

The Meanings of the Quran
Volume I

The Meanings of The Quran

(Translation of Mutalib-ul-Furqan)

Volume I

*Exposition of the Quran from the Quran
itself*

Ghulam Ahmad Parwez

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Ghulam Ahmad Parwez was born in Batala, Punjab, in British India on 9th July 1903 into a profoundly religious family. His grandfather, who was deeply religious and belonged to the Hanafi school of thought, was a renowned religious scholar who intended to make the author inherit his knowledge and religious understanding. As a consequence, his education and training was carried out under the direction of his grandfather. While he studied the traditional religious teachings, he also had the desire and inkling to question its content using his intellect and reasoning. This led to his inner conflict with the external religious environment, and he continued to question the prevalent religious concepts and practices. He noticed that whatever was being taught as part of the religion was being referred to some Imam or religious scholar for authority. It was also noted in the religious literature that whatever the forefathers had followed should be obeyed without any question, and this was considered to be a requirement of Islam.

For Parwez this did not satisfy his desire to seek reason and logic in every claim and statement made within the religious literature. However, he could not express these doubts and reservations initially due to his respect for his grandfather and the constraints of the religious environment which prevailed at the time in his town. Later, due to his employment, he moved to Lahore (now part of Pakistan) and found a degree of freedom to question some of these religious concepts and beliefs. After the death of his grandfather, he found complete freedom to pursue his line of enquiry and research into the prevalent Islamic beliefs, doctrines, ideologies and religious practices.

This led to his discovering that most of these have been acquired from others. He tried to study the Quran using the traditional religious approach but was unable to find the answers to all his doubts, which required satisfaction from a logical point of view. He also studied the life of the last messenger and the establishment of the Islamic State in the seventh century in his quest to determine the cause which contributed to this greatest revolution based on the Quran. He especially paid attention to the statement from the last messenger, ‘The Quran is not a product of my thinking or that of any other human being’ and that this is the message from Allah. He soon learnt the procedure to understand the Quran.

Through his contact with the famous philosopher and poet, Allama Iqbal¹, who had a deep interest in the Quran, Parwez concluded that to understand the Quran one has to understand three fundamentally important points:

- (1) The Quran calls itself Light (*Nur*) and a light does not need any external source or aid to make itself visible. It makes itself evident and also exposes the reality of those things which are within its domain.
- (2) The Quran is revealed in the Arabic language and, to understand it correctly, one needs to understand the Arabic context which was prevalent at the time of its revelation.
- (3) The Quran has guided us by saying that through *Tasreef-ul-Ayat* (through cross reference of the verses of the Quran) it makes its guidance clear e.g. see (6:106).

In order to meet the second requirement regarding the precise meaning of the Arabic words in the Quran, he researched and compiled a *Lughat ul Quran* (now translated into English), which is a dictionary of all the words and terms used in the Quran, and which includes the meanings which were prevalent among the Arabs at the time of the Quranic revelation. For the third requirement of *Tasreef-ul-Ayat*, the Quran is different from books written by human beings; whereas the latter are usually divided based on various subjects, the Quran is based on mentioning a reality in one verse or verses and then its further explanation is noted in another place or places. For example, in Surah *Al-An'am* the Quran states:

And thus do We explain the signs by various verses, so that they acknowledge 'You have explained them', and We make the Quran clear for a people who know. (6:106)

In order to meet this requirement, Parwez felt the need to compile all the verses under one subject as referred in various verses of the Quran and he compiled a book in Urdu titled *Tabweeb-ul-Quran* i.e. Classification of the Quran. This made it easy to refer to various subjects and look at all the verses mentioned in the Quran relating to a subject.

¹ Sir Dr Muhammad Iqbal was a philosopher, poet and philosopher from Pakistan. Much of his Urdu and Persian poetry is inspired by the Quran. He discusses the human ego in his lectures published in a book titled, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam* e.g. see Chapter IV. Parwez has quoted him in many of his books. (Ed)

Along with writing and producing literature on the Quran, Parwez also held a regular weekly meeting in Lahore to deliver a *Dars* (lecture explaining the Quran) in Urdu, and these are also available as audio and video recordings.² He dedicated most of his life to researching the Quran and its significance in relation to presenting an alternative solution for human problems, and answering questions relating to human creation, its purpose and the question of death and the next life.

He also participated in the struggle for Independence during the period 1938-1947, and the creation of Pakistan, which was based on the ideology of the Quran, with a view to establishing an Islamic State for the Muslims of the sub-continent. He worked very closely with the founder of Pakistan, Muhammad Ali Jinnah (*Quaid-e-Azam* or Great Leader) and had regular discussions with him on various aspects of the message of the Quran. In order to support the movement for a separate state for the Muslims of India, and to counter the arguments put forward by some of the religious lobby who opposed the creation of Pakistan, he published a monthly journal called *Tolu e Islam* (Dawn of Islam) commencing in 1938. This monthly journal continues to be published by Idara, Tolu e Islam from Lahore.

Parwez joined the Indian Civil Service in the Home Department in 1927, and after the creation of Pakistan, he migrated to Karachi, and continued to serve in the same department till 1955, when he took early retirement and devoted the rest of his life fully to his work on the Quran. He moved to Lahore from Karachi and settled there.

He left this life on 24th February 1985 in Lahore and his body was laid to rest in Lahore.

² These are also compiled in book form in Urdu and are called *Darros ul Quran*. (Ed)

FOREWORD

I am an ordinary seeker of knowledge of the Quran. I have spent all my life in endeavouring to understand this supreme Book and making it comprehensible to others. When I say, ‘all my life,’ that is not an exaggeration. From the age of five or six years when I was sent to school up till now, when the stages of my life have traversed more than seventy-two years, barring those days when I was unable to due to some reason, hardly any day passed when the Quran did not remain in front of my eyes. In the first part of my life its study was undertaken in the traditional orthodox way. After this, when consciousness awakened so that I could observe and evaluate the facts with my own eyes, I then realised that whatever I had gleaned from the Quran previously had drawn me far from the reality. As a result of this, doubts and suspicions began to arise about Islam itself for which a satisfactory explanation was not forthcoming from any direction. For many years I wandered perplexed in pain and uncertainty in these same thorny vales of doubts and misgivings. During this quest in the wilderness, I also learned and became aware of why our educated youth is becoming discontented with religion. Fortune came to my aid, and with Allah’s help this reality became evident to me about the correct way in which to understand the Quran.

The Quran has called itself Light (*Nur*) and light is evidence of its own presence. In order to seek this light, one does not need external lamps, therefore the Quran can only be understood from the Quran itself. The One Who (Allah) sent down the Quran has stated:

...It is for Us to explain the Quran. (75:19)

And it is on this basis that it is stated about the Quran:

...it makes all things clear... (16:89)

...there is no crookedness in it. (18:1)

...there is no contradiction or discrepancy in it. (4:82)

There is no vagueness, no confusion in it – it is a clear, perspicuous, explicit, illuminating Book.

Allah has stated that the Quran has been revealed in clear, explicit Arabic language (26:195). From the study of linguistic knowledge this reality had become clearly evident to me about how much variation transpires in the meanings of the words

of languages through the passage of time. Therefore, in order to understand the Quran, it became essential to establish what the meanings were taken to be of these words at the time of the revelation of the Quran. It should be made clear that not only is the meaning of the Quran from Allah, its words are also from Allah. This is why it is declared to be the Word of Allah (*Kalam Allah*) (9:6).

The style of the Quran is not like that of ordinary books. The state of ordinary books is that the book is divided into various chapters. Every chapter covers a particular subject and all aspects relating to this subject are noted down all together within this chapter. This is not the style of the Quran. Regarding this, think about it as being a compilation of different sermons delivered over a period of twenty-three years. A statement is made in it at one point, and its further explanation is given at another point, an addition at some other place, and an exception in another Surah. Furthermore, the wider aspects of various facts in relation to different subjects are repeatedly brought to the fore. It has called this mode of explanation *Tasreef-ul-Ayat* (cross referencing of verses) i.e. bringing verses to mind through repetition (6:106). It is in this way that it has also defined and made the meanings of its terms clear.

The next condition for understanding the Quran is to reflect profoundly on it (4:82), i.e. to understand it through reflection and reason, intellect and vision, knowledge and consciousness.³ This command to ponder profoundly on the Quran is neither for any specific individual, nor for some particular era – it is for all individuals and for all eras. This is why the Quran cannot be understood by following previous generations, nor can the comprehension and reasoning of someone else be the authority and final word for others.⁴ One can benefit from the reflections of others because knowledge is a legacy for mankind, but it can be neither an authority, nor the final word.

In relation to deliberating on the Quran, Allah has also stated that:

*Soon will We show them Our signs in the furthest regions of the universe and in their own selves, until it becomes manifest to them that this is the Truth (Al-Haqq)
... (41:53)*

³ This aspect becomes clearer as we continue to read the Quran, as it demands intense attention to understand the realities of human life, including the purpose of human creation, accountability, individual and collective life in the world, Deen as a system, death, the life in the hereafter, etc. (Ed)

⁴ We also need to read Parvez with a critical mind. (Ed)

This means that as the undiscovered realities (of the outer universe and within the human self itself) are unveiled, the truth of the Quranic proclamations⁵ will keep becoming ever clearer before us. Therefore it is essential for the one pondering on the Quran that he should bear in mind the level to which human knowledge has reached within his own era. The Quran presents solutions for the demands of human life. If someone does not even know what the demands are of human life in his era, and to what level the strivings of the human intellect have reached regarding them, then what guidance can he acquire from the Quran!

Another point is also worthy of being understood in relation to pondering on the Quran. Some commands and laws are noted in the Quran and some realities. The commands and laws are detailed in such words whose meanings are precisely defined. But realities, especially those realities which are connected to metaphysics, are referred to using metaphors, allegories and similes. Abstract realities can only be explained in this way. It is obvious that every scholarly mind can form a concept from these metaphors and allegories regarding these realities according to his own understanding and level of knowledge. Therefore it is understandable to have intellectual differences regarding these concepts. But as far as the Quranic commands or guidance are concerned, no difference can exist in these.

The state of Quranic guidance is also this - that some commands in it are defined, and some are in the form of principles and values. As far as the principles and values are concerned, the Quran has not itself specified details about their practical application. These have been left to the Islamic system of the State, that it should devise ways to implement these practically according to the demands of their respective times. In this way, unity of action will be created in the Ummah⁶ and will be maintained. In relation to understanding the Quran, it is essential to bear in mind this important fact too.

One fundamental condition for understanding the Quran is also this - that until the time that you do not free your mind of pre-established ideologies, beliefs and concepts, the correct meaning of the Quran will not be understood (56:79). Any individual who comes to the Quran with some pre-established belief so that he

⁵ These appear to be claims because human intellect evolves over a period of time through the acquisition of knowledge and experience, otherwise what is in the Quran is truth from the very first day and will remain so until the end of time. So anyone applying their intellect and reasoning to the Quranic values with a view to seeking guidance can understand these and employ them to establish Deen in any era. (Ed)

⁶ *Ummah* – from the root (U-M-M) which means mother. It can mean a nation or a *Jamaat*, particularly a group with one ideology. See *Lughat ul Quran*. (Ed)

can obtain authority and support for his view from the Quran, cannot access the truth.⁷

This was the method which I ascertained for comprehending the Quran from the Quran itself, and I embarked on an endeavour to understand it again from the start according to this. It is obvious that this technique was very patience testing and these phases required great determination and courage, but without traversing these, the aim could not have been achieved. The remaining part of my life has passed in traversing this mountain and digging a tunnel through it. And with this feeling of gratitude and humility I bow my head before Allah for the support and opportunity He has bestowed on me leading to great success. As far as the phase of ascertaining the meanings and concepts of the Quranic words (synonyms) were concerned, after many years of hard labour I compiled the Quranic *Lughat* (dictionary) which is now published in four volumes.⁸ Along with this, in connection with *Tasreef-ul-Ayat*, I also continued with the process of the compilation of *Tabweeb-ul-Quran* (Classification of the Quran which is now published). On the basis of both of these I completed the exposition of the full Quran which is now published in thirty parts (*Paaras*⁹). During the same period, I published the Quranic teaching and realities in the form of different writings which have become very popular especially among the younger educated generation – *Man-o-Yazdan*, *Iblees-o-Adam*, *Joo-e-Nur*, *Barq-e-Toor*, *Shola-e-Mastoor*, *Mairaj-e-Insaniyat*, *Jahan-e-Farda*, *Kitab-ul-Taqdeer*, *Khatm-e-Nabuwat aur Tabreek-e-Ahmadeat* and *Shahkar-e-Risalat* are different parts in this same enlightened series.¹⁰

In parallel with this, I also started the practice of holding a weekly *Dars*¹¹ of the Quran which, by the grace of Allah, is continuing for the past almost twenty-five years. Since in a *Dars* every matter unfolds before us in great detail, therefore this process has proven to be very effective, comprehensive and attractive. It was a demand of friends and attendees from the beginning that a *Tafsir*¹² of the Quran should be compiled on the basis of these *Dars*. I envisaged immense difficulties

⁷ As we live our life, our sense of being is formed by the environment in which we live and we mostly take this to be a fact of life. The reality that becomes formed within us is a mixture of our own beliefs and concepts and is also drawn from others who influence our life. When we are exposed to the reality in the Quran from Allah, we find this to be different from the way human beings generally think and view life. In order to benefit from this, we need to then remove all that previous content of our consciousness whether created by us or by others. (Ed)

⁸ The Quranic *Lughat* is available in English in two volumes. It is available on Amazon and also at <https://www.parwez.tv/> for free download. (Ed)

⁹ The Quran has 114 chapters, but it has also been divided into 30 equal parts for the sake of facilitating its recitation e.g. during Ramadan, the month of fasting. (Ed)

¹⁰ Some of these books have been translated into English and are available on Amazon. (Ed)

¹¹ *Dars* – a lesson or lecture on a topic of the Quran. (Ed)

¹² *Tafsir* – a detailed explanation of the Quranic verses with meanings. (Ed)

in this task, though through intense effort spanning years, one of my close friends (Malik Zahoor Ahmad) had transferred these *Dars* which are recorded on a tape recorder, on to paper, but the style of a *Dars* is completely distinct from the written form. For a *Tafsir*, related material has to be sifted and separated from the mountain of detail covered in these *Dars* and rearranged in a novel and coordinated form. That is why I could not muster sufficient courage to commence this lengthy process. But as of last year, this demand by my companions acquired such an intensity that I eventually assented. By continuously writing for an extended period of time, my hand now becomes tired. A solution to this problem was presented by another friend (Akhlaque Ahmad), so I continued to dictate the *Tafsir* and he kept on writing it. And within a short period of three months, a draft of its first volume was ready, which is now being presented. This volume is spread over nearly three hundred and seventy five pages, but you will note that it includes Surah *Al-Fateha* and only the first twenty-nine verses of Surah *Al-Baqarah*. After studying the *Tafsir* however, this fact will become clear to you that these initial verses merited this detail: from this, a complete outline of Islam emerges before us. My view is that as we continue to progress forward, this amount of detail will no longer be required, and subsequent volumes will cover a proportionately larger portion of the Quran. In any event, I have commenced the journey, I do not know how long it will take to traverse further stages and when the final destination will be reached. At this point in time I can say nothing more than this:

...My affair I commit to Allah: for Allah watches over His servants. (40:44)

In relation to this *Tafsir*, keep the following points in mind:

- (1) I have often said that the Quran cannot be understood through the *Tafasir*¹³ which are commonly available, because the major part in them is outside of the Quran, and the personal beliefs and ideas of the writer (*Mufassir*) influence the Quranic guidance. The significance of this *Tafsir* (written by me) is that the meaning of every verse is made clear in the light of other parts of the Quran itself. Furthermore, since my connection is not with any particular sect, and my beliefs and views are based on the Quran, therefore you will not find the contamination of any sectarian stain in this *Tafsir*.
- (2) The literal translation of the verses is noted where required. Generally, their meaning is explained because you will appreciate later on that the translation of the Quran cannot be done in any language.

¹³ Plural of *Tafsir*. (Ed)

- (3) The dictionary meaning of the word is given to the extent that it is required in the verse being analysed, the remainder of the meanings can be found in the *Lughat ul Quran*.
- (4) Those verses which have been mentioned in order to further explain some other verse, only their summary is noted there, their detail and interpretation will be given at their own place.
- (5) Since I have been writing continuously without a break about the Quran for the last forty years, therefore many matters will appear in this *Tafsir* which I will have explained at some point in my previous writings.
- (6) In this *Tafsir* the negation of those non-Quranic beliefs and views which are commonly prevalent among us under the name of Islam continued to take place automatically. But in this regard I have named neither any sect nor any personalities, barring a few such places where it was unavoidable. It is not intended from this to in any way mock these sects or personalities, the requirement is to counter their beliefs which are contrary to the Quran.
- (7) The chapters of this *Tafsir* are not according to the Quranic division, but instead are according to the division of topics in this *Tafsir*.

Finally, I extend my heartfelt thanks to all those friends who helped me in the organisation, writing, compiling, publishing, etc., of this work. In this respect, foremost is the name of my very close companion Siraj Munir, whose hard work facilitated the phase of correction of this work.

And in conclusion of this foreword, it is necessary to acknowledge and express this matter, that in relation to understanding the Quran, this is, nevertheless, purely a human endeavour, which can neither be considered to be free from error and omission, nor the final word. As I noted at the start, I am just an ordinary student of the Quran, I have never considered my status to be higher than this, either previously or now.

Salaam!

G. A. Parwez

25 B, Gulberg II, Lahore

8th October 1975

GLOSSARY

Some significant Arabic terms which have appeared in this volume are explained together with their meanings. Some of these meanings are taken from the book by the author titled *Islam: A Challenge to Religion*. The meanings of other terms are based on the *Lughat ul Quran* by the author. Those terms not covered here will have their meanings noted where these appear in the text for the first time.

Batil: This means not only destructive pursuits, rather every one of those things is termed as *Batil* which has no constructive result; when something is tested against a standard and it fails to meet that criteria i.e. *Haqq* is that which meets the standard and *Batil* is that which does not meet the standard. Hence it is the opposite of *Haqq*. *Batil* does not denote merely those ideas or actions which possess destructive potentialities but includes all thinking and conduct that does not lead to constructive outcomes.

Deen: According to the Quran, every nation on earth has been blessed from time to time with Divine guidance through the agency of the messengers of Allah (*Anbiya*) who received the Divine revelation (*Wahi*). All these messengers were entrusted with the establishment of Deen. But with the passage of time, their followers failed to maintain that Deen in the pristine purity in which it had been established by their *Anbiya* and they deviated from the right course, altered and modified Allah's revealed guidance, and foisted upon it elements utterly alien and repugnant to its spirit. Deen thus generated into religion (*Madhab*) and lost its soul. The Quran rules out the plurality of Deens and contemplates only one Deen.¹⁴

Haqq: This is a very comprehensive term of the Quran. It is usually translated in English as truth or right but in fact it has a much wider meaning. According to Lane¹⁵, its primary signification is suitability to the requirements of wisdom, justice, right or rightness, truth, reality or fact; or to the exigencies of the case, as the suitability of the foot or a door in respect of its socket for turning around rightly; the state or quality, or property of being just, proper, right, correct, or true. The state of being established or confirmed as a truth or fact; everlasting existence; valid, substantial, or real. Existing as an established fact so as to be undeniable.

¹⁴ See section 1.37. (Ed)

¹⁵ Arabic English Lexicon.

These several meanings of this word make it perfectly clear that *Haqq* is by no means confined to the realm of thoughts and ideas, notions and beliefs. It stands for those constructive results of conceptions and beliefs which manifest themselves in a tangible form and are in harmony with the changing needs of the times. No belief or theory relating to this world can be described as *Haqq* unless its truth is established by a positive manifestation of its constructive potentialities. These constructive results will be abiding and imperishable, for the word *Haqq* is used only for things that are abiding and imperishable.

Eimaan: To be convinced, to accept, to verify something, to rely upon, or have confidence in. This is usually translated in English as belief or faith; and faith in turn signifies acceptance without proof or argument, or without reference to reason or thought, knowledge or insight. Faith is generally regarded as the negation of knowledge or reason. *Eimaan* is synonymous with conviction and is based on reason and knowledge. The Quran does not recognise as *Eimaan* any belief that is divorced from reason and involves blind acceptance of any claim. It is true that Deen involves the acceptance of certain things which cannot be known through sense perception, but there is no reason to presume that things which cannot be perceived do not exist. Indeed, our reason and thinking compel us to recognise the existence of many such things. In any event, *Eimaan*, according to the Quran, signifies the conviction that results from full mental acceptance and intellectual satisfaction. This kind of conviction bestows a feeling of *Amn* – inner contentment and peace (*Amn* and *Eimaan* have a common root (A-M-N)). And a *Momin* is one who accepts the truth in such a way that it ensures his own peace and helps him to safeguard the peace and security of the rest of mankind. Indeed, *Al-Momin* is one of the attributes of Allah Himself (59:23).

Kufr: This is the antonym or negation of *Eimaan*. It means to deny the truth, to prevent, to defy the laws of Allah. Basically, the word means to cover or conceal. One who denies the truth in fact seeks to conceal it; he is, therefore, called a *Kafir*. *Kufr* means open denial, not hypocrisy. The hypocrite professes to believe in a thing that he does not accept in his heart. The *Kafir*, on the other hand, openly proclaims his opposing stance. That is why the Quran condemns and consigns the hypocrite to the lowest depths of hell.

The definition of *Kufr*, however, is not confined to denial of the truth; it includes the concealment or withholding of the means of subsistence, which Allah has created for the good of all mankind, and which He wants to be freely available to all.

Madhab (Religion): This literally means the way, or course. This word does not appear in the Quran and in Islamic jurisprudence (*Fiqh*) it stands for ‘school of

thought'. The English word 'religion' is usually translated as *Madhab*, and since Islam is generally described in English as a religion, the word *Madhab* has come to be used for it. This a fundamental fallacy; it might be stressed once again that Islam is a Deen, not a *Madhab*. Today, the only Divine Deen is Islam, whose principles are preserved in the Quran.

Malaika: Commonly translated in English as angels, but this prevalent religious conception of the word is different from its Quranic conception. The universe can be divided into two parts: the material world which we can perceive through the senses, and the world beyond our powers of perception. The Quran, in the first instance, used the word *Malaika* to denote the forces of nature at work in the world of matter. For instance, when it states in the allegorical account of Adam, that all the *Malaika* prostrated themselves before Adam, it means that man has been endowed with the capacity to subdue and conquer the forces of nature. Moreover, besides the physical forces of nature, the Quranic meaning of *Malaika* includes the psychological forces within the human individual himself. When used with reference to the other part of the universe – the one beyond our powers of perception – *Malaika* stands for the forces at work there to fulfil Allah's purpose, and to shape in practice, the Divine scheme of things. In this sense, the word includes the agencies through which the word of Allah has been revealed to various *Anbiya* (for the guidance of mankind). So in this sense, *Malaika* may also be called messengers.

Malaika are not endowed with any will or independent power; they are devoted to the performance of their respective duties and cannot act otherwise. Man is the only being in the whole universe endowed with a free will and independent power.

Nabi: This is usually translated as prophet (one who prophesies). This translation is again incorrect and misleading. *Nabi* is not a derivative of *Naba'un* which means 'to inform'. In olden times the word *Nabi* was used for a special functionary in the Jewish temple whose function was to prophesy future events. In its Quranic connotation the word *Nabi* is derived from *Nabwa'tun* which means an elevated place, therefore it means a person standing on a pedestal; in other words, one who lives in this material world but can also perceive the unseen world beyond, because he (such a person) is endowed with Divine revelation (*Wahi*). The function or office of the *Nabi* is called *Nabuwmat*, that is, the function of securing Divine guidance through revelation. (See also Rasul).

Quran: The Book that Allah gave to Muhammad¹⁶ through revelation, and which he passed on to the Muslims in the form in which we know it today. The internal evidence provided by the Quran itself, as well as historical research, proves beyond a shadow of doubt that not even a comma of the original Quranic text has been changed, or is likely to be altered in the future. This is a unique attribute of the Quran and is not shared by any other revealed book now extant. The Quran embodies the Deen revealed to the earlier *Anbiya* in its true and perfect form. This Book does not give us merely a code of ethics, it provides us with a code of life which embodies guidance, principles and laws relating to every sphere of human life and activity. The Quran, according to Islam, is the final authority in matters of Deen. The injunctions and the principles contained in the Book form the cornerstone of the Islamic polity, and the limits laid down by it provide the framework within which the laws of the Islamic State may be formulated. These principles, or limits, or framework, are immutable, but the statutes made by the State within these four corners are open to modification and change according to the needs of the times. The Quran is the last of the Divine Books because *Nabuwat* ended with Muhammad. No subsequent human opinion or pronouncement in matters of Deen, therefore, can be recognised as authoritative, nor can any man-made law repugnant to the Quran be regarded as binding upon Muslims. The Quran is a book of guidance for all mankind and transcends the barriers of time and space. The Islamic State is an instrument for the enforcement of the laws and injunctions embodied in the Quran.

Rabb: Usually translated in English as the Lord. Again, the English equivalent does not convey the real meaning and significance of the Arabic original. *Rabb* means one who enables a thing or person to grow and develop and eventually to realise all its potentialities; and the process by which a person (or object) thus fulfils himself is called *Rabubiyat*¹⁷. Nothing in the universe comes into being in a state of perfection or fulfilment; it is born with certain potentialities which, when developed and actualized, enable the object concerned to become what it was designed to be. Like other objects and beings in the universe, man is also endowed with manifold potentialities which, if properly developed, enable him to rise from the animal to the human level. The Quran seeks to establish, in accordance with the Divine laws, a social order under which the latent potentialities of every individual can be fully realised. This realisation of the individual's potentials will include the sustenance and growth of his body as well as the fulfillment of his

¹⁶ The last messenger of Allah (Peace be upon him). (Ed)

¹⁷ The author coined this term from *Rabb* – it refers to the system of sustenance put forward by the Quran. (Ed)

personality. This kind of social system is called the *Rabubiyat* order, and its establishment is the ultimate end and purpose of the Deen of Islam.

Rasul: The duty of the *Nabi* does not end with the securing of Divine guidance; in fact, this is but the beginning of his task. The root of the word *Rasul* means a messenger, or who has a message to deliver. It is the duty of the *Nabi* to deliver to mankind the message revealed to him by Allah without the slightest change or modification; it is by virtue of this function that he is called a *Rasul*. But even the faithful delivery of the Divine message does not complete the performance of the *Rasul's* function; he is also responsible for setting up a social order in accordance with the principles enshrined in the Divine message that he has delivered. In other words, he is entrusted with the establishment of 'Allah's kingdom upon earth'. He is charged with the revolutionary function of ending the sway of tyrannical, oppressive and self-seeking rulers and priests and establish a free order of society in which men will not be dependent upon other men and will not be subject to anything except the Divine law. The *Rasul*, from this point of view, appears as a great revolutionary who does not content himself with sermons but practically enforces by example the Divine law and seeks to bring all men under its sway. This is the real function of the *Rasul* (*Risalat*).

In view of the above explanations it is clear that *Nabi* and *Rasul* are two facets of a single entity, or two faces of the same coin. A *Nabi* is also a *Rasul*, and vice versa. The plural form of *Rasul* is *Rusul*.

Nabuwwa, or the reception of the revelation of Divine guidance by *Anbiya* or *Rusul*, ended with Muhammad. The guidance revealed to him is preserved and enshrined fully and exactly in the Quran. But the function of *Risalat*, or the delivery of the Divine message to all mankind and the establishment of a social order in accordance with its principles, has devolved upon the nation or Ummah that has *Eimaan* in that Book i.e. the Quran.

Ruh: Usually translated as spirit or soul. 'Spirit' has a special meaning in Christian metaphysics, and 'soul' is the expression for peculiar notion in Greek philosophy. The Quranic conception of *Ruh* differs essentially from 'soul' as well as 'spirit'. Its most appropriate translation would be 'Divine Energy', which expresses itself through a free and self-determining will. Free will is possessed only by Allah, Who imparts it to human beings also; no other being is endowed with this power. The Quran holds that the power of the human will is not a product of man's natural constitution; it cannot, therefore, be called a material force. It is a power specially bestowed by Allah upon men; that explains why Allah has described it as 'His *Ruh*' – meaning thereby the human personality, which is the bearer of the free will.

This should not, however, be taken to mean that the human personality is a part of the Divine Personality. Personality is absolutely indivisible; no personality, therefore, can possibly be a part of any other personality. We are all familiar with the fallacy that the human spirit is a part of the Spirit of Allah bogged down in the world of matter, and that the whole end and purpose of man's life on earth is to purge his spirit of its material impurity, so that it may merge again with the Divine Spirit. This misconception is thoroughly repugnant to the spirit of the Quran. Allah has endowed every individual with an inchoate personality, and the purpose of his worldly life is to develop his personality so that it may be able, after death, to continue its journey further.

The word *Rub* has been used in the Quran in other senses also. But in the present work it has not been used in any of the other senses; the other meanings are, therefore, not given here.

Shaitan: Man is endowed with manifold faculties and is free to use them as he wills. These faculties include his impulses. If he uses these faculties in accordance with the laws of Allah, constructive results, which are conducive to benefit the interests of all mankind, follow. If, on the other hand, he uses his faculties in a manner repugnant to the laws of Allah, the results are destructive. The impulse that induces man to use his faculties in contravention of the Divine laws is called *Shaitan*. The common English equivalent for this word, namely, devil does not properly express the Quranic sense of the original term.

The word *Shaitan* has also been used for defiant or rebellious human beings; in other words, for such men as defy the laws of Allah themselves and also induce others to defy those laws. Since destructive activity inevitably brings frustration and sorrow, *Shaitan* has also been called *Iblees* – which means a disappointed being who fails to secure happiness in life.

Shirk: Obedience to man-made laws along with or in contravention of the laws of Allah. Islam does not permit obedience to any laws other than those laid down by Allah. Indeed, not only actual obedience to other laws but even the belief that it is permissible and proper to obey these laws is tantamount to *Shirk*. Polytheism is generally understood to mean the worship of idols. It is, of course, true that idol-worship, or the worship of any of the forces of nature, amounts to *Shirk*. But this definition is not exhaustive, nor are these forms of worship the most serious manifestations of *Shirk*, for they result mainly from ignorance. The most heinous form of *Shirk* is the obedience of laws and injunctions other than those of Allah. From the Islamic point of view, the important thing is obedience, not worship. Muslims obey Allah; they do not worship Him in the general sense of the word.

Taqdeer: This is generally translated as fate, and fatalism is widely believed to be one of the fundamental elements of the Islamic creed. This is absolutely wrong. A theory of life which is based upon the freedom of the human will cannot possibly have anything to do with fatalism. Human freedom and fatalism are mutually contradictory concepts.

A mango stone embedded in soil, if properly looked after and nourished, has the capacity to grow into a mango tree which will eventually yield the mango fruit. The realisation of this potentiality of the mango stone is called its *Taqdeer*. To be more precise, *Taqdeer* means measure. The true measure of the mango stone is the mango tree; if a stone does not grow into a tree, it does not conform to its measure. On the other hand, no mango stone can grow beyond its measure: this is the destiny of the mango stone.

Man has been endowed with manifold potentials. If he follows the right path in life and adheres to it, his potentialities are gradually realized, and his personality is so developed that he is enabled to attain the perfect human stature in this life and to tread the evolutionary stages yet to come beyond this world (the life in the hereafter). This development of the individual is called his *Taqdeer*.

Taqwa: The common English equivalent, namely, piety, does not properly express the real meaning of the word. Deviation from the path of right conduct leads man to ruin; *Taqwa* helps to keep him on the right path and thus save him from ruin. But merely saving oneself from ruin is a negative virtue, whereas the Quran regards the positive aspect of life as being of fundamental importance. In the context of the Quran, therefore, *Taqwa* involves not only saving oneself from the forces of destruction but also stabilizing one's personality through the preservation and enforcement of the laws of Allah. To be more concrete, it means the faithful and efficient performance of all the duties that Allah has enjoined upon man through revealed guidance. This meaning is wide enough to include loftiness of character and purity of conduct. One who leads a life of *Taqwa* is called *Muttaqee*.

Tauba: While on his way to a particular place, an individual reaches a crossing, and from there he takes a turn and continues onwards. But after a short while he realises that he has put himself onto the wrong path which will not lead him to his destination. He must now turn back and return to the point from where he took the wrong turn. This kind of return is called *Tauba*. It is obvious, however, that a mere return to the crossroads will not take the man to his destination; he will also have to adopt the right path. *Tauba*, therefore, covers all three aspects of the process: realising one's error, retracing one's steps, and then taking the right course.

Editor's Note

This is an English translation of the Urdu exposition titled *Mutalib-ul-Furqan* (Volume I) written by Ghulam Ahmad Parwez. This volume covers Chapter 1 (Surah *Al-Fateha*), and Chapter 2 (Surah *Al-Baqarah*) up to verse (2:29).

In this book the word Allah¹⁸ is used when referred to in the Quran, and God is used when reference is made outside the Quran. The verses quoted from it are noted in the format of (2:20) meaning Surah 2 (Chapter 2), verse 20. The numbering of the verses is in line with the format used in the copy of the Quran by Abdullah Yusuf Ali. The names of the Surahs are also given when the author has noted these in the main text. Footnotes have been added where some additional explanation is thought to be required, and these have been marked as (Ed). Where the footnote is from the author himself, nothing is noted after this.

The Quran is not a book of religion: it puts itself forward as a Divine book with a view to providing guidance for the whole of mankind for all times. It is a Book which gives an alternative system for mankind called Deen; freeing man from systems predicated on human laws.

This system of Deen is based on the Permanent Values as noted in the Quran.¹⁹ An understanding of the Quran can only be reached by those who view Deen as a Divine system in opposition to man-devised systems. The verses which are addressed to the *Jamaat e Momineen*²⁰ should be viewed as Allah's address to those who, through their own volition, have accepted *Eimaan* in the Quranic values and are focused on acquiring precisely that eminent self which can understand the outline of this system in detail. Fundamentally, the Quran tells us that every man-devised system will always suffer from human imbalances; as a consequence, they will inevitably be consumed by fear and *Huzn*²¹. Only by following the guidance of *Wahī*⁵ from Allah can human beings eliminate this fear and *Huzn* from their

¹⁸ Though the term Allah is also used by some other communities, such as Christians in Syria, here, however, Allah will mean that concept which is revealed in the Quran by Allah Himself. (Ed)

¹⁹ A list of salient Permanent Values with brief description is included in Chapter 15 by the author in his book titled *What is Islam?*

²⁰ *Jamaat* means an organised group or a party. *Jamaat e Momineen* refers to that group of people which accepts *Eimaan* and then as a consequence come together to work towards the establishment of the system of Deen. (Ed)

²¹ *Huzn* – This is a very comprehensive word which is used for each and every anxiety, grief and worry from which man suffers for some reason. It especially includes the economic stress and uncertainty. The Quran declares that all man-devised systems create *Huzn* and hence Allah guides us to remove all those causes which create *Huzn* in the world. (Ed)

world. For a balanced system to emerge, the objective standard founded on the Quranic concept of Allah is necessary. This concept is based on His attributes and is distinct from any other religious concept of God (including sectarian versions of Islam) around the world.²²

The Quranic concept of Deen as a system set in confrontation to man-devised systems is foundational to Parwez's writings. He has written extensively on various aspects of the Quran, authoring numerous books expounding the Quran in detail. His book on *Rabubiyat*²³, *The Quranic System of Sustenance*, analyses the economic problems faced by humanity and their logical solution as presented by the Quran. Despite technological advances, man-devised systems have not been able to solve the fundamental issues of man's existence on this planet. The Quran has categorically declared to man that he will remain the same in essence throughout his finite individual existence on this planet if he is not correctly guided. Being a possessor of a conscious self, he is intrinsically accountable for his finite choices and his way of life, which is always bound by physical death. The Quran calls to man to not be deceived by the world which his hands have created and to not forget the fundamental purpose for his creation – his self – which is his only means to conquer his fear and transcend death.

Parwez presents the argument that only once man intellectually grasps the light of Allah's *Wahi* can he realise his true potential. Without this light, the human intellect cannot free itself from the shackles of its emotive imbalances. This aspect is argued in detail in his book, *The Human self and Iblees - Iblees (and Shaitan)* being the emotive side of human cognition. Despite a vast surplus in physical resources, the human intellect struggles on its own to create a system which can adequately cater for the physical needs of all of humanity, and the requirements for the development of his self forever elude him. The development of the human self is only possible through the guidance provided by the Quran – this aspect is the focus of discussion in all of the writings of Parwez.

Parwez also studied and analysed the pursuits of the human intellect from the time of Plato, a period of two and a half thousand years, with a view to proving that finding an appropriate and successful solution for human problems is outside the realm of the human intellect functioning on its own. The method of the

²² For a detailed explanation regarding the concept of Allah, refer to the book *The Human Self and Allah* by the author. (Ed)

²³ *Rabubiyat* – it is based on the Divine attribute of *Rabb* which means provision of means of sustenance for the things of the universe from their beginning to their intended destination. In the case of man this includes both physical needs as well as the needs of the human self for its development. The system based on this Divine attribute will be called the system of *Rabubiyat*. (Ed)

intellect is empirical i.e. it selects a certain path in life and pursues this for a period - even centuries pass in this pursuit - then after its failure, realising its limitations, it abandons this course and attempts another technique. During this empirical process humanity suffers and creates further problems for itself. Parwez presented this research and his conclusions in his book titled, *Insaan nae Kia Socha*²⁴ He then discussed the issue of solving human problems using the Quran and stated that since the *Wahi*²⁵ from Allah is not affected by human emotions and biases, hence the solution presented by it can meet all the needs of human life on this planet. The system (Deen) which is established based on the Permanent Values of the Quran will not only meet the physical needs of every human being at a fundamental level but will also help to create an environment in the world conducive to the development of the human self. The accountable nature of man is fundamental to this concept. The Quran declares:

Allah created the heavens and the earth as Al-Haqq²⁶, so that each self is recompensed for what it does and no one is treated unjustly. (45:22)

This verse refers to the functioning of the Law of Requit, informing us that we are each individually responsible for our choices which have consequences affecting both ourselves and others. Each one of us has a self which evolves in direct proportion to what it does during the course of this finite life which ends with our physical death. This self, whose fountainhead is 'Divine energy', provides us with our consciousness and this consciousness has the potential to expand if it acquires *Eimaan*²⁷ and then performs *Saleh*²⁸ deeds. It does not simply disappear after our physical demise.

The second point relates to the question of the authority to formulate laws for fellow human beings. The Quran proclaims:

No human being has this right that Allah gives him a code of laws, power and messengerhood, and he should start to dictate to the people that you follow my commands instead of the commands of Allah... (3:78)

²⁴ The English translation is *What Did Man Think?* i.e. what did man think about the solution to the problems facing humanity. Some part of this discussion is also included in his books titled *Islam: A Challenge to Religion* and *What is Islam?* (Ed)

²⁵ *Wahi* – the revelation sent to various messengers of Allah and is now preserved and protected in the Quran until the end of time as far as this world is concerned. (Ed)

²⁶ *Al-Haqq* – see Glossary. (Ed)

²⁷ *Eimaan* – see Glossary. (Ed)

²⁸ *Saleh* – To carry out those deeds which manifest the latent potentials of those who have acquired *Eimaan*. Deeds carried out without *Eimaan* are not included in this. (Ed)

Due to all human beings being equal, no man has the right to rule over another human being directly, or through man-made laws as this undermines the human respect and dignity with which each human child is blessed from the time of birth (17:70). As long as there are man-made laws being followed in any land in the world without a Divine justification, man cannot realise his inherently dignified nature and is instead degraded. The Quran intends that man frees himself from this degradation by following the Divine laws willingly, experiencing the tangible results of advancing forward in this physical life and in his life beyond death. At a fundamental level we need to come to terms with certain facts of our creation and subsequent existence in our finite life on this earth:

- (1) Our free will and consciousness give meaning to both our inner and the outer worlds. Our sense of identity is acquired through this experience of lived life formed by our beliefs, values, prejudices, education, childhood etc. accumulating on our journey forward.
- (2) We are physically embedded in a biological system and socially into a man-made one, therefore we will inevitably encounter circumstances which were not of our own creation. In the modern concept of democratic capitalism man uses an economic scale to measure his worth; his struggle in life is reduced to his accumulation of material wealth!
- (3) The default position of man is to accept his circumstance as a *fait accompli*, and not to ask questions which give access to a higher reality e.g. the purpose of our existence, the nature and implication of death, the systems around us and how they came to be, the functioning of accountability and morality in individual and collective life etc. And those rare individuals who do seek answers, search within the context of the man-devised systems, therefore searching too often at the level of the problem itself, failing to move beyond the immediate to a higher level of analysis.

The Quran states that regarding those who look for true guidance, Allah guides them to His path (93:7).

The Quran puts a very high value on each human being and draws our attention to this fact that the visible universe around us is created for man as it is he who gives meaning to this universe – implying that biological and historical circumstance is the intended starting point for man’s journey forward. We contain a part within us called our self (*Nafsi*) which has numerous latent potentials – some of which we bring out in the course of our physical life without Quranic guidance, but there are numerous others which are in a latent form and need the Quranic light to manifest these in this life and also in the next life. Illustrating through an

example, the Quran presents two facts before us: firstly, Allah exists and His concept based on Divine attributes can be understood intellectually and this can serve as a model for the human self; secondly, the hereafter exists and with it absolute accountability – the potential to understand these two concepts is present within our cognitive capacity. Only through the Quran can we effectively define these two concepts and derive benefit.

The Quran states that every human deed has an objective weight, defined by the scales presented in the Quran. Only by understanding these scales in relation to his self and Allah can the individual effectively map his movement forward into the future. Thus the ‘true’ worth of a human being is defined clearly in relation to these two entities defined as *Al-Haqq* or absolute truth as set out by the Quran.

The self is a reflection of the choices of the individual, it defines his inner experience from which he contends with the outer world. With this self, man is burdened by responsibility. He seeks a bargain for this burden, exchanging responsibility for rights. The Quran states that before man can make demands of his outer reality, he must first accept the burden on his self, in that every deed, every intention, even every thought leaves its mark on his self and shapes his inner and subsequently his outer reality. This is called the Law of Requital (the equivalent of the Law of Cause and Effect in the physical domain). The question before us remains, how to act so that this law benefits us and does not destroy us.

Parwez attempts to explain the Quranic verses using the Quran itself, meaning that his work remains the truest and most coherent exposition of the Quran in literature today - a great favour to humanity. The Quran repeatedly warns us not to follow any *Ilah*²⁹ other than Allah of the Quran as He has clearly described. Allah presents Himself as an abstract concept to serve as a higher model for the human self. The use of reasoning to understand the Quran is crucial, for the intellect is the medium to *Al-Haqq*. The Quran declares:

Those who, when they are admonished with the signs of their Rabb³⁰, droop not down at them as if they were deaf or blind. (25:73)

²⁹ *Ilah* – this term is used for any idol or god which the human mind creates as a model for itself or as a belief. For further details see Section 1.12. Also see *Lughat ul Quran* by G. A. Parwez. (Ed)

³⁰ *Rabb* – this is an attribute of Allah, which signifies the fact that He has provided guidance to every form of creation in the universe, from its start to its end. In the case of man, however, this guidance is made available as an external entity, leaving it to his personal choice whether to accept it or to reject it. This whole system of providing nourishment for creation is called the *Rabubiyat* of Allah. See Glossary for more details. (Ed)

In this volume Parwez has covered various topics related to Chapter 1 (Surah *Al-Fateha*) and the initial verses of Chapter 2 (Surah *Al-Baqarah*) which include the concept of Allah, the question of good and evil, the psychology of hypocrisy (*Munafqat*) and *Kufr*, the system of *Rabubiyat* (sustenance), and the rise and fall of nations, etc. To be correctly understood, these should be viewed in the context of the system of Deen. These writings appeal to our sense of the Divine, of that which transcends the banality of the immediate and material reality. They seek to define the immaterial both within us and within the universe. It details the system of Deen which has the potential to solve human issues at the most fundamental level of analysis, including the issue of death and what lies beyond it. It introduces the concept of life after death, asserting its reality and seeks to define it conceptually. If the life of the hereafter exists, and its recognition and acceptance as noted in the Quran brings about a tangible and discernable transformation in our consciousness, then we can gain access to Allah's 'assistance' through universal laws in this world. Human suffering, although universal, is not the intended endpoint for man, the emancipation of man from his sufferings is a lifelong individual and collective pursuit.

Deen is the reconciliation between the individual and the collective, the material and the immaterial, the inner and the outer life of man. In such a system the human self reaches that state of development where it becomes assured of its success both in this life and in the life of the hereafter.

The following quote from Erich Fromm's book, *Man For Himself*, concisely sums up the lost and bewildered state of man when he is devoid of the guidance from Allah:

Man can react to historical contradictions by annulling them through his own action; but he cannot annul existential dichotomies, although he can react to them in different ways. He can appease his mind by soothing and harmonizing ideologies. He can try to escape from his inner restlessness by ceaseless activity in pleasure or business. He can try to abrogate his freedom and to turn to himself into an instrument of powers outside himself, submerging his self in them. But he remains dissatisfied, anxious, and restless. There is only one solution to his problem: to face the truth, to acknowledge his fundamental aloneness and solitude in a universe indifferent to his fate, to recognize that there is no power transcending him which can solve his problem for him. Man must accept the responsibility for himself and the fact that only by using his own powers can he give meaning to his life. But meaning does not imply certainty; indeed, the quest for certainty blocks the search for meaning. Uncertainty is the very condition to impel man to unfold his powers. If he faces the truth without panic he will recognize that there is no meaning to life except the meaning man gives his life by the unfolding of his powers, by living productively; and that only constant vigilance, activity, and effort can

keep us from failing in the one task that matters – the full development of our powers within the limitations set by laws of our existence. (p 32)

Note in this excerpt that the uncertainty of human existence is accepted as a ‘fact’ whereas the Quran declares that man will never live in uncertainty during his existence if he accepts the guidance of *Wabi* (the Quran): all the darknesses confronting man in his earthly life will disappear in the light of this guidance.³¹

This translation seeks to keep as close as possible to the original Urdu text in its choice of appropriate words and terms, and close attention has also been paid to convey those meanings which the author intended to convey in his interpretation of the Quranic verses. If readers find anything which may be out of order with the original Urdu text, please feel free to convey it to the Tolu e Islam Trust and, where appropriate, corrections will be made in any revised edition.

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Finally, this work is a translation and as such any ambiguity in the text in the English version which is not present in the Urdu version is my responsibility as a translator and editor and not that of the original author. If readers have any questions or comments after reading this work, they are welcome to contact the Tolu e Islam Trust.

Ejaz Rasool

Glasgow, UK

June 2023

³¹ See verse (2:257). (Ed)

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The Meanings of the Quran
Volume 1

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1 CHAPTER 1 – Surah *Al-Fateha*

Bismillah Hirrahma Nirra'heem – these words are found at the beginning of every Surah (except Surah *At-Tauba*)³² of the Quran. Some people, declaring this to be a verse, call it a part of the related Surah, and include it in the counting of the verses of this Surah too. Others do not consider it to be a part of the related Surah and say that these words have simply been written at the beginning as a sacred opening. These are technical or academic arguments which do not hold any significance in our view. In Surah *An-Namal* it is mentioned that the beginning of the missive which was written by the messenger Sulaiman (Solomon) to Queen Saba (Sheba) was with these words:

This is from Sulaiman, and this is Bismillah Hirrahma Nirra'heem. (27:30)

From this respect, these words are sent down from Allah i.e. are the *Wahi* of Allah, and for us it is sufficient to understand this much.

It is commonly translated as follows:

I begin with the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful.

There is no such word in *Bismillah* which could be translated as 'I begin'. For this meaning the word *Abtada-un* before this is assumed to be omitted, which means 'I begin'. Some people say that the word *Aqura-un* is omitted before this because it is stated in Surah *Al-Alaq* that:

Iqra bi ismi rabbi-kalla'zee khalaqa (96:1)

It is said that the initiation of *Wahi* (revelation) on Rasul-ullah³³ was done with this verse in which the messenger was told to: 'Read you in the name of your *Rabb* who created' (96:1). (The correct meaning of this verse will be dealt with at its own place). The reason that the omission of these kinds of words in front of *Bismillah* has to be accepted is because the meaning of the letter 'B' (*Ba*) is taken to be 'with'. It is true that the meaning of this letter is also 'with', but apart from this, there are other meanings as well. This letter is also used to describe a 'cause' i.e. to say that whatever is being said or done here, its cause is this, its aim is this, its reason or rationale is this.

³² It is quoted that *Bismillah* was not written at the beginning of Surah *At-Tauba* because it was not established whether this is a separate Surah or is a part of the previous Surah (Surah *Al-Infal*).

³³ The messenger of Allah i.e. Muhammad (PBUH – Peace Be Upon Him).

1.1 The Meaning of *Ism*

The word *Ism* is commonly translated as ‘name’. This is also correct, but for Allah this word is used to mean His attributes. The reality is that the basic meaning of the word *Ism* (root *S-M-W*) is for such a sign from which the thing related to it can be recognised. Since recognition of Allah is through His attributes, this is why the Divine attributes are called *Asma Ilahi*. For example, in Surah *Al-Hasbr* after noting various Divine attributes, it is stated *La-hul Asma-ul-Husna* (59:24) - all the attributes of Allah possess the most beautiful and perfect balance. Therefore, for us the meaning of *Ism* in *Bismillah* is ‘Divine attribute’. After this comes the word ‘Allah’ in *Bismillah*, which (we can say) is the personal name of Allah and *Rahman* and *Rabeem* are His attributes.

1.2 The Connotation of *Bismillah*

According to these meanings, *Bismillah Hirrahma Nirra’heem* will mean that the aim of whatever is said or done after this is that Allah’s attributes of *Rahmaniyat* and *Rabeemiyat* should appear and manifest i.e. these attributes should become applied in a tangible form. When these words appearing at the beginning of some Surah of the Quran are attributed to Allah (i.e. it is considered that Allah has informed this about Himself), then this will mean that ‘Allah’s proclamation is that We have revealed this Quran, or this verse of the Quran, so that Our attributes of *Rahmaniyat* and *Rabeemiyat* become universally manifested’. And when a *Momin* begins any of his tasks with these words, then it will mean that I am taking this work in hand so that Allah’s attributes of *Rahmaniyat* and *Rabeemiyat* become manifested from this. This means that the purpose of ‘*Bismillah*’ is to implement Allah’s attribute of *Rahmaniyat* and *Rabeemiyat* in a practical form.

Now the question which will arise before us is, what is the meaning and purpose of the Divine attributes of *Rahmaniyat* and *Rabeemiyat*. Although all the attributes of Allah possess equal greatness and importance in their own right, it is obvious that those attributes which are stated to be part of the Divine programme and in line with its obedience are declared to be the purpose and need of the human programme, they will hold special significance, and furthermore will be deserving of profound reflection and reasoning. Because these two words (*Ar-Rahman* and *Ar-Rabeem*) appear at the start of Surah *Al-Fateha*, it has thus been considered appropriate that their explanation should be given at that point. Therefore, please bear with us, and for the time being understand this much - that Allah has revealed

the Quran, whose purpose is also that in the human world His attributes of *Rahmaniyat* and *Rabeemiyat* prevail everywhere and whichever programme His servants take into their hands, its purpose and need should also be this. Furthermore, the meanings and explanations which are being presented about the Quran at this time (according to my understanding), and which you are making an effort to understand, our purpose from this should be solely this, that His *Rahmat*³⁴ becomes manifested everywhere. This is, in any case, the sole aim before me, and the ultimate objective and desire of all my endeavours.

³⁴ *Rahmat* – the root of the word *Rahm* (R-H-M) is common to both *Rahman* and *Rabeem*. Its meaning includes nourishment and development. It is commonly translated as mercy. For more detailed meanings see *Lughat ul Quran*, Vol. I, p548. (Ed)

1.3 Beginning of Surah *Al-Fateha*

Al-Hamdu Lillahi Rabb-il Alameen (1:1)

The beginning of the Quran is with this magnificent verse, and the beginning of the verse is with the word *Hamd*. This verse is commonly translated as:

All praise be to Allah, the Cherisher and Sustainer of all the Worlds. (1:1)

Non-Muslims commonly raise the objection that the Allah of Muslims is strange, Who Himself proclaims from His mouth that all praises are for Me. (According to them) for someone to say such things about himself does not seem appropriate. This objection of theirs is based on a misunderstanding. Through the Divine revelation (which is preserved within the Quran) mankind has been given this teaching that they should say this, and do this. Therefore by *Al-Hamd* is not meant that Allah is praising Himself; He has stated to mankind that you should understand this truth well and always keep before you that all *Hamd* is for Allah. If, at the beginning of the Quran, the word *Qul* (say) is understood to be implicit, then the matter will become clear. From this it will mean that Allah has taught mankind that you should ‘say it like this’ or ‘do it like this’.

As noted above, in this verse (and at similar places elsewhere) the word *Hamd* is translated as ‘praise’. This translation does not explain the Quranic meaning accurately. For ‘praise’ Arabs have other words as well, but those words have not been used in the Quran for Allah – only the word *Hamd* appears for Him. Therefore, it is extremely important to understand the basic and true meanings of this word.

1.4 Meaning of *Hamd*

Amongst Arabs the ecstatic articulation of those involuntary sentiments of immense appreciation which emerge spontaneously in the heart of a human being on witnessing some very beautiful, harmonious and unique masterpiece, are called *Hamd*. But for this there are a few conditions:

- (1) The beauty and exquisiteness, and masterpiece which is being appreciated, should be an external reality and a tangible entity. Regarding those things which are intangible, and which do not enter our perception, sentiments of appreciation and admiration cannot be created in our heart. For example, we can only admire an artist through those paintings of his

which appear before us in a visible form. This is why the Quran has admonished those who have a proclivity for beautification and display, who without doing any constructive and beneficial work, desire admiration for themselves. The Quran states:

... and love to be praised for what they have not done... (3:188)

They desire to be admired on the basis of those works which they do not do.

- (2) The act or work of someone about which *Hamd* is being done should have been performed through choice and intention; an act performed involuntarily or in a mechanical way will not make it deserving of *Hamd*. So much so, that the word *Hamd* is not expressed for even that beauty which is present in someone by birth, instead the word *Madah* is used for this. For example, in the dance of a peacock, the peacock warrants *Madah*, and its Creator (Allah) deserves *Hamd*.
- (3) It is also essential for *Hamd* that the one expressing *Hamd* should be doing so from the heart. Expressing praise under the coercion of someone will not be called *Hamd* but *Madah*. Nor can flattery, artificiality or hypocrisy, or any false praise for someone have anything to do with *Hamd*. In *Hamd* sentiments of appreciation arise spontaneously on the lips.
- (4) It is also essential to have precise knowledge about the thing for which *Hamd* is being expressed. *Hamd* cannot be expressed merely on the basis of conjecture. Vague concepts, obscure signs, doubts, and thoughts and beliefs producing uncertainty can never create the impetus for *Hamd*. *Hamd* does not arise from deceptive thinking, superstition, and blind reverence. Its origin is that concrete conviction which has been acquired as a result of reasoning and evidence.
- (5) It is essential that those beneficial and beautiful attractions, and balanced and harmonious masterpieces about which *Hamd* is being done should have reached their pristine level of accomplishment, and their benefits should be tangible. The art which has not reached its completion, or which is not beneficial for humanity, is not deserving of *Hamd* and appreciation. 'Art for the sake of art' can be worthy of *Madah* but cannot be deserving of *Hamd*.³⁵

³⁵ *Lughat ul Quran*, Vol. I, pp 369-372.

1.5 How can *Hamd* be Done

This is the meaning of *Hamd* according to the Arabic *Lughat*³⁶ and it is in these meanings that the Quran has used it. When *Al* precedes this word (*Al-Hamdu Lillah*), then its meaning will be that the highest degree of every kind of *Hamdiyat* is only for Allah – no one can share this with Him. The Being of Allah is far beyond the reach of human conjecture, thought, notion, conception. Hence, a mere mental concept of His Being cannot evoke the sentiments of *Hamd*, because the foremost condition of *Hamd* is that the entity should be tangible and visible. Therefore, just as the appreciation of some artwork is in reality *Hamd* of the artist, similarly the *Hamd* of Allah can only occur through bringing the beauties and benefits of His creation³⁷ in front of us. He Himself has stated:

... *There is not a thing but celebrates (Tasbeeh³⁸) His Hamd...* (17:44)

Everything in the universe is a talking picture of the *Hamd* of its Creator. It is apparent from this that the *Hamd* of Allah is only possible through reflection and reasoning in His created universe. He has also detailed one attribute of *Momineen* as being *Hamidoon* (9:112). It is apparent from this that when the *Hamd* of Allah is possible through reflection and reasoning in the manifestations of nature, then the fundamental duty of the *Momineen* will be that they should reflect and reason in the things of the universe. That they should carry out research into different aspects of the universe, and by making the benefits of their tangible outcomes universal for mankind, provide practical evidence of the *Hamd* of Allah. These are those very possessors of intellect and vision about whom Allah has declared:

Behold! In the creation of the heavens and the earth, and the alternation of night and day there are indeed signs for men of understanding - men who celebrate the attributes of Allah, standing, sitting, and lying down on their sides, and contemplate the creation of the heavens and the earth: 'Our Rabb! Not for naught have You created all this! Glory to You! Give us protection from the punishment of the fire'.
(3:190-191)

It is a fact that in the highs and lows of the creation of the universe, and in the alternation of night and day, there are great signs for men of intellect and vision to reach reality. Those men of intellect and vision who, while standing, sitting and lying down, constantly keep the Divine laws before them. They reflect and reason

³⁶ *Lughat* – dictionary. This was the prevalent meaning of *Hamd* according to the time of the Revelation. (Ed)

³⁷ The Arabic word used is *Takhleeq*. (Ed)

³⁸ The meaning of the word *Tasbeeh* used in the verse will be discussed at its own place.

in the creation of the heavens and earth, and when after research in them, the beneficences and diversities of the Creator of nature become unveiled before them, then they spontaneously exclaim, ‘Our *Rabb!* You have not created this system of the universe without aim, or for destructive purposes.’

This is Allah’s *Hamd*, and these are those men of intellect and vision, and those who engage in research and discoveries, who will be called *Hamidoon*. And when all this endeavour and effort of theirs will be to universally dispense Allah’s attributes of *Rahmaniyat* and *Rabeemiyat* so that the whole of humanity benefits from this, then these *Hamidoon* will be called *Momineen*.

1.6 Who are the *Ulema* (Scholars)?

These are the same ones who are called *Ulema* (scholars) by Allah at another place. In Surah *Fatir* it is stated:

See you not that Allah sends down rain from the sky? With it We then bring out produce of various colours. And in the mountains are tracts white and red, of various shades of colour, and black intense in hue. And so amongst men and crawling creatures and cattle, are they of various colours. Those truly fear³⁹ Allah among His servants who have knowledge (Ulema): For Allah is exalted in Might, All Protecting.
(35:27-28)

Have you not pondered on how amazing and based on wisdom is Allah’s system of providing water.⁴⁰ He brings down rain from the heights of the atmosphere, and from this one water produces all kinds of growth, fruits, flowers, grains, etc. And have you also ever pondered on how many great signs of Allah’s system of evolution these mountains which appear to be just standing there like frozen stationary matter are holding within themselves! How many very long eras of history each and every layer of their rocks, which are red in some places and white in others, and in some places jet black, are holding squeezed within their folds. And then reflect on human beings, cattle and livestock, and other living creatures present on planet earth, how these are all divided into countless species and how among these each species possesses distinct traits. You merely cast a cursory eye on these things of the universe and move on, but when those among the men of Allah who possess knowledge and wisdom reflect and reason on these, they are awestruck by the perception of His supremacy and authority. And these words of

³⁹ This means that they are fearful of the consequences of going against the Law of Requit. (Ed)

⁴⁰ Details of this system will be covered at different places. At this point only this much is noted.

appreciation and admiration (*Hamd* and *Tebseen*) arise spontaneously on their lips that, ‘Undoubtedly, their Creator, the One Allah, is Master of unparalleled sovereignty and power, but He does not use this power and authority for destruction, He brings it into use for the protection of the universe’. These are those scholars of knowledge and research who are declared as *Ulema* by the Quran, and who are the practical embodiment of Allah’s attribute of *Hamde’at*.

In another verse the Quran has stated that:

Verily in the heavens and the earth are signs for those who have Eimaan. And in the creation of yourselves, and the fact that animals are scattered (through the earth), are signs for those of assured conviction. (45:3-4)

There are signs for the *Momineen* in the highs and lows of the universe; these are the people who hold firm conviction in the Creator of the universe and His immutable laws. In your own creation and the continuation of other species of animals, there are signs for those people who have conviction in the universe being *Haqq*⁴¹ - these are the men of intellect and vision. These are the ones who are declared as being righteous (*Muttaqee*⁴²):

Verily, in the alternation of the night and the day, and in all that Allah has created, in the heavens and the earth, are signs for those who are Muttaqee. (10:6)

After this degree of emphasis on the use of intellect and reasoning in the system of the universe, it is stated:

Such are those signs of Allah which We rehearse to you in truth (Haqq): then ask them, in what exposition will they have Eimaan after Allah and His signs? (45:6)

1.7 Reflection and Deliberation on the Quran

Up until now we have described the manifestations of *Hamde’at* in the physical universe, but aside from means of sustenance, man also requires correct guidance in the journey of life. This guidance used to be made available through *Wahi*,

⁴¹ *Haqq* –this is usually translated as meaning something which is real and absolutely true. It includes those efforts and tasks which have a useful purpose, are good for others, and lead to a positive outcome. For more details see Glossary. (Ed)

⁴² *Muttaqee* – translated as righteous. In its wider meaning it refers to the one who performs all those duties faithfully and efficiently which Allah has enjoined through the Quran. For more details see Glossary (*Taqwa*). (Ed)

whose last link is the Quran. Allah has declared this Book also as a manifestation of *Hamde'at*:

Hamd be to Allah, Who has sent to His servant the Book, and has allowed therein no crookedness. (18:1)

In other words, when you will ponder on this code of laws which He has sent down on His messenger, then this reality will be spontaneously testified to by your tongue that it is truly deserving of *Hamd* and appreciation. That Being Who has bestowed such a code of life in which there is no crookedness, by causing the caravan of humanity to tread on the straight path (*Siraat e Mustaqeem*)⁴³, He takes it to its intended destination. It is obvious that this *Hamd* of Allah can only be performed through deep reflection and deliberation on the Quran. Furthermore, *Momineen* are those who, by carrying out research and investigation into the outer universe and by reflecting and deliberating on the Quran, demonstrate this truth to the world that it is the Being of Allah which is deserving of *Hamde'at*.

1.8 Ahmad, Muhammad, and the Stature of Mahmood

That great and accomplished self who initially made the *Hamd* of Allah general in this way was termed as *Abmad*⁴⁴ (61:6) i.e. the one who does a great deal of *Hamd*, and it was from this that he himself became declared as being *Muhammad*⁴⁵ himself (48:29) 'whose *Hamd* should be expressed continuously and persistently'. These were the supreme achievements of his righteous life on the basis of which it was declared that he is established on the 'stature of *Mahmood*' (17:49). Through his blessed hands that system became established, seeing which the whole world rose to proclaim that that Allah Who bestowed such a revolutionary system is in truth deserving of *Hamd* and appreciation, and following this, that revolutionary messenger is deserving of *Hamd* who demonstrated this system by establishing it in a practical form. The foremost consequence of this system was that the roots of those nations were severed who used to subject weaker human beings to injustice and oppression and used to exploit them through subjugation and servitude. This was that beneficial accomplishment of his through which the

⁴³ Details covered under verse (1:6). (Ed)

⁴⁴ *Abmad* - the one who carries out a lot of *Hamd* and appreciation. Some think that it means the one who is deserving of *Hamd* and appreciation. (Ed)

⁴⁵ *Muhammad* – from a practical aspect it means the one who is continuously and persistently deserving of *Hamd* and appreciation. Rasul-ullah had both names i.e. Ahmad and Muhammad. (Ed)

Hamd of Allah emerged and appeared perspicuously before the world.⁴⁶ In view of this it was stated:

Of the wrongdoers the last remnant was cut off. Hamd be to Allah, the Rabb of all the worlds. (6:45)

The roots of unjust nations were severed and in this way the *Hamd* of Allah, the *Rabb* of all the Worlds, was stamped on the face of the universe.

1.9 Beauty and Supremacy

It is obvious that for this kind of transformation a demonstration of the aspect of supremacy of the Being of Allah will also be essential i.e. together with demonstrations of the beauty and balance of creation, a manifestation of power and authority. This is why the Quran has declared the fountainhead of both beauty and supremacy as being the Being of Allah when it is declared:

...to Him belongs Dominion, and to Him belongs Hamd: And He has power over all things. (64:1)

If there were no display of supremacy in the universe alongside the beauty, then this system would end up becoming destroyed. On the other hand, that power and authority which is not a manifestation of *Hamde'at* ends up becoming the rule of Pharaoh and Genghis Khan i.e. if Deen is dissociated from politics, then what remains is tyranny. This is why Allah has stated that together with the Divine guidance He has also sent down a razor-sharp sword (57:25), because with the equilibrium provided by both of these, the system of life can remain in place. Because if power is not overseen by the Quran, then it becomes tyrannical, and if there is no power of implementation alongside the Quran, then it remains merely as a sermon. Hence, the *Jamaat e Momineen* becomes *Hamidoon* by bringing these two attributes of Allah into action.

From these explanations you can conclude that when a *Momin* (Muslim) proclaims *Al-Hamdu Lillah*, what its meaning is and what its aim is. It is clear from this that by *Hamde'at* is not meant the repetition of a few words from the tongue; this is commensurate with bringing a system into shape in which, by harnessing the forces of nature, these are made widely available for the universal *Rabubiyat* of

⁴⁶ This also points to the fact that in today's world there is so much exploitation and tyranny because there is no *Jamaat e Momineen* which exists to carry out the *Hamd* of Allah according to the Quranic system. (Ed)

mankind according to Divine guidance. And whatever forces are an obstruction in its path, to remove these. Details of these matters will be covered in the following words.

1.10 Allah⁴⁷

After *Al-Hamd*, the next word is *Lillab*. This is in reality (*Li + Allah*) - *Li* means 'for' therefore *Lillab* will mean 'for Allah'. And *Al-Hamdu Lillab* will mean that '*Hamde'at*' in its most complete and absolute form is only ascribed to Allah. Therefore, the word Allah now comes before us. It is commonly stated that this is the combination of (*Al + Ilab*⁴⁸), therefore the meaning of Allah will be the True *Ilab*, the One *Ilab*. As has already been stated, this (Allah) is a proper noun i.e. this word is used for the Divine Self and all other words are the attributes of this Self. In the root of *Ilab* (*I-L-H*) the following meanings are implicit:

- (1) Having been frightened, looking for someone's protection or giving protection.
- (2) Becoming astonished.
- (3) Holding a high status and being hidden from vision.
- (4) Accepting servitude to or the rule of someone i.e. acknowledging and accepting the supremacy and authority of someone.

According to these meanings, Allah (i.e. the Quranic *Ilab*) is that elevated and supreme Being Who is hidden from human eyes; in front of Whose supremacies human intellect and vision remain awestruck; Whose sovereignty encompasses the whole of the universe; obedience and submission to Whom is a must i.e. by acknowledging Him as *Ilab*, this means that obedience to Him and to His authority be adopted.

As has been said before, we can neither know nor say anything about the form and nature of the Self of Allah. He is beyond the limits of human intellect and consciousness, and ideation and comprehension. He has stated:

No vision can grasp Him... (6:103)

Although we only know this much, what the attributes are of that Being, and these attributes too are also those disclosed by Him which are written down and

⁴⁷ *Allah* – this is commonly translated as God, which is not correct as will become clear later. Allah has a different connotation when seen in the light of the Quranic values. (Ed)

⁴⁸ *Ilab* – commonly translated as god. (Ed)

preserved in the Quran, therefore, by *Eimaan* in Allah, this will mean to accept and adopt the rule and authority of that Being Whose attributes are cited in the Quran.

1.11 The Universal Concept of *Ilah*

As I have written at the beginning of my book *Mann-o-Yazdan*⁴⁹, if you pass through any era of human history and cast an eye on any part on the face of planet earth, you will find one thing which is commonplace among the whole of mankind, irrespective of time and place i.e. the concept of some great and high being, the awareness of some supernatural power which should be bowed down before, and which should be worshipped, from whom supplications should be entreated, which should be feared, and in whose honour offerings should be presented. Explorers of the world and Western researchers, even if they have reached such a location where no outsider before them had ever laid even a footstep, and where the local inhabitants (totally unfamiliar with civilisation and structured society) were living a life like the initial era of ignorance, despite the fact that they were completely disparate compared to the outer world in their style of living, economic ways and cultural practices, even amongst them there was to be found a belief in some invisible, higher and greater power which they used to worship.

Together with this it is also a fact that wherever this awareness of such a being exists, its concept or details are different in every place. And these are the differences where the god of every tribe is distinct from the god of another tribe, and the idol of every religion is dissimilar to the idol of other religions. This expression that *Ram*⁵⁰ is the same and *Rabeem* is also the same is evidence of ignorance of reality, a deceptive idea, or a deliberate misrepresentation. The *Yahuwa* of Jews, the 'Father' of Christians, the *Eshwar* of the Hindu religion or the *Parmatma* of their *Vedant*, the *Yazdan* of Zoroastrians – are all completely different from one another. And Allah of the Quran is distinct from all of them. This is because the founders of these religions (whom we can include in the list of *Anbiya*⁵¹, though the *Anbiya* are not the founders of Deen but will be called the

⁴⁹ *Mann-o-Yazdan* – this book has been translated into English under the title of *The Human Self and Allah*. (Ed)

⁵⁰ *Ram* – the name of a Hindu god. (Ed)

⁵¹ *Anbiya* – plural of *Nabi*, which is the status of a messenger of Allah as a recipient of revelation (*Wabi*). Every messenger of Allah first received *Wabi* as a *Nabi*, and then passed it on to the people as a messenger. For more details see Glossary. (Ed)

propagators of Allah's Deen) would have described the same attributes of Allah which are detailed in the Quran. But later on human ideas and concepts were mingled with these attributes, and in this way not only did the gods of different religions become different from each other, they also became the embodiment of a totally different concept from the true and pristine concept of Allah. This is why the Quran has stated:

...Hamd and Glory be to Him! For He is above what they attribute to Him! (6:100)

1.12 The True Allah

The true Allah is far beyond and higher than those attributes which the human mind has carved and attributed to Him. The correct concept of Allah can only emerge before us according to those attributes which are noted in the Quran, because no contamination has taken place in these from human thoughts and beliefs. And this is the reason that the Quran simply does not accept the *Eimaan* in Allah of these people who have *Eimaan* in Allah according to their own individual concepts. And it states clearly:

So if they have Eimaan as you have Eimaan, they are indeed on the right path⁵²...
(2:137)

If these people accept *Eimaan* in Allah in the way that you have accepted *Eimaan*, only then it will be acknowledged that they are treading on the right path.⁵³ When He has said that '...there is nothing whatever like unto Him...' (42:11), this does not only mean that the Being of Allah cannot be understood through any simile because the simile that will be given will, in any case, be that of some tangible and finite entity, whereas His Self is invisible and infinite; it also means that whichever gods people of other religions believe in, none among them is like this Allah Whose concept Allah Himself has presented.

⁵² The reason for this is clear: our thinking precedes whatever we do in life. Therefore the change in human conduct which follows this type of *Eimaan* cannot be achieved by any other means. (Ed)

⁵³ By following the path of guidance defined by the Quran, the human self develops by displaying the Divine attributes in daily life. The development of the self which takes place following this *Eimaan* is diametrically opposite to that of any other human self. See the book titled *What is Islam?* by the author. (Ed)

1.12.1 This Cannot be Translated

And from here this point also arises before us that the word Allah cannot be translated into another language, because in whatever language it is translated, it will lead to the concept of that God which the speakers of that language believe in as God. For example, from the word God the concept of the God of Christians will come to mind, and from the word *Eshwar* the concept of the God of Hindus.

The next question which arises is, why is it essential to accept *Eimaan* in Allah and what effect does this have on our life? For example, one person says that there is a God, and the second one says I do not believe in Him. Or one person accepts the God whose concept is presented, for example, by Christianity, and another accepts that Being whose concept is given in the Quran – what effect will this have on their practical life? Because if there is no effect resulting from the belief or ideology of a human being on his individual and collective life, then whether it is accepted or not is of no consequence. The answer to this question merits greater detail, which I have noted in my book *Mann-o-Yazdan* (The Human Self and Allah). Here, it is noted briefly.

1.13 Why Accepting *Eimaan* in Allah is Essential

The Quran informs us (and now, apart from other world religions, psychologists have also begun to provide evidence of this) that man is not just the name for his physical body which remains alive like other animals under physical laws and finally expires at the hands of death. Within man there is one other entity which is called his being or self (*Nafs*). Every human child is endowed with this self from Allah, but in an undeveloped form. The self of a human being does not terminate at the hands of death, rather it remains alive and progresses forward even after this. For the sake of comprehension, we will call the physical life of man ‘life at an animalistic level’, and the life possessed by his self will be called ‘human life’.

1.14 The Human Self

The development of this undeveloped self is the purpose of human life and its aim. After death, the developed self becomes capable of traversing further evolutionary stages (details of these matters will be covered in their respective places according to the Quranic verses). It is absolutely critical to have precise

knowledge of the fact whether the self of an individual is developing or not. In the absence of this, man can suffer from misconceptions or self-deceptions. ('Self-purification' (*Tazkīa Nafs*⁵⁴) through meditations and rituals in mysticism is a consequence of this misconception). The self in its absolutely complete form is the Self of Allah, and those attributes of His which are defined in the Quran are (you could say) the rays reflecting from it, or are its various facets. Leaving aside those attributes which are solely specific to the Divine Self (e.g. *Abde'at*⁵⁵, Infinite, etc.) the remainder of the attributes are also kept within man as latent potentials in a finite form. As the human self keeps on developing, these attributes keep on being reflected (within the limits of being human) - in other words, the manifestation of the 'Divine attributes' takes place in the character and conduct (within the limits of being human) of that individual whose self is becoming developed. Therefore it is essential that in order to know whether our self is developing or not, and if it is happening then to what extent, we will need to see whether the 'Divine attributes' can be glimpsed or not in our character and conduct. Looking at it from this aspect, the Divine attributes will serve as external criteria or an objective standard by which to measure the development of our self. By this man cannot suffer from any false perception or self-deception. This is the foremost requirement of *Eimaan* in Allah and its fundamental purpose.

But development of the human self is only possible through obedience to these laws and values which Allah has provided through *Wabi*, and which are now preserved within the Quran. This is the aim of having *Eimaan* in Allah as being *Ilah* (Possessor of absolute sovereignty). In the outer universe everything remains busily functioning under the obedience of the Divine laws in pursuit of the achievement of that aim which has been defined for it. None of these things has the audacity to go against this obedience or to express rebellion. This is because they have not been given the power of choice and intent; they have been created constrained for the purpose of remaining obedient to these laws. Contrary to this, man has been created as possessor of choice and intent. The first and foremost evidence of his being possessor of choice and intent is that though his physical life is dependent on obedience to the laws of nature like animals, by rebelling against these laws he can even commit suicide – animals cannot commit suicide.

⁵⁴ *Tazkīa Nafs* - purification of the self

⁵⁵ *Abde'at* – this means infinite life, and when applied to Allah means living forever, with no beginning and no end. (Ed)

1.15 Collective Life

In the same way that laws and regulations are essential for the physical life (animalistic level) of man, laws and regulations are essential for his life at a human level (i.e. that life in which development of his self takes place). If we look at it from this angle, then it is essential for man to abide by dual regulations – one code for the growth and nourishment of his physical life (body) and a second code for the strengthening and development of his life as a human (self). Growth and nourishment of his physical (animal) life can also take place at an individual level (from living alone and in isolation), but the development of his self is only possible by living a collective life where one man has to deal with another man. (This belief that development of the human self (*Tazkia Nafsi*) is possible by living in caves, mountains, jungles, desolate places, or sitting in prolonged meditations, or in secluded abodes within monasteries is self-deception - and, in any case, contrary to Quranic teaching). The programme proposed by the Quran is:

...and bow down with those who bow down (collectively). (2:43)

Bowing down in unison with those who are bowing down before the Divine laws and:

...and be with those who are truthful (Sadiqeen). (9:119)

Living life in the companionship of those who are truthful. The Quran declares the condition for entry to *Jannat* (paradise) to be:

Enter you then among My devotees! Yes, enter you My paradise! (89:29-30)

This will be called the communal life of man. Therefore, there is also an unavoidable need for a code of laws for the communal life of man. The need for laws and regulations for this life is accepted by every nation of the world. The view of one group of men (who are in the majority today) is that human society can formulate these laws itself (this doctrine is called secularism). But the Quran informs us that from this there will be conflict in the communal and social life of men (just as is evident from history that this has been happening and is still continuing to happen). It states that laws for this should also come from this same Allah Whose laws are in action in the outer universe and according to which the system of the universe is functioning with such balance and beauty (67:3-4). These laws are received through *Wahi* and are now preserved in the Quran in their complete and immutable form (6:116, 15:9).

Among the supporters of secularism there are also those people who at least accept that the universe is created by Allah and that it is His laws which are

functioning in this, but the Quran does not accept this as being *Eimaan Billah* (*Eimaan* in Allah). About these people it says that, 'If you ask them who created the earth and heavenly bodies, and under Whose laws are the sun and moon in action, they will reply, it is Allah Alone Who has created them, and these are subject to His laws alone'. Then it says, 'If you ask them Who is the one according to Whose laws rain descends from the skies, from which the dead land gains new life, they will say that this only takes place due to Allah's laws'. After this the Quran states that when they accept the functioning of the Divine laws in the outer universe, then how can they reject the necessity of His laws in the human world? Having reached this far, what is the thing that deceives them:

Say: 'To whom belong the earth and all beings therein? If you know!' They will say, 'To Allah!' Say: 'Yet will you not receive admonition?' Say: 'Who is the Rabb of the seven (numerous) heavens, and the Rabb of the Throne Supreme?' They will say, 'Allah'. Say: 'Will you not then follow His laws?' Say: 'Who is it in Whose hands is the Sovereignty of all things – Who protects, but is not protected? (Say) if you know.' They will say, '(It belongs to) Allah.' Say: 'Then how are you deluded?' (23:84-89)

... Why do veils descend on their intellect and reasoning? (29:61).

The Quran states, announce to them:

... Say! Hamd be to Allah... (29:63)

1.16 *Ilah* of *Ard* (Earth) and *Samaa* (Heavens)

The outer universe is not the only abode for Allah's *Hamd*, it is essential that the human world also becomes the manifestation of this. Keep the human world within the obedience of the Divine laws and after that you will witness how fountains of joys and successes gush forth here, and choruses of admiration and appreciation arise! The Quran states, remember that:

It is He Who is Ilah in the heavens and Ilah on earth, and He is full of Wisdom and Knowledge. (43:84)

It is His sovereignty which reigns in the domains of the universe and also His authority on the earth. *Eimaan* in Allah means that in both these spheres the functioning of only His laws should be accepted. If Allah is accepted as *Ilah* of the external universe, and man opts for another *Ilah* in his social life, this will lead to chaos:

...if there were, in the heavens and the earth, other gods besides Allah, there would have been confusion in both! (21:22)

1.17 Those Who Make their Desires as *Ilah*

Not only does the Quran declare that to live life under the control of laws devised by human society is counter to *Eimaan* in Allah, it goes one step further than this and declares:

Then see you such a one as takes as his god (Ilah) his own vain desire? Allah has, knowing him as such, left him astray, and sealed his hearing and his heart, and put a veil on his sight. Who, then, will guide him after Allah? Will you not then pay attention? (45:23)

Have you pondered on the state of that individual who has himself made his own emotions as his *Ilah*? The consequence of doing this is that man loses the ability of hearing, seeing, and thinking and understanding, his intellect becomes shrouded, and in this way, despite possessing knowledge, he sets out on the paths of destruction and ruin. Only the guidance of Allah can save such an individual from destruction.

1.18 Emotions, Knowledge and Guidance

At this point an important issue arises which I do not wish to proceed from without addressing. Details of it will come in its own place; here, it will be sufficient to say that when the Quran was revealed, the whole world was steeped in monasticism. According to this practice, it was thought that human emotions were the chief adversary in getting access to God and nearness to God could only be achieved by the one who eliminates emotions. This was called eradication of the inner self. This was an extremely poisonous practice. Firstly, emotions are that very force which provides the impetus for human action. If these are destroyed, then man becomes merely as a stone. Secondly, that emotions simply cannot be destroyed, and to believe this is self-deception. Emotions can only be suppressed, and when these suppressed emotions find their natural true outlets closed for their expression and satisfaction, then they surface via unnatural ways. According to the terminology of psychology this is called perversion, as a result of which man becomes the victim of various kinds of psychological ailments. The Quran arrived and challenged this erroneous practice of monasticism, and stated that

making the emotions rebellious and unbridled is a cause for destruction and ruin (it calls this making the emotions as *Ilah* (i.e. god)). If these are kept under Allah's guidance, then great constructive tasks can be accomplished as a result of these. This is why the Quran states that:

...and who is more astray than one who follows his own lusts, devoid of guidance from Allah? ... (28:50)

At another place:

Nay, the wrongdoers follow their own lusts, being devoid of knowledge. But Who will guide those Whom Allah leaves astray? ... (30:29)

In the practice of monasticism, knowledge and emotions are declared to be the opposite of each other. This is why every claimant of Divine nearness is bent upon vilifying intellect. But the instruction of the Quran is to utilise emotions in the light of knowledge. The human intellect required centuries to reach this truth (apparently contradictory). Hence, in the twentieth century, psychology is coming to the fore as a science (though it has not yet been able to become an established subject of science).⁵⁶ Following extensive research, experts in this field have partitioned emotions into two parts i.e. Rational Passions and Irrational Passions. This is that very divide and differentiation which the Quran referred to fourteen centuries ago, and which, before this, the human intellect could not accept. It used to call knowledge and passions two opposing elements. These are those places where, having reached, man spontaneously declares that there is no doubt and ambiguity in this, that the Quran is not the product of the human intellect.

In any case, the Quran has placed Allah's Divinity (the sovereignty of Allah) at such an elevated and pristine level, that it even declares making a 'god' out of human emotions as being *Shirk*⁵⁷.

From these explanations it is clear that man should keep both his individual and collective life under the obedience of the Divine laws. These laws used to be made available via *Wahi*, and are now preserved in His Book, the Quran. This is what is called acceptance of Allah's sovereignty and this is what is called having *Eimaan* in Allah. Hence, the Quran has declared in very comprehensive words that:

⁵⁶ Many of its fields are now considered part of science as more empirical evidence is becoming available. (Ed)

⁵⁷ *Shirk* – this word is usually translated as the association of another god with Allah. However, in the context of the system of Deen, it refers to mixing man-made laws with the Quranic laws. The Quran considers it degradation for man to be subjected to non-Quranic laws, as these do not aid the development of the self. (Ed)

...and if any do fail to judge by what Allah has revealed, they are *Kafir*. (5:44)

Those who do not make all of their decisions in accordance with Allah's Book are the ones who are called *Kafir*.⁵⁸ Only those people who spend their life in obedience to His Book can claim to be those who obey Allah as their *Ilah* and only they can state in reality that:

All Hamd is for Allah... (1:1)

After these two words in Surah *Al-Fateha*, three attributes of Allah are noted with great precision, whose meanings are that the manifestation of His *Hamde'at* and its emergence will be fundamentally via these attributes. These attributes are: *Rabb-il Alameen*, *Ar-Rahman-nir-Rabeem* and *Ma'liki Yaum-id-Deen*. First of all, let us take the word *Rabb*.

1.19 *Rabb*

The basic meanings of *Rabb* (R-B-B⁵⁹) are 'to provide nourishment' i.e. for something to be passed through ever new forms, so that in this way, by becoming nourished and developed stage by stage, it reaches its completion from its starting point. This 'technique of nourishment' is called *Rabubiyat*, and the one who gives nourishment in this way is called '*Rabb*'. In this technique the aspects of reformation, correction, and strengthening are also implicit, and since the natural consequence of nourishment is beauty and exquisiteness, this is why *Ar-Ribba'tu* is what you call those plants which remain evergreen and fresh in all seasons, winter and summer.

From the above the basic meanings of *Rabb-un* become clear i.e. the One Who gives nourishment, the One who takes to completion, the One Who organises affairs, the One Who reforms, the One Who takes forward, and the One Who bestows strength i.e. the One Who takes everything from its starting point to its completion.

