

**THE END
TIMES
and
THE MAHDI**

HARUN YAHYA

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E-mail: info@khatoons.com

<http://www.khatoons.com>

Phone: (410) 531-9653
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By Harun Yahya

Abbreviations used:

(saas - sall-Allahu 'alyahi wa sallam): May Allah bless him and grant him peace (following a reference to the Prophet Muhammad)

(as - 'alayhi's-salam): Peace be upon him (following a reference to the prophets or angels)

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TO THE READER

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

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

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

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

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

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

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

disbelief and to disseminate the Qur'an's moral values. The success and impact of this service are manifested in the readers' conviction.

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

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

INTRODUCTION

The End Times (or the Last Days) may not be a familiar concept to many people. Therefore, we first give a brief explanation of it. The End Times means 'the last era.' According to Islamic literature, it is a period of time that is close to Doomsday.

The signs in the Qur'an and the extensive references to the End Times provided by the Hadith literature brings us to a very important conclusion. Verses and hadiths indicate that there are two phases of the End Times. The first phase is a period when all people will suffer material and spiritual problems. Following this, Earth will enter upon a period of salvation called the '**Golden Age,**' which is characterized by bounty and blessings due to the prevalence of true religion. With the end of the Golden Age, there will be a rapid social collapse and people will begin to wait for Doomsday.

In this book, we examine the End Times in the light of verses and hadiths. It is clear that the signs in question have now started to appear one after another, just as described in these references. The advent of these signs heralded fourteen centuries ago are great occurrences that increase believers' faith in and loyalty to Allah. It is surely not a coincidence that, in such a short period of time, all of these signs appeared one after another. These signs are good news to Allah's servants.

The account of events related in the following pages are prepared according to the guidance of the verse,

Say: 'Praise be to Allah. He will show you His Signs, and you will recognize them. Your Lord is not unaware of what you do'' (Surat an-Naml: 93).

Another issue we need to stress here is that Allah knows the best of everything. As is in every other subject, we have no knowledge other than that about which He informs us.

SIGNS OF THE LAST DAY IN THE QUR'AN

The signs of the Last Day in the Qur'an

What are they awaiting but for the Hour to come upon them suddenly? Its Signs have already come. What good will their Reminder be to them when it does arrive? (Surah Muhammad: 18)

From this verse we learn that the Qur'an describes signs that announce the coming of the Last Day. In order to understand the signs of this 'great announcement' we must reflect upon these verses. Otherwise, as the verse indicates, our thinking will be of no use when the Last Day is suddenly upon us.

The Hour is near

Allah reveals in the Qur'an that there can be no doubt that the Last Day is near.

And the Hour is coming without any doubt ... (Surat al-Hajj: 7)

We did not create the heavens and earth and everything between them, except with truth. The Hour is certainly coming. (Surat al-Hijr: 85)

There may be some who think that the message of the Qur'an concerning the Last Day was revealed more than 1400 years ago and that this is a long time compared to the length of a human life. But here, it is a question of the end of the world, the sun and the stars, in short, of the universe. When we consider that the universe is billions of years old, fourteen centuries is a very short period of time.

The supremacy of the morality of Islam in the world

Allah announces that those who serve Him purely, without associating any of His creatures as divinities besides Him, and do good works to win His favor, will be endowed with power and authority.

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

In a number of verses, it also says that it is a divine law that those servants who are faithful and live the true religion in their hearts will be made the inheritors of the world:

We wrote down in the Psalms, after the Reminder came: 'It is My righteous servants who will inherit the earth.' (Surat al-Anbiya': 105)

We will leave you the land to live in after them. That is the reward of those who fear My station and fear My threat. (Surah Ibrahim: 14)

There is no doubt that Allah will keep His promises. The high morality that will conquer perverse philosophies, distorted ideologies and false religious understanding is Islamic morality. The disbelievers and pagans cannot prevent this from happening.

The splitting of the moon

The 54th Surah of the Qur'an is called 'Surat al-Qamar.' In English *qamar* means moon. In several instances, this Surah tells about the destruction that befell the people of Nuh, Ad, Thamud, Lut and Pharaoh, because they rejected the warnings of the prophets. At the same time, there is a very important message stated in the first verse, concerning the Last Day.

The Hour has drawn near and the moon has split. (Surat al-Qamar: 1)

The word 'split' used in this verse is the Arabic *shaqqa*, which in Arabic it has various meanings. In some commentaries on the Qur'an, the meaning 'split' is preferred. But *shaqqa* in Arabic can also mean 'ploughing' or 'digging' the earth.

As an example of the first usage, we can refer to the 26th verse of Surat al-Abasa:

We pour down plentiful water, then split the earth into furrows. Then We make grain grow in it, and grapes and herbs and olives and dates. (Surah 'Abasa: 25-29)

It can be clearly seen that the meaning of *shaqqa* here is not to 'split.' It means to plough the earth in order to grow various plants.

If we went back to the year 1969, we would see one of the great wonders of the Qur'an. The experiments carried out on the surface of the moon on July 20, 1969, may be hinting at the fulfillment of news given 1,400 years ago in Surat al-Qamar. On that date, American astronauts set foot on the moon. Digging at the lunar soil they carried out scientific experiments and collected samples of stones and soil. It is surely very interesting that these developments are in complete agreement with the statements in the verse.

We must make this clear, however: The phenomenon of the splitting of the moon is, of course, one of the miracles vouchsafed by Allah to our Prophet (saas). This miracle is revealed as follows in one hadith:

The people of Mecca asked Allah's Apostle to show them a miracle. So he showed them the moon split in two halves between which they saw the Hiram' mountain. (Bukhari)

The miracle described above is the phenomenon of splitting of the moon revealed in the verse. However, since the Qur'an is a book which addresses all times it is also possible that it is referring to the landing on the moon in our own age. (Allah surely knows best)

The signs described by the Prophet (saas) are occurring one after the other

In the hadiths that have come down to us from the Prophet (saas), news is given concerning the End Times and the Golden Age of Islam. When we compare these signs with the events that are taking place in our time, we can see many indications that we are living through the End Times and which also herald the arrival of the Golden Age of Islam.

The hadiths used in the coming sections of this book contain such information given by the Prophet (saas) in this regard.

At this point, there may arise some doubt in the reader in regards to the truth and authenticity of these hadiths about the end. There is a method to distinguish those that are true from those that are false. As we know, hadiths about the Doomsday relate to events that are to take place in the future. For this reason, when a hadith comes true in the course of time, all doubt as to the source of the words is removed.

Several Islamic scholars who conducted research on the subject of the End Times and of the signs of the Last Day have used this criterion. An expert on the subject, Bediuzzaman Said Nursi, said that the fact that the hadiths concerning the End Times correspond to events observed in our day shows the truth of the hadiths.¹

Some of the signs related in the hadiths were observable in some part of the world in any period during the 1400 year history of Islam, but that would not have proven that that period was the the End Times. For a certain period to be called the End Times, all the signs of the Last Day must be observed to be occurrence in that same period. This is expressed in a hadith:

Signs following one another like the pieces of a necklace falling one after the other when its string is cut. (Tirmidhi)

In the hadiths, the beginning of the End Times is described as when discord grows, and war and conflict are on the increase, when there is chaos and moral degeneration rears its head and people turn away from the morality of religion. At the time in question, natural disasters will occur all over the world, poverty will reach unseen levels, there will be a large increase in the crime rate, and murder and brutality everywhere. Yet this will be only the first stage. During the second phase, Allah will rescue mankind from this chaos and replace it with a blessed existence full of plenty, peace and security.

Wars and anarchy

Allah's Messenger (saas) said: 'The Harj (will increase).' They asked, 'What is the Harj?' He replied, '(It is) killing (murdering), (it is) murdering (killing).' (Bukhari)

The Hour will come when violence, bloodshed, and anarchy become common. (Al-Muttaqi al-Hindi, Muntakhab Kanzul Ummaal)

The world will not come to an end until a day would come to the people on which there will be general massacre and bloodshed. (Muslim)

If we look at the last fourteen centuries, we see that wars were regional before the twentieth century. However, wars that affected everyone in the world, political systems, entire economies and social structures, have happened only comparatively recently, in the two world wars. In World War I, more than 20 million died; in World War II, the toll was more than 50 million. At the same time, World War II is acknowledged to have been the bloodiest, the greatest and the most destructive war in history.

The conflicts that occurred after World War II—the Cold War, the Korean War, the Vietnam War, the Arab-Israeli conflict, and the Gulf War—are among the most critical events of our time. Likewise, regional wars, conflicts and civil wars, have caused destruction in many parts of the world. In places such as Bosnia, Palestine, Chechnya, Afghanistan, Kashmir and many others, problems continue to afflict humanity.

Another instance of a type of 'chaos' that concerns human beings as much as war is organized international terror. As authorities on the subject also agree, acts of terror have multiplied in the latter half of the twentieth century.² Indeed, it is even possible to say that terror is a phenomenon particular to the twentieth century.² Organizations devoted to racism, communism and similar ideologies, or with nationalistic aims, have engaged in acts of brutality with the help of the developing technology. Within the world's recent history, acts of terror have, time and again, fomented chaos. Much blood has been shed and countless innocent people have been maimed or killed.

The destruction of great cities: wars and disasters

Great cities will be ruined and it will be as if they had not existed the day before. (Al-Muttaqi al-Hindi, Al-Burhan fi Alamat al-Mahdi Akhir al-Zaman, p. 38)

The ruin of great cities spoken of in this hadith brings to mind the destruction that now arises from war and various natural disasters. Recently developed nuclear weapons, aircraft, bombs, missiles, and other modern weapons, have caused untold destruction. These weapons with their enormous destructive power have brought about a degree of destruction never before seen. Indeed, the great cities targeted are most affected by this destruction. The incomparable destruction of the Second World War is an example of this. With the use of the atom bomb in world's greatest war, Hiroshima and Nagasaki were completely destroyed. As a result of heavy bombing, European capitals and other important cities suffered a great amount of damage.

In the last few years, hurricanes, storms, typhoons and other such disasters have had a destructive effect on the American continent as well as in several other places in the world. In addition, floods have caused mudslides, which have engulfed certain centers of population. Furthermore, earthquakes, volcanoes and tidal waves have also caused great devastation. Therefore, all this destruction brought on upon the great cities by these calamities is an important sign in each case.

Earthquakes

The Hour (Last Day) will not be established until ... earthquakes will be very frequent. (Bukhari)

There are two great hadiths before the Day of Judgment... and then years of earthquakes. (Narrated by Umm Salama r.a.)

In the last few years, major earthquakes have occurred repeatedly and are among the foremost fears of people around the world. If we look at the data collected by the American National Earthquake Information Center for 1999, we find that 20,832 earthquakes happened somewhere in the world. As a result, an estimated 22,711 persons lost their lives.³

When the figures of the past are examined, we see that the number of earthquakes was very few. According to US Geological Survey (USGS) reports, the number of earthquakes with a magnitude of 5.0 or greater that took place during the four hundred years between 1955 and 1975 was only 110. According to the data of the same

institution, within only the 23 years between 1980 and 2003, the number of earthquakes with a magnitude of 6.5 or more was 1685.4

Poverty

The poor will grow in number. (Amal Al-Din Al-Qazwini, Mufid Al-'ulum Wa-mubid Al-humum)

Gains will be shared out only among the rich, with no benefit to the poor. (Tirmidhi)

Obviously, that period indicated by the Prophet (saas) describes conditions in our day. If we look at past centuries, we see that the difficulties and anxiety brought about by drought, war and other calamities were temporary and limited to a particular region. However, today, the poverty and difficulty of earning a living are permanent and endemic.

