

THE ARROGANCE OF SATAN

**Satan has gained mastery over them and made them forget
the remembrance of Allah. Such people are the party of Satan.**

No indeed! It is the party of Satan who are the losers.

(Surat al-Mujadala: 19)

HARUN YAHYA

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By Harun Yahya
Edited By: David Livingstone

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TO THE READER

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

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

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

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

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

In them, one will not find, as in some other books, the personal views of the author, explanations based on dubious sources, styles unobservant of the respect and reverence due to sacred subjects, or hopeless, doubt-creating, and pessimistic accounts that create deviations in the heart.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Meanwhile, it would just be a waste of time and energy to propagate other books which create confusion in peoples' minds, lead man into ideological chaos, and which, clearly have no strong and precise effects in removing the doubts in peoples' hearts, as also verified from previous experience. It is apparent that it is

impossible for books devised to emphasize the author's literary power rather than the noble goal of saving people from loss of faith, to have such a great effect. Those who doubt this can readily see that the sole aim of Harun Yahya's books is to overcome disbelief and to disseminate the moral values of the Qur'an. The success and impact of this service are manifest in readers' conviction.

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

It is no exaggeration to say that the collection of books by Harun Yahya have assumed this leading role. By the will of Allah, these books will be a means through which people in the 21st century will attain the peace, justice and happiness promised in the Qur'an.

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

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

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

INTRODUCTION

Allah created the angels and jinn before He created the Prophet Adam. They were glorifying Allah with praise. Then, Allah created Adam (as), the first human being, and commanded the angels to prostrate themselves to him.

With wholehearted obedience, the angels complied with Allah's command and prostrated themselves to Adam. Yet, *Iblis* (Diabolis), one of the jinn, rebelled against this command. That is because, he believed that he was superior to Adam (as). Out of this arrogance, he replied to the question posed to him by Allah: "**Iblis, what prevented you prostrating to what I created with My own Hands? Were you overcome by arrogance or are you one of the exalted?**" (Surah Sad: 75), as follows:

"I am better than him. You created me from fire but You created him from clay."(Surah Sad: 76)

Iblis, who dared such a disobedience to Allah's command, was denounced by Allah and was destined to the eternal torment of Hell.

The reason why *Iblis* revolted against Allah was due to his "arrogance," or to put it in other words, "vanity." What instilled these feelings of pride in *Iblis* was a vice he had allowed to grow within himself: "Ego"...

The equivalent term of "ego" in Arabic (*enaniyet*) is a derivative of the word *ene*. It means attributing a separate existence to one's self, seeing one's existence apart from and independent of Allah, and orienting one's deeds, attitudes and outlook by it.

Arrogance, on the other hand, is merely one of the manifestations of "Ego." Once a person builds an "ego-centered attitude," eventually he will begin to boast about the qualities and means Allah had granted to him as blessings, such that, these means become the presumed justification of his flawed mindset. As the Prophet Muhammad (saas) said in a famous hadith, "*Arrogance means ridiculing and rejecting the Truth and despising people.*" (Muslim)

No matter the circumstances, such a person sees himself superior and greatly valuable. In the Qur'an, such a person is said to deify himself.

Consequently, arrogance and, in connection with it, vanity, equals to associating partners to Allah and disbelief. In fact, this vice of *Iblis*' is explained thus: "**... Iblis who was arrogant and was one of the disbelievers.**" (Surah Sad: 74)

The arrogance of *Iblis*, which made itself evident when he was commanded to prostrate to Adam (as), ultimately resulted in eternal torment for him. This account indicates how great a danger arrogance is to those who harbour this evil feeling in their heart.

Arrogance is Satan's most fundamental character flaw. Consequently, "arrogance" and "vanity," which is its derivative, are the source of all evil and perversion. As it was the case with millions of people who have lived in the past, these flaws for which Satan was guilty have also seized control of the base natures of innumerable number of people living today, drag them into the same evil ways of *Iblis*.

An arrogant person, that is, someone who attributes an independent power to himself, and thus shows an undue arrogance towards Allah, and turns his back to His verses, is continually vulnerable to Satan's wiles. The purpose of this book is to present all the aspects of arrogance and the character flaws of a person who is seized by this malady, and to summon all, upon whom Satan exerts his influence, to avoid him and to cleanse themselves of this evil.

With these aims in mind, throughout the book, we will consider the psychological condition of vain people, in relation to the fault of "arrogance," which is their inherent flaw.

We hope that this book serves as a strong warning to all of our readers to shun this evil vice of *Iblis'* .

CAUSES OF ARROGANCE

As we said earlier, the reason underlying a person's arrogance is his erroneous assumption that he has an existence apart from and independent of Allah, and that he has acquired his qualities of his own doing. However, in order to recognise the irrational nature of this line of thinking, one does not have necessarily to adhere to a faith.

Simply giving a little thought to this matter would make one grasp that he has not come into being by his own will, that he has no idea whatsoever about the time he will meet his death, and that his physical characteristics had not been given to him on his own doing. All these factors should lead him to comprehend that everything he possesses, including his body, is temporal, and will ultimately perish. All these indicators are clear evidence that man is weak, and that nothing-not even those things he thinks he is in possession of-in actuality, belong to himself, or that he exercises control over them. We could multiply these examples still, through deeper thought. In light of all these facts, it becomes clear how irrational is arrogance. However, the majority of people are so unconcerned about their role in life that they cannot grasp-or are prone to forget-even these simple facts. For this reason, in our day, one can hardly encounter a person who is not guilty of arrogance on some level.

However, it is entirely unthinkable for a person to become arrogant if he is aware that Allah is the Almighty, that He created everything from nothing, that it is Allah Who has endowed humans with all their qualities and bestowed upon them their possessions, and Who can take them back whenever He wills, that all beings are mortal, and that the only One Whose existence will persist forever is Allah alone. Only the ones who fail to grasp these facts and forget about their deficiencies, weaknesses and death, can dare to act as such.

The reasons underlying arrogance are of various kinds; an issue which is unimportant for some may become a cause for arrogance in others. But, in general, the reasons leading to feelings of arrogance in people are basically the same. These reasons are generally linked to people's physical or intellectual qualities. The most frequent causes are the following:

- Power and Wealth
- Beauty and Youth
- Status, Prestige and Esteem
- Intelligence, Enlightenment and Education

Of course, we can always add to these causes. Other causes, depending on the environment in which one lives, can also lead to arrogance. Yet, a person who seeks the reasons for why some people have become arrogant will eventually come across these qualities mentioned above.

Further scrutiny of the qualities mentioned above will lead one to conclude that these are all temporary qualities, over which one does not have control. All these are temporal values, no matter how beautiful, wealthy or intelligent a person may be. A man's life is limited to 50-80 years or, at most to a 100 years... Neither the wealthiest man, nor the most beautiful woman, has the privilege of enjoying a longer life in this world. He or she will eventually meet death, although he had sought to avoid it and lose everything which he had been boasting about.

This aside, we need to keep in mind that all such things as wealth, beauty, and health are not guaranteed for life. It is only a matter of a moment when one can lose all of his or her material and spiritual attributes of which he is so proud. It is not infrequently that we can witness examples of people who experience such losses. The Qur'an reveals the true nature of the life of this world, that we take heed:

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

We have already stated that these qualities that contribute up arrogance in people are not features that make a person superior. They are all blessings in return for which a man must feel grateful to Allah. However, in case a person fails to consider that it is Allah Who grants these blessings, and of the reasons why He grants them, a person grows increasingly arrogant, and starts to believe that he possesses these qualities because he deserves them.

While counselling the believers, the Prophet Muhammad (saas) drew attention to this point, reminding them of the possibility that the most important assets man thinks he has may disappear one day, and that he has to make use of them in a way that pleases Allah while he has them:

Take advantage of five before five; your youth before your old age, your health before your sickness, your wealth before your poverty, your free-time before your preoccupation and your life before your death. (Al-Haakim, al-Bayhaqee, Saheeh)

In the following pages, we will expand on the nature of these qualities that cause conceit, and the real truth about the life of this world, to which man is so passionately attached.

Power and Wealth

An investigation of history reveals that the possession of power and wealth is a common characteristic of arrogant and haughty people. Due to the power they held, these people rejected faith and subjected those around them to oppression.

However, these people, who grew arrogant on account of their wealth and power, failed to grasp a very important truth: everyone, whether rich or poor, will one day surely meet death and be placed under the earth. In death, money and possessions no longer have any significance. The eternal life of the hereafter will be the only truth awaiting him. The money and wealth he accumulated in the life of this world will be of no benefit to him, unless he spent it for the cause of Allah. A person who boasts of his wealth, and holds an excessively high opinion of himself, in actuality, forgets the fact that he is vulnerable even to a miniscule virus invisible to the naked eye. Even a world of wealth proves insufficient to improve his safety against the danger of a tiny microbe. Moreover, all the riches of the world, even if it were doubled, cannot make him immune to death.

Although he may assume that he will continue to be held in high esteem with the goods and money he leaves behind in this world, he will be greatly disappointed on the Day of Judgment. That is because, no matter how rich he may be, there will remain only a few people who will still remember him only 3 to 5 years after his death. Even if he, exceptionally, were to live on in the memories of a greater number of people, it would not help him in the least. Indeed, while he is suffering from torment for his arrogance towards Allah, how people will remember him will lose all its importance.

Such people develop their character based on arrogance. However, the kind of character derived from the power of wealth is not "character" in its true sense of the word; losing his wealth, or meeting someone wealthier than he, causes his self-confidence and so-called character to disappear. That is, if the self-confidence and character of a person are dependent upon such factors, then that person is doomed to a lack of confidence and frustration when he loses them.

However, a person who believes in Allah, the Creator of all beings, and puts his trust in Him, maintains his strong character, no matter what befalls him. That is because the only source of power is Allah, and Allah is the Eternal Owner of Sovereignty and the Everlasting. Therefore, the only factor upon which one's self-confidence should depend is one's faith and trust in Allah.

A person who turns to Allah, and puts his trust in Him in all his affairs, gains a strong character because he knows that there is no power other than Him. Unless Allah wills, nothing will happen to a person of faith. Meanwhile, when Allah decides on something, He just says to it, "Be!" and it is. For human beings, who are weak and in need of their Creator, there exists nothing greater than being Allah's friend. Therefore, for a believer, it is unthinkable to assume an image of himself that is founded on material wealth, or any other temporal quality. He considers these qualities merely as Allah's blessings, and puts them to use for the cause of Allah alone.

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

As the verse above maintains, for arrogant people, children are also a form of property; they exploit them as a means for ostentation. They attribute the good qualities of their children to themselves, and thus feel pride, as if it is they who have given those qualities to their children. Rather than recognising their children as blessings Allah committed into their care to be brought up in the way that pleases Him, they consider their children as means to compete with others. For this reason, everything related to their children, their food, clothes, the schools they attend, their profession etc. become matters of prestige for them.

"Ostentation," which should be regarded as a social "disease," is not restricted to this example alone. The majority of people boast about their social status, clothes, cars, houses, goods and so on. Interestingly, their main ambition in this form of ostentation is to earn the respect of others. That is, their choices do not reflect what they really need to improve their health, comfort or tastes. They attach too much importance to the opinions of others. This subjects them to an emotional roller-coaster ride, of greater and greater ambition and more desires. But, will this ambition suffice to quench the desires of man's lower self?

Allah informs us in the Qur'an that the greed of disbelievers is insatiable. The greedier a person becomes the more arrogant and rebellious he becomes. Indeed, the verse below offers an accurate description of the psychology of a disbeliever:

Leave the person I created on his own to Me alone, him to whom I have given great wealth and sons who stay with him, and whose way I have smoothed. Then he wants Me to add yet more! (Surat al-Muddaththir: 11-15)

As the above verse also brings to light, because the desires of the lower self are insatiable, it is always in need of more. It passionately desires something, but once it is attained, it immediately seeks something else. A person believes that he will be happy once he attains his desire, but he soon finds that the attainment of what he thought would be a desirable end does not bring him lasting happiness. Despite this fact, however, guided by his greed, he hoards wealth and continually strives for more. For instance, after years of effort, a person eventually manages to buy a flat. But, after just a few years, he loses interest in the house, and begins to set his sights on a better one. Let's suppose that he also succeeds in purchasing it; after only five years, he starts to dream of yet a better house, with pool and garden this time, and this vicious circle goes on and on.

We often come across similar examples in our own lives. The pursuit of a house, car, summer home, children, personal benefits, etc. lures these people into the downward spiral of the allurements of the life of this world, and occupies them until death comes upon them. Of course, there is nothing wrong with such pursuits; it is entirely legitimate. But, a life entirely guided by these ambitions has no meaning. As a matter of fact, some "players" attain many of their desires in this game, while though the majority fail, and meet death before they can satisfy their greed.

It is futile to be consumed with such greed, but the transience of this world, or the brevity of this life, are not the only reasons for its futility. We also need to consider the following: even the wealthiest man, living in a stately mansion, or opulent house with more rooms than occupants, can only spend his time in one room at a time. Though he may have a very sophisticated wardrobe, the fact remains that he can only wear one suit at a time. Even if he changes his suit every hour, he will soon become bored. If he is served countless varieties of gourmet foods, his appetite would be quenched before he eats at the most 2 servings. An attempt to have more may turn out to be harmful... It is apparent that most of human behaviour is shepherded by vain avarice. However, from the viewpoint of one with the ability to discern, these are not the things for which to be ambitious. On the contrary, they are the delusions of the life of this world. This fact, which is ignored by the majority of people, is related in the Qur'an as follows:

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

There is yet another important fact that should be kept in mind; everything a man possesses in this world exists by the Will of Allah. By Allah's Will, some people are born into wealth while others are tested in poverty for the length of their lives. However, it is entirely irrational for a person to be arrogant because of the blessings

Allah grants him. As human beings, we must grasp that this truly is a matter of Allah's Will; He improves the situation of those whom He pleases, and He also restricts the means of others. In both cases, however, it is a test for man; he is tested in his attitude to these favours as well as deprivations. One verse reads:

Allah expands provision to anyone He wills and restricts it. They rejoice in the life of the world. Yet the life of the world, compared to the hereafter, is only fleeting enjoyment. (Surat ar-Ra' d: 26)

This being the case, in the life of this world, which is as brief as the blink of an eye, man needs to avoid such delusions and feel grateful for the possessions given to him, rather than perceiving them as a means to become arrogant towards Allah. Indeed, the Day of Rising is a dreadful day, when all of man's possessions and other worldly assets will be reduced to nothing. On that Day, when not a single trace of man's worldly possessions will remain, he will be called to account for every offence he committed against Allah.

In the coming sections of this book, we will present examples from the lives of the arrogant who boasted of their property, as they were mentioned in the Qur'an.

Beauty and Youthfulness

Beauty is also among the causes that may lead a person to become arrogant. People are all too easily deceived by the fleeting allurements of this world. However, physical beauty is not a quality of one's own making. It is granted by Allah. It is also a quality that can be taken back at any time.

Everyone knows that it is a matter of an instant in which one can lose his or her good-looks. A facial scar, or loss of an organ, can change the looks of a person forever, and none should regard himself as an exception. Even if none of these terrible things were to happen, a person must keep in mind that he is also vulnerable to a merciless and irrepressible enemy; that is, aging. Even the most beautiful person in the world cannot resist the process of aging, and eventually her beauty, first diminished by wrinkles and other traces of old age, fades in time. Celebrities are a good example of this reality. As an immutable law of Allah, these people, who one day bask in the adulation of fans, later cannot prevent themselves from growing older. All the wealth and means at their disposal cannot save them from this inevitable end. These examples help to better understand how vain it is to be arrogant on account of one's beauty and youth. Still, it will be helpful to consider what the body goes through during the initial phases that take place during the first 10 days after death.

The corpse, when buried under ground, will go through a rapid process of decay. Soon after it is placed in the grave, bacteria will start to function. The gasses released from these organisms will inflate the body, starting from the abdomen, altering its shape and appearance. Bloody mucous will dribble out the mouth and nose due to the pressure of gasses on the diaphragm. Accompanying this exterior transformations of the body, its internal organs will also decay, letting off an unbearably disgusting smell. The brain will decay. Bones will detach from sinews and the skeleton will fall apart. This process will continue until the whole body is reduced to a mere heap of bones.

This is exactly what will happen to us all, even though we find it difficult to think of. One who assumes that his physical attractiveness belongs to him must also think the same for this decayed corpse. Yet, this is what

even the most beautiful person in the world will ardently avoid, because it is unthinkable to boast or become haughty towards Allah with a decayed body.

Some, on the other hand, lack self-confidence because they are not noticeably attractive. In fact, this is another form of egotism. The person in question, attributes her beauty to herself, and considers the absence of it as a deficiency or flaw. Regarding this issue, it is the conduct of believers that is most commendable. Believers feel contented with what Allah has granted them, and do not make their physical qualities a matter of self-doubt or arrogance. They are aware that the real owner of their bodies is Allah, and that they are merely being tested by them. It is the soul that matters and one's nearness to Allah.

Being grateful to Allah, aware that beauty is a blessing granted by Him to man, and thereby, being modest, is the most exemplary manner of conduct. Meanwhile, it may well be that Allah grants inner beauty, charm and light from His sight to one who avoids boasting about what he has, remaining aware that it is Allah Who possesses everything. Thus, such a person may be better liked by people than a lot of others would with a better physical appearance.

Status, Prestige and Esteem

Do not strut arrogantly about the earth. You will certainly never split the earth apart nor will you ever rival the mountains in height. (Surat al-Isra' : 37)

Holding a status, and the prestige it brings, is one of the allurements of the life of this world. It is surely vain and irrational to be arrogant and feel superior due to the status and prestige one enjoys in this life. History abounds with the examples of people who possessed status and great power, yet lost them both in an instant. Surely, everyone is familiar with such examples. Despite being aware of these examples, those who make their status and prestige a matter of pride simply lack wisdom, since these are the worldly values that are esteemed by certain people, and which are things of this world. A person who is well-off, for instance, is generally respected by only his employees. Alternatively, a statesman is known and appreciated only by the people of that country. Even if a person succeeds in earning the appreciation and respect of all the people in the world-though this is unlikely-this fact is unalterable. The mere truth is, those who respect him are ordinary people, and this is not ever-lasting.