⁵⁸ This is not an accusation but a statement of fact i.e. all the advantages associated with following the Quran remain out of their reach, and this includes the life of the hereafter. This aspect will become clear later. See Glossary for more details. (Ed)

⁵⁹ For more details about the meanings of the root of the word *Rabb*, see *Lughat ul Quran*, Vol. I, pp. 526-528 (Ed)

1.20 Creation of the Universe

How did this visible universe come into existence from nothing: the answer to this is not possible for the human intellect. In the system of nature the law of cause and effect is functioning and continuing i.e. whatever manifests here is the consequence of some cause. Physical science is the name given to determining the links of cause and effect. These researchers keep extending these links back in time, and they are also succeeding to a large degree in their research, but ultimately they reach such a point in this where, though this universe is visibly in existence, it is not comprehended how it came into existence. In other words, though an effect is present, nothing can be known of its cause. Even the greatest of scientists can be seen confounded at this point, perplexed and awestruck just like someone completely ignorant. We have seen (under the topic of ‘Allah’) that being awestruck is included in the meaning of ‘*Ilah*’. The beginning of the universe is that point of wonder which is connected with the majesty of *Ilah*. This is why Allah has declared Himself as the One Who created the heavens and the earth from nothing (2:117) or (6:14). In other words, the One Who brought this material universe into existence without the presence of prior material. The One Who brings into manifestation an effect without a cause. He has called the state before the beginning of the universe as being the domain of *Amr*, and after the emergence of the universe as being the domain of *Khalq*. The beginning of human knowledge commences from the domain of *Khalq*, and it is from this very point that comprehension of the *Rabubiyat* of Allah also has its origin.

1.21 The Doctrine of Evolution

Discoveries by physical sciences have reached this reality that the form in which we find things of the universe today is not the one in which it was at the beginning. The beginning (you could say) of everything among them started from one point; after this, whilst becoming nourished continually, that entity kept advancing forward (the dot became a line), and by passing through various phases and stages became shaped into this form which we witness before us today. This is called the Theory of Organic Evolution in their terminology.⁶⁰ At this point it suffices to say this much. In this regard observe also that the linguistic meanings of these

⁶⁰ I have covered details of this theory and its explanation in light of the Quranic verses in my book, *The Human Self and Iblees*. Those readers who are interested can read it here.

words (*Hamd*, Allah and *Rabb*) which we have noted and then the meanings for which the Quran has employed them, are there any words available in any other language of the world in which these could be translated? Just take this word *Rabb*. In English translations of the Quran (whether those translations have been done by non-Muslims or by Muslims themselves) this is translated as Lord. Just reflect whether that meaning which is implicit in the word *Rabb* can be conceptualised in any way whatsoever from this word Lord. Never mind understanding the meaning, the concept which is formed about Allah from this is completely different from the concept which is created by the word *Rabb*. On the one hand, ‘the One Who, providing nourishment to the things of the universe, takes them from the starting point to the point of completion, and in this way, by passing them through evolutionary stages, causes them to manifest their latent potentials’; and on the other hand, the term Lord. This is the reason that Gibb⁶¹ (1945) said that the translation of the Quran cannot be done in any language of the world. Only its meanings can be explained (and this is the very reason that even after compiling the *Lughat ul Quran*, I did not translate the Quran, but presented its meanings).

In any event, when a researcher reflects on the system of the universe and observes how Allah’s *Rabubiyat* converts a drop of water into a pearl, and turns a nondescript cell of life into the being of Adam after passing it through millions and millions of stages, he spontaneously proclaims:

Hamd be to Allah, Rabb of all the Worlds. (I:I)

But the manifestation of this attribute of the *Rabubiyat* of Allah is not confined to only one thing or one part of life, this encompasses all the worlds. From this the next matter now appears before us i.e. what is meant by worlds?

1.22 Alameen - Worlds

Its root is *Ain-L-M* which means to know and recognise. Therefore *A’lim* (as in *Lim*) is a possessor of knowledge or someone who knows about some matter and *A’lam* (as in *Lam*) is that thing through which someone can recognise something i.e. a sign or symbol of something, for example *Alam* (flag) is the symbol of an army. You are passing through a desolate jungle at night where there is no sign of any human life, and you glimpse a flickering light in the distance. From this you

⁶¹ H. A. R. Gibb, *Modern Trends in Islam*, p. 4 (1945 edition).

will recognise that a human being lives there. That lamp will become the sign or *Alam* of the presence of some human being.

As has been noted earlier, the reality of the form of Allah's Self cannot be grasped by human consciousness, but the existence of this universe is a sign of this fact that it has some Creator. Therefore, this discernible universe will be called the sign or means by which to recognise the invisible and imperceptible Self of Allah. From this a comprehensive point arises before us: the Quran has called the universe *A'lam* which means that the existence of the universe is not in itself the objective, but only a means by which to recognise someone – to recognise the stature of man himself. And moving forward from this, to know and understand this *Amr* that there is some Creator of this universe under Whose supreme and grand scheme this whole system is busy functioning. The declaration that this visible universe is not an objective in itself but is the means to achieve a higher and greater aim could only have been the miracle of the Quran.

In the words of Iqbal:

*This garden is a place for tending to angst and its expression,
It is neither for roving nor a permanent refuge.*

Alameen is the plural of *Alam*, therefore its meaning is 'universes'. We consider this world of ours as being the universe, but who knows how many universes there are created by Allah. And then the meaning of this word will become even more clear when we bring this fact noted in the Quran before us:

...He adds to His creation as He Wills...(35:1)

Allah keeps on adding to his creation according to His programme of *Mash'eat*⁶². Who knows how many new universes keep on coming into existence every new day. Keep these awesome expanses of these creations of Allah in mind, and then reflect on this fact that He has called Himself *Rabb-il Alameen* i.e. responsible for the nourishment (*Rabubiyat*) of all the universes.

1.23 Life in the Stellar Bodies

Arabs used to think that no growth takes place in mud and stone (and similar inert material), therefore they reserved the word *Alam* only for living or conscious

⁶² *Mashe'at* – as per His Will and laws. (Ed)

things. And it was from this very viewpoint that they used to consider *Alameen* as meaning various nations of the world. But now scientific discoveries are pointing to something else, as a result of which the distinction between inert and non-inert is disappearing – not only this, the ancient concept of matter itself has been transformed. Thus Allah's being *Rabb-il Alameen* will not remain confined just to living things, rather will encompass all things which are dispersed throughout the universes. But if we consider it to be limited only to living things according to the ancient concept of the Arabs about living things, even then according to the Quran living things are not confined only to this planet earth. It says that there are such planets dispersed throughout the heavens in which there are living creations. In Surah *Asb-Shura* it is stated:

And among His signs is the creation of the heavens and the earth, and the living creatures that He has scattered through them: and He has power to gather them together according to His Will. (42:29)

Among the Divine signs is also this, that He has created the heavens and the earth, and has scattered living creatures within them. Following this, the final words of the verse merit intense reflection and attention in which it is stated that He also has the power that at some point in time He may cause these living creatures dispersed among different planets to connect with each other. Perhaps this quest and pursuit of man may one day provide proof of this reality which is noted in the Quran. The Quran has also declared in relation to the unveiling of *Haqq*⁶³ that:

Soon will We show them Our signs in the furthest regions of the universe and in their own selves, until it becomes manifest to them that this is the truth... (41:53)

We will continue to show Our signs to mankind in their internal world⁶⁴ and in the outer universe until this proclamation of Ours becomes crystal clear before them that whatever is stated in the Quran is based on fact, it is not conjecture and guesswork. Regarding this Quranic concept about the existence of life dispersed in the stellar bodies, Iqbal had stated that:

*These heavens are not devoid of life,
There are hundreds of caravans there too.*

⁶³ *Haqq* – this means that Allah's creation is for the production of constructive results. (Ed)

⁶⁴ This will include understanding of the human psyche. When the Quran draws our attention to the concept (and fact) of the life in the hereafter, a whole new world of human psychology emerges. Modern psychology only deals with the human psyche, which is predicated on the cessation of human life with physical death. (Ed)

1.24 Nations of the World

If, by condensing the meaning of the word *Alameen*, we confine it to the human world, then its meaning will be ‘universal mankind’ or the sum total of the nations of the world. The Quran has also used this word for these meanings. For example, it has declared itself to be *Zikr*⁶⁵-*ul-lil Alameen* (12:104) and at other places it has called itself the vision for mankind (45:20) or the guidance for mankind (2:185). Similarly, in line with this it has declared Rasul-ullah as *Rabmat*⁶⁶-*ul-lil Alameen* (21:107) and at other places that the purpose of his messengerhood was for the whole of humanity (34:28). From this viewpoint *Rabb-il Alameen* will mean to be responsible for the nourishment of the whole of mankind. (I generally use the term ‘universal system of *Rabubiyat*’ for this).

1.25 Responsibility of the Islamic System

From the *Rabubiyat* of universal mankind this fact also becomes clear that the true Allah (Whose concept has been presented by the Quran) is not the *Rabb* of some specific tribe, special race, particular nation, or even of some particular followers of a religion – He is the *Rabb* of universal humanity. And from this, this reality will also become clear what the practical outcome will be of that system which will become shaped by the hands of the Ummah which has *Eimaan* in Allah (*Jamaat e Momineen* or *Ummat e Mussallama*), according to which Allah’s attribute of *Rabb-il Alameen* will become manifest in a tangible and self-evident form: this system will take the responsibility for providing the means of sustenance to the whole of mankind on itself. It is stated in the Quran:

There is no moving creature on earth, but its sustenance depends on Allah... (II:6)

There is no living creature on planet earth for whose *Rizq*⁶⁷ Allah has not taken the responsibility upon Himself. The treasures of *Rizq* have been provided by Allah, but their production and distribution are carried out through human hands.

⁶⁵ *Zikr* – usually means to mention. It also means eminence. Here it will mean a message which is for the whole of mankind, and by following which mankind can achieve eminence. (Ed)

⁶⁶ *Rabmat* – the root for this word *Rabm* is (R-H-M) which means nourishment and development. Hence, by virtue of his status in passing *Wahi* on to mankind, the messenger of Allah earns this attribute as part of his role. (Ed)

⁶⁷ *Rizq* – the means of sustenance. Every one of those things from which benefit can be derived or that food which is made available from Allah to living things as nourishment e.g. rain water; it also means to provide this at the right moment in time. (Ed)

This Ummah will generate the maximum means of sustenance (*Rizq*) and after this will carry out its distribution in such a way that no human being will be left deprived. In the Quran the foremost reason for Allah being deserving of *Hamd* and appreciation is stated to be His being *Rabb-il Alameen*. Furthermore, only that system can be deserving of *Hamd* and appreciation in the world which takes this responsibility of *Rabubiyat-e-Alameeni* into its own hands and delivers it in a balanced way. This is the real foundation and the true purpose of the economic system of the Quran. Details of the ways in which this means of sustenance will be acquired or made available will be demonstrated through these two words which will be discussed next.

1.26 *Rahman – Raheem* (1:2)

The root of each of these words is *Rahm* (R-H-M). It is from this that the word *Rahmat* originates, which means that donation which fulfils someone's apparent and hidden privation, and which is given according to the requirement of the need. The word *Raheem* also originates from this. The way in which the fetus receives nourishment within the uterus of the mother illustrates the meaning of *Rahmat* with clarity. From the reproductive cells of man and woman, fertilization takes place and the embryo becomes established within the uterus. In this coming together within the embryo the realisable potentials of a live human child are concealed; the way in which the means of nourishment are provided there to make these potentials manifest astounds people of intellect and vision – everything is received there without any recompense and return. This is received in a completely different way from the manner after the child is born. And then there is such flexibility, tolerance, refinement and delicacy within the mother's uterus that it does not become an obstacle in the movement of the fetus – this is one example of the displays of Allah's *Rahmat*.

The question which arises is why two words, *Rahman* and *Raheem*, have been used for the manifestation and expression of this attribute of Allah (*Rahmat*) even though the root of both is the same. As we have seen under the topic of *Bismillah*, these words have been used there as well, and these are translated as 'the One Who is Merciful, very Compassionate'. You have seen that from this translation not only does the reality not become apparent, but it is also not comprehensible what is meant by 'the One Who is Merciful, and very Compassionate'. In English translations of the Quran the words Beneficent and Merciful also appear for these. From these also the matter remains unclear, and neither can the correct meaning be understood. The Arabic language is a very scientific language, every

word in it has a root which contains a fundamental meaning like the seed of a tree. After this, in this language there are different forms, or weightages, according to which various words keep on arising from this very root. Every form, or weightage, has a specific characteristic. As a result of this, even though the words which arise in various forms have the same fundamental meaning, their characteristics keep on becoming different. The word *Rabeem-un* is based on the weight of *Fa'eel-un*, whose characteristic is that the expression of this attribute is that it is continuous, gradual, and persistent. And the weight of *Rahman-un* is on *Fa'la-nun* whose meaning is that the expression of this attribute is with intensity and all of a sudden. This difference between these two meanings demands profound reflection and reasoning. As has been stated, researchers from the discipline of physical sciences have reached this conclusion that development in the things of the universe is occurring through an evolutionary process i.e. with gradual nourishment these keep progressing forward from their point of origin until they reach their destination of completion. These evolutionary stages are traversed, link by link, on a continuous basis. There is no gap in these links. But sometimes it also happens that a thing jumps across various links in a single leap and adopts a new form.

1.27 Emergent Evolution

This is known as emergent evolution in their terminology. These scientists are unable to explain anything about how this occurs. Thus (we may say) the leader of this doctrine, Lloyd Morgan, writes in his book, *Emergent Evolution*:

*'If it is asked, that thing which you call Emergent, what is it actually – the brief answer to this will be that this is a new kind of connection. And if it is asked in what respect are these connections considered new, then the answer can only be that prior to the appearance of their characteristics nothing can be said about them'*⁶⁸

In the same vein, Viscount Samuel writes:

'In the chain of cause and effect sometimes those exceptions appear which only the hand of nature can bring into existence.'^{69,70}

⁶⁸ C. Lloyd Morgan, *Emergent Evolution* – translated from Urdu in Parvez's book. (Ed)

⁶⁹ Viscount Samuel, *Belief and Action*.

⁷⁰ For further details and explanations of the Theory of Evolution, see my books, *Insaan nae Kia Socha?*, *The Human Self and Iblees*, and *Salsabeel*. This doctrine is not the product of modern times.

From the above explanations this fact becomes evident that the usual form of the means of nourishment (*Rahmat*) which the things of the universe obtain for their development is that it keeps becoming available continuously and stage by stage. For this the Quran has termed Allah as being ‘*Ar-Raheem*’. But when its appearance is in the form of emergent evolution, then He has called this ‘*Ar-Rahman*’. Have you observed how the matter has changed significantly simply due to the differentiation in weightage, and how this matter becomes understood why the Quran has used two different words from one root.

1.28 The Stages of Human Creation

In relation to human creation the manifestation of both these attributes are noted in one verse of the Quran in a very perspicuous and visionary style. It is stated in Surah *Al-Mominun* that the beginning of the creation of man took place from inert matter. Then conception occurred in the mother’s uterus and the fetus began to develop. First it adopted the form of a leech-like clot, then it became like a piece of flesh, then a skeleton of bones emerged in it, then a layer of flesh was wrapped over these bones. Up until this point the technique of reproduction and development is the same for the embryos of a human being and other animals, and comes into shape via a gradual process. This takes place according to Allah’s attribute of *Raheem*. After this, such a fundamental difference occurs between a human being and an animal which is not the physical outcome of the former links of evolution – there, a sudden change emerges. About this the Quran has stated:

...then We created out of it another creature... (23:14)

In other words, then Allah made it into a new kind of creation. This is the consequence of Emergent Evolution. According to this ‘New Creation’, man becomes endowed with his self whose fundamental characteristic is choice and intent, and through the development of which it becomes enabled to traverse further evolutionary stages. For this Emergent Evolution the word ‘*Ar-Rahman*’ has appeared.

1.29 Guidance of *Wahi*

It is found among our predecessors (Muslim thinkers) e.g. Ibne Muskaweya (died 421 AH) has discussed this in detail in his book *Al Fowz-ul-Asgbar*. Among these predecessors, the change or jump created due to emergent Evolution was called *Tughbra*.

The development of the human self takes place through obedience of those values and instructions which are given via *Wahi* (revelation) from Allah. When Allah stated about Himself that:

...your Rabb has inscribed for Himself Rahmat... (6:54)

Allah has declared it as a duty upon Himself to bestow the means of sustenance (*Rahmat*). This also means that in this *Rahmat*, other than the means of nourishment for the physical life of man, the development of his self was also included. Here, another aspect appears before us which is a specific manifestation of His attribute of *Rahmaniyat*. About man it is stated in the Quran:

Taught man that which he knew not. (96:5)

In other words, Allah placed the ability to gain knowledge within man. Animals live their life according to their instinct; they do not have any need to gain knowledge from outside, therefore they are not even bestowed with this ability. This ability is specifically for human beings. Man acquires this knowledge through different ways and means i.e. observations, experiments, study, education and teaching, lectures and discussions, etc. Knowledge is gained gradually via these methods, and whichever individual wishes to, he can achieve it. In other words, we can say that in this aspect Allah's attribute of *Rabeemiyat* is functioning.

1.29.1 *Wahi* Was Always External

But there is another form of knowledge as well, which cannot be obtained in any way whatsoever through the methods mentioned above, nor is there any role played in it of man's own effort, or deed and skill. This used to be conferred from Allah directly on to his chosen righteous individuals. This is called *Wahi*. This is that knowledge about which it is stated:

...but Allah will choose for His special Rahmat whom He will... (2:105)

According to His programme of *Mash'eat*, Allah selects whoever he wishes specifically for this *Rahmat*. This reality that in the acquisition of *Wahi* there was no role of man's own skill and effort is clear from the fact that the righteous being who was being selected and designated for this had no knowledge or inkling before receiving *Wahi* of this matter that he was going to be bestowed with this knowledge. Hence, in the case of Rasul-ullah himself it is stated:

...you knew not before what was the Book and what was Eimaan... (42:52)

From this it is evident that in the bestowing of *Wabi* Allah's attribute of *Rahmaniyat* would manifest itself. This is why it is stated regarding this:

Ar-Rahman! It is He Who has taught the Quran. (55:1-2)

Knowledge of the Quran is bestowed by *Rahman*, and it is on this very basis that the Quran is declared as being *Rahmat*. It is noted in Surah *Bani Israel* that:

We send down in the Quran that which is a healing and a Rahmat for Momineen... (17:82)

And We have bestowed in the Quran all that which is a healing and a *Rahmat* for those who seek *Eimaan* in its truth.⁷¹ This knowledge (*Wabi*) from Allah was bestowed for the final time on Rasul-ullah. In this *Wabi* Deen reached its completion and was preserved in the folds of the Quran – this is called the finality of *Nabuwwat*.⁷² After this there remained no need to provide knowledge directly from Allah, nor any possibility or prospect.

1.30 Further Elaboration of *Bismillah*

From the above discussion it becomes clear that the responsibility which Allah had taken upon Himself for the provision of the means of nourishment (*Rahmat*) (6:54) encompasses both the outer universe and the human world. This is why He has stated:

...Our Rabb! Your reach is over all things in Rahmat and knowledge...(40:7)

At the time of describing the exposition of '*Bismillah Hirrah-ma Nirra'beem*' we had said that the meaning of *Rahman* and *Rabeem* will appear before us in Surah *Al-Fateha*. From the meanings of these two words which have been explained above, it is clear that when it will be declared by Allah that We have given this programme for this purpose that Our attributes of *Rahmaniyat* and *Rabeemiyat* become manifest, then by this it will refer to that means of nourishment which was essential for the nourishment of physical life and the human self. And when these

⁷¹ As also noted in (10:57), since the Quran deals with the human self, it helps to remove the inner dissonance of the human psyche through *Eimaan* and righteous deeds. This is also confirmed in (3:103). (Ed)

⁷² This means that no more *Wabi* is going to come to mankind (on this earth) as the last *Nabi* was given the complete book, the Quran. This aspect can be verified by studying and understanding the Quran, as all the laws and values required to establish the system of Deen are noted in it. There remains no need for any further guidance as the Quran is complete and is preserved for all times. (Ed)

words will be delivered through the human tongue, it will mean that I am taking responsibility for this programme before me, so that by this these attributes of Allah become universally manifest i.e. that system becomes established in which the means of sustenance becomes available for the nourishment of the physical life of the whole of mankind and the development of the abilities of their self also keeps taking place. From this, this reality will also become apparent that when Sulaiman started his missive to Queen Saba with the words *Bismillab Hirrah-ma Nirra'beem* (27:30), then what a supreme, great reality was intended to be disclosed by this. The aim (or consequence) of the armed invasions by all kings is destruction and devastation. It was on this basis that Queen Saba had told her ministers:

She said: 'Kings, when they enter a country, despoil it, and make the noblest of its people its meanest. Thus do they behave'. (27:34)

When kings invade a country, they crush it; the people who have respect and dignity in that land are humiliated and ruined, and this action is not confined to one particular king, this is the pattern of *Malukiyat* (kingship or dictatorship) itself. Sulaiman had clarified this very reality in his letter, that my *Maslak* (way) is not like that of worldly kings, I am a messenger of Allah, and a conduit to bring His sovereignty into practical manifestation. Therefore, this launching of forces of mine is not for ruin and destruction, rather it is to make the attributes of *Rahmaniyat* and *Rabeemiyat* widespread. Sulaiman was a messenger specifically assigned to a particular nation, and his sphere of influence and application was confined to a particular region of the earth. In contrast to this, the final messenger of Allah was sent (and is) as a messenger for the whole of mankind and the sphere of influence and application of his teaching was (and is) beyond the limits of time and space. This is why Rasul-ullah is declared as *Rahmat* for all *Alameen* (21:107).

1.31 The Correct Meaning of *Rahm*

Before proceeding, it is necessary to clarify another fundamental point. In Allah's attribute of *Rabeemiyat* the meaning of *Rahm* is included, but there is a fundamental distinction between the Quranic meaning of *Rahm* and the meaning which is prevalent in the world. This prevalent meaning has been made commonplace by Christianity, and it was from this that those misconceptions arose to which Muslims also fell prey. This concept spread amongst them through mysticism. The fundamental doctrine of Christianity is that every child is born stained with the sin of his first parents (Adam and Eve) – this is called Original Sin. It is not at all possible for man to become cleansed and purified of the taint of this sin.

The logical and natural consequence of this is that no man remains capable of entering paradise at all.

1.32 The Doctrine of Christianity

The Christian belief is that when God observed this state of hapless human beings then He felt (Allah forbid) very grieved, He felt pity for them, and He sent His only son into the world so that the opponents crucify him and in this way his blood becomes an atonement for the sins of men. From this, this Christian belief became widespread that the issue of salvation is not dependent on human deeds but is dependent on Allah's mercy which reaches those people who believe in the atonement of His son (Jesus). Read the letters by St Paul in the New Testament of the Bible. This belief has been propagated in these. He has said:

For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith – and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God – not by works, so that no one can boast. (Ephesians, 2:8-9)

In another letter he wrote:

For we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from observing the law. (Romans 3:28).

In other words, that we conclude that man does not become righteous according to deeds as per *Shariat* but is considered righteous as a result of faith.

This is that very doctrine according to which Christians hold this belief about God that God is mercy or God is love. And this is that same concept according to which *Rahman* and *Rabeem* is translated as Merciful and Compassionate in English translations of the Quran.

1.33 The Quranic Concept of *Rahm*

In opposition to this doctrine of Christianity, the whole structure of Quranic teaching is constituted on the foundation of the Law of Requitul. This means that the result of every individual or collective deed of man is determined according to this law which has been established by Allah for this. The consequence of ingesting cyanide is death, while ingesting clean and pure water is an elixir of life. Going beyond the physical universe and the physical life of man himself, this same law is functioning in life as a human being also. This is called Allah's system of justice and this system of Allah is immutable and absolute.

But we have stated above that the concept of *Rahm* is also included in Allah's attribute of *Rabeemiyat*. From this the question before us is that *Adl* (justice) and *Rahm* are apparently two contradictory concepts; how can there be compatibility between these two? If the sentiment of *Rahm* dominates *Adl*, then it does not remain as *Adl*, but according to the Quranic meaning of *Rahm* no contradiction remains. In this both *Adl* as well as *Rahm* remain. This can be understood through an example. An individual puts his finger into the fire, and the finger gets burnt. There is severe pain resulting from this. All this takes place according to Allah's law of *Adl* in which there is not an iota of *Rahm*. But that Allah Who has made this law that a finger becomes burnt by fire, that same Allah has also created such medicines from the use of which this severe pain from burning becomes relieved. And there is the possibility of revival of the finger again. This type of means of protection or devising of treatments is Allah's *Rahmat* or His *Rahm*. You have seen that in this concept of *Rahm* the concept of the law is functioning i.e. the way in which there is Allah's law (*Adl*) that a finger burns if put into the fire, similarly there is also a law of Allah that the finger heals by the application of a certain medicine.

1.34 The Quranic Concept of *Tauba* (Repentance)

In human life this is termed *Tauba*. The Quranic concept of *Tauba* can also be understood through an example. You have to go to some particular village. At a crossroads you took a turn in the wrong direction. This is losing direction and an error. After walking a short distance, someone informs you, or you realise through signs en route, that you are going on the wrong path. Obviously after this you will not take a single further step in this direction. You will of a necessity require to return to that same crossroads from where you had taken this wrong turn. But by merely returning to this crossroads you will still not reach your intended destination. From here, you will need to step in the right direction. In the language of Arabs and in the terminology of the Quran returning from the wrong path back to the crossroads is called *Tauba*, and getting onto the right path from the crossroads is termed as being *Amaal e Saleh* (righteous deeds). In this way the loss caused by human error is rectified. In human life there are laws established by Allah for this kind of countering of consequences and recovery. Including these kinds of laws in the code of life is called Allah's *Rahm* in Quranic terminology, and it is in these very meanings that Allah is *Rabeem*.⁷³ Among Jews no concept of

⁷³ These matters will be discussed further on where verses regarding *Tauba* will be explained in detail.

Tauba even exists. Similarly in Christianity there is no possibility of removing the effect of a sin through deeds. According to the Hindu religion, whatever *Joon* (form) man has been born into (mouse, dog, pig, low caste, etc.) as a consequence of his deeds in a previous life, it is impossible to alter it in the present life. In other words, among these followers of religions (according to the Quran) there is a rejection of Allah's *Rahmat* (from the possibility of rectification). The Quran terms this as *Kufr*:

...and never give up hope of Allah's mercy: truly no one despairs of Allah's mercy, except those who are Kafir. (12:87)

In contrast to this, it has stated:

Say: 'O my servants who have transgressed against their selves! Despair not of the mercy (Rehmat) of Allah: for Allah protects from all sins, for He is All-Protecting and Raheem. Turn you to your Rabb and bow to His Will (laws) before the penalty comes on you: after that you shall not be helped. (39:53-54)

O Rasul! Tell these servants of mine who have done wrong to their own selves, who have taken a turn in the wrong direction at the crossroads of life, that they should not lose hope in Allah's law of *Rahmat*. In His system of justice the potential for erasing the effects caused by mistakes is also present. Whenever this realisation awakens in you that you have taken a step in the direction of a non-Divine path, you should turn towards the laws of your *Rabb* and bow your head before His laws willingly. As a result of this, you will be protected from the harms arising from your mistake; however, this is only possible if you turn towards the Divine laws before the destructive effects resulting from your error begin to appear before you. If you cause any delay in this, then their rectification will not be possible.

The Quran has summarised this whole explanation in these four words (in Arabic) when it stated that:

...for those things that are good remove those that are evil... (11:114)

The condition for recovery from the destructive effects of wrong steps is that you should perform as many constructive tasks as possible – remove the consequences of wrong deeds through righteous deeds - this is the way in which Allah's *Rahm* manifests itself. Have you seen how Allah's *Rahm* is in reality one constituent of His Law of Requit. This is further elucidated in the next words of Surah *Al-Fateha* where it is stated:

*Ma'li-ki Yaum-id-Deen.*⁷⁴ (1:3)

1.35 Master of the Day of Judgement

The root of the word *Malik* is (M⁷⁵-L-K). The basic meanings of this root are:

1. To be master of something and in control.
2. Choice and intent, or authority.
3. A strong foundation i.e. that support on which something is established.
4. That means through which some matter is resolved and reaches its desired conclusion. This is why cement⁷⁶ or mud is called *Milak-un* because by brick and stone becoming joined through this, each provides strength to the other, and in this way the wall reaches its completion.

When this word is used for ordinary people, its meaning (generally) is of such a type of power and authority through which other human beings are made slaves (*Mamluk*); it is termed *Malukiyat* (dictatorship, authoritarianism, despotism). But when it is used for Allah, then obviously this will not mean tyrannical authority. Despite being the Creator of everything, Omnipotent and Sovereign, Allah is not dictatorial. Hence, when it will be declared ‘...to Allah belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth...’(2:107), in every instance this will mean that in the whole of the universe His dominion and authority reigns, but this fundamental meaning will also be implicit in it that this authority of His will also be the support for the life and nourishment of things of the universe. This authority is that cementing force due to which the elements of the universe are intertwined with each other as if these have become one single unit. And it is this mutual conjoining of theirs as a result of which the system of the universe is functioning with this balance and beauty – this is called *Mo’addat*. And it is from this respect that Allah also has the attribute of *Al-Wadud* (85:14) i.e. the One Who takes the process of evolution forward by generating mutual attraction and amalgamation between the particles of the universe. Wherever this attribute of Allah (*Malkiyat*) is mentioned in the Quran, it will need to be seen which of the above meanings is most suitable according to the context and background. In this verse of Surah *Al-Fateha* it will mean authority or dominion.

⁷⁴ *Ma’liki Yaum-id-Deen* – usually translated as Master of the Day of Judgement. (Ed)

⁷⁵ M (*Mim*) has three vowels – *Fatha* (dash above), *Kasra* (dash below), and *Damma* (a comma above).

⁷⁶ In olden times it was mud that was used in construction.

1.36 *Yaum*

This word is commonly translated as ‘day’ i.e. that day which consists of twenty-four hours. Undoubtedly in the Arabic language this word appears with this meaning as well, but its meaning is far broader than this. This word (*Yaum*) is also used for what we call a period, or an age, or a stage, etc. Whatever prolonged and extended stages the universe has passed through to reach here, these have also been termed using the word ‘*Yaum*’. And it is from this point of view that it is stated that one *Yaum* of Allah’s is equivalent to thousands and thousands of years of your reckoning (32:5) – in fact, it is of fifty thousands of years (70:4). In the verse being discussed *Yaum* will mean time or era.

1.37 *Ad-Deen*

This is a very comprehensive term of the Quran in which the summary of its whole teaching is encompassed. This is its focal point, this is that central point around which all its commands, principles, values, and laws revolve and present their *raison d’être*. By understanding the true meaning of this term, Islam can be comprehended, and if the Quranic concept of it is obscured in the minds, then nothing of Islam can be correctly comprehended e.g. neither its beliefs and concepts, nor its constituents and commands, nor its objectives and requirements, nor its need and outcome. From these explanations it is clear how comprehensive, vast and important this term is, and how essential it is to understand it correctly – indeed, indispensable.

As has been stated, this word contains vast meanings; on the one hand, its meanings are control, authority, rule, state constitution, law, organisation and administration, decision, concrete outcome, reward and punishment, the Law of Requital; but (on the other hand) when this same word is used with reference to human beings, then its meanings are obedience, compliance, submission; and when its reference is to both Allah and man together, then its meanings will be obedience to the Divine laws whose consequence manifests according to the laws defined by Allah.

Numerous verses of the Quran can be quoted in support of the various meanings of this root noted above, but we consider that there is no need for this. At whatever places these verses appear, the relevant meaning will automatically

become clear. At this point it is deemed appropriate to quote a comprehensive verse of Surah *Al e Imran*. It is stated:

Do they seek for other than the Deen of Allah? - while all creatures in the heavens and on earth have, willing or unwilling, bowed to His Will (laws) and to Him shall they all be brought back. (3:83)

Do these people wish to adopt some other Deen, other than Allah's Deen? Are they searching for some other Deen? Do they not see that whatever is in the highs and lows of the universe is submitting before His laws, willingly or unwillingly – this is that Deen which encompasses the whole of the outer universe i.e. that Divine system according to which this system of the universe is functioning. From this the meaning of Deen becomes clear i.e. that system which is established according to the Divine laws.

After this it is directed that you, too, proclaim that we willingly submit before the laws of Allah only, and these are those laws which have continued to be given to mankind through the medium of the *Anbiya*, and have now been given in the Quran. This is what is known as Islam (3:84). In the next verse it is stated:

If anyone desires a Deen other than Islam, never will it be accepted of him; and in the Hereafter He will be in the ranks of those who have lost. (3:85)

Therefore whoever adopts some other Deen other than '*Al-Islam*' (which has been referred to above), that will not be worthy of acceptance before Allah; and such people will eventually witness in how great a loss they were.⁷⁷

1.38 The Concept of Own Independent State

It is evident from this that Deen is the name of that system, which is shaped according to the Divine laws, in which every individual accepts the authority of Allah and Allah alone, and in which the precisely correct outcome of his every deed becomes established (which is called a return or recompense). It is clear that such a system in which obedience and submission is to the Divine laws is only possible when the Muslim Ummah (*Jamaat e Momineen*) has its own independent state in which they have full control and authority to implement these laws – in other words, for the establishment of Deen the existence of an independent state for Muslims is inescapable. In the absence of this, living a life according to '*Ad-*

⁷⁷ The issue here is that the human self cannot develop without this *Al-Islam*, and it is this developed self which is required to understand and establish the system of Deen. (Ed)

Deen’ or ‘*Al-Islam*’ is impossible. This state is a natural consequence of *Eimaan* and *Saleh* deeds⁷⁸ and its aim is to establish *Deen*. See how this reality is elucidated in a clear and comprehensive style in this verse of Surah *An-Nur* where it is stated:

Allah has promised to those among you who have Eimaan and work righteous deeds, that He will, of a surety, grant them in the land, power, as He granted it to those before them; that He will establish in authority their Deen – the one which He has chosen for them; and that He will change their state, after the fear in which they lived, to one of security and peace: they will follow Me and not associate aught with Me. If any do reject after this, they are rebellious and wicked. (24:55)

Those people who have conviction in the truth of the Divine laws, and then carry out such tasks according to them which become the cause for the emergence and manifestation, and nourishment of their latent potentials, this has been promised to them by Allah, that He will bestow on them a state and government in this world just as He bestowed on these kinds of nations before them. This is called ‘establishing power in the land’. What is the purpose of this establishment? The purpose is so that the *Deen* and system of life which Allah has selected for them becomes established and is constructed and implemented practically; and in this way, these people are able to live a life of peace and tranquility free from all kinds of fear and grief. This peace and tranquility is also not an aim in itself, rather its aim is that they should be able to adopt obedience to Allah’s laws alone, thus ensuring that no one else is sharing in His sovereignty – obedience purely to the Divine laws. This is *Ad-Deen* or *Al-Islam*. Subsequently it is stated that after the meaning of *Deen* becoming so evidently clear, if any denies it or rebels against it, then understand that they have stepped on the wrong path, having abandoned the right path.

As will be explained later on at its appropriate place, *Ad-Deen* has two important aspects – establishment of *Salaat* and execution of *Zakat*. Hence, the next verse after the above states:

So establish Salaat and give Zakat; and obey the messenger⁷⁹; so that you may receive Rahm. (24:56)

In other words, the purpose of establishment of power in the land is so that *Ad-Deen* becomes implemented, and as a result of this, you will become enabled to

⁷⁸ *Amaal e Saleh* – righteous deeds after acquiring *Eimaan* i.e. those deeds which the Quran has specified for the development of the self and to help bring out human latent potentials. See verse (2:177). (Ed)

⁷⁹ Obeying the messenger means to obey the Quran which he also obeyed, and as a consequence of this obedience, *Ad-Deen* was established. (Ed)

carry out the responsibility of establishing *Salaat* and executing *Zakat*, and you can obey the messenger. This type of establishment in the land had taken place during the illustrious era of Rasul-ullah, and the very first head of state, or central authority of this state was Rasul-ullah himself. Hence, the practical shape of the establishment and strength of this system was simply this, that its central authority should be obeyed.

1.39 Obedience to the Messenger

This obedience was, in reality, of the Divine laws themselves, but since their implementation was via this authority, therefore obedience to him was declared essential. This system was not confined to the virtuous life of Rasul-ullah, it was meant to advance further (since the Quran is the final and eternal code of life for mankind for all times), thus this was made clear by stating that:

Muhammad is no more than a messenger: many were the messengers that passed away before him. If he died or were slain, will you then turn back on your heels? If any did turn back on his heels, not the least harm will he do to Allah; but Allah will swiftly reward those who serve Him with gratitude (by following the Quran). (3:144)

Muhammad is no more than a messenger of Allah, before this other similar messengers also came and having carried out their individual duties, passed away. Therefore, if tomorrow this messenger also dies, or is killed, then by thinking that the system of Deen was only associated with his life, will you revert to your former way of life? Whoever does this will not be able to do any harm to Allah, he will only harm himself. But those who remain steadfast on this path will keep receiving the full fruits of their hard work and endeavours.

At another place it is stated about the *Jamaat e Momineen* that:

Those whom, if we establish them in the land, establish Salaat and give Zakat, enjoin right and forbid wrong: with Allah rests the end of all affairs. (22:41)

These are the people who, when they acquire establishment in the land, they will carry out the responsibility of establishing *Salaat* and executing *Zakat*; they will implement all the commands which this system will accept as being correct according to the Divine laws. And they will forbid, by law, from those matters which will not be capable of being accepted according to these commands. In summary, decisions on all matters in this will be determined according to the laws of Allah. This is because Allah has decreed in very clear terms that the right to govern only belongs to Allah:

...the command is for none but Allah...(12:40)

And by stating the following about this rule of Allah, it was made clear that:

...if any do fail to judge by what Allah has revealed, they are Kafir. (5:44)

Those people who do not establish rule according to Allah's Book will be those who will be called *Kafir*. Rasul-ullah himself was also commanded:

...so judge between them by what Allah has revealed...(5:48)

O Rasul! You should judge their affairs according to the Book of Allah.

1.40 The Characteristic of *Yaum Ad-Deen* (Period of Deen)

In light of these elaborations the meaning of the verse being discussed of Surah *Al-Fateha*, '*Ma'liki Yaum-id-Deen*', becomes clear i.e. that era in which the system of *Ad-Deen* will be established in which only His laws and commands will be operating. What will be the cardinal characteristic of this era? In another verse this is clarified in these words:

*And what will explain to you what the Day of Judgement (Yaum Ad-Deen) is?
(82:17)*

Who can tell you about *Yaum Ad-Deen* other than Allah? *Yaum Ad-Deen* is that day when:

*It is that Day when no self shall have power to do aught for another: for the
command, that Day, will be with Allah. (82:19)*

This will be that era in which no human being will have any authority or control over another human being. In this, all authority and control will only be possessed by Allah, all matters in it will be under the obedience of Allah's law. This is the fundamental characteristic of *Yaum Ad-Deen*. Just reflect how much like a paradise that society will be in which no human being will be the slave of another human being. Obedience is only carried out to Allah's laws, and the results of everyone's efforts and deeds will manifest according to these laws; no one will be treated unjustly and cruelly (3:25). There should be no kind of manipulation and subjugation, deprivation and exploitation (20:112).

1.41 Opposition to this System

It has been said above that in the system of Deen no human being retains any kind of authority and control over another human being. It is obvious that this kind of system is highly distasteful to groups which have vested interests. Generally, such groups can be divided into three categories:

- (1) The ruling class, no matter in what form it may be and whatever name may be given to it i.e. it may be a kingship from an ancient era, dictatorship, or a democracy of modern times.
- (2) The capitalist elite which keeps the indigent and labour class under their subjugation based on the power of wealth.
- (3) And the religious clergy which does whatever it likes in the name of God.

These three categories⁸⁰ do their utmost to prevent this system from becoming established and if does become established, that it does not endure.

The *Anbiya* used to come with this very Deen and the establishment of this system was their responsibility as a messenger. They used to establish this system despite intense opposition from these groups of vested interests, but after their departure, these groups would again raise their heads and begin to make efforts to dismantle it. In pursuit of this aim, these three groups would unite with each other, with the clergy leading the way in all of this. There was a particular reason for this. It is a fact that falsehood cannot succeed by appearing in its true shape, therefore it always deceives under a cloak of truth. If these people had preached in clear words to the followers of Deen to abandon Deen, they would never have listened to them. The technique they adopted was to maintain the terminology of Deen intact, but they changed their meanings. They left the forms of the constituents and elements of its practical programme unaltered, but by sucking out their soul, made them into lifeless statues.⁸¹ After this they separated worldly matters from matters of Deen. Matters relating to worldly affairs were given into the hands of the government and they made themselves masters of ‘matters of Deen’. By these matters is meant beliefs, rituals of worship, and personal laws such as marriage, divorce etc. In worldly matters the decisions of the government began to be implemented, and in matters of Deen their *Fatwas* began to operate. Whatever had happened to the established system of Deen of former *Anbiya*, the very same also befell Islam.

⁸⁰ The fourth category can be the media which is replacing the clergy, as people are moving away from religion. Fundamentally they (clergy plus the media) control the psyche of the masses. (Ed)

⁸¹ Details of this will appear under the next verse (1:4).

1.42 Deen Became Converted into Religion (*Madhab*)

After the initial period (of Islam) dictatorship raised its head, and together with this the religious clergy came into existence. Deen became divided into two parts. The part which the religious clergy took under its cloak is called *Madhab* instead of Deen and which is translated as religion in English. In religion the system of government invariably becomes secular. This is that very format of Islam which is established up until the present time, according to which it is declared that for obedience to Sharia⁸² there is no need for the existence of an independent State. Prayer, fasting, Hajj, *Zakat* etc. i.e. obedience to the pillars of Islam can be performed under every kind of government and by this the aim of Islam becomes accomplished.⁸³ And regarding the issue of the authority of Allah, its domain is confined to the life of the hereafter, not to this worldly life. Hence, when according to *Madhab* the translation of *Ma'liki Yaum-id-Deen* is done as 'Master of the Day of Judgement', what is meant by this is that the 'Day of Judgement' is the day of *Qiyamat* – it has no relevance to this world.⁸⁴ This is that deception which the religious clergy has been promoting from the very beginning. In this, Deen becomes transmuted into mere *Madhab*. At the time of the revelation of the Quran, only religions remained in the world; the system of Deen did not exist anywhere. And even now only religions remain in the world (including Muslims); Deen does not exist anywhere. The difficulty in other religions was that the original book of Allah did not exist in its true form with them, therefore it was impossible for their religion to convert again into the system of Deen. With us, Allah's Book (the Quran) exists in its original unadulterated form, therefore it is not impossible to establish the system of Deen again among Muslims. Whichever free state of Muslims makes this decision that it will keep its system under the obedience of the Quran, it will become the cause for the establishment of the system of Deen. I have always emphasised this matter, that Islam should not be called a *Madhab* - it is not a *Madhab* but Deen. Hence, this should only be called Deen. In this way Islam will become set apart on one side from the religions of the world and will also be different and distinct from other systems of government.

⁸² *Sharia* – this term has attained great significance in modern times. Most of it is related to personal laws based on religious practices and rituals prevalent since the times of dictatorships of the past. (Ed)

⁸³ These five pillars of Islam exist in religious sectarian versions of Islam – note that the Quran is not considered to be among these five pillars. (Ed)

⁸⁴ This implies that recompense and accountability only take place after death. (Ed)

Finally, it is necessary to clarify this much that by *Yaum Ad-Deen* is not only meant the domain of Allah's system in this world, human life also proceeds forward after death, and the future of every individual (status in the life of the hereafter) is determined according to the effects of his deeds which are committed by him in this life. From this respect, the domains of Allah's Law of Requital are both this world and the hereafter, therefore by Allah being master of *Yaum Ad-Deen* will mean the inclusion of both of these domains.

We have noted above that the technique of religion is that it maintains the terminology and constituents of Deen as such, but alters their meanings. Details of this will be found under the meaning of *Ibadat* which now comes before us.

1.43 *Iyy'a ka Na'budu* (We Obey You)

The first part of the next verse of Surah *Al-Fateha* (1:4) is '*Iyy'a ka Na'budu*' i.e. after bringing the correct concept of Allah's *Hamde'at*, *Rabubiyat*, *Rahmaniyat*, *Rabeemiyat* and *Malkiyat* before him, a *Momin* spontaneously proclaims that '*Iyy'a ka Na'budu*'. In this '*Na'budu*' the whole system of Deen is incorporated. It is usually translated as 'We only worship You', and if this translation is done that 'We only do Your *Ibadat*', even then the meaning of *Ibadat* is taken as being worship. By converting *Ibadat* into worship, Deen turns into religion. In every religion *Puja* (worship) of God is performed, but in Deen Allah's '*Ibadat*' is done.

1.44 *Ibadat* (Obedience)

Its root is *Ain-B-D* from which the word '*Abdun*' originates, and as we know, the meaning of *Abd* is that of a slave and subject. In the Quran this word is used precisely to mean slavery and subjugation. It is noted in Surah *Al-Shu'ara* that when Musa went to Pharaoh and requested to be given permission to take Bani Israel away with him, Pharaoh replied, 'Musa! We heaped so many favours on you, and you are returning these favours in this way'. In reply, Musa stated, these are your favours are they not:

...that you have enslaved (*Abbad'ta*) Bani Israel. (26:22)

That you have kept my people shackled in subjugation and slavery to you. Here, the meaning of *Abbad'ta* is transparent. In another verse, when Musa and Haroon invited Pharaoh and his courtiers to accept *Eimaan* in Allah, they responded:

They said: 'Shall we have Eimaan in two men like ourselves? And their people are subject to us!' (23:47)

What, should we agree to their proposition, who are only two men like ourselves, and their people are our subjects? From these and other similar verses this reality becomes evident that *Abde'at* means to accept submission to Allah. In Surah *Al-Kahf* the words *Mahkumiyat*⁸⁵ and *Ibadat* are used as synonyms. At one place it is stated:

...nor does He share His command with anyone whatsoever. (18:26)

Allah does not share his right to govern with anyone. And at another place it is stated to the individual who seeks good in his future that he should not include any other in the *Ibadat* of his *Rabb*:

...in submission of his Rabb admit no one as partner. (18:110)

In Surah *Yusuf* it is stated that Yusuf said to his companions in the prison that:

...the command is for none but Allah: He has commanded that you submit to none but Him: that is the established Deen... (12:40)

'Remember! Only Allah holds the right to govern. He has commanded that other than Him, do not adopt the *Abudiyat* (*Mahkumiyat*) of anyone else'. Here, too, His *Mahkumiyat* is declared to be His *Ibadat*. And after this, it is stated this is the concrete and established Deen.

From this, this reality becomes clear that according to the Quran, *Ibadat* of Allah means to adopt His *Mahkumiyat* i.e. to follow His laws and this is what is known as *Ad-Deen*. This fact also becomes evident from this that submission to Allah (adopting His *Mahkumiyat*) is not obedience to some dictator – this is obedience to law, because the fundamental meaning of Deen is that of law.

1.45 Self-Discipline

But in this *Abde'at* another point is implicit – in the Arabic language '*Ta'beed-un*' means by training a camel or horse to enable it to carry out tasks i.e. to train this wild animal in such a way that it uses its powers and potentials according to a particular pattern and discipline. Allah has bestowed many potentials and powers

⁸⁵ *Mahkumiyat* – derived from *Hukm*, to mean command. Here it means accepting the commands of Allah. (Ed)

on man. If man keeps these forces rebellious and unbridled (i.e. employs these according to his emotions), then the consequence is nothing but chaos and disintegration. But if, keeping these very same potentials within Allah's defined limits, he employs these according to His designated laws and codes, then the outcome is universal *Rabubiyat* and the development of his own self. From this viewpoint *Ibadat* will mean to employ one's own potentials and abilities according to the laws of Allah. Revisit the verse of Surah *An-Nur* (24:55) quoted earlier – it is stated in this verse that as a consequence of *Eimaan* and righteous deeds, establishment in the land (a free state) is acquired for this reason that Deen becomes established in this, and that you become capable of '*Ya'bu'duna Ni*' – you carry out solely 'My obedience'.

1.46 Own Independent State

From here this reality has also become clear that *Ibadat* of Allah can only be adopted when Muslims have acquired power in the land i.e., they have their own independent state in which they are enabled to live their life according to Allah's laws.⁸⁶ For the 'worship' of Allah it is not necessary to have one's own independent state: (as indicated earlier) Allah's worship can also be carried out under the rule of the *Kuffar*⁸⁷.

The Quran has been revealed in the language of the Arabs, and as has already been stated, at the time of the revelation of the Quran, Deen did not exist anywhere, religion abounded everywhere. In religion there is no concept of the *Mahkumiyat* of Allah, instead there is the concept of worship of Him. In this respect, the meaning of this word *Ibadat* was transmuted into worship by Arabic speaking religionists (and Arabs who were *Mushrikeen*⁸⁸). Therefore, wherever in the Quran this word is mentioned in relation to them, then according to the connotation attributed to it by them, it will be taken to signify worship. But when this refers to the concept of Allah as presented by the Quran and to the *Jamaat e Momineen* who have *Eimaan* in this, then this will mean Allah's *Hakmiyat* (rule). And the meaning of His *Mahkumiyat* (rule) will come to the fore from the

⁸⁶ This need should emerge through being *Momineen* and Muslims to have a state in which, by establishing the Quranic laws, the system of Deen takes shape. This will serve as a model for the rest of humanity to emulate, and to appreciate the creation of man, with the aim of developing their own selves within the confines of the Quranic Permanent Values. (Ed)

⁸⁷ *Kuffar* – those who reject the guidance of the Quran. See Glossary. (Ed)

⁸⁸ *Mushrikeen* – plural of *Mushrik*, the one who associates others with Allah as noted in the Quran. (Ed)

direction of this *Jamaat*. From this viewpoint, when these servants of Allah will recognise and acknowledge this *Amr*⁸⁹, they will state that:

We obey You...(1:4)

1.47 True Freedom

So this will mean that we do not accept the rule of anyone other than Allah; we simply do not accept the right to govern of anyone else. Just reflect how great and supreme a proclamation and slogan of freedom and autonomy this is, so supreme that from this man advances forward freely from every doorstep of the world, rapt with extreme devotion, and never bows down before any human being. In the words of Iqbal:

*This one prostration which you consider burdensome,
Bestows freedom on man from a thousand prostrations.*

This is that freedom which servants⁹⁰ of *Rahman* achieve by obedience of Allah. The Quran proclaims in very clear terms that this is indeed the true status of man that he should never bow down before anyone other than the Divine laws – that he should not adopt the *Mahkumiyat* of anyone else:

*I have created Jinns (rural dwellers) and men (urban population) so that they may
follow My laws. (51:56)*

Whether men are living an urban life or a life in the desert, they are created for this very reason that they should not accept the rule of anyone other than Allah. This is that acceptance and proclamation which is in the life-giving announcement of *Iyy'a ka Na'budu* and this is the very meaning of *La Ilaha Illa'Allah* – there is no possessor of authority other than Allah. According to Iqbal:

*The manifestation of sovereignty only belongs to this Omnipotent Being,
He is the One Ruler, the rest are the idols of Azar.*

⁸⁹ *Amr* – this means planning and direction. For further details see *Lughat ul Quran*. (Ed)

⁹⁰ As a Muslim and *Momin* the status of man is of companionship with Allah. The word servant as commonly understood does not define the true meaning of *Abd* of the Quran. See verse (10:62). (Ed)

But the aim of acceptance of the sovereignty of Allah does not mean that some matter of Allah needs to be put right – the aim from this is the development of man’s own self. And this truth is evident from the next two words of the verse:

... *Wa Iyy’ a ka Nasta’een.* (1:4)

These words are commonly translated as ‘we seek Your help only’. Many other words are present in the Arabic language and in the Quran for the word help. The question is, why has this word been selected here? As has already been noted, the Arabic language has very wide-ranging meanings. In it there are hundreds of words for each single thing. The words which have been selected by the Quran from these numerous words for the expression of its objectives and requirements is in itself a miracle of the Quran. This is why when the Quran uses a particular word at a certain place, we need to examine why it has selected and used this word there. If this fact becomes clear, then not only will the meaning of the relevant verse become apparent, but more or less the full teaching of the Quran, or an aspect of its purpose and aim (*Hikmat*⁹¹) will also appear in front of us. This is the reason why understanding the correct meaning of the words of the Quran is absolutely essential. This objective cannot be achieved through a translation.

1.48 Meaning of *Mustaan*

The root of ‘*Ista’an*’ is *Ain-Wa-N*. *Awaan* is that animal or human being which is in a full-grown state and its energies have become fully developed, with this proviso that these are also fully balanced. Therefore, *Ista’an* will mean to wish for the fullest development and balance in one’s own self and to seek someone’s help for this purpose. It is from this respect that Allah has been called *Al-Mustaan* in (21:112).

In the first part of this verse, *Iyy’ a ka Na’budu* was stated, in which by *Abde’at* was meant the utilisation of one’s own potentials and energies according to the Divine code. Therefore, the meanings of *Iyy’ a ka Na’budu* were that ‘We employ our full potentials and energies according to Your laws and commands only’. For this purpose it is important that man’s potentials and energies are developing and that there should also be full balance in them, because if no proportion and balance remains in the potentials and powers, then these go to waste or produce destructive effects. For the production of constructive results it is necessary for there to be proportion and balance in them. The meaning of *Iyy’ a Ka Nasta’een* is

⁹¹ *Hikmat* – the reason for giving an instruction. (Ed)

that we wish for this kind of development in our potentials and energies and this aim can only be achieved by living life according to the code decreed by You (Allah).

1.49 The Meaning of *Dua* (Supplication)

Iyy'a ka Nasta'een ('We desire or ask for your help in this aim') contains an aspect of supplication in it. What the meaning of supplication is according to the Quran will be explained a little later, where verses relating to 'entreating' Allah will appear before us. At this point it is necessary to only understand this much that you cannot perform an action until a desire or yearning for this does not first arise in your heart (you cannot perform any task without an intention). The degree to which this desire or yearning is intense, your intention will be strong for the achievement of this aim. And the degree to which your intention is strong, to the same degree you will employ your power and persistence to achieve this aim. The spontaneous appearance on the lips of the intense yearning which is agitating in the heart is called *Dua* (supplication). Indeed, mostly this yearning does not even need to appear on our lips in the form of words, its mere emergence in the heart becomes a *Dua* in itself.

1.50 Wishes of a *Momin*

In relation to the meaning of *Bismillah* we have stated that whatever task a *Momin* forms an intention to do, the desire from out of all desires i.e. his ultimate aim, is that the attributes of *Rahmaniyat* and *Raheemiyat* of Allah manifest and become implemented. In other words, universal *Rabubiyat* is sought from this. It becomes clear from this that every desire or wish of a *Momin* is according to the values and laws of Allah. That is why it is stated:

And you should only wish that which Allah wishes...(76:30)

Hence, for the accomplishment of his desires and wishes, or for the achievement of the aim before him, a *Momin* of Allah will solicit the support of the laws and values of Allah. This means that he would wish that every step of his which is taken for the achievement of this aim is according to these values and laws (this is called seeking support i.e. human intention and action being congruent with the guidance of Allah) - this is what will be termed 'desiring Allah's help'.

1.51 Action Accompanying *Dua* (Supplication)

In the explication of *Dua* it will be explained that this does not mean that whatever we ask from Allah we will get it automatically. For this it will be necessary to make full endeavours according to the procedure laid down by Allah. Furthermore, seeking the help of Allah does not mean that we make a supplication, and that desire becomes fulfilled straightaway. For this we will need to work according to the programme designated by Allah. In Surah *Al-Baqarah* it is stated:

*O Jamaat e Momineen, seek help from Allah through patience and Salaat⁹².
Remember Allah's help comes to those who are steadfast in their aim. (2:153)*

After stating that you should seek Allah's help through *Salaat*⁹³ and *Sabr*⁹⁴, in the subsequent verses it is described what kind of distressing and life-threatening stages will need to be negotiated for this. In these stages fear and danger will have to be countered; hunger and thirst will have to be faced; there will be loss of life and possessions – even life itself may have to be sacrificed. Allah's help will only come to those people who provide proof of resoluteness and perseverance during these patience testing stages (2:154-157).

In Surah *Anbiya* first this eternal principle is described that inheritance of power in the land is the share solely of those people who tread on the programme of development of human potentials designated by Allah (21:105). After this, that struggle is referred to which was taking place between Rasul-ullah and the groups with vested interests opposing him in relation to making the *Rahmat* of Allah universal. Following that it was stated through the blessed lips of Rasul-ullah that 'O my Rabb! You decide between me and these people with Haqq'. After this it is stated:

'...Our Rabb – Ar-Rahman, is the One Whose assistance should be sought against what these people utter'. (21:112)

Then the opposing people were told, we seek the assistance of Allah Who is *Ar-Rahman* against the kinds of things you are saying. This is called *Isti'anat* and Allah

⁹² The meaning of *Salaat* will be covered in Surah *Al-Baqarah*.

⁹³ *Salaat* – generally translated as prayer. Its wider meanings include following the Divine laws. Throughout the Quran, this word is preceded by the word establishing, not that of reading. It points to the establishment of the system of *Salaat*. (Ed)

⁹⁴ *Sabr* – usually translated as patience. It means perseverance and making sustained efforts to achieve an aim. (Ed)

is called *Al-Mustaan*. It is clear from this too, what the meaning of seeking Allah's aid is. In the verse under consideration (1:4) the words *Na'budu* and *Nasta'een* are in plural form – and not only at these two places, all the supplications of the *Jamaat e Momineen* are in plural form i.e. this seeking of aid is not individual, it is collective. This is because, as has been stated already, all the aims of the *Momineen* are achieved through that collective system which is established according to the Divine laws. In this system individuals cooperate with each other and from this mutual coordination and cooperation the system takes shape and remains strong. This system only becomes established through the mutual collaboration of individuals and its aim and purpose is the nourishment and development of people. This is why it is stated:

...help you one another in righteousness and virtue, but help you not one another in sin and rancour⁹⁵... (5:2)

From this it is clear that Allah's aid is not obtained in caves, shrines, temples, monasteries – this is obtained through the collective programme of the Divine system.

We have stated above that the beginning of every effort or action by man is through a wish or desire arising in his heart. By becoming intense, this same desire becomes an intention, and after this intention becomes reinforced, a step is taken for the achievement of this aim. The stage of taking a step is a very important one and at the same time a very delicate one as well. For example, you leave the house with the intention to travel somewhere. In order to reach this place the first and indispensable condition is that you set out on the exact route. If you step in the wrong direction then you will travel the distance, and in this process your time and energy will also be expended, but ultimately what will happen is that not only will you not reach the intended destination, instead you will have distanced yourself far away from it. Hence, when you sought Allah's aid for the aim of the desired destination by saying *Iyy'a Ka Nasta'een*, this meant that first of all you wished that the correct or straight path to reach this destination becomes visible to you. In order for this, the desire of your heart reached your lips by becoming this supplication:

Show us the straight path. (1:5)

⁹⁵ The meanings of these Quranic terms i.e. *Birr*, *Taqwa*, *Ithm*, and *Udwaan* will be discussed at their own places later.

1.52 The Straight Path (*Siraat-al-Mustaqeem*)

The first word of this verse is *Ib'dina* from which the aim is to seek guidance. As you know, the word guidance has appeared in the Quran (in different forms) with great frequency and wide-ranging meanings. This is because there is a line of demarcation between guidance and misguidance, truth and falsehood, and *Eimaan* and *Kufr*. Hence, it is vital to understand its correct meaning. In the exposition of *Rabb-il Alameen* it has been stated that the meaning of *Rabubiyat* is to take a thing from the point of its beginning, gradually towards its completion by continuously providing nourishment. It is obvious that according to this programme the things of the universe will have to undertake a journey, they will have to follow a particular direction, and this path will also be one which is designated by Allah Himself, because by following any path other than the one designated and defined by Him, this aim cannot be achieved. This mode of directing is called guidance. For this the condition is that this guidance is clear, perspicuous, radiant, and tangible. (This characteristic is implicit within the meaning of this root itself). Conjectural, speculative, doubtful, suspicious, vague guidance cannot be called Divine guidance. This guidance has been endowed to all things of the universe from Allah. In Surah *Al-A'la* it is stated that *Rabb* is He Who:

Who has created, and further, given order and proportion; Who has ordained laws and granted guidance. (87:2-3)

The One Who initiated creation, and then by trimming away the excesses and superfluities of everything, produced balance and proportion in it, then established scales (laws) for it, and determined that objective to which it has to reach, and provided it with guidance in order to reach it. By summarising it in this way, the Quran states at another place:

...Our Rabb is He Who gave to each thing its form and nature, and further, gave it guidance. (20:50)

Our *Rabb* is He Who gave everything its form and then guided it to reach its intended objective – this guidance is present within everything. This is called the instinct or *Fitrat* (nature) of these things, which these things are constrained to obey. The nature of water is to flow downhill in the form of a liquid; having reached a certain temperature it should freeze; or, on the other hand, become steam and float away. The instinct of a goat is to eat grass and to not even glance at meat. The instinct of a lion is to drink blood and eat meat. If you put the eggs of both a hen and a duck under the hen for hatching, when the young emerge

from these eggs, the duck's offspring will make a beeline for the water, whereas even if you wish to lead the hen's chicks towards water, they will take flight from there. This guidance is present within them from the time of birth; it does not need to be acquired from any external source. The Quran has also called this as *Wahi* towards them. For example, with regard to *Wahi* towards the honeybee it is stated:

And your Rabb taught (Wahi) the honeybee to build its cells in hills, on trees, and in habitations. (16:68)

And sent *Wahi* to the stellar bodies (41:12) and to the earth (99:5), etc.

1.53 Guidance for Man

Man is also included among the creations of Allah. He also needs to traverse his evolutionary stages to reach his designated destination - for this, he has to undertake a journey and traverse the distance; for this also correct guidance is needed and responsibility for this guidance has also been assumed by that Allah Who has endowed guidance to the things of the universe. Hence, His decree is:

Verily We take upon Ourselves to guide. (92:12)

Providing guidance to human beings is also Our responsibility. At another place it was proclaimed through the lips of Ibraheem, that *Rabb-il Alameen* is He Who:

Who created me, and it is He Who guides me. (26:78)

In relation to the account of Adam (which is noted by the Quran metaphorically and details of which will be covered in Surah *Al-Baqarah*), it is stated that when paradise became snatched from Adam, and he fell into a despondent state about whether there is any chance of rectification for me or not, then Allah said to him, do not despair:

...and if, as is sure, there comes to you guidance from Me, whosoever follows My guidance, on them shall be no fear, nor shall they grieve. (2:38)

Guidance will keep coming in your direction from Me, and whoever amongst you treads the path according to this, he will reach the intended destination without fear and danger.

From these verses (and many other verses of this kind) it is clear that the responsibility for the guidance of man has also been assumed by Allah Himself, but the form in which this guidance is given to them is quite different. Regarding

the things of the universe this guidance has been placed within them, but this is not the case for human beings. For them the method adopted was that this guidance from Allah (which is called *Wahi*) was bestowed on a chosen righteous individual (he is termed a *Nabi* or *Rasul*), and he used to communicate this guidance to other people. They had the choice to obey this guidance and thus reach their intended destination without fear and danger, or by choosing other (wrong) paths for themselves to become ruined and destroyed. This guidance used to be available from Allah to a *Nabi* first of all. Hence, it is stated about *Rasul-ullah* himself:

And He found you wandering in search of truth, and He gave you guidance. (93:7)

We found you earnestly seeking reality, so We guided you towards the right path.

1.54 Allah's *Wahi* (Divine Guidance)

The *Wahi* which was bestowed in the direction of a *Nabi* was called His Book (i.e. the Book of Allah sent down on him). Thus, the aim of following Allah's guidance was obedience of this Book. The *Wahi* which was sent to *Rasul-ullah* is noted and preserved in the Quran – this *Wahi* is complete, as well as immutable. Therefore it is proclaimed about this Book:

Verily We have revealed the Book to you in truth, for mankind. He, then, that receives guidance benefits his own self; but he that strays injures his own self. Nor are you set over them to dispose of their affairs (not to force them onto this path). (39:41)

We have sent down this Book upon you, which is based on *Haqq*, so that mankind can obtain guidance from it. Proclaim to them that whoever acquires this guidance, the benefit of this will be to his own self; the one who, by adopting other paths, goes astray, his loss will also only be to himself. Your task is to make this guidance reach these people, not to force them to tread on this path, because you have not been made a guardian over them.

From this, two matters have become clear. One, that the responsibility of the messenger was to communicate Allah's guidance to others, it was not his responsibility to make them tread on this path. The Quran has stated at a number of places that if it was intended to make mankind tread on this path like the things of the universe, then they, too, would have been created constrained like those things. With respect to this very choice and intent, it is stated in another verse that:

*We showed him the path: now it is his choice whether to accept it or reject it. (76:3).
See also (18:29)*

At another place it is stated that (O Rasul) it is simply not within your control to cause someone to tread on the right path, no matter how much your heart may desire this. Only the one who wishes to adopt this path through his own intention and desire will tread on the right path (28:56). A great reality has been noted in this, and that is that only he will tread on the right path who steps out of his home to reach some destination, and having reached a crossroads, is in search of stepping in the right direction. For the individual who does not even wish to set out on a journey, the question of guidance simply does not arise in his case. Nor for the one who sets out on the journey but without defining an objective – this is not called journeying, but loitering. And the Quran terms this as wasted deeds (i.e. fruitless movements and deeds). Such people do not consider any guidance to be of any worth to them. These are the people about whom it was stated to Rasul-ullah that:

Can you then make the deaf to hear, or give direction to the blind, or to such as wander in manifest error? (43:40)

What, do you wish to make those hear, who continue to sit with their ears deaf, and do not even wish to hear the message? Do you wish to show those people the path who do not even wish to open their eyes, and in this way end up in manifest misguidance? True guidance can only be received by the one in whose heart there is a palpitating desire to reach the destination and he then strives in search of the right direction:

And those who strive in Our cause, We will certainly guide them to our paths... (29:69)

To those people who strive to seek the path which leads towards Us, We show them the right paths, and as stated above, this right path is found through obedience of the Book sent down by Allah, and cannot be found by any other technique:

...Say: 'The guidance of Allah – that is the only guidance'... (2:120)

(O Rasul) announce to these people that true guidance is only that which is made available from Allah; other than this, no guidance can take the caravan of humanity to its intended destination – this is that very path which is termed as being *Siraat e Mustaqeem*.

1.55 *Siraat e Mustaqeem* (Straight and Balanced Path)

At this stage it is also essential to understand another important point. An individual possesses the intention to travel to Rawalpindi from Lahore,⁹⁶ he awakes in the morning and peruses the railway timetable, he checks what the timings are of the trains going to Rawalpindi and when these will reach there, what the fare is, and what is the procedure to reserve a seat, etc. By meticulously studying the timetable, he satisfies himself regarding these matters, and after that he puts it away safely. He enacts the same thing every morning, and carries it out like a duty, but he never leaves his house in order to go to Rawalpindi. In your opinion, do you think he will reach Rawalpindi by doing this all his life? And will studying the timetable like this every day cause any benefit to reach him? The answer is clear. Therefore, reading the Book of Allah, and understanding it will only benefit the one who takes practical steps under its guidance in the journey of life. Only he will be able to reach the destination who undertakes the journey under the guidance of this supreme Book. This Book will guide towards *Siraat e Mustaqeem*; it will not pick someone up and make him reach the destination.

These words are generally translated as the ‘Straight Path’. Straight path is the translation of the word *Siraat* only. But here, together with *As-Siraat* the word *Al-Mustaqeem* is also stated. The root of this word is *Q-Wa-M* from which the word *Qiy'aam* is derived. *Qiy'aam* means to stand up and it is obvious that only that individual can stand up whose balance is stable – any slight distortion in the balance, and an individual cannot remain upright, nor anything else. From this respect the meaning of *Mustaqeem* is possessing balance. Hence, the meaning of *Siraat e Mustaqeem* will be the straight and smooth path – such a straight path that it has no bends and turns, and so smooth that there are no bumps or dips in it.

1.56 One Great Truth

As has been stated previously, there is also a miracle of the Quran implicit in the selection of words. Though the meaning of *Siraat* is a straight path, a supreme reality is hidden in the straightness of this path. The style of the Quran is that wherever it presents positive tenets from itself, together with this it also keeps

⁹⁶ Rawalpindi and Lahore are two cities in Pakistan. (Ed)

refuting erroneous and *Batil*⁹⁷ ideologies, and both these aspects are implicit in *As-Siraat*.

1.57 The Cyclical Concept of Life

According to the concept which the human intellect devised about human life, the movement of life is considered cyclical. When the Greek philosophers pondered on the heavenly bodies, they found them to be spherical. From this the greatness of a sphere or circle became embedded in their minds. And as a result they formulated this belief that the movement of the universe and human life is cyclical - in other words, it is orbiting within a circle. In the case of a circle, what happens is that at whatever point anything starts its movement, after going around in a full circle, it returns to that same point - it does not progress forward. Like a merry-go-round, it keeps repeating one circle on the same one path. From this Pythagoras formulated the doctrine of Transmigration of the Soul. According to this doctrine, it is believed that man came into this world after one birth and became tainted with evils (sins). After his death his soul is returned to this world in some other form so that he could remove some of these stains. This process does not end with just one or two birth cycles – for this it is necessary to pass through millions of cycles (i.e. ever new births) until man eventually reaches his first form. At that time these cycles come to an end i.e. the purpose of all these cycles is that man should become just the same as he was originally. This is the ultimate aim of the cyclical process. This cyclical concept of life is not just confined to Transmigration of the Soul; the doctrine of salvation in world religions takes root from this very concept. Christianity stated that every child comes with the burden of sin from his very first father and mother (Adam and Eve) at the time of his birth. There is only one way to achieve salvation from this burden of sin and that is to have faith in the atonement of Jesus. Through this faith man again becomes pure and clean as he was before his birth. In other words, the same concept which was the basis of Transmigration of the Soul. Those religions which established the concept of hell (*Jabannum*) stated that though man comes into this world pure and clean, such sins become committed here by him due to which his self becomes stained. In order to cleanse these stains he will be placed in hell in the hereafter, thus the simile of a washerman's vat is used among them. His becoming pure and clean again in this way is called *Najaat*

⁹⁷ *Batil* – those efforts which lead to destructive results, or no results; when something is tested against a criteria and does not meet the standard. See Glossary for more details. (Ed)

(salvation). You have seen that the same concept of cyclical movement is in place here as well i.e. after such a long and winding journey to reach that same point from where man originally set out.

1.58 The Belief of Followers of Mysticism

This was the concept of those who follow *Shariat*. The followers of *Tareeqat* presented this concept in another hue. According to the *Vedant* of Hindus, it was asserted that the human soul (*Atma*) is part of the great soul of Brahma (*Parmatma*). This part, by separating from its origin, has become trapped in the quagmire of matter. The requirement is for it to be cleansed and purified of this stain so that it can rejoin with its origin: this is called salvation. For this there is the need for great hardships; to practice giving up desires; soul-destroying and self-deprecating sufferings (the *Nirvaan* of Buddhism also presents a similar concept). This same belief of *Vedant* appeared in the form of Jewish mysticism and the monasticism of Christianity, and it was from there that the Muslims borrowed it and gave it the name ‘Islamic Mysticism’. This is that doctrine which is noted by Rumi in one of his poems i.e. that the flute laments and wails because it has separated from its origin, and this yearning will end when it merges with its origin once again - this is the only achievement of all the struggles and endeavours in life. Similarly, the merging and becoming lost of the human self into the Divine Being is called *Wassaal*⁹⁸ in the terminology of Sufism i.e. lost in Allah, and hence Allah remains.

From these explanations you will have observed what kinds of beliefs and doctrines the concept of the cyclical movement about life encompasses, and what kind of concept, not just about human life, but also about its Creator, Allah, emerges before us from this? The creation of the universe, the birth of man, the process of righteous heavenly guidance, the coming of the *Anbiya* – the meaning of all of this is that out of all possible purposes the only purpose of such a vast, detailed, and lofty programme from Allah is that in whatever form something was originally, it should become the same again (as you were). Such a worthless and aimless programme can in no way be attributed to the Supremacy and Omniscience of Allah. The Quran ended all these *Batil* (false) beliefs by declaring that the movement of life is not cyclical but *Siraati*⁹⁹. The caravan of life is

⁹⁸ *Wassaal* – this term is uttered when someone dies i.e. that the soul of the deceased has gone and merged with the Divine Self. (Ed)

⁹⁹ From the word *Siraat* which means a straight path. (Ed)

traversing on a straight and direct path which means that it is advancing forward by passing through its evolutionary stages.

1.58.1 The Quranic Concept of Life

The objective of this journey is not to again arrive at that point from where the journey had commenced; its aim is to reach that destination which is far ahead and very elevated from its starting point. The journey of life is not cyclical but evolutionary. The aim of this striving and endeavour is not to revert to the previous state by becoming free of difficulties or becoming pure and clean from stains. Its aim is to become far more superior than before, and to achieve a lofty status. It is on this basis that the Quran has declared the purpose of human life to be achievement, not salvation. According to the Quranic concept, the human self is not a part of Allah's Being – the self is an indivisible unity, it simply cannot be divided into parts. When some part of a thing becomes detached from it, it then becomes an incomplete thing, it becomes flawed; as a result of this, that self simply does not remain as a self. Therefore, the human self is not a detached part of the Being of Allah. Allah has endowed man with a self in an undeveloped form and the purpose of human life is that through its becoming developed, it becomes enabled to traverse further evolutionary stages – this destination will become apparent in the afterlife.

From this you have witnessed that from the supplication which the Quran has informed us about to tread on *Siraat e Mustaqeem*, by this it has also refuted the false beliefs about the aim and purpose of human life. And in addition has placed a positive, constructive programme in front of man, which by advancing him forward, will take him to elevated heights:

You shall surely go from stage to stage. (84:19)

So that man keeps on rising to ever more elevated heights, stage by stage – this is *Siraat e Mustaqeem*.

1.59 Allah is on *Siraat e Mustaqeem*

In Surah *Hud* it is stated:

...verily, it is my Rabb that is on a straight path. (11:56)

The common translation of this is that Allah is also treading on the straight path. But its meaning is that the whole system of the universe, while treading on the straight path according to Allah's laws, is traversing evolutionary stages. In the human world it is the messenger of Allah who first of all treads on this straight and balanced path – this is why it is stated about Rasul-ullah that:

...verily, you are on a straight path. (43:43)

You are undoubtedly journeying on the straight path. It was stated to the *Jamaat e Momineen* that you should adopt this *Maslak* that '*Iyy'a ka Na'budu*' i.e. we only accept the rule of Allah. After that it is stated that they are the ones who yearn to remain treading on *Siraat e Mustaqeem*, and by combining these two it is stated:

It is Allah Who is my Rabb and your Rabb; then follow Him. This is the way that is straight. (3:51)

O Rasul! Inform them that your *Rabb* and my *Rabb* is Allah. All of you should also only accept his rule, this is what *Siraat e Mustaqeem* is. From this it is evident that *Siraat e Mustaqeem* is simply another name for accepting obedience to Allah. You have observed how the Quran keeps explaining itself.

1.60 What are *Subal As-Salaam*?

In relation to *Siraat e Mustaqeem*, the clarification of another point is also considered to be essential. *Siraat e Mustaqeem* (the Super Highway) is only one – this is that great highway about which guidance has continued to be made available via all the *Anbiya*, but Allah has stated about the Quran that it is a shining light (*Nur e Mubeen* - a crystal clear light):

...wherewith Allah guides all who seek His good pleasure to paths of peace and security and leads them out of darkness by His Will unto the light – guides them to a path that is straight. (5:16)

Through this Allah guides those people who follow His programme towards *Subal As-Salaam* (paths of security and peace) and in this way he brings them out from the darkneses into the light. Here, the Quran has called it *Subal*, which is the plural of *Sabeel* (single path), and its meaning is many paths. The question which arises here is that when *Siraat e Mustaqeem* is only one, then why did the Quran say *Subal*? This point is worthy of reflection.

Ad-Deen has always been one and the same right from the beginning, but to bring it into practical shape in different eras (according to the needs of that time) the

method and programme has remained different. In other words, the principal laws bestowed by Allah have remained immutable right from the start and will remain so. But the methods to act upon them will keep on changing according to the demands (needs) of the time – these are what will be called *Subal* i.e. those narrow side roads which eventually merge with the main highway. This is why in this verse (5:16), after *Subal As-Salaam*, it is stated that this is the way in which Allah guides them towards *Siraat e Mustaqeem*¹⁰⁰. This means that whatever methods are adopted to act in accordance with the system of Deen, their aim should be to take man towards the true Deen.

This is that *Siraat e Mustaqeem* for which the heart of a *Momin* is ardent to tread on. Until now the matter was merely ideological. In the next verse, the Quran presents its purpose and aim in a tangible form when it states that:

The path of those on whom You have bestowed Your grace (Naimat)... (1:6)

In other words, that path on which these kinds of people had previously treaded, and whose consequence was that... *An-Amta Alayi'him*.

1.61 *An-Amta Alayi'him*

A description of the guidance to that *Siraat e Mustaqeem* for which supplication was made to Allah is presented in a tangible form. What is being stated is that this is the path of those people who You bestowed with Your bounties. It is obvious that this is a very comprehensive thing i.e. such a thing through which, by practically obeying Deen, all the results and achievements emerge before us, whether these are obtained in this world or in the life of the hereafter. Therefore, it is vital to comprehend the correct Quranic meaning of *Naimat*¹⁰⁰ because this is that tangible criterion from which it will be possible to assess whether we are in possession of Allah's *Naima* or not. If we do possess these, then our *Eimaan* is *Eimaan* according to Quranic terminology, and our deeds are righteous deeds (*Amaal e Saleh*). If these are not possessed, then that which we call *Eimaan* and righteous deeds, through which we may satisfy our heart giving it false contentment, will be no more than a self-deception.¹⁰¹

There is a plant among the Arabs which they call *Tan'eemat-un*. Its leaves are soft and delicate, evergreen and beautiful. It grows on water as a result of which there

¹⁰⁰ *Naimat* (pl. *Naima*) – this is explained by the author in the next paragraph. (Ed)

¹⁰¹ In the words of Maulana Abul-Kalam Azad (a Muslim Indian political leader of the time): 'God worship and acting virtuously'.

is never any alteration in its freshness and bloom – but together with this, the meaning of elevation and successfulness is included in its root (*N-Ain-M*). Hence, *Al-Namatu* is the name given to that building which has been constructed on a hill, also to some elevated signpost or flag from which a direction can be determined. From these meanings it is clear that the manifestation of *Naimat* means for every aspect of human life to be pleasant, vast, refined, prosperous, elevated and successful. Those people who will have such a life will be declared as being *Munim Alai'hi* i.e. those who are in possession of the bounties of Allah. Details of this aspect will be found in various verses of the Quran, some of which are noted below:

1. For a nation to obtain a solution and freedom from the despotic grip of tyrannical rulers is Allah's *Naimat*. Hence, Musa said to his people (Bani Israel), remind yourselves of this *Naimat* of Allah which He blessed you with. You were chained in the grip of slavery by Pharaoh's people; they used to unleash various kinds of torments on you, Allah made you free from this and that was His supreme reward (2:47-49).
2. But this is only a negative aspect i.e. to achieve freedom from some suffering. After this, its positive aspect comes before us – this same nation of Bani Israel was reminded about this in the following words:

O children of Israel! Call to mind the favour which I bestowed upon you, and that I preferred¹⁰² you to all others. (2:47)

In other words, the blessed nation (*Munim Alai'hi*) is that which holds a prominent and superior position among its contemporary nations i.e. not just equal to other nations, but far ahead of these and loftier. When the Quran stated '*Ant'um'ul A'lawn*' about the *Jamaat e Momineen* - you will be superior and ahead (3:139) - this is exactly what it meant i.e. prominent and superior to all nations in the world. This was that superiority of Daud and eminence of Sulaiman which Sulaiman attempted to express gratitude for in the following words:

...O my Rabb! So order me that I may be grateful for Your favours, which You have bestowed on me and on my parents... (27:19)

3. In Surah *An-Nabl* first of all details are noted about various materials regarding life – houses and dwellings for habitation, protected shelters in

¹⁰² Bani Israel as the 'preferred' nation means that they achieved this status through following the laws of Allah and thus becoming eligible for the *Naima* of Allah. (Ed)

mountains, garments to afford protection from the weather, armour for defence in battlefields, etc. And after this it is stated:

*...thus does He complete His favours on you, that you may follow His laws.
(16:81)*

Therefore for all the necessities of life to keep on becoming available is Allah's *Naimat*.

4. In Surah *Luqman* this reality is noted using two such comprehensive words¹⁰³ in which everything in the universe becomes incorporated. It is stated:

Do you not see that Allah has subjected to your use all things in the heavens and on earth, and has made His bounties flow to you in exceeding measure seen and unseen? ... (31:20)

Have you not reflected on this reality that whatever is in the highs and lows of the universe (*Ard* and *Sama'waat*), Allah has placed it under your control. And in this way has made you aware of the abundance of His manifested and hidden bounties so that you may benefit from these.

5. In Surah *Ibraheem*, after a detailed description about harnessing the heavens and the earth, it is stated:

And He gives you of all that you ask for. But if you count the favours of Allah, never will you be able to number them... (14:34)

The *Naima* of Allah are so numerous that they cannot be counted or calculated. You can understand it in a few words as whatever means and resources were required by you for the nourishment of life and its strengthening and success, Allah has made provision for all of this for you. These are all *Naima* of Allah.

6. This was in relation to the means of sustenance for the physical life of man. (But as has been noted before) man is not just defined by his physical life. Other than this, he also has a human life as well, whose development takes place according to those values which have been bestowed via *Wahi* through the medium of *Anbiya*. In Surah *Maryam*, after mentioning different *Anbiya*, it is stated:

¹⁰³ The two comprehensive words are *Zabira'tan* (seen) and *Batina'tan* (unseen). (Ed)

*Those were some of the messengers on whom Allah did bestow His grace...
(19:58)*

Here, the bestowing of messengerhood is also declared as a blessing of Allah, though it is that blessing which man did not receive as a result of his efforts and deeds but used to be conferred from Allah by His Will. This is that *Naimat* of Allah whose conclusion took place in the form of the Quran, when it is stated:

... This day have I completed your Deen for you, completed My favour upon you... (5:3)

Consequently, all mankind will now be able to benefit from this *Naimat* of *Wahi* via the Quran till the day of judgement. This *Naimat (Wahi)* is not present anywhere else, nor can it be conferred on anyone else after Rasul-ullah – in the presence of the immutable and preserved Book of Allah, what need is there for further *Wahi*?

7. The foremost sign of those people who benefit from this *Naimat* (the Quran) is that there is no difference of any kind among them. Their hearts are bonded with each other. See in what clear words the Quran has noted this supreme fact when it states:

(O Jamaat e Momineen!) Holding on all together, collectively, to this firm support bestowed from Allah, remain firm as one Jamaat, and do not create dissensions among yourselves. Remind yourselves of the Naimat of Allah with which He has blessed you. You were enemies of one another, He joined your hearts with each other (did not merely unite you outwardly) and in this way made you brethren. This is a great Naimat of His. You had reached the brink of the hell of destruction and ruin, He saved you from falling into it. In this way Allah makes His signs clear so that you keep treading on the right path. (3:103)

1.62 Allah's *Naima* are Achieved through Effort

From the above explanations this reality has become apparent to us what those things are which have been declared as *Naima* by Allah, and who are those *Munim Alai'hi* (blessed people) who treaded on Allah's designated *Siraat e Mustaqeem* before us, and in order to follow whose path a supplication has been taught to us. But it is obvious that these *Naima* of Allah cannot be acquired merely by engaging in supplications, these are the natural consequence of *Eimaan* and righteous deeds (except *Nabuwmat* which was received externally). According to the Quran, *Jannat*

is that place in the journey of life where these *Naima* of Allah become concentrated in their most exalted form. It is stated about this *Jannat*:

...how excellent a reward for those who work righteousness! (39:74)

What a glorious reward it is for those who work hard, with which they have been remunerated. To achieve this and make it sustainable, a detailed programme has been given in Surah *An-Nisa* which we will present at its own place. Here it is sufficient to say that the companionship of these *Munim Alai'hi* people is acquired by obeying the Divine system (4:64-70).