In the world today, poverty has reached grave proportions. The last report by UNICEF stated that one in four people of the world's population lives in 'unimaginable suffering and want.'⁵ 1.3 billion of the world's people survive on less than \$1 a day. Three billion people in the world today struggle to survive on \$2 a day.⁶ Approximately 1.3 billion people lack safe water. 2.6 billion people are without access to adequate sanitation.⁷

The collapse of moral values

The Hour will come when adultery becomes widespread. (Al-Haythami, Kitab al-Fitan)

The Last Hour will not be established until they (wicked people) commit adultery on the roads (public ways). (Ibn Hibban and Bazzar)

Men will imitate women; and Women will imitate men. (Allama Jalaluddin Suyuti, Durre-Mansoor)

People will indulge in homosexuality and lesbianism. (Al-Muttaqi al-Hindi, Muntakhab Kanzul Ummaal)

There will be prevalence of open illegal intercourse. (Bukhari)

The Hour (Last Day) will not be established until murders will increase. (Bukhari)

In our day, there is a great danger that threatens the world's social fabric. In the same way as a virus kills the human body, this danger brings about subtle social collapse. This danger is the degradation of those moral values that help to maintain a healthy society. Homosexuality, prostitution, pre-marital and extra-marital sex, sexual misdemeanors, pornography, sexual harassment and the increase of sex-related illnesses, are a number of important indications of the collapse of moral values.

Hadiths on the rejection of the true religion and the moral values of the Qur'an

Near the establishment of the Hour there will be days during which (religious) knowledge will be taken away (vanish) and general ignorance will spread... (Bukhari)

There will be a brief dark trial which will not fail to afflict everyone of this community and then when people think it is finished it will start all over again. During it a man may be a believer in the morning and an unbeliever in the evening. (Abu Dawud)

There will come a time upon the Ummat when people will recite the Qur'an, but it will not go further than their throats, (into their hearts). (Bukhari)

Before the Last Hour there will be commotions like pieces of a dark night in which a man will be a believer in the morning and an infidel in the evening, or a believer in the evening and infidel in the morning. (Abu Dawud)

A time will come when a man will not care about how he gets things, whether lawful or unlawful. (Bukhari)

There will appear in latter times a people who will gain this world with the help of religion. (Tirmidhi)

The Last Hour will not be established until there will remain those people who will neither be aware of the virtues and never prevent the vices. (Ahmad)

The Last Hour will not come before Allah takes His religion away from the people of the earth, leaving no one in it but heathens who do not recognize right or object to wrong. (Reported by Abdullah ibn 'Amr ibn al-'As)

The emergence of false prophets

The Last Hour will not come before there come forth thirty Dajjals (imposters), each presenting himself as an apostle of Allah. (Abu Dawud)

Experts have noted that there has been a proliferation of so-called messiahs that began to appear in the 1970's and which has since increased substantially. According to these experts, there are two basic reasons for this increase. First is the collapse of communism, and the other is the possibilities afforded by Internet technology.⁸

The Qur'an tells of 'Isa's return to earth

Allah did not allow the disbelievers to kill 'Isa (as), but took him up into His own presence, and announced the good news to humanity that he will return to Earth in the End Times. The Qur'an provides information about 'Isa (as)'s return in several instances:

- One verse says that the disbelievers who set a trap to kill 'Isa (as) did not succeed;

(And We cursed them) for their saying, 'We killed the Messiah, 'Isa son of Maryam, Messenger of Allah.' They did not kill him and they did not crucify him but it was made to seem so to them. Those who argue about him are in doubt about it. They have no real knowledge of it, just conjecture. But they certainly did not kill him. (Surat an-Nisa': 157)

- Another verse says that 'Isa (as) did not die, but was taken from the human sphere into the presence of Allah.

Allah raised him up to Himself. Allah is Almighty, All-Wise. (Surat an-Nisa': 158)

- In the 55th verse of Surah Al 'Imran, we learn that Allah will place the people who follow 'Isa (as) above those who disbelieve until the Day of Rising. It is an historical fact that, 2000 years ago, 'Isa (as)'s disciples had no political power. Christians who lived between that period and our own have believed a number of false doctrines, the chief of which is the doctrine of the Trinity. Therefore, as is evident, they will not be able to be referred to as followers of 'Isa (as), because, as it says in several places in the Qur'an, those who believe in the Trinity have slipped into denial. In such a case, in the time before the Hour, the true followers of 'Isa (as) will overcome the deniers and become the manifestation of the divine promise contained in Surah Al 'Imran. Surely, this blessed group will be made known when 'Isa (as) returns again to earth.

- Again, the Qur'an states that all the People of the Book will believe in 'Isa (as) before he dies.

There is not one of the People of the Book who will not believe in him ('Isa) before he dies; and on the Day of Rising he will be a witness against them. (Surat an-Nisa': 159)

We learn clearly from this verse that there are still three unfilled promises concerning 'Isa (as). First, like every other human being, the Prophet 'Isa (as) will die. Second, all the People of the Book will see him in bodily form and will obey him while he is alive. There is no doubt that these two predictions will be fulfilled when 'Isa (as) comes again before the Last Day. The third prediction about 'Isa (as)'s bearing witness against the People of the Book will be fulfilled on the Last Day.

- Another verse in Surah Maryam discusses the death of 'Isa (as).

Peace be upon me the day I was born, and the day I die and the day I am raised up again alive. (Surah Maryam: 33)

When we compare this verse with the 55th verse of Surah Al 'Imran, we can recognize a very important fact. The verse in Surah Al 'Imran speaks about 'Isa (as)'s being raised to the presence of Allah. In this verse, no information is given as to whether 'Isa (as) died or not. But in the 33rd verse of Surah Maryam, 'Isa (as)'s death is referred to. This second death is possible only if 'Isa (as) came to earth again and died after living here for some time. (Allah surely knows best)

- Another verse that alludes to 'Isa (as)'s return to earth reads:

He will teach him ('Isa) the Book and Wisdom, and the Torah and the Gospel. (Surah Al 'Imran: 48)

To understand the reference to the 'Book' mentioned in this verse, we must look at other verses in the Qur'an that are relevant to this subject: if the Book is stated in one verse together with the Torah and the Gospel, then it must mean the Qur'an. The third verse of Surah Al 'Imran serves as such an example:

Allah, there is no god but Him, the Living, the Self-Sustaining. He has sent down the Book to you with truth, confirming what has there before it. And He sent down the Torah and the Gospel, previously, as guidance for mankind, and He has sent down the Furqan (the criterion of judgment between right and wrong). (Surah Al 'Imran: 2-4)

- In that case, the book referred to in verse 48, that 'Isa (as) is to learn, can only be the Qur'an. We know that 'Isa (as) knew the Torah and the Gospel during his lifetime, that is, approximately 2000 years ago. Clearly, it will be the Qur'an that he will learn when he comes to earth again.

- What verse 59 of Surah Al 'Imran offers is very interesting: **'The likeness of 'Isa in Allah's sight is the same as Adam...'** In this verse we can see there must be a number of similarities between the two prophets. As we

know, both Adam (as) and 'Isa (as) had no father, but we may draw a further similarity from the above verse, between Adam's (as) descending to earth from Paradise and 'Isa (as)'s descent from Allah's presence in the End Times.

- The Qur'an says this about 'Isa (as):

He ('Isa) is a Sign of the Hour. Have no doubt about it. But follow me. This is a straight path. (Surat az-Zukhruf: 61)

We know that 'Isa (as) lived six centuries before the Qur'an was revealed. Therefore, this verse must refer, not to his first life, but to his coming again during the End Times. Both the Christian and the Islamic world are eagerly awaiting 'Isa (as)'s second coming. This blessed guest's honored presence on the earth will be the important sign of the Last Day.

- Further evidence of the second coming of 'Isa (as) can be found in the use of the word *wakahlan* in Surah Maida, 110 and Surah Al 'Imran 46. In these verses, we are revealed these commands:

Remember when Allah said, 'Isa, son of Maryam, remember My blessing to you and to your mother when I reinforced you with the Purest Spirit so that you could speak to people in the cradle and when you were fully grown (*wakahlan*) ...' (Surat al-Ma'ida: 110)

He will speak to people in the cradle, and also when fully grown (*wakahlan*), and will be one of the righteous. (Surah Al 'Imran: 46)

This word occurs only in these two verses and only in reference to 'Isa (as). The word is used to describe 'Isa (as)'s more mature age. The word refers to the age between 30 and 50, that is, to the end of youth and the beginning of old age. Islamic scholars are agreed in translating this word to refer to a period after the age of 35.

Islamic scholars rely on a tradition related by Ibn Abbas to the effect that 'Isa (as) was raised to the presence of Allah when he was young, that is, at the beginning of his 30's, and that when he comes to earth again, he will have 40 years left to live. 'Isa (as) will progress into his old age after he has returned to earth, so this verse may be said to be a proof of 'Isa (as)'s second coming to earth.⁹

The Prophet (saas) told of 'Isa's second coming

There are a few hadiths from the Prophet (saas) that refer to the second coming of 'Isa (as). The Islamic scholar Shawkani stated that there are 29 hadiths about 'Isa (as)'s return, and that the information contained in these hadiths could not have been falsified. (*Ibn Majah*)

By Him in Whose Hands my soul is, son of Maryam, 'Isa, will shortly descend amongst you people (Muslims) as a just ruler. (Bukhari)

The Hour will not be established until the son of Maryam (i.e. 'Isa) descends amongst as a just ruler. (Bukhari)

The Prophet (saas) tells what 'Isa (as) will do when he returns:

'Isa (as), son of Maryam (as), will descend, rule for 40 years with the book of Allah and my sunnah, and die. (Al-Muttaqi al-Hindi, Al-Burhan fi Alamat al-Mahdi Akhir al-Zaman)

Isa (as), son of Maryam (as), will be a just judge and just ruler (in my community), break and crush the cross and kill the pig ... The earth will be so filled of peace as a vessel is filled with water. The entire world shall recite and follow one and the same Word and none shall be worshipped except Allah. (Ibn Majah)

THE END TIMES AND THE EMERGENCE OF THE MAHDI

Some important explanations about the End Times are as follows: During the terrible chaos of the final times, Allah will use a servant having superior morality known as the Mahdi (the guide to the truth), to invite humanity back to the right path. The Mahdi's first task will be to wage a war of ideas within the Islamic world and to turn those Muslims who have moved away from Islam's true essence back to true belief and morality. At this point, the Mahdi has three basic tasks:

1. Tearing down all philosophical systems that deny Allah's Existence and support atheism.
2. Fighting superstition by freeing Islam from the yoke of those hypocritical individuals who have corrupted it, and then revealing and implementing true Islamic morality based on the rules of the Qur'an.
3. Strengthening the entire Islamic world, both politically and socially, and then bringing about peace, security and well-being in addition to solving societal problems.

According to many hadiths, Prophet 'Isa (as) will return to Earth at the same time, and will call upon all Christians and Jews, in particular, to abandon their current superstitions and to live by the Qur'an. As the Christians harken to him, the Islamic and Christian worlds will come together in one faith, and the world will experience that period of great peace, security, happiness, and well-being known as the Golden Age.