The unalterable truth of the life of this world is this: Whether one is poor or wealthy, beautiful or ugly, one will one day be wrapped in a simple shroud and placed in grave. Anything belonging to this world will no longer be of any benefit to him. He will be reduced to bones, and nothing else. At that point in time, one's status, profession, power or beauty will lose all its significance, and a person will be questioned solely based on his obedience to Allah. One's attitudes in this world, and his wholehearted submission to his Lord, will be the determining criteria for one's position in the life of the hereafter. The Qur'an here informs us about the future awaiting these people in the hereafter:

Abandon those who have turned their religion into a game and a diversion and who have been deluded by the life of the world. Remind by it lest a person is delivered up to destruction for what he has

earned with no protector or intercessor besides Allah. Were he to offer every kind of compensation, it would not be accepted from him. Such people are delivered up to destruction for what they have earned. They will have scalding water to drink and a painful punishment because they were disbelievers. (Surat al-An' am: 70)

In essence, those who boast about their status, and consider themselves superior to others, are the ones who suffer the most from the consequences of their actions. That is because, there is always someone who is greater in status or position, next to whom such people feel inferior, something which is a great cause of embarrassment to these people.

Another aspect of the subject we are discussing deserves special mention; their arrogance brings no benefits whatsoever in this world. Although these people earn some form of appreciation from others, they are, in actuality, those who are disliked and whose company is the least welcomed. Those who are humble, on the other hand, are those who have recognised the importance of character, wisdom and morality as true values. They do not boast of their qualities. And, owing to this character, they earn the love, respect and appreciation of others.

Intelligence, Enlightenment, and Education

Aside from wealth, beauty and social status, which are the major causes of arrogance, there is another factor to which people attach considerable importance. They consider being a graduate of a prestigious college, for instance, a very important matter of pride.

However, as is the case with all other things in life, attending such a school is also a part of the destiny Allah has predetermined. Therefore, making this a matter of pride would be an unjust glorification of one's self.

In the hereafter, man will be questioned, neither about the college he graduated from, nor of his intellectual background. (Certainly, an education is important but definitely not something to boast about.) In Allah's presence, man will be held responsible for his sincerity, faith, modesty, and his acts of worship.

However, for such people, who make it their major goal to attain the temporal values of this world, any quality-be it minor or important-may turn out to be a cause for arrogance. Possessing profound knowledge about a subject is one such quality. In fact, though a person may be exceedingly skilled at mathematics, or may have developed important theories in the field of physics, there is only one important issue we need to consider; even if he employs all his knowledge, he can never change even a single law of physics or create a living cell.

Apart from the basic issues we have mentioned above, there are also those who boast of their insignificant qualities. For them, simple privileges, such as a good-looking hair, a new car, clothes, competence with computers, a rich voice, popular friends, etc. may be reason for them to boast. However, those who are more wise are continually aware of the banality and triviality of this simplistic type of thinking.

The wise, that is, the prophets and believers, who had remained modest throughout their lives, provide a good role model for us to follow. The Prophet Sulayman, for instance, employed all his wealth and power for the cause of Allah. Similarly, Dhu' l-Qarnayn considered the authority he had over nations as a means to serve the religion of Allah. The Prophet Dawud, as well, showed meticulous attention in complying with Allah's commands and in being just.

In addition to these few chosen people, the lives of the followers of the Prophet Muhammad (saas) also provide a good role model for Muslims. Although the majority of them came from the prominent families of the society they lived in, they did not hesitate for a moment but sided with Allah and His Messenger, when forced to make a choice between their possessions, money, the people around them, and Allah' s religion. That is because, they were very well aware that the life of this world is insignificant, and that the real resting-place is the hereafter. With the intention of earning the good pleasure of Allah, they sided with the Prophet (saas), emigrated when they were forced to, left behind their wealth and riches, did not covet the social standing or rank they had held, and devoted their entire lives to service in Allah' s path.

The character that is pleasing to Allah is obvious. Those who may currently be in possession of blessings such as wealth, beauty, intelligence, prestige, youth etc., must remember to keep in mind that it is Allah Who grants them these and that they are being tested by them. On the Day of Judgement, they will be called to give an account for each of these blessings. In the Qur' an, Allah relates the psychology of those who fail to grasp this fact, and thereby, become arrogant towards Him:

Does he imagine that no one has power over him? He says, "I have consumed vast quantities of wealth." Does he imagine that no one has seen him? (Surat al-Balad: 5-7)

For his own benefit, the reader must think about his own character while considering what is explained in this section. One' s lower-self is very prone to boasting. Intelligence, background, a profession, a house, a car, education, one' s physical qualities, and various other qualities can potentially lead to vanity. Still, besides these, one' s self may find others to boast. Yet, the essential thing is not to be misled by the superficial aspects of this world. It must be remembered that arrogance will only bring humiliation to a person, both in this world and beyond.

EFFECTS OF ARROGANCE ON THE SOUL

The arrogant are distinctly avaricious and desirous of prestige. They are known both for their ambition as well as their desire to gain prestige. Wherever they are, they want to be the supreme, unique and most powerful one. They rely on their beauty, possessions, intelligence or status, that is, in the things of which they boast. Moreover, they believe they will never lose these qualities or possessions. Not for a moment do they feel any doubt about their flawed way of thinking. Although those around them are aware of their shortcomings, they believe themselves irreproachable. In actuality, they suffer many weaknesses due to their failure to grasp these facts. This mental deficiency is related in the Qur'an as follows:

Among them there are some who listen to you. But can you make the deaf hear even though they cannot understand? Among them there are some who look at you. But can you guide the blind, even though they cannot see? (Surah Yunus: 42-43)

Though the reasons for arrogance differ from one person to another, depending on their respective traits, there is a state of mind common to nearly all arrogant people. In the following section, we will consider some general character traits that result from this state of mind.

They are in a Diseased and Disturbed State of Mind

A normal person, who enjoys a stable state of mind, is extroverted, open and sincere. An arrogant person, however, suffers a darkened and disturbed state of mind. Being deceived and carried away by his pride, his inner-world is a sombre place of distress and anxiety; consumed with devious thoughts and schemes. Such a state of mind becomes exhausting, and causes them to age before their time.

Lacking in character, they are cold and ill-tempered. It is rare to see a pleasant expression or sign of affection or appreciation on their face, or to hear an encouraging word from them. One cannot feel relaxed among them or enjoy their company. Men tend to become aggressive and irascible. In woman, on the other hand, arrogance manifests itself as uneasiness. Wherever they are, a minor problem is likely to cause tension in them and absorb them in quarrel.

They Greatly Fear Making Mistakes

All acts and thoughts of those who are abundantly proud are directed towards earning the appreciation of others, and of making themselves out to be superior. For this reason, they excessively fear making mistakes. For them, making mistakes is a form of humiliation. They have total confidence in themselves, yet, paradoxically, feel the constant worry of doing the wrong thing. The arrogant ardently avoid all kinds of mistakes; making a mistake for them is an embarrassment. Therefore, they deny even the possibility. They are in a constant struggle to escape accusation of any faults. In a verse, Allah describes a disposition of these people:

Do you not see those who praise themselves for purity? No, Allah purifies whoever He wills. They will not be wronged by so much as the smallest speck. (Surat an-Nisa' : 49)

The arrogant humiliate others when they discover their mistakes. They exaggerate the errors other people make, taking every opportunity to bring these to light. They show no pity for anyone who commits an error, and become condescending towards them. They erroneously assume that if they reveal others' mistakes they make apparent their own faultlessness. Therefore, no one can feel at ease in their company. Such people always create an atmosphere of negativity.

Due to these reprehensible qualities, the arrogant can never master sincerity in its true sense. They remain deprived of this quality because they are aloof, always scheming. Such traits hinder them from being sincere towards others, being the reason why others distance themselves from them. They always fear that sincere behaviour, or natural shortcomings may become an object of ridicule. Due to their bad character, the arrogant are usually abandoned by others when they lose their power or fortune. Yet, we need to remember that, even at those times when they feel they are powerful, they are still alone in their own inner-world, so distant from the morality of the Qur' an.

They Cannot Stand Criticism

Being subject to criticism is something an arrogant person dislikes immensely. When criticised, his facial muscles tense up, and his expression dulls. Concerned about damage to his prestige, he is dismayed. He assumes that, if he makes a mistake, he will be ridiculed or humiliated by others, just as he is accustomed to reprove others in similar situations. He believes that being subject to criticism or admonition is degradation. To adopt such a state of mind is detrimental both in the spiritual and physical sense. Their tone of voice fluctuates, they are impaired by twitching, and in their face, you will not find signs of sincerity. Ultimately, they never find peace and comfort.

They maintain goals such as being "the most beautiful," "the most clever" or "the most qualified." Such pursuits place them under constant pressure. Seeing themselves as so perfect or superior, (or rather that they aim to prove themselves to be so), even a minor admonishment suffices to infuriate them. However, there is a point on which they are forgetful; they may seek to present themselves as perfect and infallible, and in some cases even succeed at doing so. Yet, on the Day of Judgment, they will be confronted with all their wrongdoings, whether minor or grave. As Allah informs us in the Qur' an, "**Do they not know that Allah knows what they keep secret and what they make public?**" (Surat al-Baqara: 77), everything about them is known to Allah,

the Almighty. But being forgetful of their Lord and the Day of Judgment, they only deceive and humiliate themselves.

Praise Is What Pleases Them

That state of mind peculiar to the arrogant is discernible in their looks and their manner of speaking. These people either praise themselves openly, or place themselves in those circumstances by which they will gain praise. On the other hand, other people's good qualities make them envious. This envy becomes immediately perceptible in their facial expression. Because of their arrogance, they become unsociable. Basically, they are tense and distressed, trying to appear "cool" and different to others. What they enjoy most is praising themselves or to be praised by others.

On the contrary, believers are aware that they are merely servants of Allah, and only Allah is Praiseworthy. The Prophet Muhammad (saas) sets an example of modesty for all Muslims, as revealed in his saying:

Do not exceed bounds in praising me; I am only the Lord's servant; then call me the servant of Allah and His messenger. (Bukhari, Muslim)

Arrogance Prevents Man from Loving and Being Loved

The arrogant love themselves most, and thus, can never experience true love. At most, they can only pretend to love. They find it demeaning to show their love to others; they always desire to be the one to whom love and attention is shown. They deem it to be a kind of weakness to love others and to show them affection.

Due to their overbearing pride, they are incapable of love. Loving another person demands, primarily, that one be able to discern those qualities that are deserving of love. Yet, an arrogant person is loath to recognise these favourable qualities in people. Indeed, in their eyes, it is they who are most worthy of love. For this reason, they feel jealous of the beauty, intelligence, virtue or possessions of others. Sometimes, this jealousy reaches to such an extent that they wish others to lose all their good.

Another reason why they are incapable of showing love is that they cannot appreciate other people's good qualities. Moreover, even if they were to recognise them, they expressly avoid mentioning them. The presence of someone else with better qualities than they makes them feel uneasy. Consumed with jealousy, they are malicious and hostile.

The arrogant, with such disquieted spirit, are, in actuality, in great loss; throughout their lives, they are never able to experience true love, a feeling which is a great blessing from Allah. Apart from not being able to love, they are also not loved in the true sense, though they may be good-looking or intelligent. Because they share certain mutual interests, they may have established relationships with some people. Otherwise, most dislike their company. There is something unpleasant about their character and air. Considering the absence of tenderness, warmth, sincerity and modesty in their character, it is not difficult to understand why people avoid such people, no matter what their status or privilege.

They Are Unable to Enjoy Anything

An arrogant person is also unable to enjoy anything. Events and places that others generally take pleasure in do not meet up to their taste. In such circumstances, they seek the imperfections of others, and, all the while,

strive to make known their supposed superiority. They consider being "cool" and "indifferent" as a mark of that superiority, and find it degrading to enjoy themselves.

Nevertheless, it is again only themselves who suffer from the consequences of such a disposition; they cannot taste the blessings of having joy, constantly submerged in their gloomy world. Curiously, they are incapable of understanding the reason for their uneasiness. Although they possess many superior features, according to them, they cannot rid themselves of distress and unhappiness. This demonstrates the fact that those who are arrogant towards Allah are bereft of understanding; they cannot grasp that it is Allah Who inspires this anxiety into their hearts.

A verse gives a detailed account of the sort of the arrogance of these people:

When he is told to have fear of Allah, he is seized by pride which drives him to wrongdoing... (Surat al-Baqara: 206)

Allah causes these people to feel depressed and buries them in ignominy, on account of their "pride" and "forgetfulness" of Him:

When Allah desires to guide someone, He expands his breast to Islam. When He desires to misguide someone, He makes his breast narrow and constricted as if he were climbing up into the sky. That is how Allah defiles those who disbelieve. (Surat al-An' am: 125)

Surely these are the troubles inflicted upon people in this world; their repayment in the hereafter will be much severer.

THE NEGATIVE EFFECTS OF ARROGANCE ON THE HUMAN BODY

Arrogance demands constant apprehension. Over an extended period of time, this causes tension and stress on the human body. Concerns such as over making a mistake, being subject to criticism or humiliation, losing prestige, earning the approval of others, or losing things for which one is proud, puts man under extreme pressure and demand constant attention of him. This is just the exact condition for stress to result. Hence, the facial expressions and the moods of an arrogant person vary greatly from that of a modest one.

An arrogant person, who leads his entire life under undue stress, actually causes great harm to his body. This, however, he often fails to understand. Lost in the pursuit of being seen as superior puts him under great pressure, the traces of which it is possible to discern in his physical body.

The distress the arrogant feel internally manifests itself physically. Their hair, for instance, becomes dull and slows its growth. Their skin thickens, becomes hard and loses its pliability. The tension in their muscles become apparent. They look old for their age, and wrinkles begin to appear. Their mouth dries. Their eyes lose their vitality and become dull. Under the influence of arrogance, masculine qualities appear in women; their skin thickens, they become hairy and veiny, and their hands bony. Their skin turns to dark. Any positive physical aspects in such an arrogant person does not help to counter his or her ultimate lack of appeal.

Despite any physical charm, a "deficiency," as a consequence of his pride and lack of wisdom, pervades an arrogant person's body. Ironically, a modest and sincere believer has a positive effect on people, though he may lack physical beauty.

On the other hand, an arrogant person is impaired in speech, failing to speak fluently or sincerely. His reasoning is flawed. Instead of speaking candidly or purposefully, he speaks boastfully, so as to cover his flaws, or to earn the acclaim of others. This is why every sentence he utters is clearly lacking in wisdom, and thus, makes known his insincerity. Especially, when his mistakes are made known, or when he is given advice he dislikes, the features mentioned above become even more obvious.

Internal organs are also vulnerable to the negative effects of arrogance. As in the case of cigarettes and alcohol, the negative effects of stress, as a consequence of arrogance, become apparent over an extended period of time. Specialists have also linked many disorders to stress. The most observable consequences of stress are stomach aches, gastritis, and other disorders of digestive system.

We need to remember that all these effects mentioned above can be observed only by an attentive eye. People having these traits may deny the existence of these symptoms or explain them away. Yet, a comparison between a believer, who is submissive to Allah, and an arrogant person, would make these physical and mental differences apparent. As one grows old, the differences become ever more apparent. Thus, an arrogant person causes the most damage to himself. Believers, on the other hand, lead a joyful and peaceful life, since they put their trust in Allah, and believe in the reality of fate. Of course, signs of aging will appear on them as well, yet, not to the extent of the harm of stress and the gloomy temperament of the arrogant. In this way, believers lead a happy life, both in this world and beyond...

HIDDEN ARROGANCE

Another form of arrogance, or considering oneself superior, is what we call the hidden arrogance. Generally, the attitudes of people with hidden arrogance vary greatly from that of the arrogant. The most significant difference between the two is that an arrogant person can be readily recognised from his outward appearance, whereas it is difficult for someone with hidden arrogance.

Arrogant people commonly reveal their arrogance by boasting openly. Yet, the other group of arrogant people conceal their arrogance. These people pay special attention to masking this reprehensible quality. Therefore, the question is: Why do they need to hide their arrogance? Why do they put such effort?

There are various reasons for this. These people, who are more intelligent than arrogant people, are, in actuality, very well aware of what is right and wrong. For this reason, they can sense that arrogant manners are liable to produce undesirable effects in others and upset them. Since they attach too much importance to the opinions of others, they prefer to hide their arrogance, and thereby, not lose their approval. They are well aware that being modest is recognised as a virtue and thus they pretend to be so.

These people believe that they are the "most intelligent" and "the most upright." They deify themselves. Making a mistake or appearing incompetent hurts their pride. This being the case, they strive to maintain a perfect image in the eyes of people. That is why they do not want to be known as arrogant and feel ashamed if they sense that people have formed such an opinion about them. They fear losing the approval of others rather than fearing Allah and seeking His good pleasure alone.

One thing they enjoy is secretly mocking others. This is one way to satisfy their lower desires. Yet, they also pay meticulous attention not to make others notice this wickedness of theirs.

Their method of concealing their arrogance is quite devious; primarily, they try to put forth themselves as ideal people. It is essential for them to be known as "virtuous," being the reason why they aim to present themselves as "perfect" and "innocent." Earning the adulation and approval of others, to be admired by them, and thus, assuaging their arrogance becomes their main pursuit.

The arrogant boast continually, trying to bring attention with their qualities. People with hidden arrogance, however, avoid such overt attempts. Their schemes are more subtle, or more precisely, more wicked. They tend to create the appropriate conditions that will lead others to praise them.

Such a type of arrogance is dangerous; it is something like an iceberg. (About 90 percent of its mass is below the surface of the water.) It is easy to avoid people who are arrogant, in common sense of the word, since they are easily recognised. But, it is otherwise with those who conceal their arrogance. Their arrogance becomes obvious only in time, making it more difficult to admonish to them or to explain to them the situation they are in.

In general, this state of mind makes itself known after one has assumed a position of authority or responsibility; that is, by these circumstances, their hidden disease is accentuated. They attribute this responsibility to their superior features; and, it is quite difficult to persuade them otherwise. And, should they succeed at their task, they become excessively proud about it.

There are many other situations that cause this hidden arrogance to surface. For instance, upon losing his position of prestige, a person who appears modest outwardly may adopt an attitude otherwise unexpected of

him; he may become introverted, diffident, and surly. This behaviour is telling marks of arrogance. A modest person's temperament never changes, no matter what happens to him. Such a person knows that there is good in whatever happens, and strives to earn the good pleasure of Allah no matter what the circumstances. As for an attitude to the contrary, however, it becomes obvious that the person in question attaches undue importance to prestige and status, thereby revealing his arrogance.