1.63 How were These (*Naima*) Utilised?

In this connection the next issue is that obtaining these *Naima* of Allah is not an end in itself; it is also necessary to assess how these *Naima* are utilised. If they are brought into use according to the values and laws of Allah, then this is termed as *Shukr e Naimat* (expressing gratitude for these blessings); and if they are utilised against these, then the Quran declares this as being *Kufr e Naimat* (denying these blessings). It is on this basis that it is stated that "They will be questioned, how did you utilise Allah's *Naima*?":

Then, shall you be questioned that day about Naima. (102:8)

If these Divine *Naima* are utilised wrongly (against the Quran), then these are snatched away, whose first consequence is that that nation becomes inflicted with the consequences of fear and hunger. In Surah *An-Nabl* it is stated that Allah wishes to illustrate this reality through a metaphor. There was a habitation whose inhabitants enjoyed peace, as well as tranquility. The abundance of sustenance was such that it flowed from all four corners towards it:

...yet was it ungrateful for the favours of Allah: so, Allah made it taste of hunger and terror like a garment, because of what they used to do. (16:112)

These people did *Kufr* against these *Naima* of Allah, and the consequence of this was that they became inflicted with the punishment of hunger and fear. This punishment did not come from an external source, it was the outcome of their own machinations, in other words, the outcome of their own self-created system. This same reality is noted at another place in these words:

Have you not turned your vision to those who have changed the favour of Allah into denial, and caused their people to descend to the house of perdition? Into hell – they will burn there - in an evil place to stay in! (14:28-29)

Have you observed the condition of these people who have converted the *Naima* of Allah into *Kufr*, and in this way have deposited the caravan of their people in that marketplace where no buyer existed for their products i.e. into hell – how dreadful was that place where the leaders of this nation transported them. But those responsible are not only the leaders of this nation, the whole nation is responsible for this.

1.64 Change in *Naimat* Through Change in Psyche

Because in this regard the Quran has decreed this principle:

This is because Allah will never change the blessing which He has bestowed on a people until they change what is in their (own) selves; and verily Allah is He Who hears and knows (all things). (8:53). See also (13:11)

This is because Allah never creates any change in those *Naima* which a nation has acquired until the time that the nation does not bring about mental and psychological changes within itself. Remember! The decisions of Allah are not made randomly and blindly.

It is obvious from this that the fundamental condition for obtaining *Naima* and for their loss is the change in the psyche of a nation. If this change is in the right direction according to Allah's guidance, then this will be called *Eimaan* i.e. this will be the consequence of *Eimaan*. And if it is in the wrong direction, then this will be termed as *Kufr*.

The issue began from this, that men of Allah (*Jamaat e Momineen*) accept and acknowledge this fact in the presence of Allah that we only accept Your rule. In response to this, Allah directs:

...and be grateful for the favours of Allah, if it is He Whom you obey. (16:114)

If you are truthful in this claim of yours that you accept Allah's rule, then its practical proof will be that you utilise these *Naima* bestowed by Allah according to His laws; as a consequence these acquired *Naima* will remain in place and there will also be continuous increases in them:

And remember! Your Rabb caused to be declared: 'If you are grateful, I will add more unto you; but if you show ingratitude, truly, my punishment is terrible indeed'. (14:7)

And when your *Rabb* proclaimed this *Amr* (decree) that if you employ the *Naima* correctly (*Shukr e Naimat*), then we will keep on giving an increase in these *Naima*,

but if you do *Kufr* of these *Naima*, then the punishment for this will be very severe, what this punishment will be is described in the next verse:

...the path of those whose portion is not wrath, and who go not astray. (1:7)

1.65 Wrong Translation

Among us the customary translation of these verses of Surah *Al-Fateha* (1:7-8) is as follows:

Show us the straight path – the path of those on whom you have bestowed your bounties, not those on Whom your wrath descended, or those who went astray. (1:7-8)

At a cursory glance there appears nothing objectionable in this translation, but if we look at it a bit more closely, then a very wrong concept of Allah appears before us. When we beseech Allah to show us the path of those people on whom You bestowed your bounties i.e. the path of those blessed individuals or nations (*Munim Alai'hi*), then up to this point the matter is plain and clear. But when we say this '...not of those people on Whom Your wrath descended, or those who went astray', then from this the meaning which emerges is that Allah also guides to the path of those people who are condemned or astray. This concept about Allah that He also guides to the path of these people is highly objectionable. Allah is far above this that He would guide His servants towards the path of those who are condemned and of nations which have gone astray. From some verses of the Quran some people draw this kind of meaning that 'Allah provides guidance to whomsoever He wishes and misguides whomsoever He wishes' – this is not the correct meaning of these verses. The correct meaning of these verses will be given at those places where these verses have appeared. Here, it is necessary to understand this much that man gains guidance or misguidance of his own accord. But since this is gained according to the law and code established by Allah, therefore it is related towards Allah.¹⁰⁴

1.66 Illustration Through Contrast

¹⁰⁴ Details of these will be found in the book by the author titled, *The Book of Destiny*.

In order to understand the correct meaning of the verses noted above, it is important to bear this fact in mind that the Quran also clarifies its facts and explanations through the use of contrast, and this technique is very appealing and effective. For example, by presenting contrasting words such as ‘darkness and light’, ‘shadow and sunlight’ or ‘blind and seeing’ in opposition to each other, it makes its meaning clear. This is the style it has adopted in the verses quoted above. Their correct meanings are that – show us the path of those people who were successful (*Munim Alai’hi*), and who were not misguided and had not become condemned (*Maghdubi Alai’hi*) i.e. they were like this - not like that. Thus, by use of contrast, the meaning became crystal clear.

1.67 The Meaning of *Ghadab* (Punishment)

In the basic meanings of the word *Ghadab* the propensity for intensity, power, heat, supremacy, ascendancy and grip are found. When this word is used in relation to human beings, then the aim will be to imply anger, and those emotions associated with *Ghadab*. But Allah is above and beyond human emotions, hence, when this word is used in relation to Allah then it will mean the firm grip of Allah’s Law of Requit. That same meaning which is noted in such verses as:

Truly strong is the grip of your Rabb. (85:12)

Or

...so We seized him (Pharaoh) with a heavy punishment. (73:16)

This is the very meaning of Allah’s *Ghadab* as well i.e. that ruin and destruction which results according to the immutable Law of Requit. As noted above, here the meaning of the first line of the verse, *An’amta Alai’him* (1:8), is clarified by demonstrating its converse e.g. when those bounties of Allah with which the nation of Bani Israel was bestowed were mentioned, it was stated about them:

O Bani Israel! Call to mind the Naima which I bestowed upon you, and that I preferred you to all others. (2:47)

Therefore, superiority over nations of the world is a *Naimat* of Allah. After this, when they abandoned this path (by treading on which they achieved this success), the consequence which transpired was:

...they were covered with humiliation and misery; they drew over themselves the wrath of Allah...(2:61)

At another place:

...*be overwhelmed with wrath from their Rabb, and with shame in this life...*
(7:152)

From these verses it is clearly demonstrated that humiliation and degradation became imposed on them in the life of this very world.

1.68 *Zillat* (Humiliation) and *Masknat* (Dormancy)

The word *Zillat* means every kind of beggary, weakness, subjugation, helplessness, despair, destitution, misery and degradation. Over there, there was ‘supremacy’, and here, there is ‘humiliation and lowly existence’ – from this the meaning of Allah’s bounties and Allah’s punishment becomes evident.

The other word is *Masknat*. Life is the name for movement and activity i.e. the name for continuously progressing on the highway of life. This is what is termed as persistent efforts or unmitigated endeavours. The nation which halts and becomes static at some point, becomes deprived of the energies of life. A stagnant nation does not just remain static in one place; if you look closely, it is in fact taking retrograde steps, because dynamic nations progress far ahead of it. Hence, *Masknat* is the name for that condition of a nation when it stops from moving forward. In the Quran *Jabannum* (hell) is also called *Jabeem* (5:10). And the meaning of *Jabeem* is the closing of a path (dead end).

1.69 Intellectual Inertia

We have observed this eternal principle of Allah that whatever bounties are in the possession of any nation, these never become snatched from it as long as it does not transform its psychic (internal) world. Therefore, whichever nation halts at one point, this does not only mean that its feet stop moving, it means that intellectual inertia becomes created within it – it gives up thinking and reasoning. It adopts the *Maslak* of *Tagleed* (emulating of forefathers). It deceives itself by saying that whatever was required to be researched about the facts and issues of life, it has been researched. Whatever distance was meant to be traversed in the journey of life, it has been traversed – this is indeed our final destination and our ultimate objective. The only authority they quote for this is that this is that *Maslak* which our forefathers had adopted. The Quran has contradicted this belief at

many places and has declared in clear words that such a nation becomes deserving of Allah's *Ghadab* (wrath). For example, in Surah *Al-A'raf* it is stated regarding the people of Aa'd that when their messenger, Hud, invited them to obedience of the sole sovereignty of Allah, they retorted, do you want us to give up the cult of our forefathers? In response to this Hud said that this path of yours and your insistence on remaining on it provides evidence of this fact that:

He said: 'Punishment and wrath have already come upon you from your Rabb: dispute you with me over names which you have devised – you and your fathers – without authority from Allah? Then wait: I am amongst you, also waiting'¹⁰⁵. . . And We cut off the roots of those Who rejected Our signs and did not accept Eimaan.
(7:71-72)

Allah's *Ghadab* and *Rijs*¹⁰⁶ have already descended on you. (The meaning of *Rijs* will be given in its own turn). Those false idols which you mention, those doctrines and beliefs which you refer to as being the teachings of *Haqq* and truth, their reality is nothing other than being some names which your forefathers or perhaps you yourselves have now invented. Allah has sent down no approval of their being *Haqq* and truth. Despite this warning and admonishment, they remained stubborn in their stance, the outcome of which was that the root of that nation became severed, because rather than acknowledging the truth of the laws of Allah, they continued to falsify them.

It is obvious from this that the nation on which the wrath of Allah has descended becomes deprived of all the successes and prosperities of life and even the very root of its tree of life becomes severed.

1.69.1 Mutual Fights and the Wrath of Allah

One of the signs which was mentioned of a blessed nation was that the hearts of the members of this nation are bonded together (3:103); their mutual love and affection have reached to an extremity. Contrary to this, the Quran has stated that

¹⁰⁵ This illustrates the fact that the Law of Requitil in the human world works to a time interval between the time that deeds are committed, and their consequences manifest themselves. This is particularly true when applied collectively to a nation. For further details see the book titled *The Life in the Hereafter: What Does the Quran say*. (Ed)

¹⁰⁶ *Rijs* – root R-J-S. Its meanings include doubt, suspicion, hesitancy, anxiety, an unclear matter. For further details see *Lughat ul Quran*. (Ed)

if the state of a nation becomes such that they start cutting each other's throats, then the wrath of Allah descends upon them. In Surah *An-Nisa* it is stated:

If someone kills a Momin intentionally, his recompense is hell, to abide therein: and the wrath and curse of Allah are upon him, and a dreadful penalty is prepared for him. (4:93)

1.70 Allah's *Sakht* (Punishment)

The word *Sakht*, which is also noted in the Quran, is very nearly a synonym of *Ghadb*. The point at which this word has been used is worthy of deep reflection. The code of life which is revealed by Allah is complete, and obedience to it means that this complete code should be followed fully i.e. such a system should be established in which all matters are resolved according to this very code. If it so happens that some matters are settled according to Allah's laws, and some through self-devised laws, or according to the codes of other nations, then the consequence of this dualism can be nothing other than humiliation and ruin (for reference see verse 2:85). The verdict about such a nation is that it is *Maghdubi Alai'hi* (condemned to punishment). A clarification of this is given in another verse by saying that the condition of some people is such that, after clear guidance reaching them from Allah, they revert to their previous path (this is called *Irt'daad* i.e. apostasy); in other words, in certain matters they begin to obey those people for whom the code of Allah is a burden. The end of these people is very painful:

Those who turn back as apostates after guidance was clearly shown to them... this, because they said to those who hate what Allah has revealed, 'We will obey you in part of the matter;' But Allah knows their inner secrets. But how will it be when the Malaika¹⁰⁷ take their selves at death, and smite their faces and their backs? This because they followed that which called forth the wrath of Allah, and they hated Allah's good pleasure (in disagreement with the laws of Allah); so, He made their deeds of no effect. (47:25-28)

The last words of the verse merit close attention. What is stated here is that in 'some matters' these people obey non-Divine laws. From this the mind begins to think that they should definitely be rewarded for those matters in which they

¹⁰⁷ *Malaika* – from the root (M-L-K) which means a force. It is commonly translated as angels. It means the universal forces (including those of nature) known and unknown, seen and unseen, which work in the universe. It includes those functioning within the human world e.g. gravity, winds, light, radio waves, etc. Also see Glossary. (Ed)

follow the Divine code i.e. not all of their deeds should go to waste. This misgiving is based on a shallow perception. If you look at it in greater depth, this reality will become evident that the natural outcome of following such a path is that all the efforts and deeds of an individual will go to waste. Let us understand it through an example. If, in your treatment from a physician, you take some ingredients from his prescription, and some ingredients from the prescription of another healer – just think whether these different ingredients will produce their correct outcome, or will all of your efforts become wasted? The system of life only produces correct effects when all of its ingredients are correct, pure, proportionate, and are each of them at their precise level, and there is no kind of contamination in them or mutual conflicting interaction (this is called *Tauheed*¹⁰⁸). If a constituent from another system is grafted into this system, then this kind of hybrid system cannot produce any constructive result. This kind of grafting or mixing is termed *Shirk*. Deen is the name for the system which is based on *Tauheed*. In religion human ideologies, beliefs, rituals and rites are all mixed in, this is why the deeds of a religious nation remain fruitless. In the performance of religiously defined rituals and obligations, it bears severe hardships and undergoes painful and patience testing practices, but no constructive result comes from these, while it continues instead to fall, day by day, into pits of humiliation and disgrace.

1.71 Being a *Mushrik* Despite Claiming to Have *Eimaan*

About these kinds of people the Quran states:

And most of them do not have Eimaan in Allah without associating partners with Him. (12:106) See also (17:46, 39:45, 40:12)

Despite acknowledging *Eimaan*, they remain only as *Mushrik*. If there is even the slightest mixing of non-Allah laws in pure Deen, it becomes *Shirk*.

The Quran has also described other signs of condemned nations, but at this point, for the sake of brevity, we will suffice with these. When those verses come before us, details of those will also be provided. But in conclusion, we consider it essential to present one such sign which has been accorded specific prominence in our time and that is the economic system. The Quran has declared hunger to be Allah's chastisement (16:112), but on the other hand it has also stated that

¹⁰⁸ *Tauheed* – this means the Oneness of Allah. In the Quranic context it means to only follow the Quranic laws, and to not mix these with any man-made laws. (Ed)

many such nations also became destroyed who had acquired a myriad of economic prosperities (28:58). The question arises that when economic deprivation is a sign of Allah's wrath and punishment, then how can economic prosperity be the cause for destruction?

1.72 Economic Imbalance

The matter is clearly evident that the only economic system which can be the basis for the prosperity of a nation is one in which the distribution of sustenance is balanced. The condition of a system in which the balance is distorted becomes such that one part of the nation lives a life of hunger and deprivation, and the other part enjoys abundances of the means of sustenance. The inevitable consequence of this imbalance in the distribution of sustenance is the destruction of this system and ruin of this nation. See how the Quran has declared this to be a reason for Allah's punishment. It states:

Eat of the good things We have provided for your sustenance, but commit no excess therein, lest My wrath should justly descend on you: and those on whom descends My wrath do perish indeed!¹⁰⁹ (20:81)

Consume the *Rizq* bestowed on you by Allah in a *Halal*¹¹⁰ and balanced manner. Do not adopt such a course of action in which the division of *Rizq* becomes imbalanced. The meaning of not committing excesses has been made clear from the verse of Surah *Ar-Rahman* where it is stated:

In order that you may not transgress balance. (55:8)

If you do this then you will suffer from Allah's punishment, and listen to this carefully, that whichever nation becomes embroiled in the wrath of Allah, by falling into the deep gullies of humiliations and deprivations it becomes destroyed and annihilated. (A detailed discussion about the economic system will be given at its own place).

Not only has the Quran stated do not adopt such a path as a result of which Allah's wrath descends upon you, it has also urged not to have friendly

¹⁰⁹ In excess, food becomes a poison, causing maladies such as obesity and its associated issues, diabetes, heart disease, etc. (Ed)

¹¹⁰ *Halal* – that which is permitted by the Quran. (Ed)

relationships with those people who are declared as being condemned by the Quran.

1.73 Friendship with *Maghdubi Alai’hi* (the Condemned)

In Surah *Al-Mujadilah* it is stated:

Turnest you not your attention to those who turn in friendship to such as have the wrath of Allah upon them? They are neither of you nor of them, and they swear to falsehood knowingly. Allah has prepared for them a severe penalty: evil indeed are their deeds. (58:14-15)

Have you ever pondered on the condition of such people who establish friendly relationships with those people who are under the shadow of Allah’s wrath, even though there is no commonality between these two.

In another verse the *Jamaat e Momineen* are forbidden from this by stating:

O you who have Eimaan! Turn not for friendship to people on whom is the wrath of Allah... (60:13)

It is clear from these explanations that when a *Momin* expresses this wish of his that I should not somehow tread on the path of those who are condemned, what his aim is from this, and what the will of the Quran is in this matter.

After this, let us examine the next part of the verse (1:7).

1.74 *Wa’lad Da’Leen* (Misguided)

Just as the Quran has described being blessed as the opposite of being condemned, similarly, it has used the word *Dhalalat* (misguidance) in opposition to *Hadayat* (guidance). Fundamentally, it means to be bewildered and worried, or to wander about aimlessly; also for something to become hidden or disappear; for different things to become mixed in such a way that these cannot then be separated, just as water mixes in milk. Since the one who loses his direction in the desert cannot then reach his destination despite all his efforts, this word is therefore also used for the failure and going to waste of effort and hard work, as has been described in Surah *Al-Kahf* (18:103) i.e. all their efforts became wasted. The individual on a wrong path remains immersed in this self-deception that he is treading on the right path. This is why a mirage is called *Al-Mudhillu*.

Though an individual who is about to become a *Nabi*, before his *Nabuwat* reaches this conclusion based on his insight that the path on which the society is going is not right, he does not have the correct path before him. As a result, a strong desire arises in his heart in search of the truth, and he searches around in pursuit of the right path, until such a time that he receives the correct guidance from the direction of Allah. It is quoted in the Quran regarding Rasul-ullah that:

And He found you seeking truth, He gave you guidance. (93:7)

We found you in search of truth, so you were guided towards the right path.¹¹¹ This is stated with regard to a *Nabi* but the reality is that every seeker of truth has to adopt this same method.

1.75 Wandering in Search of Truth

If some individual remains satisfied (without research and investigation) with the prevalent ideologies and beliefs in his society (or world), then neither any desire takes birth in his heart to seek the correct path of life, nor can he get on to the correct path. It is of great importance to evaluate the prevailing environment using intellect and reasoning. The famous philosopher of the modern era, Whitehead, has said that to accept the prevalent ideas and beliefs of your era as they are and to remain fixated on them is idolatry.¹¹² It is interesting that even among Arabs themselves this meaning was implicit in idolatry. In their language the word *Watan* was also used for an idol, and the meaning of *Watan* is to be immobile and static – that is what is known as blind obedience which leads to stagnation. The follower of such a course can never adopt the right path.

1.76 Destructions Due to *Taqleed*¹¹³

The Quran has informed us that those people who do not make use of intellect and reasoning can never set out on the right path, their end is hell.

¹¹¹ It should be made clear that the *Nabuwat* of a potential *Nabi* is not the outcome of these intellectual endeavours: it used to be received from Allah externally, and human effort and skill had no role to play in it. Here it is only stated how, whoever was selected for the task of messengerhood, used to himself be dissatisfied with the prevailing environment of his time.

¹¹² *Adventure of Ideas* by Whitehead, p 11.

¹¹³ *Taqleed* – following in the footsteps of forefathers i.e. blind obedience. (Ed)

In Surah *Al-A'raf* it is stated:

Many are the Jinns¹¹⁴ and men We have made for hell: they have hearts wherewith they understand not, eyes wherewith they see not, and ears wherewith they hear not. They are like cattle – nay more misguided: for they are heedless of warning. (7:179)

You will come across such people in the world whose path will tell you that they are destined for hell. The question which arises is, who are these people whose paths in life demonstrate that they are living a life bound for hell. They are those people who, though they hold hearts in their chests (with the potential to think and understand), do not make use of these to reflect and reason. They have eyes but do not use them to see, they also have ears but do not employ these to hear.

These people live life not at the human level but at an animalistic level, in fact, at a level even lower than that of animals because animals do not employ intellect and reasoning (as they are simply not provided with this potential) but at least they live life according to their instincts. In contrast to them, these people are ignorant of the destination intended for them and unaware even of their own stature. These are those very people to whom the Quran referred when it stated to Rasul-ullah that you cannot make the dead to hear, nor make such people hear to whom you wish to say something and who instead turn their faces away and do not even wish to listen to what you have to say, nor can you guide the blind towards the right path:

Verily, you cannot make the dead hear, nor can you make the deaf hear the call, when they show their backs and turn away. Nor can you lead back the blind from their straying: only those will you make to hear, who have Eimaan in Our signs and submit in Islam. (30:52-53)

The Quran has divided those who do not use their intellect and reasoning principally into two categories: one being those who, having reached the crossroads of life, do not feel the need to consider which path they should turn towards, nor any need to seek the advice of anyone – whatever path the crowd is travelling on, they follow behind them without thought or comprehension. The authority they have for this is the belief of theirs that this is that path which our forefathers adopted and which has continued to reach us throughout the generations without a break. The Quran states about them that, when after continuing to tread on this path they eventually reach hell and they are asked why did you follow this path, they will reply:

¹¹⁴ *Jinns* – hidden from eyes. Here, this means people living in remote rural areas far from established towns and villages. (Ed)

And they would say: ‘Our Rabb! We obeyed our chiefs and our great ones, and they misled us as to the right path’. (33:67)

1.76.1 Overpowered by Emotions

The second type is of those kinds of people who though they are aware of the right path, their vested interests do not permit them to come to this path; by becoming consumed by their emotions they become blind and their intellect and reasoning, knowledge and vision, are of no use to them. In Surah *Al-Jathiyah* it is stated:

Then see you such a one as takes as his god his own vain desire? Allah has, knowing him as such, left him astray, and sealed his hearing and his heart, and put a cover on his sight. Who, then, will guide him after Allah? Will you not then receive admonition? (45:23)

It should be made clear that (as already stated in verse (1:1)) human desires and emotions are not something to be despised, it is their wrong use which destroys man. If these are kept within Allah’s guidance, then great constructive results are accomplished from them. Hence, it is stated in Surah *Al-Qasas*:

But if they hearken not to you, know that they only follow their own lusts: and who is more astray than one who follows his own lusts, devoid of guidance from Allah? For Allah guides not people given to wrongdoing. (28:50)

1.77 The *Dhalalat* of the Democratic System

In our times misguidance has another face also, which is becoming commonplace in the whole world, and which is considered to be a very great feat of the modern era. This is that path which is termed democracy and whose foundation is on this belief that the decision of the majority is always right, and this is what should be followed. Contrary to this, the Quran declares:

Were you to follow most of those on earth, they will lead you away from the path of Allah. They follow nothing but conjecture: they do nothing but lie. (6:116)

If you obey the majority of mankind, they will mislead you from the path leading in the direction of Allah. These people follow conjecture and speculation and are guided by their presumptions. Contrary to this:

Your Rabb knows best who strays from His path: He knows best who they are that receive His guidance. (6:117)

The only criteria for right and wrong, *Haqq* and *Batil*, is the guidance of Allah – this is that guidance about which it was proclaimed to mankind:

...whosoever follows My guidance will not lose his way, nor fall into misery. (20:123)

Whoever follows My guidance will neither divert from the correct path, nor by suffering from heart-rending hardships will he be deprived of bounties.

1.78 Those Who Sell *Madhab* Clothed as Deen

We have seen at the beginning that when two things are mixed together in such a way that it is no longer possible to separate them, this is also called misguidance as already stated (see verse 1:3). When the Deen of Allah, communicated by the *Anbiya*, converts into religion, then this same state of the mixing of *Haqq* and *Batil* is produced: these become intertwined with each other in such a way that never mind separating them, even their identification becomes problematic. Then like a fraudulent milkman who sells milk mixed with water as pure milk, those involved in religion as a business sell the self-created commercial product of religion by branding it as the pure product of Deen and receive very great remittances for this. These are the ones about whom it is stated:

But there are, among men, those who purchase idle tales, without knowledge, to mislead from the path of Allah and throw ridicule: for such there will be a humiliating penalty. (31:6)

These people keep the public deluded by their fabricated tales and fictional fables, so that they can keep them astray from the path of Allah. Though they are, in fact, uneducated, by presenting themselves as very great scholars they become the leaders of men, and they do all this for the sake of earning their bread. That self-created religion which they present in the garb of Deen is highly risible, the consequence being that the world considers the true Deen itself, which they relate to themselves, as a jest. The nation which plays such games with Deen sinks into a severely humiliating punishment.

Cast a general glance at the nations of the world and you will witness that the extent to which a nation is submerged in *Madhab*¹¹⁵, it will be ignorant and backward to that same degree. This is what Allah's punishment is. *Madhab* is the sum total of superstitions, and the natural consequence of superstition is backwardness and ruin.

1.79 Is *Rizq* (Sustenance) in Allah's Hand?

In the previous pages we had finished the explanation of *Maghdubi Alai'him* on this verse of the Quran (1:7) in which it is stated that the consequence of an unbalanced economic system is hell. In relation to misguidance, too, one such verse comes before us. In Surah *Yasin* it is stated:

And when they are told, 'Spend of the bounties with which Allah has provided you,' the Kafireen say to those who have Eimaan: 'Shall we then feed those whom, if Allah had so willed, He would have fed Himself? - You are in nothing but manifest error.'
(36:47)

When those people who have *Rizq* in excess of their needs¹¹⁶ are told to keep this surplus available for those who are in need of it, they say in reply, what kind of wrong path are you advising us to follow. Allah has kept the distribution of *Rizq* in His Own hand; those people who are poor and deprived are thus because of the *Masbe'at* of Allah. Allah Himself wishes them to remain in this condition. To now say that we should give them surplus *Rizq* to end their poverty and deprivation is equivalent to waging a war against Allah. If Allah wished, He would have provided them with *Rizq* Himself. The reply which is received in the Quran from Allah about this objection of theirs is, say to them, how blatantly misguided you are, Allah does not give *Rizq* directly to anyone. The distribution of *Rizq* is through the hands of the Islamic system, and that system in which this kind of class differentiation does not endure is shaped according to Allah's guidance. This is the path of those on whom there are Allah's blessings (details of these matters will appear later when the Quranic system of sustenance is discussed).

From the above discussion it is clear that when the Quran had taught this supplication to the *Jamaat e Momineen*, that we should not tread on the path of

¹¹⁵ The word used for religion is *Madhab*. This word does not appear in the Quran. In Arabic it means a path. (Ed)

¹¹⁶ This is the characteristic of the capitalist system in which excess wealth accumulates in the hands of the few. (Ed)

those people who are *Da'Leen* (losing direction), what it meant by this. It is on this basis that it instructed:

...nor follow the vain desires of people who went wrong in times gone by – who misled many and strayed themselves from the straight path. (5:77)

Do not follow the desires of those former peoples who went astray themselves and also misguided others, and in this way both the leaders and followers went astray from the straight and balanced path leading to Allah.

1.80 These are Not Some Specific Nations

It is also obvious from the above that by *Maghdubi Alai'hi* and *Da'Leen* are not meant some specific nations – their application will be to all those nations which were deprived of Allah's *Naima* due to treading on the wrong path, and in this way sank into a hell of destruction and ruin, whether it was nations in the era before the descent of the Quran, or of nations of that time, or of nations yet to come till the Last Day. But among us it is commonly understood and taught that by *Maghdubi Alai'hi* is meant the nation of the Jews, and by *Da'Leen* is meant the Christians. In this way we have deceived ourselves that condemned and misguided nations are other nations, we are not to be counted among them. Not only this, we have in fact divided the whole of the Quran into different categories in this way, so that wherever there is mention of destructions and devastations, by declaring that this is about Jews, this is about Christians, this is about the pagans of Makkah, this is about the *Kuffar* of Arabia, etc., etc. we become deceived ourselves and remain so. They are all destined for hell, whereas *Jannat* has been prepared solely for us. But realities cannot be altered through self-deception. The only way that we can emerge from this self-deception is by declaring Allah's Book to be a criterion, and then seeing and understanding and evaluating whether we are to be counted among the group who are blessed, or in the group of those who are condemned and misguided?

1.81 Summary of Chapter 1

You will have seen that at the beginning of each book there is a foreword or a preface. The purpose of this is to introduce the subject or contents of the book. The most suitable foreword or preface is that which is extremely concise, yet it

demonstrates this fact in comprehensive words regarding the purpose and objective of the book.

Surah *Al-Fateha* is called *Fateha Al-Kitab*, the meaning of which is that this Surah is the preface or introduction of *Al-Kitab* i.e. the Quran. If we look at its succinctness, then this Surah consists of seven verses, and the verses are also so brief that they consist of a few words. But the state of its comprehensiveness is such that the fundamental teaching of the Quran and the essence of the system of Deen has been compressed into it, and appears in such a way as if the whole of the sky is being reflected in the pupil of the eye. This is glaring evidence of the marvel and miracle of the Quran.

At the beginning of Surah *Al-Fateha* the words *Bismillah Hirrah-ma Nirra'beem* come before us. If these are referred to Allah (i.e. if Allah Himself is considered to be addressing us), its meaning will be that this Book has been sent down so that the responsibility for the nourishment of mankind which Allah had taken on Himself, becomes fulfilled – this nourishment was not possible without the guidance of *Wabi*.

And if it is referred to human beings (i.e. it is understood that Allah has given this teaching to human beings), then this will mean that every *Momin* accepts and announces that the purpose of the programme which I am taking into my hand is that the attributes of *Rahmaniyat* and *Rabeemiyat* of Allah become manifested to all.

After this Surah *Al-Fateha* comes before us. I was puzzling over appropriate words and an explanation for its summary, when I saw that the meaning which I have written in explanation for it in the *Mafboom ul Quran*¹¹⁷ is the most suitable summary for this. This is why I consider it appropriate to present it here, as follows:

When man reflects on the organization and administration of this system of the universe, then this truth becomes unveiled and appears before him how everything in it continuously receives the means of nourishment without any recompense or payment, and from which it reaches its point of completion from its starting point, progressively under normal circumstances, and if need be through emergent evolution. On observing this astounding system of sustenance (*Rabubiyat*), spontaneous words of appreciation and admiration appear on the lips of every man of vision, and he exclaims involuntarily, 'O our *Rabb*, You have

¹¹⁷ Exposition of the Quran compiled by the author in Urdu. An English version is available at www.Parvez.tv. (Ed)

neither created any of the things in the universe without purpose, nor for a destructive outcome' (3:190-191). These are those men of knowledge and conviction who are the ones who truly do *Hamd* (appreciation) in earnest of Allah (9:112). They are the ones who are called *Ulema* (scholars) (35:27-28).

For the completion of this programme of Allah, it is essential that those tyrannical forces which are impediments in the path of nourishment of others should be removed from the path – this is the first step of *Hamde'at*¹¹⁸ (6:45).

The consequence of removing these tyrannical forces from the path will be that such a system will become established in which a human being will neither be dependent on another man, nor under his rule. In this the decisions of all matters will be according to the laws of Allah (17:111, 43:84, 82:18-19). This is the system which must finally overcome all systems of life which are devised by men (9:33).

This system will become shaped at the hands of those individuals who will proclaim this great reality and will certify this proclamation in practical terms, that 'other than Allah we do not accept the sovereignty and obedience of anyone else, nor do we seek aid from any non-Allah system' (3:79, 12:40). The practical application of this is obedience to the commands and principles of His supreme Book (the Quran) (5:44-48).

When these individuals (*Jamaat e Momineen*) step forward in the journey of life, these beautiful wishes and pious desires appear on their lips as supplications that, 'O Allah, may the straight and harmoniously balanced path of life which guides us towards our desired objective without fear and grief emerge distinctly in front of us'.

In other words, that path by treading on which obedient nations from the past embraced bounties and successes of life. As a result of this, by harnessing the forces of the universe, they achieved a distinguished position among their fellow nations (2:47, 31:20).

As long as these nations kept treading on the path ordained by You, they continued to benefit from the bounties of life. When an alteration occurred in their ideology of life, these bounties became snatched from them (8:53) and they became humiliated and disgraced in the world (2:61, 7:152). Their pastures of efforts and deeds burned and were reduced to a heap of ashes, and because the right path had become obscured from their eyes, their caravan of life remained lost in a maze of speculations and conjectures. Sometimes with eyes shut they

¹¹⁸ *Hamde'at* is from the word *Hamd*. Here it means that in order to fully appreciate the creation of Allah, the Divine system needs to be established in the light of *Wabi* in the human world. (Ed)

kept pursuing the antiquated ways of their forefathers (37:69-71) and sometimes they made their own desires as their guide (45:23). When they became hopeless due to being lost in the convolutions of this journey devoid of a destination, they deceived themselves by asserting that it was never the Will of Allah to show us the right path (6:149).

O Allah, we beseech You to enable us to follow the path prescribed by You, so that our end is not also like that of those who bear a scorched burden. Because we know that no one can show the right path to a nation which turns its face away from Your guidance (61:5). At the same time, we also know that this path can only appear to those who strive to seek it (29:69). We also ask You to grant us the ability to make this sustained endeavour.

2 CHAPTER 2 – Surah *Al-Baqarah* (Verses 2:1-5)

2.1 Background

A little further on in this Surah, addressing Rasul-ullah, the Quran has stated:

When My servants ask you concerning Me, I am indeed close to them: I listen to the supplication of every suppliant when he calls on Me: let them also, with a will, listen to My call, and have Eimaan in Me: that they may walk in the right direction.
(2:186)

O Rasull! When My servants ask you about Me, say to them that I am very near to them; whenever some caller calls Me, I answer His call. Hence, they should also listen with the ears of their heart to whatever I say to them in response to their call, and they should maintain conviction in its truth, so that they can obtain correct guidance in the journey of life.

Regarding ‘supplication’ to Allah, a brief summary has been given in Surah *Al-Fateha* in verse (1:4). Further details will be covered at their respective places. But this much is crystal clear (and it is also our personal experience and observation) that when we pray to Allah for the accomplishment of some objective, then we do not get a direct answer from Him. Therefore, the meaning of what He has stated here that ‘I answer the call of every caller’, is something else. This can be understood by an example. An individual is engaged on a journey to reach a particular destination. On the way a crossroad appears, from where he cannot figure out which path out of these two will lead to his intended destination. At that point he is in need of discovering the correct path from someone who knows this. If he does not do this and he steps in the wrong direction, then not only will he not reach his intended destination, all his time and energy will go to waste. In the journey of life man encounters (both as an individual and collectively) crossroads at every step – the meaning of ‘crossroads’ is that in every matter there is more than one possibility facing him out of which he can only select one at any one time. More than one possibility only presents before man, because he has been created as a possessor of choice and intent. Animals never have more than one possibility in front of them because they have not been given this ability of choice and intent. This question never arises before a goat whether to eat grass or meat – there is only one path or decision for it, and that is inherent within its nature (*Fitrat*). Therefore it does not require any external guidance. Only man has

this requirement. This was that very requirement for which, in the previous Surah (*Al-Fateha*), he called to Allah and beseeched:

Show us the straight and balanced path. (1:5)

Allah answered by saying that We have heard your call, and its answer is:

*This is the Book; in it is guidance sure, without doubt, to those who are righteous
(Muttaqeen). (2:2)*

You will obtain this guidance in this Book (guidebook). We have pointed out signs for the right and wrong paths in a clear and explanatory manner in this (2:256) – this is the answer to your call, and this is how your supplication will be acknowledged. This is the connection of this Surah with the previous Surah.

2.2 (2:1) *Alif-Laam-Meem (A-L-M)*

In the beginning of this Surah (and some other Surahs) these kinds of letters of the alphabet appear which cannot be called words. Though every word is in fact a compilation of letters, in the Arabic language the root of every word is in the letters. But it is letters that join together to make a word, and the word provides its assigned meanings. But these letters (which have been noted above) do not form words, they remain merely as letters; and they are also read as individual letters e.g. *A-L-M* will not be read as *Alm*, it will be read separately as *A-L-M* (*Alif-Lam-Meem*). As individual letters, these are termed as *Muqatta'at*¹¹⁹ i.e. letters which are cut off. In connection with the meaning of these letters (from the earliest times till today), so much has been written that with these countless analyses this dream itself has become confused. We do not wish to enter into this in detail. Whatever we have understood according to our vision, we consider it appropriate to present this briefly in a few words.

2.3 *Muqatta'at (Acronyms)*

In the English language that which are called abbreviations are letters taken from different words which are written and read separately, for example, R.S.V.P., P.S., e.g., etc. This was customary among Arabs as well, and not only among Arabs,

¹¹⁹ *Muqatta'at* – this means cut off alphabets. (Ed)

this is also found in the Hebrew language. Since the Quran was revealed in the Arabic language, therefore the same style of explanation has been adopted here as well (though this is another matter that this style of the Quran is in itself extraordinary). In following their style of expression, some *Muqatta'at* of words have appeared in the Quran. Since this style was commonplace among them, it is nowhere to be found in the Quran that they ever questioned what is the purpose of these abbreviations (though many questions which were asked by them are noted in the Quran); they knew what this meant.

As far as my insight guides me, these are letters taken from words (barring a few) relating to the Being of Allah, or His attributes (*Al-Asma'al-Husna*). For example, in *Alif-Lam-Meem*, *Alif* is for Allah, *Lam* is for *Aleem* (All Knowing) and *Meem* is for *Hakeem* (All Wise). It is not essential for these that they should be the very first letters of these words. For ascertaining their meaning, any letters from these words can be taken. The Quran has also made provision for the aesthetic proclivities of man from the aspect of phonetics, and (my refined sentiments point to this) that in the selection of these letters, this aspect has also been catered for. In any event, this is that style according to which I have ascertained the meanings of these abbreviated letters in *Mafboom ul Quran*. From this aspect, the meaning of *Alif-Lam-Meem* will be:

Allah, All Knowing, All Wise has decreed... (2:1)

2.4 *Zali-Kal-Kitabu La Raiba Fee-hi*¹²⁰

The Quran has proclaimed itself as being *Al-Kitab*. The root of this word is K-T-B, whose basic meanings are to give a command or to declare something as essential e.g. it is stated in the Quran:

...fasting (Siyam) is prescribed to you... (2:183)

Fighting (according to need) is prescribed upon you... (2:216)

It should be made clear that when a decree or command is eternal and immutable, it is declared to be a law. The commandments which have been revealed in the Quran are both eternal and immutable. This is why they are called laws in general

¹²⁰ *Zali-Kal-Kitabu La Raiba Fee-hi* - commonly translated as 'This is the book in which there is no doubt...' (2:2). (Ed)

terminology (though the word law itself does not appear in the Quran).¹²¹ The Quran has used the word *Kitab* with these very meanings e.g. in Surah *An-Nisa* firstly it is described in detail which relations are *Haram* for you according to Allah's law, and after that it is declared:

...this is the law of Allah for you...(4:24)

In the same way, it is stated about the Quran itself:

There are well established laws in it. (98:3)

Among Arabs when dispersed parchments were amalgamated, then at that time it would be called a book, and since dispersed ideas are preserved by writing these down in one place, that is why the meaning of *Kataba* is 'he wrote'. Therefore, *Kitab* was the name given to those written pages which were compiled together. Allah declares about the Quran:

By a Book inscribed, in a scroll unfolded. (52:2-3)

Arabs used to remove the skin of a deer and convert it into a form of parchment: this was called *Riqa*. Those writings which were meant to be preserved were written on them, and when these written parchments were amalgamated then it was called a book. As far as the scribes of *Wabi* are concerned, there is evidence available within the Quran itself that they were very honourable and trustworthy (80:15-16). It is obvious from this that the Quran was a Book written and compiled on parchments of *Riq* in Rasul-ullah's own time. That which is averred that the Quran was not gathered and compiled during the time of Rasul-ullah, but instead its assembly was performed later on with the help of dispersed slates, bones, and leaves during the era of Abu Bakr Siddique, Umar or Uthman¹²², is not correct. The evidence of its being a fully compiled Book is present within the Quran itself. After Surah *Al-Fateha* it is called a Book from the very beginning – in fact, according to Mufti Muhammed Abdu'hu it is *Kitab-un* (book), meaning it is *Maktub-un* - this is a noun for those things which are written down. And the wisdom in referring to it as 'This is the Book' is that Rasul-ullah had only given

¹²¹ We will explain later that when the word law is used for some particular principle, then wherever this principle has this character that it is immutable and eternal, this will also mean that by acting according to it a particular outcome will ensue and will always be the same, just as happens with the laws of nature. From this aspect the definition of law is given as: if – then – always i.e. if such and such is done, then its consequence will be such and such, and will always be the same. This is the same characteristic as that of the Quranic laws.

¹²² The first three Caliphs of the Islamic period after the death of Rasul-ullah. (Ed)

the direction to write the Quran down; there was no command to write down anything other than the Quran.¹²³ Therefore the meaning of *Zali-Kal-Kitabu* is:

You had called out to Us and said that you wish to be guided towards that straight and balanced path which could take you to the intended destination. You will obtain this guidance in this Book.

By calling it *Al-Kitab* it has been made distinct and distinguished from all other books of the world, and by this is meant *Al-Quran*.

2.5 *La Raiba Fee-hi* (there is no ‘doubt’ in it)

The first characteristic of this Book is informed to be that there is no *Raib* of any kind in it. *Raib* is commonly translated as doubt (*Shakke*). But *Shakke* itself is an Arabic word and the Quran has used this also – in fact, at one place it has stated *Shakke’in Mureeb’in* (in suspicious doubt) (34:54). But it is vital to find out what the difference is between *Shakke* and *Raib*, and why did the Quran use the word *Raib* in this verse?

2.6 Synonyms

Every language of the world contains synonyms i.e. such words which have similar meanings. As far as the number of synonyms is concerned, no other language in the world can compete with the Arabic language. While carrying out a comparative study of different languages, Dr. Bucke¹²⁴ has quoted from the famous writer, Max Muller, that in the era when Sanskrit was a living language, there were thirty-five words in it for the goddess *Agni* (Fire), and thirty-seven words for the god *Suriya* (Sun). But in the Arabic language there are, for example, two hundred for a snake, five hundred for a lion, one thousand for a sword, and 5744 words about a camel. From this you can gauge the synonyms in the Arabic language. But despite this abundance of synonyms, there are no two words in this language whose meanings are exactly the same. There is always a fine difference in the meanings of these synonyms, and at times this fine difference later assumes great importance.

¹²³ *Tafsir Al-Minar*, Volume I, p. 123

¹²⁴ Richard Maurice Bucke, *Cosmic Consciousness*, pp 30-31

2.7 *Raib and Shakk*

The correct meanings of the synonyms which the Quran has used can only be understood when we bear in mind this fine difference in meaning. The difference between *Raib* and *Shakk* can be understood through the following example. An individual tells you that I have seen a line on the ground at a certain place from which it appears that it is the outline of a snake. You say that I have a *Shakk* about this, a snake cannot be in that place. You will note that this *Shakk* is related to your mind, nothing more than this. On the other hand, in the darkness of night you become aware of a rustling noise in your room, from which a *Shakk* arises in your mind that this may be a snake. It is obvious that you will become apprehensive as a result, and until this *Shakk* of yours is not dispelled, you cannot sleep in peace. For this kind of *Shakk* the word *Raib* is used i.e. such a *Shakk* as a result of which a psychological predicament and inner anguish is triggered, due to which unease is created in your heart. In other words, the effect of the word *Shakk* is confined to your mind and observation, and the consequence of *Raib* causes distress to the heart over and above the mental *Shakk*.¹²⁵

The word *Raib* has been used in Surah *At-Tauba* in such a way that this meaning of its becomes clearly evident. The hypocrites (*Munafiqeen*) constructed a mosque in Medina. From this the intention in their hearts was actually to create dissension among Muslims, but outwardly they professed that this is constructed in the cause of Allah. Allah's *Wahi* tore apart the veil of this hypocrisy (*Munafaqat*) of theirs and Rasul-ullah was instructed to not even step into this mosque. What the state of the hearts of these hypocrites would have been from this is obvious. Describing this, the Quran has declared:

The foundation of those who so build (this mosque) is never free from suspicion and shakiness (Raiba-tun) in their hearts, until their hearts are cut to pieces... (9:110)

In other words, this building which they have constructed will continue to remain as a cause for the chastisement of their hearts (*Raib*) until their hearts are shattered into pieces. From this the meaning of *Raib* becomes clear. Hence, when it is said about Allah's Book that there is no *Raib* in it (*La Raiba Fee-hi*), its meaning will be that there is nothing in it which is doubtful and uncertain. From it all those doubts and suspicions arising in the human mind, which are caused due to not possessing

¹²⁵ There is no doubt in this that synonyms are sometimes used interchangeably, but generally this kind of difference in their basic meanings is acknowledged.

correct knowledge of the facts, will be removed. And along with this, those psychological distresses and torments of the heart will also be alleviated, which are created by these doubts (pl. *Shakkeok*) from which the human heart becomes influenced. Both mental peace and contentment of the heart will be achieved from this Book. Have you observed how with the use of one word (*Raib*) the Quran has wrapped both perception and emotions in its fold!

2.8 *Hud'al-Lil Muttaqeen*¹²⁶ (2:2)

After stating the fundamental characteristic (*La Raiba Fee-hi*) of this great Book, its cardinal objective is stated to be *Hud'al-Lil Muttaqeen*. The meaning of guidance (*Hadayat*) has been explained in Surah *Al-Fateba* (1:5). As was stated there, its meanings are of such a guidance which emerges and becomes manifestly clear before us. It was also clarified there that the need for guidance only arises for the one who feels this need or can only benefit the one who decides to go to some place and for which he is then willing to embark on a journey. What benefit can guidance give to the one who does not even wish to go anywhere? As was illustrated there via an example, if you keep studying the railway timetable sitting at home – not only studying it, but keep analysing each and every word of it, you will reap no benefit from this. Only the one who possesses the desire to set out on a journey will benefit from this. But for a journey there is another precaution required and its explanation is given by the word *Muttaqeen*.

Among us a 'pious *Muttaqee*' is termed as one who is not just an ordinary type of Muslim, but who holds a higher status in religious practices – such a status which, you could say, could be considered as the ultimate stage in God worship. If it is said regarding someone that he is a very pious *Muttaqee*, then it is felt that nothing more needs to be said about him. From the viewpoint of this meaning an objection is commonly raised that the need for guidance is for the one who is setting out on a journey or forgets the direction. The individual who is already treading on the right path, in fact you could say that he has already reached his intended destination, what need does he have for guidance? (In other words, the need for guidance will be for those who are astray; what need do *Muttaqeen* have for it?) As noted earlier, this objection arises due to not having the correct Quranic meaning of this word in front of one.

¹²⁶ Guidance for those who wish to be righteous. (Ed)

2.9 The Fundamental Meaning of *Taqwa*

Taqwa and *Muttaqeen* are very comprehensive terms of the Quran. The root of these words is *Wa-Q-Y* whose basic meaning can be understood through an example. The garments of the Arabs are very loose and quite wide and long. One of them inquired what is it that is known as *Taqwa*. In reply it was said that when you have to pass along such a path which has thorny bushes on both sides, how will you negotiate this passage? He said that I will gather my garment sometimes on one side so that it does not become entangled in some bush, and sometimes on the other side, and in this way, protecting myself from these thorny bushes, will advance safely through this passage. He was told that this is what is termed as *Taqwa*. Hence the basic meaning of this root (*Wa-Q-Y*) is to protect something, saving it from harmful and troublesome things, and to meticulously observe correct measures for this purpose. Therefore *Muttaqeen* will be those travelers who hold fast to the desire and determination to reach their destination whilst keeping themselves protected from the hazards of their journey. Hence, the first condition to obtain benefit from this great Book will be that man should wish to travel on the paths of life practically, and not wish to remain sitting at home. And the second condition is that he wishes to travel on the secure paths of life, and for this aim he desires to become aware of the means and methods to protect himself from the hazards on the journey. This matter can also be understood through an example. An individual wishes to dive into a river; you tell him that the water is very deep here, do not jump here, you will drown. If he wishes to avoid the danger of being drowned, he will take advantage of this guidance of yours, but if he wishes to dive into the river with the intention of committing suicide, then it is irrelevant whether you make him aware of this or not. He will jump in without hesitation. From this the difference between these two types of journeyers on the path of life becomes clear. The Quranic explanation of this will come before us further on after a few verses. Therefore, *Muttaqeen* are those who maintain the desire to keep themselves protected from the dangerous abysses on the path, and for this they are observant of this guidance which they obtain from this Book.

2.10 *Taqwa* of the Human Self

There are certain things in which, if we put some other thing, it then remains fully protected; these are called preservatives. From this root (*Wa-Q-Y*), the word *Wi-Qaya-Tun* is derived. The payoff of Quranic teaching and guidance is the development and growth of the human self in such a way that it can both live life

in the world in a correct and balanced way, and along with this become so strengthened that it can become capable of traversing the next evolutionary stages of life (the life of the hereafter). It is stated in the Quran about the human self that:

And its enlightenment as to its wrong and its right. (91:8)

Both kinds of possibilities have been kept within it i.e. the possibility of disintegration (*Fajur*) and also the possibility of becoming protected and strengthened (integration). The word *Taqwa* has been used for its remaining protected and strengthened; the meaning of this word becomes further clarified from this.

Words like *Taqwa* and *Muttaqeen* etc. frequently appear in the Quran from the beginning till the end, and it has explained with great clarity what the characteristics of *Muttaqeen* are, and what the outcomes and fruits of these characteristics are. At this point we consider it necessary to mention only a few of their characteristics which in our opinion hold a fundamental status. As has been said at the start, among us the words *Muttaqee* and piety are mentioned together, and the meaning of *Muttaqee* itself is taken to mean being pious. A very profound concept is contained in this word ‘pious’. Whether it is the monasticism of Christianity, or the *Vedant* of Hinduism, the temples of the Zoroastrians, or the *Nirvana* of Buddhism, the root ideology of all of these is that the physical world is worthy of rejection and the one who is engrossed in worldly attractions cannot acquire nearness to God. A basic condition for Divine nearness is to distance oneself from these attractions. After Deen became converted into ‘religion,’ when this same ideology of monasticism arrived among Muslims in the shape of mysticism, according to this concept they also declared the world and its attractions as worthy of rejection and abandoning them was declared to be a requirement for Divine nearness. It is from here that the term ‘pious’ became prevalent among us. This is why you will see that when it is said about some individual that he is very *Muttaqee* and pious, the picture which emerges in our mind about him is that he distances himself from worldly things which are attractive and alluring and views them with distaste.

2.11 The Characteristics of *Muttaqeen*

This concept is the opposite of the Quranic meaning of *Muttaqee*. It is stated in Surah *Yunus* about *Muttaqeen*:

It is He Who has made the sun to be a shining glory and the moon to be a light and measured out stages for it; that you might know the number of years and the count (of time). Nowise did Allah create this but in truth. (Thus) does He explain His signs in detail, for those who understand. Verily, in the alternation of the night and the day, and in all that Allah has created, in the heavens and the earth, are signs for those who have Taqwa. (10:5-6)

From this just consider that, as far as this material universe is concerned, what the status of *Muttaqeen* will be - those who reason and reflect on this whole universe and who harness the forces of nature (as will be discussed further on).

From this another question will arise that every one of those nations which acquires knowledge of the laws of nature can harness the forces of nature – there is no distinction here either between *Momin* and *Kafir*. Today, atheistic European nations have forged far ahead in this matter: will these then be called *Muttaqeen* in the terminology of the Quran – not at all, to think this is wrong. And the reason for this error is that by deducing the meaning of some verse of the Quran, we try to jump to some conclusion. The correct procedure for reaching these conclusions is to keep in front all those places in the Quran where this subject matter has been discussed (this is called cross referencing¹²⁷ of verses).

The Quran has called human emotions as *Shaitan* when these are in rebellion against Allah's laws by becoming free from the constraints of *Wahi*, and has called those people as *Momineen* who spend their life in accordance with the limits defined by *Wahi*. In this connection it also demonstrates the meaning of *Taqwa* when it states:

Those who have Taqwa, when a thought of evil from Shaitan assaults them, bring Allah to remembrance, when lo! they see clearly. (7:201)

Momineen are those who never deliberately allow rebellious emotions and desires (*Shaitan*) to overwhelm them; but if it sometimes ever happens that this kind of wandering thought enters their heart, they immediately bring Allah's laws to mind; as a consequence of this, their eyes are immediately opened and their vision is enlightened through which they recognise that this is an *Ibleesi* deception, and they immediately shake it off from their field of vision. The Quran states that such people are called *Muttaqee*. From these two verses at least, this meaning has come before us that *Muttaqee* are those who, having harnessed the forces of nature, utilise them according to Allah's *Wahi*. And if any thought against it ever arises

¹²⁷ The term used by the author is *Tasreef-ul-Ayat* i.e. looking at all the verses (by cross referencing) related to a subject matter to arrive at a correct conclusion taking into account the overall guidance of the Quran. See verse (6:105). (Ed)

by chance in their heart, they immediately push it away and rid themselves of it. Such were those dangerous places which were to appear at various junctures on their path – those who desire and determine to pass through these places carefully and securely are the ones who have been called *Muttaqee*. Based on this, the meaning of these few words of the initial verse of Surah *Al-Baqarah* (2:2) is:

You had called Us and said that you should be given correct guidance to traverse the journey of life. You will obtain this guidance in this Book, which will remove the thorns of doubts and suspicion from your mind and will also purge the psychological torments and distresses from your hearts. But only those people will be able to benefit from this guidance who are determined to go on this journey, and who desire that by remaining protected from all the dangerous chasms along the journey, they reach the intended destination.

2.12 *Alla'zeena Yu'mi-nuna bil Ghaib*¹²⁸ (2:3)

At this point the Quran uses the term *Muttaqeen* and then explains this term according to its unique style. It defines who are the people designated as being *Muttaqeen* and what their distinctive characteristics are. It is stated that these are the people:

Who have Eimaan in the unseen... (2:3)

The first word in this is *Eimaan* and this is that basis on which the whole structure of Deen becomes raised. There will hardly be a page of the Quran on which this word has not been mentioned in one form or another. If it is present, then there is Islam; if it is not present, then there is no Islam either. But this is our irony, that the level of importance which this term or concept possesses, the prevalent wrong meaning has taken us that much further away from Islam. An explanation of this will appear before us a bit further on. Firstly, we should understand the linguistic or basic meanings of this word.

2.13 Meanings of *Eimaan*

¹²⁸ *Alla-zeena Yu'mi-nuna bil Ghaib* – this translates as ‘Those who have *Eimaan* in the unseen’. The word *Ghaib* is used for ‘unseen’ and is explained later. (Ed)

The root of Eimaan is *A-M-N*, and as is known, *Amn* means fearlessness, contentment, or the state of being protected from dangers. *Amana* means to make someone worry free and contented, giving peace to another, taking the responsibility to protect him upon yourself. Among Arabs the she-camel which was trustworthy because of her strength and nature, and about whom there was the assurance that she will not become weak from a sustained journey and will not trip and fall on the way, was called *Naqat-un Amun'un*. Hence, *Momin-un* will mean the one who is in a state of peace and contentment himself, and also gives assurance of peace to others; and by trusting whom, man can become free of worry and contented. One attribute of Allah Himself is that of *Al-Momin* (59:23), which means the one responsible for the peace of the universe.

When *Amana* is followed by (*L* i.e. *Lam*) it means to accept some matter. And when it is followed by (*B* i.e. *Ba*) then it means to accept *Eimaan* as stated in this verse:

... all have Eimaan in Allah... (2:285)

This is that *Eimaan* which is the foundation on which the whole structure of Deen is established, and its wrong meaning becomes the cause for countless complications. In the English language it is translated as faith, and faith means to accept something without evidence and logic, without knowledge and vision, without thinking and reflection, accepting without reasoning with eyes closed. And this kind of *Eimaan* is considered to be highly admirable. The greater the degree to which some individual accepts some matter without logic and reasoning, the greater his *Eimaan* is considered to be solid and unwavering. And this is the reason why intellect and *Eimaan* are considered to be the opposite of each other, and it is generally stated that we accept God without reasoning. This meaning of *Eimaan* is against its Quranic meaning. According to the Quran, *Eimaan* means to accept truth correctly based on knowledge and vision, logic and evidence, after thinking and reflection, with the full conviction of the heart and mind. This will be called conviction in the English language.

2.14 Momin and Intellect and Vision

The Quran has declared that *Momineen* are those people:

Those who, when they are admonished with the signs of their Rabb, droop not down at them as if they were deaf or blind. (25:73)

Even when the verses of Allah are presented to them, they do not bow before them as if deaf and blind. They do not accept these by shutting their eyes. This is the fundamental trait of a *Momin* according to the Quran. In another verse it is stated:

... Therefore, follow Allah's laws (Taqwa), O you men of understanding - who have accepted Eimaan... (65:10)

Here it is stated that only those who are men of knowledge and understanding accept *Eimaan*. In Surah *Al-Hajj* it is stated:

And that those on whom knowledge has been bestowed may learn that this (the Quran) is the truth from your Rabb, and that they may have Eimaan therein... (22:54)

So that those people who have knowledge in this matter that this Quran is an established reality from your Allah – here, also, *Eimaan* is conditionally linked to ‘knowledge’.¹²⁹

How much significance knowledge and intellect hold according to the Quran is a subject in its own right, which cannot be glossed over briefly; a detailed discussion will be given at its appropriate place. At this point in time, we wish to look at a few verses and move on.

2.14.1 Importance of Knowledge and Vision

(As has also been written under verse 7 in Surah *Al-Fateha*) it is stated in Surah *Al-A'raf*:

Many are the Jinns and men We have made for hell: they have hearts wherewith they understand not, eyes wherewith they see not, and ears wherewith they hear not. They are like cattle – nay, more misguided: for they are heedless. (7:179)

As you pass through the world, you will see such civilised and not so civilised people wandering about whose conduct will be of that kind as if these people are inhabitants of hell. Every individual will most certainly wish to know what are those people like whose conduct will demonstrate that they are destined for hell. It is stated that they are those people who, despite possessing the potential for understanding and reasoning, do not make use of understanding and reasoning;

¹²⁹ The next part of this illuminating verse is a reflection of a very great truth, but this is not the place for its elucidation. Here, we wish to remain focused on the subject under view.

who, though they possess eyes, do not make use of them to see; who, though they possess ears, do not make use of them to hear. These people are animals, not human beings, rather, even more heedless than animals, because animals at least act according to their instincts, whereas these people, despite being human beings, remain ignorant of their human potentials. At another place it is stated that the keepers of hell will ask those entering hell, what kind of crime was it that you committed as a result of which you are gripped in this severe punishment. In response, they will say that without going into details, we will only say that:

... 'Had we but listened or used our intelligence, we should not now be among the companions of the blazing fire!' (67:10)

If we had listened to the Divine invitation with attentive ears and had then made use of our intellect and reasoning, we would not have been in *Jahannum* today.

From these verses alone you can assess how much importance knowledge and intellect, reflection and reasoning hold according to the Quran. After this, can it even be conceived of that, according to the Quran, *Eimaan* will mean to accept some matter without knowledge and intellect and without reflection and reasoning? This concept is in reality a creation of mysticism, whose advice is to plug the ears, seal the lips, and shut the eyes. Among them the use of knowledge and intellect, reflection and evidence is '*Ibleesi Maslak*'. Their belief is that 'the first one to make use of intellect and reasoning was *Iblees*'.

2.15 Destructions Caused by *Taqleedi Maslak*

As described in verse 7 of Surah *Al-Fateha*, the Quran strongly condemns *Taqleed* (blind obedience of forefathers). *Taqleed* means the acceptance with closed eyes of those beliefs and concepts which have been passed down through the generations from predecessors, and not to evaluate them using logic, evidence, intellect and reasoning. Regarding the *Kuffar*, the Quran states:

When it is said to them: 'Follow what Allah has revealed:' they reply: 'Nay! we shall follow the ways of our fathers': What! Even though their fathers were void of wisdom and guidance? (2:170)

These people will keep following in the path of their forefathers, even if their forefathers had never utilised intellect and reasoning, nor had gone forth in the light of Allah's guidance. Despite this, they will follow in their footsteps so that the hell into which they sank, they can also fall into it!

2.16 The Case of Muslims by Birth

This important question arises here, that those whom we call Muslims by birth, what is their status? This status of Muslims by birth is evident that they were born in the homes of Muslims, so they were called Muslims. If they had been born in the homes of Hindus, they would have been called Hindus. The former did not accept Islam through their choice and decision, nor did the latter adopt *Kufr* through their own choice. If you look at the Quran, it states throughout: *Allaẓeena Amanu* or *Yu'mi-nuna* i.e. those people who accept *Eimaan* or those who act like this. These are action (verb) statements, and a verb means to perform some action. Accordingly, *Eimaan* will only be his who accepts *Haqq* and truth with the full conviction of his heart and mind himself. There is no difference between being a Muslim by birth and the following of forefathers (*Maslak e Taqleed*). A child is called a Muslim due to birth because his parents are Muslims, so much so that if his father and mother are Sunni (for example), then he is called a Sunni Muslim; if they are Shia, then he is called a Shia Muslim – this is called *Maslak e Taqleed*.

From here an important question arises, that the Muslim nation which comes into existence in this way, what is its status? The Quran itself has clarified this. It calls it a Muslim nation overall i.e. members of Mohammad's Ummah and recognises them as being separate and distinct from non-Muslims. Even during the time of Rasul-ullah himself such a situation had arisen: the Muslims of the initial period¹³⁰ had accepted *Eimaan* after thinking and understanding, using their intellect and reasoning, therefore they are included among the category of true Quranic *Momineen*. When the glory and power of the Islamic State emerged in Medina, numerous Arab tribes bowed their heads before this government, and in this way, by entering the domain of Islam, began to consider themselves and call themselves *Momin*. The Quran admonished them, stating do not think or say this. In Surah *Al-Hujrat* it is declared:

The desert Arabs say, 'We have Eimaan.' Say, 'You have no Eimaan; but you (only) say, 'We have submitted our wills to Allah,' for not yet has Eimaan entered your hearts.' But if you obey Allah and His messenger, He will not belittle aught of your deeds: for Allah is All-Protecting, Raheem. (49:14)

Say to them that you have not accepted *Eimaan*, because *Eimaan* has not entered your hearts; simply by submitting to this State, you have become included in this nation. But this thought should not enter your hearts, what benefit have we

¹³⁰ They were called *Sababa Kabbar* – the Companions. (Ed)

reaped from accepting Islam. If you obey Allah and His Rasul, then you will get the recompense for your deeds just as *Momineen* do. Make endeavours to understand the truths of Islam, and in this way, when *Eimaan* enters your hearts, then at that time announce that you have become *Momin*. In this way, a line of clear demarcation has been drawn between those who accepted *Eimaan* after satisfying their hearts and minds, and those among them who are Muslims by birth, or those who have entered the domain of Islam because of some other reason. From the aspect of being part of the Muslim Ummah, both *Momin* and Muslim are citizens of one nation, but there will be a difference between them due to the degree of their *Eimaan*.

2.17 *Momin* and Muslim

Before proceeding, it is important to understand this fact that the Quran more or less uses the words *Momin* and Muslim with similar meanings. At times it gives preference to Muslim over *Momin*, from this perspective that a *Momin* accepts the truth, and a Muslim bows before it in practical terms and obeys it – from this respect, it also uses the words *Momin* and Muslim separately, for example:

For Muslim men and women, for Momin men and women. . .(33:35)

At another place it states:

Those who have Eimaan in our signs and are Muslims. (43:69)

In such places we can say that being a Muslim is an intrinsic trait of a *Momin* i.e. according to the Quranic meaning, a *Momin* is one who has *Eimaan* in the verses (signs) of Allah and obeys them, in other words, he is a *Momin* as well as a Muslim. This is the same state for a Muslim: that he is both a Muslim as well as a *Momin*. In other words (according to the Quranic meaning), a *Momin* is also a Muslim and a Muslim is also a *Momin* (the word *Mussalman* does not appear in the Quran). At this juncture the point we are trying to clarify is that the Quran declares Muslims as being members of Muhammad's Ummah i.e. it recognises them as a separate and distinct nation from non-Muslims.

But if they are not *Momin* according to the Quranic standard, then it does not include them in the category of *Momineen*, though it also addresses them as 'O those who have *Eimaan*'¹³¹. At various places in the Quran it is important to

¹³¹ 'Ya'ayyu Halla Zeena Ama'nu' – 'O those who have accepted *Eimaan*.' (Ed)

understand this difference, and bear it in mind that when does it mean a ‘Quranic *Momin*’, and when does it mean merely a traditional Muslim. Regarding the members of a ‘Muslim nation’ it is also important to understand that if any one among them (Muslims) denies the truth of even a single one of the matters of which the Quran has spoken, or also accepts some other *Wahi* after the Quran, then he can no longer remain a member of the Muslim nation (Muhammad’s Ummah).

Keeping this fact in mind, ponder on those verses in which the Quran, by addressing them as ‘*Ya’ayyu Halla Zeena Ama’nu*’, invites Muslims to accept *Eimaan*. For example, in Surah *An-Nisa* it is stated:

O you who have Eimaan! Have Eimaan in Allah and His messenger and the Book which He has sent to His messenger and the scripture which He sent to those before him ... (4:136) See also (57:28)

O *Momineen*! It is obvious here that this refers to the members of the Muslim nation. Acquire *Eimaan* in Allah and His messenger, and on that Book which Allah has sent down on His messenger, and on those Books which He has sent down before this. Note that the address is to ‘*Ya’ayyu Halla Zeena Ama’nu*’ and they are being told ‘*Aminu Billahi*’ i.e. you should accept *Eimaan* in Allah – saying to those who have *Eimaan* that you should accept *Eimaan* does not apparently seem to make sense, but when this fact which we have noted above is borne in mind, then this matter becomes easier to understand. In this regard, see also the following verse in which it is stated:

Those who have Eimaan (in the Quran), and those who follow the Jewish (scriptures), and the Christians and the Sabians – any who have Eimaan in Allah and the Last Day, and do Saleh deeds, shall have their reward with their Rabb; on them shall be no fear, nor shall they grieve. (2:62) See also (5:69)

We can see here that the way in which the Jews, Christians, and Sabians are invited to have *Eimaan*, similarly ‘*Alla Zeena Ama’nu*’ (those who call themselves Muslims) have also been told to accept *Eimaan*. It is obvious that this also means those Muslims who have not accepted *Eimaan* themselves but who are included in the nation of Muslims.

2.18 Demand of *Eimaan* from the People of the Book

Furthermore, Jews and Christians have also been asked here to have *Eimaan* in Allah and the hereafter, even though it is their claim that they believe both in

Allah and in the hereafter. It is plain from this that the Quran does not accept this *Eimaan* of theirs as being *Eimaan*, because *Eimaan* does not mean that some individual should simply say that I believe in Allah. *Eimaan* is only his who accepts Allah according to that concept which Allah has presented in the Quran, and this is why He has stated:

So if they have Eimaan as you have, they are indeed on the right path... (2:137)

If these people who call themselves believers in God accept *Eimaan* in the way that (O *Jamaat e Momineen*) you have accepted *Eimaan*, then it will be acknowledged that they do, in fact, have *Eimaan* in Allah.¹³²

2.19 Brahmo Samaji Movement

It seems appropriate at this point to also clarify the misunderstanding which transpires in reference to verse (2:62) referred to above. In the nineteenth century, a Hindu leader, Raja Ram Mohan Rai, from Bengal (combined India), set up a movement which was introduced with the name *Brahmo Samaj*. The foundation of this movement was on this ideology that among followers of the different religions, the claim of each one that truth and reality is only with them, and not in any other religion, is false, and the cause for their mutual differences and conflicts. Universal truths are present in all religions equally and by amalgamating these truths and accepting these as correct, this will lead to the eradication of all religious conflicts. This movement was called *Brahmo Samaj*.

For a period of time this movement remained well known, but it was not able to progress. Around 1931, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad¹³³ published the first volume of his famous *Tafsir, Tarjaman ul Quran*, and this ideology was repeated in it. He wrote in it:

1. Not only has Islam stated that there is truth in every religion but has clearly stated that all religions are true.
2. It has stated that the Deen ordained by Allah is only one – what is that true Deen? It teaches worship of one Allah and a life of virtuous deeds; whichever human being adopts the path of *Eimaan* and good deeds, salvation is for him, whether or not he enters your groups.

¹³² For a more detailed discussion refer to the book, *The Human Self and Allah*, by the author. (Ed)

¹³³ He was a political leader who held various positions within the Indian National Congress party and held the post of Education Minister of India from 1947 to 1958. (Ed)

3. It has proclaimed in clear words that the purpose of its invitation is no more than this - that all religions should gather together on their common and agreed truth.
4. It has stated that the essence of Deen (i.e. worship of one Allah and a life of pious conduct) is not the monopoly of a single group, such that other than this one, no other man has received it – this exists equally among all religions.¹³⁴

Maulana Azad had already achieved the distinguished status of a scholar of Deen and a *Mufasssir*¹³⁵ of the Quran among Muslims, and his writings and speeches had a profound impact on the hearts of the people, and this *Tafsir* of his had been long awaited.

Therefore, when this was published, it was well received, and admiration and praise arose for it from many different corners. But when I saw what type of *Brahmo Samaji Islam* was presented in it, and what consequences could ensue from its harmful effects, I wrote a detailed critique on it, which was published in a famous journal titled *Muarif*¹³⁶ in its January 1933 edition. This critique received a fair degree of affirmation from the scholarly class and voices became raised from various corners in opposition to the *Tafsir* of Maulana Azad. I had principally raised two points in it:

- (1) It will be correct to say that every founder of a ‘religion’ (*Nabi* or Rasul) received universal truths through *Wahi* equally, but it is wrong to say that all those truths still exist today in all religions equally. This is because that Deen which these *Anbiya* received in their own respective times does not exist in its original, true, and unadulterated form in any of these religions. This is only present and preserved in the Quran and:
- (2) This is the reason that the Quran invites all followers of religions to acquire *Eimaan* in the messengerhood of Rasul-ullah and in the Quran, and plainly declares that there is no path other than this to achieve emancipation and success.¹³⁷

After this the effect of this ideology of Maulana Azad began diminishing among Muslims but Hindus promoted it a great deal. So much so, that in June 1941 a conference of all religions was held at the site of Sholapur and its president Pandat Sunder Lal Jee boosted this ideology with the support of the *Tafsir* of Maulana

¹³⁴ *Tarjaman ul Quran*, Volume I, Edition 1947, pp 213-214, 189, explanatory note p. 266

¹³⁵ *Mufasssir* – the one who writes a *Tafsir* (exposition of the Quran). (Ed)

¹³⁶ Published by *Darul Musnifeen* (Azam Garh, India)

¹³⁷ This article of mine, *Kia Tamaam Mazhabab Yaksaan Hein?* (Are All Religions Equal?), is included in my collection of essays titled, *Firdaus Gum-Gashta?* (The Lost Paradise). (Ed)

Azad. And when (during the Pakistan movement) the greatest leader of Hindus, Mr. Gandhi, prepared a blueprint for a common education scheme for the whole country, this ideology was given special importance in it. By the grace of Allah, the credit for smashing that idol of poison and scheme for the ruination of Islam fell on me, and one article alone (published in the current issue of Tolu e Islam Journal) ended it all.¹³⁸

From these facts you can assess what intrigues used to take place to uproot Islam completely in (undivided) Hindustan. This was the inspiring motive in the demand for Pakistan, to protect Islam from such meddling and to establish it once again in the shape of a dynamic and vital system, which was only possible in its own free State. This was also the reason for my association with this movement - this was the demand of my *Eimaan* and requirement of Deen.

After this short interlude, let us return to the original subject.

2.20 *Laa* (Denial) and *Illa* (Excepting)¹³⁹

If we go into further detail, then understanding every single word of the Quran to be based on *Haqq* and truth is called *Eimaan*. If any one of the matters noted in it is not accepted as truth, or a doubt sets in regarding its being based on truth, then the *Eimaan* of such an individual does not remain as *Eimaan*.¹⁴⁰ But to illustrate it further, the Quran has declared five constituents as being part of *Eimaan* i.e. Allah, the hereafter, *Malaika*, the Books and *Anbiya* (2:177) and has declared the rejection of these, or any one of these, as *Kufr* (4:136). But as has been noted earlier, the meaning of having *Eimaan* in them will be *Eimaan* according to all those details, differentiations and characteristics which have been detailed about them in the Quran. If that *Eimaan* is not according to the Quranic concepts, then it will not be recognised.¹⁴¹

¹³⁸ This article was published with the title 'Wardha ki Taleemi Scheme', and after this thousands of copies of the pamphlet (in many languages) were distributed throughout India. As a result, this *Fitna* (trial) was effectively resolved.

¹³⁹ These are the meanings of these words, not literal translations, as will become clear later. (Ed)

¹⁴⁰ This statement only holds true if the translation of the Quran into any given language is pristine and free from human bias and contamination. (Ed)

¹⁴¹ This acceptance is not something external – it essentially means that the human self will not develop according to the Quranic values, and so will not be capable of benefitting from all those future evolutionary stages (of this life and the next life) which are intrinsically linked with Quranic *Eimaan* and righteous deeds. This individual will not be able to comprehend the significance of Deen and will be of no use in the establishment of this system in this world. (Ed)

In order to accept *Eimaan* with the total satisfaction of the heart and mind, the Quran has described this technique:

...whoever rejects evil (Taghut) and has Eimaan in Allah, has grasped the most trustworthy handhold, that never breaks... (2:256)

See in this verse how the condition of rejecting evil (*Kufr bil Taghut*) is considered essential before reaching *Eimaan* in Allah. Without going into details, *At-Taghut* can be understood as meaning every ideology, concept, belief, school of thought and *Maslak* which is against the Quran. Hence, in order to accept the Quranic truths, the foremost condition is that the mind should be cleansed and purified of all non-Quranic concepts and ideas. In this way, when the human mind has a clean slate, then the words and marks of *Eimaan* will be able to be imprinted on it. New writings cannot be inscribed on the slate which is already written on. This action of rejection and acceptance are declared to be two constituents of this *Kalma* (pronouncement), by the acceptance of which one then acquires *Eimaan* i.e. *La-Ilaha-Illa'Allah*. According to the first part of this *Kalma*, it is essential that man rejects every non-Divine god and after that accepts that God is Allah. Without this *Laa* part, the destination of *Illa* cannot be reached. Until the idols in the Kaaba are not turned out, 'Allah will not enter it' (metaphorically). When Allah has stated about the Quran:

Which none shall touch but those who are cleansed. (56:79)

By this it was meant that until the human mind is not purified and cleansed of non-Quranic beliefs, it cannot connect to the Quran. Its practical technique will be that through study, observation, experiment, knowledge, vision, reasoning and reflection, man should reach this reality that the beliefs and ideologies hatched by the human mind do not meet the criteria of *Haqq* and truth, therefore that these are not worthy of being accepted as a code of guidance.¹⁴² After this negating action, to acquire *Eimaan* in the Quranic truths using intellect and reasoning in the same way. He should accept *Eimaan* himself in this way and also invite others to acquire *Eimaan* in the same way. This is that *Maslak* (way) for the acceptance of which it was stated via the distinguished lips of Rasul-ullah:

Say you: 'This is my way: I do invite unto Allah – on evidence clear as the seeing with one's eyes – I and whoever follows me'... (12:108)

¹⁴² Whether these are from non-Muslims, or we have received them through inherited traditions, or we have accepted them by way of *Taqleed*.

This is the proclamation of Allah, and this is what is known as following the *Sunnat* of Rasul-ullah – inviting towards the Quran based on clear evidence.

2.21 Mutual Relations of *Momineen*

It has been said at the start that *Al-Momin* means the one who guarantees peace and security. As far as mutual relations among *Momineen* are concerned, there can be no doubt in their being guarantors of peace and security for each other. The Quran has declared them to be brothers of each other:

The Momineen are but a single brotherhood... (49:10)

Their characteristic is:

...compassionate amongst each other... (48:29)

And it has been clearly stated that:

If a man kills a Momin intentionally, his recompense is hell to abide therein forever: and the wrath and the curse of Allah are upon him, and a dreadful penalty is prepared for him. (4:93)

In our society the tradition is that when a *Momin* meets another *Momin*, he says to him *Assalamu Alaikum*¹⁴³, which means that he should assure him that he desires his peace and security and guarantees it. And in reply, the other should also give a guarantee of peace and security. Hence, for *Momineen* to be mutually responsible for the peace and security of each other is a fundamental condition of their being *Momin*.

As far as non-Muslims are concerned, the *Jamaat e Momineen* is also a guarantor of their peace and security. Relationships between nations of the world are established on the basis of mutual agreements. But in the Machiavellian politics of the modern era (secular), agreements can never be trusted. First of all, even that same government which has made a pact with another nation turns its back on its own agreement, and even if it does not do this, then the government succeeding it makes such a change in its constitution as a result of which the former pact automatically becomes null and void. In any case, under the present political system no nation can be secure from another nation in relation to peace

¹⁴³ *Assalamu Alaikum* – the greeting which Muslims exchange when they meet each other. It means ‘Wishing your peace and security’. (Ed)

and security. These same mutual suspicions become the cause for international conflicts and ultimately become a cause for wars.

2.22 Guarantee of Peace to Non-Muslims

But if there is such a nation whose constitution and code of laws is before the whole world, and in this constitution there is a guarantee that this nation will never deceive in any mutual agreement, and also this guarantee that new governments may come and go, but no government will ever bring about a change in this constitution – then just think how much at peace nations of the world will be from such a nation. The name of this nation is *Jamaat e Momineen* i.e. a nation which gives a guarantee of peace and security to the world. The immutability of the Quran for all times is such a trustworthy guarantee of international peace that no other nation of the world can produce any model like it.

2.23 The Rule of Law

From here another great reality comes before us. We have stated earlier that the kind of concept of Allah which the Quran has presented, there was (nor is) no similar concept present in any of the ‘world religions’. In them the concept of God was that of a ‘King’ who is not constrained by any rule or law. Whenever he wishes, he can give whatever kind of order he wants; never mind going against this order, no one dares even question why His Majesty has given such an order. His decisions keep altering from moment to moment according to his desires and will.

When the state of absolute authority of a ruling king possessing finite powers is such, then how can an Omnipotent Allah possessing infinite powers and sovereignty be constrained by any rule or law? He can state whatever He wishes; He can do whatever he wishes; no one can question Him, why did He say this and why did He do this!

This concept of God was being passed down as a common value according to every religion until the Quran arrived and refuted it. It declared that undoubtedly Allah is Omnipotent, but after the creation of the universe He has established such laws according to His absolute authority as a result of which this system of the universe is functioning with such beauty and harmony. Established such laws,

and together with this also stated that despite being Possessor of infinite power, We will not make any change in them.

Then like the immutable laws which Allah established in the outer universe, similar kinds of laws were also established for human life. These laws are preserved in the Quran – these are immutable, and are absolutely firm in their consequences. In other words, Allah’s words (laws in theory) are also immutable (6:116), and *Sunnat Allah* (laws in practice) are also immutable (33:62). This is what is called the Law of Requitul on which the whole structure of Deen is raised.¹⁴⁴

This is that unique concept of Allah which the Quran has presented and which is not found anywhere in the religions of the world i.e. instead of dictatorship, Allah as Guarantor of the rule of law. A law is defined as ‘If-Then-Always’ (as already stated) – ‘If you do this, then its consequence will be this, and will always be like this’. You will see in relation to the Quranic commandments that what has been stated is you should do such and such, so that such and such transpires – this is what is called a law in action. The one who has *Eimaan* in this Allah can declare with full confidence that ‘You keep working in your way, let me work in my way; the results themselves will show whose proclamation is true and whose is false’ (6:136). It is said that to test theoretical claims, the pragmatic test is a feature of modern times. Ponder on the Law of Requitul of the Quran, and just think whether the evaluating of claims by their results is a creation of the modern era, or the procedure presented by the Quran fourteen hundred years ago! Could it still be said after this that the Quran demands *Eimaan* in its proclamations without knowledge and reasoning and with eyes shut? Anyhow, let us proceed.

2.24 Reward and Punishment

The philosophy of reward and punishment is a topic in its own right which will be dealt with at its own place. At this point it will be enough to understand that whatever consequence is established of some deed according to a law, it cannot be declared to be a ‘punishment’ imposed from the outside. For example, the inevitable consequence of putting a finger into fire is pain and distress – this distress is not a punishment imposed from outside, this is the natural consequence of putting a finger into fire. You can understand this difference between a natural consequence, and one imposed from the outside for an action and its punishment,

¹⁴⁴ Some of this has been discussed under Surah *Al-Fateba*.

by another example. A master warns his servant that if you break any utensil again, I will beat you. And a doctor informs his patient that if you do not take precautions, the fever will return. Both are referring to the future and there is an aspect of pain in both. But what the master is saying is his order, and what the doctor is saying is a forecast about the natural consequence of an action. When the Quran declares about the different paths of individuals or nations that ‘They will suffer a severe punishment’ (etc.) this is not the order of a master - it is the prediction of the natural consequence of a wrong action which will appear in the future. The significance of ‘future’ will be discussed in the next part of the verse. This is that concept of Allah which the Quran presents.

The narrative began as (Allah had stated) you called upon Us and requested that for passing through the journey of life, you should receive guidance towards the right path. You will obtain this guidance in this *Al-Kitab* which will produce contentment in your hearts by removing the cognitive dissonances created by doubts and uncertainties, conjectures and speculations. But only those people will be able to benefit from this guidance, who desire to reach their intended destination by remaining protected from the treacherous pitfalls on this journey.

It will become evident from here that, even after this clarification, only the one who acquires the conviction that whatever is being said to him about this path is absolutely accurate and true, will be able to take a step forward on the journey. As long as he does not attain this conviction, he will not lift a footstep on this journey, he will never adopt this path. *Eimaan* is the name given to achieving this certainty about the future. But it is stated about this *Eimaan* that:

Who have Eimaan in the unseen (Ghaib)...(2:3)

The question is, what is the unseen? By translating *Eimaan* as faith, the difficulty which we have referred to earlier becomes even more severe when the unseen is added to it. The meaning generally taken of *Eimaan bil Ghaib* is ‘*Eimaan* in invisible Allah, or *Eimaan* in other such realities’. After this it is said that the Allah (or realities) in whom *Eimaan* in the unseen is accepted, what need can there be in that for the use of knowledge, intellect, reasoning and evidence, and reflection and understanding? Thus, true and firm *Eimaan* is only that which is accepted without proof and devoid of reasoning. As we have already seen, this concept is contrary to the concept presented by the Quran. It therefore becomes imperative that we should examine what the precise Quranic meaning of *Eimaan bil Ghaib* is.

The basic meaning of the word *Ghaib* (unseen) is something which is hidden from the eyes – the condition for this is that that thing or reality must definitely exist somewhere. Therefore, those things or realities will be described as *Ghaib* which, though they are definitely present somewhere, are concealed from human sight.

The Quran has elucidated this further by contrasting it with its antonym ‘*Shahadat*’. It is stated in it about Allah:

... Who knows both hidden (Ghaib) and open (Shahadat)...(59:22)

Though the basic meaning of *Mash’bud* is that the thing should be present before us, by extrapolating this meaning, those realities are also called *Mash’bud* which come into the domain of the human senses. This source of knowledge is called sense perception. If looked at it from this viewpoint, there will be different levels of *Ghaib* and *Shahood*, as in the following examples.

2.25 Forces of the External Universe

There are countless such things or forces in the universe which do not become manifest in any one era of human knowledge i.e. do not come within the domain of our sense perception. But when in the next era the sphere of human knowledge becomes broader and the level of its knowledge becomes higher, then many forces among these which were previously hidden (*Ghaib*), by becoming manifest, appear before us. For example, the atom and its immense energies, which were in existence in this world from the first day of the creation of the universe, but were concealed from human perception, have become manifestly evident in our times, or are becoming evident. With regard to providing proof of the evidence of its claims, the Quran states:

Soon will We show them Our signs in the furthest regions of the universe and in their own selves, until it becomes manifest to them that this is the truth... (41:53)

We will continue to gradually manifest the hidden signs in the universe and in the domain of the human self, until this matter becomes evident that whatever the Quran has stated is based on established truth. It should be made clear that the distinctions between *Ghaib* and *Shahadat* exist because of the limitations of human knowledge, otherwise there is nothing *Ghaib* in Allah’s knowledge – everything and every reality is evident (*Mash’bud*). When He states that Allah also Has knowledge of *Ghaib*, then this means those things, or knowledge of those realities, which are hidden from human eyes. What the Quran has said in this verse is that as human knowledge continues to advance further, the secrets of the universe will continue to become manifestly evident one by one, and they will provide evidence of this fact that the claim made in the Quran about this matter was based on truth. In this way, evident proof about every claim of the Quran will gradually manifest before mankind. Hence, to say that whatever could have been comprehended

about the proclamations and realities of the Quran has been comprehended in any one era of human knowledge, and that there can be neither any change or amendment, nor addition or deduction in its outcome, is contrary to human knowledge itself and against Quranic evidences. One aspect is guidance for human life and Quranic laws and values - the Quran has termed these as established facts (3:7); these are crystal clear and fixed. That is why these can be understood extremely well in any era. But the other aspect is the realities presented in the Quran which it has termed as metaphors (3:7) i.e. those abstract realities which can only be made to be understood using metaphors. It can never be said about these that any one era, or any one individual or individuals, have fully encompassed their meaning. Regarding the details and secrets of nature, it is the acknowledgement and declaration of scientists that in this matter 'the last word always has to be left for the last man'¹⁴⁵. I cannot comment about science, but about the Quranic realities it has to be admitted that their complete understanding has to be left to the last era of mankind.