SIGNS OF THE MAHDI'S EMERGENCE

Pervasive corruption

While a corrupt environment enables believers with strong faith to increase their faith and patience, and their rewards in the Hereafter, it leads those with weak and superficial faith to lose their faith or weaken it further. The Mahdi will come when the existing corrupt environment is extremely intense and severe.

The Mahdi, one of my children, comes into being, by the blessing of Allah, upon the approach of the Day of Judgment and the weakening of the hearts of the faithful because of death, hunger, and the disappearance of the sunnah, and the emergence of innovations and the loss of means by which to enjoin the right and forbidding the wrong. His justice and prosperity will ease the hearts of the faithful, and friendship and love will settle between the non-Arab and Arab nations. (Al-Muttaqi al-Hindi, Al-Burhan fi 'Alamat al-Mahdi Akhir al-Zaman, p. 66)

Disorder, corruption, and fear will emerge in the West... Corruption will proliferate. (Mukhtasar Tazkirah Qurtubi)

A kind of corruption will surface, from which no party will be able to protect itself, and spread immediately to every direction. This situation will persist until one comes and says: 'O people, from now on your leader is the Mahdi.' (Ibn Hajar Haytahami, Al-Qawl al-Mukhtasar fi'alamat al-Mahdi al-Muntazar, p. 23)

The hadiths speak of a corruption that will touch everybody and spread quickly. In other words, a certain type of corruption that is known to everybody and opposes religion and Allah will target the people's faith. Today, materialist philosophy is the largest and most comprehensive trend designed to deny Allah's Existence and

creation. Underlying this philosophy is the 'theory of evolution,' which provides it with a self-proclaimed 'scientific' basis. Even though it is not based on any scientific and logical evidence, certain materialist circles throughout the world continue to work for its acceptance by using methods associated with strong propaganda, deceit, and even fraud.

Today, as this theory has penetrated almost every household by means of both the press and television, almost everyone in the Muslim world and everywhere else has heard of it. This theory is first presented as fact when people are children by means of countless lies and deceit. As they grow older, they continue to be misled by such funny nonsense that they, and humanity as a whole, came into being merely as a result of coincidences and that they descended from monkeys. Youths of all age are brainwashed at all stages of their education by evolutionist lies.

There is a noteworthy point here. As our Prophet (saas) noted in one of his hadiths, corruption's global pervasiveness and rapid spread can materialize only when suitable technological means are available, as they are today (e.g., the press, publications, broadcasting, the Internet, and satellite communication). As the relevant technology did not exist in the past, corruption could not spread throughout the world. As a result, no other worldwide corruption that had declared war against Allah's Existence, creation, and religion was seen in the past. All of these are among the important signs that the Mahdi's advent coincides with the present time.

Religious prohibitions gaining acceptance

The prevailing lifestyle of our own time, which has spread so widely in the last several decades and makes no distinction between what religion prohibits and allows, while tolerating all kinds of debauchery, reflects the environment depicted in the hadiths. Several hadiths describe this dark environment, the harbinger of the Mahdi's emergence, as follows:

The Mahdi will not emerge unless disbelief invades everywhere and is openly committed in the public. What rules in such times is the invasion by disbelief... That is its power. (Mektubat-i Rabbani, 2:259)

The Mahdi will emerge following the instance of such vile corruption (fitnah) whereby all of the prohibitions are regarded as lawful. (Ibn Hajar al-Haythami, Al-Qawl al-Mukhtasar fi `Alamat al-Mahdi al-Muntazar, p. 23)

Iran-Iraq War

The following hadith reveals an important war that will take place in the End Times:

There will be tumult in Shawwal (the tenth Islamic month), talks of war in Dhul-Qa`dah (the eleventh Islamic month), and the outbreak of war in Dhul-Hijjah (the twelfth month). (Muhammad ibn `Abd al-Rasul Barzanji, Al-Isha`ah li-ashrat al-sa`ah, p. 166)

The three months referred to in this hadith coincide with the months during which the Iran-Iraq war developed. The first uprising against the Shah took place on 5 Shawwal 1398 (8 September 1976), as indicated by the hadith, and a full-blown war broke out between Iran and Iraq in Dhu'l-Hijjah 1400 (October 1980).

Another hadith describes the details of this war as follows:

A nation/tribe will come from the Farsi direction, saying: 'You Arabs! You have been too zealous! If you don't give them their due rights, nobody will have an alliance with you... It must be given to them one day and to you the following day, and mutual promises must be kept...' They will be going up Mutekh; Muslims will be

coming down to the plain... Mushrikun (idolaters) will be standing over there on the bank of a black river (Rakabeh) on the other side. There will be a war between them. Allah will deprive both armies of a victory... (Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Rasul Barzanji, Al-Isha'ah li-ashrat al-sa'ah, p. 179)

- Those coming from the Farsi direction: those coming from the Iranian side
- Farsi: Iran, Iranian
- Coming down to the plain: Plain, Iranian Plain
- Mutekh: Name of a mountain in the region
- Rakabeh: Region where the oil wells are concentrated

This hadith may draw attention to the outbreak of a racial dispute that would cause both sides to come down to the plain (Iranian Plain) and wage war. Further, as noted by the hadith, the Iran-Iraq war lasted for 8 years and, despite the many thousands of casualties, neither side could claim victory or a decisive superiority.

The Occupation of Afghanistan

Pity poor Taliqan (a region in Afghanistan) that at that place are treasures of Allah, but these are not of gold and silver. (Al-Muttaqi al-Hindi, Al-Burhan fi Alamat al-Mahdi Akhir al-zaman, p. 59)

There is an indication that Afghanistan will be occupied during the Last Days. The Russian invasion of Afghanistan took place in 1979 (1400, according to the Islamic calendar).

In addition, this hadith draws attention to Afghanistan's material riches. Today, large oil deposits, iron basins, and coal mines that have not been commercially exploited yet have been detected there.

Stopping the flow of the Euphrates river

Stopping and interrupting the flow of the Euphrates river is one sign of the Mahdi's emergence.

Soon the river Euphrates will disclose the treasure (the mountain) of gold, so whoever will be present at that time should not take anything of it. (Bukhari)

It (the Euphrates) will uncover a mountain of gold (under it). (Abu Dawud)

Many respected books of hadith mention both of these events. Al-Suyuti mentions this hadith as 'the stopping of water.' Indeed, the Keban Dam has stopped the flow of the River Euphrates.

The surrounding land has become as valuable as gold for various reasons, such as electricity production and higher soil fertility through the irrigation and transport facilities that Keban dam has made possible.

The Keban dam and the others constructed over the River Euphrates resemble a concrete mountain, and wealth as valuable as gold comes out of it. Therefore, dam takes on the properties of 'the golden mountain.' (Allah knows best).

Eclipse of the moon and sun in Ramadan

There are two signs for the Mahdi... The first one is the lunar eclipse in the first night of Ramadan, and the second is the solar eclipse in the middle of this month. (Ibn Hajar al-Haythami, Al-Qawl al-Mukhtasar fi `Alamat al-Mahdi al-Muntazar, p. 47)

There will be two solar eclipses in Ramadan before the Mahdi's advent. (Mukhtasar Tazkirah Qurtubi)

... The solar eclipse in the middle of Ramadan, and the lunar eclipse at the end... (Al-Muttaqi al-Hindi, Al-Burhan fi Alamat al-Mahdi Akhir al-zaman, p. 37)

It has reached me that before the Mahdi emerges the moon will be eclipsed twice in Ramadan. (Related by Abu Nu'aym in al-Fitan)

The most striking point here is that two solar as well as two lunar eclipses take place within one month (Ramadan).

If these incidents are examined carefully, some differences become apparent. The best thing to do in such a situation is to locate the areas of agreement. These are the following: There will be solar and lunar eclipses during Ramadan, these will be spaced about 14-15 days apart, and the eclipses will be repeated twice.

In line with these calculations, there was a lunar eclipse in 1981 (Hijri 1401) on the 15th day of Ramadan, and a solar eclipse on the 29th day of the month. There was a "second" lunar eclipse in 1982 (Hijri 1402) on the 14th day of Ramadan, and a solar eclipse on the 28th day of the month.

It is also particularly significant that in that particular instance, there was a full lunar eclipse in the middle of Ramadan, a most striking prophecy.

The occurrence of these incidents during the same period coinciding with the signs of the Mahdi's emergence, and their miraculous recurrence at the onset of the fourteenth Islamic century for two consecutive years (1401-02) makes it possible for these events to be the signs foretold by the hadiths.

Moreover, an astoundingly similar eclipse occurred in the years 2002 and 2003.

ACTUAL ECLIPSE DATE

Lunar Eclipse November 20, 2002

In Hijri 1423 (in the middle of Ramadan)

15 days later

Solar Eclipse December 4, 2002

In Hijri 1423 (at the end of Ramadan)

Lunar Eclipse November 9, 2003

In Hijri 1424 (in the middle of Ramadan)

15 days later

Solar Eclipse November 23, 2003

In Hijri 1424 (at the end of Ramadan)

The rise of a comet

A star with a luminous tail will rise from the East before the Mahdi emerges. (Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Rasul Barzanji, Al-Isha'ah li-ashrat al-sa'ah, p. 200)

A comet will be appearing in the East, giving out illumination before he arrives. (Ibn Hajar al-Haythami, Al-Qawl al-Mukhtasar fi 'Alamat al-Mahdi al-Muntazar, p. 53)

The rise of that star will occur after the eclipse of the Sun and the Moon. (Al-Muttaqi al-Hindi, Al-Burhan fi Alamat al-Mahdi Akhir al-zaman, p. 32)

As referred to by the hadiths,

In 1986 (Hijri 1406), Halley's comet passed by Earth. The comet is a bright, shining star that travels from East to West. This happened after the lunar and solar eclipses of 1981 and 1982 (Hijri 1401-1402).

The concurrence of this star's rise with other signs of the Mahdi's emergence indicates that Halley's comet is the star pointed to in the hadith.

Storming the Ka`ba and the subsequent bloodshed

People will perform hajj together and gather without an Imam. The Hajjis will be looted and there will be a battle at Mina in which many will be slain and blood will flow until it runs over the Jamra al-'Aqaba. (Jamra: a stone pillar, which represents Satan, that is stoned during the pilgrimage.) (Narrated by 'Amr ibn Shu'ayb, al-Hakim and Nu'aym ibn Hammad)

People make pilgrimage without an imam leading them. Big wars break out when they come down to Mina, and they are entwined just the way dogs entwine, and tribes attack on each other. This strife is so widespread that legs are buried in lakes of blood. (Al-Muttaqi al-Hindi, Al-Burhan fi Alamat al-Mahdi Akhir al-zaman, p. 35)

The phrase 'the year in which he will emerge' draws attention to a massacre that will occur on the date of the Mahdi's emergence. In 1979, a massacre very like this one occurred during the Ka'ba raid, which took place during the pilgrimage month. It is very interesting that this raid occurred at the very beginning of the period during which the signs of Mahdi's advent appeared, that is, the first day of the Islamic year 1400 (21 November 1979).

The hadiths also mention bloodshed and massacres. The killing of 30 people during the clashes between Saudi soldiers and attacking militants during the raid confirms the rest of this hadith.

Seven years later, an even bloodier incident happened during the pilgrimage. In this incident, 402 demonstrating pilgrims were killed, and vast amounts of blood was shed. Both the Saudi soldiers and the Iranian pilgrims committed great sins, for they killed one another. These bloody incidents have great parallels to the environment described in the hadith.