A modest person, on the other hand, is one purified of all such manners. He is self-satisfied and at ease. Yet, it also deserves mention that over-exaggerated modesty is also an important form of arrogance. Because, where modesty is valued, a person who nurtures hidden arrogance strives to earn the approval and appreciation of others by pretending to be modest.

As we said earlier, hidden arrogance is dangerous, since it manifests itself in ways we do not expect. And, being confronted with a person's hidden personality can be quite shocking. For instance, when faced with failure or criticism, a person who is not known to be arrogant may lose his temper and conduct himself quite unseemly. That is because, the idea of others being aware of his failure deeply hurts his pride. It may well be that his arrogance had never surfaced only because his wishes or expectations had never been challenged. However, believing that he has lost all his prestige in the eyes of people, now he has no qualms about revealing his arrogance and wickedness, which had till then been hidden.

Hidden arrogance may also appear in the form of acts of immorality. A person may lie in order to conceal his own imperfection, or he may try to make others' failures known to others in order to make himself appear better. Should a flaw of his be noticed, he would try to avoid all possible reactions, and defend his base nature. For this end, he resorts to evil methods, such as weeping or making others pity him.

The arrogant express their discontent through silent protest; they give the cold shoulder, overreact, or become ill-tempered. Therefore, one who encounters such clear signs will easily be able to diagnose arrogance. In the case of hidden arrogance, however, almost all of these signs are not recognisable. Such people, by all appearances, are cheerful, and of normal vitality. Normally, their behaviour doesn't betray a hint of deviousness. Even, in some cases, they pose modesty so successfully that they are able to fool others. However, these people have one distinguishing trait; an excessively high opinion of themselves. They somehow believe they are "the best" in either their profession, at school, in their surroundings. And, this notion has even penetrated to their subconscious. As we said earlier, when they receive an undesired reaction, their real character surfaces; abruptly, they become belligerent. Falsely believing that they have been subjected to unfair treatment, they suffer an unhealthy mental state. This tendency is indicative of a weakness in them. Essentially, when they encounter something undesirable, their arrogance become evident and they begin to suffer a kind of "insanity."

Those who conceal their arrogance and claim purity for themselves may for a while manage to hide their pride from others, but Allah surely knows and makes known what is concealed in their hearts. One verse reads:

There is no doubt that Allah knows what they keep secret and what they make public. He does not love people puffed up with pride. (Surat an-Nahl: 23)

The most significant characteristic common to both groups-that is, those who are arrogant and those with hidden arrogance-is the inevitable end they will meet: Hell. The Qur'an informs us about the end of those who

are arrogant, whether overtly or deceitfully, and who are too proud to worship Allah. One of these verses is as follows:

Enter the gates of Hell, remaining in it timelessly, for ever. How evil is the abode of the arrogant!
(Surat an-Nahl: 29)

EXAMPLES OF ARROGANCE IN THE QUR' AN

The Leader of the Arrogant: Satan

Satan's arrogance, on account of which he was dismissed from Allah's mercy and grace, is related in the Qur'an as a lesson to mankind. As we said in the introduction to this book, Allah created Adam (as) and commanded the angels to prostrate themselves to him. They obeyed Allah's command, with the exception of *Iblis*, one of the jinn. He claimed to be a creature superior to man, and haughtily disobeyed Allah. For this reason, he was dismissed from the sight of Allah.

The reason of *Iblis*' defiance toward Allah is related in the Qur'an as follows:

He (Allah) said, "What prevented you from prostrating when I commanded you to?" He (Iblis) replied, "I am better than him. You created me from fire and You created him from clay." (Surat al-A'raf: 12)

Claiming to be a superior being, *Iblis* refused to prostrate to a human being. However, the grounds for this claim are invalid. He argued that he was created from fire, while man is created from clay, claiming that fire is superior to clay. In other words, the only basis for his arrogance is simply the difference between the physical make-up of these two substances. However, regardless of their nature, -whether clay or fire-both *Iblis* and man are beings created by Allah. Disobedience to one's Creator, on account of such an argument is entirely senseless and the mark of great ingratitude.

Furthermore, an examination into the basis of *Iblis*' claim would clearly reveal the erroneous nature of his assumption. Fire may well be brighter and more dazzling to the eye. All the same, clay is abundant in minerals and other substances. It abounds with all forms of precious materials and gems. Unless Allah wills, soil does not decay or disintegrate easily. But, this does not hold true for fire; it can be put out instantly. In addition, earth holds another superior quality over fire; it extinguishes it.

In any case, whatever the reason may be, no one should ever dare to question Allah's command. Yet, the overwhelming arrogance of *Iblis* hindered him from employing his wisdom and grasping the might of Allah, the Creator of all beings. Thus, he failed to measure Allah adequately. Consequently, an insignificant physical difference has proved sufficient grounds to mislead him. This delusion that arose from his arrogance led him to rebel against his own Creator, although he was in Allah's presence, and was someone fully cognizant of the beauty of Paradise and the torment of Hell:

When We said to the angels, "Prostrate yourselves to Adam!" they prostrated, except for Iblis. He said "What! Am I to prostrate to one You have created out of clay?" (Surat al-Isra' : 61)

The last statement of *Iblis* in the verse above makes known the extent of his pride. Man's exaltation by Allah and *Iblis*' demotion and furthermore, Allah's demand from him-that he prostrate himself to man-revealed his overbearing pride, which had until then been concealed. The lack of conscientiousness fostered in him

because of such a mindset led him to a failure in measuring Allah justly. As a result of this psychology of his, he behaved immorally and disrespectfully towards Allah (Surely Allah is beyond all that). In response to this behaviour, Allah says the following:

He (Allah) said, "Iblis, what prevented you prostrating to what I created with My own Hands? Were you overcome by arrogance or are you one of the exalted?" (Surah Sâd: 75)

Satan's defiance and his attempt to exalt himself backfired. Allah degraded him and-as a lesson to those who follow his immoral path-drove him away from Paradise:

He (Allah) said, "Get out of it, reviled and driven out. As for those of them who follow you, I will fill up Hell with every one of you." (Surat al-A' raf: 18)

As these verses make clear, Satan's greatest mistake was to arrive at erroneous conclusions and putting them into practice. This faulty reasoning is one of the fundamental characteristics of all who follow in the footsteps of Satan and become "devilishly arrogant." The detrimental effects of pride on a person are clearly demonstrated in the defiance of Satan, and those who followed him, to his Creator, the Almighty Allah. Maintaining a narrow outlook on things, evaluating everything from one's own perspective, causes one to become deprived of insight. Such an outlook eventually makes a person apt to perceive and interpret things incorrectly.

Satan's Provocation

Because of his unsound reasoning, Satan saw man as the main cause of his humiliation. Thus, he asked Allah for an amount of time to be able to mislead man, and thus, to take revenge upon him. His aim is to lead man away from the straight path, and by that, to make him rebellious towards Allah. It hurt his pride to see man exalted above him, and himself humbled. The story of Satan is related in the Qur'an as follows:

He (Allah) said, "What prevented you from prostrating when I commanded you to?"

He (Iblis) replied, "I am better than him. You created me from fire and You created him from clay."

He (Allah) said, "Descend from Heaven. It is not for you to be arrogant in it. So get out! You are one of the abased."

He (Iblis) said, "Grant me a reprieve until the day they are raised up."

He (Allah) said, "You are one of the reprieved."

He (Iblis) said, "By Your misguidance of me, I will lie in ambush for them on your straight path. Then I will come at them, from in front of them and behind them, from their right and from their left. You will not find most of them thankful." (Surat al-A' raf: 12-17)

In the aftermath of this pledge, *Iblis* initiated his struggle against man. Within the time granted to him, he would employ any means to prevent mankind from Allah's way, and to make them follow him. As a matter of fact, the Qur'an informs us that many follow Satan, and thus, are reduced to the lowest of the low. Since that time, *Iblis* has misled many and made them side with him. Aside from man, he has also had many followers among the jinn.

These jinn and people who follow *Iblis* maintain the same attribute as "Satan." ("Satan," derived from the Arabic word "shatana" which means "removed," is the attribute of every evildoer who is arrogant towards Allah, and therefore, is removed from His mercy and grace.) These jinns and men follow in the footsteps of *Iblis*, and make it their main goal to lead people astray, just as how they themselves have been misled by their own arrogance. The cause of these jinn and men are related in the Qur'an as follows:

In this way We have appointed as enemies to every Prophet satans from both mankind and from the jinn, who inspire each other with delusions by means of specious words-if your Lord had willed, they would not have done it, so abandon them and all they fabricate-so that the hearts of those who do not believe in the hereafter incline towards them and are pleased with them and perpetrate whatever they perpetrate. (Surat al-An'am: 112-113)

The arrogance of Satan is the major sign of those who are misled by him and who exhibit similarity to him. Arrogance is like the seal or signature of Satan, with which he stamps whoever adheres to him. As we have discussed, this disease of Satan, who was driven out by Allah due to his arrogance, poses a mortal danger to mankind. That is because, Satan, for the purpose of drawing man nearer to him, and making him a devoted follower, strives primarily to infect people with arrogance. A person seized by the disease of arrogance loses his conscientiousness and wisdom. Arrogance hardens the heart. This is why, contrary to the wiles of Satan, believers are encouraged to be modest:

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

The effects of Satan's influence may appear in various forms. As is known, rather than employing what Allah has granted him to draw nearer to Him, and feeling grateful to Him, Satan became pretentious. Failing to consider that Allah could reduce him to insignificance whenever He wills, He revolted against Allah's command. Indeed, the adherents of Satan show forth this quality of his in many ways. For instance, though a person might render some service to Allah, he should consider this service as an opportunity granted by his Lord to earn His good pleasure. Otherwise, believing that one can attain success by one's own efforts, without having been under Allah's ordinance, and being boastful thereof, would be errant. Because, attributing that success to one's own abilities, and being proud is a characteristic peculiar to Satan. Indeed, Qarun, who believed that his wealth was an outcome of his qualities, and thus, boasted, **"...I have only been given it because of knowledge I have..." (Surat al-Qasas: 78)**, is an important example of one who was severely punished by Allah for his evildoing. The Prophet Muhammad (saas), too, told believers to abstain from being boastful:

Allah has revealed to me that you must be humble, so that no one boasts over another, or oppresses another. (Muslim)

One must remember that Satan approaches man stealthily, avoiding notice. He is in no hurry. With repetition and persistence, he can gradually deceive people, a method that proves successful over the long term. If one fails to be on the alert against this stealthy method of Satan, its effect strengthens in time. For instance, if a person would enjoy some minor success, Satan would jump on the opportunity to tempt him. The insinuations made by Satan into the mind of that person would probably not include discernable expressions of arrogance. Such a person would, for instance, not openly say, "It is I alone who have accomplished this task." Satan employs a more deceptive strategy; he penetrates deeply into one's heart, but gradually. If a person fails to recognise that his success belongs to no one but Allah alone, he, in time, starts to believe in his own abilities and think that he possesses power independent of Allah.

If this sentiment turns into a permanent state of mind, conceit becomes one of his character traits. Such a person is a law unto himself; he does what he considers right, and sees himself better and wiser than anyone else. The inner-voice that insinuates feelings of superiority in him becomes louder. A person infected in such a way suffers from detrimental spiritual afflictions. In time, his heart grows insensitive to Allah's signs. Indeed, the Qur'an reveals that only those who are not vain can truly believe in Allah's signs:

The people who truly believe in Our Signs are those who fall to the ground prostrating when they are reminded of them, and glorify their Lord with praise, and are not arrogant. (Surat as-Sajda: 15)

The End of Those who Follow Satan

Satan exercises particular influence on conceited people. Those who are devoid of the faith and the wisdom to comprehend Allah's power—those who constitute "the majority of the people," as referred to in the Qur'an—follow Satan's path, joining the horde of his followers. One verse reads:

Satan has gained mastery over them and made them forget the remembrance of Allah. Such people are the party of Satan. No indeed! It is the party of Satan who are the losers. (Surat al-Mujadala: 19)

In the hereafter, those who side with Satan will no doubt be the most humiliated. They will be sent to Hell; furthermore, Satan will abandon them. At that moment they will realise that Satan made them only hollow promises, and that his words were merely deceptive. Yet, it will be too late; the Hellfire will already be awaiting them, making the promise of Satan:

When the affair is decided Satan will say, "Allah made you a promise, a promise of truth, and I made you a promise but broke my promise. I had no authority over you, except that I called you and you responded to me. Do not, therefore, blame me but blame yourselves. I cannot come to your aid nor you to mine. I reject the way you associated me with Allah before." The wrongdoers will have a painful punishment. (Surah Ibrahim: 22)

PHARAOH

Pharaoh is often referred to in the Qur'an as one of those who grew arrogant towards Allah. However, regarding Pharaoh as a merely unique example, is to fail to recognise the broader significance of the subject. It is important to recognise that the story of Pharaoh in the Qur'an, aside from merely providing information about his life, defines the "Pharaonic" character that has become prevalent in our time.

Whether recognised or not, history has seen many people possessed of the Pharaonic character. As a matter of fact, most are familiar with this character. Those who are known for their arrogance are often likened to Pharaoh.

The Qur'an refers to Pharaoh and his people as follows:

Such was the case with Pharaoh's people and those before them. They denied their Lord's Signs so We destroyed them for their wrong actions. We drowned Pharaoh's people. All of them were wrongdoers. (Surat al-Anfal: 54)

The character trait common to Pharaoh and other nations that perished before him is arrogance. The arrogance they harboured in their hearts prevented them from accepting Allah's messenger and obeying him. Their rejection only led them to torment both in this world and beyond. Further exploring the nature of the arrogance of Pharaoh, and considering the nations referred to in the Qur'an as those that have gone down in history for their arrogance, and their relevance to our day, will help us better understand the importance of the subject.

The attitude of Pharaoh and his people towards Allah's messenger was common to all corrupted nations. Their arrogance reached to such an extent that they even dared to make a mockery of Allah's messengers and the book he was sent with.

This is related in the following verses:

We sent Musa with Our Signs to Pharaoh and his nobles. He said, "I am the Messenger of the Lord of the worlds." But when he came to them with Our Signs, they merely laughed at them. (Surat az-Zukhruf: 46-47)

One of Pharaoh's distinguishing traits was, as is the case with his leader, Satan, his immoderate attachment to worldly things. Due to this distorted mindset, he failed to make a rational assessment of the events that confronted him, and thus, could not grasp Musa's superiority. According to him, worldly values, such as wealth, power, money etc., were the criteria that established one's superiority. This poor reasoning of Pharaoh's is described in the Qur'an as follows:

Pharaoh called to his people, saying, "My people, does the kingdom of Egypt not belong to me? Do not all these rivers flow under my control? Do you not then see? Am I not better than this man who is

contemptible and can scarcely make anything clear? Why have gold bracelets not been put upon his arms and why is there not a train of angels accompanying him?" (Surat az-Zukhruf: 51-53)

The issues Allah draws our attention in the verses above are as follows:

1. According to Pharaoh, the measure of one's superiority was not fear of Allah, but possessions and wealth. Nobility was also considered important.
2. Failing to grasp that the decision rested with Allah alone, Musa's stature as Allah's messenger was hurtful to his pride.
3. He despised Musa (as), found him contemptible, and mentioned his manner of speaking as a mark of inferiority. Focusing on people's imperfections is evidently the behaviour of an arrogant person.
4. Pharaoh thought the messenger should have been accompanied by angels, or possessed wealth and power, since, in his opinion, these were the symbols of authority.

Pharaoh Tried to Exalt Himself Before Musa (as):

A conversation between Musa (as) and Pharaoh is quoted in the Qur'an as follows:

Go to Pharaoh and say, "We are the Messenger of the Lord of all the worlds to tell you to send the tribe of Israel away with us." He (Pharaoh) said, "Did we not bring you up among us as a child and did you not spend many years of your life among us? Yet you did the deed you did and were ungrateful." He (Musa) said, "At the time I did it I was one of the misguided." (Surat ash-Shu'ara' : 16-20)

In the verses above, a different form of Pharaoh's arrogance is made apparent. When summoned to comply with Allah's commands, he immediately resorted to foolish methods. Verbal abuse was one such ruse. By referring to Musa (as) that he had been brought up in the palace, Pharaoh attempted to remind him of the loyalty he owed him. Furthermore, he tried to coerce him by mention of the Egyptian man he unintentionally killed when he has been ignorant of the religion. In this way, he foolishly intended to abase Musa (as) and to exalt himself before him and his people.

Pharaoh's Attempt to Kill Musa (as) Out of Arrogance:

Pharaoh said, "Let me kill Musa and let him call upon his Lord! I am afraid that he may change your religion and bring about corruption in the land." Musa said, "I seek refuge in my Lord and your Lord from every proud man who does not have faith in the Day of Reckoning." (Surah Ghafir: 26-27)

Pharaoh was so arrogant that, only in murdering Musa (as) would he find relief. This belligerent attitude of his was also a revolt against Allah. Aware of Musa's finer qualities, he felt jealous of him, and saw killing

him as the only way to maintain his authority over the people of Egypt. When faced with Pharaoh's insolence, Musa (as) maintained a composure that was truly exemplary, continually seeking refuge in Allah.

The above mentioned verse also draws our attention to Pharaoh's disbelief in the Day of Reckoning. One's disbelief in the books sent by Allah and of the Day of Reckoning, which has been proclaimed by Allah's messengers, is another sign of a person's insolence and arrogance. However, such arrogant people will only suffer greatly in the hereafter, just as Pharaoh did.