Some realities are also such that it is simply not possible for them to come within the grasp of the human senses, e.g. the nature and form of the Being of Allah, or the states of life after death; when the Quran stated about Allah that:

No vision can grasp Him. But His grasp is over all vision... (6:103)

Human eyes cannot grasp Allah, but Divine knowledge has encompassed everything: this is what was intended to be communicated by this. So much so, that He has even stated:

... there is nothing whatever like unto Him... (42:11)

This then means that the nature and reality of the Being of Allah cannot be made to be understood through any example even, because whatever a thing may be, it will ultimately have to be perceptible, and the Being of Allah is beyond the limits of perception.¹⁴⁶

2.26 Beyond the Limits of Perception

¹⁴⁵ From *The Great Design*, p.52 (translated from the quote in Urdu from the book).

¹⁴⁶ This is the reason that the Quran has not demanded recognition of the Being of Allah; it has enjoined accepting Eimaan in Him. Recognition of the Being of Allah is simply not possible for man.

But this does not mean that reflection and reasoning cannot take place about these unseen and abstract realities either. Allah has termed the system of the universe and these elements and forces working within it as *Ayat Allah* (signs of Allah). *Ayat* means that kind of sign or symbol from which some information can be derived about something. Hence, things of nature and the system of the universe are such signs by reflecting and reasoning on which, the Being of Allah can be assessed from an intellectual point of view. How many abstract truths and realities are there in the universe (especially those related to metaphysics) for which efforts are made through intellect and reasoning to comprehend these. The life in the hereafter is totally related to metaphysical realities. In these verses of Surah *Al-Baqarah* it is stated:

...thus does Allah make clear to you His signs: in order that you may consider (their bearings on) this life and the hereafter... (2:219-220)

Have you seen that here, together with this world and the life of this world, emphasis has been placed on reflection and reasoning on the life of the hereafter also. Though we cannot understand the nature and reality of that life, we can understand the fact of its existence and its significance (in the light of the Quran) through the use of intellect and reasoning. From these explanations it is clear that these realities cannot appear before our eyes in tangible forms, but this aspect of *Eimaan bil Ghaib*¹⁴⁷ is also not beyond the bounds of knowledge and vision, reflection and wisdom.

2.27 Unseen Results

There is also another form of *Eimaan bil Ghaib*. A farmer has retained a small quantity of wheat seed which can be used for his and his family's sustenance. He lifts the sack of wheat seed and mixes it with the soil in his land. After this he rises every morning and works with all his might all day in this field and returns home at night empty handed. He does not do this for just one or two days – he does this continuously, day in, day out, for months. Those who are ignorant about this programme of his and its outcome, will surely call him insane, that this can only be the action of a madman that for months he strives with all his might all day long, and he does not achieve anything in return for it. The question is, why does he do this? What is his motive for doing this? The answer to this is very simple, and it is that although tangible results from his hard work are not apparent

¹⁴⁷ *Eimaan* in the unseen. (Ed)

for the time being, he has conviction that these same few seeds which he mixed in with the soil are one day going to enter his house in the form of many sacks filled with ripe wheat. To have *Eimaan* in the unseen results of some programme is also called *Eimaan bil Ghaib*.

2.28 Life of the Messenger Himself

It can at least be said about this farmer that he has seen the physical outcomes of this programme many times before. In this regard, he only required this much conviction that if this programme is acted on correctly, then its tangible results will inevitably materialise. But there are, of course, also such programmes which have to be initiated for the first time, for whose tangible results there is no example or model before us. In order to agree to act upon such a programme there can only be one motive, and that is to have complete trust in the truth of what the person who is putting forward this programme is saying. This is called *Eimaan bil Risalat* (*Eimaan* in messengerhood) and the evidence for its truth is in the past life of this person. When the Koresh of Arabia said in response to Rasul-ullah that the programme which you ask us to follow, and about whose bright outcomes you assure us with such confidence and insistence, how can we accept that it is correct and true. In reply Rasul-ullah said only one sentence and that is:

...A whole lifetime before this have I tarried amongst you: will you not then use your intellect? (10:16)

I am not a stranger amongst you, nor a newcomer, that you have no knowledge about my past. Before this I have spent my whole life amidst you. Can you not conclude from this whether I am truthful or a liar? The kind of life I have spent, can it be imagined that a person with this character and conduct can all of a sudden start telling such a big lie – this was stated by the messenger with extreme self-confidence, and not a single one of those who heard it refuted it. Allah's *Wahi* presents new programmes and these paths are also very challenging. In order to accept the message being given by the presenter of *Wahi* as being truthful, it is essential that we ourselves are convinced of his being truthful. This is called *Eimaan bil Risalat*.

But he never asks for his message to be accepted without evidence and reason either. For proof of the positive outcome of the system being presented by him, he presents the history of previous nations. He tells those he is addressing to pay attention to these evidences from history; from this the reality will become clearly evident before you that the system which I am presenting is not appearing in the

world for the first time, it has been presented many times before. Whichever nation acted upon this system, it achieved a world full of successes and prosperities. Those who followed their own self-devised systems in opposition to this, they plunged into the deep abyss of destruction and ruin. Go and observe the ruins of their destroyed dwellings, you will find the words of the signs of their deeds and their consequences written glaringly upon them and will appear before you as proof of my claim.

See how here again the invitation is given to use intellect and reason for *Eimaan* in the unseen. The path which was highlighted by the Book of Allah for the foremost group of *Muttageen* was a completely novel path for them. In order to tread on this, it was this kind of *Eimaan* in the unseen which was needed that has been mentioned in these lines. It is obvious that the opponents must be pointing to the likelihood of thousands of kinds of difficulties and dangers on this path. They must be saying hundreds of things to prove it to be wrong. It was possible that doubts could also have arisen in their hearts by this. Hence, there was the requirement to have a very firm resolve and concrete *Eimaan* for this.

2.29 The Foremost Pioneers

These were the people about whom the Quran stated:

And those first forerunners from among the Muhajireen and Ansar who, for the establishment of this system, when circumstances were extremely unfavourable and events were very discouraging, followed it in an excellent manner. Because they conformed to the laws of Allah, His blessings and bounties became congruent with them. And such a paradisiacal society was readied for them whose prosperities will never diminish; they will abide therein forever (both in this life and in the life of the hereafter). And this is the great achievement and accomplishment of man. (9:100)

And they were showered with flowers of praise and appreciation (56:10-26). It is a fact that the status of pioneers is very elevated; when their sown field produces the mature crop, on seeing this droves of people then appear to join this system. The Quran has described this as being the natural consequence of the great efforts and sacrifices of the *Jamaat e Momineen* (110:1-2).

It is true to say that for those coming later, the tangible results of this system become an incentive for them to be drawn towards it, but even they require some other conviction and guarantee, and that is that the law according to which this system has produced these results once is an immutable law, not subject to any

change. Whenever action is taken according to it, those same results will ensue which have been produced once according to this law. This is that truth which the Quran repeatedly presents when it states:

(Such was) the practice of Allah among those who lived aforetime: no change will you find in the practice of Allah. (33:62) See also (35:43)

2.30 Permanence of the Law

This very law has been functioning in the universe right from the beginning; it is still in implementation today, and its characteristic is that you will never find any change in it. The whole Quran is an evidence of this very truth that there can be no change in the consequences of the laws of Allah, whether these are laws of nature working in the outer universe, or Quranic laws relating to man's individual and collective life. This whole system of the universe is functioning with such beauty and harmony because there is never any change in the laws on which its foundations are raised. It was on the basis of the firm conviction in the immutability of these laws (as noted earlier) that Rasul-ullah told his opponents, that if you are not convinced of the truth of this even after this degree of intellectual reasoning and evidence, then only one method remains after this:

Say: 'O my people! Do whatever you can: I will do (my part): soon will you know who it is whose end will be (best) in the Hereafter: certain it is that the wrong-doers will not prosper.' (6:135)

You carry on working according to your system; I am working according to my programme in my own place – I will not interfere in your programme, nor should you place any obstruction in my programme. Then, after that, wait for a short period – as much time as is required for the crop to mature after sowing the seed. You will witness with your own eyes to whom success will reach. My claim is that the field of the one who is unjust can never prosper. You declare that this is false: nations engage in all kinds of evils and oppressions in the world yet continue to prosper – this is our experience as well. In response it was said just wait awhile, this reality will appear before you in a tangible and visible form that the field of the one who is unjust can never bear fruit. Nothing can go against this law of Allah.

2.31 Prophecies

There is also another form of *Ghaib* and manifestation – experts in the field of astronomy state with certainty that a hundred years from now, on such and such a day, at such and such a time, there will be an eclipse of the sun, and at exactly that time, on that day, there is an eclipse of the sun. During the superstitious era, people making these kinds of prophecies were considered to possess supernatural powers, therefore they used to be worshipped. But with the expansion of human knowledge, today this truth has become clearly evident just like two plus two is four, that there is no supernatural factor in it. This is simply the outcome of knowledge about which law of nature the orbits of the moon and sun follow and that this law is not subject to change. Whoever acquires knowledge of this law can make these kinds of predictions not only hundreds of years, but thousands of years in advance.

But these kinds of predictions can be made about those things which do not possess free will and intent, which are constrained to follow the laws of nature, and which simply do not possess any choice to do anything according to their own wish. Regarding the creation which possesses the choice to make its own decisions, no prediction can be made about it (man is a very powerful creation possessing choice; however, bring this reality before you by an example about a small creation). There are ten eminent scientists sitting around a table busy making predictions about the future of the things of nature from the solar system and distant galaxies, and they are very capable of making such predictions. If a fly sits in front of them on the table, never mind one, even all ten of them combined together will not be able to predict where that fly, having flown away, is going to settle next on that table. Just think that when it cannot even be predicted about a thing like a living fly with ‘freedom to choose’, what it is going to do in the future, then how can any prediction be made about an entity like a human being who possesses choice and intent? Those who make prophecies about the future of human beings are promoters of *Batil*. Leaving aside anyone else, the Quran even declares that an individual cannot state with certainty about himself what he is going to do tomorrow, and at what place on earth his death will occur:

... Nor does anyone know what it is that he will earn on the morrow; nor does anyone know in what land he is to die. Verily with Allah is full knowledge and He is acquainted (with all things). (31:34)

This is that *Ghaib* about which it is stated in the Quran that its knowledge is only with Allah, not with anyone else (27:65). The keys of this *Ghaib* are with Him (6:59). Leaving aside others, even Allah’s messengers themselves did not have knowledge of *Ghaib*, hence, even Rasul-ullah stated about himself (via *Wahi*):

...nor do I know what is hidden...(11:31)

The messenger could only have knowledge of those things among the matters of *Ghaib* which was passed on to him from Allah via *Wahi*. Consequently, Allah made it clear regarding such knowledge that:

This is part of the tidings of the things unseen, which We reveal unto you (O Messenger!) by inspiration... (3:44)

These are those matters of *Ghaib* which we are informing you of via *Wahi*.

2.32 Only Allah Possesses Knowledge of this Kind of *Ghaib*

And since the process of *Wahi* has ended with the being of Rasul-ullah, therefore no human being can receive knowledge of *Ghaib* from Allah.¹⁴⁸ These so-called claimants of ‘spirituality’ who claim every other day that they receive knowledge about unseen matters from Allah’s direction, and then issue all kinds of important prophecies about them, this is, in other words, a claim of *Nabuwmat*. Because the Quran has stated that this type of knowledge of *Ghaib* was only passed on to the messengers via *Wahi*, regarding those who make such predictions it has stated that these claims of theirs have no status other than being *Rajman bil Ghaib* (conjectures about the unseen) (18:22) i.e. those firing shots in the dark, just soothsayers. If those making these kinds of prophecies do not claim to receive knowledge from the direction of Allah, then we should not have any objection to them. We will only say this much that this is not knowledge of the unseen, these are merely human speculations. But if someone says that he receives this knowledge of the unseen from Allah (which is called *Kashf* and *Ilbaam*), then we will unhesitatingly declare that he is not truthful in his claim. This is because Allah has declared that this kind of knowledge could only be received by the *Anbiya* through *Wahi* and this process of *Wahi* has ceased. The Quran has only mentioned *Wahi*; *Kashf* and *Ilbaam* are not mentioned anywhere in it.¹⁴⁹

The discussion started from this point that those people who resolve to undertake a journey, and desire that they should receive a map and details of that route which can transport them to their intended destination without fear and danger,

¹⁴⁸ The Quran is a complete Book of guidance for the whole of mankind for all remaining times on planet earth. It contains all the requisite information for development of the human self and for the establishment of the system of Deen; there is, therefore, no need for any further revelation from Allah. This has been discussed in detail in the book *What is Islam?* by the author. (Ed)

¹⁴⁹ *Kashf* and *Ilbaam* – *Kashf* means a kind of individual inspiration, mystical contemplation or mysticism. *Ilbaam* means some kind of revelation which only the recipient thinks he can understand but which cannot be communicated to others. (Ed)

then this ‘*Al Kitab*’ can provide such guidance. But since the path described by this Book will be one on which they will not have previously treaded, they will only be able to adopt this path with full assurance and determination when they have complete certainty about this path being correct and free of danger. Therefore the first trait of *Muttaqeen* is that, having complete conviction in the validity of this unseen path (i.e. the unseen results of this new system), they adopt it. After this, the Quran describes what they will need to do to reach their intended destination.

2.33 They Establish *Salaat* (2:3)

After this it is stated, ‘*Yu’Qi Munassalaat*’ which is translated as ‘they establish *Namaz*’. The meaning of ‘they read *Namaz*’ can be understood, but what is meant by saying ‘they establish *Namaz*’ is not clear. The root of *Yu’Qi Mun* is *Q-W-M*. *Qama*, *Qiyaman* means to stand up, to have balance, some matter to be balanced and in proportion, to be established and durable, to remain sustainable and abiding. *Aqama* means that something was straightened and put aright, its balance was maintained. These meanings have been explained in the exposition of *As-Siraat al Mustaqeem* under Surah *Al-Fateha*. Hence, the meaning of *Aqa-Mussalaat* will be to install and organise *As-Salaat*, to establish it securely.

In his English translation of the Quran, Marmaduke Pickethall has recorded these same meanings for *Yu’Qi’mun* (although he has translated *As-Salaat* in line with tradition as worship). From this it is evident that *As-Salaat* is something which is required and desired to become established and strengthened. The discussion regarding *Namaz* will come later on. Here it is enough to say that in order to understand the essence of Deen, it is necessary that the terms of the Quran should be left as such and that they should not be translated. Their translation is not able to be done in any language. By replacing these with words from another language, not only can their correct meaning not be comprehended, that meaning also becomes distorted. *As-Salaat* should be called simply *As-Salaat* and its meaning should be defined from the Arabic *Lughbat*¹⁵⁰ and the Quran. You will see that in the Quran the terms *Aqa-Mussalaat* and *Ita-e-Zakat* are constantly repeated as fundamental constituents of Deen (pillars or mainstays) - from this their importance will become evident.

¹⁵⁰ *Lughbat* – this means dictionary. Here it refers to the usage of the Arabic language prevalent at the time of the revelation of the Quran. See *Lughbat ul Quran* (Vol. 1 & 2) compiled by the author. (Ed)

According to the *Lughat* and the Quran, in order to establish the meaning it is also necessary to comprehend this important point that from the *Lughat* that fundamental concept appears before us, which is implicit within the root of this word, and for which the Arabs used to employ it (this is called *Muhawara-Arab* i.e. the prevalent Arabic usage).

2.34 Meaning of Quranic Terminology

But when one among these words is prefixed with (*Al*) thus making it a noun, then it becomes a Quranic term. The meaning of this term will be ascertained from the Quran. The technique for this is called *Tasreef-ul-Ayat* i.e. wherever the Quran has used this term, to determine what its purpose and meaning is in that context. Through cross-referencing of the Quranic verses, and by using the Arabic *Lughat* (after reflection and reasoning), the meaning of the words and terminology of the Quran become clearly evident. For example, the basic meanings of the word *Salaat* will be defined through *Muhawara-Arab*, and when the word *Al-Salaat*¹⁵¹ is used, then this will be a Quranic term – in this way, other Quranic terminology can be figured out (we have, in any case, used this method for understanding the Quran).

2.35 The Meaning of *Salaat* as per *Lughat*

The root of *Salaat* is *Sd-L-W* though it can also be *Sd-L-Y* (this is however, a technical issue which I have discussed in *Lughat ul Quran* and does not require to be repeated here). Its fundamental meaning is to walk behind someone. Because Arabs used to illustrate the meaning of ideological and abstract realities through tangibles, therefore among them in a horse race the horse in second place which gallops continuously in such a way that its forelock is touching the tail of the leading horse would be called *Al-Musalli*, and the horse in front would be called *Sabiqun*. It is on this basis that Imam Raghīb¹⁵² has stated that when it is stated in the Quran in verse (74:43) that we were not among the *Musalleen*, the meaning of this is that we were not among those who followed behind the *Anbiya*. It is noted in the important book of *Lughat, Tajul Aroos*, that among the meanings of this

¹⁵¹ This term is written in Arabic as *Al-Salaat*; however, it is read as *As-Salaat*. This latter format is used in the rest of the book. (Ed)

¹⁵² Compiler of an Arabic dictionary.

root are attachment i.e. to remain devoted and attached to someone. From this aspect, Qartabi has written in his *Tafsir* that *Salaat* will mean attachment to the Divine system, to remain within the Divine limits, to adhere to Allah's Book. On this basis the meanings of *Salaat* are also to carry out the responsibilities defined by Allah. You will have seen from these interpretations that *As-Salaat* does not just mean *Namaz*, it encompasses the complete Divine laws and commandments and His prescribed duties and responsibilities. In Surah *Al-Fateha* we have seen that the supplication of *Momineen* is 'show us the straight path (1:5)' and in Surah *Hud* it is stated that 'my *Rabb* is on the straight path' (11:56). From this it will appear as if Allah is leading ahead on the straight path, and the *Momineen* are making supplications to follow after Him (it is this very meaning which is intrinsic in *Salaat*). But this kind of allegorical interpretation is against the true concept of Allah. Therefore its meaning can only be this - that system of the universe which, obeying the Divine laws, is moving forward through its evolutionary stages. This meaning becomes crystal clear in this verse of Surah *An-Nur* in which it is stated:

See you not that it is Allah Whose Tasbeeh all beings in the heavens and on earth do celebrate, and the birds (of the air) with wings outspread? Each one knows its own (mode of) Salaat and Tasbeeh. And Allah knows well all that they do. (24:41)

Have you not pondered on this reality that everything in the heavens and earth, and in the skies in which birds fly, are doing *Tasbeeh* of Allah. Each and every one of them knows his *Tasbeeh* and *Salaat*. And everything that they do is within the knowledge of Allah. The explanation of the word *Tasbeeh* will be given later at its own place; here it is sufficient to state briefly that it means to strive fully for the achievement of the objective before you and to expend your full energies in its pursuit. It is stated in this verse that every single thing in the universe knows its own *Tasbeeh* and *Salaat*. This matter is clear that every single thing in the universe also knows what its assigned duties are, and what the procedure is for carrying these out for which they have to remain busily striving. The fundamental meaning of *Salaat* becomes evident from this.

At another place the Quran has made clear what the meaning of *As-Salaat* is in relation to human beings themselves, and what its outcome is. What is achieved through its establishment, and what destruction ensues through wasting it. In Surah *Maryam* initially there is mention of various *Anbiya* and it is stated that these were the people who were blessed with Allah's *Naima* (19:59). After them such disobedient people were born into their Ummahs who wasted *As-Salaat*. The question which arises is what did they do as a consequence of which *As-Salaat* became wasted. The Quran states:

But after them there followed a posterity who lost As-Salaat and followed after lusts: soon, then, will they face destruction. (19:59)

They began to follow their base desires. From this it is evident that establishment of *Salaat* and the following of own desires are two opposing things. As has already been clarified (see 1:1) the satisfaction of human desires is not a bad thing, provided they are fulfilled by remaining within the limits defined by Allah. They wreak devastations at that point when they exceed limits and become rebellious.

2.36 *Salaat* Going to Waste

As-Salaat therefore means the satisfaction and fulfilment of human desires and emotions according to the Divine laws – to obtain work from them while remaining within the Divine limits, to make these follow the Divine laws. It is obvious that this objective can only be achieved within a collective system – that system in which different individuals work towards the goal defined by Allah instead of pursuing their own vested interest. This is the reason why the Quran has declared the establishment of *Salaat* to be a collective duty. And not only this, it has also stated that the establishment of *As-Salaat* is only possible when the *Jamaat e Momineen* has acquired power in the land; they have their own independent State. Hence, in Surah *Al-Hajj* it is stated:

(They are) those who, if We establish them in the land, establish Salaat, and give Zakat, enjoin the right and forbid wrong: with Allah rests the end (and decision) of (all) affairs. (22:41) also see (24:55)

2.37 The Need for One's Own Independent State

These are the people who, when they are in possession of power in the land and their own State becomes established, will carry out the duty of establishing *Salaat* and perform the duty of executing *Zakat*; they will implement laid down commandments and forbid from wrongdoing. It is clear that there can be no need whatsoever for one's own government for the purposes of reading *Namaz* and the giving of the customary *Zakat* (2.5%). Based on the prevalent practice, these duties can be carried out under any government. Even during our colonisation by the British, we possessed the right to read *Namaz* and give *Zakat*, and today Muslims also have this right in India. It is also clear from this that the meaning of establishment of *Salaat* and execution of *Zakat* according to the Quran is not that

which is prevalent today. These are those duties which can only be carried out in our own independent State. (A discussion about *Zakat* will come at its own place – here we wish to confine ourselves to *Salaat*).

Regarding the Islamic State, it is stated in Surah *Ash-Shura*:

Those who hearken to their Rabb on His call and establish Salaat; who conduct their affairs by mutual consultation; who spend out of what We bestow on them for sustenance. (42:38)

Momineen are those who say upon the invitation of Allah that we accept it, they bow down their heads before His commands i.e. they establish *Salaat* and settle all their matters through mutual consultation; and whatever sustenance is provided to them by Allah, they keep it available for the universal *Rabubiyat* of mankind (this is the actual meaning of executing *Zakat*). From this it is also clear that *As-Salaat* is that system of government in which all matters are settled through mutual consultation of the *Jamaat e Momineen* and whose primary responsibility is the *Rabubiyat* of mankind. Since the Islamic system becomes established for the practical implementation of the laws and values of the Book of Allah, therefore it is stated at another place:

As to those who hold fast by the Book and establish Salaat ... (7:170)

2.38 As-Salaat and Economics

How vast the sphere of *As-Salaat* is has been made clear by the Quran in connection with the glowing account of the messenger Shuaib. In Surah *Hud* it is stated that the messenger Shuaib presented the message of Allah before his people, which they opposed as usual. After an intense argument, the people asked Shuaib, tell us what exactly do you want? He replied that I want freedom for *Salaat* (in which you people do not interfere). This religious nation thought, according to their own understanding, that he wishes permission to worship God in his own way, what objection can there be in this. He can carry out his worship in whatever way he wishes, so they agreed to this. But after a very short while they noted that by *Salaat* Shuaib did not mean what they had thought. So they told Shuaib:

They said: 'O Shuaib! Does your Salaat command you that we leave off the worship which our fathers practised, or that we leave off doing what we like with our wealth and possessions?'. ... (11:87)

What kind of *Salaat* is this of yours which says that we should abandon those deities which our forefathers have been continuing to worship, and also that we should not utilise our wealth and possessions according to our volition – we cannot give permission for this kind of *Salaat*.

Pay attention to the last part of this great verse from which it is clear that *Salaat* is not simply a name for *Namaz*, its domain also extends all the way to economics.

We have seen in verse (22:41) of Surah *Al-Hajj* that it has been stated that when their own State becomes established, the *Jamaat e Momineen* will carry out the duties of establishing *Salaat*, executing *Zakat*, promoting good and forbidding evil. In another verse it is stated:

...and establish Salaat: for Salaat prevents from shameful and unjust deeds... (29:45)

It is a fact that *As-Salaat* stops from *Fob'sha* (exceeding limits) and *Munkar* (deceitfulness). A detailed discussion about *Fob'sha* will come later. Here we wish to confine ourselves to *Munkar*. Firstly, forbidding *Munkar* has been stated as a duty of the State, and here it is stated that this task will be done by *As-Salaat*. From this it is also clear that *As-Salaat* is the name of this very system whose duty is the promotion of good and the forbidding of *Munkar*. As far as our *Namaz* is concerned, it is evident that *Fob'sha* and *Munkar* are not prevented by it. Never mind those who do not recite *Namaz*, how many *Namaz*i are there who recite their *Namaz* with great punctuality but despite this commit *Munkar*. Hence, *Munkar* can only be stopped through the system of *Salaat* (Islamic system of government). How supreme a revolutionary campaign is required for the establishment of the system of *Salaat* is described by the Quran in an extremely attractive style in the account of the confrontation between Musa and Pharaoh.

2.39 The Great Revolution

The narrative begins from the point when Musa went to the heights of Mount Tur, and there Allah called to him, and first of all stated this:

I have chosen you: listen, then to the inspiration (sent to you). (20:13)

O Musa! This is not a chance event that you have arrived here and We have commenced talking to you. We have chosen you for a specific purpose and for the accomplishment of a great programme. At another place it is stated that this selection also did not just materialise out of the blue. For this you have been put

through extremely life-endangering¹⁵³ events, and when you met these criteria, We selected you for Our purpose (20:37-41). Hence, listen to Our *Wahi* with the ears of your heart. The first matter is to bear in mind that:

Verily, I am Allah: There is no god (Ilah) but I: So serve you Me (only)...(20:14)

Excepting Us there is no other Sovereign, therefore only subservience to Me can be adopted, not to anyone else. Pharaoh has shackled your nation in slavery and subjugation to him; by liberating this nation from the chains of his slavery they have to be made free for the adoption of the sovereignty of Allah. For this you have to establish *As-Salaat* so that Our eminence is exalted, Our authority is proclaimed (20:14). Then it is declared:

Verily the Hour is coming - My design is to keep it hidden...(20:15)

The toppling of the system of government of a rebellious, tyrannical ruler like Pharaoh, and establishing the system of *Salaat* (Divine system) in its place is a supreme revolution. This revolution was until now proceeding imperceptibly towards its maturation; now the time has come that it should emerge in front visibly – from the unseen it becomes seen (i.e. *Mash'bud* from *Ghaib*).

2.40 How a Revolution Materialises

Here the Quran has noted in just a few passing words a great reality in connection with the occurrence of a revolution. It has stated that which is called a revolution does not appear overnight all of a sudden; it requires a long period of time (destruction can be caused overnight, but a revolution cannot be brought about like this). The demands of the time pave the environment for this. A change takes birth in the consciousness of man, but all this takes place in such an imperceptible way that the eyes cannot detect it. The destructive effects of a wrong system keep on accumulating gradually, and when their weight becomes heavy, then the time for the overturning of this system comes near. After this, with one jolt, the sky-high edifice of this system comes tumbling down, and people think that this change occurred all of a sudden. The Quran has noted this reality in an eloquent style in Surah *Anbiya*. Look at verses (21:11-16) of this Surah and reflect on this meaning which I am quoting from *Mafhoom ul Quran*. It is stated:

¹⁵³ The word used is *Fitna*, which means the purification of a metal by heating and melting it; to manifest the true reality of something. (Ed)

Remember! If you go against the Divine laws, then you will also be destroyed just like We destroyed numerous such nations before you who were bent upon doing injustice, and then raised new nations in their place. The effects of their wrong ways were becoming imprinted imperceptibly. They used to be warned of their consequences in order that they desist from this path. But they never paid heed to this warning. Hence these imperceptible consequences kept piling up slowly, till such a time that when they appeared before them in a tangible form, then they tried to run away.

But at that moment there was no opportunity to escape left. Consequently, our Law of Requitall called to them and said, where can you now escape to? Now return to those indulgent pleasures of yours whose intoxications had stupefied you. Turn back to those mansions of yours in which you used to consider yourself so secure; go there so that you can be questioned, through the exploitation of the labours of which people did you construct all this, and what right did you have to do all this.

At this point in time there was no way that they could escape acknowledgement of this reality that they were, in truth, unjust, and severely bewailed their conduct. But of what use was this regret at this time - when the consequences become established and appear before you, then these cannot be overturned. Therefore they kept on wailing that they were deeply sorrowful on account of the injustices they had committed. But Our Law of Requitall made them like a mown field in which no potential for growth remains, or like an extinguished flame from which the warmth of life vanishes.

They used to think that We have created this system of the universe merely for sport and entertainment, and they did not know this, that we have not created it in vain. This contains a supreme purpose, and that purpose is that no deed of anyone should remain unaccounted for; whether individuals or nations, that the deeds of everyone must establish their precise effects. (21:11-16)

After this clarification we now return to the original subject. Musa was told that regarding the revolution which was until now simmering within the conscience of the universe, the time has come that it should become manifest in a tangible shape itself so that - and this 'so that' is very noteworthy - listen to it intently:

...for every self to receive its reward by the measure of its endeavour. (20:15)

...will have no fear of harm nor of any curtailment. (20:112)

No one should remain in any kind of danger of being oppressed or impoverished, or of injustice and exploitation. After this it was announced:

Go to Pharaoh, for he has indeed transgressed all bounds. (20:24)

Go and unleash that revolution over there from which injustice and oppression can become eradicated and Bani Israel can gain freedom from the iron shackles of *Malukiyat* (tyrannical dictatorship) – this is what is meant by the establishment of *Salaat* (20:14).

2.41 Basic Condition of the Revolution of *Salaat*

But for this kind of revolutionary change the very first and fundamental requirement is unity of the Ummah and obedience to the central authority. If dissension arises within the Ummah and its centrality no longer remains, then never mind the installation of a system of *Haqq* in place of a system of *Batil*, even the system already established cannot survive. This is why the Quran had stated to the *Jamaat e Momineen* that the programme for the achievement of this exalted objective is:

So set you, your face steadily and truly to Deen... (30:30)

For the establishment of this system (Divine Deen), concentrate all your attentions on one focal point. By cutting yourself off from all directions, make this alone your aim of life:

Turn you back to Him, and follow Him: establish Salaat, and be not you among those who join gods with Allah. (30:31)

By protecting yourself from the thorny path, keep following the Divine laws for this, and in this way establish the system of *Salaat*. Remember! the unity of the Ummah is an absolute must for this; therefore, after becoming a follower of One Allah (*Tauheed*), do not again become one of those who associate other gods with Him (*Mushrikeen*):

Those who split up their Deen and become (mere) sects - each party rejoicing in that which is with itself! (30:32)

In other words, do not be from among those people who created divisions in their Deen and became separated into different groups, became divided into sects, and after this every sect from among them became deluded in this self-deception that we are on the path of truth and *Haqq*, while the rest are misguided. Even though no *Haqq* and truth remains in the Ummah which becomes divided into sects. The guarantor of *Haqq* and truth is the collective system of life, whose

foundation is based on the unity of the Ummah as its centre. This was the foremost condition for the establishment of the system of *Salaat*.¹⁵⁴

There is still a great deal to say about *Salaat*, (as we have seen in the account of Shuaib) it is connected to the economic system. Therefore, for a further explanation of the system of *Salaat*, we view the remaining part of this verse (2:3) i.e. '*wa Mimma Razaqna Hum Yunfiqun*', as part of it, so that by the amalgamation of *Salaat* and *Infaaq*, the full blueprint of the system appears before us.

2.42 *Wa Mimma Razaqna Hum Yunfiqoon*

This is stated to be the next characteristic of the *Muttaqeen*. These words are translated as 'Whatever sustenance We have bestowed on them, they spend out of it' (2:3). It is obvious that every individual spends his wealth and riches. Hence, what is that characteristic in this of the *Muttaqeen* due to which the need arose to say about them that *Muttaqee* are those who spend their wealth and riches. For this the most that needed to have been said was that they spend their wealth and money with care and desist from extravagance. The command for this has been given at other places (7:31, 17:26). Thus the characteristic of the *Muttaqeen* which has been described is not just that they refrain from extravagance, this attribute is far higher and unique than this.

2.43 The Meaning of *Rizq*

In this respect, let us first of all consider the word *Rizq*. Everything on which life depends, and which is declared to be the cause for its nourishment, is called *Rizq*. From this perspective you can call *Rizq* as the means of nourishment. Since from the Quranic perspective human life is not just confined to his physical body, other than this there is the human self as well whose development is absolutely necessary, therefore according to the Quran all those resources will be included in *Rizq* which are essential for the nourishment of the human body and for the development of his self (which is the fount of human potentials). In relation to *Rizq* for the development of the human self, it is stated in Surah *Al-Hajj*:

¹⁵⁴ We will explain later that when we turned *Salaat* into *Namaz*, then *Namaz* itself became the sign for recognition of our sects.

And those who leave their homes in the cause of Allah and are then slain or die – on them Allah will bestow a goodly provision: Truly Allah is He who is the best of providers. (22:58)

Allah will bestow *Rizq e Hasna*¹⁵⁵ on those people who, for the sake of fulfilment of the programme of Allah, give up their homes and possessions if the need arises (i.e. emigrate), and then are killed confronting the enemy en route, or otherwise meet their death due to some incident. It is obvious that after the death of a human being, food and nutriment is no longer required for the nourishment of the body, therefore by *Rizq e Hasna* is meant those means of *Rizq* due to which the human self develops. The aim of stating this is that, according to the Quran, all those means of nourishment through which the growth of the body and development of his human potentials (self) can be achieved will be included in *Rizq*.

Among the Arabs one characteristic of *Rizq* was also that it should be made available on time i.e. whatever kind of nourishment is needed at any particular time, it should be readily available.

2.44 The Meaning of *Infaaq*

Now we come to the word *Yunfiqun*, the root of which is (N-F-Q). *Nafqun* is that tunnel whose points of entry and exit are both open. Other than the passage to enter it, the hole that is made by a wild mouse has many passages constructed by it on the other side by which to leave, and it covers these with fine soil so that if someone tries to capture it, then it can escape through these routes. This type of tunnel is called *Nafq*. By the same token, a *Munafiq* (hypocrite) is that individual who, before entering some system, plans in his heart that in case I have to leave this, then which routes will need to be taken. In any event, the basic meaning of this root is not that of spending but is that of keeping open. This word is used as the opposite of holding back, as is clear from the following verse:

*Say: 'If you had possessed the treasures of the mercy of my Rabb, behold you would keep them back, for fear of spending them (Infaaq): for man is ever niggardly'.
(17:100)*

Before the present time, when there were no currency notes, and wealth used to be in the form of gold and silver coins, then coins used to be kept in such sacks

¹⁵⁵ *Rizq e Hasna* – that *Rizq* which is balanced in every respect. (Ed)

whose mouths used to be open, but the other side used to be closed. This technique of keeping wealth is also an antonym of *Infjaaq*. Thus it is stated in Surah *Al-Ma'arij* that hell will cry out to that individual who hoards wealth and then keeps the mouth of the sack tightly closed (70:18). Similarly in Surah *At-Tauba* the word *Infjaaq* has appeared in opposition to *Iktanaaz*, where it is stated that those people who hold back coins of gold and silver, and do not keep open the lids of their money chests, give them the 'glad tiding' of a severe chastisement i.e. of such a punishment in which these coins will be heated in hell and with them their foreheads, sides and backs will be imprinted. And they will be told that this is that wealth which you had piled up and held back for yourself alone, and you did not desire to keep it available to be used for Allah's programme (universal *Rabubiyat*) (9:34-35). In Surah *Muhammad* it is stated that if you adopt this path then remember that you will become destroyed, and your place will be taken by some other nation who will not be like you (47:38).

From these explanations it is evident that *Infjaaq* does not mean to spend but is the term for such a course of action, ideology, or economic system in which the means of sustenance are not kept held back but are held open for the universal *Rabubiyat* of mankind.¹⁵⁶

2.45 *Rizq* is the Responsibility of Allah

The Quran has stated:

There is no moving creature on earth, but its sustenance depends on Allah... (II:6)

There is no living entity on the face of the earth for whose *Rizq* Allah has not taken the responsibility upon Himself. From this an important question arises in our mind that our observation is this (on which human history is also a witness), that human beings continually die of hunger – not only during a period of famine but now the situation is such that almost half of the world's population goes to sleep at night hungry. The question which comes to mind is that when Allah has taken the responsibility upon Himself for the *Rizq* for every moving, living thing on earth, then what kind of responsibility is this in which half of the population goes to sleep hungry at night? This question is extremely important and it is essential to understand the true reality for this.

¹⁵⁶ Remind yourself once again of what has been noted in Surah *Al-Fateha* in relation to *Rabb-Il Alameen* and *Rahman* and *Rabeem*, and this reality will become clear from this.

Allah created man (as well as His other creation), and together with this - in fact even before their creation - created all those means of sustenance on which their life was dependent – air, water, light, heat – all these are present externally on earth. And within the earth, stores of food, which have to be extracted after only a little effort. Allah fulfilled His responsibility in this way. It is from this aspect that He has called Himself *Razzaq* and *Razzaaq* (the One who provides sustenance).

2.46 The Real Question is that of Distribution of *Rizq*

After this the question arises before us about the distribution of *Rizq*. People with a superficial understanding said that this distribution should also have been retained in His own hand by Allah, so that he could have continued to provide *Rizq* directly to every needy person. In reply to this Allah stated that this view is wrong, We have created man as possessor of freedom to choose and intent, therefore the system of distribution of *Rizq* has been given into his hands, and We do not interfere in this. We have provided clear instructions about this system of distribution. The guidance of *Infaaaq* is at the top of this list, which means that no individual should withhold *Rizq* which is beyond his own need. He should keep it available to fulfil the needs of others. The basis of this ideology is on this reality that the means of sustenance, whether it is within the earth or above it, cannot be the private property of one man or a group of men. Its right of ownership belongs only to Allah Who has created it for the universal sustenance of all of His creation. The unjust distribution of *Rizq* is based on this wrong and evil ideology that men can have a right to ownership over the means of production. This ideology is the basis and foundation of the capitalist system and is the root cause of all destructions and devastations. The group holding the reins of power (whether it is in the shape of dictatorships of ancient times, or in the mould of present-day democracy) takes the means of production into its own possession and then by making other human beings dependent on them for their basic food, makes them obey their every command. When the hungry populace raises its voice in protest against this, then the religious clergy quietens them into a slumber by saying that Allah has kept the distribution of *Rizq* in His own hand. Whoever He wishes, He makes rich; whoever He wishes, He keeps poor; on whoever He wishes He bestows abundant *Rizq*; whoever He wishes, he keeps hungry - no human being can remove this differentiation because it is created by Allah. If Allah had wished that you do not remain hungry, then why would He not have provided bread to you Himself. The Quran has declared this reasoning to be not only *Batil* but *Kufr*. It is noted in Surah *Yasin* that:

And when they are told, 'Spend of the (bounties) with which Allah has provided you,' the unbelievers (Kafireen) say to those who have Eimaan: 'Shall we then feed those whom, if Allah had so willed, He would have fed (Himself)? You are in nothing but manifest error.' (36:47)

When it is said to these people that the means of sustenance which Allah has provided to you, keep it available for the nourishment of mankind, the ones who adopt the path of *Kufr* say to those with *Eimaan*, 'What, do you want us to provide bread to those whom Allah wishes to keep hungry – this would be a war against Allah! If it had been Allah's wish that they should not remain hungry, then why would He not have provided food to them Himself?' In response to this the Quran has considered it sufficient to state that this is such blatant misguidance for which there is no need for any argument or discussion. Allah has not kept the distribution of *Rizq* in His hand. This is a deceit of the religious clergy who, by administering the opium of this wrong belief to the populace, keeps on strengthening the roots of the capitalist system. This is the reason why the Quran has combined priests and anchorites (religious scholars and clerics) and capitalists all together into one category (9:34-35).

2.47 Rizq Belongs to Allah

The true foundation of the Quranic economic system is inherent in the word *Na*¹⁵⁷ in *Razaq Na Hum*. Allah has stated that 'the *Rizq* which We have given you' i.e. *Rizq* is owned by Allah. He has made it available free without any return and payment. You can look at the Quran from the beginning to the end, you will find words like *Razaq Na Hum*, *Raza Ka Kum* etc. regarding *Rizq* i.e. *Rizq* is provided from the direction of Allah. The question is only regarding its distribution. Land is the basic means of *Rizq*. Regarding this, He has repeatedly stated that this is in the ownership of Allah. Earth is Allah's land (11:64). In it is the means of sustenance for men and their animals (79:33, 80:32); there is the means of sustenance for the whole of mankind (50:11). It has been created solely for the benefit of creation (55:10). It should be kept available equally for all those who need it (41:10). This reality has been stated with great brevity but in an extremely attractive style in Surah *Al-Hadeed*:

And what cause have you why you should not spend in the cause of Allah? For to Allah belongs the heritage of the heavens and the earth... (57:10)

¹⁵⁷ *Na* – this Arabic word means 'we'. (Ed)

When the truth is that whatever is in the highs and lows of the heavens and the earth all belongs to Allah, then who are you to withhold those resources of sustenance, and to not keep them available for the benefit of the children of Adam. In order to obtain *Rizq* from the land you certainly make some effort; the maximum you can have is the right for a return for this effort of yours, not for the whole produce. Take the reward due for your work and give the remainder to the owner (Allah) of the land. He has described this fact in a very eloquent way in verses (56:63-73) of Surah *Al-Waqi'ah*. The following is the meaning of these verses taken from the exposition of the Quran (*Mafhoom ul Quran*):¹⁵⁸

For this purpose, just study this system a little according to which your nourishment and growth takes place, and then think, does all this take place according to Allah's law, or according to your own devised laws! (For example) just examine the farming in which you engage, how much is your contribution in it, and what sorts of things does our law do? By ploughing the land you sow seed in it – now tell Us who grows a crop out of this seed? Is it you who does this or does this take place according to Our law? (56:63-64)

After this it is stated:

Then after the crop is ripe, Who protects it? This may also happen that some calamity may occur as a result of which this ripe crop becomes damaged – damaged in such a way that you hold your heads in your hands and begin to wail to each other that we are completely ruined, we have become totally impoverished and left destitute. Leaving aside obtaining grain from this land, our labour and seeds have also gone to waste. (56:65-67)

Following this it is said:

Then just ponder on this water, on which not only your crops but your own life itself is dependent. Do you rain it down from the clouds, or is it Our Law of Rabubiyat that does this? (These clouds become formed from the water of the oceans which is so brackish that it can neither be used for drinking nor for agriculture). Just reflect that if the water from the clouds (rain) had also remained brackish, then what could you have done? It is perplexing why you do not reach the correct conclusion by reflecting in this way on such a clear and straightforward matter; and regarding nourishment, why you do not appreciate the system of Allah. (56:70)

Further on it is stated:

¹⁵⁸ It will help if you also keep the Quranic verses in front of you from any of the Arabic versions of the Quran.

Likewise, look at the fire which you kindle and put to so many uses. Now, say, who is it that conserves this heat energy inside the branches of the green trees – concealing a flame within the twigs - is it your doing, or does Our law make it happen? (56:71-72)

After stating these facts, the Quran states:

(Ponder on this whole machinery of the universe for the production of Rizq, and then reflect Whose law is working here. Then also reflect to what extent is your share in all this programme, and to what extent that of the Divine system? In whatever way you look at it, you will ultimately come to this conclusion that your contribution is only your effort in this business, all the rest is carried out by the Divine system. Hence, in its production (means of sustenance), your share can only be proportional to your input of work – you cannot become owner of the whole). All these means of production exist in their own right – they are neither made by you, nor purchased by you. They remind you of this fact that Allah has made them the means of sustenance of life for the needy. (56:73)

This means that in this business the effort is yours, and the means of production Ours. Hence, retain the reward of your hard work in this for yourself in the form of means of nourishment, and ‘pass on Our share to us’. The question which arises is, how should we pass on Your share to You? The reply was given: pass it on to those who are unable to provide the means of nourishment for themselves (56:73). Once it reaches them, consider it to have reached Us. This fact has also been noted in (67:21, 67:30, 80:24-32).

2.48 Rights of Allah and Rights of Human Beings

The terms *Haquq-ullah* (rights of Allah) and *Haquq-ul-Abad* (rights of human beings) are commonly repeated among us. This division of rights is mentioned nowhere in the Quran. Only at one place is there mention of ‘one right of Allah’. It is that same ‘right of ownership’ which has already been discussed in detail above. In Surah *Al-An’am* it is stated:

It is He Who produces gardens, with trellises and without, and dates, and tilth with produce of all kinds, and olives and pomegranates, similar (in kind) and different (in variety): eat of their fruit in their season but render the dues that are proper on the day that the harvest is gathered. But waste not by excess: for Allah loves not the wasters. (6:141)

Allah is He Who has spread out the arrangement of gardens (for the nourishment of the whole of humanity); some are very sturdy and tall trees which are standing without any support, some are soft and fragile vines (like grapes) which are held up using trellises for support. Also sky-high date palms and pastures producing varieties of crops, and fruits such as olives and pomegranates – similar in some ways to each other and also distinct. When these trees or pastures bear fruit, then consume their fruit and grains with pleasure, but give away ‘Allah’s right’ from these. Do not transgress the limit in this regard (by holding on to ‘Allah’s right’ yourself), this conduct of yours will not be acceptable to Allah.

2.49 The Dealing of *Momineen* with Allah

This matter of *Haquq* (rights) is in relation to ordinary people. But in this matter *Momineen* adopt a different path with Allah. It is their *Eimaan* that not only the land (the means of production) but their own potentials (to produce *Rizq*) are also fundamentally bestowed by Allah. The Quran declares:

And you have no good thing (Naimat) but is from Allah... (16:53)

We are provided with these *Naima* so that we can employ these according to the defined programme of Allah. This is why we will be accountable for these, to answer before Allah as to how we used to employ these:

Then, shall you be questioned that Day about these good things. (102:8)

This deal of theirs with Allah becomes settled through a mutual covenant. According to this covenant:

Allah has purchased of the Momineen their selves and their possessions; for theirs (in return) is Jannat... (9:III)

They sell their life and possessions into the Hands of Allah, and in return Allah bestows *Jannat* on them. Human life and all its potentials are included in ‘life’ which have been bestowed from the direction of Allah free from any recompense and payment, and in ‘possessions’ all that becomes included which man earns himself (through his own endeavours). They sell all this into the ‘hands of Allah’ and Allah bestows *Al-Jannat* on them. The details of *Al-Jannat* are very lengthy, but (as far as the physical life of man is concerned) its characteristic has been described as:

... and eat of the bountiful things therein as (where and when) you will... (2:35)

Whenever and wherever hunger is felt, there should be enough available to eat your fill. Further on the Quran states:

There is therein (enough provision) for you not to go hungry nor to go naked, nor to suffer from thirst, nor from the sun's heat. (20:118-119)

In this *Al-Jannat* every member of society will (at the very least) be at peace from the issue of these basic needs of life.

2.50 The Meaning of this in Practice

It also becomes clear that in this society this mutual covenant between Allah and the *Momineen* will not be merely ideological and confined to beliefs, it will be practically as such. In 'religion' by the recitation of a few words it is assumed that any responsibility has been discharged. But in Deen whatever is uttered or is accepted has to be carried out in practical terms as well. It is 'religion' in which at the front of a house is written, 'In truth everything belongs to Allah. That which is given to me is for a few days only'. And in practical terms the right of total ownership is protected in his own name and in the name of his progeny and the 'Real Owner' is not even allowed to peep into this. But in Deen the matter of buying and selling which is mentioned above is settled in practical terms. A *Momin* sells his life and possessions into the hands of the head of this system which is shaped in order to carry out the responsibilities of Allah. It is sold into his hands, and Allah verifies it that We have purchased it. This is what is called *Ba'et* (the matter of bartering). It is stated in Surah *Al-Fatab*:

Verily those who plight their fealty to you do no less than plight their fealty to Allah: the Hand of Allah is over their hands... (48:10)

O Rasul! Those *Momineen* who sell their life and possessions into your hands, they are in reality transacting these into the Hands of Allah. For the confirmation of this covenant, it is not your hand which is placed over their hand, it is the Hand of Allah, because you are settling this transaction on behalf of Allah. *Momineen* sell every possession of their life into the hands of this system, and in return this system takes the responsibility for the development and nourishment of their physical life and their human self on its own head. This is the practical interpretation of *Wa Mimma Razaqna Hum Yunfiqoon*.

2.51 Step by Step Transition

It should be made clear that this system does not become formed in one day. In place of the (man-made) wrong system for the distribution of *Rizq*, this Divine system comes into action gradually. The commands which we see in the Quran for individual charity, donations, etc. are related to this transitional period. When this programme reaches its final stage, then the situation in it will become:

... they ask you how much they are to spend (keep available for others); say: 'What is beyond your needs'...(2:219)

O Rasul! They ask you how much should we keep available from our earnings for the fulfillment of the needs of others (handing over to the system). It was decreed, say to them, all that is beyond your own needs. In this by 'others' is not meant only those who belong to your *Jamaat* – it includes needy individuals from the whole of humanity. Undoubtedly the start of this will be from their own society, but its expansiveness will gradually spread and amalgamate the whole of universal mankind within its sphere. This is because Allah has taken on the responsibility for the *Rabubiyat* of all living creatures (11:6) upon Himself, and this responsibility of His is fulfilled through the hands of this system. This is that system about which it is stated:

... what is good for mankind remains on earth...(13:17)

Strength and sustainability will only be for that system of distribution in front of which is not the benefit of a specific individual, a specific group, a particular nation or State, but instead is the good of the whole of humanity. This is that very system which is declared to be the duty of the *Muttaqeen* to establish and to keep fortified.

2.52 Best in Providing *Rizq*

Have you ever pondered on this fact that Allah has called Himself *Khair ur Raziqeen* (5:114, 34:39). This means that this *Rizq* is apparently being provided to you through the hands of these human beings - from this respect they can be called *Raziq* (providers of *Rizq*). But from the point of view of being the Owner of this *Rizq*, Allah alone is *Khair ur Raziqeen*. The state of these helpers who distribute *Rizq* in this way on behalf of Allah is that they state clearly to those to whom they provide *Rizq* that:

We feed you for the sake of Allah alone: no reward do we desire from you, nor thanks. (76:9)

In this distribution of *Rizq* we are only fulfilling the wish of Allah, not giving anything from our own side. And when we are not even bestowing anything from our own selves, then leaving aside taking any recompense for this, we do not even desire any thanks. These representatives only take as much as meets their needs from this means of sustenance for themselves, the remainder is all passed on to others who are in need. In fact, their state is such that if it ever happens that there is less *Rizq* and more needy ones, then:

... but give them preference over themselves, even though poverty was their (own lot)...(59:9)

They give preference to the needs of others over their own needs. (As has been noted earlier) the structure of this economic system is established on the foundations of this *Eimaan* (16:53) that to whatever extent *Naima* are available to us, whether these are in the form of means of production or in the form of abilities to earn *Rizq*, these are all of them bestowed from the direction of Allah. That is why they will be utilised according to the principles and programme defined by Allah. Contrary to this, the mentality of the (*Batil*¹⁵⁹) basis of the capitalist system is that the means of production can be in the private ownership of individuals, and the earning potentials of *Rizq* also belong to individuals themselves. However much anyone earns on the basis of these is owned by him – no one can intervene in this.

2.53 The Basic Mentality of the Capitalist System

The Quran has noted this *Batil* (evil) mentality and the consequences arising from it in just one verse of Surah *An-Nabl* with great clarity. It states:

Allah has bestowed His gifts of sustenance more freely on some of you than on others: those more favoured are not going to throw back their gifts to those whom their right hands possess, so as to be equal in that respect. Will they then deny the favours of Allah? (16:71)

The explanation of this is that it is a fact that there is a difference in the potentials of different people to earn *Rizq* – this is because there are different kinds of tasks

¹⁵⁹ *Batil* – translated as evil i.e. that which gives wrong results (as opposed to *Haqq*, which is translated as truth, that which gives constructive results). (Ed)

in the world for which different kinds of abilities are required (43:32). Those people who possess a greater capacity for earning *Rizq* hoard all of their earnings for themselves even though what is in excess of their needs is the right of those who cannot fulfil their needs through their own earnings (70:24).¹⁶⁰ Then why do these people not return their spare earnings to those people who work under their direction, and which is in fact their right, so that in this way all people become equal sharers in the economic conveniences bestowed by Allah (30:28).

Those people who do not do this in actuality deny this fact that their potentials have been bestowed on them as a blessing from Allah.

In the next verse it is stated:

*... will they then have Eimaan in Batil (evil) and be ungrateful for Allah's favours?
(16:72)*

This is *Eimaan in Batil* and *Kufr* of the *Naima* of Allah.

2.54 Qarun

At another place it is stated that Qarun (who is presented by the Quran as a representative of the capitalist system) also had this mentality. He used to state that:

... This has been given to me because of a certain knowledge which I have...(28:78)

My wealth is a result of my own skill, hence, no one can have any role in it. At another place it is stated that this mentality is not confined to Qarun only, whoever abandons the values of *Wabi*, his mentality becomes like this:

*Now, when trouble touches man, he cries to Us: but when We bestow a favour upon him as from Ourselves, he says, 'This has been given to me because of a certain knowledge (I have)!' Nay, but this is but a trial, but most of them understand not!
(39:49)*

¹⁶⁰ This point needs our profound individual reflection. The surplus capital which is held in the possession of individuals beyond their needs creates deprivation in the world and is the root cause of abject poverty. Individuals holding on to this surplus capital need to realise that they are ruining their next life (as their self is not developing) by holding on to it and not making it available for the sustenance of mankind. (Ed)

The consequence of this is that destruction which has turned the human world into hell.

If you look at the history of mankind, the issue of the distribution of *Rizq* (which is now called the economic or commercial system) has bound man in a state of angst in every era. Many compassionate hearts were concerned by the destructive effects which resulted from its wrongful distribution and they made intellectual efforts (without the light of *Wabi*) to seek a solution to this important and extremely challenging problem. The proposals of thinkers from Plato to Karl Marx, and scholars of economics, are various links in the instructive tale of this intellectual striving and failed endeavours of man. This is not the place to go into their details.¹⁶¹ At this juncture it will be sufficient to state that the last link in this long chain of events - the philosophy of Marx - what solution did it propose.

2.55 The Empirical Method of Human Intellect

But before this there is the need for an introductory explanation. Allah's *Wabi* presents absolute and clear-cut solutions for the important issues of human life, Those fortunate nations which adopt these reach the intended destination secure and protected, prosperous and free from fear and grief from the dangers of the path. Those who do not accept these in this way, they try to determine a solution intellectually. The method of research of the intellect (human thought) is empirical which is called trial and error. The human intellect proposes a solution and then pursues it. It progresses forward traversing hundreds of hardships and perils on the way, wading through rivers of blood, and negotiating chasms of fire, getting its bones broken and enduring troubles. Then it sees that it had adopted a wrong path, so abandoning this, it seeks another solution, and then sets out on this new path. After these kinds of numerous failures and life-sucking experiments, at some point that solution appears before him which *Wabi* had presented on the very first day.

The way in which the Quran has explained this point should be understood like this - that the eternal truths presented by *Wabi* are wrapped up in the waves of time. When human knowledge rises up and touches these waves, then the truth hidden in it unveils and manifests itself. In Surah *Ha-Mim* it is stated:

¹⁶¹ I have covered these in detail in my book, *Insaan nae Kia Socha? (What Did Man Think?)*

Soon will We show them our Signs in the furthest regions of the earth, and in their own selves, until it becomes manifest to them that this is the Truth... (41:53)

After the revelation of the Quran, another element also becomes added together with this empirical technique of the intellect. Because of the universality of the means of communication and dissemination, Quranic truths have become commonly known and are continuing to become so in the world. It is obvious that human intellect is also becoming influenced both consciously and unconsciously by these. The consequence of this is that the point which the intellect used to previously reach taking centuries through experimentation, it now reaches it in a relatively short time. Therefore (as I have written in my book on the eminent life of Rasul-ullah titled *Mairaj-e-Insaniyat*¹⁶²) based on evidence it can be said that in the arena of life, wherever some ray of light becomes visible, it is from the rays of light of the same sun; and in the garden of the world wherever some flower is seen to be blooming, it is because of the manifestation of this same life-giving spring.

2.56 Doctrine of Karl Marx

Karl Marx (1818-1883), after his lifelong intellectual pursuits, stated that the solution to this problem is nothing other than to establish such an economic system in which:

From each according to his ability, and to each according to his needs'.

Ideologically this was a very satisfying solution to this most tenacious problem. But the question was whether it was even possible for this technique to be implemented in practice. The objection which used to be raised against this was that an individual who earns a great deal as a result of his ability, but his needs are minimal, will therefore obtain far less from this, so what will his incentive be that he should work hard and hand over the fruit of his toil to others! According to his philosophy, Karl Marx was a denier of Allah, *Wahi*, *Risalat* (messengerhood), Permanent Values and the life in the hereafter. He used to declare that human life was only this physical life and no more than this. According to this philosophy of life, he was not able to find any satisfactory answer to this objection. Hence, he concluded that the solution to this problem is only that which I have presented, but how this will be actioned I cannot say. That is why those people who are insisting on this answer live in a world of dreams. For the time being no answer

¹⁶² *Mairaj-e-Insaniyat - The Pinnacle of Humanity* (the book is in Urdu). (Ed)

can be provided to this. This was what he stated, and his follower Lenin clarified this by stating that:

*By passing through what stages, and through what practical steps mankind will be able to achieve this higher purpose, we neither know anything about this nor can know anything. This is because we do not have any material with us through which an answer can be given for these questions.*¹⁶³

Marx said that until the time that man does not reach this final destination, the system of socialism should be progressively established during the transitional period i.e. the means of production should be taken out of the hands of individual ownership and should be given into the ownership of the State. This is why at this point in time in socialist countries the system of socialism reigns in place of the capitalist system.

But this system could not present any solution to this challenge. If we lift the cover, we will see the same spirit of capitalism functioning within its constitution – the difference will only be of terminology. Under the capitalist system the means of production remain in the ownership of individuals; in socialism these means come into the hands of a group of individuals which takes possession of the state government. The impoverished labourer continues to remain destitute and subjugated as before.

Previously it was a Pharaoh who used to proclaim this slogan that:

And Pharaoh proclaimed among his people, saying: ‘O my people! Does not the dominion of Egypt belong to me, (witness) these streams flowing underneath my (palace)?’... (43:51)

Now this proclamation rallies from a ‘group of Pharaohs’ (ruling class) who have given themselves the name of a State as a form of deception. The outcome of both is the same:

(Pharaoh) saying, ‘I am your Rabb, Most High’. (79:24)

Your sustenance is in our hands, we are your sustainers, therefore accept our rule.

2.57 The Failure of Socialism

¹⁶³ Translated from Urdu as quoted in the book. Reference – Marx Engels, *Marxism*, pp. 355, 358.

Under the capitalist system the wages of the workers were set by the owner of the land or factory. Now their remuneration is set by the ‘State’ and the criterion for setting the level of remuneration is not whether through this the needs of the life of the worker are even met or not, the criterion for this is the advantage or interests of the employer. Neither that system took the responsibility upon itself for *Rizq*, nor did this system. The condition of workers has become worse than before under this system (socialism). Previously if he could not get on with one owner, then leaving him, he could enter into the employment of someone else. Now because the complete monopoly over the means of production belongs to the ‘State’, he cannot even leave it and move on to somewhere else. This is the most evil face of dictatorship. This is that very hell about which the Quran has declared that:

Every time they wish to get away therefrom, from anguish, they will be forced back therein... (22:22)

When they form an intention to escape from this hell of anguish and distress, they will again be pushed back into it. This is the solution to that most difficult problem to which the human intellect (without the light of *Wahi*) has arrived at so far. Even though ideologically Karl Marx arrived at its solution, since his philosophy of life could not provide that basis on which the lofty edifice of this system could be raised, therefore in practical terms he remained at the same place as the capitalist system was – indeed, an even worse position than this. Only *Eimaan* can provide a solution to this i.e. this *Eimaan* that:

- (1) Not only the means of production, even human potentials are not in my ownership: these are owned by Allah and bestowed by Him.
- (2) My responsibility is that by bringing out these potentials of mine through my utmost endeavours, I produce *Rizq* and hand it over into the control of that system which then distributes it among all those who are needy (including myself). (The remuneration for hard work is not wages, rather it is to fulfil the needs of life. A system which does not take responsibility for this has no right to appropriate the means of production into its own possession).
- (3) If that system or I do not do this, then we will be held accountable and questioned about this.¹⁶⁴

¹⁶⁴ Accountability is in-built in all human actions and systems e.g. the gross imbalance in the world is a consequence of man-devised systems. (Ed)

This is termed *Eimaan* in Allah and the hereafter and is declared to be the duty of the *Muttaqeen*.

We had commenced from the matter of the establishment of *Salaat*, and *Infaaq* was introduced so that it becomes clear how both are intrinsically linked. In this regard a few such verses are presented in which the duty of the *Musalleen* is declared to be *Infaaq*, and from this respect they are termed as *Munfiqeen* (3:16).

2.58 Connection between *Salaat* and the Economic System

The Quran has stated the defined and tangible consequence of *As-Salaat* to be that it prevents from *Fab'sha* and *Munkar* (29:45). The root of the word *Fab'sha* is (*F-H-Sh*) in which every condemned deed (worthy of revulsion) is included. But when the word *Fab'sh* was spoken among Arabs, its general meaning used to be taken as shameful acts, but the meaning of *Fab'sha* was that of being miserly because being miserly was an extremely loathed trait among them. As far as *Munkar* is concerned, it also includes every detestable matter, but its fundamental meaning is the excuses and deceptions of the selfish intellect (i.e. the intellect which only thinks of its own interest). If intellect is set free from *Wabi* then its role only remains to suggest and devise to man reasons and justifications for his every deed and decision. Furthermore, the aim of *As-Salaat* is stated to be that it removes the emotions of miserliness from the human heart, and it becomes an impediment in the devising of paths of justification for the selfish intellect. You will have seen how profound the connection between *As-Salaat* and the economic system is from the point of view of ultimate objective. Keeping this fundamental point in mind, let us proceed.

2.59 Falsifying Deen

In Surah *Al-Ma'un* it is stated:

See you one who denies Deen? (107:1)

Have you ever reflected on the condition of the individual who falsifies Deen? Here we are not discussing those people who do not accept Deen from the very beginning. We are discussing those who claim to be adherents of Deen (i.e. call themselves Muslims like us), but in practical terms they deny Deen. After this it is described what they do due to which they falsify Deen. The Quran states:

Then such is (the man) who repulses the orphan (Yateem). And encourages not the feeding of the indigent (Miskeen). (107:2-3)

This is the one who constantly rejects and pushes away the one who is forsaken in society (the word *Yateem* includes those children whose parents are dead and also those who are left alone in a destitute and helpless state in society). The meaning of pushing away these people becomes clear from those verses of Surah *Al-Fajr* where it is stated that the condition of a human being is such that if *Rizq* becomes restricted for him, then he laments loudly that:

...my Rabb has humiliated me! (89:16)

See how my *Rabb* has humiliated me for no reason. I did not do any such deed for which I should have been punished like this. The Quran replies that this is wrong – that from Our side the punishment of disgrace and ignominy is imposed on someone for no reason - this disgrace and ignominy of yours is solely the consequence of your own deeds and those deeds were these:

Nay, nay! but you honour not the Yateem. (89:17)

You did not consider these people worthy of respect and dignity who used to be left alone in society. For you, only those people were worthy of respect whose party was strong. Your second crime was this:

Nor do you encourage one another to feed the poor (Miskeen)! (89:18)

For those people who were no longer able to work (whose mobility became impaired), you never made any such arrangement through which the means of sustenance becomes available:

And you devour inheritance – all with greed. (89:19)

You used to devour the inheritance of parents and grandparents.

And you love wealth with inordinate love! (89:20)

And you desired that the wealth of the whole world becomes accumulated and gathered in your lap.

After this let us return to Surah *Al-Ma'un* where it is stated that the falsifying of Deen is done by the one who, instead of giving respect and dignity to those who are destitute in society, pushes them away, and does not arrange for the sustenance of people who become incapacitated (107:3). After this it is stated:

So woe to those who are Musalleen (perform Namaz). (107:4)

These are those *Musalleen* whose *Namaz* becomes the cause of ruin for them.

Who are neglectful of their Salaat, those who only do it for display and refuse to let (the wealth) flow like a stream. (107:5-7)

These are those people who consider the visible and physical movements of *Namaz* as being *Salaat* itself and are negligent of the spirit, purpose and aim of it i.e. they read *Namaz* a lot, but they put a wall in front of these fountains of *Rizq* which should have been kept continuously flowing to meet the needs of mankind, and hold these back for themselves. These are those *Musalleen* whose *Namaz* brings destruction upon them, and these are those people who falsify Deen.

In Surah *Al-Muddathir* it is stated that the guardians of hell will inquire of the criminals, what were the crimes committed by you as a result of which you are being consigned to hell:

They will say: 'We were not of those who were Musalleen; nor were we of those who fed the indigent; but we used to talk vanities with vain talkers; (and thus) we used to deny the day of Deen'. (74:43-46)

They will say in reply that we were not from among the *Musalleen*. We never made arrangements for the sustenance of the deprived and destitute. We used to talk a great deal about these matters, but never did anything in practical terms, and this is how we used to falsify Deen.

These were the *Musalleen* who were the ones who falsified Deen. In comparison to this, in Surah *Al-Ma'arj* the Quran states in its distinct, dramatic style:

Inviting (all) such as turn their backs and turn away their faces (from the Right) and collect (wealth) and hide it (from use)! Truly man was created very impatient - fretful when evil touches him; and niggardly when good reaches him - not so those who are Musalleen - those who remain steadfast to their Salaat; and those in whose wealth is a recognised right for the (needy) who asks and him who is prevented (for some reason from asking); and those who hold to the truth of the day of Deen. (70:17-26)

Hell will call out to those people whose conduct was such that when they used to be called to fulfil the requirements of Deen, either they used to turn their back and move away, or if they heard the request, then they concocted excuses to avoid it. These are those people who used to hoard up wealth and then used to fasten the openings of their sacks (of wealth) tightly. After this it is stated that the truth is that if man becomes heedless to the values of *Wahi*, then his condition becomes such that his appetite is never satiated – he becomes very impatient. So impatient that if the least trouble reaches him (e.g. a loss occurs in some business transaction) he starts lamenting loudly, and when prosperity arrives, then he withholds his riches and wealth. After this it is stated but the *Musalleen* are not like

this i.e. those people who follow *As-Salaat* scrupulously. These people know that in their riches and wealth is the right of those human beings whose needs are not met from their own earnings, or who have become totally incapacitated. These are the people who authenticate the Day of Deen (*Yaum Ad-Deen*). In these verses the words 'known right' merit particular attention i.e. the needy and deprived neither ask them for charity, nor do they give them anything as charity. Both of them know that in their wealth there is the right of every needy one. They can demand it from them as a right. It is clear that this means that this system is not one of individual charity and *Zakat* – this is that system whose duty is to cater for the *Rabubiyat* of the whole of mankind. In this system every needy one receives the means of sustenance as a right.

We have seen above (in Surah *Al-Ma'un*) that the people who falsify Deen are those who think *As-Salaat* is the name for the visible and physical movements of *Namaz*, and they ignore the spirit, purpose, aim and need of it. In Surah *An-Nisa* these people are called hypocrites (*Munafiqeen*) and their condition is described as being:

... When they stand up for Salaat, they stand without earnestness (Kusala), to be seen of men... (4:142)

When they stand up for *As-Salaat* then it is for the state of *Kusala*. In other words, they consider that the duty of *Salaat* is fulfilled by these movements and procedures - those movements and procedures which people are able to witness, and in this way can praise them for being very pious in reciting *Namaz*. There is a very fine point implicit in the word *Kusala* in this verse. The one who is fluffing up the cotton has a tool which, along with a bow, has a wire attached to it; by combining the two the objective of fluffing up the cotton is achieved. But if the wire and bow are both separated from each other, then this objective can never be achieved. This wire is called *Al-Kasal* when it has been separated from the bow. You can now understand for yourselves that a *Salaat* in which the aim and purpose are detached from its visible movements, what value can it have in the Divine balance?

This is the condition of hypocrites as noted in Surah *At-Tauba*:

...that they come to Salaat without earnestness; and that they offer contributions unwillingly. (9:54)

If they come to *Salaat*, then it is in a condition of *Kusala*, and if they contribute anything for the sake of Deen, then they consider it a liability!

This reality will have become evident before you from these verses that, according to the Quran, to what an extent an interlinked relationship exists between *Salaat* and the system of *Infaaq* - and what the consequence is according to the Quran when the economic system is separated from *Salaat*, or the system of *Salaat* is separated from an economic system.

2.60 *Namaz*

We have already noted that, although according to the Quran the meaning of establishing *Salaat* is to establish that system in which all members of a society continue to keep following the Divine laws, in the Quran this word (*Salaat*) has also come in this form which is termed as *Namaz*. *Namaz* is a word from the ancient Persian language (Pahlavi). The Zoroastrians of Iran (who are called *Parsi* among us) used to call their way of worship as *Namaz*. This word came to us (the Indian sub-continent) from them and became so commonplace that now this very same word is used in place of *Salaat*, even though this word does not appear in the Quran anywhere. Furthermore, as noted above, the word *As-Salaat* has also been used for those congregations which are now called *Namaz*.

2.61 Connection Between Bodily Movements and Thinking

The human condition is such that when some sentiment surfaces in his heart, he expresses it both through his mouth, and together with this, such movements also occur automatically from other parts of his body which become the manifestation of this motive or thought. For example, when emotions of happiness are aroused in your heart, then the waves of this spread across your face in the form of a smile. When you say *Salaam* to someone, your hand automatically rises towards your forehead. When you pay respects to someone, your head bows down, and in a state of deep devotion this bowing down takes on an extreme form which is called prostration. According to linguistics, this spontaneous harmony of thoughts and parts of the body is called parallelism. This display of the parts of the body is so involuntary and spontaneous that you cannot prevent it. If you place the restriction on a speaker that he can make a speech in any way he desires, but during the speech he should remain still, no kind of movement should be evident from him, nor should any particular expressions appear on his face, you will see that he will either simply not be able to make any speech, or even if he manages to reel out some written words, his speech will remain ineffective and

without any impact. These perceptible and visible movements of the parts of the human body are called formalism – rites and customs. The Quran has not declared these internal urges to be forbidden – their manifestation and expression is permitted. In *Salaat* (*Namaz*) standing, bowing, prostration and *Tawaaf* (circumambulation) etc. as rites of Hajj are the satisfaction of this very need of man. If these visible manifestations are abandoned, then either only philosophical rhetoric will remain, or states of monasticism. Whether these are concepts of philosophy or states of mysticism, these are in any case individual, and have no connection with collectivism. But Islam is the name for a collective system, therefore these visible manifestations also remain in place, and it is also necessary for there to be uniformity and harmony among them because their mutual harmony is the manifestation of unity of purpose in the Ummah.¹⁶⁵

2.62 Manifestation of Rites

On the other hand, if purpose and need disappear from these practices, and the carrying out of these rituals becomes an aim in itself, then this is called worship, which is found to exist in every religion in one form or another. Amongst us as well, because Islam has become converted into only a *Madhab* (religion), therefore in this also *As-Salaat* is considered to be confined to the visible movements of *Namaz*, and the meaning of *Ibadat* has been declared to be worship. And these same manifestations have become considered to be the requirement of Islam.

With this introductory explanation, let us now look at the gatherings of *As-Salaat* in the light of the Quran. Regarding the Islamic system, it is stated in Surah *Ash-Shura*:

Those who hearken to their Rabb and establish Salaat; who (conduct) their affairs by mutual consultation; who spend out of what We bestow on them for sustenance.
(42:38)

These are those people who respond willingly to the call from the Divine laws, establish *Salaat*, and settle their affairs through mutual consultation and deliberate over what kinds of methods need to be adopted for the duty of delivering *Infjaaq*. The history of the initial era tells that when the need would arise for consultation on some important matter by the State, then an announcement used to be made

¹⁶⁵ The author here has conflated the involuntary movements of the body in response to emotions with the deliberately planned ritualistic movements over which man has full control. The reason for this conflation is unclear. (Ed)

from the government - *As-Salaat ul Jamia'tu* (gather for *Salaat*). On hearing this, people would assemble to participate in this gathering.¹⁶⁶ Since the purpose of consultation was to obey the Divine laws, that is why its commencement was in the form of *Namaz* (just as among us the inauguration of a meeting traditionally starts with the recitation from the Quran). It is evident from this that these gatherings used to take place at appointed times. This is why it is stated:

... establish Salaat: for such Salaat is enjoined on Momineen at stated times. (4:103)

Remember! For *Momineen*, *Salaat* is a duty which should be carried out on time i.e. such a duty which should be performed at the stated time. In other words, whatever time has been fixed for it, it will be essential to assemble in this gathering at that time.

If these timings have been set by Allah Himself, then there can be no alteration in this, although in urgent situations emergency gatherings (other than planned gatherings) can be organised. If Allah has not set their timings, then these will be agreed through mutual consultation, and it will be possible to make alterations (through mutual consultation).¹⁶⁷

This is that call for those gatherings which the Quran has noted as calling for *Salaat*. For example, it is stated in Surah *Al-Jumah*:

O you who have accepted Eimaan! When the call is proclaimed for Salaat on the Day of Assembly (Yaum ul Jumah), hasten earnestly to the Zikr of Allah, and leave off business... (62:9)

O members of *Jamaat e Momineen*! When you are called to *Salaat* on the day of gathering, then leaving behind all your tasks and engagements, hasten towards the place of assembly because 'matters of Allah' will be discussed there. (The full meaning of these verses will be explained at their own place). At another place it is stated:

When you proclaim your call to Salaat they take it (but) as mockery and sport; that is because they are a people without understanding. (5:58)

¹⁶⁶ I have quoted this here considering it to be historical evidence because it appears to be a practical application of the Quranic principle of '*Nu'dia lis-Salaat*' (announcement for *Salaat*) (62:9). This is my understanding regarding the historical evidence of the earlier time i.e. whichever narrative does not go against the Quran, I do not feel any hesitation in accepting it; whatever goes against it, I declare it to be unacceptable.

¹⁶⁷ Has Allah defined the timings for these gatherings? A discussion about this will come a little later on.

The state of the opponents is such that when you call for gatherings such as *As-Salaat*, they mock it.

After *Salaat*, all other matters used to be resolved in the *Masjid* (mosque) e.g. it is noted in Surah *Al-Maida* that when there is some contention in the matter of a legacy, then following *Salaat* the concerned parties should be held back, so that a decision in this matter can be taken according to the law (5:106). In order to participate in these gatherings, it is very important to observe cleanliness. In this regard, the Quran has given instructions at various places about bathing, ablution, and ablution without water, etc. (5:6, 4:43). It has also been emphasised that you should participate in these gatherings with full consciousness and awareness, because there will be discussions about matters of great importance there. When you do not even comprehend what you are uttering, then instead of benefit, there will be a loss by participation in these gatherings (4:43).

The form in which we perform *Namaz*, there is no mention of its constituents and their details in the Quran. From among these, only a few have been referred to in general terms in the Quran. In other words, these constituents have not been expounded in the Quran. And from here a very important and fundamental question comes before us whose connection is with the essence of Deen itself.

2.63 Principles and their Sub-Clauses

A principle is one thing, and explaining this principle and the ways in which to act on this principle is another thing. The principle always remains immutable, while changes keep taking place in the methods and procedures by which to act on it according to the demands of the time. It can be understood by referring to an example relating to physical life - that human life depends on food. This is an immutable principle which is consistent from the beginning till the present. But the nature of food and its form has continued to change. In the earlier eras the food of those who lived in caves was different from that of human beings of today. Even today there is a difference in the food of citizens of different countries and this variation is mostly the consequence of climate and environment.

Furthermore, there is a difference in the diet of an individual during the various stages and circumstances of his life. Children have a different diet, the diet during adolescence is something else, and even more different in old age. There is also a difference between the diet of a healthy person and a patient. If this principle is adopted that there can be no change in diet under any circumstances, then life

cannot advance even a couple of steps. This also applies to those principles and values which have been received from Allah for the guidance of man. These principles are called *Ad-Deen*, which has continued unchanged from the beginning till now. It is stated in Surah *Ash-Shura*:

The same Deen has He established for you as that which He enjoined on Nuh - that which We have sent by inspiration to you - and that which We enjoined on Ibraheem, Musa, and Eisa: namely, that you should remain steadfast in Deen, and make no divisions therein... (42:13)

That same path of Deen has been proposed for you too, for which the command was given to Nuh, Ibraheem, Musa, Eisa, and which is now being revealed through *Wahi* to you (O Rasul). They were all told this same thing, to always keep this Deen established and to never create any difference and division in it. This *Ad-Deen* was those principles which were kept immutable from beginning till end, but there used to be a change continuously in the methods by which to act on these principles according to circumstances. The state of the limitation of knowledge at the beginning of human life was such that Nuh was even taught through *Wahi* how to construct a boat (11:37). It is apparent from this that in that era, in order to act practically on Deen, even minor rules and procedures used to be passed on through *Wahi*. As human knowledge kept on expanding, a reduction and change used to be made in these constituents.

2.64 Cancellation and the Cancelled

In Surah *Al-Baqarah* this reality has been explained in these words:

None of Our revelations do We abrogate or cause to be forgotten, but We substitute something better or similar... (2:106)

The technique of *Wahi* has been that some laws used to be revealed through a messenger; after this messenger, some of these laws used to be changed by his followers (this is called tampering). Some used to be wasted or forgotten, either due to these intrigues of theirs, or through heavenly and earthly disasters. Some were also such that though they remained unchanged, it was felt necessary to make a change in them as a result of an alteration in the condition of the times. At that point in time another messenger would arrive. Through him, those very same principles of *Ad-Deen* used to be revealed which were communicated by the previous messengers. As far as the constituents of these were concerned, whichever of these were aimed to be kept as such, they were reiterated (these have

been called *Mithli'ba*¹⁶⁸); and those which were considered to be alterable, by cancelling them such guidelines were revealed in their place which were in line with the needs of the time. As a consequence of this, these updated instructions used to be improved from the former ones. In another verse these have been termed as altered verses:

When We substitute one revelation for another, and Allah knows best what He reveals, they say, 'You are but a forger': but most of them understand not. (16:101)

In Surah *Al-Hajj* this fact has been noted in these comprehensive words:

Never did We send a messenger (or a Nabi) before you, but when he framed a desire, Shaitan threw some (vanity) into the message (after the messenger left) but Allah will cancel anything (vain) that Shaitan mixes in, and Allah will confirm (and establish) His Signs: for Allah is full of Knowledge and Wisdom. (22:52)

O Rasul! Our procedure has been that the revelation which used to be sent to the *Anbiya* and messengers, when *Shaitan* mixed something in it (after the departure of the messenger), then We used to send another messenger, and through the revelation sent down to him, by erasing the adulteration by *Shaitan* (by cancelling it), We used to establish Our laws once again – this all took place according to the knowledge and wisdom of Allah. This is why the followers of the previous messenger used to quarrel with the messenger and used to say that the bye-laws which you are presenting are different from our *Sharia*, and it is obvious from this that you are not a messenger of Allah – you devise these commands yourself and by attributing them to Allah call this a Divine revelation. Referring to these kinds of objections of theirs, it was stated that if any such commandments of *Shariat* are presented by a new messenger which are different from the commandments bestowed on an earlier messenger, then this is also according to the programme of Allah. These sub-clauses (constituents) are able to be changed and modified, whilst the essence of Deen remains immutable. Therefore, disputes should not be created about the original Deen on the basis of these changes in procedures and sub-clauses:

To every people have We appointed procedures which they must follow: let them not then dispute with you on the matter... (22:67) See also (5:48)

We gave different procedures and sub-clauses of Deen to every nation (according to their circumstances) but the essence of Deen (*Al-Amr*) remained the same in every case. They should not fall into disputes regarding the essence of Deen by presenting these changes in sub-clauses as a justification. (For example) in the

¹⁶⁸ *Mithli'ba* - alike, or similar. (Ed)

Jewish *Sharia* the fat of animals with nails, and the fat (from specific areas) of cows and goats was forbidden (*Haram*) (6:146) but the Quran has not declared this forbidden (*Haram*).¹⁶⁹

2.65 Final Code of Life

This process continued like this until humanity reached that era in which the speed of progress and expanse of human knowledge was to become very rapid, this is why according to His programme of *Mash'eat*, Allah sent a final messenger, and whatever guidance was to be provided to man until the Last Day was preserved and completed in the Book sent down on this messenger. The crux of this Book was that in it:

1. The principles of Deen were the same as those which were continuing from the beginning.
2. As far as commandments were concerned, there were very few whose details were defined by Allah Himself. These were those details which were aimed to be kept immutable.
3. And other commandments were only given as principles i.e. their sub-clauses were not defined by Allah Himself because these sub-clauses were not meant to remain immutable for all time; changes were going to take place in these according to changing circumstances.

The above three points are illustrated through the following examples:

- (1) Obedience can only be to Allah, not to any human being. This was an eternal principle of Deen which was continuing as immutable from the beginning, and which was to remain immutable.
- (2) Under the commandments the Quran has itself explained all the details of those relationships which are declared *Haram* for *Nikah* (4:23). Similarly, the shares of inheritance have also been defined by the Quran itself (4:11-12, etc.).
- (3) Crimes are of numerous types. The Quran has itself specified punishments for a few among these (theft, *Zina*, slandering, treason) and has not laid down the punishment for the rest.

¹⁶⁹ When verse (6:146) is read with reference to the previous verse, this indicates that this forbidding was instituted by the Jews themselves as an adulteration, and Allah relates this to Himself. The verse sums it up by saying this is in recompense for their wilful disobedience. (Ed).

- (4) And some commandments are such which have only been given as principles e.g. though the ruling for mutual consultation has been given (42:38), the actual machinery for consultation has not been specified by it.

From these examples you will have seen what the form of the principles and injunctions of the Quran is. As far as these principles and details which are given in the Quran are concerned, neither any deduction nor addition can be made in them, nor any change or modification. As far as the rest of the commandments are concerned, the details of which the Quran has not itself defined, a question arises about how these sub-clauses will be determined. In relation to this, Allah has clarified this matter, saying that do not think about these that this has been an oversight on Our part, that we have not defined their details – these have been left like this intentionally. It is declared:

O you who have Eimaan! Ask not questions about things which, if made plain to you, may cause you trouble. But if you ask about things while the Quran is being revealed, they will be made plain to you. Allah has pardoned that which is past: for Allah is All-Protecting and Forbearing. Some people before you did ask such questions, and they became thereby Kafir. (5:101-102)

O *Jamaat e Momineen!* Do not insist on asking about those matters which We have not revealed: at this point in time, when the process of revelation is in progress, if (supposing) these matters are also included in the Quran, then you will end up in difficulties. By including these in the Quran, this would mean that there can never be any change in them, and when due to changes in circumstances these become impracticable, then it will become difficult for you to perform these. Before you, a nation acted exactly like this; then their condition became such that in order to rid themselves of these impracticable clauses, they cast off the mantle of Deen itself. Hence, those sub-clauses which We have not defined have been kept like this intentionally.

2.66 The Method to Define Sub-Clauses

The question which arises is that this used to take place in the case of previous messengers, that these kinds of sub-clauses would be received via the new messenger. Now, when the process of *Wahi* itself has been ended, and following Rasul-ullah no more messenger is ever coming, then what procedure has been given for the determination of sub-clauses, and any changes and modifications according to need? In the verse quoted above, this has also been stated that even

during the revelation of the Quran it was not aimed to establish these sub-clauses according to *Wabi*. Hence, for the determination and modification of these sub-clauses, the method which was proposed after the messenger was the same as was adopted during the life of Rasul-ullah. For this Rasul-ullah had been instructed:

...and consult them in affairs...(3:159)

This means that the determination, alteration and modification of these sub-clauses will be through mutual consultation, not via *Wabi*. The instruction of the Quran (for mutual consultation) regarding this procedure for the determination of these sub-clauses had commenced during the time of Rasul-ullah. After this, the question which arises before us is what method has been suggested for this after the demise of Rasul-ullah. For this, first of all this fact was made clear that the system of consultation (the Islamic system of government) which had become established during the era of Rasul-ullah was not only meant to be for the duration of the lifetime of the messenger – it was intended to remain implemented even after him. In Surah *Al e Imran* it is stated:

Muhammad is no more than a messenger: many were the messengers that passed away before him. If he died or were slain, will you then turn back on your heels? If any do turn back on his heels, not the least harm will he do to Allah; but Allah (on the other hand) will swiftly reward those who (serve Him) with gratitude. (3:144)

This means that the system of government which was established during the eminent life of Rasul-ullah was meant to endure after the messenger, and according to this, the command given to Rasul-ullah for the determination and modification of the sub-clauses was also meant to be acted upon even after him. Hence, (in the same way that Rasul-ullah was instructed to carry out mutual consultations for the determination of these matters, similarly) the *Jamaat e Momineen* were told:

...who (conduct) their affairs by mutual consultation...(42:38)

From the above explanations it is clear that there can be no kind of alteration in the principles and laws, values and commandments of *Ad-Deen* which are present and preserved in the Quran. And whichever details are not given in them, their determination and modification according to the changes in circumstances will be through the Islamic system of government.