There come the cries of war in (the month of) Shawwal with the outbreak of war, massacre, and carnage in (the month of) Dhu'l-Hijja. The pilgrims are plundered in this month, the streets cannot be crossed because of the blood shed, and religious prohibitions are violated. Big sins are committed near the Magnificent House (the Ka`ba). (Al-Muttaqi al-Hindi, Al-Burhan fi Alamat al-Mahdi Akhir al-zaman, p. 37)

This hadith draws attention to the incidents that will occur near the Ka`ba. The incidents during 1407 actually took place near the Ka`ba, and not inside it, unlike the event of 1400. Both incidents happened just the hadiths indicated that they would.

Sighting a flare in the East

In its section on the signs of the Mahdi's emergence, the book Ikdiddurer states: 'The emergence of a big flare which is seen in the East up on the sky for three nights. Sighting of an extraordinary redness, not as red as the usual color of the dawn, and its spread over the horizon. (Al-Muttaqi al-Hindi, Al-Burhan fi Alamat al-Mahdi Akhir al-zaman, p. 32)

I swear that a flame will engulf you. That flame is presently in an extinguished state at the valley called Berehut. That flame swallows up people with terrible pain inside it, burns down and destroys people and property, and spreads all over the world by flying like a cloud with the assistance of winds. Its heat at night is much higher than its daytime temperature. By going as deep as the center of Earth from the heads of people, that

flame becomes a terrible noise just like the lightning between the earth and sky, he narrated. (Mukhtasar Tazkirah Qurtubi)

A brief explanation of this flame, a sign of the Mahdi's advent, is as follows:

In July 1991, after Iraq's invasion of Kuwait, a huge fire spread through Kuwait and the Persian Gulf after the Iraqis fired Kuwait's oil wells.

In addition, the first part of the hadith says that the flame 'is in an extinguished state.' Given that the flame is the result of burning an inflammable substance, what waits in an extinguished state is not the flame itself but the material to be burnt by the flame.

In this context, this may mean underground oil. Berehut is the name of a well—an oil well. When the time comes, oil extracted from these wells will become a fire ready to be burned.

A sign out of the Sun

He (the Mahdi) will not come unless a sign emerges out of the Sun. (Ibn Hajar al-Haythami, Al-Qawl al-Mukhtasar fi `Alamat al-Mahdi al-Muntazar, p. 47)

The Mahdi will not emerge unless the Sun rises as a sign. (Al-Muttaqi al-Hindi, Al-Burhan fi Alamat al-Mahdi Akhir al-zaman, p. 33)

The large explosions detected on the Sun during the twentieth century may well be this sign.

Also, the August 11, 1999 solar eclipse was the last of the century. It was the first time that so many people had been able to watch and study an eclipse for so long.

The Rebuilding of Ruined Places

The rebuilding of the ruined places in the world, and the ruination of constructed places are signs and portents of Doomsday. (Agreed Upon)

Various hadiths reveal that the Qur'an refers to the Mahdi

The Mahdi will rule Earth, just like Dhu'l-Qarnayn and Sulayman. (Ibn Hajar al-Haythami, Al-Qawl al-Mukhtasar fi `Alamat al-Mahdi al-Muntazar, p. 29)

The Companions of the Cave (Ahl al-Kahf) will be the Mahdi's helpers. (Al-Muttaqi al-Hindi, Al-Burhan fi Alamat al-Mahdi Akhir al-zaman, p. 59)

The number of the Mahdi's helpers will be as many as those who crossed the river with Talut. (Al-Muttaqi al-Hindi, Al-Burhan fi Alamat al-Mahdi Akhir al-zaman, p. 57)

THE GOLDEN AGE

The Prophet (saas) describes the End Times with its heavenly features

Many hadiths indicate the existence of a period when the Qur'an's values will pervade Earth. This period, known as the Golden Age, will last for more than half a century and, in many ways, will resemble 'the Blessed Period' of our Prophet (saas).

According to one hadith, people will be so content that they will spend their days with no idea as to how time passes and how one day turns into the next. They will pray to Allah to prolong their lives in order to receive more benefits from these graces. Another Prophetic hadith states that;

The younger ones wish they were grown-ups, while the adults wish they were younger... The good become even more good, and even the wicked ones are treated well. (Al-Muttaqi al-Hindi, Al-Burhan fi Alamat al-Mahdi Akhir al-zaman, p. 17)

Unprecedented Abundance

Many hadiths reveal that there will be an unprecedented abundance of crops and goods, all of which will be distributed without measure:

During this (period), my ummah (people) will lead a kind of comfortable and carefree life that they have never known before. (The land) will bring forth its yield and will not hold anything back... (Ibn Majah)

In the last of times there will be a khalifa (successor) who will distribute wealth without even counting it. (Muslim)

The inhabitants of the heavens and the inhabitants of the earth will be pleased with him and such plants will be produced by the earth that the living will wish the dead could come back to life. (At-Tabarani and Abu Nu'aym)

The land will turn like the silver tray growing vegetation... (Ibn Majah)

Technological developments will provide abundance in the Golden Age

People will reap 700 measures of wheat for every one they sow ... People will throw down a few handfuls of seeds and reap 700 handfuls ... Although much rain will fall, none will be wasted. (Ibn Hajar al-Haythami, Al-Qawl al-Mukhtasar fi `Alamat al-Mahdi al-Muntazar, p. 43)

This hadith refers to an increase in agricultural production that will occur in the End Times by transitioning to modern agriculture, developing new agricultural techniques, improving seed stocks, and using rainwater more efficiently by constructing new dams and artificial lakes.

The high cost of living and poverty will end

As the Golden Age will be a time of welfare and great wealth, all people will receive more than they demand. Nothing will be measured or counted.

Our Prophet (saas) said that his people will live in blessings, especially during the Last Days:

A time will come when a person, with his golden alms in his hand, will go around, finding no one (in need) who is willing to receive the alms. (Mukhtasar Tazkirah Qurtubi)

Then will my Ummah be blessed, the number of animals will increase and the land will bear its fruits. (Ibn Hajar al-Haythami, Al-Qawl al-Mukhtasar fi `Alamat al-Mahdi al-Muntazar, p. 26)

Definitely possessions will be in abundance then, flowing like water. Yet no one will (condescend) to take any. (Mukhtasar Tazkirah Qurtubi)

Religion will be restored to its original state

Another news revealed by the Hadith literature regarding the End Times is that the original religion will no longer be misunderstood. In the Golden Age, all heretical misunderstandings that entered Islam after the Prophet (saas) will be eliminated, and the original religion will be restored. Just as in the case of the Prophet, the requirements of the religion will be fulfilled.

After the death of our Prophet (saas) and his Companions, history records that unrelated heresies and forms of worship were introduced into the original religion, and that countless hadiths and judgments, most of which have survived to our day, were fabricated and attributed to our Prophet (saas). Despite the best efforts of true Muslims to eliminate these fabrications, many practices done in the name of Islam today are not based upon the Qur'an.

As the Qur'an is the only source that can distinguish between the correct and mistaken practices, only its guidance can expose and remove these fabricated heresies. This way, the true religion will resurface.

In the End Times, Allah will restore the religion to its original state and make the Qur'an's morality prevail. When this time comes, He will remove all deviations that hinder people from living by His religion, and will purify Islam from all heresies, false beliefs, and forms of worship.

SIGNS OF THE END TIMES FROM SURAT AL-KAHF

The Prophet Muhammad (saas) highlighted this sura

Many prophetic hadiths connect Surat al-Kahf with the End Times. Some of these are given below:

Related by An-Nawwas ibn Sam'an:

'He who among you will survive to see him (the Dajjal) should recite over him the opening verses of Surah al-Kahf.' (Muslim)

Related by Abu Umamah al-Bahili:

Whoever enters his (the Dajjal's) Hell, let him seek refuge with Allah and recite the opening verse of Surat al-Kahf, and it will become cool and peaceful for him, as the fire became cool and peaceful for Ibrahim. (Ibn Kathir)

Signs and secrets about the End Times

One reason why the Prophet (saas) recommends that believers read Surat al-Kahf is that it contains very important signs about the End Times, such as those that are required to defend and fight against the Dajjal and the irreligious movements that bring so much evil to humanity, and which he wants to spread around the world. It also contains many lessons for Muslims. Our Prophet's (saas) recommendation to memorize and to read this surah attentively is a clear indication of this. As we will see throughout this chapter, the experiences of the Companions of the Cave (Ashab al-Kahf), who lived in an unbelieving society, the lessons that Musa (as) learned from Khidr (as), and the rule over the world that Dhu'l-Qarnayn (as) established in order to disseminate the values of Islam, are matters upon which believers need to reflect.

The extraordinary situation of the People of the Cave

Do you consider that the Companions of the Cave and Ar-Raqim were one of the most remarkable of Our Signs? When the young men took refuge in the cave and said: 'Our Lord, give us mercy directly from You and open the way for us to right guidance in our situation.' (Surat al-Kahf: 9-10)

These verses touch upon this group's extraordinary situation. As the narrative unfolds, we see that their experiences are of an unusual and metaphysical nature. Their entire life is full of miraculous developments. Their situation is subject to our Prophet's (saas) hadith, which make the connection between them and the End Times. This indicates that people living in the End Times may have supernatural experiences.

The tenth verse tells us that those young people sought refuge in the cave from the existing oppressive system, which did not allow them to express their views, tell the truth, and call to Allah's religion. Thus, they distanced themselves from their society.

However, this should not be understood as an idle period away from society, for they took refuge there while asking for Allah's grace and help. They also sought to improve and develop themselves. Muslims of the End

Times living under oppressive regimes will conceal themselves and hope for Allah to increase His grace upon them, and also to make their lives and struggle against anti-religious movements easier.

Their secrecy continued for some time

So We sealed their ears with sleep in the cave for a number of years. Then We woke them up again so that We might see which of the two groups would better calculate the time they had stayed there. (Surat al-Kahf: 11-12)

The reason for this state of sleep was their surrender to fate and peace, because Allah, Who created the universe out of nothing, arranges everything for the benefit of Muslims. In our own time, some Muslims have adopted a similar spiritual detachment. This way, they remain uncorrupted by the materialist ideologies that seek to distance people from their faith, and also are untouched by the violence to which these ideologies lead. Thus, they can continue to live according to the Qur'an without being affected by the surrounding moral degeneration, cruelty, and chaos. The Companions of the Cave remained hidden for some time, and Allah roused them at a time of His choosing.

They proclaimed Allah's religion to their people

Our people have taken deities apart from Him. Why do they not produce a clear authority concerning them? Who could do greater wrong than someone who invents a lie against Allah? (Surat al-Kahf: 15)

As this verse states, the Companions of the Cave called their idolatrous people to faith, invited them to Allah's religion, asked them to stop associating others with Allah, and demanded that they bring forth the evidence upon which they based their denial. When they could not do this, they exposed their idolatrous people as liars and slanderers.

Today, Muslims also demand proof from those who take idols besides Allah. In the End Times, there exists an idolatrous belief that idolizes matter and chance: Darwinism.

Darwinism claims that the universe has no purpose, was formed by random occurrences, and that only the fittest members of nature survive. This anti-religious system is based on conflict and violence. In reality, these claims of random occurrences being responsible for everything are no more than acts of slander by the Darwinists against Allah, Who is All-powerful and has created everything that exists.