Pharaoh's Claim of Divinity

Pharaoh said, "Haman, build me a tower so that perhaps I may gain means of access, access to the heavens, so that I can look on Musa's God. Truly I think he is a liar." That is how Pharaoh's evil actions were made attractive to him and he debarred others from the Path. Pharaoh's scheming led to nothing but ruin. (Surah Ghafir: 36-37)

Pharaoh said, "Council, I do not know of any other god for you apart from Me..." (Surat al-Qasas: 38)

What Pharaoh stated in the verses above, in addition to the manner of his struggle with Allah, exemplify his audacity. As well, he falsely assumed Allah to be the Lord of the heavens alone, and denied that Allah is the Lord of the heavens and the earth and everything in between. According to his deviant outlook, his admitting to Allah's existence would nullify his authority and might. That is why he strove to argue that Allah is the Lord of the heavens alone. However, Allah informs us in Surah Ghafir that Pharaoh's ideas led him only into torment. Though, until that time, when he was to meet his torment, Pharaoh maintained his arrogance and his claim of divinity. Moreover, he even resorted to force and threatened his own people, as well as Musa (as), to submit to this claim:

Pharaoh said, "What is the Lord of all the worlds?" He said, "The Lord of the heavens and the earth and everything between them if you knew for sure." He said to those around him, "Are you listening?" He (Musa) said, "Your Lord and the Lord of your forefathers, the previous peoples." He (Pharaoh) said, "This Messenger, who has been sent to you, is mad." He (Musa) said, "The Lord of the East and the West and everything between them if you used your intellect." He (Pharaoh) said, "If you take any god other than me, I will certainly throw you into prison." (Surat ash-Shu'ara' : 23-29)

These verses make light of Pharaoh's claim of divinity and his struggle with Allah. Pharaoh first posed a question about Allah, whose basis was evil. His arrogance was so overwhelming that he was determined to refuse Musa's answer, no matter what. He was insistent on denying Allah's might, despite all the signs he witnessed. Pharaoh responded to the message of Allah, communicated to him by Musa (as), with threats and abuse; he was angered to hear that Allah was the Lord of all humanity, both of the past and present. His insolence led him to accuse the messenger of insanity. Because he lacked wisdom, a quality peculiar to

believers alone, he engaged himself in a struggle with Musa (as), yet, failed to remember one important fact: Allah was the protector of Musa (as), the sole possessor of everything, including him (Pharaoh), as well as all that he possessed.

Arrogance Made Pharaoh Deny Miracles

After first listening to the message of Allah, communicated through the Prophet Musa, Pharaoh asked him to bring about a miracle. Pharaoh, who trusted in the skills of his magicians, wanted Musa (as) to confront his magicians, since he was certain of his ultimate victory. In his opinion, a successful confrontation would secure his authority. However, the magicians' performance was mere sorcery, which the miracle performed by the Prophet Musa rendered void. Thus, Pharaoh was defeated. Yet, instead of acquiescing and accepting to be rightly guided, he became still more arrogant.

Witnessing the miracle performed by Musa (as), the magicians embraced faith and came to believe in the Lord of Musa (as). Nevertheless, their choice had no impact whatsoever on the hardened heart of Pharaoh. Rather, he decided instead to use force:

The magicians threw themselves down in prostration. They said, "We believe in the Lord of all the worlds, the Lord of Musa and Harun." Pharaoh said, "Have you believed in him before I authorised you to do so? This is just some plot you have concocted in the city to drive its people from it. I will cut off your alternate hands and feet and then I will crucify every one of you." (Surat al-A' raf: 120-124)

Drawing a Lesson from the End Met by Pharaoh

Pharaoh was one of the most arrogant people in history. He followed in the footsteps of Satan, and was repaid for what he did with unprecedented humiliation. So abject was this humiliation that, he not only lost his dignity in the eyes of his own people, but became a lesson to all men of all ages. The lesson from the end met by Pharaoh is related in the Qur' an as follows:

We brought the tribe of Israel across the sea and Pharaoh and his troops pursued them out of tyranny and enmity. Then, when he was on the point of drowning, he (Pharaoh) said, "I believe that there is no god but Him in whom the tribe of Israel believe. I am one of the Muslims." What, now! When previously you rebelled and were one of the corrupters? Today we will preserve your body so you can be a Sign for people who come after you. Surely many people are heedless of Our Signs. (Surah Yunus: 90-92)

At the moment of his death, Pharaoh repented, yet, his repentance was of no avail. He persisted in arrogance and denial although he was confronted with the facts and witnessed great miracles. It was his conceit

and feelings of superiority that created such a disposition in him and he felt regret only at the moment of his death, though it did not save him.

Here, a point deserves special mention. Arrogance was the major reason behind Pharaoh's denial. He insisted on denial, not because he failed to see or grasp the signs of faith, but because it hurt his sense of pride. His magicians' acknowledgment of Musa's forthrightness and their embracing the faith had been a great sign for him. The miracles performed by Musa (as) too were sure signs. Anyone witnessing such miracles would normally come to believe in Allah.

However, Pharaoh was devoid of a sound judgement, since his overbearing pride obscured his wisdom. The magicians' conversion to Musa's religion did not make him reflect upon the extraordinary situation he had confronted. All that he could think about was that the magicians had embraced the faith without him authorizing them to do so. Pharaoh's ability to judge was severely obscured by his pride. This is why he insisted on denial, until death came upon him.

The condition that led Pharaoh to disbelief holds true for every disbeliever. The reason of their denial is their overbearing pride. In the Qur'an, Allah describes these people as follows:

When Our Signs came to them in all their clarity, they said, "This is downright magic," and they repudiated them wrongly and haughtily, in spite of their own certainty about them. See the final fate of the corrupters. (Surat an-Naml: 13-14)

Pharaoh Will Lead His People on the Day of Judgment

Pharaoh lost his wealth and all the blessings he enjoyed in this world. Moreover, he was convicted to torment in the life of the hereafter. He lost the gardens, rivers, beautiful estates, crops, in brief, every thing for which he boasted. As the Pharaoh's case exemplifies, no matter how wealthy or powerful a person may be, Allah may take away his possessions in an instant.

For one of such insolence and arrogance, the torment of Hell will be terrible. As well, those who follow leaders with a Pharaonic character, and do not keep their mind occupied with the remembrance of our Lord, will also be punished. On the Day of Judgment, those who followed in the footsteps of Pharaoh will be brought with their leaders before their Lord to give an account of the deeds they performed in this world. Indeed, that which Pharaoh and his followers will meet on the Day of Judgment is related in the Qur'an as follows:

We sent Musa with Our Signs and clear authority to Pharaoh and his ruling circle. They followed Pharaoh's command but Pharaoh's command was not rightly guided. He will go ahead of his people on the Day of Rising and lead them down into the Fire. What an evil watering-hole to be led to! They are pursued by a curse in the world and on the Day of Rising. What an evil gift to be given! (Surah Hud: 96-99)

As said earlier, it would be wrong to assume that these qualities are peculiar to Pharaoh. All must fear succumbing to such a disposition, and be wary of a similar end. Those with such a disposition must remember the end of Pharaoh, and ardently avoid a similar punishment.

There is another point here that deserves mention; not only the Pharaonic arrogance but all forms of arrogance, are evil. Because arrogance obstructs one's wisdom, his pride can achieve dangerous proportions without him noticing it. Before all else, as many verses of the Qur'an make clear, arrogance is a quality with which Allah is displeased. This is why believers should endeavour to eschew arrogance with all their effort, and never allow their lower-selves to lead them to boast. We must keep in mind that even the smallest lapse permitted to one's lower-self may ultimately cause a great loss. A person may, without recognising it, become carried away, believing in the superiority of his opinions and attitudes. Indeed, Pharaoh, who harboured deep-seated pride, was seized by such an obsession. This is related in the Qur'an as follows:

**... Pharaoh said, "I only show you what I see myself and I only guide you to the path of rectitude."
(Surah Ghafir: 29)**

The verse quoted above illustrates Pharaoh's distorted sense of self. He sought to lead the masses astray. He was so assured of himself that he never doubted the reliability of the way to which he adhered.

This tendency is common to all arrogant people. The arrogant people have total confidence in themselves, and are often insistent on refusing the possibility that others may know better than themselves. Especially, they cannot tolerate those people chosen by Allah, and endowed with superior qualities. People who are assured of their superior intelligence must draw a lesson from the story of Pharaoh. While there is still time, one must consider the imprudence of the Pharaonic character, be guided instead by his conscience, and thus, avoid following in Pharaoh's footsteps, but seek forgiveness from Allah.

QARUN

Qarun was one of the people of Musa but he lorded it over them. We gave him treasures, the keys alone to which were a heavy weight for a party of strong men. Thereupon his people said to him, "Do not gloat. Allah does not love people who gloat." (Surat al-Qasas: 76)

As the above-quoted verse maintains, the treasures and status Qarun possessed in Egypt made him grow arrogant and insolent towards his people. To test him, Allah granted him an enormous fortune, and as is the case with all arrogant people, he was spoilt by them. He forgot that all possessions belong to Allah, and that He can take them back any time He wishes, and failed to recognise that these were granted to him as a test. Due to his arrogance, he thought that they were all given to him because he had "knowledge" and possessed superior qualities:

He said, "I have only been given it because of knowledge I have." Did he not know that before him Allah had destroyed generations with far greater strength than his and far more possessions? The evildoers will not be questioned about their sins. (Surat al-Qasas: 78)

This is the deviant outlook of the arrogant. Although it is Allah Who has given man whatever he has, the arrogant boast of their possessions and do not feel grateful to Allah or ask forgiveness from Him. They do not bother themselves with thinking, even for a second, that they could lose all these gifts in an instant. However, as we are to understand from this verse, many people, who were wealthier or more powerful than Qarun, perished on account of their arrogance. Like those of the past, Qarun received his punishment in this world. If he had been as powerful as he assumed himself to be, he would have been able to rescue himself. Yet, neither his status, nor his possessions, nor the people who admired him, nor the knowledge for which he boasted, could save him from Allah's punishment:

We caused the earth to swallow up both him and his house. There was no group to come to his aid, besides Allah, and he was not someone who is helped. Those who had longed to take his place the day before woke up saying, "Allah expands the provision of any of His servants He wills or restricts it. If Allah had not shown great kindness to us, we would have been swallowed up as well. Ah! Truly the disbelievers are not successful." (Surat al-Qasas: 81-82)

HAMAN

As we are to understand from the Qur'an, "Haman" is one of the men closest to Pharaoh, and who obeyed him and acted in compliance with his methodology. Being insolent and rebellious, he sided with Pharaoh and remained a loyal supporter to him. When Musa (as) came to his people to communicate Allah's message, Haman was there to oppose him along with Pharaoh:

We sent Musa with Our Signs and clear authority to Pharaoh, Haman and Qarun. But they said, "A lying magician." When he brought them the truth from Us they said, "Slaughter the sons of those who believe with him but let their women live." The stratagems of the disbelievers are nothing but errors. (Surah Ghafir: 23-25)

Pharaoh's immoral conduct towards Musa (as) was similarly adopted by Haman. Furthermore, he shared Pharaoh's errant reasoning and complied with all his wishes. As the verse below maintains, Pharaoh asked Haman to build a tower to see Allah (Surely Allah is beyond this):

Pharaoh said, "Council, I do not know of any other god for you apart from Me. Haman, kindle a fire for me over the clay and build me a lofty tower so that perhaps I may be able to climb up to Musa's god! I consider him a blatant liar." (Surat al-Qasas: 38)

However, Haman, who, out of conceit, was insistent on refusing to submit to Allah and His messenger, met the same end as Satan and Pharaoh. He tasted the inevitable end slated for the arrogant:

And Qarun and Pharaoh and Haman-Musa came with the Clear Signs to them, but they were arrogant on the earth. They could not outstrip Us. We seized each one of them for their wrong actions. Against some We sent a sudden squall of stones; some of them were seized by the Great Blast; some We caused the earth to swallow up; and some We drowned. Allah did not wrong them; rather they wronged themselves. (Surat al-'Ankabut: 39-40)

THE PROPHET IBRAHIM' S FATHER

The Prophet Ibrahim' s father possessed the attributes common to disbelieving nations. He was one of those who grew arrogant towards Allah, and was entrenched in hostility towards the Messenger. Having to be taught the morality of religion from his own son hurt the pride of this arrogant man. With gracious words and gentleness did the Prophet Ibrahim communicate Allah' s religion to his father and sought ways to prevent him from worshipping idols. Despite the Prophet Ibrahim' s best efforts, his father clung to his ignorant ways. He turned from the Prophet Ibrahim merely because he had faith in Allah, threatening him even with stoning:

Mention Ibrahim in the Book. He was a true man and a Prophet. Remember when he said to his father, "Father, why do you worship what can neither hear nor see and is not of any use to you at all? Father, knowledge which never reached you has come to me, so follow me and I will guide you to the right path. Father, do not worship Satan. Satan was disobedient to the All-Merciful. Father, I am afraid that a punishment from the All-Merciful will afflict you, and turn you into a comrade of Satan." He said, "Do you forsake my gods, Ibrahim? If you do not stop, I will stone you. Keep away from me for a good long time." (Surah Maryam: 41-46)

These threats did not daunt Ibrahim (as); he showed loyalty to Allah, disobeying his father and his people who denied his prophethood, and ultimately leaving them. This exemplary conduct of Ibrahim (as) is related in the Qur' an as follows:

Ibrahim was a community in himself, exemplary, obedient to Allah, a man of pure natural belief. He was not one of the idolaters. (Surat an-Nahl: 120)

Then We revealed to you: "Follow the religion of Ibrahim, a man of pure natural belief. He was not one of the idolaters." (Surat an-Nahl: 123)

ABU LAHAB

Abu Lahab was a disbeliever from the time of the Prophet Muhammad (saas) who was known for his arrogance and insolence. The Qur'an informs us that he and his wife were repaid with Hell for their evildoings in this world. They will be greatly humiliated with the punishments they receive.

The carrying of wood, is a job too mean for those fond of boasting of their wealth and possessions. Also seen as demeaning by them was the wearing a fibre cord around the necks. Yet, Allah humiliated them in a way they could not foresee. Their future condition, set as an example to later generations, is related in a surah of the Qur'an as follows:

Ruin to the hands of Abu Lahab and ruin to him! His wealth has not helped him nor anything he has earned. He will burn in a Flaming Fire. And so will his wife, the firewood-carrier, with a rope of twisted fibre round her neck. (Surat al-Masad: 1-5)

THE OWNER OF A VINEYARD

In Surat al-Kahf, Allah gives the example of a vineyard-owner who was deceived by his prosperity and achievements. This man exemplifies the type of arrogance that is derived from wealth. The pertinent verses are as follows:

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

As the verse maintains, in order to test him, Allah granted this vineyard owner abundant wealth. Yet, all this wealth only made him boastful. Instead of feeling grateful towards Allah, asking His forgiveness, and putting his riches to use for the cause of Allah, he spoke proudly and falsely assumed that his wealth was immune to time and disaster.

This is a clear example showing the illogic of arrogant people; although the vineyard-owner claimed that his possessions were eternal, he did not explicitly deny the existence of Allah, and even considered the possibility of his having to return to Him. Interestingly, he falsely maintained that he would not be punished, but rather, would actually be rewarded if this were to really happen.

A similar line of thinking is also common in the arrogant people of today. Although they do not openly deny the morality of religion, they are far from having fear of Allah in their hearts. Still, they falsely assume

that they will somehow be saved, even if they are "sent back to their Lord." This example of the vineyard-owner, given in the Qur' an, clearly shows that such people lack wisdom. Such a person' s understanding is blurred by his arrogance, and he is hindered from grasping Allah' s infinite might.

The end met by the vineyard-owner, as Allah relates in the Qur' an, was also a note of caution. He lost all his wealth. He eventually said "if only....," but it was too late to be mindful:

The fruits of his labour were completely destroyed and he woke up wringing his hands in grief, rueing everything that he had spent on it. It was a ruin with all its trellises fallen in. He said, "Oh, if only I had not associated anyone with my Lord!" There was no group to come to his aid, besides Allah, and he was not given any help. (Surat al-Kahf: 42-43)

THE CHIEFS OF THE NATIONS

From the stories Allah relates in the Qur' an, we understand that those who reject the messengers, harbour profound hostility towards them, and carry on the bitterest struggle against them, are a people who are, according to the language of the Qur' an, called the "the chiefs of the nation." Their most characteristic feature is their arrogance. A number of verses revealing this fact are as follows:

The chiefs of his people who were arrogant said to those who were oppressed-those among them who believed-"Do you know that Salih has been sent from his Lord?" They said, "We believe in what he has been sent with."

Those who were arrogant said, "We reject Him in whom you believe." (Surat al-A' raf: 75-76)

The chiefs of his people who were arrogant said, "We will drive you out of our city, Shu' ayb, you and those who believe along with you, unless you return to our religion." He (Shu' ayb) said, "What, even though we detest it?" (Surat al-A' raf: 88)

Some of these people grew so arrogant that they said they would not believe unless they received divine revelations as the prophets did:

And likewise in every city We set up its greatest wrongdoers to plot in it. They plot against themselves alone, but they are not aware of it. When a Sign comes to them, they say, "We will not believe until we have been given the same as the Messengers of Allah were given." Allah knows best where to place His Message. Debasement in the sight of Allah and a severe punishment will strike those who did wrong for the plots that they concocted. (Surat al-An' am: 123-124)

One of the major reasons behind this mindset is their intolerance for the messengers because they were people chosen by Allah. They found it degrading to their status, reputation, wealth and honour to obey the messengers. This is why, throughout ages, ruling circles of disbelievers had always perceived the messengers as a threat to their established order, status and their image in the eyes of public. The divine message brought by the messengers caused them to reveal their pride and hatred towards them.

In all ages, "the chiefs of the nations" have been referred to as the "elites" of societies. As is known, the "elite" is that group of people that enjoys superior social or economic status. As said earlier, such attributes cause pride and arrogance in disbelieving people who fail to employ their wisdom. Deriving power from this prosperity and social status, they exercise authority over the rest of the society. They have such a high opinion of themselves that they revolt against Allah and His messengers. Never do they accept the fact that superiority rests on one's nearness to Allah rather than his power or prosperity. That is because, the acceptance of this truth would nullify their status. They are haughty, a quality which makes them deny the existence of Allah. Never do they consider that, all people, whether poor or wealthy, will ultimately be wrapped in a few metres of shroud, and that they will be reduced to a skeleton. Their possessions will bring no good to them in the hereafter.

In the Qur' an, Allah informs the believers about the main character traits of these chiefs of the nation that result from pride and arrogance—and thus, from disbelief. In this way, believers of all ages can come to know these people, who are apt to hinder them from their noble cause, and thus, they may take the necessary measures to protect themselves from them. Believers are also expected to draw lessons from their stories and to pay meticulous attention not to adopt a disposition similar to theirs. No one can absolve himself from the promises of the Qur' an, seeing himself as self-sufficient; believers must also reflect on the verses about disbelievers, and put forth effort to be purified of the errors peculiar to disbelievers.