2.67 Combination of Permanence and Change

Through this entrancing combination of permanence and change, the caravan of humanity will continue to advance forward, treading through its stages joyfully and felicitously. This is a demand of human life itself. If there is any sub-clause in it which is not capable of change, then its example will become like that of a boat without an anchor which is left at the mercy of the turbulent events of an era. And if there is nothing within it which is capable of being changed, then it will become static and like a stone: its manifestation and evolution will come to an end.

2.68 What Happened Subsequently?

During the eminent life of Rasul-ullah, and after him as long as the Quranic system remained in place (which is termed the Caliphate post *Risalat*), this combination of permanence and change also remained in place. This was that core momentum of this system as a result of which this Ummah attained those heights and expanses within a few years whose parallel is not to be found anywhere in human history. But, unfortunately, this system did not remain established, and when this system itself no longer remained, then the process of defining the sub-clauses of its principal commands and any change also ended. At that time Deen converted into *Madhab* (religion), (and as happened in every religion) it was also then deemed about those sub-clauses which were prevalent at that time that these will remain unchangeable forever (like the principles of Deen). As a consequence of this, life became static and frozen. Because of this, not only did these clauses gradually become unworkable, it became impossible even to act on the principles of Deen itself. This is because it is only possible to act on principles when the methods and procedures for acting on them are in line with the requirements of the time. If these methods become frozen, then it is also no longer possible to act on Deen, just as, for example, if it is assumed that the unchangeable method of travel is a bullock and cart, then reaching the moon would become impossible, no matter how much you may be convinced, in principle, of the possibility of reaching the moon. In these circumstances, what *Madhab* does is that it declares the aim of Deen to be the continuation of enacting the appearances of these constituents and keeps on emphasising fervent adherence to these. But this technique also cannot remain effective for long, this is because man can only comply with that undertaking willingly and compulsorily whose results keep on manifesting before him. By the following of displayed rites, no result comes before us. Hence, those people who judge deeds by their outcomes do not remain attached to these displayed rites. This common complaint in our time that the new generation of Muslims is becoming indifferent

towards religion - this is the reason for this. This generation (i.e. the class of educated youth) is neither willing to accept any claim without logic and reason, nor willing to act on any programme whose tangible results do not appear before them. If the correct system of Deen and its effects of improving humanity would have been before them, then not only would this youth have made it a part of their life, but (in the words of the Quran) other nations would also have been attracted towards it in droves (110:2). And in this way, this proclamation of the Quran would have become visible as an established truth:

It is He Who has sent His Messenger with guidance and the Deen of Truth, to proclaim it over all Deen, even though the Mushrikeen may detest it. (9:33)

Allah is He Who has sent His messenger with clear guidance and a system based on truth, so that this system overpowers all other systems, never mind how distasteful this may be to the *Mushrikeen*.¹⁷⁰

2.69 The Timings of *Salaat*

From these explanations this fact has become clear why the Quran itself did not define the full details of all its commands. After this let us return to the topic being examined i.e. towards the constituents and details of *Salaat* (*Namaz*). There simply cannot be two viewpoints about the importance that *Salaat* holds in the system of Deen. But despite this, you will see that the Quran has not given definite details about its timings, *Rakaat*¹⁷¹, movements and recitations¹⁷², etc. Some indications are to be found about some of these (in the Quran), and regarding the remainder, not even this much. First, let us consider the timings of *Salaat*. There are pointers about these at the following places:

Establish Salaat at the sun's decline (Daluk e Shams), till the darkness of the night (Ghasa-Qi-Layl), and the morning recitation: for the reading in the morning carries its testimony. (17:78)

- (1) The common translation of this verse (17:78) is that you should establish *Salaat* from *Daluk e Shams* to *Ghasa-Qi-Layl* and Quran *al-Fajr*. Bear in mind that the Quran *al-Fajr* is very *Mash'bud*. In this the words *Daluk e*

¹⁷⁰ This is an essential need if the world is to become peaceful and free from tyranny and poverty. (Ed)

¹⁷¹ *Rakaat* – the number of times one has to stand and bow down during the reading of *Namaz*.

¹⁷² This means what to recite during the reading of *Namaz*.

Shams and *Ghasa-Qi-Layl* require our attention. The word *Daluk* has a very broad meaning. Its basic meaning is that of movement. This word is also used for when the sun rises to its zenith, and also for when it has declined and set. And the darkness at the beginning of the night is called *Ghasa-Qi-Layl*. From this respect, from the rising of the sun to sunset, in fact, till sometime after sunset (till *Ghask*), all of that time is included in it. So many longwinded but mutually contradicting accounts have been documented in the interpretation of this verse in the books of *Tafsir* that it is not possible to present even a summary of them here. We have presented the verse and the literal meaning of these words as well. At least this much has become clear from the verse that timings have not been defined in it, even though (as noted before) the technique of the Quran is that when it intends to present something precisely, then it does not make use of pointers and indicators – it explains it clearly, unambiguously and in a specific manner. But in this verse that specific manner has not been employed.

- (2) In Surah *Hud* it is stated:

And establish Salaat at the two ends of the day and at the approaches of the night... (11:114)

The general meanings of this are that you should establish *Salaat* at both ends of the day and in the first part of the night. Similarly, it is stated in Surah *Taba*:

... and celebrate (constantly) the Hamd of your Rabb, before the rising of the sun, and before its setting; yes, celebrate them for part of the hours of the night, and at the sides of the day... (20:130)

In this verse the word *Salaat* is not mentioned, the word *Tasbeeh* has been used. But it is commonly averred that this is also intended to mean *Salaat*. In this, both ends of the day are mentioned, before sunrise and before sunset, and the hours of the night. Even here nothing is stated specifically. Attempts are commonly made to prove from this verse, and a few other similar kinds of verses, that the prevalent five timings of *Namaz* are specified by the Quran itself. But the general claim is that these timings were defined by Rasul-Ullah.

- (3) It is stated in Surah *An-Nur* in relation to social manners that children working in your homes can roam about unchecked in the house, aside from these three timings:

... and the (children) among you who have not come of age ask your permission (before they come to your presence) on three occasions: before morning Salaat; the while you doff your clothes for the noonday heat; and after the late-night Salaat: these are your three times of undress... (24:58)

Before the *Salaat* of *Fajr*, and after the *Salaat* of *Isha*, and in the afternoon, because during these times you are sitting or lying in an informal state after disrobing. In this verse the *Namaz* of *Fajr* and *Isha* are mentioned by name, from which it is evident that during the time of Rasul-ullah two *Namaz* were known as such, although there is nothing in the Quran as a command regarding these either.

- (4) In Surah *Al-Baqarah* there is mention of matters related to *Talaq* (divorce) first, and following this it is stated:

Guard strictly your Salaat, especially the middle Salaat; and stand before Allah in a devout (frame of mind). (2:238)

Protect your *Salaat* (plural form) and the ‘middle *Salaat*’. In this the meaning of ‘middle *Salaat*’ is taken to be that of the intermediary *Namaz*, and it is said that from this is meant the *Namaz* of *Asr* because this comes in between *Fajr* and *Zuhr* on one side, and *Maghrib* and *Isha* on the other side. (What the meaning is of this verse according to my understanding will be covered at its own place).

2.69.1 Rakaat

As far as *Rakaat* are concerned, the Quran has also not defined these specifically either. This much has been described in Surah *An-Nisa* that in the conditions of war, when you are faced with a threat from the enemy, then *Namaz* should be performed in such a way that one group of *Mujabedeens* should stand with the Imam (i.e. Rasul-ullah) and remain armed. Once they have performed prostration they should step back and the other group which has not yet fulfilled *Salaat* should join the Imam, they should also remain armed (4:101-102). In Surah *Al-Baqarah* it is declared:

If you fear (an enemy), do so on foot, or riding, (as may be most convenient), but when you are in security, do Zikr of Allah in the manner He has taught you, which you knew not (before). (2:239)

In other words, when you are in a state of fear, then remind yourself of the laws of Allah either on foot or on horseback. And when you are in a state of felicity,

then act as you have been taught. Regarding *Rakaat*, indicators are found only in these verses of the Quran. I do not wish to go into their details further because there are differences about these among the various sects i.e. these differences play a prominent role regarding how many *Fard Rakaat*¹⁷³ and how many *Sunnat*¹⁷⁴ and how many *Najf*¹⁷⁵ etc. there are in every *Namaz*. (I will explain these verses according to my understanding at their own place).

2.70 Recitation in *Salaat*

As far as reciting something in *Namaz* is concerned, the Quran has not dealt with this either. In a verse of Surah *Bani Israel* it is stated:

...Neither speak your Salaat aloud, nor speak it in a low tone, but seek a middle course between. (17:110)

Adopt neither a loud voice nor absolute silence in your *Salaat*, instead adopt a middle course between the two.¹⁷⁶ Some people view *Salaat* here to mean *Namaz*, whereas others view it as a general supplication (because *Salaat* also means supplication).

In Surah *At-Tauba*, regarding the hypocrites, Rasul-ullah is informed:

Nor ever supplicate for any of them that dies, nor stand at his grave... (9:84)

You should not even pray at the funeral of any one of them, nor stand at their grave sides. The meaning usually taken from this verse is the *Namaz-e-Janaza* (funeral prayer). In Surah *Bani Israel* it is stated:

And pray in the small watches of the morning: (it would be) an additional prayer for you... (17:79)

O Rasul! You should also remain awake for some part of the night but this command is only for you. The meaning usually taken from this is the *Namaz* of

¹⁷³ *Fard* – a duty or obligation to perform in *Namaz*. (Ed)

¹⁷⁴ These are over and above *Fard* requirements and were reportedly performed by the messenger. (Ed)

¹⁷⁵ *Najf* – these are additional, if someone wishes to get an extra ‘reward’. (Ed)

¹⁷⁶ Another view that merits serious consideration is that the aim of the Quran is to disseminate its message to the whole of mankind in such a way that there is neither compulsion, nor a dereliction in duty to communicate the message. As noted in (29:45), *Salaat* prevents from shameful and unjust deeds. (Ed)

Tabajjud, and it is said that this was specified for Rasul-ullah, and even then not as a duty but as *Nafl* (extra prayer).

According to my understanding, this is all that is in the Quran regarding details about *Namaz*. According to the principle which I referred to earlier regarding the definition of sub-clauses, I do not require to exert myself further in this matter, because my understanding is that the principal command about *Salaat* was passed on to Rasul-ullah through *Wabi*, and he would have defined a complete programme for this through mutual consultation according to the Quranic principle.¹⁷⁷ These decrees of the Quran appear to be details of this programme. In this regard, what the pattern is of the sub-clauses in the commandment which the Quran itself defines has already been illustrated through some examples. At this moment in time I have verses (2:282-283)¹⁷⁸ of Surah *Al-Baqarah* before me. It has been described in this what procedure should be adopted when you are dealing in the matter of mutual loans – just see in what great detail and emphasis the Quran has explained this programme. When it has this style regarding sub-clauses in matters of transaction, then why did it not adopt a similar style for defining the sub-clauses in connection with a fundamental duty such as that of *Salaat*? It is strange that in the case of ablution it gave such detailed instruction - wash the face, wash the hands up to the elbows, wipe the head, wash the feet up to the ankles; do this after a call of nature; do this when you are a wayfarer or a patient; and about what to do if water is not available (5:6). Such detailed instructions have been provided about the preparation for *Salaat*, but regarding the procedure of *Salaat* itself no definitive command in this manner has been given. From this it is apparent that Allah wished to (deliberately) keep these sub-clauses undefined.

From among the predecessors, those sects who defined the constituents of *Namaz*, based these on *Abadeeth*¹⁷⁹ or *Fiqah*. But the extent of variation in these constituents is obvious from the *Namaz* of different sects. Another fact is also worthy of our attention at this point. The Quran had declared *As-Salaat* to be a means to create unity among the Ummah. It is stated in Surah *Al-Rum*:

¹⁷⁷ The commonly held belief is that Rasul-ullah defined these sub-clauses through *Wabi Khafi* (concealed *Wabi*), which is not present in the Quran. The Quran is only *Wabi Jalli* (visible *Wabi*). However, no proof for these two types of *Wabi* is to be found in the Quran. *Wabi* was only of one kind, all of which is preserved within the Quran. This belief about these two types of *Wabi* existed among the Jews. Details of this will be available at its own place.

¹⁷⁸ Verse (2:282) is probably the longest verse of the Quran.

¹⁷⁹ For more details, see *The Status of Hadeeth in Islam*, by the author. (Ed)

...establish *Salaat* and be not among those who join gods with Allah, those who split up their *Deen* and become sects - each party rejoicing in that which is with itself!
(30:31-32)

Establish *Salaat* and do not become one among the *Mushrikeen* (those who associate man-made laws with Allah's laws) i.e. do not become one among those people who created differences in *Deen* and were divided into sects. And then the state of affairs become such that every sect began to think that we are on the path of *Haqq* and the remainder are on the path of *Batil*.

2.71 The Existing *Namaz* is a Manifestation of Sectarianism

In other words, the Quran had declared *Salaat* to be a means to create unity and to maintain unity in the Ummah, but unfortunately that same *Salaat* (in the form of *Namaz*) has become the manifestation of sectarianism in the Ummah. If there are ten thousand Muslims sitting in some congregation, there will be no visible sign of sectarianism among them, they will all appear as individuals of one Ummah. But if during this time an *Azaan*¹⁸⁰ for *Namaz* is heard, then one group among them will head for one mosque, and the other group will head for another mosque. And in this way their sectarian differences will become clearly visible, and the state of intensity of these differences will be such that Muslims of one sect will not be given permission to say their *Namaz* in the mosque of another sect, and if he absentmindedly reads his *Namaz* behind the Imam of another sect, then there will be an outcry that his *Namaz* has not taken place.

2.72 The 'Ahle-Quran' Sect

Since these sects are claimants of this fact that these constituents in *Namaz* which differ from each other are defined according to *Ahadeeth* or *Fiqah*, the effect of this does not impact the Quran. But during our time another such sect has emerged which has directly targeted the Quran itself in such a way that this claim of the Quran that there is no contradiction in it has become *Batil* (Allah forbid). The claim of the Quran is:

¹⁸⁰ The call to prayer which is announced from a mosque prior to every *Namaz*.

Do they not ponder on the Quran? Had it been from other than Allah, they would surely have found therein much contradiction. (4:82)

Do these people not reflect on the Quran? If it had been from someone other than Allah, they would have found many contradictory statements in it. In other words, one of the reasons the Quran has presented as being evidence of its claim to be from Allah is that it does not contain any contradictory statement.

The claim of the sect to which I have referred above, and which refers to itself using the term *Ahle-Quran*, is that the details and sub-clauses pertaining to all the Quranic injunctions are present within the Quran itself. For this they have first of all taken the constituents of *Namaz*. Without entering into a lengthy discussion, I consider it sufficient to say what the outcome of this fruitless effort of theirs was. The founder of this sect was Maulana Abdullah Chakralwi and one group of his followers resides in Lahore. Both of these have defined the constituents of *Namaz* (according to their claim) from the Quran, and the state of their discovered constituents is such that:

Maulana Chakralwi	Lahore Sect
1. <i>Namaz</i> five times	<i>Namaz</i> three times
2. Two, three, four <i>Rakaat</i> in <i>Namaz</i>	Only two <i>Rakaat</i> in <i>Namaz</i>
3. Two prostrations (<i>Sajda</i>) in each <i>Rakaat</i>	Only one prostration (<i>Sajda</i>) in each <i>Rakaat</i>

As far as the recitations within *Salaat* are concerned, these are also very peculiar, even though they are based on the verses of the Quran.

Now if someone raises this objection that a Quran whose condition is such that even in the constituents of *Namaz* there are differences to such an extent, then how can it be accepted as being sent from the direction of Allah? Just think, what possible reply can be given to this? And if these two groups (leader and followers) start arguing with each other, and hurl accusations at each other that he has not understood the Quran correctly, then another objection will arise from this, which if not more severe than the first, will certainly be no less. The one who is objecting will say that the claim of the Quran is that it is *Kitab ul Mubeen* (a book which makes things clear) and it explains every one of its points with great clarity, but its practical position is such that it cannot even detail numbers in an unambiguous way in its instruction. The way in which it details these numbers, one person considers it to be five times, the other three times, some others consider it to be two, three, four *Rakaat*, and some only two *Rakaat*. Some understand it to be two prostrations, some only one. Intellectual differences in the human thought

process about abstract realities is understandable because these are explained metaphorically. But the book which has this style regarding defined commands and laws, never mind thinking it to be a book from Allah (Allah forbid), even among human literature it cannot achieve a respectable status. You can see how much disservice is done to the Quran by this! It is with great pain and sorrow that it has to be said that by taking the name of the Quran, to what a degree these people have shown enmity towards the Quran. And this is the very reason that I have had to specifically counter their ideology and *Maslah*.

But after having said and heard all this, let us come to the practical life. The condition of Muslims today is such that they have different sects, and there are differences in the constituents of the *Namaz* of every sect and this very difference is a mirror reflection of their sectarianism. On the other hand, the Quran has declared the unity of the Ummah to be the basis of Deen. The question which arises from this is, can these differences be resolved? And can unity be created once again in this Ummah?

2.73 What Should be Done?

In support or authority for these differences, every sect presents their own respective *Abadeeth* or decisions of *Fiqah*. These *Abadeeth* or inventions of *Fiqah* can serve as an authority for these differences but are not its basic cause. The basic cause is the disappearance of that system through which the establishment of Deen and the unity of Ummah was connected. When this is the fundamental cause of these differences, then there can be no better way to alleviate these other than for that system to be established again. At this point it is often said that this is merely living in a world of dreams – that system cannot be re-established, to say this is either self-deception or deceiving others. Whichever it may be, the Quran had, in any case, warned in advance regarding this: that if you had thought this system can remain established during the lifetime of Rasul-ullah, not after him, then this will signify turning your back on Deen (3:143, details have already been covered). It is possible to re-establish this system and it is easy as well. Whichever State makes this decision based on *Eimaan* that all its affairs¹⁸¹ will be managed according to the Quran, and after that it also starts acting on this, that State will then be called the follower of *Risalat*. The primary condition for this is that those responsible individuals in whose hands are the reins of power should

¹⁸¹ In which there will be no distinction or differentiation between religious and non-religious matters.

themselves be followers of the Divine values. The responsibility of this State will be that it should assess whatever is currently prevalent in the name of Islam against the criteria of the Quran. Whatever meets this standard should be adopted and whatever goes against it should be rejected. It should be made clear that the Quranic guidance is so clear that never mind this kind of evaluation being impossible, it is not at all difficult. Regarding that which is commonly voiced that the custodians of religion also have the Quran with them currently, then why, despite this, does unity not exist among them, the reason for this is that at this point in time the Quran is not held up as a criterion for the evaluation of these matters. A great deal of what is accepted as an authority and standard is outside of the Quran, and this is the cause for these differences. When it is the proclamation of the Quran that there is no contradiction in it, then by declaring it as a criterion, how can differences remain?

As far as the sub-clauses of the Quranic principles and commands are concerned, that system will also assess and check these – those sub-clauses which meet the needs of the time will remain unchanged; those which necessitate some change, it will change them; and it will also keep adding new sub-clauses according to the requirements. In this way, based on a combination of permanence and change, the Quranic programme will again come into action.

Until this system is established, my view is that in whatever form the various sects of the Ummah are following these, they should continue to do so.¹⁸² But there should not be such extremism in this that it becomes a cause for mutual hatred and enmity. Furthermore, no individual or sect should have this right that he can change or modify any of these prevalent constituents or coin a new rite. This will lead to further dissension and conflict among the Ummah. Only the Islamic system has the right to make any deletion and addition, or any change or modification in these sub-clauses. Nor can any individual acquire this right that, following the finality of *Nabuwwat*, he comes and proclaims to the Ummah that Allah has told me like this, therefore you should do it in this very way. This claim of such an individual that ‘Allah has told him so’ is itself *Batil*. Whatever Allah had to say to mankind, He has said it for the last time in the Quran, and that is it.

¹⁸² This point needs further reflection in the light of the Quran. The Quran has asked us to view all our thoughts and deeds in the light of the Law of Requit (45:22). If the existing beliefs and practices are not challenged, then they will continue unabated; how then will change according to Quranic guidance emerge from those people who are content with their current rituals and practices, devoid of the Quran? The messengers forbade people from engaging in wrong practices. (Ed)

Although for those possessing Quranic vision it is necessary that they present the Quranic teaching and concepts before the nation, while identifying those matters which are against the Quran in the prevalent beliefs and concepts, along with this it is also necessary that they clarify this point that whatever they are saying is based on their own vision as a human being in which there is a possibility of error and omission.¹⁸³

2.74 Congregations for *Salaat* are Essential to Shape and Strengthen the Ummah

Finally, it is necessary to reiterate this point that gatherings for *Salaat* have great significance in the system of Deen. For the establishment of Deen the Quran shapes an Ummah (*Hizb-Allah*), which is completely distinct and unique from the rest of the world. And because this is a revolutionary *Jamaat*, whose aim is to overpower all man-devised systems with the proposed system of Allah, therefore its clash with other parties (or nations) is inevitable. For the formation and strengthening of a *Jamaat* two fundamental elements are intrinsically linked: exclusiveness and gregariousness. This was the exclusiveness (dissociation) for which Ibraheem had proclaimed:

There is for you an excellent model in Ibraheem and those with him, when they said to their people: 'We are clear of you and of whatever you follow besides Allah: we have rejected you, and there has arisen, between us and you, enmity and hatred for ever - unless you have Eimaan in Allah and Him alone'... (60:4)

We dissociate ourselves from you, and from those whose obedience you have adopted by abandoning Allah - we abhor them. We simply do not accept your system - we totally reject it and do not wish to conceal this fact. We proclaim loudly and clearly that our revulsion and the wedge between us is openly manifest, and this state of affairs will continue until the time that you accept *Eimaan* in one Allah – they made this proclamation, and the Quran declared this *Maslak* of theirs to be a balanced model for the Muslim Ummah. This is that emphasis and instruction for exclusiveness and dissociation which the whole Quran is full of.

¹⁸³ This has been my own way in this regard. I do not make any kind of change in the existing constituents of Islam, nor do I create a new method, or adopt one. And whichever Quranic meaning I present, I also make it clear that this is the outcome of my own vision, which cannot be free from error and omission.

There is no allowance for compromise or flexibility in this principle, and this is the practical meaning of ‘There is no god but Allah’.

As far as the other element for the basis of the Ummah is concerned i.e. gregariousness (48:29), the congregation for *Salaat* is the practical demonstration of this. At the call for this congregation, members of the Ummah hasten to the assembly point in line with the command of Allah (62:9), saying:

For me, I have set my face, firmly and truly, towards Him Who created the heavens and the earth, and never shall I associate partners with Allah.’ (6:79)

Having turned my face away from the whole world, I direct all my priorities to that Allah Who brought the universe into existence from nothing, and I do not associate anyone in His sovereignty – both elements of exclusiveness (from others) and gregariousness are included in this proclamation. In this gathering the principal aspects of the system appear in miniature form: one Ummah, its members, eliminating all kinds of differences, standing in one file; one Imam (centre of the system), on whose command all bow down and rise in unison and in one colour. And all of this is a manifestation of what reality? It is of this truth that ‘We follow You’ (1:4). Other than You, we do not accept the sovereignty of anyone else, we do not accept the rule of anyone else.

After the declaration and practical demonstration of the fundamental principles of the Divine system in this way, the proceedings for consultation about the matter for which this gathering was organised will commence.

2.75 It is Also Necessary to Retain these Soulless Forms

There is no doubt (as has previously been stated) that these congregations have now become mere showcases without aim (now that that system is no longer in place and Deen has been converted into religion in this way) and have become soulless entities. Nevertheless, it is necessary to retain their existence. One is that these rites and traditions (*Munasak*) are a means by which to maintain the separate identity of the ‘Muslim Nation,’ and secondly because, if we ever try to re-ignite this system (i.e. to re-establish it), then the stage of breathing *Ruh* into these bodies will be relatively easier. For the re-establishment of the Ummah, the metaphorical meaning of ‘breathing Divine energy into the (human) forms’ could be taken to mean this! As has been stated in the Quran:

... the spirit will be breathed into these figures, and We shall collect them all together. (18:99)

By breathing *Ruh* into these figures, their collective life will be re-ignited. Hence, along with retaining the existing form of *Namaz*, it will be necessary to bear in mind this reality that this is the reading of *Namaz* in the prevalent circumstances – the establishment of *Salaat* will only be possible when the Islamic system is established (22:41).

An illustration of what the condition of the Ummah becomes reduced to through not having a centre is illustrated in our prevalent conduct of *Namaz*. During a congregational *Fard Namaz*, you will observe unity and one colour.¹⁸⁴ But after this, in the *Salaat* without an Imam (e.g. in the recitation of *Sunnat* etc.) it will be the same mosque, the same Ummah, the same *Namaz*, but simply by not having an Imam, the whole *Jamaat* will become a display of disintegration and dissension – someone is standing, another is bowing, and another is prostrating, this one is seated – so much so, that the whole courtyard of the mosque will appear to be a representation of the current anxious thoughts and vision, and misconduct and misdeeds of Muslims. Establish *Imamat* (Centre), and that same unity and one outlook will come back.

Let us move forward after negotiating this difficult ground. We are discussing the traits of the *Muttaqeen*. The Quran has declared their next characteristic to be:

And who have Eimaan in the Revelation sent down (Nazal) to you... (2:4)

O Rasul! These are those people who have *Eimaan* in what We have sent down to you. As has been noted before, *Wahi* is the name of that special and unique knowledge which the messengers used to receive directly from Allah.

2.76 The Distinctiveness of *Wahi*

By selecting the word '*Nazool*' for this, Allah has explained this reality in a very comprehensive way. The basic meaning of its root (*N-Z-L*) is to 'descend from a height'. Regarding its various aspects and usage, we will discuss these at their relevant places. We will confine ourselves here to that meaning which signifies *Wahi*. It is declared about knowledge which is the outcome of human intellect that it exists within man and emerges from there. In other words, you can view it as this knowledge rising up from below. In contrast to this, knowledge which is bestowed from Allah should be understood as coming downwards from above.

¹⁸⁴ This unity is confined to the physical appearance of the formation of a file behind the Imam. (Ed)

This is the objectivity of this knowledge for which the word *Anzal* or *Tanzeel* has been used. There is no kind of human knowledge which does not emerge from the ‘inside to the outside’ of any individual i.e. in which there is no interference from his intellect and emotions. Until a short time ago it was considered about *Wajdaan* (intuition) that it was not the product of human intellect, it is received externally from somewhere. Research in the modern era has demonstrated that there is no intervention of any external voice in it - it is the voice of the sub-conscious itself. Iqbal has quoted Bergson (who is considered the Imam of modern day research in intuition), stating ‘intuition is only a higher kind of intellect.’¹⁸⁵

We cannot know, (and no human being other than a *Nabi* can know), what is the state of receiving *Wahi*. All that the Quran has stated is:

...for he brings down the (revelation) to thy heart by Allah's Will...(2:97)

O Rasul! Jibreel¹⁸⁶ (Gabriel) brings down this Divine knowledge with the command of Allah on your heart. This knowledge used to descend on the heart of the *Nabi* as exact words, this is why it is called *Kalaam Allah* (Allah’s Words) (9:6). Allah Himself has declared that knowledge which descended on Rasul-ullah like this to be the Quran, when it stated:

It is We Who have sent down the Quran to you by stages. (76:23)

We have sent down this Quran to you by stages and Rasul-ullah was commanded that whatever has been revealed to him from Allah should not be kept to his own self, but should also be passed on to other people. Allah’s command was:

O Messenger! Proclaim the (message) which has been sent to you from your Rabb. If you did not, you would not have fulfilled and proclaimed His mission...(5:67)

O Rasul! Whatever is sent down to you from the direction of Allah, spread it to others also. If you do not do this, you will be derelict in your duty of *Risalat* (messengerhood). In the performance of this duty of *Risalat*, Rasul-ullah gave the Quran to the Ummah in a collective, written and organised form, which is continuing to be preserved with the Ummah right up until today without any alteration or modification whatsoever in a single word. There is no matter in it

¹⁸⁵ M. Iqbal, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*. p3.

¹⁸⁶ Jibreel – this is a word from the Hebrew language. In the Quran it means that energy (force) of Allah which was used to reveal the *Wahi* of Allah on the heart of Rasul-ullah. It is also called *Rub-ul-Quds* (16:102) and also *Rub-ul-Amin* (26:193). (Ed)

which is either cancelled or tampered with. This is the *Wahi* of Allah, having *Eimaan* on which is a condition of being a *Muttaqee*.

2.77 *Wahi e Khafi* (Secret *Wahi*)

In addition, there is a belief prevalent among us that there used to be two types of *Wahi*. One was *Wahi Jalli* (visible) or *Matlu* (recited) and *Maqtoob* (transcribed) - which is noted in the Quran. And the other type is *Wahi Khafi* or *Ghair Matlu* (not recited) and *Ghair Maqtoob* (not transcribed) - *Abadeeth* are based on this type of *Wahi*. But there is zero mention of this second type of *Wahi* in the Quran. There is only mention in it of the one *Wahi* which is preserved within the Quran.¹⁸⁷

In order to be *Muttaqee* the first condition was to have *Eimaan* in Allah. After this it was declared to be essential to have *Eimaan* in *Ma'Anza Lalla-Hu* (what was being revealed from Allah). In this the first thing which needs to be understood is that our (or human beings) relationship with Allah is only through *Wahi*; apart from this there is no other means of connection with Allah. And since Allah's complete and preserved *Wahi* is now in the Quran, therefore the sole means of connection for us with Allah is the Quran. When we study the Quran, then Allah is in conversation with us (because this is Allah's Word (9:6)). And when we set out to follow its commands, we are obeying Allah, since He has declared the method for obedience to His orders and laws to be obedience of the Quran. Therefore, when the trait of *Muttaqeen* is stated to be that they have *Eimaan* in *Ma'Anza Lalla-Hu*, then the practical meaning of this is that they obey the Quran. Thus it is a Divine command itself that:

Follow (O men!) the revelation given unto you from your Rabb, and follow not, as friends or protectors, other than Him. Little it is you remember of the message. (7:3)

Whatever has been sent down to you from Allah, obey it, and other than this do not obey any other companion or guardian. Though this is all that requires to be done, there are very few people who keep this reality before them. With reference to *Ma'Anza Lalla-Hu*, we wish to confine ourselves for the time being to only this much, otherwise *Ma'Anza Lalla-Hu* is the whole of the Quran itself, therefore,

¹⁸⁷ Details regarding this issue will be given at that place where the matter of *Wahi* will be discussed.

discussion about it cannot be limited to this place (or any other one place).¹⁸⁸ It is stated about the *Muttaqeen* here that they have *Eimaan* on what is sent down to you. Together with this, it has also been stated:

...and what is revealed before you... (2:4)

And whatever, O Rasul, was sent down before you, they have *Eimaan* in that too. The question is, what is the purpose of having *Eimaan* on what was revealed before Rasul-ullah (or the Quran)? The Quran tells us that messengers kept on coming from Allah to every nation and in every era. The meaning of Rasul or *Nabi* is that they used to receive *Wabi* from Allah, and the *Wabi* of all of them will be included in *Ma'Unzi La Min Qablik* (what was sent down before). But along with this the Quran has also stated that those who claimed to follow them tampered with whatever was passed to these *Anbiya*. Moreover, some books from among these also perished as a result of both earthly and heavenly calamities. It is possible that there are some commands in which there has not been any alteration, and which are present in their original form in those adulterated books, which still remain in existence in the possession of those who claim to follow these messengers. But as we have noted in detail earlier under the subject of cancellation and revoking, the style of *Wabi* has also been that from among the commandments sent down to the earlier *Anbiya*, new directives used to be passed on via *Wabi* to the *Nabi* coming later in place of those commandments which were not aimed to be retained (even if those commandments were present in the previous books in an unadulterated form). In any case, after the revelation of the Quran, the position of the books which were revealed to the former *Anbiya* is such that:

1. Not one among these books exists today in its original unadulterated form with any nation. This is not an unfounded claim. I have compiled a history of these books, and I have proved through evidence provided by the scholars of these religions themselves that not one amongst these books exists in its original shape in which it was made available to their *Nabi*.¹⁸⁹
2. All of the guidance sent to previous *Anbiya* which was aimed to be retained in its original form is compiled within the Quran. It is on this basis that it is stated in the Quran:

To you We sent the Scripture in truth, confirming the scripture that came before it, and guarding it in safety: so judge between them by what Allah has revealed,

¹⁸⁸ Like my other writings, this endeavour from beginning till end is about what Allah has revealed (*Ma'Anza Lalla-Hu*), as this is the mission of my life.

¹⁸⁹ The title of the book is, *The Heavenly Books of the World Religions*. The book is in Urdu.

and follow not their vain desires, diverging from the Truth that has come to you... (5:48)

O Rasul! We have sent this Book down on you with *Haqq*, which will demonstrate all these claims as truths¹⁹⁰ which were made to previous Ummahs through different *Anbiya*, and which also encompasses the fundamental teaching of these *Anbiya* and is also a witness over it. Hence, make decisions about the affairs of these nations according to this Book, and do not obey their desires and opinions after the arrival of this *Al-Haqq*. As has been noted in detail earlier, the Quran also demands from these nations that they have *Eimaan* in the messengerhood of Rasul-ullah and in the Quran.

The condition of religious nations of the world is such that every one of these nations calls the religion of the others false. The natural and essential consequence of this is that the founders of these religions are also declared as liars. Because of this, mutual hatred and enmity is born. This is the basic cause of the perpetual discord and conflict among the followers of religions. The Quran provides teaching of large-heartedness and broad vision. It states to its followers that they should announce that we have *Eimaan* in all these founders¹⁹¹ of various religions that they were true messengers of Allah. They came in their respective times with the true message from Allah. Although that message does not exist anywhere in its original form (except the Quran), we respect all those *Anbiya* in the same way that we respect Muhammad, Rasul-ullah. This respect is a part of our *Eimaan* because:

... We make no distinction (they say) between one and another of His messengers... (2:285)

As far as their being a messenger is concerned, we do not draw any distinction among any of them.¹⁹² Have you observed how that ‘love’ which is declared in the words of Iqbal to be *Fa'teh A'lam* (conquering the world) is the natural and essential consequence of this *Eimaan* of the *Jamaat e Momineen*. The Quran has mentioned the names of some *Anbiya* specifically and has stated about the rest

¹⁹⁰ The Quran calling itself truth like the previous books does not mean that it verifies them in whatever state these books are. Doing this will be a clear contradiction that, on the one hand, it is declaring these as being adulterated, and then on the other hand, also stating them to be truthful. (Details will come later).

¹⁹¹ It is important to bear in mind that the *Anbiya* were not founders of Deen. They were messengers of Deen (passing the message on to others). But since the concept of Deen has not remained with the followers of various religions, they therefore call those *Anbiya* as the founders of their religions.

¹⁹² If we do this, then we are distancing ourselves from Quranic teaching at a fundamental level. (Ed)

that We have not named them (40:78, 4:164). But when our *Eimaan* happens to be this, that messengers came to every nation of the world, then whether the name of any of them has been referred to in the Quran or not, respect for those who are called the founders of their religions by religious nations will become incumbent on us. We cannot even be disrespectful regarding the eminence of any among them, this will be counter to our *Eimaan*, although if someone claims *Nabuwat* after Rasul-ullah, then we will call him a liar and will not count him among these *Anbiya* on whom we have been made duty bound to have *Eimaan*.

Allah has stated ... 'have *Eimaan* in the revelation sent to you and sent before your time'... i.e. whatever is sent down on Rasul-ullah and whatever was sent down before Rasul-ullah. In other words, there is no mention of the sending of *Wabi* after Rasul-ullah anywhere in the Quran, because the process of sending down *Wabi* was ended after Rasul-ullah.

It should be made clear that Muslims will be included only within the Ummah of Muhammad and will also follow only the Quran. They will neither enter into the Ummah of another *Nabi*, nor will they follow the books connected to them.

2.78 ...And Have the Assurance of the Hereafter (2:4)

This is the last link in the chain of the traits of *Momineen* which are being narrated i.e. *Eimaan* in the hereafter. Where this trait is the last segment in the process under view, it is also the last segment in the process of understanding the constituents of *Eimaan* itself. The first segment in this chain is *Eimaan* in Allah and the last segment is *Eimaan* in the hereafter. The practical meaning of *Eimaan* in Allah is to have *Eimaan* in the truth and firmness of the permanent, eternal, immutable principles, values and laws of Allah. And the practical meaning of *Eimaan* in the hereafter is firm conviction in the life-giving fruits resulting from following these principles and commands, and in the humanity destroying consequences of going against them, whether these manifest in this world or in the life of the hereafter. In other words, *Eimaan* in the hereafter is another name for *Eimaan* in the Law of Requit of Allah.

Akbi'run (the feminine equivalent of which is *Akbi'ratun*) is opposite to *Anwal* (first or earlier). This word is used for such a thing which is coming after some earlier thing, but after which no similar thing comes, instead, a new sequence commences. By the term 'coming after' is meant the future. It is from this that the word *Akba'ru* arises whose feminine equivalent is *Ukbra*, which means such

a thing which is completely different from its own former links. This meaning merits further reflection.

2.79 Difference Between Animalistic and Human Life

In relation to the creation of man the Quran has stated that the beginning of life on the surface of the earth occurred from the first life cell. After this, by passing through different stages, changing forms, leaving behind eons of periods, life kept advancing forward, until such a time that it entered the animalistic rank.¹⁹³ In Surah *Al-Mominun* it is first described how the human embryo passes through those very stages in the mother's uterus which every animal embryo goes through. But after this, with regard to the human child, it is stated:

... We produced out of it another creation... (23:14)

Then We made it such a creation which was completely distinct from its previous links. From this point onwards, human life became different, specific, and unique from other animals. The life of animals is defined by their physical bodies; when death becomes imposed on the body, the life of this animal ends. But human life is different and unique from them in the sense that an individual does not die with the death of his body, his life also continues onwards. But the next link of life is not like that of the previous links. The Quran has termed this as *Khalq e Jadeed* (a new creation). In Surah *Bani Israel* it is stated that these people say:

They say: 'What! when we are reduced to bones and dust, should we really be raised up to be a new creation?' (17:49) See also (17:98, 32:10)

So when we are ground into dust after decay and disintegration following death, what! will we come alive after this having acquired a new birth? At other places, by terming it as 'bring you out once again' (20:55) and 'promising a second creation' (53:47), the Quran has made it clear that that life will be different from the present earthly life. This life after death is called the life in the hereafter (*Hayat e Akhira*). If there is no *Eimaan* in this then an individual can neither be a Muslim, nor be called a Muslim.

It has been stated above that the meanings of *Akhira* are that of the future. If we look at it from the point of view of these meanings, then:

¹⁹³ Details about these matters will be given later when verses about the genesis of human beings appear.

- (1) The tomorrow to come of every individual is his future (*Farda*).
- (2) The next era of every nation is its future, whether it is a rise or decline.
- (3) After every current generation of universal humanity, the generation to come is its future
- (4) And the life after death is the future of all of them.

Two kinds of doctrines of life and systems of life based on them are to be found in the world. One doctrine of life neither accepts the eternal and immutable laws of Allah (*Wahi*), nor acknowledges the life of the hereafter. This doctrine is called atheism, or a materialistic ideology of life, and the system based on this as being secular.

2.80 Secular Doctrine of Life

Under secularism, society has the authority to formulate laws, and the consequences of disobedience to these laws is also based on the justice system established by that society. For example, an accused is arrested by the police and if the court declares him to be a criminal, he receives punishment for that crime. The first basic fault of this system is that it is society itself which formulates the laws, and whenever it wishes, it can also make changes and modifications in these laws. Hence, no one can have any certainty and assurance about how long the laws of today will remain in force and when they will be changed. The second basic limitation is that if someone's crime does not come to the notice of the police, or if he makes such an arrangement that the court cannot prove him to be a criminal, then he simply cannot receive the punishment for this crime. Contrary to this, the Law of Requit of Allah is free and far above these fundamental flaws.

2.81 Allah's Law of Requit

In this, every deed of man is bound to produce its consequences according to the eternal laws of Allah. And it is not only visible deeds which fall within its grasp, even the deceptions of the eyes and the thoughts passing through the hearts are encompassed. In Surah *Al-Momin* it is stated:

(Allah) knows of (the tricks) that deceive with the eyes, and all that the hearts (of men) conceal. (40:19)

As far as the consequences of these deeds are concerned, we could say that the whole of the Quran is an exposition of this very point. At one place it states in comprehensive terms that:

And, of a surety, to all will your Rabb pay back (in full the recompense) of their deeds: for He knows well all that they do. (11:111)

At another place it states in individual terms:

... it receives every good that it earns, and it suffers every ill that it earns... (2:286)

This is so because the effect of every deed of man affects his self (according to the Quranic philosophy of life), and carrying these imprints, this self remains in place both in this life and following this, also goes forward. Hence, there is no question of any deed remaining unaccounted for. In the communal life of the *Jamaat e Momineen*, the establishment of a system of justice is also absolutely imperative according to the Quran; but despite thousands of precautions and safeguards, the possibility of some kind of limitation remaining in it cannot be ruled out. But the Law of Requital of Allah is free from these limitations. Regarding this system, it is stated at another place:

...Every self draws the consequences of its acts on none but itself: no bearer of burdens can bear the burden of another... (6:164)

At another place it is stated:

Then guard yourselves against a Day when one self shall not avail another, nor shall intercession be accepted for him, nor shall compensation be taken from him, nor shall anyone be helped. (2:48)

So much so, that in connection with this it was also caused to be announced via the lips of Rasul-ullah himself that:

Say: 'I would, if I disobeyed my Rabb, indeed have fear of the penalty of a Mighty Day'. (6:15)

As has been stated above, the effect of every deed of man becomes imprinted on his self. This is called his individuality. Referring to this individuality in a concise but extremely comprehensive manner, the Quran has proclaimed:

'And behold! you come to us bare and alone as We created you for the first time'...
(6:94)

2.82 The Marks Imprinted on the Human Self

Whatever is ‘yours,’ whether it is your wealth and possessions, or relatives and close ones, friends and companions, or supporters and helpers – you will leave all of them behind and will only bring your individuality (self) to Us, and the marks imprinted on it will themselves proclaim aloud all that you have done. Today these imprints are concealed from the eyes, at that time these will become visible just like the letters of words written in lime juice keep on appearing automatically when the paper is placed in front of a fire. It is these very imprints which are called the scroll of deeds of a human being. In Surah *Bani Israel* it is stated:

Every man's record We have fastened on his own neck: on the Day of Judgement We shall bring out for him a scroll which he will see spread open. (It will be said to him) read your own record; sufficient is your self this day to make out an account against you. (17:13-14)

What kind of state, form and shape the life of the hereafter will be, and what the framework of paradise and hell will be, we cannot comprehend this at the existing level of our consciousness. About paradise it is stated:

Now, no person knows what delights of the eye are kept hidden (in reserve) for them - as a reward for their deeds. (32:17)

Like every abstract reality, it has explained this metaphorically. It is stated in Surah *Ar-Ra'd* that:

The parable of the Garden which the righteous are promised! - beneath it flow rivers ... (13:35) See also (47:15)

Similarly, it is stated about hell that:

The fire of (the wrath of) Allah kindled (to a blaze), the which does mount (right) to the hearts. (104:6-7)

The fire kindled by Allah whose flames engulf the hearts.

This is not the place to go into the details of these metaphysical realities. Their details are dispersed throughout the Quran and will be dealt with at their respective places. It is enough to mention here that *Jannat* is the name for traversing further (next and higher, elevated) evolutionary stages of human life. And *Jahannum* is the name for the ceasing of this evolution.¹⁹⁴ Though there is

¹⁹⁴ I have covered this in my book, *The Life in the Hereafter: What Does the Quran Say?*

one particular point which I do not wish to leave by moving on ahead. It is given in the Quran about the life in the hereafter that:

... they will recognise each other... (10:45)

2.83 They Will Recognise Each Other

Over there, all will recognise each other. And we think that there cannot be a more painful hell than this; the way we live our life in the world is that outwardly we remain as something other, whereas in reality we are something else. We appear as empathetic and sympathetic towards our friends but within ourselves we intrigue against them, and form such arrangements that these friends and companions, and relatives of ours, never find out a word of these intentions and intrigues, and we continue to remain very trustworthy in their sight. We make ourselves appear as very saintly, pious, virtuous, and devout and true Momin in the eyes of people, but behind the cloak our life is highly deplorable. We do all this so skillfully that our secret is never exposed during a whole lifetime and we depart from this world in the same state. But just imagine this scene, that all our relatives and near ones, friends and acquaintances, our admirers and followers are present, and by becoming unveiled, our true life appears clearly before them such that we cannot possibly refute anything. Just think, what will our state be at this point? Can there possibly be a greater punishment than this? From this respect, it is stated about that life:

The Day that (all) things secret will come out... (86:9)

But the time of manifestation of the results of deeds is not only in the hereafter: if not all, then most consequences appear right in this world, especially the consequences of the collective system of nations. The Quran has used both the word *Ajla* in opposition to *Akbira* (17:18), as well as *Ad-Dunya* (2:200). *Ajla* means that which appears before us very quickly and *Dunya* means immediately in front or close by.

2.84 Consequences of Deeds in Worldly Life

Let us once again examine the example of a farmer which we had quoted in relation to *Eimaan* in the unseen. We had said that there is hunger in his home and he has one sack of wheat which he has held back as seed for his next crop. If

he ignores his future and leaps forward for *Ajla* benefits, then he will grind this wheat. From this there will certainly be freshly baked bread in his home, but at the time of harvesting the crop, he will not even receive a single grain as his share. This is because he had given preference to immediate benefits as opposed to the future (*Akhirah*). The Quran has described three types of outlook. One is of those people who view life as being the life of this world only, in front of whom there are only the benefits of this world, nothing more than this. It is stated about them:

... There are people who say: 'Our Rabb! Give us (Your bounties) in this world!' But they will have no portion in the Hereafter. (2:200)

There are also some such people who declare the acquisition of immediate and readily available benefits of life as being the very aim of life. Though they attain these benefits, they have no share in the hereafter. At another place it is stated about these same people that when they will be taken towards hell, they will say we should certainly be in receipt of some kind of pleasant reward here for our deeds. They will be told:

'... You received your good things in the life of the world, and you took your pleasure out of them... ' (46:20)

You had already taken your full share of bounties in the life of the world, and having consumed them there, finished them. Hence, you have no share in the bounties of this life. This is the condition of adherents of the secular system, by whatever name they may be known.

2.85 Only the Hereafter

The second point of view is that of people who follow religions, who say that this world and its pleasures are worthy of contempt: men of God have no share in it, they will receive the reward of their deeds in the hereafter. The Quran declares that this doctrine is also in opposition to Deen. Poverty and deprivation, humiliation and disgrace in this world is Allah's punishment:

But whosoever turns away from My message, verily for him is a life narrowed down, and We shall raise him up blind on the Day of Judgement. (20:124)

Whoever goes against Our laws, his sustenance will become restricted, and on the Day of Judgement We will raise him up still blind – i.e. these are those people who do not attain the immediate benefits of this life, nor the bounties of the life

of the hereafter. They spend all their life in the deluded dreams of self-deception and complacency.

2.86 Both this World and the Hereafter

And the third group is of those people whose ideology of life is this:

... 'Our Rabb! Give us good in this world and good in the Hereafter and defend us from the torment of the fire!' To these will be allotted what they have earned; and Allah is quick in account. (2:201-202)

These are those people who obtain the fruits of their endeavours both in this world and in the hereafter. Allah is very quick in settling accounts. These are those people who have *Eimaan* in the hereafter. In Surah *Bani Israel* this fact has been noted in a very comprehensive style where it is stated:

If any do wish for the transitory things (of this life), We readily grant them - such things as We will, to such persons as We will (as per law): in the end have We provided Hell for them: they will burn therein, disgraced and rejected. Those who do wish for the (things of) the Hereafter, and strive therefore with all due striving, and have Eimaan - these are the ones whose striving is acceptable (to Allah). Of the bounties of your Rabb We bestow freely on all - these as well as those: the bounties of your Rabb are not closed (to anyone). See how We have bestowed more on some than on others; but verily the Hereafter is more in rank and gradation and more in excellence. (17:18-21)

Whoever wishes only the immediate benefits of this world, We will provide him with these benefits according to Our law of nature, but in the hereafter he will be consigned to hell, disgraced and humiliated. There will be no share for him in the prosperities of life there. The individual who desires the benefits of the future (along with immediate benefits) and makes efforts for the attainment of these benefits according to the laws of Allah, his efforts will establish full results. Whoever works according to the laws of Allah, We will keep on helping him. We have not erected gates in the path of our bounties, that these become opened for one group and become closed for another group. This is an arena of efforts and deeds and the field of action is open equally to all. This is the reason that some nations in the world will be seen to be ahead of other nations. But together with this it is also a fact that those people whose eyes are also on the future (along with the present), their status is very elevated.

How these results of the deeds of people or nations are established, we cannot say anything about this, but the Quran only tells us this much that the whole of this system of the universe is functioning for this purpose so that no deed of man should be able to remain without producing its result:

Allah created the heavens and the earth as Haqq, and in order that each self may find the recompense of what it has earned, and none of them be wronged. (45:22) See also (53:31)

As far as the functioning of the laws of nature in the universe is concerned, according to scientific research we can predict what the result will be of a certain action - if a finger is put into fire, it will burn. But as far as the moral deeds of an individual or the collective deeds of nations are concerned, we cannot say what the system of the universe undertakes in their outcomes. How death comes to an individual from taking cyanide, we can tell this through scientific information about the properties of cyanide and the system of the human body. But how the human self is impacted by the consumption of illegitimate sustenance; or how a system based on injustice, despite its hundreds of tricks, ultimately becomes destroyed, we have not (at least to the present time) been able to identify in what way the system of the universe operates in this regard. Perhaps with the further expansion of human knowledge these facts will also become uncovered before us.¹⁹⁵

2.87 Connection Between a Deed and its Outcome

It is essential at this juncture though to bear in mind an important point. A boss threatens his employee that if you break another utensil, I will give you a good beating. It is obvious that in this ‘beating and the breaking of a utensil’ there is no mutual connection. This is merely the decision or order of this individual. It is possible that he may say that if you break another utensil, you will be dismissed from the job. In contrast to this a doctor informs his patient that if you eat this again, it will result in so much pain in your stomach that you will not be able to remain alive from it. This is not an order by the doctor, this is the natural consequence of breaking a law. There is an intrinsic connection between ‘eating

¹⁹⁵ The functioning of the Law of Requitil in the human world is manifesting itself gradually through the spread of social media, and especially in the economic field. Across the world people are becoming more aware of the exploitation taking place by the rich and powerful under the capitalist system. Information is being shared across the globe among the general public and this is contributing to the accountability factor. (Ed)

this food’ and ‘stomach ache’. Since the doctor has knowledge of this mutual connection, he is not giving an order, he is predicting the outcome of this action according to the law. Wherever it is stated in the Quran that (for example) there is a chastising punishment for them, this is not an ‘order’, this is a ‘prediction’ of the natural consequence of their breaking the law – i.e. a description of the immutable, mutual connection between ‘If and Then’.

In any case, this is that hereafter (the Law of Requital) in which *Muttaqeen* have *Eimaan*, rather, have conviction. Conviction means to reach the stage of proof in some matter by the use of knowledge and research, after the removal of every kind of doubt and suspicion. Have you observed that according to the Quran *Eimaan* in the hereafter is also not a label given to some blind faith; it is the acceptance of that truth which has reached the stage of proof after knowledge and research. This is why it has emphasised the use of intellect and reason in both this world and the hereafter (2:220). The consequence of this *Eimaan* and conviction is that man never succumbs to this deception that I can do whatever my heart wishes, there is none to hold me accountable. It is stated in Surah *Anbiya* that those whom you consider sovereign in the world (*Ilah* i.e. deities) are also not exempt from answering for their deeds, they will also be questioned. This status only belongs to Allah, that no one can question Him:

He cannot be questioned for His acts, but they will be questioned (for theirs).
(21:23)

Only Allah is not answerable to anyone. From here another reality comes before us. In the political dictionary sovereign means ‘accountable to none’. In the Islamic system this position cannot even be held by the Islamic government (never mind anyone else) – it is also answerable before Allah. This is the extent of the expanses of the domain of the Law of Requital of Allah!

In Surah *Al-Fateha* the desire of the *Momineen* was stated to be this - that we wish to tread on the path of those people who were blessed with the bounties of Allah. Allah declared that by following Our Book, you will achieve all these blessings, but in this process you will always have to bear in mind this fact:

Then, shall you be questioned that Day about the bounties of life. (102:8)

You will be questioned about all these blessings, how did you obtain them, and how did you utilise them. Conviction and awareness of being accountable for your every deed, and having to answer for them, is the natural consequence of *Eimaan* in the hereafter, and is the fundamental trait of the *Momineen* and *Muttaqeen*.

We started the discussion with the desire of the *Jamaat e Momineen* arising on their lips that we wish to be guided towards the straight and balanced path of life (1:5). In response to this wish of theirs, it was declared that you will be able to obtain this guidance from this Book of Ours. But for this the first step is to become *Muttaqeen* (2:2). What those traits and signs of the *Muttaqeen* are is described after this. After stating this, the Quran declared:

*They are on true guidance from their Rabb, and it is these who will prosper
(Muflihoon). (2:5)*

These people are the ones who remain steadfast on the path defined by Allah, and these are the very people whose orchards bear fruits. *Muflihoon* is commonly translated as successful but its meaning is far more profound and broader than this. In the Arabic language agriculture or farming is called *Falahat* and *Falla'hun* is the farmer. From this respect *Muflihoon* are those farmers whose orchards successfully bear fruit.

2.88 The Meanings of *Muflihoon*

The Quran has explained the outcome and fruition of righteous deeds by generally using orchards as a metaphor. Just consider what kind of composition of constituents is required for orchards to flourish? First of all, such a seed in which there is the potential for growth. Then such land which allows the latent potentials in this seed to become capable of manifesting. Then all those other physical resources – air, water, heat, light, etc., due to which this crop keeps on growing and flourishing. And together with all of these, that law and procedure of agriculture according to which advantage can be taken of these forces of nature and physical resources. If there is a deficiency in even any one of these things, then this field will not reach fruition. And if this effort meets all these requirements, then (in the words of the Quran) every single seed will become seven hundred grains and will reach the farmer's abode. But these grains will be of the same type as the seed which was sown, about which it is said 'what you sow, so shall you reap' i.e. that Law of Requitil on which the whole structure of Deen is raised. This is that tangible example through which human deeds generating their results, i.e. Allah's Law of Requitil, has been explained. Another great fact is implicit in this example. The results of farming keep on appearing in practical terms, because of which man never remains in any doubt as to whether his efforts are in the right direction or not, and also whether these will even come to fruition, or will go to waste. The farmer satisfies himself with this fact every day that these tangible results of his hard work which appear gradually provide an

incentive for him, the consequence of which is that he puts in his maximum effort. If at any stage he sees that his effort is not succeeding, then he does not continue this fruitless endeavour. He stops right there and takes full cognizance of this whole programme. If he finds some flaw somewhere then he addresses it immediately (this is called *Taubah*). And if he sees that he is going on the wrong lines from the outset, then abandoning this programme, he takes some other step which leads to an outcome. This fact is also implicit in the example of farming. The same also happens in *Ad-Deen*. Contrary to this, in *Madhab* (religion) the results of human deeds do not appear like this in a tangible and visible form. Only this satisfaction is provided about them that these are definitely bearing results (based on veneration), but their outcomes will come in front in the hereafter. This kind of blind veneration cannot face concrete facts, therefore it cannot progress in the light of knowledge and vision. By stating *Fid'dunya Hasana'tun* (the good of this world), and by explaining it using the example of a farm, the Quran has turned the blind faith engendered by religion into the true reality presented by Deen.

2.89 Tangible Results

It was Rasul-ullah and his companions who were the first to act on and demonstrate the programme of *Ad-Deen*. The Quran has explained this practical programme of theirs and its glowing results through this example and simile where it states:

...like a seed which sends forth its blade, then makes it strong; it then becomes thick, and it stands on its own stem, (filling) the sowers with wonder and delight. As a result, it fills the Kuffar with rage at them... (48:29)

They planted a tiny seed from which sprouted a soft and fragile shoot, then it gradually became a stem and stood on its own feet. Then grains appeared in its ears, and the crop matured in such a way that their (the farmers) hearts overflowed with delight and joy on seeing this. And the breasts of the people (*Kuffar*) who used to taunt and ridicule them about what a useless pursuit they are wasting their time and energies on, began to be fraught with malevolence.

After this, the Quran states that this is not just limited and confined to the *Momineen* and *Muttaqeen* of that era only:

...Allah has promised those who have Eimaan and do righteous deeds protection, and a great reward. (48:29)

This is the promise of Allah that whichever people, whenever and wherever, demonstrate such an *Eimaan* and these kind of deeds, their farms will be protected from destruction and they will also attain full fruition. The name of such an outcome and fruition is ‘establishment in the land’ which is the essential and natural consequence of *Eimaan* and *Saleh* deeds (24:55).

The *Jamaat e Momineen* had said in their supplication that the path of the people on whose path we desire to tread are those who benefitted from the bounties of Allah. They were not those whose terrain of efforts and deeds became charred and they remained deprived of these prosperities, who were condemned and misguided.¹⁹⁶

This was not merely an idea from their minds or abstract desire. The history and conduct of those nations which fell into this category was in front of the Arabs at the time of the revelation of the Quran. As the Quran itself has stated at many places, they used to travel day and night on those routes along which the ruins of the destroyed habitations of these annihilated nations used to invite them to learn a lesson and gain insight. Furthermore, in front of them also was the plight of the Jews going about in the land, who despite being heirs of the glamour of Sulaiman and the power of Daud, had become the most disgraced nation in the world. These were those nations – a detailed explanation of them, and similar nations will be covered in the next chapter.

2.90 Summary of Chapter 2 (Verses 2:1-5)

The decree of Allah, the All Knowing and Wise is that:

1. The guidance you are desirous of (1:5) is preserved in this code of laws of Ours (15:9) in which there is neither uncertainty nor doubt¹⁹⁷, nor any psychological dissonance. In the journey of life this code of laws guides those people who wish to avoid the pitfalls of following the wrong paths, towards the path that leads to the intended destination of humanity.
2. These are the people who maintain a conviction in those truths which are concealed from the eyes but whose purpose can be comprehended by using intellect and reasoning in the Quran. And who have trust in the

¹⁹⁶ Condemned and misguided - *Maghdubi Alai'him* and *Da'Leen*. (Ed)

¹⁹⁷ As discussed earlier, the word used in the verse is *Raib*, which contains all these meanings including doubt, fear and ambiguity. So by stating this at the beginning of the Quran, Allah has characterized its teaching as being free from all those states of mind which create *Raib*. (Ed)

outcomes of following the right course, which even though they are initially hidden from their sight, there is certainty in their ultimately materialising. With this aim in mind they establish that system in which all people keep on following the Divine laws, and after taking whatever is required for their own needs from the means of sustenance given to them, they keep the remainder available for the nourishment of the rest of mankind (2:219).

3. These are those people who have *Eimaan* in all those truths which (O Rasul) have been revealed to you through *Wahi*. And which were revealed before you to the messengers in their respective times (and which no longer survive in their original and untampered form with their followers and are now only preserved within the Quran). Having *Eimaan* in these truths means that through accurate historical evidences they reach this conclusion that this programme has already been acted upon many times previously, and every time those same outcomes have been produced from this which are now being promised. This is why even now those same outcomes will be reaped. In this way they have conviction in this reality that by following this Divine code, a new life emerges, and in this way through the exertions of the present, the future of man becomes bright – that future whose continuity is confined not to this world alone, but which also continues to advance even after death.
4. These are those righteous people (*Muttaqeen*) who continue to traverse the journey of life under the guidance of the law of *Rabubiyat* bestowed by their *Rabb*, and these are the very people whose fields ultimately achieve fruition (23:1-11, 31:2-5).

This category is of those people who desire to protect themselves from the destructive outcomes of the wrong path of life, and their wish is that the correct path appears before them.

3. CHAPTER 3 - The *Kuffar*¹⁹⁸ (Verses 2:6–7)

The next verse states:

As to those who reject, it is the same to them whether you warn them or do not warn them; they will not accept Eimaan. (2:6)

The Quran has divided mankind into two fundamental categories – *Kafir* and *Momin*:

It is He Who has created you; and of you are some that are Kafir, and some that are Momin: and Allah sees well all that you do. (64:2)

There can be many sub-divisions of these basic categories but these are principally the two types of human beings – one that accepts the truth of the eternal values of Allah revealed in *Wabi* (the Quran) and the other being those who reject these. This is what is referred to as the two-nation ideology i.e. Muslim and non-Muslim. This verse (2:6) is commonly translated like this: ‘For those people who are *Kafir*, it is equal to them whether you warn them or not, they are not going to accept *Eimaan*’. As we have seen before, there was an objection raised due to the apparent meaning of (2:2), that those people who are already *Muttaqee*, what need do they have for guidance. Guidance is for those who are astray. The answer to this has been given earlier.

3.1 The Objection

A far greater objection than this arises as a result of the common translation and apparent meaning of this verse (2:6). It is said that it is all the same to the *Kuffar* (non-Muslims) whether they are preached to about guidance or not, they will never accept *Eimaan*; so is the need for guidance then for Muslims? A further objection which arises from this is that at the time of the revelation of the Quran, all were non-Muslim – if it was all the same to them whether they were preached to or not, then what was the aim of the Quran being sent down and the preaching through *Risalat*? Additionally, the next part of the verse (*La-Yu'minoon*) is contrary to what happened – as it was those same people who became *Momin* by accepting

¹⁹⁸ Translated as non-believers. See glossary for details. (Ed)

Eimaan! It is clear from these explanations that this is not the correct meaning of this verse. For its correct meaning, look again at the explanations which have been presented in reference to *Eimaan*. It was said there that *Eimaan* is the name for acceptance of the truth about facts with the intention of the heart and using one's own choice. In other words, no individual can become a *Momin* until he accepts these truths without any coercion or compulsion using his own choice and intent. It was from this point of view that it was stated that no individual can become a *Momin* merely due to being born in the home of Muslims: for this, some action has to be taken. This is exactly the same position for *Kufr* also. For this, too, the Quran has used the verb (as action) grammatically – *Kafara*, *Yakfuru*, etc., in other words, he chose *Kufr*. Hence, *Kufr* is also an ideology of life (even if it is the opposite of *Eimaan*), a philosophy of life, a *Maslak* and a system; the one who adopts this using his choice and intent is called a *Kafir* - he, too, is not a *Kafir* by birth.

It is important to reiterate here that from the point of view of national identity, Muslim and non-Muslim become divided into two groups with respect to their birth, and it is important to bear this difference and distinction in mind also. But from the point of view of the Quran, the fundamental mode of being of a *Kafir* and *Momin* should not be ignored. According to this state, the meaning of the verse (2:6) being analysed is that for those people who choose the *Maslak* and system of *Kufr* through their own choice and intent, and then become obdurate in their stance and do not wish to hear anything against it, the preaching of guidance cannot have any influence on them until the time that they are agreeable to listen to the subject matter and are willing to reflect on it. Just bring to mind again the example of someone committing suicide. It will be said about him that it is all the same to him whether someone warns him about the dangers of drowning or not, he will not pay heed to any such warning.

3.2 The Meaning of *Kufr*

We have to see what it is that is called *Kufr* according to the Quran, and who are those people on whom preaching about the guidance cannot have any effect. The basic meaning of *Kufrun* is to hide and to cover. From this respect, night is called *Kafirun* because its darkness places a cloak over all things. The grave is also called *Al-Kufru* because the corpse is put in it and hidden within it. Even a farmer is called a *Kafirun* because he conceals the seed in the soil. As a result of the meaning of 'hiding,' its definition also came to include denial, because the individual who hides something denies that it is with him. Since denial is the opposite of

acceptance, hence in Quranic terminology *Kufr* is the opposite of *Eimaan*. And when this denial reaches the stage of confrontation, then such an individual adopts rebellion. This is why *Kafa'ra* means that he adopted rebellion against the system of Allah.

Kufrun is also used in opposition to *Shukrun*, hence *Shukr* means for something to rise up and appear in front. Therefore, *Kufr* of *Naima* means the concealment of the bounties of Allah, to not keep these available for the good of universal mankind; this is called *Kufr e Naimat*. (There are other derivatives of this root (K-F-R) as well, but at this point in time we will limit ourselves to these meanings which are essential for understanding the verse under view).

We have seen above that the meaning of *Kufrun* is to hide away (to deny). It is obvious that only those matters can be hidden about which man has knowledge, and denial can also be only of them. The question of concealment or denial of those matters about which someone has no knowledge whatsoever does not even arise. Therefore the meaning of *Kufr* will be that the Quranic truths should be within someone's knowledge, and that he either hides them or denies them.

3.3 It is Essential to Have Knowledge of the Guidance

It is stated in Surah *Muhammad*:

Those who reject Allah, hinder (men) from the path of Allah, and resist the messenger after guidance has been clearly shown to them will not hurt Allah in the least, but He will make their deeds of no effect. (47:32)

It is stated in Surah *Al-Anam*:

'O you assembly of inhabitants of rural and urban dwellings! Came there not unto you messengers from amongst you, setting forth unto you My signs, and warning you of the meeting of this Day of yours?' They will say: 'We bear witness against ourselves.' It was the life of this world that deceived them. So against themselves will they bear witness that they were Kafirun. (6:130)

Men will be questioned, whether they are from nomadic tribes (*Jinn*), or from urban habitations of cities (*Ins*): What, did not such messengers come to you, who presented Our laws before you, and informed you clearly that the outcome of adopting a path against these laws will be destruction and ruin. They will attest to this and will say, yes, this did take place, however, the vested interests of physical life kept them in deception, and so despite this, they adopted the *Maslak* of *Kufr*,

and in this way they will give evidence against themselves. And after this it is stated:

This is so because your Rabb would not destroy for their wrongdoing men's habitations whilst their occupants were unwarned. (6:131)

This is so because it is not the way of Allah that He should destroy some nation without warning them about the consequences of their wrong system; doing this will be injustice and Allah does not do injustice to anyone. From this, too, the meaning of choosing *Kufr* becomes evident i.e. the condition for this is that the truth should have appeared before someone and they refuse to acknowledge it. Similarly, in Surah *Momin* it is stated:

Those in the fire will say to the keepers of hell: 'Pray to your Rabb to lighten for us the penalty for a day!' They will say: 'Did there not come to you your messengers with clear signs?' They will say: 'Yes'. They will reply, 'Then pray (as you like)!' But the prayer of the Kafireen is nothing but futile wandering in mazes of error! (40:49-50)

The inhabitants of hell will appeal to the guardians of hell, could you not just petition Allah that he may mitigate this punishment of ours, even though it be for a day? They will say in reply that, tell us, did not Allah's messengers come to you with clear rationales? They will respond, yes, they did come. The guardians of hell will say, then go and beseech Allah yourselves; we cannot do such a thing. Why should we bother supplicating for the one who has deliberately and knowingly purchased destruction for himself? After this it is stated that having repudiated truths in this way, what result can the supplicating of those treading on wrong paths produce?

3.4 Admonition and its Propagation

Before moving on it is important that the meanings of the word *Anzar* which appears in this verse (2:6) are also clarified i.e. 'It is the same to them whether you warn (*Nazar*) them or do not warn them'. As stated above, the customary meaning of this is that of 'frightening them'. The correct meaning does not become evident from 'making them fearful'. The meanings of *Anzar* are to apprise someone of the potential harm or loss in some matter before its occurrence, and in this way to forewarn him about the dangerous outcomes. The vanguard which routinely travelled ahead of an army so that it could warn it by detecting the movements and activities of the enemy, used to be called *Nazeera tul Ja'ish*. In the

previous pages this reality has been clarified that, according to the Law of Requit of Allah, there is a consequence of every deed of man, and an outcome of every system. The messengers of Allah used to warn people according to the *Wahi* of Allah that the consequence of your wrong path will be destructive whereas the outcome of the righteous path will be prosperous. According to the former, they used to be called *Nazzeer* (warners) i.e. the one warning about the calamitous effects of their wrong path, and according to the latter, *Basbeer*, i.e. the one giving glad tidings of the propitious results of treading on the right path. Based on this the meanings of *Anza'run* will be to apprise or warn, not merely to frighten. This fact is stated with such succinctness and eloquence in a verse of Surah *Yasin* that by reflecting on it the intellect and vision become entranced. It is stated that this Quran has been sent down so that:

That it may give warning to any (who are) alive, and that the charge may be proved against those who are Kafireen. (36:70)

In other words, whichever individual or nation still retains the potential to remain alive, they should be made aware how the wrong path on which they are treading is leading them towards the destruction and ruin of hell. And then whoever, despite this, refuses to abandon this wrong path, this fact should become ultimately evident to them that whatever the warner had said was indeed true. In other words, *Tanzeer* (warning) can only be of benefit to the one who is desirous of being alive.

3.5 The Human Self

Let us move forward. It has also been stated earlier that there are fundamentally two doctrines in relation to human life. One doctrine is that the life of a human being remains busy in movement and action under the obedience of physical laws, and when this machinery ceases to function (according to these same laws), then that is called death, as a result of which this person ceases to exist. This is called Western materialism, secularism, or communism. The second doctrine is that man is not just defined by his body; other than the body, there is another thing within him which is called his self, *Nafs*, or (in the terminology of Iqbal) his *Khudi* (ego). This is neither a product of physical laws, nor is it under the control of these laws. This is the fountainhead of human intent and choice, and it is on this that the result of every deed of man is (you could say) imprinted. It is not impacted in the slightest by the death of the body. This continues forward, taking these imprints of this individual's deeds with it. This is called the life of the hereafter, in which its rank is defined according to these imprints of which it is the

possessor. This is the Quranic doctrine of life. The development of the human self is the purpose and goal of the Quranic programme. This fact is clarified in two succinct verses of Surah *Ash-Shams*:

Truly he succeeds that purifies it, and he fails that corrupts it! (91:9-10)

The one who has developed his self - his field has achieved fruition. Whoever submerged it under the dust of material interests, his human potentials remained buried (undeveloped). It is clear from this that *Kufr* means to hide eternal truths, and the denial or suppression of one's own self. It is on the basis of this that life at an animal level is called *Kufr* i.e. that doctrine of life in which human life is taken to mean merely a physical life just like that of animals. It is stated in Surah *Muhammad*:

...while those who are Kafir will enjoy (this world) and eat as cattle eat; and the fire will be their abode. (47:12)

The goal of life of those people who adopt the *Maslak* of *Kufr* is to eat and drink like animals and to benefit from the physical accoutrements of life, nothing more than this. What can their end be but the hell of destruction? At another place this doctrine of life (secularism) is explained in these words:

And they say: 'What is there but our life in this world? We shall die and we live, and nothing but time can destroy us.' But of that they have no knowledge: they merely conjecture. (45:24)

These people say that life is only the life of this world. We remain alive in this and then the passage of time puts an end to us. Commenting on this, the Quran states that these people have no knowledge of the truth, they remain wandering in the dales of scepticism and conjecture.¹⁹⁹

It has already been noted above that just like *Eimaan*, *Kufr* is also embraced through one's own intent and decision, and it is adopted at that juncture when knowledge of the reality has been acquired. Hence, it is stated in Surah *Al-Kahf*:

Say, 'The truth is from your Rabb': let him who will, have Eimaan, and let him who will, reject (it)...(18:29)

Say to them that *Al-Haqq* (Eternal Truth) has arrived before you, now whoever desires can accept it (have *Eimaan* in it), and whoever desires can deny it (engage in *Kufr*). At another place it is stated:

¹⁹⁹ We have been bestowed with the potentials of intellect and reasoning in order to make efforts to seek out the truth. (Ed)

Let there be no compulsion in Deen: truth stands out clear from error. . .(2:256)

The question of compulsion in the matter of *Ad-Deen* simply does not arise: the right and wrong paths have both been differentiated, one can choose whichever path one wishes (see also 16:106).

3.6 Against the Doctrine of Compulsion (*Jabr*)

The Quran has severely admonished those people who adopt the doctrine of compulsion as a defence in order to avoid responsibility. For example, it is stated in Surah *Al-Anam* that:

Those who give partners (to Allah) will say: 'If Allah had wished, we should not have given partners to Him, nor would our fathers: nor should we have had any taboos.' So did their ancestors argue falsely, until they tasted of Our wrath. Say: 'Have you any (certain) knowledge? If so, produce it before us. You follow nothing but conjecture: you do nothing but lie.' (6:148)

When those people who have chosen the path of *Shirk* are asked why they have adopted this wrong path, in reply they say, what is our fault in this? If Allah had not wished this then we, or our forefathers, would never have adopted this path. At this the Quran states that this is not anything new which these people are presenting as an excuse. Even before this, such people have passed by who used to talk in this way. But by talking like this they were not able to save themselves from the destructive consequences of their wrong path. Hence that destruction descended on them, and their doctrine of compulsion could not save them from it. After this the Quran states that this is all based on complete ignorance – tell them to enter the arena of knowledge, and if you truly have some evidence with you, then present it. The fact is that this belief of theirs is not based on knowledge and vision - it is merely conjecture and speculation, or a lie and false accusation²⁰⁰ (see also 43:20).

It is one thing to not be the possessor of choice and intent, and it is another thing to not use this intent, or to create such an environment due to which this most lofty potential of man does not come into operation. We will deal later with the former. The Quran discusses the latter at great length and informs us how, despite

²⁰⁰ I have discussed the issue of fatalism in detail in my book titled *The Book of Destiny*. Those readers who are interested can find further details in it. In the context of the subject under discussion here, we will confine ourselves to this much only.

man being the possessor of choice and intent, he himself makes this potential of his ineffective. The Quran tells us how this takes place, and how those who do this choose the path of *Kufr*. Some examples of this are noted next.

3.6.1 *Kufr* by Obedience of Forefathers

By following in the footsteps of forefathers (*Taqleed*), man surrenders his choice and intent himself. It is stated in Surah *Al-Baqarah*:

When it is said to them: 'Follow what Allah has revealed,' they say: 'Nay! we shall follow the ways of our fathers.' What! even though their fathers were void of wisdom and guidance? (2:170)

When they are told to obey what Allah has sent down (the Quran), they reply, no, we are going to keep on following the same path on which we found our forefathers treading. Censuring this, it is stated that despite their forefathers not possessing intellect and vision, nor being on the correct path of *Wabi*, they will continue to follow in their footsteps. In the next verse it is stated:

The parable of those who are Kafir is as if one were to shout like a goat-herd to things that listen to nothing but calls and cries: deaf, dumb, and blind, they are void of wisdom. (2:171)

This course of blindly following forefathers takes human beings to the level of animals, which simply do not possess the potential to make use of intellect and reasoning (7:179). The parable of the religious clergy and their followers can be understood as follows: that there is a flock of sheep and goats behind which there is a shepherd. The shepherd has learnt some sounds from his venerated elders devoid of words, and has memorised some words without any meanings. He keeps calling out these sounds, and keeps repeating these words, and the sheep and goats which are accustomed to these sounds keep turning this way and that way accordingly. Neither the shepherd knows what the meanings of these sounds and words are, nor are those sheep and goats capable of understanding anything other than these sounds. These are the ones who are followers of their forefathers - deaf, dumb, blind, making no use whatsoever of intellect and reasoning – who can call them human beings?

3.6.2 *Mutrifeen* (Exploiters)

It is stated in Surah *Al-Zukhruf*²⁰¹ that such a path is chosen by those who are *Mutrifeen*. Those who shirk hard work and live a life of ease at the expense of others are called *Mutrifeen*. To think about some matter using knowledge and intellect, and to then make a decision using one's choice and intent, demands great resolve and exertion, and to accept one's own responsibility demands great courage and determination. The *Maslak* of *Taqleed* is a very convenient path - in this one neither has to make any decision oneself, nor accept responsibility. But as a consequence of this ease, man deprives himself of that invaluable potential which is a line of differentiation between an animal and a human being; in other words, the ability to make choices and decisions. It is a declaration of the Quran that it is only such people who adopt the path of *Kufr* i.e. those who, despite possessing the potential of choice and intent, do not make use of it.²⁰²

3.6.3 Overwhelmed by Emotions

Now let us look at the second example of man not using his decision making capacity correctly. The state of human decision making is such that his sources of knowledge and information – hearing, observation etc. provide him with data. On the basis of these sources of information, the intellect of this individual reaches some kind of conclusion. In light of this conclusion, he makes a decision for himself. The resolve to carry out this decision is called intent. It is obvious from this that man's decision and intention are dependent on the correct functioning of his abilities of hearing and observing. If these abilities are not functioning correctly, then they neither provide accurate information, nor can the decision based on them be called a correct decision. Just observe some individual in a state of intoxication (of alcohol), what kind of information is supplied to him by his hearing and observation, and then what kinds of decisions does he make based on such information! And after that, what are his intentions!! Leave aside the criticism about his intent and decisions by some third party, after recovering from the effects of alcohol, when he himself casts an eye on these, he becomes extremely remorseful that what is this that I have said and done!

Intoxication does not only result from alcohol – whenever, and through whatever circumstances human emotions overpower his intellect and thinking, they also acquire the shape of intoxication. At this point his intellect and thinking becomes

²⁰¹ For example, see verse (43:23). (Ed)

²⁰² They do not make use of their choice and intent on the right path. (Ed)

paralysed. In Surah *Al-Qasas* Rasul-ullah is told that he should give an invitation to the path of *Haqq* and truth to these people, and after this it is stated:

*But if they hearken not to you, know that they only follow their own lusts: and who is more astray than one who follows his own lusts, devoid of guidance from Allah?...
(28:50)*

If these people do not accept your invitation, then take it as being that they are obeying their own desires. Remember! Whoever does not keep his emotions under the control of the correct code of life, and leaves these unchecked for his vested interests, he cannot adopt the correct path. This is what is called *Kufr*.

This is about individuals. The Quran has also declared about nations that when some nation only views its own interest and ignores the Divine values, then its state becomes like this:

... but of no profit to them were their (faculties of) hearing, sight, and heart and intellect, when they went on rejecting the signs of Allah: and they were (completely) encircled by that which they used to mock at! (46:26)

Their hearing, seeing, and power to make decisions is of no help; these become paralysed and ineffective, and this is the consequence of rejection and rebellion against the Divine laws. They mock these laws and values, and the consequence of this is that the destructive effects of their wrong conduct encircle them from all sides.

3.6.4 Jealousy of the Jews

In connection with those who are overpowered by their emotions and adopt *Kufr*, the Quran quotes the example of the People of the Book (its first addressees), when it states:

Quite a number of the People of the Book wish they could turn you (people) back to Kufr after you have accepted Eimaan from selfish envy after the truth has become manifest unto them...(2:109)

These People of the Book desire that the way in which they have chosen the path of *Kufr*, your condition should also become the same – this is based on this jealousy whose fire keeps blazing in their hearts, even though *Haqq* and truth have appeared clearly before them. The Quran has described one of the reasons for this jealousy, rancour, and arrogance of the Jews to be that they were immersed in this false mindset that *Nabummat* (messengerhood) will remain confined to the

progeny of Ishaq. But Rasul-ullah was from the lineage of Bani Ismael, this is why the Jews simply could not bear it. The Quran states that they (and together with them the whole world) should know that messengerhood is not connected to any particular race, tribe or family. This selection takes place according to the *Mash'eat* of Allah, which he terms as his *Fadal* (blessing). It is stated in Surah *Al-Baqarah*:

Miserable is the price for which they have sold their selves, in that they deny (the revelation) which Allah has sent down, in insolent envy that Allah of His Grace should send it to any of His servants He pleases... (2:90)

These people are rejecting this revealed Book of Allah purely due to arrogance, and this is a very evil bargain i.e. such a bargain in which, by selling an entity of immense value, they are purchasing the means for the satisfaction of one single emotive desire of theirs.

3.6.5 Egotism

Arrogance is also one form of egotism. In this connection it is stated in Surah *Al-A'raf*:

...And certainly there came to them their messengers with clear signs, but they would not have Eimaan in that which they had rejected before... (7:101)

The messengers of Allah did come to them with clear facts and rationales, but they refused to acknowledge them merely due to their haughtiness and pride and declared that you are liars. After that those messengers reasoned with them a thousand times, but since 'No' had once been uttered from their lips, they therefore remained intransigent as a result of egotism and continued to keep on rejecting.

The Quran has given a clear example of egotism relating to the account of the confrontation between Musa and Pharaoh. It is stated in Surah *Al-Naml* that Musa presented such clear rationales before the people of Pharaoh for which they had no answer, but:

And they rejected them in iniquity and arrogance, though their (inner) selves were convinced thereof... (27:14)

They kept on refusing to accept these even though their hearts concurred with them – they had come to recognise that what he is asserting is true. But their rebelliousness and egotism was acting as an impediment to the acceptance of truth.

3.6.6 Intoxication of Power

When some nation acquires power through deceitfulness, and then in order to keep it established and strong continues to employ every kind of legitimate and illegitimate tactic, then that, too, does not adopt the path of truth and justice – it continues to reject it and undermine it. In Surah *Fatir* it is stated that the egotistic ones among the Arabs were like this. Before the appearance of Rasul-ullah, they used to continually swear that if some messenger of Allah comes in their direction, then you will see how we will become the best guided nation in the world. But when that messenger arrived, not only did they reject his invitation, but they began to display deep hatred and antagonism towards him, purely because they had authority in the land, and by the acceptance of this truth then that illegitimate power could no longer have been sustained (35:42-43). These are the people about whom it is stated:

...it is the same for them whether you warn them or do not warn them; they will not accept Eimaan. (2:6)

Those people who are captivated by their desires in this way, it is equal to them whether you warn them or not about the destructive consequences of their wrong path – their emotions of jealousy, hate, prejudice, animosity, vested interests, arrogance in the land, and intoxication of power do not leave any possibility that they can listen to something with their conscious mind and formulate a decision using a moral intellect. Just imagine for a moment this scene, that the streets are brightly lit, the road is like a carpet of light due to electric lights, but that a traveler shuts his eyes – can this light be of any assistance to him? Will it not be said about him that it is the same for him whether the paths are lit or immersed in darkness! Such are those people about whom it is stated:

Among them are some who (pretend to) listen to you: but can you cause the deaf to hear, even though they are without understanding? (10:42)

These people come and sit in your gatherings. It appears as if they are listening to your talks very attentively, but their condition is such that though their ears are in your direction, their thoughts are someplace else, the result being that neither your voice reaches their minds, nor do they gain anything from this according to their intellect and reasoning. O Rasull! just think that those people who become deaf like this despite having ears, can they reap any benefit whatsoever from this preaching of yours? In the next verse it is stated:

And among them are some who look at you: but can you guide the blind – even though they will not see? (10:43)

You are deep in conversation with them, and they are even gazing at you, but despite this they see nothing because their thoughts are elsewhere. O Rasul! can you show the path to these kinds of blind people with eyes?

3.7 Nazar and Basr (Sight and Observation)

The Quran has outlined such a refined difference between *Nazar* and *Basr* here for which appropriate words are not available in our language. The translation of both is that of ‘seeing’ but there is a great difference between seeing and observing. This is the expanse of the Arabic language and the selection of words by the Quran because of which it has termed one type of seeing as *Nazar* (in which thoughts are someplace else), and the other kind of seeing as *Basr* (in which thinking and comprehension are also included). You can differentiate between them by the words ‘*Basarat*’ and ‘*Baseerat*’.²⁰³ It is stated in Surah *Al-Rum*:

So verily you cannot make the dead to hear, nor can you make the deaf to hear the call, when they show their backs and turn away. Nor can you lead back the blind from their straying: only those will you make to hear, who Have Eimaan in Our signs and submit their wills in Islam. (30:52-53)

O Rasul! Just as you cannot make the dead to hear, similarly you cannot make these live humans hear, whom you call out to and they deliberately become deaf and turn away in such a manner as if they had never even heard you. In the same way, you also cannot guide these blind ones towards the straight path and take them out from the darkneses of misguidance, who despite possessing eyes, simply do not wish to see. Only those will pay attention to your teaching who, when bowing their heads to it, have accepted *Eimaan* in the truth of this.

In Surah *Luqman* it is stated:

When Our signs are rehearsed to such a one, he turns away in arrogance, as if he heard them not, as if there were deafness in both his ears: announce to him a grievous penalty. (31:7)

²⁰³ For example, see verse (7:198): ‘If you call them to guidance, they hear not. You will see them looking at you, but they see not’.