They distanced themselves utterly from the surrounding idolatrous worldview

When you have separated yourselves from them and everything they worship except Allah, take refuge in the cave, and your Lord will unfold His mercy to you and open the way to the best for you in your situation. (Surat al-Kahf: 16)

Due to the unbelievers' oppression, the Companions of the Cave felt the need for total segregation. Thus, they severed all links with the unbelievers by seeking refuge in the cave. During this period, Allah's grace descended on them, and He made things easier for them in many respects. The most important aspect of His help and support was sparing them from the negative impact of the unbelievers.

They hid themselves

For if they find out about you, they will stone you or make you revert to their religion, and then you will never have success. (Surat al-Kahf: 20)

'They will stone you' describes a form of terror. This character trait is clearly recognizable today in people who are under the influence of godless ideologies. For example, terrorists who subscribe to communism are led by their hostility to the state to throw stones and attack its officials, as well as at the police forces. These attacks aim to weaken and demoralize them so that the communists can realize their anti-religious ideals and establish their rule by dragging the country into chaos and conflict.

Given this, it is vital for the people of the End Times to stay clear of the bloodstained ideologies that have brought nothing but evil to the world, not to side with those who corrupt others, and not to be influenced by the provocations of anti-religious ideologies or their agitations.

Only Allah and a handful of people knew their number

They will say: 'There were three of them, their dog being the fourth.' They will say: 'There were five of them, their dog being the sixth,' guessing at the Unseen. And they will say: 'There were seven of them, their dog being the eighth.' Say: 'My Lord knows best their number. Those who know about them are very few.' So do not enter into any argument concerning them, except in relation to what is clearly known. And do not seek the opinion of any of them regarding them. (Surat al-Kahf: 22)

'Those who know about them are very few' indicates also that a few people could have this knowledge. For instance, one such person could be Khidr (as), whose miraculous circumstances we will explore shortly. It is also possible that Khidr's disciples might have this knowledge, with Allah's will and revelation. The Qur'an reveals that Allah reveals some of the Unseen to His Messengers.

The journey of Prophet Musa (as) and his young servant to the 'meeting-place of the two seas'

Remember when Musa said to his young servant: 'I will not give up until I reach the meeting-place of the two seas, even if I must press on for many years.' (Surat al-Kahf, 60)

Here, 'young' suggests that when doing something, one should seek the assistance of young people and work with them.

Young people should be motivated to use their energy, dynamism, strength, ambition, and excitement for right action for Allah's pleasure. Some of the verses speak of youth, and the following verse states that only some young people of his nation believed in Musa (as):

No one believed in Musa, except (some) offspring (i.e., youths) among his people, out of fear that Pharaoh and the elders, would persecute them. Pharaoh was high and mighty in the land. He was one of the profligate. (Surah Yunus, 83)

The sixtieth verse of Surat al-Kahf refers to the meeting point toward which Musa (as) is traveling. Musa (as) knows that he will meet with someone, and he knows that this will take place at the 'meeting-place of the two seas.' This place could be any place on Earth that fits this description.

Prophet Musa (as) meets with the blessed and merciful Khidr (as)

They found a servant of Ours whom We had granted mercy from Us and whom We had also given knowledge direct from Us. (Surat al-Kahf, 65)

Allah is most compassionate, graceful, and merciful toward His servants. Musa (as) set out to meet Khidr (as), someone to whom Allah has given mercy. Therefore, Allah's attributes of grace and mercy are reflected on him, which has caused him to receive a superior knowledge from Allah and to become one of His distinguished servants.

Dhu'l-Qarnayn (as)

They will ask you about Dhu'l-Qarnayn. Say: 'I will tell you something about him that is worthy of remembrance and mention.' (Surat al-Kahf, 83)

Throughout history, many scholars have interpreted the narrative of Dhu'l-Qarnayn (as) in many ways. The verse says that it was revealed as a reminder to Muslims and is connected with the revelations of hidden meanings and reasons.

Dhu'l-Qarnayn (as) had power and was enlightened

We gave him power and authority on Earth, and granted him a way to everything. So he followed a way. (Surat al-Kahf, 84-85)

From these verses, we understand that Dhu'l-Qarnayn's country is away from problems. In other words, his rule is solid, rational, and strong.

'We granted him a way to everything' suggests that Dhu'l-Qarnayn (as) was given the ability to solve every problem, which means that he was a very intelligent, sagacious, and perceptive believer. With these Allah-given faculties, he solved all complex issues quickly and removed the obstacles.

Dhu'l-Qarnayn (as) was also a spiritual guide

He (Dhu'l-Qarnayn) said: 'As for those who do wrong, We will punish them. Then they will be returned to their Lord, and He will punish them with a dreadful punishment. But as for him who believes and acts rightly, he will receive the best of rewards, and we will issue a command, making things easy for him.' (Surat al-Kahf: 87-88)

When Dhu'l-Qarnayn (as) spoke, he reminded his people of Allah and the Hereafter. He spoke in a Muslim manner. From the expressions used in the verse, we understand that he was a Muslim leader who ruled a Muslim nation.

Dhu'l-Qarnayn (as) proceeded straight away to call the people he met to believe in Allah, devotion, the good deeds prescribed by the Qur'an, and to perform the prayers and acts of worship. He drew their attention, in order to encourage them, to the rewards that they are promised in this world and the next, and thus called them to faith.

Dhu'l-Qarnayn (as) helped people

They said: 'Dhu'l-Qarnayn! Yajuj and Majuj are causing corruption in the land. Can we, therefore, pay tribute to you in return for your constructing a barrier between us and them?' (Surat al-Kahf: 94)

For the corruption of Yajuj and Majuj, the people in trouble sought Dhu'l-Qarnayn's (as) help and offered to pay him a tax in return. From this, we understand that Dhu'l-Qarnayn (as) did not represent a single person; rather, he ruled a nation. Just like Sulayman (as), he ruled a nation and commanded an army.

This verse indicates that he must have had teams of construction experts and civil engineers with him. From the people's request, we can deduce that Dhu'l-Qarnayn (as) was interested in, and was knowledgeable about, construction and civil engineering. He might even have been renowned for his expertise in these fields. Accordingly, other nations requested his assistance. All of these factors demonstrate the size and power of his nation.

That Dhu'l-Qarnayn (as) was well respected and effective in the East and the West could indicate that he was ruling a nation whose power was extensive. Therefore, he was a leader, aware of his responsibility to bring peace, justice, and security not only to his own nation, but also to every part of the world.

The narrative of Dhu'l-Qarnayn (as) indicates that in the End Times, just as it was during his own time, the values of Islam will rule the world.

A different interpretation

Another possibility is that this narrative conveys events that will happen in the future.

In Allah's presence, all time is one. Future, past, and present are experienced all at once. In some verses, the events of the Day of Judgment in Hell and Paradise are related as if they have already taken place. The following verses are an example of this technique.

The Trumpet is blown, and all who are in the heavens and all who are on the earth swoon away, save him who Allah wills. Then it is blown a second time, and behold them standing waiting! And the earth shone with the light of her Lord, and the Book is set up, and the prophets and the witnesses are brought, and it is judged between them with truth, and they are not wronged. (Surat az-Zumar: 68-69)

The events related in this verse are told as if they have already taking place, even though to us, they are future events yet to happen. Therefore it is possible that the Dhu'l-Qarnayn (as) narrative is from the future, related to us in the past tense.

The eighty-fourth verse says: '**... (We) granted him a way to everything.**' This might indicate that Dhu'l-Qarnayn (as) will rule the world in the future.

In today's world, a leader or a nation that has dominion over the world must have both communication technology and conventional power. As the leader cannot inspect all of them personally, we can assume that he will stay in a central capital city and control the other areas through satellites and other means of communication. As the ninety-fifth verse expresses, "**He said: 'The power my Lord has granted me is better than that,'**" it is probable that Dhu'l-Qarnayn (as) had an established power. If we look at the narrative from this perspective, we realize that each verse could be conveying a different message. For example, Dhu'l-Qarnayn (as) went first to the West, then to the East, and then back again. These verses might be implying that he communicates with different areas by changing channels broadcasting from satellites. The verses speak constantly of 'finding.' Dhu'l-Qarnayn (as) 'found' a people by the 'spring,' that he 'found' a people in the East, who did not understand. These acts of 'finding' happen by searching, and this could be a finding based on looking up satellite channels.

The verses say that the people of the East had no shelter from the sun. If we consider this information in the light of communication technology, there are two possible messages here. Dhu'l-Qarnayn (as) could be watching or gathering intelligence via satellite from these areas (Allah knows best). Or they could be implying infrared technology, which is used in many different areas today. Infrared cameras are used in medicine, criminal pathology, meteorology, criminology, intelligence, industry, and other fields. Such cameras also can observe the human body in great detail.

If Dhu'l-Qarnayn (as) was addressing a nation, he could do so via satellite and TV broadcasts. This would enable him to learn of the people's needs and complaints, regardless of where they lived, and then rule the areas under his control accordingly.

The Yajuj and Majuj corruption could be a classic act of terror or anarchy or even be committed by means of broadcasting. For example, they could be disrupting other broadcasts in order to broadcast their corrupt ideas. Dhu'l-Qarnayn (as) could have prevented this broadcast and thus the corruption. For instance, he could have used the copper and iron mentioned in the verse to create an electromagnetic field and disrupt the radio and TV broadcasts. Transformers, which are made by winding copper wire around an iron core, are one of the sources of electromagnetic fields. A powerful electromagnetic field can disrupt radio and TV broadcasts.

Another possibility is that a huge communal satellite dish is implied. The reason for it being so big could have been to overcome Yajuj and Majuj's global disruptive system. The surfaces of these dishes are usually made of the cheaper and lighter aluminum, which is not the ideal material for performance. Copper is a much better conductor, and might have been preferred for this reason. However, covering such a huge dish with copper sheets is not rational. On the other hand, copper-plating the dish with molten copper would give it the smoothest surface and deliver the highest possible performance.

The wall or barrier created by the competing broadcasts or by creating a magnetic field could be termed an 'invisible barrier.' Some scholars read the word *saddayn* in the ninety-third verse as *suddayn*, and *sadd* in the following verse as *sudd*. In the first case, the meaning would be a 'visible barrier'; in the second, it means an 'invisible barrier' (Allah knows best).

'They were, therefore, unable to climb over it, nor were they able to make a breach in it,' as stated in the ninety-seventh verse, might be referring to this, because Yajuj and Majuj attempt to overcome or breach the transmitter's broadcast. Significantly, the current expression used for pirate stations that broadcast by interfering with another broadcast is 'breaching transmission.'

Considering the expression 'scarcely able to understand speech' in this light might mean that this satellite broadcast is sometimes not understood by some people. When the broadcast is disrupted, the people cannot understand; but when the normal broadcast is restored, they begin to understand (Allah knows best).

The expression 'a muddy spring' in the eighty-sixth verse is also interesting, because seeing the sunset on the TV screen is just like the sun setting in a spring. The colors on the screen change as the sun sets in the distance over the sea, and this appears grayer on the screen. Thus, for someone viewing this, it will appear as if setting in a muddy spring. The *aynin hami'ah* expression, made up of 'ayn (spring) and *hami'ah* (muddy) could be implying this unclear view.

Also, his contact with the East and the West could indicate that he is in touch with the various parts of the globe. While the sun rises over one part, it sets on the other.