In the following section, we will consider the major character traits of the "elites" as told in the Qur' an.

They Expend Effort to Lead People Astray

The chiefs of the nations do not tolerate their people to have faith in Allah; this being the case, they put forth a continuous effort to lead them astray. The people's embracing of the faith means to them losing the grounds upon which they exercise their authority. Before all else, faith renders the worldly criteria maintained to presume superiority and false value judgments ineffective. Furthermore, in this manner the society can come to know the weaknesses of those to whom they had attached so much importance. Ultimately, no one will be left to exalt them, nor to submit to them.

It is against the interests of the chiefs of the nation to lose the loyalty of their subordinates, those people they tend despise and consider as their inferiors. They want people to follow them, no matter what the consequences may be. Hence, they employ any method, threats, if necessary, to divert them from the morality and the way of living enjoined by the Qur' an. Some of the examples relating to such efforts of the chiefs of the nation are provided by the Qur' an:

The chiefs of his people who were disbelievers said, "If you follow Shu' ayb, you will definitely be lost." (Surat al-A' raf: 90)

Pharaoh said "Have you believed in him before I authorised you to do so? This is just some plot you have concocted in the city to drive its people from it. But you are going to know." (Surat al-A' raf: 123)

In Spite of Their Knowing the Truth, They Deny It

What underlies the denial of the chiefs of the nations is their obstinate arrogance, as in the case of Pharaoh, and certainly not their incapability to comprehend. Even if they can grasp the existence of Allah and the hereafter, they strongly resist the idea, being overcome by their pride. Allah makes clear their situation in the Qur' an: **"They repudiated them wrongly and haughtily, in spite of their own certainty about them..." (Surat an-Naml: 14)** As said earlier, wealth and power is the reason for their haughtiness:

We never sent a warner into any city without the affluent people in it saying, "We reject what you have been sent with." They also said, "We have more wealth and children. We are not going to be punished." (Surah Saba' : 34-35)

However, wealth, children or possessions bring no benefits to a person unless one seeks the pleasure of Allah. Only if a person puts these blessings into use for the cause of Allah' s religion can he expect rewards in the hereafter:

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

They Follow In the Footsteps of Their Forefathers

Those who exult in their ostentation make an unjust claim by maintaining that the messengers' mission is to divert them from their forefathers' religion:

When Our Clear Signs are recited to them, they say, "This is nothing but a man who wants to debar you from what your fathers used to worship."... (Surah Saba' : 43)

Another refrain common to the arrogant is "the religion of fathers." They feel very certain of the righteousness of their fathers and forefathers. This is undoubtedly merely a perversion resulting from arrogance. Considering their ancestry, traditions and cultural heritage superior, they reject submitting to a messenger though he is in all ways wiser. This is a consistent error common to such people:

Similarly We never sent any warner before you to any city without the affluent among them saying, "We found our fathers following a religion and we are simply following in their footsteps." Say: "What if I have come with better guidance than what you found your fathers following?" They say, "We reject what you have been sent with." (Surat az-Zukhruf: 23-24)

They Do Not Comply With Allah' s Book

The arrogant are unwilling to comply with Allah' s book. Their unrelenting desire to be superior accounts for this tendency. They are so certain of themselves that they never assume that they may be on the wrong path. They falsely maintain that, if there is a right path, it is the one to which they adhere:

Those who are disbelievers say of those who believe, "If there was any good in it, they would not have beaten us to it." And since they have not been guided by it, they are bound to say, "This is an antiquated falsehood." (Surat al-Ahqaf: 11)

They Do Not Obey Messengers

The messengers Allah sends to the nations of the world are endowed with moral excellence, intelligence, and insight. They are chosen by Allah and are specially endowed with wisdom. One verse reads: "**He gives wisdom to whoever He wills and he who has been given wisdom has been given great good. But no one pays heed but people of intelligence**" (Surat al-Baqara: 269)

Since these men are superior in faith, knowledge and wisdom, believers hold them in high esteem. Corrupt chiefs of the nations, on the other hand, arrogantly oppose the messengers, though they are the most trustworthy and noteworthy of people. Moreover, they insult them, cast aspersions against their honesty and other praiseworthy qualities, and even lay traps against them and plot to assassinate them. This they perform under the influence of the wicked arrogance festering in their hearts. This pride they harbour hinders them from being submissive to Allah's messengers and causes them to deny the truth:

Has news not reached you of those who came before you, the peoples of Nuh and 'Ad and Thamud, and those who came after them who are known to no one but Allah? Their Messengers came to them with Clear Signs, but they put their hands to their mouths, saying, "We reject what you have been sent with. We have grave doubts about what you are calling us to." (Surah Ibrahim: 9)

The Qur'an also reveals how these arrogant and belligerent chiefs of the nations respond to prophets and how perverted are the opinions they form when they are called to the truth:

The chiefs of those of his people who were disbelievers said, "This is nothing but a human being like yourselves who simply wants to gain ascendancy over you. If Allah had wanted He would have sent angels down. We never heard of anything like this among our ancestors, the earlier peoples." (Surat al-Mu' minun: 24)

The chiefs of his people-those who were disbelievers and denied the encounter of the hereafter and whom We had given opulence in the world-said, "This is nothing but a human being like yourselves who eats what you eat and drinks what you drink." (Surat al-Mu' minun: 33)

The chiefs of the nations demanded of the messengers that they perform miracles. The fact that the messengers' represented the chosen of Allah, and their superiority in wisdom, knowledge, morals, virtue, and spirituality, hurt their pride. Since they were not disposed to accept this reality, they accused the messengers of being merely ordinary men and required them to perform miracles to prove otherwise. The Prophets' possessing human traits, that is, eating, drinking and so on, was surprising to them. In addition, they made it a pretext for

their disbelief. As a matter of fact, even the performance of miracles would not have helped these obstinate people to believe:

They said, "No matter what kind of Sign you bring us to bewitch us, we will not believe in you." (Surat al-A' raf: 132)

What really disturbed the chiefs of the people is the fact that, despite their power, esteem and authority, a person, who was not one of them, and more, who denounced their system, had been accepted by the rest of society, by spreading the message of the religion. They took this entirely as a personal attack and could never, therefore, accept the prophets' superiority. This they adopted as a personal cause and persisted in their hostility towards the Prophet (saas), and wished instead for a member of theirs to have been the prophet. They said:

"Why was this Qur' an not sent down to one of the great men of the two cities?" (Surat az-Zukhruf: 31)

In reply to this wish of the chiefs of the nation, Allah stated the following:

Is it, then, they who allocate the mercy of your Lord?... (Surat az-Zukhruf: 32)

Through Various Methods, They Strive to Cause Harm to Messengers

The chiefs of Pharaoh' s people said, "This is certainly a skilled magician." (Surat al-A' raf: 109)

The chiefs of Pharaoh' s people said, "Are you going to leave Musa and his people to cause corruption in the earth and abandon you and your gods?" He (Pharaoh) said, "We will kill their sons and let their women live. We have absolute power over them!" (Surat al-A' raf: 127)

As the verses clearly imply, as was Pharaoh, the chiefs of his people was also insolent. In fact, they were the ones who incited Pharaoh to violence. By forging accusations, such as of sorcery and corruption, they tried to make Pharaoh become even more insolent towards Musa (as) and his followers, and inflict still more cruel policies against them.

The chiefs of the disbelievers are known for their insolence towards the messengers, who shattered their false regimes to their very foundations. The attitude they assumed towards the messengers was certainly abusive. A few examples are as follows:

The chiefs of his people said, "We see you in flagrant error." (Surat al-A' raf: 60)

The chiefs of those of his people who were disbelievers said, "We consider you a fool and think you are a liar." (Surat al-A' raf: 66)

Wisdom is the most notable quality of the messengers Allah sends to mankind. Indeed, measuring Allah with a true measure, grasping the essence of religion, and living by it, requires wisdom. Therefore, the accusation of "foolishness" the disbelievers brought against the messengers was merely out of the jealousy they felt towards them, and of the desire to assuage their superiority complex. Another purpose would have been to adversely influence the people who followed them. By acting in this way, however, they have demonstrated that it is they who were the true fools.

Their Evil Plots Ensnare But Themselves

As discussed, the impudence, audacity and insolence of the evil chiefs of disbelievers has been consistent throughout the ages. However, their end corresponded with their evil; the plots hatched by these insolent chiefs of the people always turned ultimately against them. The immutable law which Allah ordained for humanity is described as follows:

...But then when a warner did come to them, it only increased their aversion, shown by their arrogance in the land and evil plotting. But evil plotting envelops only those who do it. Do they expect anything but the pattern of previous peoples? You will not find any changing in the pattern of Allah. You will not find any alteration in the pattern of Allah. (Surah Fatir: 42-43)

DISBELIEVING NATIONS

As said earlier, rebellious and malevolent chiefs of disbelievers were found in every society and throughout history. Having grown arrogant, these people rejected Allah's messengers, who had been sent to summon them to the right path. Nevertheless, before the torment they would eventually suffer in Hell, they encountered severe affliction also in this world.

In this section of the book we will examine such nations as referred to in the Qur'an, and see how they responded to their respective messengers.

People of Nuh (as)

The chiefs of the people of Nuh (as) were excessively proud, as was the case with many other nations in history. When Nuh (as) summoned them to the religion of Allah, very few followed him. Still, Nuh (as) never despaired of saving them from the torment of the afterlife. But, despite all his efforts, his people responded to him in the following manner:

The chiefs of those of his people who were disbelievers said, "We do not see you as anything but a human being like ourselves. We do not see anyone following you but the lowest of us, unthinkingly. We do not see you as superior to us. On the contrary, we consider you to be liars." (Surah Hud: 27)

These people, whose pride showed through in their language, also insulted the believers who followed Nuh (as). Since, according to their errant thinking, superiority rested on one's wealth, possessions, sons, position and rank, they looked for these qualities in the believers who adhered to Nuh (as). However, they failed to grasp that superiority entailed nearness to Allah and high morals:

They said "Nuh, you have argued with us and argued much so bring us what you have promised us if you are telling the truth." (Surah Hud: 32)

Before them the people of Nuh denied the truth. They denied Our servant, saying, "He is madman," and he was driven away with jeers. (Surat al-Qamar: 9)

Nuh (as) tolerated patiently this terrible behaviour and performed his task of summoning them to the truth with sincerity. Yet, when it became obvious that it was not probable for them to reform, he expressed his feelings in regards to their arrogance to Allah and turned Him for help:

He said, "My Lord, I have called my people night and day but my calling has only made them more evasive. Indeed, every time I called them to Your forgiveness, they put their fingers in their ears,

wrapped themselves up in their clothes and were overweeningly arrogant. Then I called them openly. Then I addressed them publicly and addressed them privately." (Surah Nuh: 5-9)

Nuh said, "My Lord, they have disobeyed me and followed those whose wealth and children have only increased them in loss. They have hatched a mighty plot saying, ' Do not abandon your gods. Do not abandon Wadd or Suwa' or Yaghuth or Ya' uq or Nasr.' They have misguided many people. Do not increase the wrongdoers in anything but misguidance!"... Nuh said, "My Lord! do not leave a single one of the disbelievers on earth!" (Surah Nuh: 21-24, 26)

Allah answered Nuh's prayer; their arrogance and denial cost the people of Nuh their lives in this world. In the hereafter, on the other hand, torment also awaited them:

Because of their errors they were drowned and put into the Fire. They found no one to help them besides Allah. (Surah Nuh: 25)

The People of ' Ad

Allah sent the Prophet Hud as His messenger to the people of ' Ad. He summoned them to Allah's path but was responded to with abuse. The arrogance of the people of ' Ad is related in the Qur'an as follows:

' Ad were arrogant in the land, without any right, saying, "Who has greater strength than us?" Did they not see that Allah, Who created them, had greater strength than them? But they renounced Our Signs. (Surah Fussilat: 15)

Such pride held before Allah is the utmost extent of perversion; theirs was an audacity that no other being would ever dare. They had such a high opinion of their power that their intelligence was marred; they failed to grasp even the most obvious facts. With the power granted to them by Allah-and thus, which could be taken back whenever He willed-they opposed Allah and His messenger. In return, they were cursed both in this world and on the Day of Rising:

That was ' Ad. They denied the Signs of their Lord and disobeyed His Messengers and followed the command of every obdurate tyrant. They were pursued by a curse in the world and on the Day of Rising. Yes indeed! ' Ad rejected their Lord, so away with ' Ad, the people of Hud! (Surah Hud: 59-60)

Thamud

Allah sent the Prophet Salih to Thamud as His messenger. Like all other messengers, the Prophet Salih called his people to the truth, and reminded them about the fact that they had been created, so that they could come to know the truth. Yet, his people clung to their old ways. As related in the Qur'an:

Thamud denied the warnings. They said, "Are we to follow a human being, one of us? Then we would truly be misguided, quite insane! Has the Reminder been given to him of all of us? No indeed! He is an impudent liar." (Surat al-Qamar: 23-25)

Obviously, the Prophet's possession of human qualities was one of the justifications that misled them. Their deficient rationale accepted obedience only to a supernatural being, an angel for instance, or to someone who could bring about miracles. Their overwhelming arrogance prevented them from obeying another human being. This is why they spoke ill of the messengers, and accused them of being liars.

The Children of Israel

A close read of the Qur'an reveals that the Children of Israel, with their ungratefulness to Allah's gifts and blessings frequently referred in His Book, have been remembered as the most insolent people in history. Considering what they had gone through in a specific course of time, it is astonishing to see how haughty and obstinate they became, despite all mercy and forgivingness Allah showed them.

As is known, Allah granted the Children of Israel many blessings, and made them superior to other nations. In return, He only asked them to "fulfil His covenant." However, instead of showing sincere loyalty and obedience to Allah, they disobeyed their Lord's commands, and wronged themselves by overstepping Allah's limits:

... What has been sent down to you from your Lord increases many of them in insolence and disbelief... (Surat al-Ma'ida: 68)

... We have incited enmity and hatred between them until the Day of Rising. Each time they kindle the fire of war, Allah extinguishes it. They rush about the earth corrupting it. Allah does not love corrupters. (Surat al-Ma'ida: 64)

Allah reveals in the Qur'an that He tested this people many times, with both blessings and difficulties.

As is known, the Children of Israel were a people bound in servitude. Due to the tyrannical rule of Pharaoh, this nation was condemned to centuries of slavery. The governing system of Pharaoh was exceptionally oppressive. The Children of Israel were at the point of despair under the Pharaoh's regime, who, according to the Qur'an, "let their women live and slaughtered their sons." As a result of these terrible difficulties, Allah sent this enslaved nation the Prophet Musa, who showed them a great miracle by "parting the sea," and rescued them from the cruel authority of Pharaoh:

Tribe of Israel! Remember the blessing I conferred on you and that I preferred you over all other beings.

Remember when We rescued you from the people of Pharaoh. They were inflicting an evil punishment on you-slaughtering your sons and letting your women live. In that there was a terrible trial for you from your Lord.

And when We parted the sea for you and rescued you, and drowned the people of Pharaoh while you watched. (Surat al-Baqara: 47, 49, 50)

This miracle, for which anyone whose heart is not hardened would lead him to glorify Allah, did not inspire the fear of Allah into their hearts or make them humble. Instead of accentuating their faith, they exceeded Allah's limits when Musa (as) had left them for a while. They even dared to idolize a calf, and thereby, showed extraordinary perversity:

Musa brought you the Clear Signs; then, after he left, you adopted the Calf and were wrongdoers. Remember when We made a covenant with you and lifted up the Mount above your heads: "Take hold vigorously of what We have given you and listen." They said, "We hear and disobey." They were made to drink the Calf into their hearts because of their disbelief. Say, "If you are believers, what an evil thing your faith has made you do." (Surat al-Baqara: 92-93)

The deviance and arrogance these people were guilty of, revealed in the Qur'an as a lesson to mankind, are not limited to this story alone. This nation, which failed to show gratitude for Allah's forgiveness, were guilty of many other examples of insolence.