Just consider the condition of that individual who, when he is presented with Our laws, walks away with such extreme pride and arrogance as if he had never heard anything, as if his hearing is blocked by ear plugs. But by doing this, how can he save himself from the destructive effects of his wrong path. After ingesting poison man may ignore this warning a thousand times (that poison causes death), the poison will of a surety show its effects.

3.8 Elucidation of Reality Through Comparison

As has already been noted, one technique of the Quran is also to make reality evident through comparison. For example, it is stated in Surah *Fatir*:

The blind and the seeing are not alike. (35:19)

In the next two verses:

Nor are the depths of darkness and the light (equal). (35:20)

Nor are the shade and the heat of the sun (alike). (35:21)

And in the next verse:

Nor are alike those that are living and those that are dead. Allah can make any that He wills to hear; but you cannot make those to hear who are in graves. (35:22)

It is Allah's law that only he who wishes to listen can hear. The one who dons a death shroud while alive and then reposes in a grave and thus becomes a corpse, who can make him hear. Who can make him see anything? These are those walking corpses for whom it is equivalent whether:

... it is the same to them whether you warn them or do not warn them; they will not have Eimaan. (2:6)

For whom it is the same whether you warn them or not about the dangers on the path; when they simply do not wish to see or hear anything, then how will they accept your teaching? This Quran is the code of life for those human beings who are alive (36:70), not for giving sermons in graveyards.

3.9 Should They be Left to Their State?

A question arises here, should these people be left in this state of theirs; and then taking this to be the case, that the message of *Haqq* and truth should not be passed on to them because doing so would be pointless? No! This is not the desire of the Quran. In these verses the Quran is describing the state of the psyche of these people and expressing their response. It does not say to Rasul-ullah (or other communicators of *Haqq*) that by declaring them to be beyond reach, you should turn your back on them. The state of Rasul-ullah was like that of a compassionate physician, whose heart is troubled about why the patient is not swallowing his medicine, why does he not take precautions. The degree of intensity of Rasul-ullah's feelings was such that Allah Himself had to inform him that:

You would only, perchance, fret yourself to death, following after them, in grief, if they do not have Eimaan in this message. (18:6)

But along with this it was also proclaimed:

...But proclaim (to them) this (truth): that every self delivers itself to ruin by its own acts... (6:70)

The response to your deep concern is only that you keep on reminding them about the ignored realities using the Quran, so that this may not happen that some individual becomes ruined because the truth did not reach him.

In connection with the discussion on *Eimaan*, we have seen that according to the Quran there are five fundamental constituents of *Eimaan* – Allah, *Malaika*, the messengers, the Books and the hereafter. The rejection of all of them, or even one of them, is *Kufr*. It is stated in Surah *An-Nisa*:

...Any who denies Allah, His Malaika, His Books, His messengers, and the Day of Judgement, has gone far, far astray. (4:136)

But the Quran has described so many aspects, and so many kinds of *Kufr*, that its sphere becomes very wide, and not only are those whom we term as *Kafir* or non-Muslim contained in this sphere, others also fall within it. At this point in time we are only presenting a few of these aspects, the rest will be discussed as they appear at their own places.

3.10 It is *Kufr* to Consider the Universe as *Batil*

One belief about the universe is that it has no external existence, it is just an illusion created by human thought. The Greek philosopher Plato is stated to be the originator of this doctrine, which in his terminology is called the Theory of

Forms.²⁰⁴ This doctrine arose from there and gradually spread throughout the world, particularly in the world of mysticism. This is why in the Hindu philosophy of *Vedant* the universe is called *Maya* or deception, or a dream of *Eshwar* or sport. The doctrine of ‘unitary existence’ of the followers of mysticism is somewhat similar to this. Most of our poets (especially Persian) are influenced by this Platonic doctrine.

The doctrine of the materialistic philosophers of the West is that this universe has come into existence purely by chance and is busy in motion via its own inner force. When this inner force ceases one day, then this will disintegrate into pieces and the entire structure of the universe will be annihilated. There is neither any purpose to its creation, nor is it busily engaged in motion according to some defined programme, nor does it have any destination and aim.

The Quran calls these concepts *Batil* and proclaims them to be *Kufr*. It is stated in Surah *Saad*:

Not without purpose did We create heaven and earth and all between! That were the thought of those who do Kufr! But woe to the unbelievers because of the fire (of hell)! (38:27) See also (21:30)

Contrary to this, the state of *Momineen* is such that they reflect on the creation of the heavens and the earth, and in the alternation of the day and night while standing and sitting, lying down, in every state; and after persistent effort and investigation, they reach this conclusion that:

‘...Our Rabb! not for naught have You created (all) this!...’ (3:190-191)

From this it is clear that according to the Quran it is *Kufr* to consider the universe as an illusory thought or devoid of purpose and destination (*Batil*).

3.11 Duality is *Kufr*

The Quran states:

O you who have Eimaan! Enter into Islam (system of Deen) wholeheartedly... (2:208)

²⁰⁴ Plato’s Theory of Forms asserts that the physical realm is only a shadow, or image, of the true reality of the Realm of Forms. (Ed)

This point is very important and merits profound reflection. After diagnosing your ailment, a physician specifies a prescription for you which consists of different components. It is necessary for the cure that you utilise this prescription in its entirety. If you use some components of this and discard others, then not only will your disease not be treated, it is also possible that you may in fact be harmed by this. This is the same condition of the Islamic system. The Quran is such a code of life which encompasses all aspects of human life. The state of the system which will be established according to it will also be such that no aspect of life will be outwith the sphere of its rule and the domain of its implementation. Hence, this will have to be adopted fully. If such a situation is created where some of its components are made a part of one's own system, and other components are omitted, or some constituents of this system are adopted and the remainder are devised by our own selves, or constituents which are formulated by other people are borrowed, then not only will this system not establish its blissful results, instead, its consequence will be nothing other than humiliation and disgrace, and destruction and ruin. The Quran also declares this path of duality to be *Kufr* and proclaims this to be deserving of punishment. It is stated in Surah *Al-Baqarah*:

... Then is it only a part of the Book that you have Eimaan in, and do you reject the rest? But what is the reward for those among you who behave like this but disgrace in this life? And on the Day of Judgement they shall be consigned to the most grievous penalty... (2:85)

In another verse it is stated:

*This is because, when Allah was invoked as the only Sovereign (Whose laws are to be obeyed), you displayed Kufr, but when partners were joined to Him, you believed!
The command is with Allah, Most High, Most Great! (40:12)*

When these people used to be invited to the One Allah, they used to display *Kufr*, and when others were invoked alongside Him, then they used to have *Eimaan* in that. Remember! this path is of *Kufr* and *Shirk*, not of *Eimaan* and *Tauheed*. The path of *Eimaan* is only this - that sovereignty and rule must be completely and practically of Allah the One and Only.

3.12 Not Establishing Rule According to What Allah has Sent Down

And this is that supreme reality, by stating which in Surah *Al-Maida*, a clear line of demarcation is drawn between *Kufr* and *Eimaan*:

...If any do fail to judge by the light of what Allah has revealed (the Quran), they are Kafirun. (5:44)

The aim and goal of the Quran is the unity of mankind i.e. gathering mankind as one under the obedience of the Divine values so that all these ruinous conflicts and bloodshed come to an end, which are the natural consequence of humanity being divided into different factions. As an initial step for this it shapes an Ummah which it terms a Muslim Ummah. The unity of this Ummah is the manifestation of *Tauheed*.

3.13 Sectarianism is *Shirk* and *Kufr*

This is why according to it sectarianism is considered to be *Shirk* and *Kufr*. It is stated clearly in Surah *Al-Rum* that:

...And be not you among those who join gods with Allah (Shirk) - those who split up their Deen and become sects - each party rejoicing in that which is with itself! (30:31-32)

At another place it has declared this sectarianism to be *Kufr*, and has intensely opposed it in an instructive manner when it is stated:

Be not like those who are divided amongst themselves and fall into disputations after receiving clear signs: for them is a dreadful penalty - on the Day when some faces will be (lit up with) white, and some faces will be (in the gloom of) black: to those whose faces will be black,0 (will be said): 'Did you reject Eimaan after accepting it? Taste then the penalty for doing Kufr.' (3:105-106)

O *Jamaat e Momineen*! Do not be like those people who, after receiving clear teaching from Allah, fell into mutual disputation and in this way became divided into sects. The consequence of this will be a great devastation (think of it as at the time of the manifestation of results) - some faces will be bright and jubilant and some will be dejected and clouded! And these bleak ones will be those who (having created divisions) after accepting *Eimaan*, adopted *Kufr*. They will be told to taste now the devastating consequence of your *Kufr*.

3.14 *Masjid e Zarrar*²⁰⁵

While explaining the meaning of verse (2:3) under the subject of *As-Salaat*, we stated that *Salaat* is a manifestation of the unity of the Ummah. Along with this we had also stated that unfortunately our present *Namaz* are a manifestation of sectarianism, and our mosques are the havens for this. The Quran has declared the construction of such mosques which lead to sectarianism within the Ummah to be *Kufr*, and this has been stated in relation to the construction of that mosque which was erected during the eminent time of Rasul-ullah with the aim of creating division. Regarding this mosque, the Quran has proclaimed:

And there are those who put up a Masjid (mosque) by way of mischief and infidelity - to disunite the Momineen - and in preparation for one who warred against Allah and His Messenger aforesaid... (9:107)

This mosque is one which will harm the unity of the Ummah, is a cause for division among the *Momineen*, therefore it is *Kufr*; and understand it like this, that this is going to be a sanctuary for those people who were intent on warring against Allah and His messenger.

3.15 The Capitalist System and *Riba* are *Kufr*

In explanation of this same verse (2:3) of this Surah, it was noted under the title of ...‘they keep their means of sustenance bestowed by Us open for others,’ that the Quran presents a comprehensive economic system which is distinct and unique from other economic systems - this system uproots the capitalist system from its foundations. The foundation of the capitalist system is based on this ideology that capital also earns wealth. The Quran proclaims this system to be *Riba* and declares it to be a *Maslak* of *Kufr* – such a *Maslak* against which there is an eternal proclamation of war by the Islamic system. While referring to this (capitalist) system, the Quran has instructed the *Jamaat e Momineen* that:

O you who have Eimaan! Devour not usury (Riba), doubled and multiplied; but fear Allah; that you may (truly) prosper. Fear the fire, which is prepared for those who are Kafir. (3:130-131) See also (2:279)

²⁰⁵ *Masjid e Zarrar* - the term is used for a mosque which causes harm and division within society. (Ed)

In other words, keep yourselves clear of this system, otherwise you will also be thrown into that hell which has been prepared for the *Kuffar*.

3.16 Do Not Let the Quran be Heard

After these overall characteristics, the Quran has informed us of one fundamental characteristic of the *Kuffar* as being that these people do their utmost to prevent the voice of the Quran from reaching the people. Hence, in Surah *Fussilat* it is stated:

Those who are Kafir say: 'Listen not to this Quran but talk at random in the midst of its (reading), that you may gain the upper hand!' (41:26)

Those people who have chosen the *Maslak* of *Kufr* are not only opponents of the Quran themselves, they also tell others that you too should not listen to this Quran. And wherever an invitation is being extended towards this Book, make such a commotion so that what is being said cannot reach the ears. This is one such technique through which you can overpower those who have chosen the *Maslak* of the Quran. If the voice of the Quran becomes commonplace, then you will never be able to subdue them.

3.17 *Kuffar* Will Not be Able to Overpower *Momineen*

These people had thought of this ploy at that time when the Quran had proclaimed:

Let not those who are Kafir think that they can get the better (of the Momineen): they will never frustrate (them). (8:59)

Those who choose the path of *Kufr* should not fall prey to this false assumption that they will forge ahead of those who follow the Quran. Remember! Even though they may attempt a thousand stratagems, they will never cause them to become paralysed and overwhelmed. After this the Quran emphasised to the Muslims that they should protect their frontiers with all their might (8:60, 24:57), and then it decreed in very clear words:

... And never will Allah grant to the Kafireen a way (to triumph) over the Momineen. (4:141)

After this guaranteed promise and clear-cut proclamation of Allah, (present day) Muslims of the world should themselves decide, do they fulfil the criteria of *Momineen*? The criterion decreed by Allah is only one, and that is that no non-Muslim nation will be able to overpower the Muslim Ummah (*Jamaat e Momineen*). And today our condition is such that it is unlikely that there is any piece of land on the face of the earth in which the residing Muslim Ummah – no matter how vast or wide their States may be – are free from the influence and control of non-Muslims in one form or another, directly or indirectly. (In any case, this was just to clarify a point).

The Quran has made it crystal clear that *Kufr* and Islam are two distinct philosophies of life, two separate systems of life, and *Momin* and *Kafir* are two distinct nations or parties. He has called one '*Hiẓb-Allah*' and the other '*Hiẓb-ush-Shaitan*' (58:19, 22). And has stated clearly and explicitly about *Hiẓb-ush-Shaitan* that they are the worst enemy of your system. They will attempt every conceivable effort to make it fail and to eliminate it. It is obvious from this that regarding those people whose state the Quran describes as being this, can relations of friendship be established with them under any circumstances whatsoever? Absolutely not. The Quran has forbidden this with great strictness.

3.18 *Kuffar* Cannot be Friends of *Momineen*

(Apart from Rasul-ullah) the Quran has declared the life of Ibraheem and his companions as a balanced model for Muslims, and this is stated at that place where this announcement of theirs is presented before us:

There is for you an excellent model in Ibraheem and those with him, when they said to their people: 'We are clear of you and of whatever you follow besides Allah: we have rejected you, and there has arisen, between us and you, a wedge and aversion forever, unless you have Eimaan in Allah and Him alone'... (60:4)

They announced to their people that we are extremely averse to both you and to all of those whose rule you are adopting after having abandoned Allah; there exists aversion and a wedge between you and us, and we do not wish to keep this concealed: this is such a manifest reality which we wish to broadcast throughout the world without any reservation. We openly and completely reject your *Maslak* and system. This gulf between you and us will remain until the time that you also acquire Eimaan in One Allah like us. This is that point when it was stated to the *Jamaat e Momineen*:

There is for you an excellent example (to follow) in Ibraheem and those with him... (60:4)

This is why it was stated to Rasul-ullah:

...Follow the ways of Ibraheem, the true in Eimaan... (16:123)

And the *Jamaat e Momineen* were instructed:

...and take you the station of Ibraheem as a model of life ... (2:125)

In order to achieve the status of Ibraheem, make the arena of life as the focal point of your exertions and pursuits. The Quran clarified this in the following words:

O Jamaat e Momineen! Other than members of your Jamaat, do not make anyone else your confidante. These (other) people will leave no stone unturned in your destruction. The desire of their hearts is that you should suffer from such life-threatening troubles as a result of which your strength is crushed. Some words of hatred and vengeance appear spontaneously on their tongues, but what remains lying hidden within their hearts is far greater than this. We have described these matters clearly so that by using your intellect and awareness, you can take precautionary measures against them.

Look! Never do this that you make them your friends. Even if you do resort to this, they will never make you their friend, although you have Eimaan on all those Books which were sent down from the direction of Allah, and these also include those Books which were sent down to their (your opponents') Anbiya. You do this with the sincerity of your heart, but their state is such that when they meet you, they say we also have Eimaan (in the Quran). And when they are not with you, they chew their fingers with intense hatred and anger against you. Tell them, Go! and perish in your anger. Allah knows what you manifest and what is concealed within your hearts. Your psychological dissonances and duplicitous life will become the means of your destruction.

The state of the evil of their hidden self is such that even if something good touches you in passing, it severely displeases them. And if some trouble visits you, they are highly delighted by this. But you should not pay any attention to their words. If you remain steadfast in your programme and wholeheartedly seek the protection of Allah's laws, then all their plots and intrigues will not be able to harm you in the slightest. The

Law of Requital of Allah is encircling them from every direction, this is why results will be established according to it, and not according to their wishes.^{206,207} (3:117-119)

In this connection, the Quran has stated this much:

O Momineen! (Understand this truth well that according to Allah's constitution, the distinction between us and others will not be based on race and blood relationships, rather it will be according to a shared ideology of life. Hence, even if your parents, brothers and sisters also prefer Kufr over Eimaan, then you also should not make them your friends. Remember! Whoever, despite this warning, maintains friendly relationships with them, he will do an injustice to himself because doing this will be equal to rebellion against Allah's law. (O Rasul!) Tell these people that if your fathers and mothers, sons, brothers, wives, and other relatives, and the wealth and riches which you earn, and that commerce the decline of which you fear, and those mansions which you are so fond of – if even any one of these things becomes dearer to you than Allah and His messenger (the Divine system), and more dear than striving in the cause of its establishment and strengthening, then wait for the consequences of this path of yours to materialise at the time of manifestation of results according to the Divine law. Remember, Allah never shows the path of success and prosperity to that nation which slips away in any direction after leaving the right path. (9:23-24)

Following these kinds of teachings, instructions and warnings, Allah had such a great degree of assurance of the firmness of *Eimaan* of resolute and true *Momineen* that He declared with the fullest confidence and trust:

You will never see that those people who have Eimaan in Allah and the hereafter will maintain friendly relationships with those who are willing to wage war against Allah and His messenger (the system of Allah), regardless of whether they are their parents, children, brothers and sisters, or other family members. This is because these are the people in whom Eimaan has penetrated the depths of their hearts. Allah's Wahi becomes a source of strength for them in every aspect of their life, the consequence of which are eternal springs of Jannat, unfamiliar with autumns. In summary, Allah is well pleased with them and they with Allah. These are the very people who are called Hizb-Allah – the party of Allah. And it is obvious that Allah's party always remains successful and prosperous. (58:22)

²⁰⁶ The translation of these verses will be noted at their own place. For the time being you can check these in any copy of the Quran.

²⁰⁷ The author has quoted this from his book, *Mafboom ul Quran*. This is the translation of the Urdu text. (Ed)

3.19 The Conduct of Hypocrites

It also becomes clear from the Quran that hypocrites had also joined in with the *Jamaat e Momineen*. It appears as if they perhaps used to spread such ideas in this *Jamaat* that the whole world is against us; if we establish friendly relations with the *Kuffar* nearest to us i.e. the Koresh²⁰⁸ etc. then we will gain strength through this. It is also possible that they may have secretly established these kinds of contacts and connections with them. The Quran exposed these kinds of mischievous whisperings of theirs and informed the *Jamaat e Momineen* to remember that they are those hypocrites who:

Yea, as to those who take for friends Kafireen rather than Momineen: is it power they seek among them? Nay, all power is with Allah. (4:139)

Those people who, leaving the *Jamaat e Momineen*, make the *Kuffar* as their friends, do they do this because they think that they will gain some strength by this. Let them know that strength in totality will only be achieved by adhering to Allah's system, not by establishing friendly relations with the opponents. Such relations absolutely cannot be established with them.²⁰⁹

3.20 There Can Be No Compromise

At this point it is also necessary to clarify that pacts can be made with non-Muslim nations, and social relationships can be maintained with them at the basic human level within the limits of the Quran. But they cannot be made trusted companions and sharers of confidential matters, and it is on this very basis that they cannot be included in the business of the Islamic government.²¹⁰ Islam does not contain

²⁰⁸ Prominent tribe in Makkah at the time. (Ed)

²⁰⁹ It should be made clear that the *Kuffar* will include all kinds of non-Muslims, whether they are People of the Book or not. Details about the People of the Book will come later, where the Quran has forbidden the establishment of friendship with them (5:51). So much so, that the Quran has even decreed not to have friendly relations with those who mock your Deen as well (5:57).

²¹⁰ In an Islamic State there are no trappings and privileges of power e.g. by being part of the government, since the standard of living of the *Momineen* at the top is exactly the same as that of the ordinary citizens. So being in government actually involves carrying out additional responsibilities without being paid extra dues as would be the case in non-Quranic systems. (Ed)

any flexibility in relation to its principles, therefore, there can also be no compromise with non-Muslims in this respect. In Surah *Yunus* it is stated:

But when Our clear signs are rehearsed unto them, those who rest not their hope on their meeting with Us, say: 'Bring us a reading (Quran) other than this, or change this...'(10:15)

When the laws of Allah are presented before the people, those who do not have *Eimaan* in Allah's Law of Requital say to Rasul-ullah, that as we cannot accept the laws and values of the Quran, if you wish to deal with us then either bring some other Quran in place of this one, or at least make some changes in this according to our desire, then we will join with you. In reply to this it is stated:

...Say (to them): 'It is not for me, of my own accord, to change it: I follow naught but what is revealed unto me: if I were to disobey my Rabb, I should myself fear the penalty of a Great Day'. (10:15)

O Rasul! Say to them that this is simply not within my authority that I could make any change in the Quran from my side.²¹¹ My duty is to follow this Quran. If I go against it, then I, too, fear the destructive consequences, because I will not be able to save myself from these either, therefore I cannot do such a thing. At another place it is stated:

Their desire is that you should be pliant: so would they be pliant. (68:9)

They desire that you waver somewhat from your stance, and they should move somewhat from their position, and in this way a mutual compromise is made. In this respect Rasul-ullah was informed:

And incline not to those who do wrong, or the fire will seize you... (11:113)

See to it that you do not incline in the slightest towards them; if you move even slightly from your stance, then you too will plunge into that same hell towards which they are heading. The truth is that there can never be any compromise between *Haqq* and *Batil*. If *Batil* moves from its position, then nothing affects it, but if *Haqq* moves even slightly from its place, then it no longer remains as *Haqq*. The fundamental meaning of *Haqq* is precisely this, that it is absolutely unwavering in its stance. We can understand this through an example. An individual says two plus two makes four; another one says, no, two plus two makes three, and these two are disputing on this matter. A mediator says to them that, sirs, the matter will not be resolved by this kind of intransigence. Both of

²¹¹ This does not mean that Rasul-ullah would have done this if he could. He understood fully that the Quran is a complete Book and code of life. (Ed)

you should yield your positions. You should compromise on this that two plus two makes three and a half. It is obvious now that the individual who claimed that two plus two makes three loses nothing by this – he was asserting a falsehood before and will still be wrong. But the individual who said two plus two makes four, was stating a matter of *Haqq* and truth. If he accepts that two plus two makes three and a half, then this will remain neither *Haqq* nor truth – this has turned into wrong and *Batil*. There can be hundreds of wrong answers to a sum, but the correct answer is one, and only one. This is the reason that *Haqq* simply cannot compromise with *Batil*; it is not a question of obstinacy, it is the natural demand of *Haqq*.

This is the state of affairs regarding the mutual relationship between Muslims and non-Muslims. Following this, let us move on. The next verse after this is:

Allah has set a seal on their hearts and on their hearing, and on their eyes is a veil; great is the penalty of hell for them. (2:7)

This is the common translation of this verse.

3.21 One Dilemma

Keep this translation in mind and then reflect again on this predicament which we had presented in connection with the common translation of the previous verse (2:6). From the traditional translations of these two verses, it seems as if for those people who are *Kafir*, it is the same to them whether you warn them or not, they will never have *Eimaan*. This is because Allah has sealed their ears and hearts and has placed veils over their eyes i.e. these people adopt *Kufr* (and do not accept *Eimaan*) because Allah has placed seals on their hearts and this is why it is all the same to them whether you warn them or not. Have you seen that the dilemma which was difficult before has become even more problematic with this translation? From this man inevitably reaches the conclusion that what possible fault is there in this of these people: they are helpless and constrained in this matter. But this difficulty becomes a conundrum when the next words are also linked to this translation, that there will be a severe punishment for them. The question which will arise in connection with this is that when Allah Himself has placed a seal on their hearts, and as a result they no longer retained the ability that they could have accepted *Eimaan* and hence they remained *Kafir*, then why should they be given a punishment? Is this not such a matter that it leaves you holding your head in your hands in bafflement! An even clearer example of the difficulties

which confront us as a result of these kinds of traditional translations appears in verse (16:93) of Surah *An-Nabl*. It is traditionally translated as:

If Allah so willed, He could make you all one people: But He leaves straying whom He pleases (according to His law), and He guides whom He pleases: but you shall certainly be called to account for all your actions. (16:93)

If Allah had wished He could have made you all into one Ummah (there would have been no *Kafir* or *Momin*), but Allah misguides whoever He wishes, and gives guidance to whoever He wishes. From this the matter becomes clear that choosing guidance and misguidance is not within the control of man himself – Allah guides whoever He wishes and misguides whoever He wishes.

But following this (the last part of the verse) Allah has stated, ‘But you will be questioned that why did you do this’. Have you noticed what has transpired? First it is stated that Allah misguides whoever He wishes and guides whoever He wishes, and after that it is stated, ‘You will be questioned as to why you adopted the path of misguidance’.

Having looked at the traditional translations of the Quran, and the results of understanding them superficially in this way, we now come to the correct meanings of the Quran.

3.22 Correct Interpretation

The Quran has stated in verses (2:6-7) that Allah puts seals on the hearts of those people who choose *Kufr*, but at another place Allah has made the matter clear in a few words that:

...Nay, Allah has set the seal on their hearts because of their Kufr... (4:155)

These seals become imposed because of their *Kufr* i.e. it is not that Allah Himself places seals on their hearts and that is why they adopt the path of *Kufr*; instead since they choose the path of *Kufr*, hence seals become imposed on their hearts.

Now we come to verse (16:93) of Surah *An-Nabl* whose wrong interpretation becomes the cause for creating scores of misunderstandings.²¹² By observing conflicts and chaos, tyranny and coercion, injustice and exploitation universally in the world, many people who are sensitive but have a superficial view and

²¹² There are numerous such verses in the Quran. Their correct meanings will be explained at their respective places.

understanding, will generally be heard saying that why did Allah not do this - that he should have created human beings in such a way that they simply could not have resorted to tyranny and oppression, all human beings would have kept following the virtuous path. The Quran has stated that this was not at all difficult for Allah to do, that He could have constrained human beings just like other things of the universe to follow one path only (16:93). But the programme of His *Masbe'at* was not for this. He did not create man constrained in this way, He created him possessing the freedom to choose and with the ability to make decisions. It is the consequence of this same ability to choose and decide that when he comes to a crossroad in life, both paths (right and wrong) are shown clearly to him:

And shown him the two paths? (90:10)

And it is said to him that he can adopt whichever path he wishes. In other words, if he wishes he can adopt the wrong path, and if he wishes he can set out on the right path (16:93). But along with this, he is also told what the consequence will be of treading on the wrong path, and what will be the fruits of following the right path. Whichever path he selects, the results of that will appear before him. This is what is called accountability, or questioning, in the terminology of the Quran:

...but you shall certainly be called to account for all your actions. (16:93)

As has been explained previously, these consequences of human deeds are not imposed from somewhere outside as a punishment – every consequence is concealed within the deed itself, just as the mango tree is concealed within the mango stone, and the poplar tree in the poplar seed. What happens is only that the deed takes place first, and the consequence appears later. Regarding the existence of this intrinsic link between the deed and its consequence, it is stated:

... let every self look to what (provision) it has sent for the morrow... (59:18)

3.23 Mutual Connection Between the Deed and its Result

It is incumbent on every individual that he should check in advance what he has sent for his 'tomorrow'. The meaning of 'tomorrow' is that the result of a deed appears after its commission. At another place it is stated:

... The Day when man will see (the deeds) which his hands have sent forth... (78:40)

When man will see with his own eyes what he has previously been sending forth for himself by his own hands. In this connection another matter requiring to be understood is why Allah relates these consequences to Himself. For example, in this same verse (16:93) it is stated that whichever individual desires to tread on the right path, Allah guides him towards the right path; whoever desires to adopt the wrong path, He shows him the wrong path. Or, for example, it is stated in verse (2:7) that ‘Allah has placed seals on their hearts’, though we have seen that Allah Himself has stated that these seals are a consequence of the *Kufr* of these people themselves. The matter is clear: an action is initiated from the direction of man, and its consequences are determined according to the established law of Allah. The law of Allah begins its pursuit (you could say) according to whatever kind of act is committed by man, and ultimately seizes him i.e. the consequence of this deed becomes established according to it and appears before him. For example, in relation to the wrong path of Bani Israel, it is stated:

... Then when they went astray, Allah let their hearts go astray... (61:5)

When they themselves became warped, Allah made their hearts warped. Or, at another place it is stated:

... Then they turn aside: Allah has turned their hearts (from the light)... (9:127)

When they turned their faces away from the path defined by Allah, Allah turned their hearts in that same direction. This is that reality which has been detailed comprehensively in these words:

... Verily never will Allah change the condition of a people until they change it themselves (what is in their hearts)... (13:11)

Allah does not change the conditions and circumstances of a nation until the time that the nation does not produce change within itself i.e. whatever kind of change that nation brings about within itself, the law of Allah will cause it to become exactly that. In other words, in this world of efforts and deeds the initiative lies in the hands of man and the law of Allah follows it. Whatever man wishes to become, the law of Allah makes him the same. And whatever he becomes in this way, (like the fruit of a tree) he keeps displaying his traits through his own self. This is the conclusion and outcome of the issue of *Taqdeer* (fate). Iqbal has explained this in a very attractive and comprehensive style when he states that:

In other words, the matter is very delicate and profound, but this secret is hidden within a word and that word is this, that if you change, then your Taqdeer will change accordingly i.e. however you turn out to be, your Taqdeer becomes the same; that same kind of law of Allah becomes applicable to you.

If you make yourself dust on a path, then even the slightest gust of wind will whirl you around and disperse you. But if you create hardness like a stone within yourself, then whichever mirror you strike against, it will shatter into pieces.

If you make yourself a dew drop, then you will fall down to the ground from the heights of the heavens, and the tiniest of rays of the sun will end your being and existence. But if you transform yourself into a boundless ocean, then you will achieve eternal existence. However, if for some reason you have fallen into an abyss, then do not just sit there shedding tears blaming your Taqdeer; nor deceive yourself by saying that since Allah has written it like this in my Kismet, so what can I do? This is false.

In whatever state you are at this moment in this time, Allah's law is being imposed on you accordingly. If you desire that some other law of Allah should become applicable to you, then change your own self: the other law of Allah will become applied to you. There are infinite laws with Allah – whatever kind of individual a man himself wishes to become, the same kind of law becomes applicable to him.²¹³

Hence, when Allah relates some deed of man to Himself, this is what it means i.e. 'He did this, so We did it like this'. An individual dies by swallowing poison - this incident can be narrated in many different styles. It could even be said about this that the poison killed him; also that he killed himself by taking poison; and also that he ingested poison and Allah killed him. And as a principle, also that whoever swallows poison, Allah will kill him.

3.24 Allah Relates Deeds Towards Himself

In other words, whatever happens in the universe according to the established laws of Allah, He also relates these directly to Himself. For example, rain falls according to the established law of nature of Allah, and these laws are so immutable that whoever acquires accurate knowledge of it, he can forecast when and where rain will fall. Despite this, Allah relates this to Himself and states:

...It is He Who sends down rain... (31:34)

Or,

... in the rain which Allah sends down from the skies... (2:164)

So much so, that He even says:

²¹³ The author has translated these Persian verses by Iqbal (from his book *Javaid Nama*) into Urdu. (Ed)

It is Allah Who made your habitations homes of rest and quiet for you; and made for you, out of the skins of animals, (tents for) dwellings... (16:80)

Even though it is obvious that human beings construct their tents and houses themselves. Whatever man does according to his natural abilities, Allah also relates this to Himself. For example, (leaving aside *Wabi*) man acquires all kinds of knowledge through his own exertions but because the basic potential to acquire knowledge is bestowed by Allah, hence He states:

Taught man that which he knew not. (96:5)

Allah taught man all that which he was not aware of. He even says:

He Who taught (the use of) the pen... (96:4)

Allah taught man to write with a pen, although it is obvious that a child learns to write with a pen himself. In connection with documentation relating to buying and selling, it is stated in Surah *Al-Baqrah*:

...let not the scribe refuse to write as Allah has taught him... (2:282)

It should never be the case that the scribe should refuse to write this documentation in the way that Allah has taught him. In Surah *Al-Maida*, regarding hunting by dogs, it is stated:

...and what you have taught your trained hunting animals (to catch) in the manner directed to you by Allah... (5:4)

It is obvious that Allah does not teach hunters how dogs need to be trained to hunt. They learn this technique themselves. But since the potential to acquire knowledge is fundamentally bestowed by Allah, therefore Allah relates these matters to Himself. This is that reality which Ibraheem has described in these words:

Who gives me food and drink, and when I am ill, it is He Who cures me. (26:79-80)

From these verses it is evident that Allah relates the effects which materialise via the laws established by Allah to Himself (whether these are laws of nature dispersed throughout the pages of nature, or are preserved as the values and laws of Allah in the Quran). Following this, it will become easy to understand why He stated that Allah places seals on their hearts (2:7), or whoever wishes to be misguided, Allah takes him towards misguidance, etc.

If verses of the Quran in which Allah has related some matter towards His direction are translated like this, that ‘Allah does this according to His law’, or

that ‘according to Allah’s law this takes place’, then all difficulties are removed. This is the technique which I have adopted in this respect.

3.25 The Meanings of *Khatam* and *Tabba*

The words *Khatam* and *Tabba* have appeared in verses like ‘*Khata’mallah Hu Ala Qalubi’him*’ etc. When you fill a bottle with something and close it with a cork, and then for further security also place a seal on it, this is called *Khata’ma* i.e. to close something completely (from this the meaning of the finality of messengerhood²¹⁴ will also become clear). Sometimes we close an envelope and seal it with wax and then using a stamp engrave our name in it. Doing this is called *Tabba* – the issue is the same i.e. to close something in such a way that nothing can enter it. Let us see how this state of the human heart becomes like this – that state in which nothing of knowledge and reason can enter.

It is stated in Surah *Al-Momin* about Pharaoh and his companions:

(Such) as dispute about the signs of Allah, without any authority that has reached them. Grievous and odious (is such conduct) in the sight of Allah and of the Momineen. Thus does Allah seal up every heart - of arrogant and obstinate transgressors. (40:35)

These are those people who keep opposing Allah’s laws without any authority or evidence. Just think! How deserving of condemnation this path is. They do this merely due to egotism, arrogance and pride. After this it is stated that in this way Allah puts seals on the hearts of such people.

3.26 How Hearts Are Sealed

It is stated in Surah *Al-Rum*:

Verily We have propounded for men, in this Quran, every kind of parable: but if you bring to them any sign, the Kuffar are sure to say, ‘You do nothing but talk vanities.’ (30:58)

In order to make people understand, We have used various styles and techniques in the Quran, but their condition is such that when verses from it are presented

²¹⁴ *Khatm-e-Nabuwat* – the ending of messengerhood. (Ed)

to them, they will declare without any thought or understanding that ‘you are dishonest and a follower of lies’. After this it is stated:

Thus does Allah seal up the hearts of those who understand not. (30:59)

In this way Allah puts seals on the hearts of those people who keep on calling others liars without knowledge and evidence.

In Surah *Al-Anam* it is stated:

Of them there are some who (pretend to) listen to you; but We have thrown veils on their hearts, so they understand it not, and deafness in their ears; if they saw every one of the signs, they will not believe in them; in so much that when they come to you, they (but) dispute with you. The Kafirun say: ‘These are nothing but tales of the ancients.’ (6:25)

This is how seals become applied to their hearts. This same reality is described at another place in the following words:

And among them are men who listen to you, but in the end, when they go out from you, they say to those who have received knowledge, ‘What is it he said just then?’ Such are men whose hearts Allah has sealed, and who follow their own lusts. (47:16)

While sitting in your gatherings, they remain lost in their own thoughts, and when they stand up and leave, then they ask of those who had listened attentively to these matters, what was this individual saying in there.

These are the people on whose hearts seals become imposed according to the law of Allah, and they keep on blindly following their own desires. The state of their stubbornness is such that they say with great pride:

They say: ‘Our hearts are under veils (concealed) from that to which you invite us, and in our ears is a deafness, and between us and you is a screen: so you do (what you will); for us, we shall do (what we will!).’ (41:5) See also (2:88)

O Rasul, you keep preaching to us day and night, but you should know that there can be no impact on us, our hearts are wrapped in covers, our ears are becoming plugged; in fact, you could say that between us and you there is a veil. Therefore, do whatever you wish, we are not about to abandon our programme. Verse (45:23) from Surah *Al-Jathiyah* has already been quoted in which it is stated:

Then see you such a one as takes as his god his own vain desire? Allah has, knowing (him as such), left him astray, and sealed his hearing and his heart (and understanding), and put a cover on his sight... (45:23)

This is also stated in Surah *An-Nabl* thus:

This because they love the life of this world better than the Hereafter: and Allah will not guide those who are Kafir. They are those whose hearts, ears, and eyes Allah has sealed up, and they take no heed. (16:107-108)

From these verses you will have seen that when man does not make use of reflection and reasoning then this very ability of reflection and reasoning becomes disabled.²¹⁵

3.27 Heart Locking itself through own Lock

This supreme fact is expressed in extremely concise words in Surah *Muhammad* in the following way:

Do they not then earnestly seek to understand the Quran, or are their hearts locked up by them? (47:24)

In this verse one such point has been mentioned which I do not wish to move on from without illuminating further. What has been stated is ‘*Um Alla Qalu’bin Aqfaluhaa’* – the translation of these words is difficult but what is being said is that on their hearts are the locks of their own hearts. The meaning is that the locks on the hearts do not become applied from somewhere externally; these locks are moulded within the workshop of these hearts themselves. The heart installs these locks manufactured by itself on itself, and then shuts itself inside. You can understand it as the following example: an individual enters a room and bolts the door from the inside, and then shrieks and wails, how can I get out, take me out’, even though he has bolted it himself and he himself can open it. And this is that reality which appears before us at another place in the form of a concrete statement where the Quran has declared:

By no means! but on their hearts, is the stain of the (ill) which they do! (83:14)

Nay! The matter is not that which most people commonly understand it to be. The issue is that their own deeds, by becoming rust, bind to their hearts. This is what is called seals imposed from the direction of Allah.

From these explanations it has become evident what the meaning is of verse (2:7). In the verse prior to this it was stated that those people who deliberately adopt the path of *Kufr* and do not wish to hear anything whatsoever against their path,

²¹⁵ Scholars on evolution inform us that whichever species stops making use of some part, after a period of time nature then makes this part of it redundant.

it is equal to them whether they are warned about the destructive consequences of their path or not; they will simply not be agreeable to accepting the true message. The consequence of this endeavour of theirs is stated to be that little by little their condition becomes such that their very ability to reason, think, listen, and observe becomes paralysed (2:7). And because all of this is their own doing, they will have to face the consequence of this, and that consequence is a mighty chastisement!

...Great is the penalty they incur...(2:7)

3.28 Meaning of *Azaab*²¹⁶

The frequency with which the word *Azaab* has appeared in the Quran, it is with the same frequency and intensity that its erroneous concept is prevalent among us. First of all that among us, *Azaab* only commences after death from the grave – *Azaab* of the grave, *Azaab* of *Hashr*, *Azaab* of *Jahannum* – and the depiction of this *Azaab* in the minds is as though policemen are hanging a criminal upside down, skinning him or marking his skin with hot metallic rods, and he is shrieking and wailing with this unbearable agony.

As far as worldly *Azaab* is concerned, its position is like this, that if there is an earthquake somewhere, then it is said that this is an *Azaab* from Allah. If there are floods, then it is an *Azaab* from Allah. If there is no rain, then this is also an *Azaab* from Allah. If an epidemic of plague or cholera occurs, then this is an *Azaab* from Allah, etc, etc. But the form of this *Azaab* is strange. The criminal or villain happens to be in London, and the earthquake occurs in Mexico. Debauchery and depravity take place in Russia and floods appear in Pakistan i.e. if such types of catastrophes occur in some part of the world, it is said that this is an *Azaab* from Allah which has appeared due to crimes and evil. And for protection or alleviation, it is ordained that you (the addressees) should seek the forgiveness of Allah. Ask for forgiveness for your sins so that this *Azaab* of Allah can be removed.

3.29 Natural Disasters

²¹⁶ *Azaab* – usually translated as punishment. (Ed)

The Quran has mentioned these kinds of disasters in connection with the circumstances and condition of former nations. What its correct interpretation is, and what the connection and relationship is between the deeds of nations and these kinds of physical disasters, details of these will be given at their respective places. As far as the modern era is concerned, it is obvious that these kinds of natural disasters keep occurring in every country. Those countries which take precautionary measures in the light of scientific research remain protected from their disastrous effects; those who do not do this, become destroyed.

Human knowledge is gradually progressing forward. As a result of this he has overcome many of these kinds of disasters; he will overcome the rest as well. When Allah informed man that We have subjugated the system of the universe to your control, what this means is that man was bestowed with this ability that he could harness the forces of nature (details of this will appear later). Hence, to state about these kinds of universal disasters that Allah makes men suffer in an *Azāab* due to their sins is incorrect.

What happens is that due to contravention of the Divine principles and values, the morals of a nation deteriorate. The foremost consequence of this is that the concept of justice disappears from this nation. This nation first of all adopts this practice of injustice against other nations and keeps promoting it by terming it as the fervour of patriotism. Gradually, these germs also penetrate within their own selves, and in this way lawlessness spreads in this society, the consequence of which is chaos and conflict in every facet of life.²¹⁷ This also affects their organisation and management, the outcome of which is that that nation simply does not remain capable of facing natural disasters. This is the link between the moral decline of nations and the devastations resulting from natural universal events. In other words, natural disasters e.g. floods, earthquakes etc. do not result from human 'sins'; these materialise according to the laws of nature. The consequence of human 'sins' (due to transgression of moral values) is that this nation neither retains the ability to counter and mitigate these natural disasters, nor has the potential to rectify the subsequent devastation resulting from these events.

As far as punishment in the hereafter is concerned, it has already been stated that the state and environment of that life are such abstract realities which we cannot understand tangibly. These have been described in the Quran in the form of metaphors and similes. In light of these, we will explain what their meanings are in their respective places according to our vision and understanding.

²¹⁷ Details of *Fasad* will be discussed under verse (2:11).

After this introduction, let us see what is the Quranic meaning of *Azqaab*.

In verse (1:5) of Surah *Al-Fateha* we have seen that, according to the Quran, the concept of life is dynamic; it neither moves in circles nor is it static. By traversing through various evolutionary stages, life has reached the status of Adam from its initial point. This destination is not the ultimate end of the journey, in order to pass through further evolutionary stages it has to advance forward. And this process also continues beyond death. In fact, you could say that only the initial phase of the lengthy process of the evolution of Adam has commenced. It is evident from this that the onward continual progression of life is its success, and its becoming static at some point is its extreme failure and despair – as long as life remains like a babbling stream, it is life. When it halts somewhere, becoming a stagnant pond, then its fundamental characteristic (flowing) firstly becomes restricted, and after this it ceases. The Quran has termed life becoming static at some point as *Azqaab*. Among the Arabs, due to the aridness and intensity of the heat of the deserts, their animals had to remain thirsty, and on many occasions the intensity of thirst used to reach to such an extent that the animal would even give up eating and drinking, and in this way the ability to move around no longer remained within it. This condition of its was termed as *Azqaab*. It is from this respect that the Quran has called *Jahannum* as being *Jabeem* e.g. (44:56) – the meaning of *Jabeem* is an impediment, or to become an obstruction.

3.30 Life Becoming Static

Within our nation²¹⁸, which is unfortunately stagnant at one point for centuries, the very awareness itself of the painful despair of the soul resulting from dynamism having switched to inertia is dead. We have come to believe that this, in fact, is how life is supposed to be. The condition of such pain and agony should be enquired from someone who is sprinting in a sports ground together with other runners, and he can see that he will forge ahead of all of them but en route some obstruction appears, and thus instead of going forward, he halts and becomes stationary. And then he witnesses with his own eyes, how by advancing forward, those players who were far behind him have reached the destination. This is that *Azqaab* which simply cannot be put into words, it can only be imagined. In this world, humiliation and backwardness, subjugation and dependency, weakness and absence of strength, helplessness and vulnerability, poverty and destitution, and after this cowardice and lack of courage, in fact, absence of

²¹⁸ The Muslims as a nation. (Ed)

honour and disgrace are the natural consequences of this inertia – and therefore the various facets of this *Az̤aab*. This is the *Az̤aab* of this world. Following this, the question of the *Az̤aab* in the life of the hereafter comes before us. Details about them will be given at their respective places. At this point it is enough to say that the Quran has portrayed it metaphorically and has stated at a fundamental level that:

(It will be said:) ‘You were heedless of this; now have We removed your veil, and sharp is your sight this Day!’ (50:22)

Over there the veils which lie over the eyes will become lifted, and the vision will become so sharp that it will be able to pierce even through layers of steel, whereupon there will be such an acute awareness of the loss resulting from remaining inert and falling behind in the dynamic sphere of life, that upon seeing it, man will emit a painful cry and will say:

... ‘Woe unto me! Would that I were (mere) dust!’ (78:40)

I wish that I were just a lump of mud instead of a self-conscious human being.

Next, we will describe some examples of this *Az̤aab* which are related to life in this world. The Quran explains the collective forms of most *Az̤aab*.

3.30.1 Humiliation and Disgrace

Although the Quran has described various forms and characteristics of *Az̤aab* – stating *Az̤aab e Az̤eem* (a very severe punishment) at some places, and *Az̤aab e Aleem* (a very painful punishment) at other places – for us the severest and worst form is that which it has termed as *Az̤aab un Muheen* – a humiliating *Az̤aab* (22:57 and other verses). The reality is that if the honour and self-respect of a nation is not completely dead, then there can be no punishment more chastising and instructive than that of humiliation and disgrace. It has reiterated this fact at a number of places in the account of Bani Israel, that the consequence of their continual transgression and criminal proclivity was:

Shame is pitched over them (like a tent) wherever they are found... (3:112)

Wherever they went, the damning *Az̤aab* of humiliation followed them like a shadow. We have said above that when dynamism no longer remains in a nation, and it stagnates at some place, then the consequence of this is that ruin and destruction which the Quran has termed as *Az̤aab*. It is on this basis that the

Quran also calls this *Maskanat*²¹⁹ (2:61) along with humiliation, when explaining the *Azraab* in which the nation of Bani Israel was gripped i.e. that their grandeur and greatness was converted into humiliation and lowliness, and their dynamism and energy became static and frozen. Referring to this conduct of theirs, that they had *Eimaan* in one part of the Divine code and used to reject the other part, it is stated that this was not only about Bani Israel, rather:

...Then is it only a part of the Book that you believe in, and do you reject the rest? But what is the reward for those among you who behave like this but disgrace in this life? And on the Day of Judgement they shall be consigned to the most grievous penalty... (2:85)

Whichever nation adopts such a path, its outcome will be nothing other than that it will be humiliated and disgraced in the life of this world and gripped in the severest *Azraab* on the Day of Judgement.

3.30.2 Subjugation

The worst form of humiliation is that some nation becomes a subject and slave of other nations. This is what the condition of Bani Israel had been reduced to in Egypt. The nation of Pharaoh had made them their subjects. Thus, when Musa went to Pharaoh, this is exactly what he had said to him:

‘...Send forth, therefore, Bani Israel with us, and afflict them not...’ (20:47)

Let the people of Bani Israel go with us and do not keep them chained in the iron grip of *Azraab*. This (elimination of slavery and subjugation) is what the Quran has termed as the changing and replacing of nations i.e. the replacement of one nation by another. The rare form of this changeover is that a victorious nation turns out the defeated nation from their places of abode and their land, and in their place it establishes itself and occupies their land (as the *Aryans* did in India to the original inhabitants, the *Draworans*). But its common form is that the defeated nation loses its wealth and prosperity and the victorious nation becomes its master. This is also ‘the replacement of one nation by another nation’. In Surah *At-Tauba* the *Jamaat e Momineen* is instructed to come out for *Jihad* in the cause of Allah:

²¹⁹ *Maskanat* – becoming static i.e. suffering from inertia; not able to escape this humiliation. (Ed)

Unless you go forth, He will punish you with a grievous penalty, and put others in your place; but Him you would not harm in the least. For Allah has power over all things. (9:39)

If you digress from this, then remember! Allah will put you in a chastising *Aẓaab*, and this *Aẓaab* will be that another nation will take your place, and you will not be able to do anything to Allah. This is because the rule of law operates in Allah's system and this law possesses so much established power that none can tamper in it. In another verse it is stated:

Behold, you are those invited to spend (of your substance) in the way of Allah: But among you are some that are niggardly. But any who are niggardly are so at the expense of their own selves. But Allah is free of all wants, and it is you that are needy. If you turn back (from the path), He will substitute in your stead another people; then they would not be like you! (47:38)

You are those people who, when you are asked to keep your treasure chests open for the establishment and strengthening of the Divine system (in the path of Allah), there are indeed some among you who start to act in a niggardly fashion. The one who is niggardly is entangled in this self-deception that he keeps his wealth for himself and deprives others of it, but he does not even understand this much that the consequence of this behaviour of his will be that he himself will also become deprived of these possessions and wealth. Say to them that by inviting you to spend in the cause of Allah, He is not asking anything from you for His Own Self. It is your own benefit in this. He is free from all wants, it is you who are needy. Remember! If you turn away from the invitation to spend and devise ways to avoid it, then the consequence of this will be that another nation will take your place and it will not be similar to you.

3.30.3 Sectarianism

Allah has termed the *Jamaat e Momineen* as one Ummah and has repeatedly stated that division into parties and sectarianism is *Kufr* and *Shirk*, and its consequence is a humiliating *Aẓaab* of destruction and ruin. In Surah *Al e Imran* it is stated:

Be not like those who are divided amongst themselves and fall into disputations after receiving clear signs: for them is a dreadful penalty. (3:105)

There are various forms and manifestations of the *Aẓaab* which becomes imposed as a result of mutual dissensions, which the Quran has expressed in Surah *Al-Anam* in this way:

Say: 'He has power to send calamities on you, from above and below, or to cover you with confusion in party strife, giving you a taste of mutual vengeance - each from the other'. See how We explain the signs by various (symbols), that they may understand.
(6:65)

This *Azāab* has different faces: sometimes it is the case that vices become commonplace among the upper strata of society, and as a consequence of these, the society becomes destroyed. Sometimes anarchy spreads among the lower classes and they cause destruction, and sometimes it happens that both these classes become divided into different parties and begin fighting with each other and are destroyed in this way. Just see! How We bring to attention the various aspects of Our laws so that mankind can understand the matter well.

This is a state of civil war but sometimes this destruction appears as a defeat at the hands of other nations. Hence, in Surah *At-Tauba* the *Jamaat e Momineen* is instructed that those opponents who have reached to the battlefield against you, fight against them; Allah wishes to make them suffer *Azāab* through your hands, and to make them humiliated and disgraced in the world (9:14). See also (9:52)

3.30.4 Fear and Grief

This is that form of *Azāab* in which the issue is ended with one blow. But even more soul-destroying than this is the *Azāab* in which a sense of fear prevails on the nerves of a nation. The Quran has informed us that the essential outcome of *Eimaan* and *Saleh* deeds is:

... on them shall be no fear, nor shall they grieve. (2:38)

Such a nation will neither be gripped in the *Azāab* of *Khauf* (fear), nor will it be infected with the anguish produced by *Huzn* (grief). *Khauf* is commonly created by external dangers, and *Huzn* is that inner state in which man remains engulfed due to anxiety and grief. This is that *Jahannum* about which it is stated that:

In which they will then neither die nor live. (87:13)

In which man neither remains alive, nor does he even die. In another verse:

...Death will come to him from every quarter, yet will he not die...(14:17)

Eimaan and *Saleh* deeds keep a nation protected from both these forms of *Azāab*. In contrast to this, in Surah *An-Nabl* the Quran has warned in a metaphorical manner:

Allah sets forth a parable: a city enjoying security and quiet, abundantly supplied with sustenance from every place: yet was it ungrateful for the favours of Allah: so Allah made it taste of hunger and terror (in extremes) like a garment (closing in at it from every side), because of the (evil) which (its people) wrought. (16:112)

There was a town whose inhabitants enjoyed both peace and tranquility i.e. they had neither any kind of fear nor grief – the state of their prosperity was such that bounteous *Rizq* was being attracted towards them from all directions. They flouted these bounties of Allah (did *Kufr*) and as a consequence they were caught in the *Azaab* of hunger and fear – and this was the outcome of their self-created system which they had established in opposition to the system of Allah.

3.30.5 *Azaab* of Hunger

From this it is evident that hunger and fear are Allah's *Azaab* i.e. dearth of *Rizq* and threat of external dangers. With regard to dearth of *Rizq*, it has stated in clear words:

But whosoever turns away from My message, verily his sustenance is narrowed down, and We shall raise him up blind on the Day of Judgement. (20:124)

Whoever eschews Our laws, his sustenance becomes restricted, and the one whose sustenance is restricted here is also resurrected blind on the Day of Judgement.²²⁰ At another place it is stated:

But those who were blind in this world, will be blind in the hereafter... (17:72)

(Regarding the *Azaab* of hunger, details will be given in connection with the economic programme of the Quran). In verse (16:112) quoted previously from Surah *An-Nabl*, it is stated that nations fall into the *Azaab* of hunger and fear due to transgression of *Naima* (bounties and blessings). This same fact is noted by the Quran at another place in a very dramatic style, when it states:

Have you not turned your vision to those who have changed the favour of Allah into rejection and caused their people to descend to the house of perdition? - Into Hell? They will burn therein - an evil place to stay in! (14:28-29)

²²⁰ This is an important point. Whatever the state in which we exit from this world at the time of our demise, the next life commences from there as and when we will be resurrected. This is part of the functioning of the Law of Requit. (Ed)

Have you ever paid attention to the state of those people who adopted *Kufr* towards Allah's bounties and as a consequence deposited the caravan of their nation in that market where there was no buyer for this commerce i.e. deposited them in hell which is an extremely dreadful place to abide in.

3.31 Worldly Hell

As has been stated before, a detailed discussion about *Jannat* and *Jabannum* will come at their own place.²²¹ Here, it is sufficient to say that the Quran has declared:

...But, of a surety, Hell will encompass the Kafirun. (29:54)

Jabannum is not somewhere far away, it continuously encircles the *Kuffar* in its sphere:

And they will not be able to keep away therefrom. (82:16)

Even now they are not hidden from its view, it is keeping watch over them. But because veils of ignorance and vested interests are covering their eyes, this is why they cannot see it. What happens in that which is called the Day of Accountability²²² is that:

And hell-fire shall be placed in full view for (all) to see...(79:36)

That hell which previously is invisible to the sight bursts into the full view of seeing eyes. As has been noted earlier, destruction and ruin do not descend on nations unjustly, nor does any nation receive success and ascendancy as *Bakhsheesh*²²³. In this world of effort and deeds there is a continuous clash between opposing forces (of *Haqq* and *Batil*). In this clash the nation which has the ability to remain alive and progress further, remains alive and advances ahead. The one which does not contain this potential becomes vanquished and is annihilated. This is that fact which the Quran has mentioned in a few concise words in Surah *Anfal* at that place where it is said to the *Jamaat e Momineen* that We have not drawn you into the battlefield for nothing, there is a specific purpose for this, and that is:

...That those who died might die after a clear sign, and those who lived might live after a clear sign...(8:42)

²²¹ See *The Life in the Hereafter: What Does the Quran Say?* by the author. (Ed)

²²² The Arabic term quoted is *Yaum ul Hisab*.

²²³ *Bakhsheesh* - a favour received without any effort. (Ed)

Whoever is to be killed, should be killed due to an evident reason, and whoever is to stay alive, should also remain alive based on a clear reason.

3.32 Life and Death on Evidence Based Vision

This is that very principle for which the Quran has quoted as evidence details of former nations with such focus and emphasis. The aim of describing these details is to inform how the nation holding on to *Haqq* and truth remains victorious and successful, and how nations who are flagbearers of the *Batil* system become destroyed and annihilated in such a way that afterwards only the ruins of their destroyed habitations survive to mourn their demise (40:82-85). As has been noted before, these destructions do not appear for no reason. Nations are warned beforehand that the consequence of the system which you have adopted is destruction and ruin. They are given this warning repeatedly, but when they do not hearken to this and continue to advance on their wrong path, then they fall into that hell about which they were warned. It is stated in Surah *Bani Israel*:

...nor would We visit with Our wrath until We had sent a messenger (to give warning). (17:15)

At another place it is stated:

Never did We destroy a population but had its warners - by way of reminder; and We never are unjust. (26:208-209)

We do not destroy any habitation until those messengers are not sent among them who warn them about the consequences of their wrong conduct and remind them in order that they are not kept in ignorance. We are not unjust that we would destroy a nation for no rhyme or reason.

The principle for the life and destruction of nations is very clear and based on reality. Medical science informs us that the environment in which man resides and the atmosphere in which he breathes is filled with billions of harmful germs. These germs get inside man where his power of immunity confronts them. If his immunity is strong, then it will kill these germs itself, and that individual remains healthy. If it has become somewhat weakened, then these harmful germs overwhelm him, and this is termed as illness. Treatment is based on this principle that the degree of immunity of that individual should be boosted, so that he becomes enabled to fight these illnesses. But if the situation is such that immunity keeps on diminishing, and harmful elements keep on overwhelming, then a day arrives when the power of immunity loses the final battle - this is termed death.

3.33 Law of Protection and Respite

Just like individuals, nations also have a similar situation. Their power of self-protection increases in relation to the extent to which they engage in constructive work and as a result destructive elements do not overpower them. But if the situation is such that the constructive tasks of a nation keep on declining, and destructive works and actions keep multiplying, then that nation willingly sets out on the road to decline, and ultimately becomes defeated and subjugated, destroyed and annihilated. The Quran has elucidated this with the example of the scales of a balance rising and falling. It states:

... Those whose scale (of good) will be heavy, will prosper. (7:8)

The individual or nation whose scale of righteousness is heavier remains successful and prosperous. And then it states:

Those whose scale will be light, will find their selves in perdition... (7:9)

The one whose scale is lighter, destroys itself. It is obvious that this process of scales being lighter or heavier does not reach to its completion in one day, a long duration of time is required for this. In the terminology of the Quran this is called the time of respite or *Ajal* (duration), during which there is an allowance and possibility for that nation to once again increase its constructive and protective potentials and save itself from the impending destruction. But for the nation which does not do this, its time of respite comes to an end, and it becomes destroyed. In the words of the Quran:

... To every people is a term appointed: when their term is reached, not an hour can they cause delay, nor (an hour) can they advance (it in anticipation). (10:49) See also (7:34)

It is stated in response to those people who out of ignorance say that *Azāab* becomes imposed from the direction of Allah, i.e. there is neither any procedure and law established for it, nor any principle and criterion, He imposes *Azāab* on whoever He wishes, that:

*What can Allah gain by your punishment, if you are grateful and you have Eimaan?
Nay, it is Allah that recognises (all good), and knows all things. (4:147)*

If you utilise the bounties as directed, and have *Eimaan* in the eternal truths, then what will Allah gain by punishing you? Instead, He bestows full recompense as a

return for balanced conduct, and His being All-Knowing means that not even anyone's smallest deed can remain hidden from His sight (99:7-8).

We have described above in what forms *Azqab* descends on nations which are prone to decline and ultimately becoming destroyed, but what has not emerged in a definitive form is what are those causes on the basis of which nations initially become prone to decline and then after this become destroyed. These causes will be found in a dispersed form in the Quran and also from time to time in this book. These nations can be definitively divided into three categories:

- (1) Regarding those nations which do not harness the forces of nature, the Quran has declared that the power to harness nature is within the realm of human potentials, hence those nations which do not make use of this power cannot even be declared to be included in the domain of humanity, never mind be counted among nations which are alive. These are commonly nations immersed in religion, before whom everything in the world is to be despised, and every attraction is deserving of condemnation. By shunning the paths of life-giving realities, they remain engrossed in the nebulous world of self-concocted holy tales.
- (2) Those nations which harness the forces of nature, but instead of employing them under the obedience of the Permanent Divine Values use them for their own vested interests, the consequence of which is mutual conflict and confrontation among nations, it appears as if these nations are heading towards lofty heights but this rise of theirs is transitory. Disdain of ethical values places a time bomb in the construction of their foundations and when the time arrives for it to explode, the whole structure of their culture and civilisation comes swiftly tumbling down. Regarding the nations of Aa'd, Thamud, etc. the Quran has informed us that they were possessors of greatly enviable power and prosperity, authority and supremacy, and along with this very aware and conscious, and were also possessors of knowledge and skill. But when they transgressed against the Divine laws and refused to establish a system according to these, then neither their power and supremacy was able to protect them from this destruction, nor was their knowledge and skill of any use to them. And that destruction which they used to mock at encircled them from every direction (46:26). The current nations of the West are its living examples. They have harnessed the forces of nature with such a degree of vastness, depths and heights which are unparalleled, and in this way have encompassed every corner of the planet. And since they kept advancing in their control of the planet, the world therefore assumed that decline cannot affect these nations. But they divorced the

Divine values from their life, and as a consequence the hell in which they are caught at the present time can be gauged to some degree from the cries and screams which are arising spontaneously from the hearts of visionaries and producing tremors in the environment of the world.²²⁴

- (3) In the third category are those nations which, having harnessed the forces of nature, utilise its benefits according to the Divine values for the general good of the whole of mankind. As long as these nations remain firm on this path, not even a shadow of decline can approach them. Details of this can be found at numerous places within the Quran under *Eimaan* and *Saleh* deeds.

At this point we have confined ourselves to this *Azaab* i.e. the destructive consequences of wrong deeds which appear in this world. Discussions about the *Azaab* in the hereafter will be discussed at their respective places. It is important to clarify this much here that the punishment meted out by courts for crimes is also termed as *Azaab* by the Quran e.g. (24:2, 24:8).

3.34 Summary of Chapter 3 (Verses 2:6-7)

This is the detailed meaning of verses (2:6-7) of Surah *Al-Baqarah* according to my vision. I have given a summary of these meanings in the following words in *Mafhoom ul Quran* (revised edition):

In contrast to the Muttaqeen, the other group is of those people who consider the physical life of this world as being the only life, that is why they neither accept the existence of the human self, nor are persuaded of the need for the Divine values for its development. To gain the benefits of physical life is their aim in life, and using all kinds of tactics for the acquisition of this is their Maslak. Until the time that they do not change this fundamental view of life, it makes no difference to them whether they are warned about the dangerous pitfalls of the path or not: they can never come to the right path. For the individual who is bent upon committing suicide, advising him not to take poison because it is fatal is futile. Such advice can only be profitable for those who wish to remain alive.

The consequence of following this path is that these people lose the potential to observe and reason, and understand and reflect (like a man who becomes mad with rage). Such thick covers of base desires are drawn over their vision that they cannot

²²⁴ Details of this are available in my book, *Insaan nae Kia Socha?* (What Did Man Think).

even see the signs of the path. Their ears are so blocked up that despite the sound of the bells, they cannot locate the caravan. Such covers are wrapped around their hearts and minds that despite reflecting on the surrounding environment, they cannot determine the correct direction. The consequence of this is that destruction which materialises according to the Law of Requital of Allah.

In this way these people deprive themselves of the true delights of life and descend into the hell of ruin and destruction. How dreadful is this end of theirs!

4 CHAPTER 4 – *Munafiqeen* (Hypocrites)

(Verses 2:8-20)

*Of the people there are some who say: ‘We have Eimaan in Allah and the Last Day;’
but they do not have Eimaan. (2:8)*

We have previously seen that the Quran has divided mankind into principally two categories – *Momin* and *Kafir*. Those are *Momin* who accept the truth of Allah’s *Wahi* as noted in the Quran. *Kafir* are those who do not accept it. Now a third category comes before us and it consists of those people ‘who say that we accept this truth, but despite this they are not *Momin*’. The details given in the Quran regarding this aspect will now appear before us.

The Quran has defined five constituents of *Eimaan* – Allah, *Malaika*, Books, Messengers and the Hereafter. In this verse (2:8) it is stated that these people say that we have accepted *Eimaan* in ‘Allah and the hereafter’. Some people with a superficial understanding think that since these people are claimants of *Eimaan* in only two out of the five constituents, and leave aside the other three constituents, this is the reason why the Quran has stated that they are not *Momin*.

4.1 The Question is Not About Numbers

This is a flawed understanding. The question here is not about two or three constituents out of five. Undoubtedly, the constituents of *Eimaan* are five according to the Quran (2:177) but its style is that at some places it only mentions one of these constituents, at some places two, and some places three, and some places five. But at every place its objective is always five constituents, for example, at one place it has stated:

*In the case of those who say, ‘Our Rabb is Allah’, and, further, stand straight and
steadfast, the Malaika descend on them... (41:30)*

Here, only *Eimaan* in Allah is mentioned. In one verse of Surah *Al-Baqarab* it is stated:

*... any who have Eimaan in Allah and the Last Day, and work righteousness, shall
have their reward with their Rabb... (2:62)*

Here, *Eimaan* in Allah and the hereafter are cited. In Surah *Al e Imran* it is stated:

...*So have Eimaan in Allah and His messengers...*(3:179)

And in Surah *Al-Taghabun*:

Have Eimaan, therefore, in Allah and His messenger, and in the Light which We have sent down...(64:8)

From these explanations it is clear that the meaning of verse (2:8) is not that since these people only accept these two constituents of *Eimaan* and not the rest, therefore they cannot be *Momin*. Here, only two constituents are referred to but all five are inferred. The meaning is that there are such people who acknowledge that they accept the constituents of *Eimaan* cited by the Quran but despite this they are not *Momin*.

While discussing the topic of *Eimaan*, it has been stated earlier (see 2:3) that the Quran also mentions such people who, though they are included in the nation of Muslims, despite this they are not *Momin*. From this it also means those people who are called Muslims by birth, as well as those who do not have firmness in their *Eimaan*. In other words, though they are claimants of having *Eimaan* in the truths of the Quran, their deeds are contrary to the Quran. For example, it is stated in Surah *Yusuf*:

And most of them have no Eimaan in Allah without associating partners with Him!
(12:106)

Details of this will be covered at its own place where it will be explained what it is that is termed *Shirk*, and how Muslims remain incriminated in *Shirk* despite being claimants of having *Eimaan*. It is clear that according to the Quranic standard they cannot be called *Momin*. It has actually declared about the *Momineen* that:

It is those who have Eimaan, and then do not mix their Eimaan with Zulm (injustice)
...(6:82)

They accept *Eimaan*, and then do not permit this *Eimaan* to be contaminated through *Zulm*. (An explanation of this will also come later, where it will be described what *Zulm* is and how it causes *Eimaan* to go to waste). The Quran has even stated that when the time for manifestation of results arrives, then:

...no good will it do to a self to have Eimaan in them then, if he did not have Eimaan before, nor earned righteousness through its Eimaan...(6:158)

This means that the Quran does not accept *Eimaan* without deeds as *Eimaan*. About these kinds of people the Quran will also say that:

Of the people there are some who say: 'We have Eimaan in Allah and the Last Day;' but they do not (really) have Eimaan. (2:8)

But from this verse is not meant just these people. It is declared about the people who are referred to in this verse that:

Fain would they deceive Allah and those who have Eimaan, but they only deceive themselves, and realise it not! (2:9)

These people deceive Allah and the *Jamaat e Momineen*; now the matter has become clear. A *Momin* is the one who has *Eimaan* in his heart and also *Eimaan* on his lips. A *Kafir* is the one who has *Kufr* in his heart as well as on his tongue. But this third category is of those people who even though they do not possess *Eimaan* in their hearts, in order to deceive they say that we have accepted *Eimaan*.

4.2 *Munafiq* (Hypocrite)

In other words, there is a coherence between the heart and the tongue in both *Eimaan* and *Kufr* – mutual harmony with *Haqq* and truth in *Eimaan*; mutual conformity with *Batil* in *Kufr*. But when there is no harmony between the heart and tongue, then such an individual remains neither a *Momin* nor a *Kafir* – in Quranic terminology this is termed a *Munafiq*. For the dictionary meaning of *Munafiq*, see the interpretation of verse (2:3) under *Unfi'qun* where it is explained that a tunnel in which the path to enter and exit are both open is called *Nafa'qun*. When a wild rat makes its hole, it digs numerous tunnels in order to exit and covers their openings with a thin layer of soil, and when it senses some danger from outside, then it escapes through one of these concealed tunnels. Every single one of these tunnels is called *An-Nafaqatu*. It is clear from this that an individual will be called *Munafiq* who, before entering some system or society, checks first of all where the hidden escape routes are. In other words, he will not be sincere even when he is entering the society, he will be a deceiver. This is why the Quran has stated that these are those people who deceive Allah and the *Jamaat e Momineen* (2:9).

4.3 Meaning of *Khada* (Deception)

Here, the word *Khuda'un* is used to mean deceiving. The meaning of this root (*Kb-D-Ain*) is to outwardly manifest contrary to whatever is in the heart; to do evil to someone surreptitiously. Its meanings emerge clearly before us from the vivid way in which Arabs used to use it. The fame and good manners of Arabs were based on their hospitality. They lived in deserts; for them only the milk or meat of cattle could be the constantly available commodity from which guests could be hosted. Hence, they would generally offer milk to a traveler arriving among them. And just imagine, if guests enter a tent and the she-camel giving milk is tied up outside, the host goes to milk the camel but she fails to produce any milk, then what will be the state of that host? They used to call such a she-camel *Khudu-un*. From this it is evident how a *Munafiq* deceives that party in which he is included i.e. he is extremely untrustworthy, and it can never be said about him when he will next deceive. Similarly, they used to call a path which outwardly appeared to be leading towards the destination, but in truth was against it, as *Kha'ida-un*. Similarly, they also called a mirage *Khida-un*. Even that Dinar which looked to be legal tender but after checking was found to be false was called *Khadi-un*. That bazaar in which the rates of things keep changing every moment i.e. now one, now another, is called *Suq-un Khadiati-un*.

From these meanings of this word this reality will become apparent that the people who are now going to be described (i.e. hypocrites), what their characteristics are, and how they can become the cause for the destruction and disintegration of the society and system in which they are included. Just a couple of verses after this, the Quran has stated that these people are *Kazib* i.e. liars. But the Quranic meaning of *Kazib* cannot become clear by just saying liars.

4.4 Meaning of *Kazib*²²⁵

The Quran itself has made this clear in such a way that after this there is no need for any further clarification. An individual is not in possession of the correct knowledge about some event, but whatever he knows, he narrates it as such. This description of his cannot be termed as being true because it is contrary to the event, but that person will not be called *Kazib* or *Kazẓab*. In contrast to this, let us see who is called *Kazib* according to the Quran. In Surah *Munafiqun* it is stated:

²²⁵ The root of this term is (*K-Z-B*). It means to deliberately give false information regarding something. (Ed)

When the hypocrites come to you, they say, ‘We bear witness that you are indeed the messenger of Allah.’ Yes, Allah knows that you are indeed His messenger, and Allah bears witness that the hypocrites are indeed liars. (63:1)

O Rasul! When these hypocrites come to you, they corroborate that you are, in reality, the Rasul of Allah. You will see that they have stated what is absolutely true, so true that Allah Himself provides evidence of its truth by proclaiming: ‘Allah Himself knows that you are truly His Rasul’. But after this He states: ... ‘but Allah also gives evidence of this, that these hypocrites are absolute liars’. Note here that these people are saying such a thing which is actually based on truth. Allah Himself verifies that this is indeed true, but despite this He declares that those who are saying this are liars. From this it is evident that, according to the Quran, the one who is called *Kaẓb* will be the one in whom the heart and tongue are not in mutual harmony i.e. there is one thing in the heart and something else on the tongue. These are the ones whom the Quran terms as hypocrites i.e. those people who do not have *Eimaan* in their hearts, they only say it to deceive (2:8).

The next verse states:

Fain would they deceive (Khada) Allah and those who have Eimaan, but they only deceive themselves and are not conscious of it (at this stage)! (2:9)

In their own minds these people think they are deceiving Allah and the *Jamaat e Momineen*, but in actual fact they are deceiving themselves (their own selves), not anyone else, but they do not comprehend this at the conscious level. The reason they cannot deceive Allah is because He is so knowledgeable and Omniscient that He is even aware of the thoughts passing through the hearts and the tricks of the eyes (40:19). Therefore, who can deceive Him. And the reason that they cannot deceive the *Jamaat e Momineen* is because the Quran has described at various places such signs of the hypocrites in the light of which no one who possesses any vision can be deceived. It is possible that they may deceive someone for a short while, but after this, when the false veneer slips off, they cannot do it again. Such people cannot deceive on a permanent basis those men who possess intellect and awareness. Now the question remains of how they deceive their own selves. For this the Quran has stated something so comprehensive and profound which can be understood through the psychology of today: the Quran has stated that there is a sickness in their hearts (2:10).

4.5 Psychological Patient

This question about where is the centre within man for understanding and thinking (intellect), and where is the centre for perception of feelings, continues to be discussed since ancient times, and it can only be said that scholars have not reached any definite conclusion in this regard up until now. Intellect and feelings are considered to be two separate categories and their centres have not been identified with certainty.²²⁶ Sometime previously, psychologists had devised and adopted the terminology of mind, which was considered to be the confluence of intellect and feelings, but a short while later found that this status of its was also based on a misunderstanding. From this word the adjective mental was created; on the one hand this was related purely to the brain, just as the place for treatment of mental diseases is called a mental hospital; and on the other hand, it has been declared to be linked to feelings, just as a diseased mentality does not mean mental diseases, but psychological disorder. Psychologists have devised another term which is called the psyche, and it is translated as the human *Nafs* or self. But until now it has not even been able to be ascertained as to what it actually is?

4.6 *Qalb* and *Fo'ad* (Heart and Mind)

In the Arabic language (and in the Quran) two words, *Qalb-un* and *Fo'ad-un*, appear for this purpose. If a superficial line of differentiation is to be drawn between the two, then it can be said that *Qalb-un* is the source of understanding and vision, and intellect and reasoning; and *Fo'ad-un* the origin of emotions of sorrow and anguish, which is from the root (*F-A-D*) which means frying i.e. anger and anxiety, sorrow and anguish, pain and grief, etc. But this is also not a definite line of distinction. The Quran has also noted about *Qalb* that it is a source of reflection and contemplation. For example, *Qalub*²²⁷ - from which they do not make use of intellect and reasoning (7:179) or (22:46), but on the other hand, at one place *Qalb* is stated to be an abode of peace and contentment (48:4) and at another place an abode of love and mercy:

...and We ordained in the hearts of those who followed him (Eisa), compassion and mercy... (57:27)

In another verse it is called *Qalb e Saleem* (a sound heart) (26:89); and at another place *Qalb e Muneeb* (a devoted heart) (50:33); at another place melting under the

²²⁶ The book, *The Master and His Emissary: The Divided Brain and the Making of the Western World*, by Professor Iain Gilchrist, has thrown light on the relative functions of the two hemispheres of the brain in this respect. (Ed)

²²⁷ *Qalub* – plural of *Qalb*, meaning heart. (Ed)

influence of strong feelings (8:2); and at another place hearts becoming hardened like a stone (2:74, 6:43). And on the other hand it has also termed *Fo'ad* as the centre of intellect and reasoning at places (16:78), and elsewhere as a source of emotions e.g. (11:120, 28:10, 104:7).

From these details it is clear that the Quran has not specifically and definitively declared about *Qalb* and *Fo'ad* which one of these is the centre of the intellect, and which one is the fountainhead of emotions. But it has stated this about the hypocrites, that they have sickness in their hearts (2:10). See also (8:49). Moreover, it has stated about the Quran that in it is a 'healing for the sicknesses of the heart' (10:57). It is evident from these verses that by diseases of the heart is meant psychological dissonances and disintegration.

In the Arabic language the basic meaning of *Mara'dun* is a disturbance in balance and equilibrium in such a way that there is debility, weakness or deficiency in some strength. Based on these explanations, 'there is a sickness in their hearts' will mean a disturbance in the balance of heart and outlook, or psychological conflict. This is what will be called a diseased mentality, or such an unbalanced personality which is suffering from various kinds of contradictions or complexes. Fourteen hundred years ago from today, terming hypocrisy as a psychological disease could only be the marvel of the Quran.

4.7 Consciousness

And when the next part, 'they are not conscious of it' (2:9), is combined with this, then the matter becomes even more profound and refined. Arabs used to call the comprehension of something through the senses as consciousness. What the Quran has stated is that hypocrites are victims of one such psychological disease whose diagnosis cannot be made through sense perception. The psychology of the modern era has divided the human self into two parts (or levels) – Conscious Mind and Unconscious Mind. The roots and causes of psychological diseases are buried and hidden in those vaults of the unconscious mind where the gazes of the human consciousness (i.e. sense perception) cannot reach. The Quran has stated that a hypocrite is a patient of one such psychological disease whose roots and causes his consciousness cannot reach. This disease is psychological and its treatment is also psychological.

4.8 Signs of the Universe and the Human Self

Now reflect that when the Quran has stated about itself that the means for the diagnosis and treatment of psychological diseases are contained within it (10:57), then to what depths of realities has it reached by this? And what kinds of hidden aspects has it invited human knowledge to reach, and placed emphasis on. It has stated about its own implicit realities:

...Soon will We show them our Signs in the furthest regions of the universe, and in their own selves, until it becomes manifest to them that this is the truth... (41:53)

We will keep unveiling those signs of Ours which are hidden within the domain of the human self and within the universe until every proclamation of the Quran appears in front as an established reality. The signs dispersed within the outer universe are those which are becoming uncovered through sense perception (scientific research and discoveries). The era of discovery of the hidden realities in the domain of the human self has now begun: as man continues to progress in knowledge of human psychology, who knows what hidden realities of the Quran, by becoming uncovered, will keep appearing! It is evident from this that in order to comprehend the truths of the Quran, it is essential that the level to which human knowledge has reached should be in the sight of those who are thinking and reflecting in the Quran. And this is the very reason that reflecting and reasoning in the Quran cannot be restricted to any era, nor can any era or individual make the claim that his scholarly conclusions about the Quran are the final word.

In this discussion of words, it is necessary to understand that the Quran is not a book of logic or philosophy, that it should become entangled in the amplification of the complexities and points of the terminologies of these topics. Its language is Arabic, therefore the general meaning of its words are the same as those meanings in which the Arabs used them. Although where it uses these words in the form of terms, then their meanings become specific – the words *Qalb* and *Fo'ad* etc. have been used taking their general meanings, whereas the word *Nafs* is its special term which it uses for that 'force' which is the source of human decision making and because of which man is declared to be responsible for his deeds. The meanings for which it has used this term of its will be described later in the discussion about *Nafs*. There you will observe that this is a very comprehensive and unique term of the Quran, and no single word of any other language can interpret it accurately and completely, not even the terms psyche or self of modern psychology. We also use the word self, or ego, or personality merely for

the sake of making it comprehensible, these words also cannot be an alternative or synonym for the Quranic term *Nafs*.

After these fundamental and introductory explanations about the hypocrites, it is important to note their particular and distinguishing signs which the Quran specifically describes. These traits of theirs are explained with such frequency in the Quran, that it is difficult to encompass them all at one point. Here, we present a few of these salient traits.

4.9 *Kufr* of *Munafiqeen* (Hypocrites)

In the verse under view (2:8) those people are mentioned who say that we have accepted *Eimaan* but they are not *Momin* i.e. there is *Kufr* in their hearts and the words of *Eimaan* on their tongues, and they do all this in order to deceive. In other places, the Quran has elucidated this in these words:

*...who say 'We accept Eimaan' with their lips but whose hearts have no Eimaan...
(5:41)*

These same words have been reiterated in (3:167) and in both places it is stated that they are nearer to *Kufr* in comparison to *Eimaan*. It is stated even more clearly that though they are in reality *Kafir*, they pretend to be *Momin* with their tongues. In Surah *Al-Maida* it is stated:

When they come to you, they say: 'We have accepted Eimaan': but in fact they enter with a mind against Eimaan, and they go out with the same. But Allah knows fully all that they hide. (5:61)

When they come to you they state that we have accepted *Eimaan*, but in reality, even though they come, it is with *Kufr*, and when they return from here, it is also with *Kufr*, but they keep this *Kufr* concealed within their hearts. Say to them that Allah is acquainted with even your hidden secrets, therefore which of your affairs can you hide from Him? Because of this concealed *Kufr* of theirs, they are called 'brothers of *Kuffar*' (59:11) and Rasul-ullah is enjoined:

O Nabi! strive hard against the Kuffar and the Munafiqeen (hypocrites), and be firm against them... (9:73)

They are all part of the same flock (66:9). In Surah *Al-Baqarah* it is stated:

When they meet those who have Eimaan, they say: ‘We have accepted Eimaan,’ but when they are alone with their evil ones, they say: ‘We are really with you, we (were) only jesting.’ (2:14)

When these people meet *Momineen*, they say we have accepted *Eimaan*. But when they secretly meet with their mentors, they assure them that when we mix with these people, do not think by this that we have aligned with them: we are in reality with you, we are only jesting with these people.

4.10 No One Has Any Trust in Them

We should not just move on from this point. The Quran has noted a very profound matter here. The question which arises is, why did they feel the need to reassure their own people that we are definitely with you? From this it appears that even their own people did not have full trust in them, and this is exactly what occurs in hypocrisy. The beginning of the path of hypocrisy is always opportunistic but gradually, as a result of this, the character itself of man becomes such that it simply cannot be trusted. Those people who are not acquainted with them become caught in their net of deceitfulness and become duped by them, but those people who know that they exhibit hypocrisy, do not consider them trustworthy, even if they are from among them. This is the reason that the Quran has stated about them that:

(They are) distracted in mind even in the midst of it - being neither for one group nor for another... (4:143)

In their hearts, these people (hypocrites) are neither with this group nor that group; they keep fluttering like a fly between them, wherever they see sweets, they go and settle there. And then their sitting on one side is also never permanent, it is purely for their own self-interest. If, after this, some attraction catches their interest on the other side, they fly over there. This is the reason that, leaving aside *Momineen*, even the *Kuffar* do not consider them trustworthy. Hence, it is stated in Surah *Al-Baqarah*:

Behold! when they meet the Momineen, they say: ‘We have Eimaan’: But when they meet each other in private, they say: ‘Shall you tell them what Allah has revealed to you, that they may engage you in argument about it before your Rabb?’ Do you not understand this? (2:76)

When these people meet the *Jamaat e Momineen*, they show themselves as having *Eimaan*, but when they meet their own people privately, they say to them that in

the interests of our own party it is beneficial to maintain contact with these people, but you should take great care not to tell them about those matters in our own books which they can use as evidence against us, and cause us to hold our tongues. You should understand this issue very well. By looking at this closely, this fact will become clear that even the people of their own party do not have complete trust in them. This is the reason that they have to repeatedly emphasise that, Sir, when you go there, take great precautions. As we have just noted, as a result of hypocrisy the psychological state of a man becomes such that no statement of his remains trustworthy. Among the opponents, trust in them simply cannot arise, even in the eyes of their own people they do not remain completely trustworthy.

4.11 Destructive Mentality

Whatever their state is amongst themselves, the reality is that they leave no stone unturned for the ruin of whichever party of the opponents they join as hypocrites. In Surah *Al e Imran* it is stated:

... When they meet you, they say, 'We have Eimaan': but when they are alone, they bite off the very tips of their fingers at you in their rage. Say: 'Perish in your rage; Allah knows well all the secrets of the heart.' (3:119)

When they meet you, they say, 'We have accepted *Eimaan*', but when they sit in their own private quarters away from you, then their emotions of envy and anger against you are so intense that they bite their own fingers like the insane. The Quran has only commented this much on their state, 'Say to them, burn yourself to ashes in the fire of your rage. Allah knows what is in your hearts'. It is stated in Surah *An-Nisa*:

They have 'Obedience' on their lips; but when they leave you, a section of them meditate all night on things very different from what you are telling them. But Allah records their nightly (plots): so keep clear of them, and put your trust in Allah, and enough is Allah as a disposer of affairs. (4:81)

When they meet with you, they assure you of their full support and obedience, but when they separate from you, then whatever you have agreed, they conspire against it in the quietness of the night. They believe that there is no one to see and hear them. They do not know that the Law of Requit of Allah is continually documenting their each and every word. After this, Allah says to the *Jamaat e Momineen*, do not be stressed about these intrigues of theirs. Ignore them and keep

total trust in the strength of Allah's laws. This trust and confidence will be sufficient for your success. In Surah *At-Tauba* it is stated:

If you do question them, they declare (with emphasis): 'We were only talking idly and in play...'(9:65)

If at any time the veil of their hypocrisy is torn away, and the members of the *Jamaat e Momineen* ask them, why are you saying these kinds of things, they reply to them, 'Do not take these utterances of ours seriously, we just say these things in jest'. In response to this, Allah informs the *Jamaat e Momineen*:

...Say: 'Was it at Allah, and His Signs, and His Messenger, that you were mocking?' (9:65)

Say to them, about whom do you jest and mock? About Allah and His laws and His messenger? Do you not feel ashamed when you are talking like this? These are those sanctified domains where every individual possessing a sound heart should bow down with great solemnity and honour. This should never even cross your mind that anything can be said in jest about it here. You take these matters lightly and in jest, and do not even feel any hesitation and shame in acknowledging this? What sort of claimants of *Eimaan* are you?