THE NUMERICAL VALUES (ABJAD) IN SOME OF THE VERSES IN SURAT AL-KAHF POINT TO TIMES VERY CLOSE TO OUR OWN DAY

We fortified their hearts... (Surat al-Kahf: 14)

1400 A.H. (Anno Hegirae, the Islamic calendar) or

1979 A.D. (Anno Domini, 'In the year of our Lord,' the Christians' Gregorian calendar)

He said: 'The power my Lord has granted me is better than that...' (Surat al-Kahf: 95)

1409 A.H., or 1988 A.D. (Without *shaddah*)

We gave him power and authority on Earth... (Surat al-Kahf: 84)

1440 A.H., or 2019 A.D. (With *shaddah*)

A sign pointing at the beginning of the fifteenth Islamic century and the end of the twentieth and the beginning of the twenty-first Christian century is the number 1980, which is obtained by multiplying Surat al-Kahf's number of verses with its numerical order in the Qur'an.

Sura 18: Surat al-Kahf (contains 110 verses) $18 \times 110 = 1980$.

Bediuzzaman Said Nursi also often indicated that this time was the beginning of the End Times. He says, for example:

*Thus, unfair people who do not know this truth say: 'Why did the Companions of the Prophet with their vigilant hearts and keen sight, who had been taught all the details of the hereafter, suppose a fact that would occur one thousand four hundred years later to be close to their century, as though their ideas had deviated a thousand years from the truth?'*¹⁰

Bediuzzaman Said Nursi, by saying '1400 years after' the Companions of the Prophet indicated the years around 1980 as the end times. Here it is important to note that he said 1400, not 1373, 1378, and not 1398. In other words, the fifteenth Islamic century.

Surat al-Kahf contains very good news for the Muslims. This news, as our Prophet (saas) revealed, is the approaching blessed period of the End Times. If Surat al-Kahf is viewed from this perspective, it is pointing at the different phases, beginning, development, and conclusion of Islam in the End Times, culminating in the rule of Islam and concluding with the arrival of 'Isa (as).

PROPHET SULEYMAN (AS)

Prophet Sulayman (as) was give unprecedented wealth

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

Allah responded to his prayer by giving him great blessings and knowledge, as well as bestowing upon him a magnificent dominion and powerful authority. In the verses 'that recount his life, many details are offered about his wealth, authority, and how he used his knowledge.

Prophet Sulayman (as) communicated with birds

Allah taught Prophet Sulayman (as) the language of birds, and he used this knowledge to form orderly ranks from of birds (Surat an-Naml:17). He communicated with birds and ruled them as he saw fit. This situation occurred as a result of Allah's favor on Sulayman (as).

(Sulayman said:) O mankind, we have been taught the speech of birds and have been given everything. This is indeed clear favor. (Surat an-Naml: 16)

We can derive important conclusions from this account:

- Birds have a special way of communicating with each other on a frequency beyond the range of human hearing. Prophet Sulayman (as) was given a special skill that allowed him to understand this language. This might have happened through a technological innovation.

- Using this skill, he gave orders to the birds so they might fulfill his wishes (Allah knows best).

- He sometimes used birds to send news and collect intelligence. This method was very successful. His knowledge made it easier for him to communicate with other countries, and effectively brought distant lands within his reach (Allah knows best).

- This verse might be drawing our attention to technological advances that will be used in the End Times. Perhaps it is not speaking of birds, but rather of unmanned aircraft in use today.

- It might have been that he placed transmitters on the birds to gather intelligence about his enemies. This way he might have obtained both audio and visual records, which he used to rule his nation.

- He also had great control over jinns and satans. As the Qur'an states, Allah said, '**And some of the jinn worked in front of him by his Lord's permission**' (Surah Saba, 12) and '**And some of the satans dived for him and did other things apart from that. And We were watching over them**' (Surah al-Anbiya'). If we think about this aspect, birds might symbolize an army of jinns.

- Another possibility is that the birds are led by jinns. Prophet Sulayman (as) might have commanded birds to perform certain tasks through using jinns.

- Allah made the Qur'an humanity's holy book until Doomsday. Thus, incidents similar to those related about Prophet Sulayman might occur in the End Times. These verses might signal to us that during this time

Allah might place satans and jinns at humanity's beck and call, or that humanity will use and benefit greatly from advanced technology at that time. (Allah knows best).

Sulayman (as) communicates with a female ant

(Sulayman) smiled, laughing at its words, and said: 'My Lord, keep me thankful for the blessing You have bestowed on me and on my parents, and keep me acting rightly, pleasing You, and admit me, by Your mercy, among Your servants who are righteous.' (Surat an-Naml: 19)

- Prophet Sulayman (as) could hear the speech of ants, and this may be pointing to the existence of advanced computer technology in the end times.

- Today, California's Silicon Valley is known as the capital of the technological world. It is very curious that the account of Prophet Sulayman (as) speaks of the Ant Valley. Allah might be pointing to an advanced technology that will appear in the End Times.

- Moreover, ants and other insects are used extensively in high technology. Robot projects developed by studying these creatures closely have advanced a number of fields, including technology and the defense industry. The verse might be pointing to this fact as well.

Blessings relevant to the End Times

Prophet Sulayman's (as) and Dhu'l-Qarnayn's (as) dominion over the world is good news indeed for all Muslims, for these narratives contain significant signs for the End Times. Truly, Muslims who preserve Allah's limits, work hard to spread Islamic morality worldwide, and refuse to shrink in the face of hardship will prevail in all eras of history. Allah will always be behind them with His help and support. Both of these Messengers, due to their above-mentioned abilities (and, of course, many other blessings of Allah), exercised a strong dominion in the world. This same dominion will certainly happen during the End Times.

The great dominion of Islamic morality, as we emphasized earlier, was defined in the hadiths through similar incidents during the dominion of these two Messengers of Allah. Some of these are as follows:

The Mahdi (the rightly guided one) will rule the world like Prophet Dhu'l-Qarnayn and Prophet Sulayman. (Ibn Hajar al-Haythami, Al-Qawl al-Mukhtasar fi `Alamat al-Mahdi al-Muntazar, p. 29)

There have been four great kings on the earth: two were believers and two unbelievers. The believers were Dhu'l-Qarnayn and Sulayman, and the unbelievers were Nimrod and Bakhtinasr. There will be a fifth king, from the People of my House. (Ibn al-Jawzi)

The situation before the Mahdi's emergence

• *At the end of time, their rulers will cause My people severe trouble in such a way that there will be no comfort for Muslims anywhere. (Al-Muttaqi al-Hindi, Al-Burhan fi `Alamat al-Mahdi Akhir az-Zaman, p. 12)*

This hadith points out that before the Mahdi comes, those who lack religious morals and have a cruel and merciless character will come to power in some Muslim countries. As a matter of fact, some contemporary

Muslim rulers oppress Muslims and crush people with their oppressive and despotic regimes. In other countries, people are subjected to trouble because their rulers are unqualified to rule. Muslims in some countries, particularly Iraq, Libya, Syria, Somalia, Ethiopia, Afghanistan, Tunisia, and Djibouti, are oppressed by their respective, and so are subjected to various hardship and problems. Muslims are prevented from practicing their religion and worshipping, and economic difficulties make life harder.

- *There will be a dusty and smoky tribulation like patches of dark night... (Abu Dawud)*

The word 'tribulation (*fitnah*)' implies anything that turns peoples' reason and hearts away from the true path, or war, incitement, chaos, disorder and conflict. The tribulation in the hadith will leave smoke and dust behind it, we learn.

Furthermore, the way that tribulation is described as 'darkness' in the hadith, can be seen as an indication that its origins are unclear, that it is unexpected. Looking at it from that regard, it is probable that the hadith is referring to one of the world's worst terrorist attack, on the cities of New York and Washington in the United States on September 11, 2001.

Therefore, this most saddening act of terror, which caused the lives and injuries of thousands of innocent people, may well be that 'tribulation like patches of dark night' foretold by the hadith as the sign of the Mahdi's emergence.

- *The Mahdi will only appear at a time when people are experiencing great fear and are afflicted by disturbances and civil war and other disasters. (Reported by Abu Ja'far Muhammad ibn 'Ali)*

Most hadiths about the Mahdi's advent focus on the prophecy that turmoil, insecurity, and disorder will rule the world before his coming. Massacres, wars, and confrontations are one of the major features of such a period. Besides, the hadith draws attention to the fact that massacres will occur all over the world.

During the two world wars of the twentieth century, an estimated 65 million people were killed. The number of the civilians slaughtered for political reasons during the same century is estimated to be well over 180 million. This is an extraordinarily high figure compared with previous centuries.

- *The Mahdi will not emerge unless innocent people are massacred, and he will appear when those on Earth and up in the sky can no longer put up with such massacres... (Ibn Hajar al-Haythami, Al-Qawl al-Mukhtasar fi `Alamat al-Mahdi al-Muntazar, p. 37)*

While the hadiths about his emergence mention such massacres as commonplace, they also emphasize that such massacres will target innocent people. As we discussed earlier, almost all of the wars today target people. So, civilians and such innocent people as children, the elderly, and women are slaughtered. Targeting these defenseless people in particular has resulted in more comprehensive massacres, while the number of people dying as a result continues to climb.

Since terror seeks to spread fear and horror, the very group on which such attacks focus are often innocent civilians.

- *Corruption that no one can escape will occur and spread immediately to another place from where it stays. (Ibn Hajar al-Haythami, Al-Qawl al-Mukhtasar fi `Alamat al-Mahdi al-Muntazar, pp. 21-22)*

The term 'corruption (*fitnah*)' also means 'war, disorder, quarrel, dispute.' Thus, civil and other wars and disorder, 'which spreads to another place from where it stays,' continues unceasingly all over the world during the

current century. In particular, the twentieth century is remembered as 'the century of wars.' And, this new century again started off with wars and terror that continues.

• *Allah Almighty will send the Mahdi after despair has reached the point that people will say, "There is no Mahdi." (Narrated by Nu'aym ibn Hammad)*

This hadith informs us that one sign of the End Times is the people's despair of the Mahdi's coming.

People who struggle with war, starvation, injustice, epidemics, and all forms of depravity in the End Times lose their hope that such disasters will ever end. Many Muslims, on the other hand, start to despair that Islamic morality will ever prevail and believe that evil will spread even further.

Indeed in our day, we frequently see the examples of this spirit. Despite the existence of countless hadiths about the Mahdi's coming and the Golden Age marked with great blessings, many people believe that such a period will never come.

This assumption is also a sign of the End Times. In a time of despair, people will enjoy the benefits of the prevalence of the morality of the Qur'an, thanks to Allah's mercy on people.

• *People will prosper until the ninety-fifth year, that is, their business will prosper. In the ninety-seventh and the ninety-ninth year, their possessions will go to waste... (Ibn Hajar al-Haythami, Al-Qawl al-Mukhtasar fi `Alamat al-Mahdi al-Muntazar, p. 54)*

It is highly probable that this refers to the year 1995, a period when people had a relatively better life and its conditions have not become so difficult. Indeed, as described in the hadith, in this year, people will have enough income to earn a living and have some possessions. However, 1997 and 1999 was a period during which the economy deteriorated and poverty spread. In this time, possessions lost their value. Such an event can happen very quickly, as exemplified by Argentina's economic crisis in the recent past.

• *The inhabitants of Egypt and Sham will kill their ruler and his commands... (Ibn Hajar al-Haythami, Al-Qawl al-Mukhtasar fi `Alamat al-Mahdi al-Muntazar, p. 49)*

When we examine Egypt's recent history, we see that a ruler was killed: Anwar Sadat, who ruled Egypt from 1970-81, was killed by his opponents during a military review in 1981. Other Egyptian leaders who have been killed include Prime Ministers Boutros Ghali (1910), and Mahmoud Nukrashy Pasha (1948).