For instance, Allah bestowed upon the nation of Israel many blessings so that they would become grateful. In return for these blessings, though, He only wanted them to enter through the gate of a town filled with gifts to them and prostrate in humility. But, they wronged themselves, and rebelled against Allah:

And We shaded you with clouds and sent down manna and quails to you: "Eat of the good things We have provided for you." They did not wrong Us; rather it was themselves they were wronging. Remember when We said, "Go into this town and eat from it wherever you like, freely. Enter the gate prostrating and say, 'Relieve us of our burdens!' Your mistakes will be forgiven. We will grant increase to all good-doers." But those who did wrong substituted words other than those they had been given. So We sent down a plague from heaven on those who did wrong because they were deviators. (Surat al-Baqara: 57-59)

Another example of them given in the Qur'an is their saying that they could not tolerate a single kind of food when they were told to eat and drink Allah's provision. Their not being contented with what Allah had miraculously provided for them, and asking for other types of food, is a clear evidence that they were far from comprehending the religion that is pleasing Allah. The extent of their lack of gratitude, and how they were repaid in this world for their wrongdoing, are all related in the Qur'an as follows:

And when you said, "Musa, we will not put up with just one kind of food so ask your Lord to supply to us some of what the earth produces-its green vegetables, cucumbers, grains, lentils and onions,"

he (Musa) said, "Do you want to replace what is better with what is inferior? Go back to Egypt, then you will have what you are asking for." Abasement and destitution were stamped upon them. They brought down anger from Allah upon themselves. That was because they rejected Allah' s Signs and killed the Prophets without any right to do so. That was because they rebelled and went beyond the limits. (Surat al-Baqara: 61)

Another irreverent form of behaviour of the Children of Israel was the manner of responding to the messenger when he told them of Allah' s commands. The answers they offered revealed their pride and impudence:

And when Musa said to his people, "Allah commands you to sacrifice a cow," they said, "What! Are you making a mockery of us?" He said, "I seek refuge with Allah from being one of the ignorant!" (Surat al-Baqara: 67)

"My people! Enter the Holy Land which Allah has ordained for you. Do not turn back in your tracks and so become transformed into losers." (Surat Al-Ma' ida: 21)

They said, "We will never enter it, Musa, as long as they are there. So you and your Lord go and fight. We will stay sitting here." (Surat al-Ma' ida: 24)

Such bold pronouncements, uttered against Allah' s command, are a lesson for the believers. Surely, repayment for the behaviour of the people of Musa (as) will be severe in the hereafter. In the Qur' an, Allah informs us about the punishment they will receive, in return for their perverse behaviour that led them into such serious blasphemy:

What an evil thing they have sold themselves for in rejecting what Allah has sent down, outraged that Allah should send down His favour on whichever of His servants He wills. They have brought down anger upon anger on themselves. The disbelievers will have a humiliating punishment. (Surat al-Baqara: 90)

As the verses make clear, the sole reason underlying their rebelliousness was their arrogance. Out of jealousy, they begrudged the prophets, and were reluctant to acknowledge their authority. In brief, the reason of their obstinacy, resistance and irreverence was their arrogance. Thus, they will be remembered in history as that nation which persistently defied and molested their prophets. Surely, this behaviour of theirs did not remain unanswered; because they deviated from the straight path, they earned eternal punishment:

Remember when Musa said to his people, "My people, why do you mistreat me when you know that I am the Messenger of Allah to you?" So when they deviated, Allah made their hearts deviate. Allah does not guide people who are deviators. (Surat as-Saff: 5)

The Children of Israel did not become arrogant only against the Prophet Musa, but to all messengers Allah had sent to them. As a matter of fact, there were times when their arrogance led them even to kill their messengers:

...Why then, whenever a Messenger came to you with something your lower selves did not desire, did you grow arrogant, and deny some of them and murder others? (Surat al-Baqara: 87)

Maintaining their excessively proud and unruly manner, the Children of Israel opposed also Talut (Saul), a king appointed to them as a leader, just prior to the time of the Prophet Dawud:

Their Prophet said to them, "Allah has appointed Talut to be your king." They said, "How can he have kingship over us when we have much more right to kingship than he does? He has not even got much wealth!" He said, "Allah has chosen him over you and favoured him greatly in knowledge and physical strength. Allah gives kingship to anyone He wills. Allah is All-Encompassing, All-Knowing." (Surat al-Baqara: 247)

Only one of the miracles witnessed by the Children of Israel would otherwise be sufficient for a person of faith to be guided to the fear of Allah. However, although Allah forgave the Children of Israel and showed them mercy time and time again, they behaved rudely and fomented great corruption on earth. This clearly shows that Allah disarmed the understanding of this nation, blinded their eyes, and deafened their ears, on account of their wrongdoing. The recompense of the Children of Israel, who will be remembered as a disobedient nation, is again stated in the Qur' an. This nation is a lesson to all arrogant people, who became corrupt because of the blessings imparted to them, and who seek to cause corruption on earth.

The People of the Prophet Muhammad (saas)

The Prophet Muhammad (saas) also related to his people that he was Allah' s messenger, and that they must obey him:

Say: "Mankind! I am the Messenger of Allah to you all, of Him to Whom the kingdom of the heavens and earth belongs. There is no god but Him. He gives life and causes to die." So believe in Allah and His Messenger, the Ummi, who believes in Allah and His words, and follow him so that hopefully you will be guided. (Surat al-A' raf: 158)

The Prophet Muhammad (saas) summoned his people to the path of Allah. However, their response was as follows:

Furthermore they say, "A muddled jumble of dreams!" and, "He has invented it!" and, "He is a poet!" and, "Let him bring us a Sign like those sent to previous peoples." (Surat al-Anbiya' : 5)

His people did not offer this reply because they were unable to grasp the message brought by the Prophet. It was, in actuality, a sign of their insolence. Just like the nations before them, they denied the prophet because of their pride and arrogance. Allah relates the comportment of the disbelievers in the Qur'an as follows:

When they were told, "There is no god but Allah," they were arrogant. They said, "Are we to forsake our gods for a mad poet?" (Surat as-Saffat: 35-36)

Just like the nations of the past, the idolaters of Mecca also did not accept Muhammad (saas) as a prophet, out of their conceit and desire for fallacious superiority. They maintained that the Prophet was a poet, although they did not themselves believe it. Furthermore, they alleged that he himself fabricated all the things he told, and thus, accused him of lies.

The similarity of these slanders to the words of the former nations, demonstrates that this is part of Allah's immutable law. Yet, there is another immutable law of Allah: according to which, both in this world and beyond, Allah humiliates and inflicts punishment upon those who deny His messengers, and become arrogant towards them...

The similarity of the words used by all nations to confront their messengers is quite striking. A time difference of hundreds of years, even cultural and geographical dissimilarities, does not matter. Disbelievers, of all ages, who failed to see or ignored the truth because of their arrogance, shared a common character trait. They all followed the same pattern and adopted the very same tactics. Surely, their ends corresponded to their behaviour, and ultimately, they were repaid with humiliating punishment.

The Qur'an informs us about that many nations have existed, who were also afflicted with anguish before the ultimate torment of Hell. The People of the Thicket, Madyan, al-Hijr, Lut, and the Companions of the Well are only a few of these. And, many other nations, having existed in different times and places, perished for the very same reason:

How many wrongdoing cities We destroyed, and now all their roofs and walls are fallen in; how many abandoned wells and stuccoed palaces! (Surat al-Hajj: 45)

THE MODESTY OF BELIEVERS

As we are to understand from the verse, "**The people who truly do believe in Our Signs are those who fall to the ground prostrating when they are reminded of them, and glorify their Lord with praise, and are not arrogant**" (Surat as-Sajda: 15), one of the most important conditions of faith is modesty. Therefore, as this verse explains, believers are always modest, being aware that Allah does not love anyone who is vain or boastful (Surat an-Nisa' : 36):

And the servants of (Allah) Most Gracious are those who walk on the earth in humility, and when the ignorant address them, they say, "Peace!" (Surat al-Furqan: 63)

The morality of Islam entails submission to Allah, and submission entails acknowledgement of one's weaknesses. Believers, who recognise that everything belongs to Allah, and that they themselves are weak and in need of Him, also act modestly towards Allah's other faithful servants. Being arrogant is contrary to faith, and the Messenger of Allah (saas) tells the believers to be humble and to treat each other like brothers in a hadith:

Do not envy one another; do not inflate prices one to another; do not hate one another; do not turn away from one another; and do not undercut one another, but be you. O servants of Allah, brothers. A Muslim is the brother of a Muslim: he neither oppresses him nor does he fail him, he neither lies to him nor does he hold him in contempt. Piety is right here -and the Prophet (saas) pointed to his breast three times. It is evil enough for a man to hold his brother Muslim in contempt. (Muslim)

Arrogance and modesty especially manifest themselves during human relations. The conduct of *Iblis*, as related in the Qur'an, best illustrates this point. *Iblis* refused to prostrate himself to the Prophet Adam. Being aware of Allah's infinite might, it was illogical for him to openly claim superiority over Allah. But, it was his pride that was hurt. It was the Prophet Adam to whom he showed arrogance, and thereby exposed his rebellious intent towards Allah.

Consequently, arrogance, which is, in actuality, a sin against Allah, manifests itself during the relations of one person with another.

Surely, modesty also manifests itself under the same conditions. Believers show their submission to Allah by behaving modestly towards His believing servants. Aware of the fact that they are not responsible for the creation of their qualities, they are grateful to Allah, and never forget that Allah may reclaim any of these at any time. Fearing punishment from their Creator, Who is the Possessor of infinite power, they take refuge in no one but Him. This submissiveness of the believers, and their fear of Allah, is related in a verse as follows:

Say: "No one can protect me from Allah and I will never find any refuge apart from Him." (Surat al-Jinn: 22)

For these reasons, the condition of mind, behaviour and physical qualities of believers, are entirely different from that of the arrogant. The virtues of believers may be defined as follows:

They are Aware of Their Weakness Before Allah

The arrogant who wish their beauty, youthfulness, and prestige to remain everlasting, fail to grasp that only the qualities of the Almighty Allah are everlasting. For this reason, they dare to revolt against Allah's clear signs.

Believers, on the other hand, expend serious effort to have a true regard for Allah's grandeur. It is because of this effort that, as well as the failings and shortcomings of other beings, they are aware of their own limitations. Contrary to the haughty rebelliousness of the disbelievers, they have a profound fear of Allah, of the Unseen, and never fail to express their feebleness before their Lord:

Say: "I possess no power to help or harm myself, except as Allah wills. If I had had knowledge of the Unseen, I would have sought to gain much good and no evil would have touched me..." (Surat al-A'raf: 188)

They Ascribe No Partners to Allah

Some people set up equals to Allah, loving them as they should love Allah. But those who believe have greater love for Allah. If only you could see those who do wrong at the time when they see the punishment, and that truly all strength belongs to Allah, and that Allah is severe in punishment. (Surat al-Baqara: 165)

One's lower-self, his whims, desires, wealth, appearance or property, are such things as idolaters set up as equals to Allah. These people fail to grasp that it is Allah Who is the possessor of everything. The main reason for this lack of insight on their part is their arrogance.

Believers, on the other hand, believe "**with certainty**" that there is no god besides Allah. They are aware that only Allah can grant them anything, if they ask it. That is, Allah is their sole guardian and supporter. In return for the countless blessings they receive, they wholeheartedly submit to Allah, and show strict obedience to Him. Believers live their lives only for the sake of Allah, and they are aware that this is the only way to complete faith, as mentioned in a saying of the Prophet Muhammad (saas):

Whoever loves for Allah, hates for Allah, gave for Allah and forbade for Allah, then he completed his faith. (Abu Dawood)

This submissive attitude of the believers is entirely contrary to that assumed by those who show "Pharaonic arrogance." Indeed, arrogant people fail to comprehend the extent of their limitations. Believers, however, having a certain faith in the verse, "**Mankind! An example has been made, so listen to it carefully. Those whom you call upon besides Allah are not even able to create a single fly, even if they were to join together to do it. And if a fly steals something from them, they cannot get it back. How feeble are both the**

seeker and the sought!" (Surat al-Hajj: 73), never think that the qualities they possess are earned of their own accord, and keep in mind that it is Allah Who has power over all things.

They Obey Allah' s Messengers

We made them leaders, guiding by Our command, and revealed to them how to do good actions and establish regular prayer (salat) and pay regular charity (zakat), and they worshipped Us. (Surat al-Anbiya' : 73)

Just as Allah created people who summon the disbelievers to the Fire, He also created leaders to guide believers to the truth. To the nations, to whom Allah sent His messengers, He commanded strict obedience to these leaders, who invite them to the right path. Yet, as is in the case of previous nations narrated in the Qur' an, many of them, and especially the "chiefs" among them, opposed the messengers due to their arrogance.

Believers, on the other hand, think in the light of the verse, "**We sent no Messenger except to be obeyed by Allah' s permission...**" (Surat an-Nisa' : 64) and regard obedience to messengers as a command of Allah. This is why obedience to messengers is an important manifestation of one' s modesty and submission to Allah. As stated in the 9th verse of the Surat al-Fath, believers honour and respect the messengers, throughout their lives.

They Do Not Persist in Wrong

Aware of their weaknesses before Allah, and the intended imperfections they are given in this world, believers do not fear committing mistakes. Having faults and imperfections does not affect them, since they do not claim superiority over others. That is because, they do not make it their goal to "maintain their prestige"; their only aim is to be a servant to Allah and to please Him.

After committing an error, they immediately repent, turn towards Allah, and show wholehearted submission to Allah. In the Qur' an, Allah advises believers to make the following prayer:

... Our Lord, do not take us to task if we forget or make a mistake! Our Lord, do not place on us a load like the one You placed on those before us! Our Lord, do not place on us a load we have not the strength to bear! And pardon us; and forgive us; and have mercy on us. You are our Master, so help us against the disbelieving people. (Surat al-Baqara: 286)

We said earlier that arrogant people are greatly concerned about committing mistakes or of having shortcomings. Not only does criticism irritates them, but they are usually not inclined to accepting it. Believers, however, are willing to accept criticism or that they have made a mistake, and turn to Allah for forgiveness. In such cases, they never become proud, but are willing to immediately admit their failure:

Those who, when they act indecently or wrong themselves, remember Allah and ask forgiveness for their bad actions (and who can forgive bad actions except Allah?) and do not knowingly persist in what they were doing. (Surah Al ' Imran: 135)

Contrary to the conceited, believers heed warnings, especially when they come through Allah' s signs. This disposition of theirs is described in Surat as-Sajda, as a mark of their faith in Allah' s signs:

The people who truly have faith in Our Signs are those who fall to the ground prostrating when they are reminded of them, and glorify their Lord with praise, and are not arrogant. (Surat as-Sajda: 15)

They Do Not Exult in their Blessings

What leads arrogant people astray is the blessings Allah has granted them. It is due to these that they exult, and become unduly proud. Believers, however, maintain a high morals, whatever the conditions may be. In impoverishment or affluence, they do not stray from modesty and good manners. Allah introduces the believers in the Qur' an as follows:

Those who, if We establish them firmly on the earth, will establish regular prayer (salat) and pay regular charity (zakat), and command what is right and forbid what is wrong. The end result of all affairs is with Allah. (Surat al-Hajj: 41)

The Prophet Yusuf' s conduct sets the best example of a believers' balanced disposition despite the conditions. Allah gave Yusuf (as) status, prosperity and knowledge, but, aware that these were all given to him by Allah' s Will, he turned solely to his Lord. His prayer clearly reveals his modesty and submissiveness:

My Lord, You have granted power to me on earth and taught me the true meaning of events. Originator of the heavens and earth, You are my Friend in this world and the Next. So take me as a Muslim at my death and join me to the people who are righteous. (Surah Yusuf: 101)

They Desire Not the World But the Hereafter

As if life were never-ending, the arrogant are obsessively attached to this world. They are not disposed to think about Allah and the Day of Judgment. Their prosperity, good-looks, or other qualities they might enjoy, cause them to grow arrogant. Believers, however, aware of the temporary nature of the things of this world, desire the hereafter alone. In the Qur' an, sincere believers are described as follows:

We purified their sincerity through sincere remembrance of the Abode. (Surah Sâd: 46)

As well, believers understand why they exist in this world. They are aware that they are being tested and that they should engage in good deeds to earn Allah's consent. In Qur'anic terms, they are those **"who sell the life of the world for the hereafter."** (Surat an-Nisa' : 74) Through the prosperity they are benefited by, they seek to become devoted servants of their Lord. As the Prophet (saas) has informed them, believers know that Allah will replace with something better than what they leave behind for the will of Allah:

Whosoever leaves something for the sake of Allah then Allah, the Mighty and Magnificent, will replace it with something better than it. (Ahmad)

In the Surat at-Tawba, believers are described as those who have sold their selves and their wealth in return for Paradise:

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

They Do Not Deride Other People

Deriding others is one of those reprehensible character traits common to the arrogant. However, believers never stoop to such mean behaviour. Superiority is not measured by worldly values, such as looks or wealth, but according to one's devotion to Allah. And, only Allah knows those who are more devout and those who turn to Him. Moreover, in the Qur' an, Allah has revealed that He despises derision, and forbids believers to ridicule others:

You who believe! People should not ridicule others who may be better than themselves; nor should any women ridicule other women who may be better than themselves... (Surat al-Hujurat: 11)

They Do Not Follow in Satan's Footsteps

In the Qur' an, Allah warns believers against their most important enemy as follows:

Mankind! Eat what is good and lawful on the earth. And do not follow in the footsteps of Satan. He truly is an outright enemy to you. (Surat al-Baqara: 168)

You who believe! Do not follow in the footsteps of Satan. Anyone who follows in Satan's footsteps should know that he commands indecency and wrongdoing... (Surat an-Nur: 21)

Those who submit themselves to the temptation of Satan are those who take pleasure in disobeying Allah's commands, because of their defiance and a false feeling of superiority. Satan's main endeavour is to present

everything Allah praises as difficult and unmanageable, and thereby, to deceive people into disobedience and the manners and attitudes that are displeasing to Allah. This is Satan's primary method, though he succeeds in tempting only those who are arrogant and desire to be unique or superior.

Believers who are obedient and forbearing, on the other hand, always observe Allah's commands. Founded on their commitment to Him, believers are the only group of people on whom Satan's deceptive ploys can exert no influence. They are not lured into the false promises of Satan, but hold on to the Qur'an. When they hear an evil suggestion from Satan, they immediately seek refuge in their Lord, recognise the truth, and realise that the scheming of Satan is in vain. That is because, their only purpose in life is to earn Allah's good pleasure and the hereafter.

They are committed to the right path, since they are aware that deviation from it for the sake of worldly pleasures would only be wronging themselves.

They Do Not Yield to Arrogant People

As we considered in previous sections, the majority of the people in Egypt were not courageous enough to follow the Prophet Musa, deterred by their fear of the Pharaoh. Only a small group followed Musa (as), and these surely placed their lives at risk, since Pharaoh decreed that all male sons born to his Israelite subjects should be killed. Furthermore, so tyrannical was Pharaoh that, when his magicians obeyed Musa (as) and had faith in Allah, he threatened them with cutting off their alternate limbs and then crucifixion. True believers, however, despite all deterrents, did not reject, not even for a moment, following Musa (as):

No one had faith in Musa except for a few of his people out of fear that Pharaoh, and their chiefs, would persecute them. Pharaoh was high and mighty in the land. He was one of the profligate. (Surah Yunus: 83)

As discussed, the disbelief of others has no influence whatsoever on believers. On the contrary, it increases their devotion. That is because, in the Qur'an Allah informs us in advance that only a few will believe. As well, the Qur'an makes clear that believers will be tested through the disbelievers. This being the case, no matter how severe the physical and spiritual oppression meted out by the chiefs of the disbelievers may be, believers never stray from the right path. As stated in the following verse, they also do not yield to their evil intent:

And with how many a prophet have there been a number of devoted men who fought (beside him). They did not give up in the face of what assailed them in the Way of Allah, nor did they weaken, nor did they yield. Allah loves the steadfast. (Surah Al ' Imran: 146)

Believers are Given the Good News of Paradise

While disbelievers exult in the blessings granted them by Allah, believers know that insolence and pride are not approved by Allah. Through their modesty and submissiveness, they desire to earn the good pleasure of Allah. To this end, they maintain good manners at every moment possible. In addition, they do not discriminate between people, but show good manners to everyone. An adverse situation or a circumstance they may find distasteful never changes this approach, because, for a believer, the good pleasure of Allah is to be sought over and above everything. Aware that Allah sees everything all the time, they are extremely attentive. As reward, they are given the good news of the promise of Paradise:

And Paradise will be brought up close to the heedful, not far away: "This is what you were promised. It is for every careful penitent: those who fear the All-Merciful in the Unseen and come with a contrite heart. Enter it in peace. This is the Day of Timeless Eternity." (Surah Qaf: 31-34)

The Secret of Modesty

These many character traits found in a believer, as mentioned in the Qur' an, make clear that modesty is a resultant quality of faith in Allah. As the Allah' s messenger pointed out, modesty is one of the fundamental notions of Islam:

Every religion has a distinctive virtue, and the distinctive virtue of Islam is modesty. (Malik)

In fact, while the Qur' an describes the modesty of the believers, it is merely mentioned as being part of their normal disposition. In other words, for believers it is not necessary to expend effort to act modestly; they are naturally modest, because their outlook is based on the truth of the Qur' an.

