Review of Books, January 9, 1997, p. 28*

The Biggest Obstacle to Evolution: Soul

There are many species in the world that resemble one another. For instance, there may be many living beings resembling a horse or a cat and many insects may look like one another. These similarities do not surprise anyone.

The superficial similarities between man and ape somehow attract too much attention. This interest sometimes goes so far as to make some people believe the false thesis of evolution. As a matter of fact, the superficial similarities between men and apes do signify nothing. The

rhinoceros beetle and the rhinoceros also share certain superficial resemblances but it would be ludicrous to seek to establish some kind of an evolutionary link between these two creatures, one being an insect and the other a mammal, on the grounds of that resemblance.

Other than superficial similarity, apes cannot be said to be closer to man than to other animals. Actually, if level of intelligence is considered, then the honeybee producing the geometrically miraculous structure of the honeycomb or the spider building up the engineering miracle of the spider web can be said to be closer to man. They are even superior in some aspects.

There is a very big difference between man and ape regardless of a mere outward resemblance. An ape is an animal and is no different from a horse or a dog considering its level of consciousness. Yet man is a conscious, strong-willed being that can think, talk, understand, decide, and judge. All of these features are the functions of the soul that man possesses. The soul is the most important difference that interposes a huge gap between man and other creatures. No physical similarity can close this gap between man and any other living being. In nature, the only living thing that has a soul is man.

Allah Creates According to His Will

Would it matter if the scenario proposed by evolutionists really had taken place? Not a bit. The reason is that each stage advanced by evolutionary theory and based on coincidence could only have occurred as a result of a miracle. Even if life did come about gradually through such a succession of stages, each progressive stage could only have been brought about by a conscious will. It is not just implausible that those stages could have occurred by chance, it is impossible.

If it is said that a protein molecule had been formed under the primordial atmospheric conditions, it has to be remembered that it has been already demonstrated by the laws of probability, biology, and chemistry that this could not have been by chance. But if it must be posited that it was produced, then there is no alternative but to admit that it owed its existence to the will of a Creator. The same logic applies to the entire hypothesis put forward by evolutionists. For instance, there is neither paleontological evidence nor a physical, chemical, biological, or logical justification proving that fish passed from water to land and formed the land animals, for such a transition. But if one must have it that fish clambered onto the land and turned into reptiles, the maker of that claim should also accept the existence of a Creator capable of making whatever He wills come into being with the mere word "be". Any other explanation for such a miracle is inherently self-contradictory and a violation of the principles of reason.

The reality is clear and evident. All life is the product of a perfect design and a superior creation. This in turn provides concrete evidence for the existence of a Creator, the Possessor of infinite power, knowledge, and intelligence.

That Creator is Allah, the Lord of the heavens and of the earth, and of all that is between them.

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

(Surah Al-Baqarah: 32)