The word 'Sham' is not only used for Damascus, for it also means 'left' and has long been used to refer to those countries to the left of the Hijaz (where the cities of Makka and Madina stand). Many leaders have been killed in the region, among them former Syrian prime ministers Salah al-Deen Beetar (1920), Droubi Pasha (1921), and Muhsin al-Barazi (1949), King Abdullah of Jordan (1951), and Lebanese Phalange leader Bashir Gemayel (1982).

• *The people of Sham will take prisoner the tribes of Egypt... (Ibn Hajar al-Haythami, Al-Qawl al-Mukhtasar fi `alamat al-Mahdi al-Muntazar, p. 49)*

Today, the states in the region in question include Israel. That is why the hadith could be pointing to the war between the State of Israel and Egypt, and the invasion of Egyptian territory.

• *People will compete with one another in constructing high buildings. (Bukhari)*

Time will pass quickly. (Bukhari)

Great distances will be traversed in short spans of time. (Ahmad, Musnad)

The Last hour will not come before time contracts, a year being like a month, a month like a week, a week like a day, a day like an hour, and an hour like the kindling of a fire. (Tirmidhi)

The century we are living in has seen the capability of constructing supersonic aeroplanes, and the ability, thanks to trains and other improvements in means of transport, to make journeys in a few minutes that would once have taken months, and in great comfort. What this hadith indicates is also taking place in this manner.

Communication between continents would take weeks hundreds of years ago, but is now a matter of seconds, thanks to the Internet and improvements in technology. Goods that used to take weeks to arrive, following a long journey, can now be delivered at a moment's notice. Billions of books can now be printed in the time it would take to write a single letter just a few centuries ago. As well, other technological developments have meant that we no longer waste large amounts of time on cooking, cleaning and child minding.

One could go on citing similar examples. Yet, the important thing here, of course, is that the signs of End Times, as set out by the Prophet (saas) in the seventh century, are now happening one by one.

• *The end of a man's whip will speak to him. (Tirmidhi)*

The whip is known as a tool used in earlier times when riding or guiding pack animals such as horses or camels. When we look closely at this hadith, we can see that the Prophet (saas) is making a comparison. Let us ask people living at the present time a question, 'Is there a modern implement that talks and resembles a whip?'

The most logical reply to that question is the mobile telephone, with its long antenna, or similar communications equipment. If we bear in mind that mobile or satellite phones are comparatively recent developments, then the wisdom behind the Prophet (saas)'s description of 1,400 years ago is even clearer. That is just one more indication that we are living through the End Times.

• *A person's own voice will speak to him. (Mukhtasar Tazkirah Qurtubi)*

The message in the hadith is quite clear: A person's hearing the sound of his own voice is another sign of the End Times. There is no doubt that in order to hear the sound of one's own voice, one first needs to record it, and then to play it back to himself. Sound recording and reproduction equipment are products of the twentieth century. That development marked a scientific turning point, and led to the birth of the communications and media industries. Sound reproduction is nearly perfect now, thanks to computer and laser technologies.

In short, the electronic gadgets of our time, microphones and speakers, allow us to record sound and play it back, and are also manifestations of that related in the above hadith.

• *A hand will be extended from the sky, and people will look and see it. (Ibn Hajar Haytahami, Al-Qawl al-Mukhtasar fi'alamat al-Mahdi al-Muntazar, p. 53)*

The sign of that day is a hand extended in the sky and people stopping to look at it. (Al-Muttaqi al-Hindi, Al-Burhan fi Alamat al-Mahdi Akhir al-zaman, p. 69)

The Arabic word for 'hand' in the above hadiths is 'yed.' As well as 'hand,' the dictionary also provides such meanings as 'power, force, strength, means etc.' It is probable that in these hadiths the word is used in those senses.

The idea of a 'power, force, strength or means' extending from the sky and looked upon by people might not make much sense in the context of past ages. Yet, it sheds considerable light on equipment such as the television,

camera and computer, which have become such indispensable parts of modern life, as described in the hadiths. In other words, the 'hand' mentioned in these hadiths is used in the sense of force. It clearly points to pictures coming down from the sky in waves, in other words television broadcasting.

• *Life spans will grow longer. (Ibn Hajar Haytahami, Al-Qawl al-Mukhtasar fi'alamat al-Mahdi al-Muntazar, p. 43)*

Fourteen centuries have passed since the Prophet (saas) brought forward that news. The average expected lifespan is much higher now than it has been at any other time in recent history. A great difference can be seen even between the figures for the beginning and the end of the twentieth century. For instance, it is estimated that a baby born in 1995 will live some 35 years longer than one born around 1900.¹¹ Another striking example on the same subject is that in the past very few people lived to be 100, whereas now it is a great deal more common.

SIMILARITIES BETWEEN THE MAHDI'S TIME AND THOSE OF PROPHETS SULAYMAN (AS) AND DHU'L-QARNAYN (AS)

The Mahdi is the rebirth of the noble ethics of Prophets Sulayman (as) and Dhu'l-Qarnayn (as) in the End Times, but on a different and larger scale. Their noble ethics' spiritual, rational, social, and mental manifestations will reappear in the End Times.

The eras of Mahdi and these two Prophets are times when the noble Islamic morality is practiced widely. All three of these eras are pleasing to Allah. The Qur'an and the Prophet's hadiths also refer to the periods of Bakhtinasr, Nimrod, and Pharaoh, which are times of wickedness and unbelief. Immediately after these evil periods, Allah made Islamic morality prevail. Similarly, our Lord will offer a time ruled by Islamic morality in the End Times: the Golden Age.

This Golden Age will be a grander reflection of Prophets Sulayman's (as) and Dhu'l-Qarnayn's (as) times. Mahdism means the prevalence of peace, happiness, love, brotherhood, graciousness, sacrifice, humane behavior, and the spirit of cooperation.

Here are some examples of the similarities between these two Prophets' times and the Golden Age.

The Mahdi's Worldwide Rule

As stated earlier, Prophet Sulayman (as) and Dhu'l-Qarnayn (as) made Islamic morality rule the world. They ruled wide territories and had very powerful armed forces. This shows a similarity to the Golden Age.

During the Golden Age, Islamic morality also will rule the world. People will convert to Islam in great numbers, while ideologies that deny Allah will wither away and Islam will be practiced as it was in the time of our Prophet Muhammad (saas). Some of the hadiths describe the Golden Age as follows:

The Mahdi will own the entire world. (Al-Muttaqi al-Hindi, Al-Burhan fi `Alamat al-Mahdi Akhir al-Zaman, p. 10)

The Mahdi will invade all the places between East and West. (Ibn Hajar al-Haythami, Al-Qawl al-Mukhtasar fi `Alamat al-Mahdi al-Muntazar, p. 56)

The Mahdi's Rare and Noble Knowledge Bestowed upon Prophets Sulayman (as) and Dhu'l-Qarnayn (as)

Earlier we mentioned the knowledge Allah bestowed upon Prophet Sulayman (as), such as the ability to rule jinns and devils, speak with birds, hear the ants' communication, and had power over the wind and used copper as he wished. Each of these skills separates him from ordinary people. Of Prophet Dhu'l-Qarnayn (as), the Qur'an says: '**Our knowledge encompasses all that happened to him**' (Surat al-Kahf: 91). He was one of the people blessed by knowledge.

The Mahdi also will have certain special skills. In his book *Mevzuatu'l ulum* (11/246), Taskopruluzade Ahmet Efendi wrote that the Mahdi will possess ilm-e-jafr (the art of divination through numbers). Another account says that:

He is called the Mahdi because he is given guidance for a situation unknown to anyone. (Al-Muttaqi al-Hindi, Al-Burhan fi `Alamat al-Mahdi Akhir al-Zaman, p. 77)

Our Prophet (saas) said that the Mahdi will understand the language of animals and have dominion over people and jinns, just like Prophet Sulayman (as) did.

The Mahdi is a person who speaks the language of birds and other animals. Therefore, his justice will manifest itself over all people and jinns. (Muhammad ibn `Abd al-Rasul Barzanji, Al-Isha`ah li-ashrat al-sa`ah, p. 188)

Their support for peace and preference for diplomacy

We stressed earlier that Prophet Sulayman (as) was very peaceful, loving, tolerant, and forgiving in his relations with neighboring countries. He preferred to solve problems through diplomacy and used democratic means. Prophet Sulayman (as) created a superior culture and strengthened his dominion through diplomacy, art, and culture. Despite his irresistible and overwhelmingly powerful armies, however, he never used military force. Prophet Dhu'l-Qarnayn (as), was also known as the 'person who prevents strife and disorder,' and brought peace and calm to people. Therefore, the times of these two Prophets look strikingly similar to the Golden Age.

In the Golden Age, people will become Muslims out of their own will, Islamic morality will prevail worldwide, and there will be no war. Accounts of this age say:

No one will be woken up from their sleep or have a bleeding nose. (Ibn Hajar al-Haythami, Al-Qawl al-Mukhtasar fi `Alamat al-Mahdi al-Muntazar, p. 42)

The Mahdi will follow the way of the Prophet. He will not wake up a sleeping person or shed blood. (Muhammad ibn `Abd al-Rasul Barzanji, Al-Isha`ah li-ashrat al-sa`ah, p. 163)

As these hadiths tell it, the Mahdi will bring Islamic morality and peace to the entire world and therefore end all war and violence. He will work to begin a cultural transformation and lead people toward Islam's moral code. During that time, with Allah's permission, the following verse will be realized:

When Allah's help and victory have arrived and you have seen people entering Allah's religion in droves, then glorify your Lord's praise and ask His forgiveness. He is the Ever-Returning. (Surat an-Nasr: 1-3)

Urging people to religious morality, and their quick action

Prophet Sulayman's (as) quick, rational decisions are an important example for all believers. The letters he wrote to the Queen of Saba, in which he urged her and her people to start believing in Allah, showed his power of communication. His bringing the Queen of Saba's throne by using a person who possessed knowledge of the Book proved his power for quick decision-making. Prophet Dhu'l-Qarnayn's (as) decision to build a strong wall—so strong that it would last until Doomsday—against the attacks of the Yajuj and Majuj tribes show his power and rationality. The Golden Age will witness very similar events.

During the Golden Age, people will embrace Islam, and there will be wide-ranging, sweeping activities toward this end. All nations, one after another, will adopt Islamic morality, and opposing ideologies will be wiped away through quick and lasting action. All cruel systems will be buried in the sands of time. In the words of the renowned Islamic theologian Muhyiddin Ibn Arabi:

Allah will give so much power to the Mahdi. He will remove cruelty from the world overnight, religion will be established, and Islam will be revived. The Mahdi will restore its lost value to it, and it will come to life after its apparent demise ... Ignorant people, misers and cowards alike, will be very knowledgeable, generous, and brave. ... They will practice religion as in the time of Prophet Muhammad (saas)... (Muhyiddin Ibn Arabi, Al-Futuh al-Makkia, p. 66; Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Rasul Barzanji, Al-Isha'ah li-ashrat al-sa'ah, p. 186)

Importance Placed on Construction

We know that Prophet Sulayman (as) focused on construction projects. He built high arches, statues, huge dishes like cisterns, and great built-in cooking vats by using the jinns and devils who did his bidding. Everybody who saw his splendid palace, especially the Queen of Saba, greatly admired it. The technology that Prophet Dhu'l-Qarnayn (as) employed to build the wall was so advanced that it cannot be destroyed, unless Allah wills it.