The following verse explains this:

The servants of the All-Merciful are those who walk on the earth in humility, and when the ignorant speak to them, say, "Peace." (Surat al-Furqan: 63)

The next verse explains the reason of this modesty:

Those who pass the night prostrating and standing before their Lord; (Surat al-Furqan: 64)

In other words, the modesty of believers is an outcome of their submissiveness to Allah. The fact that they have grasped the secret of this world, that is, understood the existence and might of Allah, accounts for their modesty.

As a result, the true modesty we are discussing in this book can only be attained through faith.

It is impossible to attain true modesty through another means than faith. Because, in a society composed of disbelievers, those who are seen as "modest" are, usually, those perceived as lacking "confidence." Because most attach too much importance to worldly things, those who are successful in attaining them become boastful, while those who cannot are deemed to be weak and insecure. Therefore, the wealthy tend to be arrogant,

whereas the poor are considered insecure. However, we need to underline that this lack of "self-confidence" is a disposition nothing near what is true modesty, a form of behaviour which is noble and dignified.

The story of Qarun, as narrated in the Qur'an, sets a good example of what we discussed above. In addition to Qarun, who was excessively proud about his wealth and possessions, the Qur'an also informs us about those who longed for that which he possessed. In addition to these, another group were the true believers who grasped the secret of faith:

He went out among his people in his finery. Those who desired the life of the world said, "Oh! If only we had the same as Qarun has been given! What immense good fortune he possesses."

But those who had been given knowledge said, "Woe to you! Allah's reward is better for those who believe and act rightly. But only the steadfast will obtain it."

We caused the earth to swallow up both him and his house. There was no group to come to his aid, besides Allah, and he was not someone who is helped.

Those who had longed to take his place the day before woke up saying, "Allah expands the provision of any of His servants He wills or restricts it. If Allah had not shown great kindness to us, we would have been swallowed up as well. Ah! Truly the disbelievers are not successful."

That abode of the hereafter-We grant it to those who do not seek to exalt themselves in the earth or to cause corruption in it. The successful outcome is for those who do their duty. (Surat al-Qasas: 79-83)

It may well be that those who desired Qarun's belongings were not as proud as he; or, they might have lacked "self-assurance." Yet, if they had been in his shoes, they would, most probably, also have been as arrogant as Qarun. That is because, just as Qarun had, they failed to grasp that the real owner of everything is Allah. They only grasped this fact when they witnessed the end of Qarun.

The truly modest ones were the believers who "had been given knowledge," that is, those who had grasped the secret of life. Aware that what Qarun possessed was temporal, and thereby, unimportant, they did not yearn for his possessions. In any case, owning a wealth the likes of Qarun's would not have hampered their dignity or humility.

These "people of knowledge," as mentioned in the story of Qarun, are role-models for all Muslims to emulate. They show that real modesty can only be attained by being a servant to Allah, and that Allah bestows His blessings only on His noble servants. That is because, they are those "who do not seek to exalt themselves on the earth or cause corruption in it." They do not become arrogant, but feel grateful for the blessings granted them.

WOULD AN ARROGANT PERSON STILL BE ABLE TO LIVE BY THE VALUES OF RELIGION?

It is obvious that a person cannot harbour arrogance and, at the same time, perform that which is entailed by the morality commanded in the Qur' an. That is because, the most fundamental principle of Allah' s religion is to acknowledge Allah' s might and to take only Him as a god. An arrogant person, however, considers himself as a being apart and independent of Allah, and seeks to satisfy his own whims and desires. Failing to grasp that he is a servant of Allah, he glorifies himself with what Allah has granted him and becomes arrogant. In other words, he deifies himself.

That is why arrogance hinders one from living by the principles of the religion and leads him to commit a form of idolatry.

Deifying himself, an arrogant person contradicts the very basic principle of the true religion; that there is no god but Him. Consequently, such a mindset prevents the arrogant from living according to the morality of the religion. Not surprisingly, the arrogant commonly have no intention of living by the religion, except for a certain group of people, which will be described in the following pages. Many verses in the Qur' an describe the resistance of the arrogant against the morality of the religion and their rejection of it:

When they were told, "There is no god but Allah," they were arrogant. They said, "Are we to forsake our gods for a mad poet?" (Surat as-Saffat: 35-36)

As the verse above mentions, their desire to be superior hinders them from acknowledging Allah and His messengers. Indeed, the arrogance of the disbelievers may attain such an extent that they even dare open hostility towards Allah. The Qur' an informs us about the mindset assumed by these people when they are summoned to bring Allah to mind:

...When you mention your Lord alone in the Qur' an, they turn their backs and run away. (Surat al-Isra' : 46)

The commands of the religion are designed to instil man with a morality that enables him to be grateful to his Lord, to draw him nearer to Him, and to earn His good pleasure. Considered in this manner, arrogance is a character-trait opposed to the very essence of the religion of Islam. It is a quality displeasing to Allah:

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

There is no doubt that Allah knows what they keep secret and what they make public. He does not love people puffed up with pride. (Surat an-Nahl: 23)

Therefore, seeking to live by the values of the religion-the main purpose of which is earning the good pleasure of Allah-while compromising it with arrogance would be impossible and an obvious contradiction.

The morality of religion calls for modesty and submission to Allah. An arrogant person, however, lacks the virtue of a believer, and thus, fails to attain any depth of faith.

An important sign of modesty is one's obedience to Allah and His messenger. The fact that an arrogant person cannot show wholehearted obedience in that way, once again, reveals that religion and arrogance are incompatible. The arrogant do not allow any to exercise authority over them. According to them, they are the ones who are the most capable and the best to take decisions. Because they are so sure of themselves, they do not even consider the possibility of the existence of someone else who may know better.

As is known, the hidden arrogance of Satan finally made itself known when he was ordered to show obedience. Because of his arrogance, he desisted and thus became one of the disbelievers. In the Qur'an, Allah places particular emphasis on obedience and gives a detailed account of the sort of obedience a believer must adopt. As Allah defines in the Qur'an, obedience is a very important issue that calls for wholehearted submission and compliance. A person's outward compliance with the messenger's decision should also be accompanied with wholehearted submission:

No, by your Lord, they are not believers until they make you their judge in the disputes that break out between them, and then find no resistance within themselves to what you decide and submit themselves completely. (Surat an-Nisa' : 65)

As said earlier, an important sign of the arrogant is their rejection of Allah's messengers. They struggled against these messengers, since the thought of obeying a person who is virtuous only by his moral excellence, wisdom and faith, and who was sent as a leader to every member of that society, hurt their pride. However, disobedience of the messengers is disobedience of Allah. And, disobedience of Allah, ultimately, brings about a lapse in the practise of religion in a society. It has been revealed in many verses that obedience of the messenger is, in fact, obedience of Allah. A verse reads as follows:

Whoever obeys the Messenger has obeyed Allah. If anyone turns away, we did not send you to them as their keeper. (Surat an-Nisa' : 80)

As made explicit in this and similar verses, obedience is analogous to a fortress that shuts out the arrogant from the realm of religion. Only modesty, submission and humility can open the gates of this castle.

In addition, arrogance is a disease that dulls all moral qualities and hardens one's heart. That is, apart from being a distasteful quality, the other character traits caused by arrogance wholly contradict the moral excellence commanded by the Qur'an. A believer is generous, self-sacrificing, patient, compassionate, committed, loyal and tolerant. An arrogant person, however, can never master these superior moral qualities in their true sense. He is stingy, selfish, impatient, inconsiderate and unjust. Surely, his character prevents him from properly fulfilling the commands of religion. Indeed, the primary purpose of the morality of religion is to help man to attain the moral excellence with which Allah is pleased.

What Happens If An Arrogant Person Claims That He Lives by the Morality of Religion?

Throughout this book, we have stressed that an arrogant person cannot be sincere about living by the principles of religion, and that the character of an arrogant person is entirely incompatible with the model of faith described in the Qur' an. Yet, there are some who claim otherwise; that is, there are certain "hypocrites" who harbour excessive arrogance in themselves, although they maintain that they live by the morality of Islam.

This has not been an uncommon assertion in the history of Islam. In the Qur' an, Allah informs us that such people have existed throughout history, including the time of the Prophet Muhammad (saas). The Qur' an offers a detailed account of the basic character traits of hypocrites, to make known the true face of these people, and thereby, to protect believers from their ploys.

In the Qur' an, Allah tells about a group of people among the believers who maintained that they believed, although, in actuality, they did not. These possessed all the character traits peculiar to the arrogant, like disobedience and disloyalty. These people were the hypocrites. For their personal reasons, hypocrites remain within the company of the believers, but hide their disbelief. However, they can be readily discerned by their manners and attitude that greatly differ from that of believers. The Qur' an outlines the attitude, behaviour, and language typical of hypocrites. In this way, it becomes quite easy for believers to distinguish who are the hypocrites.

The main reason why we should now consider the hypocrites is that this group, distinguished by their arrogance and conceit, provide an example of the fact that the arrogant are unable to even pretend to live by the principles of the religion. Indeed, the hypocrites fail to comply with many commands revealed in the Qur' an, obedience and respect to the messenger being the foremost of them. Outwardly, they fulfil many acts of worship, yet, they perform them reluctantly, thus revealing their inner motives.

In the following pages, in light of the verses of the Qur' an, we will examine the reasons why the arrogant cannot live by the principles of the religion, and what sort of inconsistencies appear when they attempt to.

The Arrogant Cannot Measure Allah According to His True Measure

In the previous sections, we stressed that arrogance is a character trait peculiar to Satan. Satan, who is, in actuality, a being that is quite capable of appreciating the infinite might of Allah, has entirely abandoned his reason, and thus, has adopted a totally unfounded line of reasoning. For this reason, he dared to rebel against Allah. In the same manner, the arrogant suffer from a lack of understanding. The Prophet Muhammad (saas) describes this heedless situation of a proud person in this way:

He is a bad man who is proud and puts on airs and forgets the Most Great and Sublime One. (Tirmidhi)

This fault is most obvious in the case of hypocrites, because, they are also known particularly for their arrogance. This trait clearly manifests itself in their failure to measure Allah with due measure. Allah relates this in a verse as follows:

Each time a sura is sent down, they look at one another, implying, "Can anyone see you?" Then they turn away. Allah has turned their hearts away because they are people who do not understand. (Surat at-Tawba: 127)

As the verse also makes clear, hypocrites, who are known for their arrogance, fail to understand that Allah sees, hears and witnesses everything. Indeed, that they can even think they can deceive Allah (Surely Allah is beyond that) reveals the extent of their ineptitude. The following verse stresses this point:

Among the people there are some who say, "We believe in Allah and the Last Day," when they are not believers. They think they deceive Allah and those who believe. They deceive no one but themselves but they are not aware of it. (Surat al-Baqara, 8-9)

Hypocrites Cannot Be Obedient or Respectful

Modesty entails respect, while arrogance entails derision. The arrogant are incapable of showing respect to others. This becomes even more difficult for them in the case of obedience to a messenger. They take pleasure only in derision, impudence and arrogance. Since arrogant people deem their opinions superior to others, they do not recognise the good in the teachings of the messengers or willingly submit to them. However, Allah refers to wholehearted obedience as one of the most necessary conditions for Islam, and in His book revealed this apparent lack of obedience of the hypocrites:

When they are summoned to Allah and His Messenger, so that he can judge between them, a group of them immediately turn away. But if right is on their side, they come to him most submissively! Is there a sickness in their hearts or do they have misgivings or do they fear that Allah and His Messenger will be unjust to them? No, it is simply that they are wrongdoers. (Surat an-Nur: 48-50)

Hypocrites Cannot Keep Their Minds Occupied With the Remembrance of Allah

One of the most telling traits of those who have become arrogant is their failure to keep their minds occupied with the remembrance of Allah. That is because, praising Allah, exalting Him, and appreciating His might, makes a person recognise his own weaknesses and conceive his position as a servant before Allah. However, this is what most hurts the pride of the arrogant. They deliberately avoid bringing Allah to mind, which makes them vulnerable to Satan's temptations:

Satan has gained mastery over them and made them forget the remembrance of Allah. Such people are the party of Satan. No indeed! It is the party of Satan who are the losers. (Surat al-Mujadala: 19)

Hypocrites Cannot Listen to the Qur' an

These people, infected with Pharaonic arrogance, are also not disposed to listening to Allah' s Book. Every verse in the Qur' an is a warning and admonition reminding them of their subjection and weakness. However, because of their arrogance, they cannot bear hearing about their weaknesses, nor can they accept admonition:

Those whose eyes were blind to My remembrance and whose ears were unable to hear. (Surat al-Kahf: 101)

Hypocrites Cannot Be Loyal

The religion entails loyalty and devotion. However, because hypocrites only pursue their personal desires and seek prestige, they follow the dictates of their own interests. It is senseless to expect loyalty and devotion from an arrogant person, since he is only loyal to himself:

...Far better for them would be obedience [to Allah' s call] and a word that could win [His] approval: for, since the matter has been resolved [by His revelation], it would be but for their own good to remain true to Allah. (Surah Muhammad: 20-21)

They Are Not Forbearing Through Difficulties

The commands of the religion are very easy to fulfill, and even enjoyable, for those who submit themselves only to Allah, put trust in Him, and prefer the abode of the hereafter to the life of this world. However, some tasks required by the religion are not in conformity with the interests of the hypocrites, who seek only worldly benefits from it. Thus, by resorting to various forms of deceit, they avoid fulfilling the commands of the Qur' an that demand forbearance, sacrifice and steadfastness:

If it had been a case of easy gains and a short journey, they would have followed you, but the distance was too great for them. They will swear by Allah: "Had we been able to, we would have gone out with you." They are destroying their own selves. Allah knows that they are lying. (Surat at-Tawba: 42)

Hypocrites Cannot Spend Willingly for the Cause of Allah

Spending one' s wealth in the cause of Allah, without expectation of anything in return, is another thing the arrogant cannot bear. However, in order not to attract attention from the believers, they do so only reluctantly:

Nothing prevents what they give from being accepted from them but the fact that they have rejected Allah and His Messenger, and that they only come to pray (salat) lethargically, and that they only give reluctantly. (Surat at-Tawba: 54)

The same verse also makes clear that they also attend prayer without earnestness.

In this section, we explained that it is difficult, and even impossible, for arrogant people to live by the principles of religion. We said that those who are arrogant and feel proud cannot even imitate a devout person. Even those who are talented may be able to imitate the character traits of a believer for a certain period of time, but their true character will eventually show forth when they feel their interests are at stake.

The sincere modesty and humility of a person is a sign of his devotion. Similarly, the arrogance of a person who claims he is a believer indicates his hypocrisy, or at least his inclination to hypocrisy.

To conclude, an arrogant person can never live by the principles of the religion in its true sense. Even if he were to memorize the entire book of Allah, it would not matter. On the contrary, he is held even more responsible since he does not practise the commands of which he is aware. Ultimately, he belittles himself to the point where he lives the religion as a hypocrite. To be a sincere Muslim, he must first quit idolizing his lower-self, and abandon pride and arrogance. That is, he must become conscious of his weaknesses and status as servant of Allah. The pure religious outlook can only be grounded on such a foundation.

THE LOT OF THE ARROGANT IN THE HEREAFTER

Apart from defining who the arrogant are, Allah also informs us about the end the people with Pharaonic arrogance will meet in the hereafter. One verse reads as follows:

When he is told to have fear of Allah, he is seized by pride which drives him to wrongdoing. Hell will be enough for him! What an evil resting-place! (Surat al-Baqara: 206)

As we are to understand from the Qur' an, the recompense of those who were too proud to worship Allah, the Almighty, is Hell. The related verses are as follows:

...Those who are too proud to worship Me will enter Hell abject. (Surah Ghafir: 60)

That is because you exulted on the earth, without any right to do so; and strutted about. Enter the gates of Hell, remaining in it timelessly, for ever. How evil is the abode of the arrogant! (Surah Ghafir: 75-76)

That Hell Fire is the abode of arrogant people is also mentioned in a hadith of the Prophet Muhammad (saas):

... Hell fire said: Inside me are the merciless and the arrogant people... (Muslim)

People who feel pride because of what they possess in this world, and become unduly arrogant, commit a serious error. They never consider what will be their outcome in the hereafter. For this reason, at a moment they can never predict, they will suddenly be encompassed by the torment of Hell. In return for their failure to reckon that they would be called to give an account of their deeds on the Day of Judgment, they will be sent to Hell. This is the final abode where they will spend the rest of their existence. The fate of these people, who forget Allah and the Day of Judgment, is stated in a verse as follows:

They will be told, "Today We have forgotten you as you forgot the meeting of this your Day. Your refuge is the Fire and you have no helpers. That is because you made a mockery of Allah' s Signs and the life of the world deluded you." Therefore, today they will not get out of it. They will not be able to appease Allah. (Surat al-Jathiyya: 34-35)

The underlying reason for the humiliation of these people, who were cast into Hell because they ridiculed the verses of Allah, and immersed themselves into the life of this world, and thus, forgot the hereafter, was arrogance. It is arrogance that propelled them into such a predicament. Indeed, they are not people who had never heard about the life of the hereafter; during their time in this world, they were warned by Allah dozens of times through His messengers and books. Yet, growing arrogant, they ignored all such warnings and turned their backs. They will be punished only because they will deserve it:

No, the fact is that My Signs came to you but you denied them and were arrogant and were a disbeliever. (Surat az-Zumar: 59)

The Qur'an offers a detailed account of the situation of the arrogant on the Day of Judgment, the eternal existence in Hell, and the torment he will suffer. In this section, we will consider the fate of these people in the hereafter, so that they can serve as an admonition to those who are arrogant towards Allah, or who potentially harbour such rebellious feelings.