4.12 Intrigues and Whisperings

The question arises, why do people adopt this kind of hypocritical path? At a basic level the Quran has stated their aim as:

They but wish that you should become a Kafir, as they are, and thus be as they are... (4:89)

For this, their conspiracy is this:

...A section of the People of the Book say: 'Have Eimaan in the morning in what is revealed to the Momineen but reject it at the end of the day; perchance they may (themselves) turn back.' (3:72)

In the morning, after announcing your *Eimaan*, go and mingle with these people, remain interacting with them during the whole day; say such things there as a result of which doubts and suspicions emerge in the hearts of the simple people among them. In the evening, exit taking your *Kufr* with you. It is possible that from among them even a few people may revert to their former way of *Kufr*. Have you witnessed how deep their ploys are? As far as their speeches are concerned,

the Quran states that these are very alluring and amazing. Then in every speech, taking vows in Allah's name, they keep making efforts to create trust in the hearts of their listeners for themselves:

... With their tongues they entice you, but their hearts are averse from you... (9:8)

Whatever you say, they will continue to be in agreement with it, even though their hearts will be rebelling against it. While remaining within the *Jamaat*, their aim is to resort to that kind of whispering campaign as a result of which conflicts arise within your party (9:48). These hypocrites will whisper about those dedicated people within the party, who willingly sacrifice their wealth, that they are spending money merely for show and in order to achieve a distinctive position within the *Jamaat*. As far as the poorer members of the *Jamaat* are concerned, who do not have the capacity to offer financial support and only offer their physical services, they ridicule them by saying, look at them, by bringing a spool of cotton they wish to enter their names among the buyers of Yusuf (9:79). In this way, they keep creating disintegration within the *Jamaat*, so much so, that they also keep telling people:

They are the ones who say, 'Spend nothing on those who are with Allah's messenger, to the end that they may disperse... ' (63:7)

You should stop giving contributions to this messenger. When he no longer has any money left, then all these people who are gathering around him will automatically abandon him.

4.13 False Accusations Against Rasul-ullah Himself

The evil selfs of these hypocrites did not remain confined to just this, their filthy hand did not even feel any hesitation in reaching to the supremely eminent self in front of whom the greatest of men in the world lowered their heads with respect and felt great pride and dignity in doing this. It is stated in Surah *At-Tauba*:

And among them are men who slander you in the matter of (the distribution of) alms. If they are given part thereof, they are pleased, but if not, behold! they are indignant! (9:58)

O Rasul! There are also such evil spirited men among them who do not even abstain from levelling false accusations against you in the distribution of alms; if you give them enough to make them happy, then all is good – if you do not give

them this much, then the fire of vengeance erupts in their hearts and they keep concocting and spreading all kinds of accusations against you.

It has already been noted that *Infaq fi Sabilillah* (spending in the cause of Allah) for the establishment and strengthening of the Divine system is a fundamental requirement. And *Infaq* 'in the cause of Allah' will only be declared at that time when the giver hands over with the full agreement of his heart, and his objective is nothing other than seeking Allah's pleasure. It is obvious that this could never be the condition of the hypocrites. But they had to contribute something or other in order to prevent the exposure of their hypocrisy. In the early days of the formation of the *Jamaat*, when the Islamic system of sustenance had not yet been established, and assistance was extended to one another on an individual basis, the state of these people was such that if they were ever compelled to contribute something, then they would make the life of that poor soul hell by continually reminding him of their favour. These are those very people to whom the Quran has referred when the *Jamaat e Momineen* were informed:

O you who have Eimaan! Cancel not your charity by reminders of your generosity or by injury - like those who spend their substance to be seen of men but have Eimaan neither in Allah nor in the Last Day. They are in parable like a hard, barren rock, on which is a little soil: on it falls heavy rain, which leaves it (as) a bare stone. They will be able to do nothing with aught they have earned. And Allah guides not those people who are Kafir. (2:264)

4.14 Showing Off

O *Jamaat e Momineen*! Do not ever do this, that after helping someone, you remind him of this favour and in this way cause hurt to his feelings; in this way, all that you have done will go to waste. Only an individual who has neither *Eimaan* in Allah nor conviction in the hereafter can behave like this. But thinking that I have to live among these people, and so have to have good relations with them, he gives something for the sake of appearances. You can understand this kind of *Nafaq* from the example of a hard rock on which a fine layer of soil builds up randomly, giving the appearance of the land being very fertile in which an excellent crop will grow, but when a single heavy splash of rain falls on it, all the soil is washed away and only bare rock remains behind. In this way, never mind obtaining numerous grains from one seed, the hard work which was expended in cultivating the crop and the seed which was sown, will also go to waste. Remember! The paths of success and blessings are never opened up in front of

those people who do not have *Eimaan* in the truth of Allah's laws and only do good to show off. These people did not only show off in the matter of *Infaq*, they used to participate in the congregations for *Salaat* with this same purpose. It is stated in Surah *An-Nisa*:

The hypocrites - they think they are over-reaching Allah, but He will over-reach them: When they stand up for Salaat, they stand without earnestness, to be seen of men, but little do they hold Allah in remembrance. (4:142)

In their own minds these hypocrites are deceiving Allah, but in reality they are trapped in deceiving their own selves. When they participate in the gatherings of *Salaat* they do so under compulsion, there is more display in this and very little remembrance of Allah. Hence, there is no achievement in this *Salaat*²²⁸ of theirs.

And not only the congregations for *Salaat*, they even used to take part with the Islamic army in battles, but after reaching there would foment such intrigues, spread rumors, and create doubts so that people should lose heart and desert the battlefield (3:154). In Surah *Tauba* these kinds of intrigues of theirs have been mentioned with great clearness and elaboration; this should be studied with great attention and reflection because subsequent history informs us that the degree of harm which Muslims have suffered via the hands of hypocrites, not even a fraction of this reached them via the hands of their open adversaries. This is in fact the reason why the Quran has noted this in such detail, so that we remain wary in this matter.

4.15 The Obedience of the Hypocrites

Eimaan is the name for obedience to Allah i.e. obedience to Allah's laws in every aspect and in every matter. In this obedience there is no question of equivocation or self-interest. But hypocrites never embrace this kind of compliance. Their state is such that:

There are among men some who serve Allah, as it were, on the verge: if good befalls them, they are, therewith, well content; but if a trial comes to them, they turn on their faces: they lose both this world and the Hereafter: that is loss for all to see! (22:11)

The Quran states that these people believe that they obtain only benefits from this conduct, but if they only looked a little deeper, then they would see that from

²²⁸ For more details see the topic *Salaat* under verse (2:3).

this there is a loss both in this life and in the hereafter as well. And it is obvious that what greater loss can there be than this?

By stating the following, the Quran has drawn a clear line of distinction between *Kufr* and *Eimaan*:

...If any do fail to judge by the light of what Allah has revealed (i.e. the Quran), they are Kafir. (5:44)

In further explanation of this, it has proclaimed in clear words in another verse:

But nay, by Rabb, they can have no Eimaan, until they make you judge in all disputes between them and find in their selves no resistance against your decisions, but accept them with the fullest conviction. (4:65)

O Rasul! Your Rabb is witness to this fact that these people can never be *Momin* until the time that they accept you as their adjudicator in those matters in which they differ, and never mind differing vocally against whatever decision you make, do not even feel any reservation in the depths of their hearts against this, and willingly bow their heads before it. This is the fundamental requirement for being a *Momin*. Contrary to this, it is stated about the hypocrites that:

Have you not turned your vision to those who declare that they have Eimaan in the revelations that have come to you and to those before you? Their wish is to resort together for judgement (in their disputes) to the Evil One, though they were ordered to reject him. But Shaitan's wish is to lead them astray far away. (4:60)

Have you also paid attention to the state of those people who think in their hearts that they have *Eimaan* in this Quran and in whatever had been revealed to the previous *Anbiya*, while in practice their state is such that they seek decisions on their affairs through non-Divine courts and edicts though they were commanded to reject them (adopt *Kufr* towards them). This is what We had instructed them, but the forces of *Shaitan* desire that they stray far from the straight path. After this it is stated:

When it is said to them: 'Come to what Allah has revealed, and to the messenger': you see the Hypocrites avert their faces from you in disgust. (4:61)

Have you observed what hypocrisy is? To verbally claim to be a Muslim, and in practical terms to have the decisions of their affairs taken through laws of other than Allah. In light of this, just think at what juncture are we standing? This was, however, a side issue, now an even more profound point for reflection and reasoning comes before us.

4.16 Division into Sects

The establishment of Islam as *Ad-Deen*, the system of life, and the unity of the Ummah are inherently linked i.e. if the unity of the Ummah does not endure and it becomes divided into sects or parties, then Islam no longer remains as *Ad-Deen*, it converts into religion. Furthermore, it is the utmost endeavour of the opponents that division becomes created within the Ummah – those who are *Kafir* i.e. open enemies, succeed with difficulty in this respect, but the intrigues of hypocrites are more often effective. These people create this kind of division under the cover of religion. The hypocrites had engaged in this kind of duplicity during the presence of Rasul-ullah himself. They constructed a mosque. They were doing all this before the very eyes of the Muslims but it appears as if the veil of deception was so thick that no one could detect this plot, and they did not pay any serious attention to it, until Allah Himself had to lift this veil and He informed them through *Wahi*:

And there are those who put up a mosque by way of mischief and infidelity - to disunite the Momineen - and in preparation for one who warred against Allah and His messenger aforetime. They will indeed swear that their intention is nothing but good; but Allah does declare that they are certainly liars. (9:107)

Among these hypocrites there are also those people who have advanced so far in their plots that they have constructed a mosque, and in this way they have displayed that they are very staunch *Momin* and devotees of the Divine system. But in reality, their intention was for harm to reach this system via this mosque, and for the paths of *Kufr* to be expanded i.e. to create division among Muslims, and so that in this way this mosque may become a safe haven for those people who are already engaged from the beginning in opposing the Divine system. These people will swear oaths that we have constructed this mosque with highly pious intentions but Allah gives evidence that these people are tremendous liars:

Never stand you forth therein. There is a mosque whose foundation was laid from the first day on piety; it is more worthy of you standing forth therein. In it are men who love to be purified; and Allah loves those who make themselves pure. (9:108)

O Rasul! You must not even put one foot in this mosque which creates division among Muslims. Can it possibly be worthy of you even putting one foot in it – you can have neither any connection with these people, nor any connection with their constructed mosque (6:159). The mosque deserving of this is that one whose foundation is laid from the very first day on observance of the established principles of the laws of Allah. Only those people come and go in it who keep

themselves clean and pure from the contamination of the *Shirk* of sectarianism (30:30). And these are the very people who are viewed with approval according to the Divine laws:

Which then is best? He that lays his foundation on piety to Allah and His good pleasure? Or he that lays his foundation on an undermined sand cliff ready to crumble to pieces? And it does crumble to pieces with him, into the fire of Hell. And Allah guides not people that do wrong. (9:109)

Ask them that is the individual who has laid the foundation of his structure on observance of the Divine laws and in harmony with the Will of Allah better, or that individual who has established this foundation on the edges of sand dunes which are continually eroding and falling into the river, and consequently that structure falls into the pit of hell taking its founder with it. The truth is that the path of prosperities and successes of life can never open up for those people who rebel against the Divine laws in this way.

And after this the Quran has described the nature of this hell, whose flames have wrapped themselves around the hearts of these hypocrites, in these words:

The foundation of those who so build is never free from suspicion and shakiness in their hearts, until their hearts are cut to pieces. And Allah is All-Knowing, Wise. (9:110)

Remember! This building of theirs, which they have constructed for this destructive purpose, will keep piercing their hearts like a thorn, as a result of which discontent and torment in their hearts will keep multiplying. There will be no decrease in the fire of their anger and prejudice, so that their hearts become shattered into pieces from the severity of this torment. Say to them that these decrees of Allah are no mere threats, these are truths based on knowledge and wisdom which will surely come to pass.

4.17 Our Mosques

We thought it necessary to explain this incident with full details from the Quran, because this is not merely reference to an event occurring fourteen hundred years ago; within this is concealed our own narrative as well. Regarding mosques, the Quran had stated:

And the mosques are for Allah (alone): So invoke not any one along with Allah. (72:18)

This is a fact that mosques should only be for Allah alone, hence, do not call upon anyone else together with Allah; nor associate them with anyone other than Allah; nor use them for anything other than for the establishment and sustaining of the Divine system.

Keep this fundamental aim of the mosques and this directive of Allah in mind, and along with this, focus your attention on *Masjid e Zarrar*²²⁹ and then cast an eye on all the mosques spread around the world. You will see that these mosques are attributed to some sect or other: it is unlikely that there is even one mosque exclusively for the cause of Allah. And according to the description by the Quran, the mosque which is a representation of sectarianism among Muslims is *Masjid e Zarar*, an abode of *Kufr*, and a haven for those who war against Allah and Rasul. We feel that nothing further remains to be said regarding this matter.

4.18 Teasing Virtuous Women

Apart from creating division within the Ummah, the Quran has also given prominence to another crime of the hypocrites, and there are hundreds of lessons and admonitions concealed in this for us also. Firstly, in Surah *Al-Ahzab* the wives and daughters of Rasul-ullah, and other Muslim women, are advised that when they go out, they should cover themselves with a cloak, so that from this they are recognised as being virtuous women:

O Nabi, tell your wives and your daughters and the believing Momineen women that they should cast their outer garments over their persons (when abroad). That is more suitable that they should be known (as such) and not be molested... (33:59)

And so the hypocrites will not get an opportunity to say that we teased them in error. After this, the Quran states:

Truly, if the hypocrites and those in whose hearts is a disease, and those who stir up sedition in the city (al-Medina) desist not, We will certainly stir you up against them; then they will not be able to stay in the society as your neighbours for any length of time. They shall have a curse on them: wherever they are found, they shall be seized and slain. (33:60-61)

²²⁹ The mosque built by the hypocrites and referred to in the Quran with this name. *Zarrar* means causing loss - generally refers to financial loss, or externally imposed hardship. It also means harm caused to the human self. (Ed)

Take this degree of precaution, but if even after this the hypocrites i.e. those people whose hearts are filled with evils, and whose only task is to spread malicious news in the society, do not desist from their mischiefs, then force will need to be used against them until they go far away from here. In response to this crime of theirs they will be deprived of all those facilities which they possess as citizens of the Islamic State. But if they do not desist from their rebellion even after this, then wherever they are, they will be arrested and will be given the death penalty.

Have you observed that, according to the Quran, how extremely severe this crime of pestering virtuous ladies is, and by spreading rumors against them, causing pain to them in this way? That crime whose ultimate punishment can also be the death penalty. In the next verse after this it is proclaimed:

This was the established way of Allah among those who passed on aforetime; no change will you find in the way of Allah. (33:62)

This is not a transitory or emergency command; this is, in fact, that command of Allah which has been enforced in the society of *Ad-Deen* before this as well; there can never be any alteration in this command. Just assess from this how high the status of a woman is, and how important it is to respect it according to the Quran.

These are a few examples of the intrigues, seditions, machinations and divisiveness of the hypocrites which have been described here. Details of these are emphasised and reiterated at various places in the Quran; their explanation will be given at these respective places.

(As has already been stated) the Quran instructed Rasul-ullah emphatically to war against the hypocrites in the same way as war is undertaken against the *Kuffar*. The Quran has stated in its warning style that it will be better for these people if they refrain from their opposing stance:

...If they repent, it will be best for them; but if they turn back, Allah will punish them with a grievous penalty in this world and in the hereafter. And there will not be for them on earth any protector or helper. (9:74)

At another place it is declared that they will achieve some worldly benefits through their trickeries; this same wealth and possessions will become the cause for hell because this will keep them trapped in this deception that their path is highly successful and that they should remain firm on it. On the basis of this path of theirs, it was stated to Rasul-ullah:

Whether you ask for forgiveness for them, or not, if you should ask seventy times for forgiveness for them - never will Allah forgive them. That is because they rejected

Allah and His Messenger, and Allah does not guide those who are perversely rebellious. (9:80)

4.19 Severing Relationship

In order to save themselves from this punishment, even if they come to you a thousand times you should not trust them. In the Divine law there is no allowance for protection from punishment for such people. This is because *Eimaan*, obedience, repentance, and forgiveness are merely words on their tongues: the sentiments of rejection and transgression against Allah and Rasul remain persistently jostling in their hearts. Such people asking for protection means nothing. At another place, addressing the messenger, the *Momineen* are indirectly informed not to obey the *Kafireen* and the *Munafiqeen*: to only obey the *Wahi* of Allah, and to maintain complete trust in its strength (33:1, 33:48). They were also commanded to sever all social relationships with them. Among social relationships, attendance at funerals etc. defines the ultimate nature of this. They were instructed to keep away from this as well. It is stated here (through the messenger):

And do not ever pray for any of them that dies - nor stand at his grave. For they rejected Allah and His messenger and died in a state of perverse rebellion. (9:84)

Do not participate in their funeral rites, nor express good wishes for them on their death. And the reason for this has again been stated that they departed this world in a state of *Kufr*. Hence, when such relationships cannot be held with the *Kuffar*, then how can these be amicably maintained with the hypocrites? The Quran has also taken this command of severing relationships with them to the next world, when it states:

One Day the hypocrites - men and women - will say to the Momineen, 'Wait for us! Let us borrow (a light) from your light!' It will be said, 'Turn you back to your rear! Then seek a light (where you can)!' So a wall will be put up betwixt them, with a gate therein. Within it will be Rahmat throughout, and without it, all alongside will be the punishment (Azaab). (57:13)

4.20 In the Life of the Hereafter

These people who are engaging in hypocrisy against you i.e. are apparently living in harmony amongst you, are in truth disparate from you. In the hereafter they will say to you, wait! We would also like to take advantage of this light of yours – then they will be told that (this light cannot be achieved by begging for it from others), this beacon can only be lit with the oil of your own individual deeds. Therefore, if you can go, then return to the previous life, and search for this direction from there. This is because this light is the outcome of those deeds which were performed in the worldly life, and since nobody can return to the worldly life, therefore they will not be able to obtain light from anywhere. The one whose lamp is extinguished in this life will also remain in darknesses in that life (17:72). Between these two groups a wall will be erected in which will be a door. On its inside (where those people will be in whose hearts there was *Eimaan*) there will only be *Rahmat* everywhere, and outside it (where the hypocrites with false faces will be) there will only be *Azaab* everywhere (the apparent difference between *Eimaan* and hypocrisy is only of one veil, but in terms of their consequences they are the opposite of each other). In the next verse it is stated:

(Those without) will call out to the Momineen, 'Were we not with you?' (The others) will reply, 'True, but you led yourself into temptation; you looked forward (to our ruin); you doubted (Allah's promise); and (your false) desires deceived you; until there issued the command of Allah. And the Deceiver deceived you in respect of Allah.' (57:14)

Those hypocrites will call out repeatedly to these *Momineen* that did we not used to be with you, whereas now you are distancing yourselves from us? They will reply that this is correct that apparently you used to be with us, but you kept yourselves in deceitfulness. You only used to stand in wait at the sidelines to see in what way the balance tilts, so that you could also be on that side. You always used to remain in suspicion and doubt about the truth of the Divine system. Your individual vested interests used to create all kinds of deceptions in you. You remained in this turmoil and deception until the decisive moment arrived according to the Divine law, the veils of deception were lifted, after which this truth became uncovered that you were not from among us. After this, the Quran states:

This Day shall no ransom be accepted of you, nor of those who rejected Allah. Your abode is the fire! That is the proper place to claim you; and an evil refuge it is. (57:15)

Then you also kept yourselves in this deception that if there is any accountability with Allah, then you will escape by offering some ransom or other. Now you can see that neither you yourselves by giving some ransom can escape from this

Aẓaab, nor those *Kuffar* among whom you were indeed a party. Hell is the abode for all of you, this is where you now belong – now you can witness how awful is the outcome of your path of hypocrisy!

Even though the Quran has stated that both the hypocrites and the *Kuffar* will be combined together in hell (4:140), along with this it has also elaborated that:

Indeed, the hypocrites will be in the lowest depths²³⁰ of the fire, and never will you find for them a helper. (4:145)

This is a supreme reality which the Quran has explained in a few words: *Kufr*, *Kuffar* and the hypocrites - *Kufr* is a common value in both, but the *Kuffar* acknowledge it openly, while the hypocrites lie. There is a famous saying about lying that in order to hide one lie, man has to tell ten more lies. Now just reflect in what a continuous state of hell and agony the life of the individual who makes use of lies at every step of his life will be spent. He will always be terrified that his lie will become discovered somehow or other. This is the very reason that the Quran has stated that a hypocrite is an immense coward. In Surah *At-Tauba* it is stated that these hypocrites swear repeatedly that they are one of you, but they are not from among you:

They swear by Allah that they are indeed of you; but they are not of you: yet they are afraid (to appear in their true colours). (9:56)

Their state is such that:

If they could find a place to flee to, or caves, or a place of concealment, they would turn straightaway thereto, with an obstinate rush. (9:57)

The Quran has illustrated their condition in these words:

When you look at them, their exteriors please you; and when they speak, you listen to their words. They are as (worthless as hollow) pieces of timber propped up, (unable to stand on their own). They think that every cry is against them. They are the enemies, so beware of them. The curse of Allah be on them! How are they deluded (away from the truth)! (63:4)

If you look at their outward appearance, physical stature, their apparel, their mannerisms, it all appears very attractive and pleasant. When they make conversation, it is so charming and compelling that the listener becomes captivated. But lift these outward veils slightly, then you will witness that they are not strong and healthy human beings, they are hollow, dry, termite eaten wood,

²³⁰ Since this is the inner state of a human self, hence hypocrisy has a far more severe effect. (Ed)

which has been placed against a wall for support. The state of their cowardice is such that if even a leaf rustles somewhere, their heart misses a beat, thinking that some new calamity has arrived!

Just reflect that the individual who is spending his life in persistent turmoil like this, if his place is not in the lowest level of hell, then where else will it be?

4.21 *Darj'at* and *Dark'at* (Ascending and Descending)

Though it is a small matter, it is, however, so fascinating that I do not wish to proceed without expanding on it. From this also you will see why Allah selected the language of the Arabs to present the Quranic facts before mankind! It is stated above that the hypocrites will be in the lowest level of hell (4:145) – on the lowest rung. Bring the concept of a ladder to mind, it only has a few rungs. When an individual is climbing up using these steps, the Arabs used to call this *Darj'at*, and when he was descending via the same, they called this as being *Dark'at*. The steps of the ladder are the same, they take the individual who wishes to ascend towards the heights, up to those heights; and whoever wishes to descend into the depths, they take him down. The means and conveniences of physical life are the same; for the one who wishes to achieve higher ranks, these means and conveniences take him towards successes; for the one who wishes to draw nearer towards ruin and degradation, these push him into the pits of ruin. The question is not about wherewithal, it is about the way in which it is utilised, or we can say it is about the aim for the achievement of which these are employed.

4.22 Jews and Bedouin Arabs

Rasul-ullah spent the first phase of the programme in front of him in Makkah. There, his dealing was with the Koresh. There was no hypocrisy in the character of the Koresh. When they opposed, they did this openly, and if they were establishing friendly relations, that too was done with a clear declaration. For the next phase of his programme, Rasul-ullah came to Medina. The population of this town was very modest, and this, too, being made up of mainly Jews, whose hypocrisy is quoted as an example throughout the world. These were those People of the Book about whom the Quran has stated that their gambit was that in the morning they would mingle among the Muslims as Muslims, spread doubts among them, arouse suspicions, and in the evening return to their own *Jamaat*.

The purpose of this was that in this way, those with a weak *Eimaan* may also possibly leave the *Jamaat e Momineen* with them:

A section of the People of the Book say: 'Believe in the morning what is revealed to the Momineen, but reject it at the end of the day; perchance they may (themselves) turn back'. (3:72)

Their settlements were in Medina and its surrounding areas. Bedouin Arabs also used to inhabit this environment. As far as race was concerned, they were also Arabs, therefore just like the Koresh, they too should have refrained from hypocrisy, but it appears that by living in the same environment as the Jews, the germs of hypocrisy had also infiltrated them. It is because of this that the Quran has called them brethren of the hypocritical People of the Book (59:11) and has declared:

The Arabs of the desert are the worst in Kufr and hypocrisy... (9:97) See also (9:101)

By joining together with the Jews, these people continued to hypocritically intrigue against the Islamic system, but when, despite this opposition, Muslims established their own State, they adopted obedience to it and accepted *Eimaan*. These are the ones about whom the Quran has instructed to say to them: do not assert this, that we have accepted *Eimaan*, say instead that we have bowed our heads before the Islamic State. *Eimaan* has not entered into the depths of their hearts (49:11). But it appears as if the veneer of hypocrisy had left them by then, and the Arabic tradition had once again emerged and come to the surface, this is because the Quran has not declared about them that they deceive Allah and the *Jamaat e Momineen*. Thus it is stated that:

...But if you obey Allah and His messenger, He will not belittle aught of your deeds... (49:14)

If these people continue to obey Allah and Rasul, then there will not be an iota of reduction in the recompense for their deeds. We do not wish to add anything further about them. As far as the hypocrites are concerned, they tormented Muslims all their lives and left no stone unturned in their destruction. The question is why did Allah not expose them, so that Rasul-ullah and the *Jamaat e Momineen* i.e. the Divine system, could have remained protected from their intrigues, and instead of the energies of this *Jamaat* being utilised in their defence, these could have been utilised fully in the constructive programme? The extent to which this question is important, its answer merits attention to the same degree. In Surah *Muhammad* it is stated that have these people in whose hearts there is the

disease of hypocrisy, ever considered that this concealed evil of theirs can become clearly evident (47:29)? After this, Allah stated to Rasul-ullah:

Had We so willed, We could have shown them up to you, and you would have known them by their marks: but surely you will know them by the tone of their speech! And Allah knows all that you do. (47:30)

Allah is well aware of their mischiefs, hence, if He had wished it, He could have informed you via *Wahi* of such visible signs by which you could have easily recognised them. But O Rasul! We did not do this. Doing this would have been against the programme of Our *Mashe'at*. We left them, so that you will need to identify them yourselves through their speech.

4.23 You Will Need to Recognise Them Yourself

Though it is a small matter, a great reality is concealed within it. When the messenger commenced his revolutionary invitation, a horde of oppositions appeared from all directions, and this opposition of theirs continued till his last breath. The *Kuffar* of Makkah were included among these as well as the hypocrites of Medina. If we glance at it superficially, the opposition of the Koresh of Makkah was very intense and testing of courage, but if we look at it more closely, then we will see that the opposition of the hypocrites was far more painful: a source of hardship, testing of patience, and demanding steadfastness as compared to the Koresh of Makkah. The Koresh were open enemies, they would announce their arrival and proclaim before striking. There was neither any difficulty in recognising them, nor any problem in assessing their intentions. But the situation with the hypocrites was completely different. Whereas they (the Koresh) would appear with open countenances, their swords grasped in their hands, these would come veiled, with daggers hidden up their sleeves: they could neither be easily recognised, nor could their intentions be assessed externally. How complicated their dilemma was, and how challenging the solution to this can be gauged from the details noted in Surah *At-Tauba*. This dilemma would have been very easy to solve if a trustworthy method or means could have been obtained to recognise them. Obviously, what means could there have been for this which were more reliable than the trustworthy and definite means of *Wahi*? But Allah has stated that it is not at all difficult for Us that We inform you about their whereabouts and their signs, but We will not do this, you will have to do this yourselves. From this it is apparent that as far as *Wahi* is concerned, it was a purely supernatural and beyond-human source of knowledge, there was no part played in it of the messenger's own intellect and vision, or effort and exertion. But in the wondrous

achievements which he accomplished in the light of *Wabi*, there was no intervention of any supernatural element, that was the outcome of his own exemplary wisdom and vision, and the fruit of an unparalleled character and conduct. The response to the plots of the opponents was carried out with meticulous planning and the cut of the sword was countered with the skill of a swordsman. This was a war at an equal level between two opposing sides, with this distinction that the enemy could use whatever trick they wished, but Rasul-ullah (and his *Jamaat*) had to remain within the limits and confines defined by *Wabi*. In this battle and conflict the position of those on *Haqq* appears to be disadvantageous, but in actual fact it was obedience to the values and principles defined by *Wabi* due to which *Haqq* ultimately succeeded.

4.24 Exemplary Model

By presenting this in front of the world as evidence of the truth of the pronouncements made by Rasul-ullah, it was stated:

You have indeed in the messenger of Allah, a beautiful pattern (of conduct) for any one... (33:21)

The life of the messenger is an ideal model for you. If an intervention of a supernatural element had played a part in these achievements, then the eminent life of Rasul-ullah could not have become a model for mankind.

This was the reason that Allah told Rasul-ullah that We will not inform you about the signs by which to identify these hypocrites; you will have to distinguish them yourself through their words and deeds – and the Quran presents evidence of this that the messenger did identify them and made his society free and pure from them. This is that reality which the Quran has referred to in these words that:

Allah will not leave the Momineen in the state in which you are now, until He separates what is evil from what is good... (3:179)

As has been explained during the discussion of verse (2:7) that though Allah relates these matters to His Own Self, these are in fact carried out by human beings themselves. Therefore it is also evident from this that during the life of Rasul-ullah this evil of the hypocrites was separated from the eminence of the *Jamaat e Momineen*. And that society consisted of those dedicated *Momineen* who

are known as the *Sahaba*²³¹. Since maturity had not yet been established in the *Eimaan* of the Bedouin, therefore the Quran has specifically termed these *Sahaba* as *Muhajireen* (Muslim migrants) and *Ansar* (local Muslims). Evidence of the purity of their *Eimaan* is found dispersed in the pages of the Quran like glittering pearls. In Surah *Anfal* it is noted:

Those who have Eimaan, and adopt exile and fight in the cause of Allah, as well as those who give (them) asylum and aid, these are (all) in very truth the Momineen: for them is protection and a provision most respectable. (8:74)

4.25 All the *Sahaba* were Pure *Momin*

Some among them were those who had said yes to the invitation of Rasul-ullah right at the beginning, and some were those who joined them slightly later. But Allah has given all of them glad tidings of *Jannat*. It is stated in Surah *At-Tauba*:

The vanguard (of Islam) - the first of those who forsook (their homes) and of those who gave them aid, and (also) those who follow them in (all) righteous deeds - well-pleased is Allah with them, as are they with Him: for them has He prepared such gardens under which rivers flow, to dwell therein forever: that is the supreme felicity. (9:100)

Just reflect – Allah has given a guarantee of an eternal paradise for all the *Sahaba*, whether they were in ‘the foremost’ category, or whether they joined them later, and has declared a shining certificate of ‘Allah is well pleased with them, and they are well pleased with Him’ for them all. Regarding those among them who joined later, He has stated that they are also from among you (8:75), as far as the promise of Allah is concerned, there is no difference between them or you. There is no doubt in this that, according to the Quranic criterion, ranks are determined according to deeds:

And to all are (assigned) degrees according to the deeds which they (have done), and in order that (Allah) may recompense their deeds, and no injustice be done to them. (46:19)

²³¹ *Sahaba* – this term refers to the *Momin* companions of Rasul-ullah, the last messenger of Allah. (Ed)

Therefore, those who were foremost among the forebearers, their ranks may be loftier²³² but as far as the Divine promise of paradise and protection is concerned, it will be equal for them all. Hence, it is stated in Surah *Al-Hadeed*:

...Not equal among you are those who spent (freely) and fought, before the victory, (with those who did so later). Those are higher in rank than those who spent (freely) and fought afterwards. But to all has Allah promised a goodly (reward). And Allah is well acquainted with all that you do. (57:10)

These are those pure *Momineen* about whom Allah said to His messenger:

...He it is that has strengthened you with His aid and with (the company of) the Momineen. (8:62)

After this, in another verse, this was elaborated in these words:

O Nabi! Sufficient unto you is Allah - and to the Momineen who follow you. (8:64)

Have you observed how much loftier was the status of the *Sababa* consisting of the *Muhajireen* and *Ansar*. This is that eminence whose portrait is drawn by the Quran in Surah *Al-Fatah* in these captivating words:

Muhammad is the messenger of Allah; and those who are with him are strong against the Kuffar, (but) compassionate amongst each other. You will see them bow and prostrate themselves, seeking Grace from Allah and (His) good pleasure. On their faces are their marks, (being) the traces of their prostration (obedience to the laws of Allah). This is their similitude in the Torah, and their similitude in the Gospel is like a seed which sends forth its blade, then makes it strong; it then becomes thick, and it stands on its own stem, (filling) the sowers with wonder and delight. As a result, it fills the Kuffar with rage at them. Allah has promised those who have Eimaan and do righteous deeds protection, and a great reward. (48:29)

Muhammad, the messenger of Allah, and the *Jamaat* of his companions – and what a wonderful and amazing *Jamaat* this is! Their state is such that they are solid like a rock against the opponents of *Haqq* but extremely kind-hearted and compassionate amongst each other (3:103). You can witness them, how they bow down to take on the burden of responsibilities and become personifications of willing obedience before the Divine laws. (But this is not a *Jamaat* of hermits, abandoning worldly life). They remain persistently engaged in pursuit of the means of sustenance for life as per the Divine law, and together with this, they also endeavour that each deed of theirs should remain in harmony with the Divine

²³² This refers to the fact that the development of the human self is the change in the internal state. (Ed)

law, and for their character to become of one colour with the Divine attributes. The effects of the contentment of heart and sincere joy that they achieve as a consequence of this are conspicuously visible on their faces. These signs of theirs were also noted in the former Divine Books, the Torah and the Bible.

The way in which they established this Divine system and made it flourish, its similitude can be understood as follows – when a seedling emerges from a healthy seed, its first shoot is very soft and fragile. Then as its root keeps on becoming stronger, its stem becomes thicker, until it becomes so robust that it becomes firmly established on its own support in a balanced way. (Corns of ear grow in it, and grains appear in these and become firm and strong. In this way, that tiny seed converts into a ripened crop). When the farmer observes his hard work coming to fruition in this way, he is filled with delight and joy. But this same thing becomes like a writhing snake in the hearts of his opponents.

In this same way Allah gives this commitment to every one of those *Jamaats* which, having established *Eimaan* in the truth of His laws, treads on the programme instructed by Him. In other words, gives a promise of this fact (this is His Law) that the tiny seed of their efforts will remain protected from all dangers, and their crop will ripen and bear the best of fruits (24:55). But for this the same kind of hard work and persistence will be required which is evidenced by a farmer (righteous seed, compatibility with the laws of nature, persistent hard work, and determination and steadfastness – all these conditions are intrinsically linked for the maturation of the crop).

It is clear from these explanations of the Quran that when Allah had stated that evil will be separated from the society of the *Momineen*, that promise became fulfilled in this way, and the virtuous *Jamaat* which remained behind (i.e. the combined *Jamaat* of the companions at the time of Rasul-ullah's departure from the world) how it was righteous in all respects - there was no hypocrite among them.

Now let us move on to the next verse:

They (think to) deceive Allah and those who have Eimaan, but they deceive not except themselves and perceive (it) not. (2:9)

The exposition of this verse has been given in the explanation of the previous verse. There is only one point which merits further elaboration. In Surah *An-Nisa* this state of the hypocrites is explained in these words:

The hypocrites – they think they are over-reaching Allah but He will over-reach them... (4:142)

The translation commonly given of this is that: ‘The hypocrites deceive Allah, and Allah deceives them’. According to this translation, the concept which comes to mind about Allah is clear. For its correct meaning, let us remind ourselves of the discussion which has been given previously in relation to verse (2:7), and align these words from verse (2:9) with it: ‘They deceive none but their own selves’, and the matter will become entirely clear. The meaning of this verse will be that the hypocrites think in their own hearts that they are deceiving Allah and the *Jamaat e Momineen*, but in reality what occurs is that according to Allah’s law of Requitul, they remain ensnared in self-deception. If the psychological disease of hypocrisy had not drawn a veil over the potentials of their intellect and consciousness, then this is not such a deep and complex matter that it could not have been understood by them.

4.26 Effects of Deeds on the Human Self

In verse (2:9) this reality is also implicit that (as has been noted before) the effect or consequence of every deed of man becomes imprinted on his self (*Nafis*). This is why the Quran has stated:

If you did well, you did well for yourselves; if you did evil, you did it against yourselves... (17:7)

If you do constructive deeds which lead towards balance, then it is your own self which flourishes from this, and if you commit acts which produce imbalance, then imbalance is created in your own self as a result. In another verse it has stated:

And if anyone does a crime, he does it against His own self... (4:III)

The crime which you (apparently) commit against others, is in reality against your own self. As a result of this your self becomes weak²³³. The renowned German philosopher, Nietzsche, has explained this point in these words:

The crime which you have committed against me, that I can forgive, but the crime you have committed against your own self due to this, who will forgive that?

The Quran has expressed this truth presented by it in two brief but very comprehensive words in Surah *Al-Hashr*:

²³³ The Arabic word used in the verse is *Ithm*, which means weakening of the self.

*And be you not like those who forgot Allah; and He made them forget their own
selves ... (59:19)*

This means that the consequence of ignoring Allah is the same as ignoring one's own self. And this is what has been declared as being 'self-deception' in verse (2:9) under view.

The next verse is:

*In their hearts is a disease; and Allah has increased their disease. And grievous is the
penalty they (incur) because they are false (to themselves). (2:10)*

The meaning of this verse too has been covered under verse (2:8). It should be reiterated again that the Quran has declared hypocrisy to be a psychological ailment. The state of psychological diseases is such that until their true cause is not diagnosed, not only are they not cured, instead with every erroneous treatment the disease keeps increasing further. We have stated previously that man has to tell ten lies in order to hide his one lie, and it is as a consequence of these that the disease keeps multiplying. This is why the Quran has stated that it is all the consequence of that falsehood and lie which they have made the blueprint of their lives.

The Quran has termed the torment and dread produced by this disease of the hypocrites as *Azāab un Aleem* i.e. a painful, agonizing punishment. We have already had a detailed discussion regarding *Kufr* in connection with verse (2:6). You will have observed there that the relationship of *Kufr* is with an error of judgement, or error in outlook of human understanding and insight. On this basis the devastation resulting from this is called *Azāab un Azeem* (2:7) i.e. a terrible destruction. But since the connection of hypocrisy is with the human heart, or psychology, that is why the destruction caused by it is called a grievous *Azāab*. In general terms we could say that if the consequence of *Kufr* is a headache, then the consequence of hypocrisy is heartache. Have you noticed how remarkable the Quran is even in the selection of words.²³⁴

A certain number of distinctive traits of the hypocrites have been explained earlier. After this, the Quran has described one such trait of theirs which we can say holds a fundamental position, and this is mentioned in the two verses after this which are the following:

²³⁴ This is why I emphasise that one should not move on without pondering carefully on every single word of the Quran.

When it is said to them: ‘Make not mischief on the earth,’ they say: ‘Why, we only want to make peace!’ Of a surety, they are the ones who make mischief, but they realise (it) not (that the consequences will surely grip them). (2:11-12)

The meaning of these verses is this, that ‘when they are told not to create mischief in the society, country or world, they say we do not create mischief, we carry out reform.’ And the Quran alerts people not to fall for this rhetoric of theirs, ‘they are not the ones to put things right, they are of those who spread *Fasad*²³⁵’.

4.27 *Islah and Fasad*

In this verse two words such as *Fasad* and *Islah* appear which are Quranic terms full of meaning and worthy of attention. The basic meaning of *Sul’Hum* is that whatever state a certain thing is required to be in, it should be in that state. Its stability, balance and proportion should endure. *Fasad’un* is its antonym, the meaning of which is that whatever state something should be in, it is not in that state - disorder has been created in its stability, balance and proportion, indeed in its every characteristic and attribute.

We have stated above that the meaning of *Islah* is that whatever state something is meant to be in, it should be in that state. Apparently, it consists of two words ‘it should’, but in the world of thought and perception, this is an extremely difficult conundrum for the solution of which the human intellect has been busily struggling (devoid of the light of *Wabi*) since the era when human consciousness first opened its eyes, but until now it has not been able to reach any concrete conclusion.

4.28 What should it be? A Most Difficult Conundrum

The problem which is before the sciences is straightforward, in this the question is only: ‘What is it?’ You may understand it like this, that a veil is drawn over the things of the universe or the forces of nature, and scientific investigations lift this veil and discover the realities lying hidden beneath it. From this it becomes known

²³⁵ The root of *Fasad* is *F-S-D*. It means not to remain in a balanced state, to become rotten and useless; for disorder to take place; destruction of a generation; not give full measure; create economic imbalance; suppress the rights of people; upset the correct order of things; commit a crime; to do injustice; the opposite of balance in a society. For further details refer to the *Lughat ul Quran* by the author. (Ed).

about everything as to what it is, and what it is like. But the real question in the human world is not that of what it is, the question is: ‘What ought to be?’ In our daily conversations we say that he did such and such, although he ‘should have done it in this way’. That individual can ask the one asserting such a thing, that why should I have done it like this, in the way that you say. And after that, who are you to tell me that I should have done it like this.

The detailed account of the story of Adam will appear before us a few verses later. You will see in it that when Allah formed the intention to create an entity on earth possessing choice and intent (man), the *Malaika* said:

... *Will You place therein one who will make mischief therein and shed blood?...*
(2:30)

Do You wish to produce such a creation in the world which possesses choice and intent and its consequences will be that he will create *Fasad* in the world i.e. he will not let anything remain in the condition in which it should be. And it is obvious that the consequence of this can be nothing other than bloodshed.

Allah said to Adam (man) that, Behold! you should keep the state of the system of your communal life in the same state that we define through *Wabi*, do not create any alteration in it as this will produce disorder in it. But the (rebellious against *Wabi*) human being said, no, I will make that decision myself about how this should be. It is the tale of this struggle and confrontation about ‘It should be like this, and not like that’, which is what is known as the history of mankind. Divine *Wabi* instructs that the system of your communal life should be like this. The vested interests of man challenge this, and declare that no, ‘it should be like this’ - this is what is called *Fasad*; this is what is called the clash between good and evil, or the confrontation between Adam and *Iblees*.²³⁶ Regarding the Quran, at a fundamental level you should also consider it as being the detailed and captivating exposition of the clash between this *Sulab*²³⁷ and *Fasad*. The striving and endeavour of *Muslibeen* is for this purpose that the human system should stay in that state in which Allah (i.e. *Wabi*) wishes to keep it. He has explained the objective before *Momineen* in these comprehensive words – or we can say that He has defined the *Momineen* like this:

But you will not, except as Allah wills... (76:30)

²³⁶ The explanation about good and evil will come further on.

²³⁷ The root of *Sulab* and *Islab* are the same. *Sulab* means acts which create balance and beauty; to leave things in the exact condition in which they should be; to remove imbalances. (Ed)

They wish the same as that which Allah wishes to happen. Have you observed with what beauty and balance the problem of what a *Momin* 'ought to be' is resolved. They are called *Muslibeen* or *Salebeen* on the basis of this very trait of theirs.

4.29 Different Aspects of *Fasad*

Contrary to this, those who turn their back on *Wabi* change this system according to their vested interests. It is because of this that they are declared to be *Mufsideen*²³⁸. In order to understand this reality, a few certain aspects of human life are presented in which, according to the Quran, instead of *Islah*, *Fasad* is unleashed.

First of all take the system of the State. The fundamental question in this is, who should possess the final authority to formulate laws? This same authority is called sovereign authority, or *Ilah* as per Quranic terminology. In the discussion which has appeared before us regarding Allah in the first verse of Surah *Al-Fateha*, you will see that the Quran has stated that this right belongs only to Allah. He is the one and only *Ilah* and there is no other *Ilah*. In the outer universe His implemented laws are functioning without any interference or disturbance. Researchers in science acknowledge this fact that the system of the universe is based on the unity of laws i.e. only the laws devised by one authority are implemented and functioning in it. It is as a result of this that this incredible and spectacular machinery is busily engaged in functioning with such balance and efficiency. In the words of the Quran:

And to Allah does obeisance all that is in the heavens and on earth, whether moving (living) creatures or the Malaika: for none can be transgressors. (16:49)

Whatever is in the highs and lows of the universe, whether it is (other than human beings) the general creation or the forces of nature, all are subjugated before His laws, and never transgress against Him. This is because:

To Him be glory throughout the heavens and the earth (i.e. Sovereignty belongs to Him): and He is exalted in power, full of wisdom! (45:37)

In the whole universe, higher authority is only with Allah, and His higher authority is not based on blind force, it is based on wisdom.

²³⁸ *Mufsideen* – those who create *Fasad*. (Ed)

4.30 The System of Government

After presenting the system of the universe as an example, He informed mankind that the way in which you accept Allah's sovereignty in the outer world, you should also accept Him as *Ilah* in the human world in the same way:

It is He Who is Ilah in heaven and Ilah on earth; and He is full of wisdom and knowledge. (43:84)

Remember, it is He Who is *Ilah* in the outer universe, and it is He Who should be *Ilah* in the human world as well. In another verse it is stated:

If there were, in the heavens and the earth, other gods besides Allah, there would have been confusion in both! But glory to Allah, the Rabb of authority: high is He above what they attribute to Him! (21:22)

Remember! If you created such a situation in which you accepted some other *Ilah* in the outer universe, and any other *Ilah* in your own world, then its outcome will be *Fasad*. This concept of yours about Allah that His domain of authority is confined to the outer universe, and that in human life men should be autonomous is very wrong, and Allah is far and above this.²³⁹ The central control of the whole of the universe is in His Hand. This is because:

He cannot be questioned for His acts, but they will be questioned (for theirs). (21:23)

Whoever is holder of authority in the world, he can be questioned as to what authority do you have for that which you say should happen. This authority only belongs to Allah. It is He Who has created the universe and mankind, and only He can be the One who can make the decision about what the system of the human world should be, just like the outer universe. For this He has given a very clear and concrete reason also: He has stated that whoever an individual may be, in the laws and decisions which are devised by him there will, of a certainty, be the contamination of his emotions, whether consciously or unconsciously. In this way, *Haqq* will no longer remain as pure *Haqq*. And:

²³⁹ Man should by choice opt for the guidance of *Wabi*, as it is in his interest to benefit from the Permanent Values in order to make his existing life free from fear and grief, and also to subsequently live a successful life in the hereafter. (Ed)

If Haqq had been in accord with their desires, truly the heavens and the earth and all beings therein would have been in chaos and confusion! (23:71)

If *Al-Haqq* falls within the control of the emotions of people, then *Fasad* will be unleashed in the heavens and earth and all that is between them. And what the outcome will be from that *Fasad* is obvious. The only way to remain protected from this is that those laws under which human beings are to live their lives should not be corrupted with human desires. The remaining part of the verse is:

...Nay, We have sent them the revelation for their eminence, but they turn away from their own eminence. (23:71)

Just behold the flawed vision of human beings, We wish to give them such a system in which the secret of their own eminence and prosperity is implicit, but they shun it. Whatever the form of a government may be, if the authority in it for legislation of laws is in the hands of one man or a group of men, then as a result other human beings will inevitably be compelled to obey according to their will. And it is an extreme humiliation for a human being that he is obliged to obey the will of another human being like himself. As a result, a human being becomes deprived of the eminence of being human. Indeed, the secret of his eminence and dignity lies in this very fact that he should not be the subject of, and dependent on, any other human being.

4.31 *Malukiyat* (Dictatorship)

One form of a government whose outcome is *Fasad* is *Malukiyat*. What happens under *Malukiyat*! The Quran has noted this in the words of the Queen of the nation of Saba:

She said: 'Kings, when they enter a country, despoil it, and make the noblest of its people its meanest. Thus do they behave'. (27:34)

Remember! When kings invade other countries, everything there is overturned i.e. a situation of *Fasad* emerges in it. First and foremost, they degrade the respectable people of that nation, and this matter is not restricted to some particular king, it is specific to *Malukiyat*. Whoever the kings may be, and wherever they may, this is what they have been doing to date, and this is what they will continue to do. In another verse *Fasad* has been defined in the following words, that:

When he turns his back, his aim everywhere is to spread mischief through the earth and destroy crops and cattle. But Allah loves not mischief. (2:205)

When such an individual acquires authority in the land, then he unleashes *Fasad* in it – he destroys the crops and slaughters the human beings. Contrary to this, this does not happen in the domain of the rule of Allah. Allah simply does not approve of *Fasad*. The Quran has presented the Pharaohs of Egypt as representatives of *Malukiyat*. It states about them:

(All) these transgressed beyond bounds in the lands. And heaped therein mischief (upon mischief). (89:11-12)

They destroy habitations, like the flood which, by breaking its banks, becomes widespread, and as a consequence *Fasad* becomes rife in the whole country, nothing remains in its original state. In another verse it is stated:

Truly Pharaoh elated himself in the land and broke up its people into parties, depressing a small group among them: their sons he slew, but he kept alive their females: for he was indeed a maker of mischief. (28:4)

Pharaoh has adopted great rebellion and has created chaos. He divides the people of Bani Israel into different parties, and in this way sometimes he weakens one party and sometime another. He humiliates and degrades those individuals of this nation in whom he observes the manifestation of human potentials, and he promotes those who are devoid of these potentials and capabilities. This is that *Fasad* of humanity which he makes commonplace throughout the land.

4.32 Democracy

Malukiyat does not mean that the authority to formulate laws is in the hands of one individual alone. Whether it is one individual or a group of individuals (which in the present day is called the Western system of democracy), this will be declared as being *Malukiyat* according to the Quran. It appears that among the people of Thamud some similar kind of ‘democratic system’ was in place, so when the messenger Saleh stated to Allah that this whole nation is corrupted, what kind of reformation of them can I implement? Allah stated:

There were in the city nine (powerful) men of a group, who made mischief in the land, and would not reform. (27:48)

You should not worry about the whole nation. The root of *Fasad* are those nine people residing in power in the capital city, who keep on creating imbalance in

every matter. Their programme is that nothing should remain in its original state. If you deal with these (nine), then the whole nation will be remedied. The cure for smallpox is not to keep an eye on every lesion, rather its remedy is that whatever harmful germs have entered the bloodstream they should be treated. Once the germs have been destroyed, then the lesions of smallpox will automatically resolve. He has stated about *Jannat*:

That home of the hereafter We shall give to those who intend not high-handedness (Alluw) or mischief on earth: and the end is (best) for the righteous. (28:83)

This abode of the life of the hereafter is for those who create neither rebellion nor *Fasad* in the world. They take care to observe the Divine laws and this *Jannat* is the outcome of this.

Here, another fundamental point is worthy of elucidation. It is stated in this verse that *Jannat* is for those who do not wish *Alluw* in the world. *Alluw* is commonly translated as becoming more elevated than others, and the meaning taken from this is power and authority, higher status and prestige. The *Maslak* of monasticism is based on this ideology that power and authority, higher status and prestige, control and supremacy, worldly affairs and rule, is not the way of the servants of Allah. The *Maslak* of the devotees of the court of Allah is that they spend a life of extreme humility and meekness, weakness and helplessness, poverty and scarcity. The ultimate extent of this is that they destroy their 'self' so that not even a vestige of desire for self-manifestation remains within them. In support of this ideology of theirs, these people present these types of Quranic verses and their own fabricated meanings of these. This concept of life is against the Quran and is the product of *Ajmi*²⁴⁰ intrigues.²⁴¹

4.33 *Momineen* and Authority in the Land

In this verse (28:83) it is stated that *Muttaqeen* and owners of paradise are those who do not want *Alluw* in the world – if its meaning is taken to be that which has been noted above, then what should be said about the Divine proclamation in which He has informed the *Momineen* that:

²⁴⁰ *Ajmi* – the term means non-Arabs. As Islam spread, non-Arabs accepted Islam, and their influence permeated many of the practices of Muslims which were against the teachings of the Quran. (Ed)

²⁴¹ For details see the last chapter of my book, *Shab-Kare Risalat* (Masterpiece of Rasul-ullah).

...for you must gain mastery if you are Momineen. (3:139)

If you are *Momineen*, then you will possess the greatest *Alluw*. The word *Ala'own* is used for them, which means most high, most superior, overall authority, most elevated - the Quran declares this to be the sign of *Momineen*.

From this the question arises that the *Alluw* which has been forbidden in verse (28:83), what does it mean? This has been clarified by Allah Himself when it was stated that:

*Now the Aa'd behaved arrogantly through the land, against (all) truth and reason...
(41:15)*

The people of Aa'd had demonstrated arrogance and haughtiness without *Al-Haqq*. At another place He has declared about the *Kuffar*:

*...but today shall you be recompensed with a penalty of humiliation: for that you were arrogant on earth without just cause, and that you (ever) transgressed. (46:20)
See also (7:146, 10:23)*

They will be told that you acquired power and authority in the world by abandoning *Haqq*, as a result of which *Fasad* was unleashed, and its consequence is this *Azraab* of humiliation in which you are badly ensnared. See how power in the land devoid of *Haqq* has been declared as being illegitimate and the cause for *Fasad* in these verses. When power and authority are kept within the obedience of the Divine laws, then that *Alluw* will be the natural consequence of *Eimaan* and *Saleh* deeds, and will be in accordance with the *Masbe'at* of Allah. That system will proclaim and acknowledge this fact that:

To Him belongs Sovereignty throughout the heavens and the earth: and He is exalted in power, full of wisdom! (45:37)

Sovereignty in the external universe also belongs to Allah, and in human life it is also His. That *Allah O Akbar!* which is announced in our (Muslim) society five times from a very elevated location in a very loud voice is (or used to be) evidence of this fact that sovereignty (supreme authority) belongs only to Allah. The authority of human beings is conferred by Him and is the means by which to accomplish His programme. This was the Quranic meaning of the proclamation of *Allah O Akbar* in the *Azraan* (call to prayer). But today (when Islam has become converted into religion instead of Deen) its condition has also become such that:

*Only ritual remains as Azaan, the spirit of Bilal has vanished.*²⁴²

4.34 Religious Priesthood

Malukiyat cannot remain established without the support and favour of the religious priesthood.²⁴³ No human being can agree to willingly bow before any other human being, hence he can never accept the rule of *Malukiyat*. The religious clergy provides him with this teaching that this individual whom you see enthroned on the chair of authority is *Zill'illah Ala Al-Ard* (the shadow of Allah on earth), the avatar of *Eshwar*²⁴⁴. Allah has yielded all His authorities to him. Hence, bowing before him is not like bowing before some human being, it is like bowing before Allah himself. The religious clergy keeps breathing this invocation into the ears of the public with such persistence and repetition that they actually begin to visualise Allah in a human form. And after this that tyrannical and rebellious ruler gives a free rein to whatever kind of *Fasad* he wishes. The Quran states that the religious clergy is an equal partner in this propagating of *Fasad*. When Pharaoh saw that he had no answer to the evidence presented by Musa, he called on the religious clergy, and told them to prove to the masses that Pharaoh is the one on *Haqq*, and Musa is the one who wishes to spread *Fasad* in the land. The Quran has announced the outcome of this confrontation as:

...for Allah prospers not the work of those who make mischief. (10:81)

These religious priests wished to maintain the *Fasad* of Pharaoh in place, but such people can never succeed in opposition to *Haqq*. At this stage, we will confine ourselves to this reference only regarding the spreading of *Fasad* by the priesthood, further details will appear later.

4.35 Economic System

In the collective system of nations there is an intrinsic connection between political and economic aspects. If there is disorder in one aspect, then there will essentially be disorder in the other aspect as well. We have written in detail about

²⁴² Bilal was a companion of Rasul-ullah, who reportedly used to announce the *Azaan*. This is a verse from Iqbal's poetry. (Ed)

²⁴³ In the modern era the media has also become part of this entity to mould and guide the opinions of the masses to their ends. (Ed)

²⁴⁴ A Hindu god. (Ed)

the economic system of the Quran in relation to verse (2:3). In summary, this system is based on these facts:

- (1) When Allah created the universe, together with this He also made arrangements for the resources for the life and nourishment of the creation. This is called *Rizq*.
- (2) Regarding the means of *Rizq* or the means of production, He instructed in clear terms that their distribution should be such that no human being remains without the necessities of life.
- (3) This is that correct condition in which the means of *Rizq* should remain, and according to which the distribution of *Rizq* should take place.
- (4) In this, *Fasad* takes the form of some individual, or a group of individuals, taking it into their personal ownership, and then its distribution is such that it should be accumulated beyond their requirements, while others remain deprived of their needs, so that they become the dependents and subjects of those people who have kept back these resources of *Rizq* within their control. The Quran terms this kind of economics as being *Fasad*. In summary it states:

...So eat and drink of the sustenance provided by Allah. And do not commit evil or mischief on the earth. (2:60)

4.36 The Spreading of *Fasad* by the People of Thamud

As far as taking the means of production into private ownership is concerned, the Quran has specifically presented as an example the account of the people of Thamud from among past nations. In that time the economy was based on agriculture, and it is obvious that for this pastures and sources of water held a fundamental position. The people in authority (leaders of the nation) of Thamud had kept these in their private ownership, the consequence of which was that the gates used to remain closed to the livestock of the people from the lower strata of society, and if these were opened, then it was only according to the desire and vested interests of these leaders of the nation. Saleh was sent to this nation as a messenger, and he informed the leaders of the nation that:

...So bring to remembrance the benefits (you have received) from Allah, and refrain from evil and mischief on the earth. (7:74)

These sources of *Rizq* are bestowed by Allah – always keep this basic fact in mind and do not create *Fasad* in the land. They said, what is the model of reformation in your mind? Saleh replied that the matter is clear:

This she-camel of Allah is a Sign unto you: So leave her to graze in Allah's earth, and let her come to no harm... (7:73)

This earth also belongs to Allah and this livestock too. Let this creation of Allah roam freely on Allah's earth, so that each one of them eats to its fill. Though they committed to this verbally, they were not prepared to adhere to it, the consequence being that this system based on imbalances of *Rizq* destroyed this nation.

4.37 *Fasad* in Commerce

As far as the distribution of resources to meet needs is concerned, this is generally known as commerce. Irregularities in the system of commerce are also termed as *Fasad* by the Quran and it has presented the nation of Shuaib as an example of this. In Surah *Hud* it is stated that Shuaib was sent as a messenger to his people. He said to them:

To the Madyan people (We sent) Shuaib, one of their own brethren: he said: 'O my people! obey Allah: You have no other god but Him. And give not short measure or weight: I see you in prosperity, but I fear for you the penalty of a Day that will compass (you) all round'. (11:84)

O people! Follow only the Divine laws, no one else is the holder of power over you except Him. I see that at this moment in time you are enjoying a prosperous life, but you have created severe economic imbalances in your society. Bring about reform in this, keep your scales of measurement accurate and give full measure to each and everyone. If you do not do this, then I fear that such a destruction will descend upon you which will engulf your whole nation in its folds. In the verse after this, it is reiterated that:

And O my people! give just measure and weight, nor withhold from the people the things that are their due: commit not evil in the land with intent to do mischief. (11:85)

As a reminder, just cast another glance at what has been related under verse (2:3) in relation to the mutual connection between *Salaat* and the economic system. You will see there that when Shuaib told them that he desired the establishment

of *Salaat*, they agreed to this, thinking that what he meant by this was worship in their own way. They agreed to this but when the reality of *Salaat* manifested before them, they exclaimed in astonishment, O Shuaib! What kind of *Salaat* is this of yours which does not even give us permission to spend our wealth and possessions according to our own will:

...or that we leave off doing what we like with our possessions (and wealth)...(11:87)

4.38 The Capitalist System

As has already been noted above, the outcome of *Fasad* in the distribution of *Rizq* is that immense wealth becomes accumulated in the hands of certain people. The foundation of the capitalist system is surplus money i.e. wealth in excess of need. The Quran has presented Qarun in the form of the embodiment of this system and has stated that he had accumulated enormous wealth. Those who invited him towards the correct system told him that we do not say to you, do not keep something for your own needs from it - take what you need for your requirements, and you must take it, but:

...but do you good, as Allah has been good to you, and seek not (occasions for) mischief in the land: for Allah loves not those who do mischief. (28:77)

The way in which Allah, by fulfilling your every need, has made your life pleasant, in the same way you should also make the lives of others pleasant by fulfilling their needs, and do not create *Fasad* in society. This conduct is strongly condemned according to the Law of Requit of Allah. In reply to this, he said the same which every flagbearer of the capitalist system says:

He said: 'This has been given to me because of a certain knowledge which I have'...
(28:78)

I have earned this wealth as a result of my skill and cleverness. Hence I can spend it in any way I like, what has Allah got to do with it, and what right does anyone have to question me? On this the Quran has only commented that did he not know how many individuals and nations there were before this who were far superior in wealth and power than this, but despite this enormity of wealth and power, the *Fasad* of their system sank them.

Since different aspects of the economic system will appear further on in various other places, therefore at this time these explanations will suffice.

4.39 Sexual Perversion

How important it is to keep sexual relationships within the Divine limits according to the Quran, can be judged from this fact that among the few crimes for which the Quran itself has defined a punishment, *Zina*²⁴⁵ is included among these (24:2). How deep the connection is of sexual chastity with the rise and fall of nations, we will explain this later at its own place. Here, it will be sufficient to state that even the thinkers of the West themselves, after their research over a prolonged period, have arrived at this conclusion that whichever nation turns its back on, or is negligent regarding sexual chastity, it can survive for a maximum of three generations.²⁴⁶ The worst type of sexual perversion is homosexuality. This epidemic was commonplace among the nation to which Lut was sent as a messenger, and it is on this basis that they are called a nation of *Mufsideen* (29:30). When the basic definition of *Fasad* is that the state in which a certain thing should be, it no longer remains in that state i.e. the purpose for which it should be used, it is not being used for that purpose, then what *Fasad* can be more egregious than that of homosexuality?

4.40 Unity of Mankind

Now we come to that form of *Fasad* which has acquired a global status in the world in the present time. The Quran has stated that:

Mankind was but one nation, but differed (later)...(10:19)

When human beings commenced their communal life, they were one group, one *Jamaat*, one nation only, and one Ummah only. But after this they created mutual differences, and became divided into family dynasties and tribes, and in this way the unity of mankind was shattered into pieces. The eradication of this self-created division was not within the remit of human intellect – this could only be removed through the guidance of *Wahî*:

²⁴⁵ *Zina* – adultery and fornication. The Quran has forbidden *Zina* (25:68). See also (17:32) (Ed)

²⁴⁶ For details see my book titled, *Letters to Saleem*, Vol. 3, letter titled, *Effect of Sexuality on the Civilisation of Nations*.

Mankind was one single Ummah, and Allah sent messengers with glad tidings and warnings; and with them He sent the Book in Haqq, to judge between people in matters wherein they differed... (2:213)

For this Allah put in place the process of sending messengers who would give glad tidings to people about the pleasant outcomes of the unity of humanity, and who used to warn about the destructive consequences of being divided. For this, they not only gave verbal sermons, they also used to be provided with a code of laws from Allah, according to which they used to adjudicate on disagreements and matters of the people in order to remove divisions. It is clear from this that, according to the Quran, the ultimate aim of heavenly guidance is the unity of mankind i.e. the whole of mankind as a universal entity. For this such *Anbiya* used to come who used to make efforts to remove differences and create unity within their area of influence, but when mankind entered that era where global unity became a possibility, then Allah sent his last *Nabi* with the final code of guidance. You will see in the Quran that this invitation is called *Lin Naas* i.e. an invitation for the whole of mankind. First of all, in place of the concept of a national or sectarian god, the Quran termed Him as being:

...the Rabb of mankind, the Ruler of mankind, the God (Ilah) of mankind... (114:1-3)

In other words, not the *Rabb* and *Ilah* of any particular race, tribe, or nation – the *Rabb* and *Ilah* of the whole of mankind. Whichever messenger Allah sent, He also stated this about him:

We have not sent you but as a universal messenger to mankind, giving them glad tidings, and warning them, but most of mankind understand not. (34:28)

O Rasul! We have sent you to the whole of mankind as a giver of glad tidings and a warner, but the human mind steeped in tribalism, nationalism and racial divisions will not accept this concept quickly, it will only be able to understand this reality gradually. He also clearly stated about the code of laws (the Quran) which He sent via this messenger that:

These are clear evidences for mankind... (45:20)

This is not for any particular race or nation, it is a cause for gaining insight and vision for the whole of humanity. He made it clear about the nation that He formed as a starting point with the aim of unifying humanity (i.e. the Ummah of Muhammad) that:

You are the best of peoples (Ummahs), formed for the good of the whole of mankind... (3:110)

The centre of the system which was to become established via the hands of this Ummah was declared to be the Kaaba, and this point was made clear about the Kaaba that:

The first House appointed for men was that at Bakka; full of blessing and of guidance for all worlds. (3:96)

That first house in the world, which was to be kept open for the whole of mankind by taking it above and beyond the divisions of race, tribe, ethnicity and nationality which damage humanity. That house is the Kaaba, which is located in Makkah, and which is the centre of guidance for all nations of the world. The objective from this is:

...an asylum of security for mankind...(5:97)

In other words, the centre of that system as a result of which all of humanity becomes enabled to stand on its own feet.

During the discussion about ‘good and evil’ we have said that according to the relative standards of profit and loss, every individual or every nation (at the very most) keeps its own interest in mind. But the Quran has declared that according to the scales of the Permanent Values, remember:

...while that which is for the good of mankind remains on the earth...(13:17)

Only that ideology, that system, that *Maslak* can endure whose aim is not the benefit of any particular individual, group or nation, but the benefit of the whole of mankind. At this point we have only quoted one or two references in connection with the focus of the Quran i.e. the unity of mankind, otherwise these explanations are widespread throughout the Quran. These will appear at their respective places. The purpose here was to explain that the goal of this last link in the process of righteousness and guidance is to create a universal brotherhood of mankind, whose foundation is the commonality of *Eimaan* (ideology). It is obvious that whichever ideology, concept, belief or system opposes it, or obstructs its path, it will be declared as the cause for *Fasad* in humanity according to the Quran. This is that very fact which has been expounded in these words, that the people who leave the straight path defined by Allah for other paths are those who:

... and who sunder what Allah Has ordered to be joined, and do mischief on earth... (2:27)

This means that by imposing gulfs of sectarianism, formation of parties, nationalism, among those whom Allah had commanded to be united, they make

efforts in this way to prevent fragmented humanity from coming together. These are the very people who foment *Fasad*.

Human history is a witness to how Rasul-ullah and his companions, within his sphere of authority under the guidance of *Wahi*, bridged these gulfs, and how they brought humanity which was divided into pieces, together – united them not only physically but united their hearts, because true unification is the coming together of hearts (3:103). They shaped one single Ummah by erasing the differentiations of colour, race, language, tribe and nationality, and in this way demonstrated to the world that the concept or ideology of unified mankind put forward by the Quran is not impossible or unable to be implemented. But we hang our heads in shame at the mention of what happened after this. That same Ummah, which was raised to create unity in mankind, itself became divided into pieces. Firstly, by converting Deen into religion it created various sects within that religion, and after that became divided into different nations on the basis of differentiations in race and nationality.

4.41 Discontent of Western Thinkers

The shaping into different nations on the basis of variations in geographical affinity was a curse created by Europe. But as we have stated above, with the descent of the Quran, that era began in which (gradually) man eventually became capable of understanding which path will take him ultimately in which direction. Europe shaped different nationalities on the bases of mutual jealousy and hatred, but when some peace arose in the intensity of passions (or you could say, when the destructive consequences of this ideology of nationalism manifested before them), thinkers from there themselves cried out aloud stating that this nationalism is taking us towards the hell of destruction and ruin. In this connection we can quote the sayings and opinions of many intellectuals and thinkers of Europe, but for the reasons of brevity, we have confined ourselves to only a few here.²⁴⁷

Aldous Huxley is a renowned thinker from there who has passed away recently. He writes in his book titled, *Science, Liberty and Peace*:

‘As a result of Nationalism, which we have adopted as an idol worshipping religion, the whole world has been divided into approximately fifty parts, which are called

²⁴⁷ Those who are interested in more detail should see my book titled, *Insaan nae Kia Socha?* under the subject *Siasat* (Politics).

*nations of the world.²⁴⁸ This is the 'state religion' of every one of these nations i.e. instead of God, worship of the nation which is considered to be the manifestation of higher values. Hence, out of these fifty idols, the worshipper of every idol considers the other forty-nine idols as mawkish. Nationalism becomes the cause for moral destruction in this way that all the beliefs of universal mankind, One God and human dignity are declared as being false due to it and in place of these, the beliefs of separatism, egotism and selfishness take birth the consequence of which is not only the legitimising of hatred and war, rather it is the cause. Remember! Every nationalism is an idol worshipping religion.'*²⁴⁹

Let us also take a glimpse at the shape of mankind which the thinkers there wished to see, having become discontented with nationalism. A former priest of the Catholic Church, Pierre Teilard de Chardin, has written in his book titled, *Building of the Earth*:

'Now the era of nations has passed by. If we wish to save ourselves from annihilation, then there is only one task needing to be done and that is to end our antiquated prejudices and to arrange for the reconstruction (going beyond different countries and boundaries) of planet earth ourselves. By taking man out of his present lowliness, there is only one path by which to take him towards the heights, and that is the invitation towards the path of humanity. Now it is necessary for human consciousness to go beyond the narrow ties of family, nationalism and race, and take the whole of humanity in its lap.'

The Quran has stated that man commenced his communal life in the form of one Ummah. The solution to his sorrows is only this, that he should once again become a single Ummah. In this connection, Hugh Miller, a professor at California University, writes in his book which he has even titled, *The Community of Man*:

'It is the duty of civilisation that it should once again revive the brotherhood of mankind which existed at the beginning of human life, but which later became temporarily divided into clans, tribes and races. Only that can be called civilisation which unites people with each other. The next step in the evolution of humanity should be to shape such a society which consists of the whole of mankind.'

²⁴⁸ At the present time, in 2023, there are 195 countries in the world. (Ed)

²⁴⁹ Translated from the Urdu quote in the book. (Ed)

This universal humanity, which these thinkers are imagining, what will be the method for shaping it? Regarding this, Gunnar Myrdal, a famous economist from Sweden writes:²⁵⁰

'It is a fact that these higher objectives of ours will only be possible to achieve when such a world comes into existence in which there are no countries defined by drawn borders on planet earth, nor are there self-devised limits by nations themselves. This will be that world in which man will go freely wherever he wishes, live, and be able to achieve joy in every place based on the same conditions. Politically, this will mean one government in the whole world and democratically, it will carry out its business through the mutual consultation of all people.'

And after this, this thinker states that:

'In the religious abode of our soul we imagine the existence of some such concept of a beautiful world in which there is complete harmony and unity'

Regarding that religion whose concept manifests in the abode of the soul of Professor Myrdal, the internationally renowned American expert on psychology, Erich Fromm, writes that the demands of the time require that in the next few centuries such a religion will materialise which will:

*'It will align with the evolutionary phases of man – its greatest trait will be that it will be global and will bring together disintegrated humanity into one unit which will encompass all the knowledge of the east and the west. It will present such a practical code of ethics based on intellect and reasoning which will be in harmony with the scientific disciplines. It will enable man so that he can exist in harmony with the external universe and with his own self. Only that will have the right to become a religion of humanity.'*²⁵¹

If Erich Fromm, or other thinkers sharing his thoughts, had had the Quran in front of them, they would have seen in it that the religion whose manifestation they so desperately desired is already present in this supreme Book in the shape of *Ad-Deen*. But since *Ad-Deen* is not present in a tangible form even among those who claim to have *Eimaan* in this Book, never mind others, hence they are awaiting its appearance. There is no doubt that under the existing circumstances

²⁵⁰ The title of the book is, *Beyond the Welfare State*.

²⁵¹ Quoted from the book, *The Sane Society*, by Eric Fromm.

its manifestation will be according to the demands of the time, and the perception of those possessing vision can see that the wait for this will not be long.²⁵²

In any case, this is that universal *Fasad* about which the Quran had declared that:

Fasad has appeared on land and sea because of the actions that the hands of men have earned... (30:41)

Because of the systems devised by men themselves, *Fasad* has been unleashed all around on land and sea. The Muslim Ummah of that era (i.e. Muhammad and his companions) converted this *Fasad* into *Islah* and it is due to this that the Quran has called them *Musliheen*. It declared that as with *Momineen* and *Kuffar*, *Mufsideen* and *Musliheen* are the opposite of each other (2:220). And together with this, it has also declared that the life of these two cannot be alike:

Shall We treat those who have Eimaan and work deeds of righteousness, the same as those who do Fasad on earth? Shall We treat those who are Muttaqee (guard against evil), the same as those who turn aside from what is right? (38:28)

It can never happen that We make those people who are models of *Eimaan* and righteous deeds equal to those who give a free rein to *Fasad* i.e. that the *Muttaqeen* and *Fujjar*²⁵³ become one and the same. If this became the case, then this will mean that We have created this system of the universe for no purpose (38:27). The end of *Mufsideen* is that of ruin. Contrary to this:

Nor would your Rabb be the One to destroy communities if its members were likely to mend. (11:117)

It can never happen that Allah will destroy that habitation or nation consisting of *Musliheen* – doing this would be injustice and Allah never does injustice:

...never shall We suffer the reward of the righteous to perish. (7:170)

4.42 *Musliheen*

The question which will ultimately come to mind is, who will be these people who will be called *Musliheen*? How can one become like this? The Quran has answered this in two words:

²⁵² 'The season for unveiling has arrived, now my companion will be seen by all!' (This is a couplet quoted by the author here).

²⁵³ *Fujjar* - those who contribute to disunity and disintegration. (Ed)

Those who hold fast by the Book and establish Salaat... (7:170)

Muslibeen are those who remain bonded to the Quran and establish that system in its light which it has termed as being the system of *Salaat*. This system was neither confined to some particular location or era, nor was it impossible to be established. The Quran is Allah's living and eternal Book, and it contains the potential that until the Day of Judgement such a system can be established according to it which can turn the *Fasad* of the world into *Islah*.

Now let us examine another mindset of the *Mufsideen* described in the Quran:

When it is said to them: 'Have Eimaan as the others have Eimaan:' They say: 'Shall we have Eimaan as the fools have Eimaan?' Nay, of a surety they are the fools, but they do not know. (2:13)

In relation to the discussion about *Eimaan*, it has already been noted (see verse (2:3)) that the Quran had demanded all mankind to have *Eimaan*. This also included those people who denied even the existence of Allah, and also those who considered other deities (gods, goddesses or their saintly entities) as possessors of Divine attributes also along with Allah. In addition, the People of the Book (Jews and Christians), who were not only claimants of having *Eimaan* in Allah, they also claimed to have *Eimaan* in the constituents of *Eimaan* which have been noted by the Quran (Allah, *Malaika*, the Books, the messengers and the hereafter). The Quran had declared to all of them that you hold *Eimaan* in these facts according to your own individual concept, but true *Eimaan* is only that which Allah Himself has expounded in the unadulterated *Wahi*, the Quran. This is why they were told:

So if they accept Eimaan as you accept Eimaan, they are indeed on the right path... (2:137)

If these people accept *Eimaan* in the way that you, O *Jamaat e Momineen*, have accepted *Eimaan*, then their *Eimaan* will be acknowledged as being *Eimaan*.²⁵⁴ So much so, that the Quran has even asked those Muslims to accept *Eimaan* whose *Eimaan* does not meet the criterion of the Quran. But in this verse (2:13), where the hypocrites have been asked to have *Eimaan* as other people have accepted *Eimaan*, there is a reference to a particular point in this: none of those other individuals or groups who were asked to have *Eimaan* had this state that they held one thing in their hearts, while they stated some other thing from their tongues.

²⁵⁴ Without the acceptance of *Eimaan* as per the Quran, the desired results from development of the human self cannot be achieved, and as a consequence the system of Deen can neither be understood nor established. (Ed)

Their beliefs were wrong beyond doubt, and were based on ignorance, but there was definitely mutual harmony between their hearts and words. Hypocrites have been told that you should give up your two-faced policy adopted for opportunism and vested interests, and bring about mutual harmony between your heart and tongue. What they said in response merits profound attention. They replied that these people are foolish who openly utter on their tongues what is in their hearts. These are not the demands of self-interest and opportunism, this results in great loss. A wise man is one who thinks about his own interest, and opportunism is its fundamental condition; the person who does not even have any concern for his own benefit and loss, he is called insane. Hence, regarding what we are being told i.e. that we should become like these people, we are not this foolish.

4.43 The Meaning of *Safahat*

Foolishness, stupidity, immaturity in intellect and reasoning, are all included in the meaning of *Safahat*. For example, in Surah *Al-Baqarah* where it is directed that in the matters of business deals, these should be put into writing, it is stated that if the lender who had to dictate this document is *Safeeban*, then his guardian should help to dictate it. From this it becomes clear that *Safahat* means immaturity of the intellect (see also verse (4:5) in which it is stated that you yourself should supervise the matters of those people who are immature in intellect). It is stated in Surah *Al-Baqarah*:

And who turns away from the Millat of Ibraheem but such as those who debase their own selves with folly... (2:130)

Only he who wishes to remain a fool can stay away from the *Millat* of Ibraheem. It is apparent from this that to keep on being foolish, despite possessing intellect and reasoning, is also included in *Safahat*.

As far as this reply of the hypocrites is concerned, that these people who accept *Eimaan* sincerely, they do not even consider their own benefit or loss, we will elucidate this further in verse (2:16). Here, we consider it necessary to draw attention to another reality. It is stated in Surah *Hud* that when Nuh commenced his invitation, the first to accept it was the category of poor people. After this, when he specifically addressed the leaders of the nation and said, 'Look! These people have accepted *Eimaan* in Allah. Come and join with them', in reply they stated:

...Nor do we see that any follow you but the meanest among us, in judgement immature... (11:27)

Those people who have accepted your Deen are just those possessing shallow intellect and reasoning. Even the decision of these people cannot be termed as a decision, so what will be achieved by quoting them as an example. We are the possessors of intellect and wisdom. Our decision can be considered to be based on insight and vision, not that of these people who belong to the lower class of our society.

The mentality of the wealthy class emerges before us from this. The wealthy class becomes trapped in this false deception that not only do we have abundance of wealth, we also have monopoly over intellect and wisdom. Those who do not possess riches are ignorant and of low intellect, none of their utterances are such that they merit any serious attention.

4.44 Criteria for *Fazilat*²⁵⁵

This statement was made by the leaders of the nation and the wealthy class of the era of Noah, but you will see that even today the mindset of this class remains the same. And this mentality is not confined to some particular era, or to some particular nation. Whenever and wherever wealth is declared to be the criterion for respect and status, this mentality will develop among the wealthy class. The Quran changed these criteria. It declared that from the point of view of birth all human beings deserve respect equally (17:70). Rank in society should be based on character and conduct (deeds) (46:19). And according to this criterion, the one who is most deserving of elevated status is the one who lives his life according to the laws of Allah more than everyone else (49:13).

Regarding the response of the hypocrites quoted above, the Quran has only commented that what they state about being possessors of intellect and reasoning, this is based on self-deception, they are not among those who have accepted *Eimaan* sincerely. If they seek a decision from the realm of knowledge and reasoning, then it will inform them that it is not those people who are ignorant and of low intellect, but they themselves who do not even comprehend this much, what effect a duplicitous policy has on the human self, and what the ultimate end

²⁵⁵ *Fazilat* – root is (F-Zd-L). It means elevated status, exceeding in righteousness, abundance of good. (Ed)

of this is. After this, the Quran has described this behaviour of theirs in which it is stated:

When they meet those who have Eimaan, they say: ‘We have Eimaan,’ but when they are alone with their evil ones, they say: ‘We are really with you: We were only jesting.’
(2:14)

When these people meet with the *Jamaat e Momineen*, they tell them we have accepted *Eimaan*, and when they meet their mentors, they say do not think that when we meet those people we have joined with them – not at all, indeed we make fun of them.

4.45 Mockery – Extremity of Low Mentality

The Quran has noted in great detail what kind of reply was received from the opponents to the invitation from the *Anbiya*. Two elements appear to be common in this opposition i.e. denial and ridicule. Denial i.e. declaring an opposing party to be a liar is related to human intellect, but ridicule is related to feelings and sentiments. You lay some ideology before a person: he presents reasons in opposition to your claim, and in this way tries to prove it as being false. This technique will be intellectual, and you will try to convince him through intellect and reasoning alone. But if the situation becomes such that he runs out of any further arguments and begins to ridicule you and mock every statement, then just think what the effect of this will be on your feelings? And can it ever be expected from such an individual that he will accept a correct and reasonable statement? At some places the Quran has mentioned both denial and ridicule together. For example:

...for that they falsified the signs of Allah and held them up to ridicule. (30:10)

And at some places only ridicule is mentioned, and Rasul-ullah is told that this mockery which these opponents employ is nothing new:

And never came there a Nabi to them but they mocked him. (43:7)

Mocked were messengers before you; but their scoffers were hemmed in by the thing that they mocked. (6:10)

The effect of mockery is so severe that on the one hand Allah reassured Rasul-ullah by stating that whatever is happening with you is nothing strange, the malicious natured opponents have done the same thing to every proclaimer of

Haqq; and on the other hand emphasised do not become disheartened as a result of these utterances:

Bear, then, with patience, all that they say... (50:39)

Do not become distressed by whatever these people are saying, but instead persevere and be steadfast in your resolve:

Therefore, patiently persevere, as did all messengers of inflexible purpose; and be in no haste ... (46:35)

Remember!

So persevere with patience, for the promise of Allah is true... (40:77)

All the promises which Allah has made with you, these will be fulfilled, because these are based on fact, therefore remain steadfast on your programme with determination and perseverance:

And have patience with what they say and leave them (move away from them) amicably. (73:10)

Do not entangle yourself with them. This is what they want, that your time and energies are wasted in defending against these words of theirs. By saving yourselves from these thorny bushes, forge ahead in a balanced way; dissociate from them, but do this not by descending to their level – even when you are moving away from them, leave them in an extremely congenial and courteous manner.

After this the Quran states:

Allah will throw back their mockery on them, and give them rope in their trespasses (Tugh'yaan); so they will wander like blind ones (Yama'hoon) (2:15)

This is the literal translation of the words in the verse. We have already discussed in detail under verse (2:7) what the correct interpretation is of such verses in which Allah has related these kinds of matters to Himself. Bring it to mind again and the matter will become evident.

The meaning of the verse under view will be that these people mock the Divine verses and ridicule those who invite towards *Haqq*, and the Law of Requital of Allah laughs at this kind of insane behaviour of theirs. The consequence of this is that despite possessing sight, these people keep on advancing further in the disease of blindness from which they are suffering. It can be expected of those people who dispute some correct matter on the basis of intellect and reasoning that at some point it may become comprehensible to them, and that they may

desist. But those people who, by descending to the lowest emotive level, adopt the path of ridiculing logical matters and take extreme pleasure in this, the question of them ceasing at any point does not even arise. As stated in (2:10), the more the hypocrites make use of hypocrisy, the more their ailment multiplies proportionally. In the same way, it is stated here that the degree to which these people increase in mockery, their blindness keeps on increasing proportionally.

4.46 *Tugh'yaan* (Gross Transgression)

As we proceed, let us consider a fine difference between two roots of the Arabic language. The common meaning of the root *Ain-M-Y* is the continuing loss of eyesight, and the root *Ain-M-He* is used for blindness of vision. This is that condition of a human being in which he does not understand what to do about the matter before him, and because of this he stands confused and bewildered, rooted in a state of extreme anxiety. The word *Yama'hoon* (root *Ain-M-He*) has been used in this verse (2:15).

Here the Quran has stated that the consequence of following this path is also that these people keep on plunging deeper in their *Tugh'yaan*. The root of this word (*Tugh'yaan*) is *T-Gb-Y* or *T-Gb-W*. The basic meaning of this is to exceed a limit or measurement. As long as water remains within a river it is a river, and its outcome is beneficial, but when by breaking its banks it becomes boundless, then it is called *Tugh'yaani* or a flood which is a cause for destruction. Similarly, if human potentials and abilities are utilised by remaining within the limits defined by Allah, then their outcome is always beneficial, but if they contravene these limits then their result is nothing other than destruction and devastation. This is exactly what the Quran has declared about rebellious and tyrannical people in power. For example, when Musa was assigned the task for a new campaign, it was stated to him:

Go you to Pharaoh, for he has indeed transgressed all bounds (Tagha). (20:24)

The people of Thamud have been mentioned earlier, about how much disorder they had created in the economic system. It is stated about them:

*But the Thamud – they were destroyed by a terrible storm of thunder and lightning!
(69:5) See also (91:11)*

In Surah *Al-A'raf*:

To such as Allah rejects from His guidance, there can be no guide: He will leave them in their trespasses, wandering in distraction. (7:186)

Those people who abandon Allah's guidance, they cannot then obtain guidance from anywhere else. They are left in their transgression, so that they keep stumbling about like the blind in search of the path.