In the hadiths of Prophet Muhammad (saas), we are told that construction will be important during the Golden Age. During this age, peace, tranquility and a very developed civilization will be brought to cities. For example,

The Mahdi works in the construction of Constantinople and other places. (Ibn Hajar al-Haythami, Al-Qawl al-Mukhtasar fi 'Alamat al-Mahdi al-Muntazar, p. 40)

Using Wealth and Splendor for Islam's Benefit and Allah's Good Pleasure

Prophet Sulayman (as) used his wealth to explain Allah's religion and spread Islamic morality throughout the world. In the countries he invaded, he first called on people to believe in Allah and salvation. The letter which he sent to the Queen of Saba, in which he invited both her and her people to Islam, is powerful testimony of that. Prophet Dhu'l-Qarnayn (as) also had strong dominion, as is seen in his words: **'The power my Lord has granted me is better than that.'** (Surat al-Kahf: 95). He used his great power to prevent disorder.

During the Golden Age, people will enjoy great wealth, prosperity, and peace. The Mahdi will use all of his wealth to spread Allah's religion, and will follow the noble morality and the dictates of peace in the countries he comes victorious. His unparalleled practices will soften people's hearts and lead them to Islamic morality. Thus, within a very short time this morality will rule the world. Some of the hadiths concerning this time are as follows:

The Mahdi will remain in my community for at least seven, or perhaps eight or nine years. In those years my community will enjoy a time of happiness such as they have never experienced before. Heaven will send down

rain upon them in torrents, the earth will not withhold any of its plants, and wealth will be available to all. (At-Tabarani)

Before pledging their allegiance to him, people will flock to where he resides, and everyone who goes there will enjoy the divine plenty. (Ibn Hajar al-Haythami, Al-Qawl al-Mukhtasar fi `Alamat al-Mahdi al-Muntazar, p. 25)

CONCLUSION

In the Qur'an, Allah states that He has brought about many miracles by means of the prophets. When the Prophet Musa (as) threw down his staff, for instance, it turned into a serpent, and when he smote the sea with that staff it divided into two, leaving a dry path down the middle. The Prophet 'Isa (as) came into the world without a father, and spoke while he was still in the cradle. Another miracle is the way he was able to heal the sick... All these miracles were support and help given to them, in the sight of Allah, to allow them to convince the people and lead them to believe in them.

Allah supported the Prophet Muhammad (saas) by means of both the miracles in the Qur'an and with information given him regarding the unknown. The Prophet (saas) supplied details about events that would happen in the near and distant future. Seeing these actually come to be is both a means of increasing the excitement of believers and of warming the hearts of unbelievers towards Islam.

Events that would have seemed impossible to happen in his own time, and that no one could even have imagined, which are now occurring one after the other, are clear evidence of the fact that the Prophet (saas) was relating special knowledge.

We must make it clear that those who refuse to be guided to the true path will nevertheless still refuse to believe, despite the clear evidence and miracles of the Prophet (saas) and the Qur'an. Allah reveals that fact in the Qur'an:

They have sworn by Allah with their most earnest oaths that if a Sign comes to them they will believe in it. Say: 'The Signs are in Allah's control alone.' What will make you realise that even if a Sign did come, they would still not believe? (Surat al-An'am: 109)

THE DECEPTION OF EVOLUTION

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

The Ideological Collapse of Darwinism

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

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

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

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

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

In a letter to Friedrich Engels in 1860, for instance, Karl Marx said of Darwin's book that "This is the book which contains the basis in natural history for our view."¹² In another letter the following year, this time to Ferdinand Lassalle (1825-64), Marx said: "Darwin's book is very important and serves me as a basis in natural science for the class struggle in history."¹³ Similarly Mao Tse Tung, the founder of Chinese communism, openly stated that "The foundations of Chinese socialism rest on Darwin and the theory of evolution."¹⁴

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

The Scientific Collapse of Darwinism

Although this doctrine goes back as far as ancient Greece, the theory of evolution was advanced extensively in the nineteenth century. The most important development that made it the top topic of the world of science was Charles Darwin's *The Origin of Species*, published in 1859. In this book, he denied that Allah created

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

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

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

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

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

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

The First Insurmountable Step: The Origin of Life

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

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

"Life Comes from Life"

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

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

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

However, five years after the publication of Darwin's book, Louis Pasteur announced his results after long studies and experiments, that disproved spontaneous generation, a cornerstone of Darwin's theory. In his

triumphal lecture at the Sorbonne in 1864, Pasteur said: *"Never will the doctrine of spontaneous generation recover from the mortal blow struck by this simple experiment."*¹⁵

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

Inconclusive Efforts in the Twentieth Century

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

Unfortunately, however, the problem of the origin of the cell is perhaps the most obscure point in the whole study of the evolution of organisms.¹⁶

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

Barely a few years had passed before it was revealed that this experiment, which was then presented as an important step in the name of evolution, was invalid, for the atmosphere used in the experiment was very different from the real Earth conditions.¹⁷

After a long silence, Miller confessed that the atmosphere medium he used was unrealistic.¹⁸

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

*Today as we leave the twentieth century, we still face the biggest unsolved problem that we had when we entered the twentieth century: How did life originate on Earth?*¹⁹

The Complex Structure of Life

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

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

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

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

*It is extremely improbable that proteins and nucleic acids, both of which are structurally complex, arose spontaneously in the same place at the same time. Yet it also seems impossible to have one without the other. And so, at first glance, one might have to conclude that life could never, in fact, have originated by chemical means.*²⁰

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

Imaginary Mechanisms of Evolution

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

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

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

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

*Natural selection can do nothing until favourable individual differences or variations occur.*²¹

Lamarck's Impact

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

Darwin also gave similar examples. In his book *The Origin of Species*, for instance, he said that some bears going into water to find food transformed themselves into whales over time.²²

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

Neo-Darwinism and Mutations

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

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

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

*First, genuine mutations are very rare in nature. Secondly, most mutations are harmful since they are random, rather than orderly changes in the structure of genes; any random change in a highly ordered system will be for the worse, not for the better. For example, if an earthquake were to shake a highly ordered structure such as a building, there would be a random change in the framework of the building which, in all probability, would not be an improvement.*²³

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

The Fossil Record: No Sign of Intermediate Forms

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

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

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

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

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

*If my theory be true, numberless intermediate varieties, linking most closely all of the species of the same group together must assuredly have existed.... Consequently, evidence of their former existence could be found only amongst fossil remains.*²⁴

Darwin's Hopes Shattered

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

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

*The point emerges that if we examine the fossil record in detail, whether at the level of orders or of species, we find – over and over again – not gradual evolution, but the sudden explosion of one group at the expense of another.*²⁵

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

*Creation and evolution, between them, exhaust the possible explanations for the origin of living things. Organisms either appeared on the earth fully developed or they did not. If they did not, they must have developed from pre-existing species by some process of modification. If they did appear in a fully developed state, they must indeed have been created by some omnipotent intelligence.*²⁶

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

The Tale of Human Evolution

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

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

Evolutionists call man's so-called first ape-like ancestors *Australopithecus*, which means "South African ape." These living beings are actually nothing but an old ape species that has become extinct. Extensive research done on various *Australopithecus* specimens by two world famous anatomists from England and the USA,

namely, Lord Solly Zuckerman and Prof. Charles Oxnard, shows that these apes belonged to an ordinary ape species that became extinct and bore no resemblance to humans.²⁷

Evolutionists classify the next stage of human evolution as "*homo*," that is "man." According to their claim, the living beings in the *Homo* series are more developed than *Australopithecus*. Evolutionists devise a fanciful evolution scheme by arranging different fossils of these creatures in a particular order. This scheme is imaginary because it has never been proved that there is an evolutionary relation between these different classes. Ernst Mayr, one of the twentieth century's most important evolutionists, contends in his book *One Long Argument* that "particularly historical [puzzles] such as the origin of life or of *Homo sapiens*, are extremely difficult and may even resist a final, satisfying explanation."²⁸

By outlining the link chain as *Australopithecus* > *Homo habilis* > *Homo erectus* > *Homo sapiens*, evolutionists imply that each of these species is one another's ancestor. However, recent findings of paleoanthropologists have revealed that *Australopithecus*, *Homo habilis*, and *Homo erectus* lived at different parts of the world at the same time.²⁹

Moreover, a certain segment of humans classified as *Homo erectus* have lived up until very modern times. *Homo sapiens neanderthalensis* and *Homo sapiens sapiens* (modern man) co-existed in the same region.³⁰

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

*What has become of our ladder if there are three coexisting lineages of hominids (A. africanus, the robust australopithecines, and H. habilis), none clearly derived from another? Moreover, none of the three display any evolutionary trends during their tenure on earth.*³¹

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

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

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

*We then move right off the register of objective truth into those fields of presumed biological science, like extrasensory perception or the interpretation of man's fossil history, where to the faithful [evolutionist] anything is possible – and where the ardent believer [in evolution] is sometimes able to believe several contradictory things at the same time.*³²

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

Technology in the Eye and the Ear

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

A Materialist Faith

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

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

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

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

It is not that the methods and institutions of science somehow compel us accept a material explanation of the phenomenal world, but, on the contrary, that we are forced by our a priori adherence to material causes to create an apparatus of investigation and a set of concepts that produce material explanations, no matter how counter-intuitive, no matter how mystifying to the uninitiated. Moreover, that materialism is absolute, so we cannot allow a Divine Foot in the door.³³

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

of a similar spell, believe in these ridiculous claims under their scientific disguise and spend their lives defending them, abandon their superstitious beliefs, they also will be humiliated when the full truth emerges and the spell is broken. In fact, the renowned British writer and philosopher Malcolm Muggeridge also stated this:

I myself am convinced that the theory of evolution, especially the extent to which it's been applied, will be one of the great jokes in the history books in the future. Posterity will marvel that so very flimsy and dubious an hypothesis could be accepted with the incredible credulity that it has.³⁴

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

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ALSO BY HARUN YAHYA

Many people think that Darwin's Theory of Evolution is a proven fact. Contrary to this conventional wisdom, recent developments in science completely disprove the theory. This book clarifies the scientific collapse of the theory of evolution in a way that is detailed but easy to understand. Anyone who wants to learn about the origin of living things, including mankind, needs to read this book.

ARKA KAPAK

The End Times means "the last era." According to Islamic literature, it is a period of time that is close to Doomsday. Qur'anic verses and hadiths indicate that there are two phases of the End Times. The first phase is a period when all people will suffer material and spiritual problems. Following this, Earth will enter upon a period of salvation called the "Golden Age," which is characterized by bounty and blessings due to the prevalence of true religion. With the end of the Golden Age, there will be a rapid social collapse and people will begin to wait for Doomsday.

This book examines the End Times in the light of Qur'anic verses and hadiths. It is clear that the signs in question have now started to appear one after another, just as described in these references.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

The author, who writes under the pen-name Harun Yahya, was born in Ankara in 1956. He studied arts at Istanbul's Mimar Sinan University and philosophy at Istanbul University. His main focus has been the refutation of Darwinism and materialism, two modern myths presented under a scientific guise. Some of the books of the author have been translated into more than 40 languages and published in the countries concerned. Harun Yahya's books appeal to all people, Muslims and non-Muslims alike, regardless of their age, race, and nationality, as they center around one goal: to open the readers' mind by encouraging them to think about some critical issues such as the existence of God and His unity, and to display the decrepit foundations and perverted works of godless systems.