They are Degraded in Hell

Those who grow arrogant in this world will be repaid in Hell with a humiliating punishment. There, apart from the agonizing physical pain, they will meet an end that will humble them spiritually. In return for having been unjustly arrogant on earth, they will receive eternal degradation in Hell:

On the Day when those who were disbelievers are exposed to the Fire, [it will be said]: "You dissipated the good things you had in your worldly life and enjoyed yourself in it. So today you are being repaid with the punishment of humiliation for being arrogant in the earth without any right and for being deviators." (Surat al-Ahqaf: 20)

In Hell, Allah subjects them to types of conditions that cause them profound emotional torment. Being cast into fire is surely tormenting; but for the arrogant, what is worse is being herded headlong like cattle into it:

No indeed! Truly man is unbridled seeing himself as self-sufficient. Truly it is to your Lord that you will return. Have you seen him who prevents a servant when he goes to pray? (Surat al-'Alaq: 6-10)

No indeed! If he does not desist, We will grab him by the forelock, a lying, sinful forelock. (Surat al-'Alaq: 15-16)

In the above verses, feeling self-sufficient, that is, arrogant, is described as the main reason for man's exultation. Again, as the verse mentions, the major factor of this exultation is the endeavour to hinder the believers. In another verse, we learn that those who become arrogant in this world are placed in the reverse situation:

"Seize him and drag him bodily into the middle of the Blazing Fire.

Then pour the punishment of boiling water on his head.

Taste that! You are the mighty one, the noble one!" (Surat ad-Dukhan: 46-49)

This is the end of the arrogant who unjustly exulted in themselves. The worldly aims they pursued were temporal. Even if they were to possess the whole world, it will some day cease to exist; when all one cherished

in this world will simply disappear. However, the life of the hereafter will last for all eternity. Moreover, Allah is the owner of everything; He has granted everything to humans in the life of this world only to test them. He tests them to see whether or not they will seek His good pleasure and feel grateful. The reward of those who are prone to arrogance is, contrary to their expectations, torment.

They Will Be Hideous

Good-looks and other physical qualities are among the traits the foremost of which arrogant people boast. That is why, those who boast of their beauty in this world will receive what they most feared; they will look hideous. In Hell, their faces will be turned black:

On the Day of Rising you will see those who lied against Allah with their faces blackened. Do not the arrogant have a dwelling place in Hell? (Surat az-Zumar: 60)

We pursued them with a curse in this world and on the Day of Rising they will look hideous. (Surat al-Qasas: 42)

They Remain in Hell For All Eternity

The verses make it clear that those who are arrogant towards Allah will remain in Hell for all eternity. And, the reason why they were sent to Hell is precisely for their arrogance. Allah repays them with eternal fire of Hell:

As for those who deny Our Signs and are arrogant regarding them, the Gates of Heaven will not be opened for them, and they will not enter Paradise until a camel goes through a needle' s eye. That is how We repay the evildoers. (Surat al-A' raf: 40)

Enter the gates of Hell, remaining in it timelessly, for ever. How evil is the abode of the arrogant! (Surah Ghafir: 76)

Enter the gates of Hell, remaining in it timelessly, for ever. How evil is the abode of the arrogant! (Surat an-Nahl: 29)

It is truly impossible to imagine being destined to remain in the torment of Hell-a place one would not even bear to see-for millions or billions of years, still knowing that it will never end. There exists no greater penalty than being punished with such a torment. Furthermore, this is a kind of torment with such an intensity that will make one desire nothing but to be extinguished.

On the Day of Judgment, Their Possessions and Children Will Be of No Benefit to Them

It is obvious that, the arrogant boast of their possessions and children since they fail to remember that it is Allah Who possesses everything. Whatever one possesses, it is a temporary pleasure of the life of this world. The sole criterion that is truly lasting, and appreciated in Allah's sight, is "taqwa," which means awe or fear of Allah, which inspires a person to be on guard against wrong action and eager for those which please Him. A verse in the Qur'an reads, "**The noblest among you in Allah's sight is the one with the most taqwa.**" (Surat al-Hujurat: 13) Nevertheless, those who compete in rebelling against Allah, rather than fearing Him, will grasp the extent of their failure on the Day of Judgment, since none of which they had valued in this world will be of any benefit on the Day of Judgment:

The Day when neither wealth nor sons will be of any use-except to those who come to Allah with sound and flawless hearts. Paradise will be brought near to those who have taqwa. The Blazing Fire will be displayed to the misled. (Surat ash-Shu' ara' : 88-91)

One of the things for which arrogant people boast most is their sons and families. In the Qur'an, Allah informs us that those who forget that their sons and families are created by Allah, will flee from them on the Day of Judgment:

When the Deafening Blast comes, the Day a man will flee from his brother and his mother and his father, and his wife and his children: on that Day every man among them will have concerns enough of his own. (Surah ' Abasa: 33-37)

As we are to learn from the verses of the Qur'an, family ties will be broken on the Day of Judgment, and those who now boast of their families will receive no help from them:

Then when the Trumpet is blown, that Day there will be no family ties between them; they will not be able to question one another. (Surat al-Mu' minun: 101)

Neither your blood relations nor your children will be of any use to you. On the Day of Rising He will differentiate between you. Allah sees what you do. (Surat al-Mumtahana: 3)

Allah also informs us in the verse quoted below that the hoarding of possessions in the life of this world will offer no benefit to the arrogant in the hereafter:

The Companions of the Ramparts will call out to men they recognise by their mark, saying, "What you amassed was of no use to you, nor was your arrogance." (Surat al-Araf: 48)

These people, though they considered themselves powerful, because they failed to grasp that Allah possesses everything, will see the truth of this fact in the hereafter. As well, they will come to understand that neither their fortune nor their power would suffice to save them from the fearsome torment of Hell:

Who has amassed wealth and hoarded it! He thinks his wealth will make him live for ever. No indeed! He will be flung into the Shatterer. And what will convey to you what the Shatterer is? The kindled Fire of Allah reaching right into the heart. It is sealed in above them. (Surat al-Humaza: 2-8)

THE FATE OF THOSE WHO WERE LED ASTRAY BY THE ARROGANT

A particular character trait of the arrogant is their leading others, in addition to themselves, astray. From a verse of the Qur' an, we learn that they do so by "turning away arrogantly":

Among people there is one who argues about Allah without knowledge or guidance or any light-giving Book, turning away arrogantly, to misguide people from the Way of Allah. He will be disgraced in this world and on the Day of Rising We will make him taste the punishment of the Burning. (Surat al-Hajj: 8-9)

While the arrogant are sent to Hell, those who admired them, and thus, followed these insolent people, will also be cast into Hellfire. These are the people who obeyed the arrogant people because they admired their worldly qualities. Although not as arrogant as those who possessed "Pharaonic arrogance," those who followed in their footsteps lacked character and willpower. Another trait of theirs is their failure to put their trust in Allah, and their being driven solely by personal motives. The Qur' an mentions the people of the Pharaoh who were guilty of such vices:

Pharaoh called to his people, saying, "My people, does the kingdom of Egypt not belong to me? Do not all these rivers flow under my control? Do you not then see?" (Surat az-Zukhruf: 51)

In that way he swayed his people and they succumbed to him. They were a people of deviators. (Surat az-Zukhruf: 54)

Such people, who shut their eyes to all forms of violence and injustice, did not consider seeking refuge in their Lord and become His servants. On the Day of Judgment, they will recognise their mistake, but it is often too late. When they stand before Allah, altogether to give an account of their deeds, those who were arrogant and those who followed them will argue with one another:

Those who are disbelievers say, "We will never believe in this Qur' an, nor in what came before it." If only you could see when the wrongdoers, standing in the presence of their Lord, cast accusations back and forth at one another! Those deemed weak will say to those deemed great, "Were it not for you, we would have been believers!"

Those deemed great will say to those deemed weak, "Did we debar you from the guidance when it came to you? No, it is you who were evildoers."

Those deemed weak will say to those deemed great, "No, it was your scheming night and day when you commanded us to reject Allah and assign equals to Him." But they will show their remorse when they see the punishment. We will put iron collars round the necks of those who disbelieve. Will they be repaid for anything but what they did? (Surah Saba' : 31-33)

As these verses also note, those who had become arrogant and those "deemed weak" will accuse one another, but it will be of no avail. In another verse, their situation is stated as follows:

**The Fire, morning and night, to which they are exposed; and on the Day the Hour takes place:
"Admit Pharaoh's people to the harshest punishment!"**

**When they are squabbling with one another in the Fire, the weak will say to those deemed great,
"We were your followers, so why do you not relieve us of a portion of the Fire?" (Surah Ghafir: 46-47)**

CONCLUSION

As we have stressed throughout this book, the fundamental character trait of an arrogant person is his failure to remember that he is a weak and mortal being before Allah. Whatever the conditions and circumstances may be, he finds justification to become vainly proud. This supposed justification may be a beautiful house, expensive furniture, a sports car, clothes, his hair style, the colour of his eyes, physical beauty, status, fame, a prestigious family name...

However, never does he ponder over the significance of the verse, "**Every self will taste death**" (Surah Al ' Imran: 185) and remember that he will die and be reduced to dust. Everything he once valued will meet the same end; his body, to which he was fondly attached, will first decay, and then be reduced to bones. His new car will become a heap of metal in only a few decades. Probably, in a few years time, no one will remember his enviable fame or status. Moreover, in a hundred years or more, not a soul will remain on earth that will have known him. His failure to grasp these facts, and, moreover, his refusal to contemplate them, is, in actuality, a clear sign of his being one of the people who does not use his intellect.

However, failure to use one' s intellect is not a reason to exonerate a person. That is because, Allah created every soul and shown him the two highways, two goals; a soul can either wholeheartedly submit to his Lord and spend his entire life to earn the rewards of Paradise, or follow his whims and desires and grow arrogant towards Him. Allah increases one' s wisdom if he adheres to the first way; the second way, on the other hand, deprives him of wisdom. As was the case with *Iblis*, those who grow arrogant have always adopted the second way. Moreover, each warning they receive proves merely to be a further reason for their persistence in denial. One verse follows:

When Our Signs are recited to such a person, he turns away arrogantly as if he had not heard, as if there was a great weight in his ears. So give him news of a painful punishment. (Surah Luqman: 7)

These people, who grow arrogant towards Allah, and turn their faces away from Him because of their arrogance, will receive punishment both in this world and beyond. They will not gain any advantage from this reprehensible attitude. Moreover, it will be a reason for which to be driven to Hell:

Say to those who are disbelievers: "You will be overwhelmed and crowded into Hell. What an evil resting-place!" (Surah Al ' Imran: 12)

Those who are herded headlong into Hell, such people are in the worst position. They are the most misguided from the way. (Surat al-Furqan: 34)

Believers, on the other hand, adhere to the first way. They are respectful and submissive to their Lord. They conduct themselves modestly towards other believers, since they recognise their own weaknesses and insignificance in the face of Allah' s infinite might, and know that "*Modesty is part of faith and faith is in Paradise*" (Ahmad, Tirmidhi) as the Prophet (saas) has stated. As well, aware that their wealth and qualities are

given to them only as a test in this world, never do they dare to regard them as a basis to suppose their superiority over others. The modest are aware of their own shortcomings, weaknesses, their vulnerability even to a microbe otherwise invisible to the naked eye, and their mortality. They also recognise the fact that, like themselves, others are also subjects of Allah. They know that in Allah's sight, only fear of Allah is the criteria for superiority, and accept no other criteria.

These are the "people of intelligence," as referred in the Qur'an. Allah has granted them "**the ability to discern between right and wrong**" (Surat al-Anfal: 29) and thus, they have grasped that this world is temporary, and that they need to prepare for the eventuality of Paradise. To this end, they purify their lower-selves of all forms of arrogance.

This, indeed, is the only way to salvation.

THE EVOLUTION MISCONCEPTION

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

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

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

It is Allah Who created the universe and Who designed it down to its smallest detail. Therefore, it is impossible for the theory of evolution, which holds that living beings are not created by Allah, but are products of coincidences, to be true.

Unsurprisingly, when we look at the theory of evolution, we see that this theory is denounced by scientific findings. The design in life is extremely complex and striking. In the inanimate world, for instance, we can explore how sensitive are the balances which atoms rest upon, and further, in the animate world, we can observe in what complex designs these atoms were brought together, and how extraordinary are the mechanisms and structures such as proteins, enzymes, and cells, which are manufactured with them.

This extraordinary design in life invalidated Darwinism at the end of the 20th century.

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

The Scientific Collapse of Darwinism

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

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

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

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

- 1) The theory can by no means explain how life originated on the earth.
 - 2) There is no scientific finding showing that the "evolutionary mechanisms" proposed by the theory have any power to evolve at all.
 - 3) The fossil record proves completely the contrary of the suggestions of the theory of evolution.
- In this section, we will examine these three basic points in general outlines:

The First Insurmountable Step: The Origin of Life

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

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

"Life Comes from Life"

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

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

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

However, five years after the publication of Darwin's book, Louis Pasteur announced his results after long studies and experiments, which disproved spontaneous generation, a cornerstone of Darwin's theory. In his triumphal lecture at the Sorbonne in 1864, Pasteur said, "Never will the doctrine of spontaneous generation recover from the mortal blow struck by this simple experiment."²

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

Inconclusive Efforts in the Twentieth Century

The first evolutionist who took up the subject of the origin of life in the twentieth century was the renowned Russian biologist Alexander Oparin. With various theses he advanced in the 1930's, he tried to prove that the cell of a living being could originate by coincidence. These studies, however, were doomed to failure, and Oparin had to make the following confession: "Unfortunately, however, the problem of the origin of the cell is perhaps the most obscure point in the whole study of the evolution of organisms."³

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

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

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

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

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

The Complex Structure of Life

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

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

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

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

evolutionist of repute from the University of San Diego, California, confesses this fact in the September 1994 issue of the Scientific American magazine:

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

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

Imaginary Mechanisms of Evolution

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

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

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

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

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

Lamarck's Impact

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

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

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

Neo-Darwinism and Mutations

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

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

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

First, genuine mutations are very rare in nature. Secondly, most mutations are harmful since they are random, rather than orderly changes in the structure of genes; any random change in a highly ordered system will be for the worse, not for the better. For example, if an earthquake were to shake a highly ordered structure such as a building, there would be a random change in the framework of the building which, in all probability, would not be an improvement.¹⁰

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

The Fossil Record: No Sign of Intermediate Forms

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

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

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

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

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

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

Darwin's Hopes Shattered

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

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

The point emerges that if we examine the fossil record in detail, whether at the level of orders or of species, we find - over and over again - not gradual evolution, but the sudden explosion of one group at the expense of another.¹²

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

Creation and evolution, between them, exhaust the possible explanations for the origin of living things. Organisms either appeared on the earth fully developed or they did not. If they did not, they must have developed from pre-existing species by some process of modification. If they did appear in a fully developed state, they must indeed have been created by some omnipotent intelligence.¹³

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

The Tale of Human Evolution

The subject most often brought up by the advocates of the theory of evolution is the subject of the origin of man. The Darwinist claim holds that the modern men of today evolved from some kind of ape-like creatures.

During this alleged evolutionary process, which is supposed to have started 4-5 million years ago, it is claimed that there existed some "transitional forms" between modern man and his ancestors. According to this completely imaginary scenario, four basic "categories" are listed:

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

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

Evolutionists classify the next stage of human evolution as "homo," that is "man." According to the evolutionist claim, the living beings in the Homo series are more developed than Australopithecus. Evolutionists devise a fanciful evolution scheme by arranging 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 most important proponents of the theory of evolution in the 20th century, contends in his book *One Long Argument* that "particularly historical [puzzles] such as the origin of life or of Homo sapiens, are extremely difficult and may even resist a final, satisfying explanation."¹⁵

By outlining the link chain as "Australopithecus > Homo habilis > Homo erectus > Homo sapiens," evolutionists imply that each of these species is one another's ancestor. However, recent findings of paleoanthropologists have revealed that Australopithecus, Homo habilis and Homo erectus lived at different parts of the world at the same time.¹⁶

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

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

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

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

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

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

We then move right off the register of objective truth into those fields of presumed biological science, like extrasensory perception or the interpretation of man's fossil history, where to the faithful [evolutionist] anything is possible - and where the ardent believer [in evolution] is sometimes able to believe several contradictory things at the same time.¹⁹

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

Technology In The Eye and The Ear

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

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

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

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

For many years, tens of thousands of engineers have tried to make a three-dimensional TV, and reach the vision quality of the eye. Yes, they have made a three-dimensional television system but it is not possible to watch it without putting on glasses; moreover, it is only an artificial three-dimension. The background is more

blurred, the foreground appears like a paper setting. Never has it been possible to produce a sharp and distinct vision like that of the eye. In both the camera and the television, there is a loss of image quality.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The stimulations coming from the eyes, ears, and nose of a human being travel to the brain as electrochemical nervous impulses. In biology, physiology, and biochemistry books, you can find many details about

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

For this consciousness is the spirit created by Allah. The spirit needs neither the eye to watch the images, nor the ear to hear the sounds. Furthermore, nor does it need the brain to think.

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

A Materialist Faith

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

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

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

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

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

These are explicit statements that Darwinism is a dogma kept alive just for the sake of adherence to the materialist philosophy. This dogma maintains that there is no being save matter. Therefore, it argues that inanimate, unconscious matter created life. It insists that millions of different living species; for instance, birds, fish, giraffes, tigers, insects, trees, flowers, whales and human beings originated as a result of the interactions between matter such as the pouring rain, the lightning flash, etc., out of inanimate matter. This is a precept

contrary both to reason and science. Yet Darwinists continue to defend it just so as "not to allow a Divine Foot in the door."

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

In fact, Allah reveals in the Qur'an in the incident of the Prophet Musa and Pharaoh that some people who support atheistic philosophies actually influence others by magic. When Pharaoh was told about the true religion, he told the Prophet Musa to meet with his own magicians. When the Prophet 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 the Prophet Musa and those who believed in him. However, the evidence put forward by the Prophet Musa broke that spell, or "swallowed up what they had forged" as the verse puts it.

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

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

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

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

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

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