4.47 Uphold the Balance of Justice

In Surah *Ar-Rahman* such a guidance has been provided to mankind in just a few words that as man delves deeper into it, his vision becomes entranced. First, it is stated:

And the firmament has He raised high, and He has set up the balance. (55:7)

Reflect on the outer universe: you will observe that this spectacular system is busy functioning with such harmony and precision because there is never any alteration in the balance which has been created in it. And after this it is stated:

In order that you may not transgress (due) balance. (55:8)

This model of the harmonious organisation in the outer universe is presented before you so that you also maintain your society within the obedience of the Divine limits, and in this way do not allow distortion to emerge in its scales of justice:

So establish weight with justice and fall not short in the balance. (55:9)

Establish this balance through justice and fairness, and in this way keep both sides of the scale level - do not attempt to tilt it:

It is He Who has spread out the earth for (His) creatures. (55:10)

The foremost condition for upholding this balance is that the means of production which We have bestowed, they are for the benefit of all creation, keep these open for the good of the whole of creation.

It is clear what is meant from these explanations when the Quran states that those people who create *Fasad* in a society are left bewildered and lost in their *Tugh'yaan*.

After describing the signs and traits of the hypocrites, a summary of this is presented in the next verse as follows:

They are those who have bartered Guidance for error: but their traffic is profitless, and they have lost true direction. (2:16)

These are the people who have purchased misguidance by selling guidance, and this trade of theirs did not deliver any profit to them because the correct path of life itself vanished from their sight. What has been noted in this verse is a matter which we describe on a daily basis and keep saying to each other, but there are great realities and profound concepts hidden within it.

4.48 The Issue of Good and Evil

While examining verse (2:11) in connection with *Islah* and *Fasad* (reformation and disorder), we had stated that the issue of ‘What is’ is very straightforward. But the question of ‘What ought to be’ is such that the human intellect has remained extremely inquisitive and anxious from the earliest era of its consciousness till the present day for the solution of this, but it has not been able to reach any definitive and satisfying conclusion. In the terminology of philosophy, this issue is called the conundrum of Good and Evil, for which the terms *Khair* (good) and *Sharr* (evil) have appeared in the Arabic language and the Quran. Commonly used words for these are benefit and loss. Every individual in the world wishes to enact such deeds which are profitable to him, and refrains from those affairs which are of loss to him. But here again that same question arises, that what is it exactly that is called benefit and what is loss? In other words, having turned full circle, human thought again halts at this initial point, that what is the satisfactory solution to ‘what ought to be?’ -Human beings have established their own individual standards of profit and loss e.g. if a shopkeeper sells something for more than the cost price by two rupees, it will be said that he has profited in this transaction. Here, the standard for measuring profit and loss is his purchase price. This kind of profit and loss is called relative. It is possible that such business circumstances may become created in which this shopkeeper may even feel an advantage or benefit in selling that thing at less than his cost price. From this it is evident that these kinds of relative standards, or scales for profit and loss, keep changing, but human thought is continuing to be adrift in such a maze of profit and loss where these are not relative, but are absolute i.e. absolute good and absolute evil – that which is *Khair* (profitable) in every condition, or is *Sharr* (evil) in every condition. As has already been stated, human thought so far remains unsuccessful in reaching this solution. Allama Iqbal states about modern man:

Entangled in such a way within the convolutions and complexities of his intellect, that till now he has not been able to make any decision about his benefit or loss.

The Quran declares that it is simply not possible for human intellect that it can ascertain absolute good and absolute evil - only the *Wahi* of Allah can do this. In fact, the Quran states that the condition of a man making decisions according to his own intellect and emotions is that:

... but it is possible that you dislike a thing which is good for you, and that you love a thing which is bad for you. But Allah knows, and you know not. (2:216)

At times he dislikes such things which are in fact *Khair* i.e. beneficial, and likes those things and holds them dear, which are harmful to him. And after this it is stated you cannot yourself determine what is in reality beneficial for you, and what thing is harmful, only Allah knows this. In another verse it is stated:

The supplication that man should make for good, he makes for evil; for man is given to haste. (17:11)

The condition of man is that in place of *Khair*, he calls out constantly to *Sharr*, because he happens to be very hasty. He only sees those benefits which are immediately before him and his vision does not extend into the future.

4.49 The True Criterion for Profit and Loss

Why can man not discover the standard for *Khair* and *Sharr* himself? The reason for this is that he is simply incapable of dissociating his decisions from the emotions of his self-interest (whether these are individual or collective), therefore the standard devised or defined by him will be relative, it cannot be absolute. By sidestepping the philosophical argument of *Khair* and *Sharr*, we will state in brief and commonly understood terms that Allah has established the Permanent Values and immutable principles and has passed these on to mankind through *Wahi*. Every one of those actions which is according to these principles and values will be *Khair* or beneficial, that which is contrary to them will be *Sharr* or harmful. For example, an individual accumulates thousands of rupees by telling a little lie or by deceiving, while another individual, by remaining true to the values of honesty and trustworthiness, suffers a loss in his business (as commonly happens in an unjust society). According to the self-devised criteria of men, the former has enacted a very profitable transaction and the latter has suffered a great loss. This decision is made according to the self-devised standards of men. Contrary to this, the decision of the *Wahi* of Allah is that since this action of the first individual is against the Permanent Values, therefore it is *Sharr* i.e. harmful; and the action of

the second individual is *Khair* due to its being in accordance with the Permanent Values of Allah i.e it is beneficial. The question is not about the material benefit or loss in declaring that one is *Sharr* or the other is *Khair*, the question is of the benefit or loss which the self of these individuals incurred. From this the decision about virtue and evil, good and bad, reward and punishment takes place. Those deeds are virtuous, good and righteous through which his self is developed and strengthened; evil, bad and punishable deeds are those because of which the development of his self halts and becomes weakened. It is another matter that with the strengthening of the self, material benefits also become acquired, which is a characteristic of the Islamic system.

We have seen that the hypocrites had said that those people who have *Eimaan* in these truths with honesty and integrity and continue to act on these values, they are foolish. Wise are those who weigh up in which matter their profit and loss lies, without caring for these values (despite still declaring their acceptance verbally). This is, in effect, what occurs in an unjust society and this is what is done. Even today, if an individual states that I wish to do commerce with complete honesty, every business mind will laugh at him, and will say that this person is an absolute fool, he knows nothing about business conventions, he will suffer loss and be ruined.

4.50 They Used to Call Rasul-ullah Possessed

In contrast to them the *Momineen* remain resolute on the Divine values under all circumstances and follow the immutable principles defined by Him, even if they have to suffer unending hardships, many privations, and have to face all kinds of dangers. When this is the conduct of ordinary *Momineen*, just think what the conduct of their Imam (Rasul-ullah himself) was in this respect. Rejecting all worldly temptations, bearing all kinds of hardships with great patience, and willingly embracing all kinds of losses, he used to remain steadfast on his programme. To those who used the criterion of worldly profit and loss, if this path of his was not ‘insanity’, then what else could it have been called? This is why they used to state:

...and they say: ‘Surely he is possessed!’ (68:51)

This was not something that happened to one messenger alone, they used to say the same thing about every messenger:

Similarly, no messenger came to the peoples before them, but they said (of him) in like manner, 'A sorcerer, or one possessed'! (51:52)

Though this was that insanity on which thousands of devotions can be sacrificed!

In the world market these are the only two different criteria for profit and loss in buying and selling which the Quran has explained in the verse under consideration (2:16), and about which it is stated that their commerce provided no benefit to them whatsoever even though they considered that this commerce of theirs had been very profitable according to their own standard. Examples of this buying and selling have been referred to in many different places in the Quran. We are quoting a few of them here.

But in order to reach true understanding, it is essential that you bear in mind the definition of 'profit and loss' which we have explained earlier i.e. the correct criterion for profit or loss is the benefit or detriment to the human self.

4.51 The Human Self

It has already been explained that according to *Kufr*, human life is only the life of this world. Hence profit in this is that from which worldly benefits are gained, and loss is that from which these benefits are not gained. The concept of the human self does not even exist among them, therefore the question of profit or loss simply cannot arise before them.

(As has been noted in the explanation of Surah *Al-Fateha*) according to the Quranic ideology of life, the life of a human being consists of his body and his self. The connection of the body is with the physical or material world, thus for the nourishment and strengthening of the physical body all those benefits are also necessary through which this aim is achieved. When the Quranic system is established then man obtains both these benefits in it. But the Quran states that if, in the confrontation between *Haqq* and *Batil*, such a situation arises where there is a clash or collision between worldly benefit and the benefit of the human self, then at that juncture the benefit of the human self should be preferred over worldly benefit. This is what is called 'preferring the hereafter over worldly benefit' in Quranic terminology.

When Deen adopts the shape of religion, then neither worldly benefits are achieved in it, nor benefits for the human self. This is what the Quran portrays as loss in both this life and the hereafter, and declares it to be an 'avowed loss'.

Following this Quranic concept of profit and loss, let us bring before us the examples presented by the Quran.

In Surah *As-Saff* it is stated:

O you who have Eimaan! Shall I lead you to a commerce that will save you from a grievous penalty? (61:10)

O *Jamaat e Momineen*! Should We signpost you to such a commerce in which there is never any possibility of loss, and in this way protect you from that painful chastisement which is the consequence of loss in commerce. That commerce is this:

That you have Eimaan in Allah and His Messenger, and that you strive (your utmost) in the cause of Allah, with your possessions and your persons: that will be best for you, if you but knew! (61:11)

Accept *Eimaan* in Allah and His Rasul²⁵⁶ i.e. hold total conviction in the truth and supremacy of that system of Allah which is being established through the hands of His Rasul. Strive with all your might for its establishment and to strengthen it. Also, utilise your wealth and possessions for it, and if the need arises, even lay down your lives. If you reflect using your knowledge and insight, you will be able to see how profitable this commerce is:

He will provide you with protection from your errors, and admit you to gardens beneath which rivers flow, and to beautiful mansions in gardens of eternity: that is indeed the supreme achievement. (61:12)

This system will make provision for such resources for you as a result of which you will be saved from these devastations which are always pursuing you. And He will bestow on you such a paradisiacal life in whose freshness and pleasantness there will never be any decline – (metaphorically) homes for living pure lives within perennial orchards. This is a very great success and accomplishment for the one who becomes blessed with it:

And another (favour will He bestow,) which you do love - help from Allah and a speedy victory. So give the glad tidings to the Momineen. (61:13)

Over and above this, another thing which you greatly like i.e. your authority will also be established not only in Arabia but outside of it in other places (33:27). For this you will need the full support and aid of the law of Allah, as a result of which

²⁵⁶ Note that the *Jamaat e Momineen* have been addressed here. They have been told to have *Eimaan* in Allah and His Rasul. An explanation of this has been given under verse (2:2)

the paths of success will keep opening up one after the other before you. O Rasull! Announce to your companions (*Jamaat e Momineen*) this life-giving tiding – this glad tiding that as a result of this both your world and the hereafter will become adorned, and you will also achieve worldly benefits and benefits related to your self too. This is that very trade regarding which it is declared in another verse:

...hope for a commerce that will never fail. (35:29)

This is that commerce in which there can never be any loss.

4.52 Agreement Between *Momineen* and Allah

Commerce is another name for buying and selling. What the form is of this selling and buying in relation to the *Momineen* has been elucidated in Surah *At-Tauba*:

Allah has purchased of the Momineen their persons and their goods; for theirs in return is the garden of paradise... (9:III)

For this commerce there is an agreement between Allah and the *Momineen*, according to which the *Momineen* sell their life and possessions into the Hand of Allah, and in return, Allah provides a guarantee of a life of *Jannat*. Regarding this business transaction, it is stated:

...then rejoice in the bargain which you have concluded: that is indeed the achievement supreme. (9:III)

O *Jamaat e Momineen*! Celebrate this bargain of yours which you have made with Allah, as this is the biggest achievement of life.

An individual enters the domain of Islam by acknowledging the constituents of *Eimaan*, but he becomes a *Momin* according to this pact with Allah to which he has to remain committed all his life. It is according to this agreement that the Quran states about the life of the *Jamaat e Momineen*:

Be sure We shall test you with something of fear and hunger, some loss in goods or lives or the fruits (of your toil), but give glad tidings to those who patiently persevere - who say, when afflicted with calamity: 'To Allah we belong, and to Him is our return'. (2:155-156)

In this there will sometimes be a risk of war and death and other dangers, at times there will be scarcity of food and the means of sustenance, at times loss of possessions and life, at times farmlands and orchards will be destroyed; all this will happen, but ultimately glad tidings of victory and success will be for those

who remain firm footed in this striving; and in this horde of hurdles and difficulties, their sights will not waver even slightly from this focal point that the purpose of our life is the establishment of the system of Allah. We have dedicated our possessions and life for this – let the difficulties come, our every step will be for this very aim (9:59). This alone is our destination and objective, and in every circumstance it is this that we will aim for.

4.52.1 Sacrificing Life in the Path of Allah

And after this it is stated:

They are those on whom (descend) blessings from Allah, and Rahmat, and they are the ones that receive guidance. (2:157) See also (33:43, 33:56)

This is that revolutionary *Jamaat* which is deserving of manifold appreciation and approval from their *Rabb*. Allah and His *Malaika* shower blossoms of *Rahmat*²⁵⁷ on them (send *Darood* and *Salaam* on them). For them are abundances of the means of nourishment and showers of respect and eminence, and that they will reach their intended destination is a certainty. These are those fortunate ones about whom it is stated:

And say not of those who are slain in the way of Allah: 'They are dead.' Nay, they are living, though you perceive (it) not. (2:154)

The one who lays down his life in this striving does not die, he becomes embraced with eternal life. His body surely dies, but his self moves forward. What his life will be like after death, you cannot encompass this at the existing level of your consciousness. At another place it is said:

Think not of those who are slain in the path of Allah as dead. Nay, they live, finding their sustenance in the presence of their Rabb. (3:169)

Do not even let the thought cross your mind that they have died, they are alive in the presence of Allah, and they are also being bestowed with the means of nourishment from Him:

They rejoice in the bounty provided by Allah: and with regard to those left behind, who have not yet joined them (in their bliss), the (martyrs) glory in the fact that on x

²⁵⁷ *Rahmat* - all aspects of nourishment. (Ed)

them is no fear, nor have they (cause to) grieve. (3:170)

Seeing their lofty ranks, with which they are graciously bestowed by Allah, they are very pleased; and their pleasure becomes multiplied as a result of this awareness that, due to their sacrifice, such a society has become established for those companions of theirs who are present in the world in which they are protected from all kinds of fear and grief:

They glory in the Grace and the bounty from Allah, and in the fact that Allah suffers not the reward of the Momineen to be lost (in the least). (3:171)

They are overjoyed with these prosperities and conveniences which they achieve from the blessings of Allah. Also because of the fact that they witnessed with their own eyes that Allah does not waste the endeavour of any possessor of *Eimaan*, He gives full recompense for it.

These are the people for whom there is nothing but profit in this bargain. Whatever they sell, it is connected to this world, which is in any case finite. But whatever they get in return for it is eternal, in a perpetual state of dynamic continuity. These are those people who, even at extremely testing times of clashes, proclaim joyously in a euphoric state, that those laying down life have acquired *Jannat* of the hereafter, and in return for their spilled blood, their companions have achieved establishment in the land – i.e. it materialised in the form of authority and government in this world (24:55). In this way the members of this *Jamaat* attained both strengthening of the self and worldly benefits. Just reflect how profitable is this covenant which is made with Allah – this is Islam, this is *Ad-Deen*.

In opposition to this are those people about whom it is stated:

These are the people who buy the life of this world at the price of the Hereafter: their penalty shall not be lightened, nor shall they be helped. (2:86)

They sell their hereafter for the sake of the benefits of the life of this world i.e. they gain worldly benefits by trampling on the Permanent Values. These are the ones who purchase death by selling life, and in this way remain in a state of permanent *Azāab*, and they have no such helper who can release them from this agony. At another place it is stated:

As for those who sell the covenant which they make with Allah and their own plighted word for a small price, they shall have no portion in the Hereafter... (3:77)

Regarding those people who sell their covenant in which they have bound themselves with Allah, and the oaths which they have taken to adhere to this

covenant in exchange for the benefits of worldly life, the consequence of this is that their self is annihilated and they have no share in the life of the hereafter.

4.53 Those Dealing in Religious Commerce

Priesthood is foremost among those people who indulge in this kind of commerce. These are the ones who are addressed when it is stated:

...nor sell My Signs for a small price; and fear Me, and Me alone. (2:41)

Do not sell Our verses for a paltry price, be fearful of the consequences of your transaction. Their business is such that:

...who write the Book with their own hands, and then say: 'This is from Allah', to traffic with it for a miserable price! Woe to them for what their hands do write, and for the gain they make thereby. (2:79)

They write *Fatwas* from their own side, and then sell these into the hands of people for a paltry price, saying that this is a commandment of Allah, this is Divine *Shariat*. And Allah states about them that whatever they write and give to people is destructive, and what they earn in this way is also destructive.

In these verses (and many other similar verses) Allah has instructed, do not sell Our verses for a miserly price. This does not mean do not accept a small price for these, instead obtain a greater amount - this is wrong.

4.54 Meaning of a Paltry Price

At a number of places the Quran informs us that whatever level of worldly benefits are gained in lieu of the hereafter, they will be miniscule and that gain is very meagre. For example, it is stated in Surah *An-Nisa*:

...Say: 'Short is the enjoyment of this world: the hereafter is the best for those who do right'...(4:77)

Say to them that no matter how great the accoutrements of this world may be, in comparison with the hereafter they are nevertheless trivial, because true profit is profit of the hereafter, and only he acquires it who observes the Divine Values. This has been elaborated even further in Surah *At-Tauba* where it is stated:

O you who claim to have Eimaan! What is the matter with you, that when you are asked to go forth in the cause of Allah, you cling heavily to the earth? Do you prefer the life of this world to the hereafter? But little is the comfort of this life, as compared with the hereafter. (9:38)

This is because the world and its accoutrements, even to the extent of man's (physical) life, is in any case temporary:

...but the provision of your Rabb is better and more enduring. (20:131)

And whatever means of sustenance is obtained according to the Divine values, it is both beneficial and long lasting. And it is obvious that the one who prefers finitude over eternal life ultimately remains in loss, since real loss is that of the human self:

...Truly, those in loss are those who lose their own self... (39:15)

Now we move on to the next verse of Surah *Al-Baqarah*:

Their similitude is that of a man who kindled a fire; when it is lighted all around him, Allah took away their light and left them in utter darkness. So they could not see. (2:17)

In verse (2:16) two points have been described as outcomes. Firstly, that those people (whether they are *Kuffar* or hypocrites) who wish to journey on the path of life without accepting *Eimaan* in the truths of *Wahi*, they cannot discover the correct path to reach the intended destination of humanity. Secondly, that those people who gain worldly benefits by sidestepping the Permanent Values of Allah, this commerce of theirs ultimately proves to be damaging. After expounding these points ideologically, the Quran has explained them using tangible similes according to its distinctive style. These examples have been noted in verses (2:17-20). It is this explanation of them that now comes before us – first, let us discuss the question of the correct path in order to reach the intended destination.

As has already been noted (further details of which will be covered under the topic of 'the story of Adam'), life has reached the human form by passing through evolutionary valleys. Whatever man has received in this automatically from nature are those same basic instincts which have also been bestowed on other animals. When a human child arrives in the world, like every newborn animal it knows instinctively where its source of nourishment lies, and how to obtain benefit from it (i.e. sucking milk at a mother's breasts). There is only one issue facing animals, and that is the fulfillment of physical needs, and for this the guidance of the instincts is sufficient. This is why they have no need for any research, nor any need for inquiry. If man's issue had been confined to just this, then he also would

not have needed to make any endeavours. But his issue is not confined to this – in front of him there are many other scores of important challenges of life - communal and societal problems, political and economic, national and international issues, and extending beyond the physical world there are the numerous conflicts of his inner life, the dissonances between his consciousness and subconsciousness, his multiple psychological conundrums, the development of his self and the question of the future, etc, etc. Discovering the solution for these problems is not within the realm of instinctual guidance.

4.55 Empirical Technique of the Intellect

Apart from instinct, man has also been endowed with the ability of intellect and reasoning. The question is whether man is capable of discovering the solutions to these issues (without the guidance of *Wahi*) based on the intellectual method? We have already covered some aspects regarding this (in connection with the analysis of verse (2:3)). But since the Quran has used an example here to explain the matter, it is appropriate that it should be further elaborated; this is not a repetition, but an elucidation.

The method of the intellect for discovering solutions to the problems of life is through trial and error. When it makes a start in determining the solution to some problem, there is nothing before it - neither a previous model, nor some line drawn on a map – it proposes a path itself and adopts this, and begins to follow it. Thousands of types of dangers appear en route, but it counters these dangers labouring under this conviction that the path it has adopted is the correct one. It is obvious that man has to bear the burden of a variety of hardships in this, rivers of blood flow in this, millions of lives perish – but on the basis of that judgement of the intellect which has been referred to above, he continues to press forward until he reaches a point where he finds out that the direction which he had adopted was erroneous. At that juncture his intellect proposes another direction, and in this way presents a new hypothesis. The history of the human intellect is a telling narrative of these experiments.²⁵⁸ These endeavours of the intellect can be understood through an example. The problem under consideration was that what is the status of different individuals in human society?

²⁵⁸ I have described this account in detail in my book titled, *Insaan nae Kia Socha?* Its study will not be without benefit for thinkers and philosophers.

4.56 The Problem of Slavery

The historical beginning of the direction which was selected by the intellect for the solution of this problem arises from the father of thinkers, the Greek philosopher Plato. He said that human beings can be divided into three categories according to birth. The first is that of holders of reason and insight and those who solve issues, whom he calls Guardians. These people are appointed at the highest levels of society. The second category is that of soldiers; and the third category is that of the public, which is based on farmers, labourers and slaves. According to him, this division of human beings is by birth, and is natural. In other words, he termed slavery as being a necessity of nature. In order to justify this, he used to present this (deceptive) logic that, just as the feet have the lowest status in the human body and their task is to carry the weight of the whole body, this is the same position of slaves in a society. Conferring a better status than this on them is like that of putting a straight shoe on a twisted foot - the degree of pain instead of comfort felt by the walker as a result of this is obvious.

Among the Greek philosophers, after Plato his disciple Aristotle is seen to be at the top of the list. He also used to declare slavery as being a necessity of nature. It is said that he had nineteen slaves and he used to present nineteen reasons in support and justification of slavery.

This matter is from nearly two and a half thousand years in the past. In this very long period of two and a half thousand years, the tales of the efforts which have been made by human intellect to ascertain the mutual status of mankind, and the sufferings which have been faced, will be found written in blood on the pages of history. After these demoralizing and patience testing experiments, man reached this conclusion after centuries that slavery is an unnatural concept and a curse for mankind and there is no justification for retaining it. As a consequence, some years earlier, the UNO declared in its manifesto that this was against fundamental human rights and it was ended in various countries. But if we look at it closely, even from this only one savage and crude form of slavery can be eradicated; its soul, like numerous other evil souls, still continues to roam around in the human world and appears in different garbs and forms. For example, the political slavery of individuals and nations, economic slavery due to need, intellectual slavery due to a wrong educational system, psychological slavery based on propaganda of lies, etc, etc.

The Quran has described this experimental method of the human intellect by the example of a wayfarer losing his way, standing alone in a vast and desolate desert. It is night-time and very dark, there is no lamp there to light his way, nor any idea

of the direction, nor any bell from a caravan, nor any sign of the destination; so much so, that even the light of the stars is completely draped over by the thick veils of the dark clouds. That wayfarer is standing at that point confused and bewildered. He only has a box of matchsticks with him. He lights a matchstick, and light spreads out in a narrow circle. He hardly takes two steps in this when darkness again engulfs the path. Thus he remains stranded there; and moves forward in this way, floundering about in this vast and desolate desert:

...every time the light (helps) them, they walk therein, and when the darkness grows on them, they stand still... (2:20)

When the path is momentarily lit, two steps are taken, then he is rooted to the spot again in the darkness. In contrast to this is the wayfarer whose journey's start is on that very path which Divine *Wabi* has defined, which is brightly lit from here to there. That traveler keeps treading this route with this firm conviction and contentment that his every step is taking him ever closer to his objective, and there is no doubt or suspicion in his reaching there.

4.57 The Quran and Slavery

Just take the example of this slavery itself. After centuries of perilous endeavours, human intellect has now been able to reach this point that all human beings are born as holders of equal rights. Allah's *Wabi* proclaimed right from the first day that:

We have honoured the children of Adam... (17:70)

All human beings from birth are deserving of equal respect and dignity – humanity means deserving of respect as a human being – and:

It is not (possible) that a man, to whom is given the Book, and wisdom, and messengerhood, should say to people: 'Be you my followers rather than of Allah's': on the contrary (he would say): 'Be you followers of Him Who is truly the Cherisher of all... ' (3:79)

No human being possesses this right that he should say to other human beings, become my subjects, not Allah's, even if he has the status of a lawmaker or ruler; so much so, that even if he possesses *Nabuwat* (messengerhood), no human being possesses the right to say this.

Together with this, He also decreed that no man or group of men has the right to govern over other human beings, this right also belongs only to Allah.²⁵⁹ Nor does anyone have the right or authority to deprive anyone of the means of sustenance. With these decrees He put an end to every form of slavery.

It should be made clear that the instructions and commands which have been given in the Quran about slaves and concubines are about those slaves and concubines who were present in the Arabian society at the time of the revelation of the Quran.²⁶⁰ Making them free instantaneously was neither advisable nor possible. For this the Quran provided such instructions as a result of which they either gradually kept becoming free, or became members of free families. In this way, the Quran solved the problem of slaves of that time and closed the door of slavery for evermore. (Details of these matters will be available at their place later).

4.58 Importance of Intellect

This is the difference between the method of reasoning of the intellect and the guidance of *Wahi*. But this does not mean that in the proposed process of *Wahi*, there is no status or place for intellect. The Quran has placed great importance on human intellect and reasoning. According to the Quran, the mutual relationship between intellect and *Wahi* is like that of light from the sun and the human eye. Just as the human eye cannot be of any use without light from the sun, similarly if man shuts his eyes then sunlight also becomes useless for him. It is this very Quranic truth that the renowned Western thinker Locke has expressed in the following words:

*‘He that takes away reason to make way for revelation, puts out the light of both’.*²⁶¹

On this enlightened path of life which *Wahi* has proposed, crossroads appear at every turn where signposts are erected for paths leading to various directions. The task of the intellect is to read these signposts and select the correct path according to them. Or you could understand it as the following: that in a children’s book of arithmetic, different sums are presented, which they solve according to mathematical rules using intellect and reasoning. Then they compare their solution with the answer which is given at the end of the book. If their solution

²⁵⁹ In the system of Deen, men at the helm of affairs will be mere administrators of Allah’s laws, implementing them within the society. They themselves will also be subject to the same laws. (Ed)

²⁶⁰ The words used are *Ma Mala’kat Aimaan o Hum* – what their right hands possess.

²⁶¹ John Locke, *Essay Book*, IV (XIX, 4).

is in accordance with the answer, the child becomes contented that he has solved the sum correctly. Just think that if a child is in possession of such a book in which the section containing sums is present but the section containing answers is missing, then you can imagine the uncertainty he will suffer from after solving a sum regarding whether it is right or wrong. The task of the human intellect is that it should keep harmonising its solution with the answer of *Wabi*, and by declaring that which is in harmony with it as being correct, move ahead. Plato himself has illustrated this method in these words:

‘These (thinkers) will make something, then will end it. They will keep doing this until they bring human pathways in harmony with the Divine paths to the best of their ability.’²⁶²

4.59 Nur (Light) and Zulmaat (Darknesses)

The Quran has everywhere described *Wabi* using the metaphor of *Nur*, and where that *Nur* is absent, it has termed this as being *Zulmaat*. It has stated that regarding the *Momineen*, Allah will:

...from the depths of darkness, He will lead them forth into light²⁶³...(2:257)

Contrary to this, rebellious elements take the *Kuffar* from the direction of light into darkness (2:257). It is based on this that He has declared the Quran as being *Nur*:

...A Book which We have revealed unto you, in order that you might lead mankind out of the depths of darkness into light... (14:1) See also (57:9)

In using the word *Zulmaat* for darkness, two important points have been brought before us. The meaning of *Zulmat*²⁶⁴ is the absence of light i.e. light not being present at a location which should have remained illuminated. Have you observed what a great reality is hidden in this one basic meaning? The things of the universe and animals did not require external light - their guidance is provided by their instinct which exists within them from birth. Hence, it is not stated about them that they are in *Zulmat*, although they do not have the light of the *Wabi* sent down

²⁶² Translated from Urdu as quoted by the author from Plato’s book titled, *The Republic*. (Ed)

²⁶³ This means that without the guidance of the Quran man is in a state of darkness i.e. the human default state is an existence in darkness as there is no inherent guidance within him. Man needs the guidance of *Wabi* to dispel this darkness and bring himself into the light provided by it. (Ed)

²⁶⁴ *Zulmat* is the singular form of *Zulmaat*. (Ed)

from Allah. The place for the *Wabi* sent down by Allah is the human world, because such light has not been kept within a human being. If society deprives itself of the light of *Wabi*, then it will be said about it that where there should have been light, there is none – the word *Zulmat* has been used for this situation.

Secondly, that the Quran has used the word *Nur* in the singular form everywhere, but *Zulmat* is used in the plural form i.e. it has called it *Zulmaat*. This profound but extremely delicate difference has been noted earlier. *Al-Haqq* is always one, but *Batil* appears before us by ever changing into a thousand garbs. The correct answer is one and only one, but there can be thousands of wrong answers. This is why the Quran has used the word *Nur* for *Haqq* or the correct answer, and *Zulmaat* for *Batil* or wrong answers. Along with this, there is also the reality that when light arrives, no matter how many layers of darkness there may be, they vanish. The light of *Wabi* erases the sum total of the flawed outlook or deceptions created by human thoughts and emotions:

And say: 'Truth (Al-Haqq) has arrived, and falsehood perished: for falsehood is (by its nature) bound to perish'. (17:81)

Now we come to the next verse:

The deaf (Summ'un), the dumb (Buk'mun) and the blind (Um'yun), they will not return (to the path). (2:18)

Let us first look at these words. *Summ'un* (root *Sd-M-M*) is that individual whose ears become closed i.e. deaf. Also, that person who does not listen to anyone and keeps insisting on his own opinion, who does not make use of intellect and reasoning. It is stated in Surah *Yunus*:

Among them are some who pretend to listen to you: But can you make the deaf to hear - even though they are without understanding? (10:42)

There are some among them who appear to be always listening to you but their thoughts are elsewhere. O Rasull! Can you make such people hear who, by shutting the doors of intellect and reasoning, place plugs in their ears. The word *Buk'mun* is used for a person who is dumb, or for such an individual who cannot explain a matter clearly, also indicating those people who do not make use of intellect and reasoning. It is stated in Surah *Anfal*:

For the worst of beasts in the sight of Allah are the deaf and the dumb - those who do not use their intellect. (8:22)

Um'yun (root *Ain-M-Y*): though this word is generally used for the one who is blind, it has many meanings - to become misguided, to insist on *Batil*, to keep on

pressing forward blindly without using intellect and reasoning, to become equivocal and doubting in some matter. All these meanings are included in it. It is stated in Surah *Al-An'am* that Rasul-ullah was informed that you should proclaim that:

...I but follow what is revealed to me. Say: 'Can the blind be held equal to the seeing?' Will you then reflect not? (6:50)

Here, too, people not employing their intellect and reasoning are called blind.

Therefore by *Summ'un*, *Buk'mun*, *Um'yun* is not meant those people who are physically deaf, dumb or blind. These mean those people who do not make use of intellect and reasoning. Hence, within Surah *Al-Baqarah* itself, it is stated in another verse:

...Deaf, dumb and blind, they are void of understanding. (2:171)

So when it is stated in the verse under consideration that when those people, by losing the lamp of *Wabi*, stumble around in their self-created darkneses, they are deaf, dumb and blind, then this means that:

... They have hearts wherewith they understand not, eyes wherewith they see not, ears wherewith they hear not... (7:179)

This means that they simply do not employ the ability to reason and comprehend which was bestowed by Allah, and the consequence of this is:

... they will not return (from the wrong) to the right path. (2:18)

4.60 The Meaning of *La-Yarji'un* (Not Returning)

The word *Raj'un* also contains many meanings, and its erroneous meaning which is commonly prevalent among us is the cause for creating misguidedness. But at this point we do not wish to delve into its details (the place for that will come later). It is sufficient to understand here that its meaning is to turn around, return, turn back, to approach, and it has appeared in this verse in these meanings. When Rasul-ullah presented his invitation, his addressees were two kinds of people: one, the People of the Book, who at some point were on *Haqq* but later diverted from this path. They were asked to return to this same *Al-Haqq* which was given to you by your *Anbiya* but which you let go to waste. When they used to spurn this, they would be asked, why do you not return towards *Haqq*? But the second category was that group towards whom *Haqq* had come for the first time. When they

would not come towards *Haqq*, then it was said about them that they do not even approach *Haqq*, they do not pay any attention to it whatsoever. For them, too, the word *La-Yarji'un* is also used. Overall, this should be understood as different people having adopted different wrong paths. An individual standing at a crossroads (rather, a four-way intersection) is calling out, saying that the paths on which you are treading, these cannot take you to the correct destination, come back to this spot, I will inform you which is the correct path. If they do not retrace their steps, then the term *La-Yarji'un* will be used for them too. In any case, the purpose of this is that people are treading on the wrong paths, the Quran is calling out to them over and over to come here, and I will guide you to the correct path. But they do not consider its invitation and bidding as being worthy of their attention, and keep on heedlessly pressing forward like the blind, deaf and dumb (2:18). The next verse to be examined is:

Or (another similitude) is that of a rain-laden cloud from the sky: in it are zones of darkness, and thunder and lightning: they press their fingers in their ears to keep out the stunning thunder-clap, the while they are in terror of death. But Allah is ever surrounding those who are Kafireen! (2:19)

In the introduction to verse (2:17) two points were noted. Now let us discuss the second point of these i.e. this point that these people who gain material benefits of worldly life at the price of the Divine Permanent Values think in themselves that we have been in great profit, but in reality this business of theirs is not profitable, rather it is detrimental. In reality only that business is profitable which is carried out within the remit of the Divine values. By 'business' is not meant merely economic transactions, it means the question of profit and loss within every sphere of life. A discussion about profit and loss, or good and evil, has already been carried out, but for an explanation of the example that the Quran refers to here, further elaboration of this issue is required.

4.61 Further Elucidation of Good and Evil

First understand this, that in the physical universe there is nothing intrinsically good or evil. It is its use which makes it good or evil, or you could say that Allah has created everything for good only, it is man who makes it evil by using it wrongly. Water supports life, the whole of life is dependent on it, it bestows fresh life to dead land, vigorous crops grow due to it, verdant and lush fruit bearing orchards emerge from it. So much so, that water plays a very fundamental role in life and all that is needed for it as the means of nourishment and strength for it. But the same water man stays alive by drinking, he can also die by drowning in it.

That water which flows by remaining within the confines of the banks of rivers, canals, streams and waterways, becomes the cause for the emergence of new life. But when that same water, by bursting its banks, assumes the shape of a flood, it becomes the cause for widespread devastation. Poison²⁶⁵, whose name is synonymous with death, can also be employed at times to save the lives of those dying, if it is used correctly in the form of treatment. This is the same condition of everything in the physical universe and of every force of nature. Allah has created every one of these for *Khair* and *Barkat* (good and benefit). It is their incorrect use as a result of which they become the cause for evil. In other words, good and evil is concealed within everything. The problem to be solved by man is to determine what is the technique through which these can be made a cause for good and benefit, while remaining protected from their harmful aspect: to extract constructive use from them, instead of destructiveness. This is the reason that the Quran has taught the supplication for protection from the evil that exists within things:

From the mischief of created things. (113:2)

In other words, this desire that whatever Allah has created, it does not become evil, it should remain good. If some things had been good and some others bad, then a supplication to remain protected from the evil things would have been taught. Scientific disciplines certainly inform us how beneficial results can be obtained from the things of the universe and how these can become evil. But they cannot tell us how to make man amenable to this - that he uses these for good and does not use these for evil. This is outside the domain of function of these sciences.

4.62 Doctrine of Utilitarianism

Moving beyond the physical or external world, let us look at the human social domain, and see whether human intellect has been able to devise such a system here which can be profitable for the whole of mankind – i.e. its outcome is *Khair* for everyone. Using its own empirical technique, the human intellect has also stumbled around extensively in search of this but has not been able to succeed in this yet. The best doctrine it has been able to discover to date is known by the term Utilitarianism. According to this doctrine, that act is *Khair* as a result of which the maximum number of people gain the maximum benefit i.e.:

²⁶⁵ The author has used the word *Sankhia* here, meaning arsenic. (Ed)

The Greatest Good of the Greatest Number.

From the point of view of this doctrine, the aim is the benefit of the majority. The question is this, are the ones who will be left out not human beings? On what basis will they be deprived of this benefit? They have no answer to this objection.

In the political world it is this very doctrine which personifies democracy. The foundation of democracy is also based on the rule of majority. Here that same question arises again – what crime has the minority committed that not only are they deprived of the right of government, rather they are handed over into the subjugation of other human beings like themselves, who have acquired a majority by some method or another. The human intellect has not yet been able to devise any such system in which this aspect of *Sharr* does not exist; in its every system, whether it is political or economic, *Khair* and *Sharr* exist as an inseparable mixture. In the verse being discussed the Quran has elucidated this very fact via a tangible simile. Let us first examine these words.

Sayyab – root is *Sd-W-B*. A cloud producing rain, but that rain which comes at the precise time, and is in the correct place.

Ra'ad – the thunderclaps from clouds

Barq – the flashing of lightning

Sawa'eq – (plural of *Sai'qa*) crackling of lightning

Khataf – (2:20) to take by snatching

With regard to the geographical conditions in which the Arabs lived and the climatic environment of their lives, for them rain was indeed a blessing. They would thirst for each and every drop of rain and would view even a speck of cloud expectantly. Now just consider that if such a cloud ever appeared there which was laden with water, and burst into a downpour at the precise time and desired place, how this event would have been a source of great joy for them. But in these kinds of clouds, darkness, thunder and the flash and crackle of lightning would also have been encased in them. They generally used to live in tents under the open sky, hence they did not possess those resources by which they could remain protected from the destructions of lightning. Consequently, when these types of clouds would appear, while they would be euphoric at the expectation of the life-giving aspects of the rain, they would also be fearful of lightning strikes. In the words of the Quran:

It is He who shows you lightning, by way both of fear and of hope: and He Who raises up the clouds, heavy with rain. (13:12) See also (30:24)

They were frightened that the flash of lightning does not snatch away their sight (24:43). And that the lightning does not descend upon them in the form of death.

It should be made clear that this does not mean that Allah only made *Barq*, *Ra'ad* and *Saiqa* for destructive purposes – the purpose of their creation is also only for *Khair*. Therefore it is stated in Surah *Ar-Ra'ad*: 'Ra'ad also remains busy in making the programme of Allah deserving of *Hamd* and appreciation' (13:13). We cannot say that science has yet been able to discover with certainty what kinds of constructive aspects are contained within these forces of nature which are seen thundering, flashing and shuddering in the skies.²⁶⁶ As far as those destructions are concerned which materialise as a result of lightning strikes, the Quran has stated briefly:

*...and this lightning comes down according to the law of Mashe'at of Allah
(universal law)...(13:13)*

Hence, if knowledge of this law is discovered, then arrangements can be made for protection from its destructive effects, just as in tall buildings a rod of metal (earthing system) is installed, due to which the destructive electrical wave becomes dormant. In any event, what the Quran wishes to state here is that both constructive and destructive aspects are concealed in these forces of nature; if these are employed according to the law of nature, then the outcome is solely *Khair*, and if this is not done, then their aspect of *Sharr* will overpower. Those who do not have knowledge of these laws devise their own various ways to remain protected. When lightning crackles, by putting their fingers in their ears they become contented that we have secured ourselves from its destructiveness. They do not even understand that even if they have protected their power of hearing in this way, there is also the possibility that a flash of lightning may snatch away their sight (2:20).

Now let us take this example further, and moving away from the external universe, come to human communal life. This world also has two aspects. One aspect is that in which, by harnessing the forces of nature, nations obtain useful work from them. We will explain further on in what different ways the Quran has made this fact clear that, by conquering the forces of nature, what kinds of uses man can obtain from them, provided he acquires knowledge of those laws according to which these forces remain in operation. Whichever nation harnesses these forces in this way, it progresses in the material world. The example of the European nations is in front of us. Those same events of nature which cause destructions in backward (illiterate) nations, Western nations have made such

²⁶⁶ We now know a great deal more about the positive effects of lightning. (Ed)

arrangements so that they may benefit from the profitable aspects of those forces while remaining protected from their devastations.

4.63 Employing the Forces of Nature

This is that aspect of the social system of man where he encounters the (controlled and uncontrolled) forces of nature. The other aspect of this is that where man has to deal with man. Because this system is devised by the intellect and reasoning, what people do is that in their own sphere they utilise these forces for beneficial purposes, but on the basis of these same forces they acquire supremacy and control over other nations. By virtue of this, they apparently gain great power. The degree to which they acquire power and supremacy over weaker nations, they fall into this false delusion to a similar degree that this system of theirs has become strong to such an extent that destruction can never visit them. But the Quran declares that this belief of theirs is predicated on flawed vision and self-deception. The strength of the system relating to human social life is not dependent only on the acquisition of material forces; its deeper connection is also with how those are employed. If these means and resources are utilised for the benefit and welfare of the whole of mankind, then that system becomes strengthened; if these are utilised for their own benefit and for the destruction of others, then this system (no matter how strong it may appear to be) ultimately becomes destroyed. This destruction does not descend all of a sudden, it approaches gradually, and like a creeping fire it appears from those directions which they can never suspect or imagine.

4.64 Destruction of Nations

In Surah *Al-A'raf* it is stated:

Those who reject Our signs, We shall gradually visit with punishment, in ways they perceive not. (7:182)

With regard to those people who falsify Our laws, We lead them gradually, stage by stage, towards hell through those paths about which they have no knowledge and insight. Never mind having insight:

...and there will appear to them from Allah that which they had not taken into account. (39:47)

In Surah *An-Nabl* it is stated:

Those before them did also plot, but Allah took their structures from their foundations, and the roof fell down on them from above, and the punishment seized them from directions they did not perceive. (16:26)

O Rasul! Not only the nation you are addressing, but nations before them also indulged in such intrigues, but these (conspiracies) were never successful. Rather, they led them unwittingly towards destructions, to the extent that the foundations of their structures were uprooted. Their roofs fell upon them in such a way that they were crushed under their weight, and all this took place in such an imperceptible way that their intellect and consciousness could not even fathom how this devastation appeared, and from where.

The Quran has stated above that this destruction comes gradually. When this happens, then instead of these nations reflecting on what fundamental weakness is there in our system as a result of which it is heading towards destructions, they think that these cracks have appeared for no reason and can be filled. But what happens is that they address one crack or bend, and two further cracks appear on the other side. According to the metaphor quoted by the Quran, in order to remain protected from the crackling of lightning they plug their ears with their fingers, and its flash snatches away their sight. The renowned scholar and philosopher of social history, Robert Briffault, writes in his famous book titled, *The Making of Humanity*, that:

*'No system of human organisation that is false in its very principle, in its very foundation, can save itself by any amount of cleverness and efficiency in the means by which that falsehood is carried out and maintained, by any amount of superficial adjustment and tinkering. It is doomed root and branch as long as the root remains what it is'. The Roman empire was, as we have seen, a device for the enrichment of a small class of people by the exploitation of mankind. That business enterprise was carried out with all the honesty, all the fairness and justice compatible with its very nature, and with admirable judgement and ability. But all those virtues could not save the fundamental falsehood, the fundamental wrong from its consequences. Their effects worked inexorably.'*²⁶⁷

He goes on to say:

'What really happens is that the phase of society, the order of things in which disregard of right is habitual and accepted, inevitably deteriorates and perishes. However much

²⁶⁷ R. Briffault, *The Making of Humanity*, p 159.

the individual may temporarily benefit by inequity, the social organism of which he is a part, and the very class which enjoys the fruits of that inequity, suffer inevitable deterioration through its operation. They are unadapted to the facts of their environment. The wages of sin is death by the inevitable operation of natural selection'.²⁶⁸

In the verse being discussed the Quran has explained this very reality using the simile quoted, and has summarised it in a few words by stating that 'Allah is encompassing *Kafireen* from all directions' (2:19). The Law of Requit of Allah is surrounding those who deny truth and *Haqq* and those who transgress, from all directions. They cannot escape from this and go anywhere. Hence, the patching and mending by their sharp intellect cannot save them from annihilation.

And from here we move on to the next verse in which it is stated (the usual translation is as follows):

The lightning all but snatches away their sight; Every time the light helps them, they walk therein; and when the darkness grows on them, they stand still, and if Allah willed, He could take away their faculty of hearing and seeing; for Allah has power over all things.²⁶⁹ (2:20)

Most of the explanation of this verse has been covered under the interpretation of the previous verse, though a few points are such that they require further elaboration - if Allah had wished He could have taken away the physical means of acquiring knowledge of these people i.e. hearing, sight, etc. But He did not do this - doing this was against His law of *Mashe'at*.

The question is, what is this law of *Mashe'at* of His? And why does He not do this?

4.65 Physical Powers are not Removed

When evils become rampant in a society, tyrannical forces of subjugation, exploitation, injustice and corruption become unbridled and life becomes intolerable for the weak and helpless at the hands of powerful people, then in the minds of shallow thinking people this thought repeatedly arises, why does Allah not paralyse those arms which are used to break the bones of the weak and helpless. Why does Allah not turn that hand into stone, which is raised to pierce

²⁶⁸ Ibid, p 262.

²⁶⁹ This is from the translation of the Quran by Abdullah Yusuf Ali. (Ed)

the chest of a victim with a dagger, so that it cannot even move? Why is it that those who indulge in corruption keep enjoying countless prosperities with each passing day. Their wealth, power and affluence keep multiplying. They continue to gain all kinds of material benefits. If Allah closed off their paths to acquiring wealth and power, then they will simply not remain capable of unleashing cruelty and tyranny on the poor. This is what Allah should do, why does He does not do it? In reply, Allah states that doing this is against Our law of *Mashe'at*. He states that We have implemented physical laws in the physical world (laws of nature) and have told human beings that they can harness the forces of nature by acquiring knowledge of these laws. As a result of this, they will gain all kinds of material benefit. In this there is no question of 'Kafir and Momin' (as has already been noted). Whoever makes an effort according to these laws, he will gain material benefit. The question of the differentiation between *Kufr* and *Eimaan* comes after this, when the problem of the use of these benefits and powers gained through physical laws is confronted. Just observe in what an eloquent and appealing style this fact is explained in Surah *Bani Israel*. The Quran states:

If any should desire the immediate (benefits of life), We hasten from it what We will: to whom We intend (as per the Divine laws). Then have We made for them hell, they will burn therein, disgraced and banished. (17:18)

Whoever wishes to achieve the material benefits of the world, We keep conferring these benefits on him according to his efforts and endeavours.²⁷⁰ When he uses these benefits wrongly (this is called *Kufr*), then its outcome is destruction.

4.65.1 Material Benefits can be Acquired by Anyone

Contrary to this it is stated:

But whoever desires (things of) the Hereafter, and strives therefor with all due striving, and has Eimaan – they are the ones whose striving is acceptable (by Allah). (17:19)

The individual who acquires material benefits according to the laws of nature, and then employs these according to the values defined by Us, his effort bears full fruition. As far as physical benefits are concerned, the Quran states:

²⁷⁰ The circumstances and environment of the society in which we live must be borne in mind. A labourer toiling in an unjust society cannot earn enough to get by. (Ed)

Of the bounties of your Rabb, We bestow freely on all - these as well as those: the bounties of your Rabb are not closed (to anyone). (17:20)

Whether *Kafir* or *Momin*, We keep taking both forward according to their efforts and endeavours, both have Our support and favour – We never do this, that We allow one party to advance, and place a barrier before the other so that it cannot go beyond it. Doing this is against our law of *Mashe'at* – material benefits have been bestowed on all human beings from Us as a bounty, and such a situation should never arise in a bounty that it is given to one while another is deprived of it. The means of sustenance have been provided to the whole of mankind as a bounty and this arena is open for all equally. To whatever extent someone makes an effort, he will reap the fruit of this accordingly.

At another place it is stated:

Whoever desires the life of this world and its adornments - We shall fully repay them for their deeds therein, without diminution. (11:15) See also (42:20)

This is that law of *Mashe'at* of Allah according to which He has stated that We do not do this, that We suspend the physical potentials of those who trample on ethical values. Their ruin, despite these abilities, will come about because they transgressed ethical values. This will be that ruin from which their physical potentials and material forces will not be able to save them. These are the forces about which it is stated:

...But of no profit to them were their (faculties of) hearing, sight, and heart and intellect when they went on rejecting the signs of Allah: and they were (completely) encircled by that which they used to mock at! (46:26)

The Quran states that:

...Truly, it is not their eyes that are blind, but their hearts which are within their breasts. (22:46)

This is the reply to this objection of these people that why does Allah not disable the hands of the unjust, why He does not turn their arms into stone? It is stated that:

...And if Allah had willed, He could have taken away their faculty of hearing and seeing...(2:20)

To do this was not at all difficult for Allah but He does not do this, as it is against His law of *Mash'eat*:

...No change will you find in the practice (approved) of Allah. (33:62)

Have you noticed how the Quran has clarified this point? But the commonplace wrong translation of the next part of verse (2:20) creates one such conundrum as a result of which not only does this explanation of the Quran become meaningless, instead a contradiction is also created by it which is against the fundamental claim of the Quran. That part is:

*... for Allah has power over all things.*²⁷¹ (2:20)

These words appear in the Quran frequently and their meaning is taken to be that Allah is All-Powerful; He can do whatever He wishes, and does so. He is not bound by any procedure and law, every matter is dependent on His will, He can do things in whatever way He wants, etc, etc. Have you seen how, according to this interpretation, that whole structure which is raised on the foundations of the Quranic concept of rule of law, comes crashing down. In any case, it is essential that we understand this fully. I have explained these matters in great detail in my book, *Kitab ul Taqdeer*²⁷². It will suffice to provide a summary of it here.

4.66 Domain of *Amr*

Allah was Allah even at that time when this universe had not yet come into existence, and He will remain Allah even at that time when this arrangement will no longer remain. Hence, the domain of Allah is not only this material universe, it lies beyond this as well. The Quran has termed the material universe as the domain of *Khalq* (creation), and the world beyond as the domain of *Amr*, and stated:

...Remember! Both the domains of Amr and Khalq are His worlds...(7:54)

We can understand nothing regarding the domain of *Amr*, all we can conceive of is that Allah's intention is in operation there, or we can say that it is related to the programme of Allah's department of planning. This is where the decisions are made about what the universe of *Khalq* should be like. This is where the creative programme of Allah is organised and laws for this are devised. Regarding this, it is the decree of Allah that:

...for Allah carries out all that He intends and plans. (22:14)

At another place it is stated:

²⁷¹ The Arabic words of the verse are: *Inn'Allah Ala Kulli Shai-in-Qadeer.* (Ed)

²⁷² The Book of Destiny.

... for your Rabb is the (sure) accomplisher of what He plans. (11:107)

In Surah *Al-Maida* it is stated:

...for Allah does command according to His Will and plan. (5:1) See also (22:18)

He also states:

He cannot be questioned for His acts, but they will be questioned (for theirs).
(21:23)

He cannot be questioned as to why He did it like this: other than Allah, everyone else can be questioned.²⁷³

This is the domain of Allah's *Amr*. When, according to His *Amr*, this material universe came into existence, then here His *Amr* adopted another position. It is stated:

...And the command of Allah is a decree determined (*Maqdur*). (33:38)

The root of this word *Maqdur* is *Q-D-R*, the basic meaning of which is estimation or a scale. The meaning of *Qadartu Shai'a* is: I measured that thing, I estimated it. The meaning of *Qadartu Alai'hi Thaubu* is: I made clothes according to the measurements of this individual. Hence, the basic meanings of *Taqdeer* are for something to become fitted according to an estimation or scale of it. And *Maqda'run* is that scale, model or pattern according to which something is made.

4.67 The Meaning of *Qadr*

In order to make something according to a specific scale and estimate it is necessary to have full control over this thing, hence, *Qadartu Ala Shai'i* means: 'I possessed this power that I could make this thing according to my pattern'. According to these meanings of the root (*Q-D-R*), the meaning of this verse (33:38) will be that Allah's *Amr* transformed into the mould of the pattern; it became bound by the scales established by Allah. In another verse it is stated:

...verily, for all things has Allah appointed a due proportion. (65:3)

These are those scales set up by Allah in the physical world which are called the laws of nature. For example, water is a supporter of life up to an extent, but when

²⁷³ The Law of Requitil points to this fact. See (45:22). (Ed)

it exceeds this limit, it becomes the cause for the death of a human being (as in death due to drowning). This will be called the scale of water. This is what is known as the law of nature. The word law does not appear in the Quran.²⁷⁴ In its place various forms of this root (*Q-D-R*) have appeared. Regarding these scales, Allah has made it clear that:

*For We do determine (according to need); for We are the best to determine (things).
(77:23)*

We have determined these scales or laws, We determine the best scales. Hence, the meaning of *Qadir-un* becomes the One Who determines scales, or the One determining the laws for the material universe. This act of determining scales is called the *Taqdeer* of Allah. For example, it is stated in Surah *Yasin*:

*And the sun runs its course for a period determined for it: that is the decree
(Taqdeer) of the exalted in Might, the All-Knowing. (36:38)*

This is that law (*Taqdeer*) established by that Allah Who possesses knowledge of everything. Though these laws of nature were determined by Allah in the domain of *Amr*, human beings have been given the ability that they can obtain knowledge about them. It is on this basis that these have been termed as those scales which can be discovered (15:21). Conceptually, these scales of Allah are called the words of Allah (*Kalimaat-ullah*) and this is clarified by stating:

...Allah's words (Kalimaat) do not change. (10:64)

And when these same laws of His take practical shape, then these are termed as *Sunnat Allah*. For this, too, it is clarified that:

...you will not find any change in the way (Sunnat) of Allah. (33:62)

Have you seen how in this new stage in the creative programme of Allah what a great revolution has emerged i.e. this revolution that that *Amr* of Allah which is not bound by any code and procedure, having reached the domain of *Khalq*, became *Maqdur* (bound by laws). This means that instead of being omnipotent, it transformed into a law, and then such a law that there can never be any change in it. In other words, Allah has imposed a constraint on Himself by this. With the concept of a 'constraint on Allah' we are overcome in a shudder of fear, but when Allah Himself has stated that We will never bring about a change in these laws, then fear should not affect us. If an Omnipotent Being imposes a constraint on Himself with His full authority and intent, then His doing this does not produce

²⁷⁴ Though the word 'law' as such has not appeared in the Quran, its equivalents have appeared e.g. *Qadr*, *Sunnat*, Allah's Word, Allah's Will, etc. (Ed)

any flaw in His being All-Powerful. Only that constraint is objectionable which is imposed on someone by another individual. The restriction which is imposed on one's own self is called being principled, which is a highly admirable action. When an individual says that I have declared this as my duty that I will not allow any beggar to leave empty handed from my door, then this self-imposed constraint of his is not a shortcoming, but an extremely admirable decision and a commendable step.

4.68 Allah Has Imposed Constraints on Himself

Allah has also used some words in the Quran regarding imposing constraints upon Himself which have also been used at other places with respect to human beings. For example, He has stated:

...He has inscribed for Himself (the rule of) Rahmat²⁷⁵... (6:12) See also (6:54)

And at another place it is stated for human beings:

...fasting is prescribed to you... (2:183)

This means that this duty has been prescribed by Allah on human beings, and in (6:12) Allah has prescribed this duty (of *Rahmat*) on Himself. In Surah *Yunus* it is stated:

...Thus is it fitting on Our part that We should deliver the Momineen! (10:103)

In another verse it is stated:

and it was due from Us to help the Momineen. (30:47)

In many parts of the Quran the words 'Allah's promise' appear i.e. Allah has made this promise and regarding these promises it is stated:

...Never does Allah depart from His promise... (30:6)

4.68.1 These Constraints are Called Laws of Allah

²⁷⁵ *Rahmat* – the root is (R-H-M). The literal meaning of *Rahm* is the uterus of a mother in which the growing child receives all the required means of nourishment freely. This root is related to provision of the means of nourishment without expecting any reward in return. It includes all bounties of life. (Ed)

This means that He has made the fulfilment of His promise mandatory upon Himself. From these, and other verses like these, this reality becomes clear that despite being Omnipotent, Allah has imposed some constraints on Himself which He never goes against. Whatever the words for them may be, in our own language we will only say this, that these are the laws of Allah which He never breaks. For example, He has decreed:

Allah has promised, to those among you who have Eimaan and work righteous deeds, that He will, of a surety, grant them in the land, inheritance (of power)...(24:55)

Allah has made this promise to those people that the ones who accept *Eimaan* in His truths and carry out righteous deeds, He will surely confer on them authority and governance in the world. This means that this is an immutable law of Allah that the outcome of *Eimaan* and righteous deeds will be power in the land. From these explanations it is evident that when Allah declared that We have constrained our *Amr* (choice and intent) according to scales, and that We will never go against these, this does not in any way diminish His being Omnipotent. Hence when it will be said that:

...for Allah has power over all things. (2:20)

this will mean that Allah has determined laws for everything, and through these same laws He maintains such control over them that He does not allow them to contravene these laws.

After these explanations we now return to the verse under consideration (2:20) in which He has stated: 'If We had wished, We could have suspended the physical abilities of these people, but despite having the power to do this, We do not do so' because We have established laws for all matters (2:20). And Our law is also this, that decisions regarding the physical affairs of human beings should be decided according to the physical laws of nature. According to this law, we do not make the tongue of a liar dumb, we do not make the eyes blind of the one looking at someone with an evil eye. Lies and the deceits of the eyes surely produce their effects but for this Our other laws are established.

With this verse, the discussion of these three categories ends i.e. the discussion about *Muttaqeen*, *Kuffar* and hypocrites. After this a new chapter begins.

4.69 Summary of Chapter 4 (Verses 2:8–20)

1. The two categories which have been noted in the previous chapters are either those who openly accept the truth, or those who openly reject it. The third category is of those people who though they say with their tongues that we have conviction in the truths of the Divine code, and that we have *Eimaan* in the Law of Requital and the life of the hereafter, in reality, however, they do not have *Eimaan* in them. (These people either follow their emotions superficially, or are opportunists or chancers; thus their companionship can never be trusted).
2. These people use double dealing against the Divine system and the *Jamaat e Momineen* who are trying to establish it, and in their own minds believe that they are deceiving them, despite the fact that if they used their intellect and awareness, this reality would have become apparent to them that they are indeed keeping their own selves in deception.
3. The consequence of this kind of emotive and duplicitous life is that their hearts and minds lose a healthy balance; and it is Allah's law that the extent to which an unbalanced mind remains engaged in such activities, its balance will keep on distorting to the same extent.
In order to follow through on this path, they have to lie at every step and have to acquire a new face at every turn. Just imagine how much turmoil their life remains in because of this.
4. When they are told not to destroy the system of society by creating imbalances, they retort with great audacity, when do we ever disturb society, we are the reformers. Remember! These are the very people who are the creators of imbalances and devastations. (This is because, how can those who do not have harmony in their inner lives create harmoniousness within society). How strange it is that these people do not even have any realisation how this contradiction between their word and deed exposes their essence and reality.
5. When it is said to them that you should also accept and adopt this code of life just like the members of the *Jamaat e Momineen* accept it as truth and act according to it, they state in reply but they are foolish and not even aware of their own benefit and loss, and discarding those profits available without effort are chasing behind 'being principled'! What, should we also become foolish like them?
Remember! It is these people themselves who are foolish and ignorant about profit and loss, who do not even understand such a basic matter that to abandon permanent benefit for the sake of a temporary advantage cannot be declared as good commerce.
6. The state of their two-faced life is such that when they meet up with those people who have adopted the Divine code, they declare to them that just

like you we also have *Eimaan* in its truth, but when they meet up alone with the leaders of their own party, they say to them, inwardly we are always with you, we only meet these people outwardly, and by making fools of them, we ridicule them.

7. Alas! If they could only have been able to judge this, that how can they ridicule others by making them fools. According to the Law of Requital of Allah, (in the domain of truth) they are ridiculing themselves. Becoming drunk with the intoxication of their own power and authority, these people step on the wrong path and then wander about confounded and distracted, and with every advancing step they become more distant from the destination.
8. These people consider themselves to be very clever, that they are acquiring an illegitimate advantage by deceiving others, and are pleased that our commerce is very profitable. Even though the truth is that there is none as ignorant as them, because in place of the correct path of life they have purchased the wrong path. This commerce of theirs can never be profitable, because by treading on the wrong path they can never reach the intended destination of life.
9. The simile of people following these transitory and immediate benefits of life is like that of a person who lights a fire in the dark of night in a jungle to determine his direction, because of which his surrounding environment becomes illuminated but immediately afterwards this fire becomes extinguished, and in this way Allah's law leaves him astray in darknesses in such a way that he can see nothing. (In other words, the attractions of immediate benefits do cause the eyes to light up once, but after this such a darkness descends that in this not only do the eyes become ineffective, all paths of rational thought become obscured, and man becomes deaf, dumb and blind – i.e. devoid of intellect and reasoning (8:22), and by becoming overwhelmed with emotions, deprived of the ability to differentiate between profit and loss (16:76). And no further possibility of returning to the correct path remains for him.
10. Or the example of their social and economic system, which is established on the basis of their self-created laws, is like cloud bringing timely rain, but together with this intense darkness, thunder, and also the crackling of lightning i.e. the means of destruction combined with the means of sustenance (30:24). These people wish to take advantage of the benefits of the rain but save themselves from the destructions of thunder and lightning. They think that the way to deal with this is to insert their fingers into their ears so that these dreadful sounds can neither be heard, nor do they enter the jaws of death. These naïve people are not even aware that

the destructions of lightning do not just enter via the ears, rather they are spread out all over the environment.²⁷⁶ The Law of Requital of Allah surrounds from all directions that nation which denies realities (7:182, 29:54, 79:36, 82:16).

11. It is possible that these people insert their fingers into their ears because of fear of thunderclaps (and in this way consider in their own minds to be protected from danger), but the flash of lightning takes away their sight i.e. the abundance of the means of sustenance mesmerises their sight in such a way that their eyes are no longer capable of detecting places of danger, or they make an arrangement to forestall one danger and another danger arises unexpectedly from another direction and destroys them (7:182).

In summary, consider it like this, that Our law is such that whichever nation harnesses the forces of nature, it becomes a beneficiary of these (17:18-21). But these profits of those who only have an eye on the benefits of physical life are temporary, while for those who keep the higher values before them, they are durable and permanent (2:201, 11:15, 42:20). You can view the state of the former like an individual standing in a desert on a dark and overcast night having lost his direction. When the path becomes momentarily visible from a flash of lightning, he can take a few steps on it, but when darkness descends again, he remains stranded.

If We had wished, We could have taken away the means of acquiring knowledge (hearing and sight) of these people, and in this way they would simply not have been given the opportunity to benefit from natural means of nourishment, but We did not do this. We have fixed scales and measurements for all matters and have defined laws and codes. Nothing in the universe can go outside of the scope of these scales; We have complete control over them.

²⁷⁶ In other words, they think that if they can close those cracks through which, in their perception, destructions descend, by using tricks of the intellect, then they can remain secure from the consequences of the wrong system of life, but their thought is immature.

5 CHAPTER 5 - *An-Naas* (Mankind)

(Verses 2:21-29)

In the next verse of Surah *Al-Baqarah* the Quran states:

O mankind! Follow your Rabb, who created you and those who came before you, that you may have the chance to become righteous. (2:21)

In the previous chapter three categories of mankind appeared before us – *Muttaqeen*, *Kuffar* and *Munafiqeen*. As has already been noted, the basic address of the Quran is to mankind. The Quran mentions different groups and categories of men in accordance with the differentiation in their character and behaviour, actions and deeds, and qualities and traits; otherwise its message is very much for universal mankind. Its Allah is the *Rabb* of mankind (114:1-3); the proclamation of His messenger is:

Say: O mankind! I am sent unto you all, as the Messenger of Allah... (7:158)

And a giver of glad tidings and a warner to mankind (34:28). His Book is an evidence and perspicuous light for humanity (4:175); and a healing for the psychological ailments of the whole of mankind; admonition, guidance and *Rahmat* on the bestowing of which they should celebrate (10:57-58). The Quran has stated in clear terms that: Remember! durability and sustainability are only for that deed which is beneficial for the whole of mankind (13:17). These are those deeds which are termed as being righteous deeds and virtues. It is as a consequence of these that authority and government is achieved in this world and the springs of paradise in the life of the hereafter.

The aim and objective of the Quran is to connect the whole of mankind into the relationship of universal brotherhood. It states that at the beginning of their communal life men lived in the form of one Ummah, but after that they created mutual differences, and became divided into different tribes, clans, parties and nations (10:19). In order to remove these differences and divisions, the process of heavenly guidance and direction was commenced. The messengers were sent as givers of glad tidings and as warners. They were bestowed with codes of values and laws so that through these they could cause these divided human beings to become one Ummah again. This is the reason given for the lengthy process of Divine guidance and blessing. It is on this very basis that in the verse being discussed *An-Nas* is addressed, and they are told the same thing which was being repeatedly stated through various *Anbiya* i.e. ‘Abandon the laws and regulations

created by men, which, by dividing you into factions, have turned you into enemies of each other, and follow only the Divine laws'.²⁷⁷ The Quran has clearly stated that the purpose of human creation can only be fulfilled if man adopts obedience and compliance to the Divine laws. It is stated in Surah *Ad-Dhariyat*:

*Jinns (nomads) and men are created so that they may serve Me (through laws).
(51:56)*

Men, whether they are living a communal life in towns, or the dispersed life of desert tribes like nomads, can only achieve the purpose of their creation when they adopt the sovereignty of Allah alone.

5.1 The Attribute of *Rabubiyat* of Allah

As has been noted already, the personal name of God in the Quran is Allah, and the remainder are all His attributes which are called *Al-Asma-ul-Husna*. These attributes of Allah have been presented with great frequency and reiteration in the verses of the Quran. This is also a miracle of the Quran that whatever attribute of Allah has been referred to at any place, it fits exactly, and explains the meaning of that verse in a very appealing style. In the verse under view it is stated: 'O mankind, follow your *Rabb*' i.e. here the attribute of *Rabubiyat* of Allah has been portrayed in a prominent way. This is because the subject of the verses under view is itself the universal *Rabubiyat* of Allah. (The meaning of the term *Rabb* has been explained in the first verse (1:1) of Surah *Al-Fateha*. This can be noted there). Its meanings are the one who, while providing nourishment to something, takes it stage by stage from its starting point to its destination of completion – i.e. the provider of the means of nourishment to everything as per its needs.

5.2 *Khalqiyat* and *Razzaqiyat*

But in this verse, after the attribute of *Rabubiyat*, by stating '*Khalaqa'kum*', Allah's attribute of *Khalqiyat* has also been noted; and by stating 'He created you and all those people who have gone before you', it has encompassed the whole of mankind from beginning to end. This means that whatever is about to be said is not confined to the people of any particular era – it will apply from the beginning

²⁷⁷ The meaning of the word *Ibadat* has been explained in detail under verse (1:4) of Surah *Al-Fateha*. Evaluate it once again, because it is the very basis and essence of Deen, and the whole teaching of the Quran revolves around this focal point.

of mankind to the final generations of humanity. In other words, Allah has created them all, and it He Who is responsible for providing the means of sustenance to them. Regarding the process of creation, He has stated:

Follow His laws, Who created you and the generations before you. (26:184)

And together with creation, He has stated about *Razzaqiyat*:

It is Allah Who has created you: further, He has also provided for your sustenance... (30:40)

At many other places it has also been clarified that other than Him there is no creator or sustainer. In Surah *Fatir* it is stated:

O mankind! Call to mind the grace of Allah unto you! Is there a creator, other than Allah, to give you sustenance from heaven or earth? There is no god but He: how then are you deluded away from the truth (this evidence based fact)? (35:3)

At another place this reality and proclamation are repeated, and it is stated:

...Say, 'Bring forth your argument, if you are telling the truth!' (27:64)

If you are truthful in your claim that there can be another creator, sustainer and *Ilah*, then present your logic and evidence to back this up. Without evidence, no claim can be acknowledged by Us.

This mutual connection of creation and *Razzaqiyat* is very profound and merits great attention. It is obvious that human beings or some other creation did not request Allah that He should create them in the world. He has produced creation according to some comprehensive and all-embracing programme of His. Just consider, would it not have been injustice and wrong that a creation was produced but the resources and means on which their life and nourishment was dependent was not created! Allah did not do this. He first of all created these means of sustenance and nourishment, and then following this, that creation for whom this wherewithal was required. Experts on earth and life sciences inform us that air, water, light, heat and the potential to grow in the earth came into existence first, and living creation came into being afterwards. This is the fundamental link between creation and *Razzaqiyat*. Furthermore, when we see in the world that a vast proportion of creation remains deprived of the means of sustenance, this is a consequence of the non-Divine distribution of sustenance, which men have held back in their own hands, otherwise Allah had created these resources and means for the *Rabubiyat* of the whole of mankind on an equitable basis. Details of these matters have been covered under verse (2:3). Further elaboration of these will also appear in the verses being discussed and even following this, wherever

there is a discussion about the economic system. This was, however, just an additional point; the real subject here is *Takhleeq* (creation).

The root of *Khalqun* is (*Kh-L-Q*) – the fundamental meaning of this is to measure with a view to making something, or cutting it, to estimate it, to assess its proportion and balance, to make one thing from another thing. Hence, *Khalqun* will mean to estimate something, to trim and refine its outline, and then to make it with style and form so that its proportion and balance remains absolutely precise.²⁷⁸ In other words, by giving ever new combinations to different elements, to keep creating new things from them – an explanation of this point will appear later.

5.3 *Khalq and Amr*

In Surah *Al-A'raf* it is stated:

...*Is it not that Khalq and Amr belong to Him? ... (7:54)*

Be aware that *Khalq* and *Amr* are both for Allah, no other is a partner with Him in these. These are what are commonly called the domain of *Amr* and the domain of *Khalq*. There was an introductory discussion about *Amr* at the end of the previous chapter in connection with Allah being Omnipotent. The mutual connection between *Amr* and *Qadr* was explained there. The word *Al-Am'ratu* was used for the path in a desert that was flagged by placing small stones. From this respect its basic meanings are sign, marker, or direction. This word is also used for numerous other meanings but here we will confine ourselves to only these meanings because the subject under our consideration is related to these. It is clear that when some manufacturer forms the intention to make something, then first of all a concept or idea about it emerges in his mind. Then he thinks and reflects about its different aspects: he envisages the possibility of its creation and constitution. And when he has ascertained all these matters theoretically, then he takes a step to make this thing in a tangible form. In the creative programme of Allah this first stage is called the domain of *Amr*. In this, all matters related to the thing which is going to become created are decided 'conceptually'. You can call this the planning stage. But in the creative programme this stage is so important and intrinsic that without it nothing can be brought into existence, and if this stage is established with certainty, then it is as if that thing has come into existence.

²⁷⁸ From this the meanings of *Khulq* and *Ikblaq* which are formed from this same root also become clear.

For the expression of this fact, these kinds of verses appear in the Quran in various places e.g.:

...when He makes a decision about an *Amr*, then He says to this *Amr*, 'Be', and then it becomes. (2:117)

We can know nothing about what this *Amr* of Allah is and how it is carried out; our knowledge is restricted to the domain of *Khalq*, and cannot advance beyond this. The renowned philosopher, Pringle-Pattison, states that it is a limitation of the English language that there is only one word 'creation' in it for *Takhleeq*, even though it was necessary that there should have been separate words for these two stages of *Takhleeq* (invisible and tangible). In the Arabic language these separate words (*Amr* and *Khalq*) exist, and the Quran has used these for this very purpose.²⁷⁹ If there had been a little more vastness in this philosopher's vision, then he would have seen that the Quran has used not just two separate words for these stages, it has used three words, and the three stages in the creative programme to which these words point are very important and fundamental (this third word, or stage, will appear before us later).

When the stage of *Amr* becomes decided, then after that the stage of *Khalq* appears in front. This is that stage where that thing adopts a tangible form. We have seen the meaning of *Takhleeq* is the creation of a new thing by mixing different elements together in precise proportions. For a human manufacturer or artisan this stage is very easy. When he decides on the plan for something in his mind, those elements by combining which he has to make that thing are already present in front of him e.g. when an architect has prepared a plan for a house, the materials which are necessary for the construction of this house exist in the world – bricks, stones, cement, steel, wood etc. For this, all that remains to be done is that he keeps on constructing the house according to the plan by mixing these constituents (essential items) in specific proportions and quantities. But when Allah began His creative programme, this was not the situation. He prepared a blueprint of the creation of the universe in the domain of *Amr*. At that time there was nothing in existence like this from which the creation of the universe could take place according to this programme. Here, first of all it was necessary to bring those elements themselves into existence from whose new combinations different things of the universe become created. This is the third stage (or we could say the middle stage) in the creative programme of Allah, which remained obscured from the vision of Pringle-Pattison. This is the stage of bringing into existence tangible fundamental elements from nothing.

²⁷⁹ M. Iqbal, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, p 97.

5.4 *Badi* and *Fatir* (Creating from Nothing)

The Quran has used the words *Bada'a* and *Fata'ra* for this i.e. bringing something into existence for the first time. In Surah *Al-Baqarah* Allah has described Himself as:

To Him is due the primal origin of the heavens and the earth...(2:117)

In Surah *Yusuf* it is stated:

...Creator of the heavens and the earth...(12:101)

In Surah *Al-An'am* this word has appeared as an active participle where it is stated:

...Who created elements of the heavens and the earth from nothing...(6:79)

A detailed discussion about the creation of the universe will come later at its own place. Here we wish to confine ourselves to the basic points of this programme. Following analysis of various things in the universe, Western scientists reached this conclusion that by delving further and further into the constitution of these things, we reach such a point where certain things appear before us that are not compounds of different constituents but are in fact unique. These unique things are called elements. Up until recently these were numbered as being ninety-two, now a few more have also been added.²⁸⁰ It was easy to determine about compound things as to how these came into existence; however, human knowledge has not been able to determine anything about how these elements came into existence. For example, when they analysed a drop of water, they reached this conclusion that it is a compound made up of two parts of hydrogen and one part of oxygen (this is why water is called H₂O). But hydrogen and oxygen are both individual elements; no one can tell how these came into existence.

5.5 From the Atom to Energy

The Greek philosopher Democritus (born 470 BC) is considered to be the founding father of this analytical research into matter. His research was that

²⁸⁰ To date there are 118 known elements. The first 94 elements of the periodic table are found in nature, but the remaining elements (numbers 95 to 118) have only been created in laboratories or nuclear reactors. (As quoted from Google - American Chemical Society). (Ed)

matter is a compound of such tiny particles which cannot be divided further: these indivisible particles are called atoms. This doctrine continued until this era of ours, when scientists made this further discovery that every atom of matter is, in reality, a carrier of positive and negative charge. And when they progressed further, they stated that these electrical waves are nothing more than merely pure energy. If some atom of matter is split, then from this such colossal energy is obtained from which this massive planet earth can be blown up. That which is so well known today as atomic energy or nuclear energy is this same energy.

It should be made clear that neither is the Quran a book of science, nor at the present time is the scientific explanation of matter our topic. All we need to say is whether elements are in a tangible form or are in the form of energy. The real question is, how did these come into existence? The Quran has termed these as *Bada'a* and *Fata'ra* i.e. it has stated that Allah has brought these into existence from nothing. Beyond this, it is outwith the grasp of our intellect. Our mind simply cannot comprehend how something can come into existence from nothing. These things are present, and no one can deny their existence. But no one can tell how these came into existence. Even a great scientist like Einstein could only say this much:

*Physical science has now turned all things into movement...the universe which appears to us to be a collection of things, is not a solid entity which is situated in space. This is not a thing at all, instead it is an action, or a structure of events.*²⁸¹

Have you observed how the direction of scientific research is turning from the domain of *Khalq* to the domain of *Amr*. In the meantime, this fact that how did the beginning of this universe of matter take place remains a conundrum. This is that point where Eddington²⁸² is standing perplexed, looking towards the heavens, just like the farmer who ploughs his fields. Ernst Haeckel has written a very interesting book which is titled, *Riddle of the Universe*, in which he writes:

We should acknowledge that we are just as ignorant today about the truth and reality of nature as we were (2400) years earlier in the time of the Greek thinkers, or 200 years previously Newton and Spinoza, or 100 years previously Kant and Goethe were ignorant. We should, in fact, also accept that the deeper we attempt to delve into the depths of this atom from which this universe is formed, and of which matter and energy are properties, the more mystifying it becomes. We can obtain knowledge about its

²⁸¹ Translated from Urdu from the author's book – he has quoted it from *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, by M. Iqbal, pp 40, 53.

²⁸² Sir Arthur Stanley Eddington. (Ed)

*physical forms and their evolutionary stages, but what the actual reality is behind these forms, we can know nothing about that.*²⁸³

Dr. James Arnold Crowther, Professor of Physics, University of Reading, states that:

*‘The system of nature in its profound, fundamental simplicity is so spectacular that in the world of science, the last word on any subject will have to be left to the last man.’*²⁸⁴

As we have said above, the Quran is not a book of science. But along with this, it is also a fact that despite it not being a book of scientific knowledge, wherever and whenever it does point to some fact, then scientific discoveries support it. Regarding the initial elements of the material universe, it has only stated that Allah brought these into existence from nothing, but after this it has informed us how following this initial stage, the creative programme of Allah gives a final form to different things after passing them through various evolutionary stages. At a few places the Quran has stated that:

...It is He Who begins the process of creation (of anything), and then takes it forward by progressing it through stages...(10:4)

The aim from going through these steps is so that precise balance and proportion becomes created in it by trimming its rough edges:

Who has created, and further, given order and proportion. (87:2)

He creates a thing, and then gradually keeps creating balance in it. It is on this basis that Allah has called Himself:

*...the Initiator of creation, the Evolver, the Bestower of forms (or colours)...
(59:24)*

In other words, the One Who initiates creation, then after passing that thing through different steps trimming its imperfections, and in this way giving it a final form. Aristotle had declared form to be the reason for distinctiveness between different things, indeed, he used to call form as the thing. By calling Allah *Al-Musanwar*, the Quran has made this reality clear, how by passing different things of the universe through creative stages, He brings these into a specific form.

5.6 *Ahsan ul Khaliqeen* (the Best of Creators)

²⁸³ Ernst Haeckel, *Riddle of the Universe* p 310.

²⁸⁴ *The Great Design*, p 35.

This trimming and refining by Allah of the things of the universe is the most exquisite manifestation of beautiful proportion and balance. He has stated:

He Who has made everything which He has created into a balanced form... (32:7)

Allah is He Who has conferred the most balanced and proportionate (pristine) form to everything, and it is from this respect that He has declared Himself ‘the Best of Creators’ (23:14) i.e. the Best Creator among creators. Other than the beauty of creation, there is another great point implicit in this: the fact that Allah has called Himself the Best of Creators means that He accepts the existence of other creators too. Although the difference between them and Allah as creators will be that Allah is *Ahsan ul Khaliqeen*, while the other creators are of a lower status. It is obvious that in our known universe only man can be a creator i.e. making ever new things from different material resources.²⁸⁵

5.6.1 *Takhleeq* and *Tauleed* (Creation and Procreation)

It is obvious that there is a fundamental difference between creation and procreation. Man and animals are all of them included in the process of reproduction (i.e. procreation, which is the consequence of sexual mating). If man also remains confined to reproduction alone, then he does not progress beyond the animalistic level. The potential for the ability to create is what distinguishes him from the animalistic level. In other words, the action of animals is reproduction, not creation. Man has control over both procreation and creation. And the act of Allah is not reproduction, it is only creation. This is why at many places He has refuted the false belief of Christianity that Eisa (Jesus) was the son of Allah. Among some of the very comprehensive attributes of Allah counted in Surah *Al-Ikhlās* in the Quran, one among these is also this:

He begets not, nor is He begotten. (112:3)

Neither He Himself is the outcome of the act of reproduction of someone, nor does reproduction take place through Him. So much so, that He Himself is also not a creation, rather is the Creator, and even more than that, He is *Fatir* (He Who creates from nothing). Man can be a creator but cannot be a *Fatir*.

²⁸⁵ Iqbal calls this power to be able to create not only a cause for human eminence, in fact, he does not even consider the man who does not display this trait to be a *Momin*.

5.7 Increases in Creation

This belief about Allah is also false that once He had created the universe, He sat back doing nothing. He has said that His creative action is continuing unabated:

...He adds to creation as per His Will...(35:1)

He keeps on creating ever new additions. The renowned thinker, Ernst Cassier, writes in his book, *An Essay on Man*:

'In connection with the process of evolution, this fact is now emerging that evolution does not mean that original creation is now not occurring; emergent evolution is, in fact, original creation (or new creation). This discovery has resulted in an important change in Darwin's Theory of Evolution.'

And George Gaylord Simpson, an expert on the science of evolution of our time, writes:

*'There appears to be this trend that in the process of evolution in all possible aspects of life, ever new additions are taking place – additions, and then further increase in these additions.'*²⁸⁶

Not only does Allah keep on making ever new additions to his creative universe, He is also not ignorant and uninformed about His creation. In Surah *Al-Mominun* it is stated:

...and We are never unmindful of (our) creation. (23:17)

In this, this belief was contradicted according to which it was thought that the universe is a clock which Allah wound up once, and it is now busily functioning automatically under its own energy, and having fulfilled this duty, Allah has gone to sleep contentedly. Not at all! Allah keeps making ever new additions to creation and is also fully aware of their every state and condition. In order to traverse through evolutionary stages, the things of the universe are in a new state at every moment. They are in need of the means of sustenance according to that stage which Allah continuously provides to them. In Surah *Ar-Rahman* it is stated:

Of Him seeks (its needs) every creature in the heavens and on earth: every day in (new) splendour does He shine. (55:29)

²⁸⁶ George G. Simpson, *The Meaning of Evolution*, p 25.

The condition of different things in the highs and lows of the universe is such that, at every moment, they are in a different state, and in every state of theirs, dependent on Allah for the means of sustenance.²⁸⁷

And since Allah is not ignorant of His creation, hence He keeps meeting every need of theirs in a balanced way.

5.8 Emergence of Life

So far we have talked about the creation of the universe i.e. about this issue that how did the physical or inorganic things of the universe come into existence. We have not discussed the subject of how life emerged on the face of the earth and how man himself came into existence? As far as the beginning of life is concerned, scientific research is also baffled in this regard in the same way that it is astounded and perplexed about the beginning of the universe. Though after the initiation of life, the conclusion to which they have reached about living things is the product of the doctrine of evolution. Although this doctrine originated via the renowned scientist Darwin, after him so many other such changes have taken place in it, that you could say that the name of Darwin can only be taken as a mark of respect. After studying the pages of the manuscript of nature, and from the perusal of buried treasures of ruins, and archaeological signs, the conclusion to which the human mind has arrived at about the emergence of life and the creation of man is noted below in brief words:

1. The beginning of life on the face of the earth occurred from water.
2. By the coming together of water and clay, the first life-cell came into existence.
3. These cells of life, after dividing into different species like the branches of a tree, began growing, developing and spreading in different directions.
4. After phases consisting of thousands of years, different kinds of transformations kept occurring in the forms of these life-cells.
5. After passing through these phases consisting of very long durations, the process of creation reached that destination which is called *Tauleed* (i.e. creation through reproduction). This can be taken to mean animal life.

²⁸⁷ Note also that everything in the universe (including man) is dependent on the *Rabubiyat* of Allah for its nourishment, and the requirements of this *Rabubiyat* keep changing in every era. Not only in every era, but in different circumstances and at different stages the requirements for the nourishment of everything are different. The system of *Rabubiyat* of Allah is that everything should keep on continuously receiving the means of nourishment according to its need. See *Majboom ul Quran* by the author. (Ed)

6. And animalistic life, after passing through similar further very long durations, stage by stage, revealed itself in the human form, and in this way the life of Homo sapiens began.

Since understanding this issue of how life came into existence was beyond the human intellect, this is why the Quran has moved on after only touching upon it to this extent:

... We made from water every living thing. Will they not then have Eimaan? (21:30)

In other words, life is dependent on water for its emergence. It emerged from water itself, and even now where there is no water, the emergence of life there is not possible. After this the Quran has stated that the central control of this original source of life belongs to Allah Himself. In Surah *Hud* it is stated:

...Allah's control is established over the fountainhead of life²⁸⁸...(11:7)

And on this same basis He has stated in various places:

...(The law of) life and death is in the control of Allah...(3:156)

5.9 Human Creation

After this the question which arises is, how did man come into existence? A detailed discussion on this topic will be carried out at that place where the story of Adam comes before us. Here it is sufficient to say that this concept which prevails among us that Allah first of all made a figure out of clay, and by breathing *Rub* into it, gave it a human form, and then by splitting open his rib cage, brought out his consort from this, and in this way, from this very first couple of a man and a woman (Adam and Eve), the process of multiplication of the human race commenced, this concept is not Quranic - it has been borrowed from Judaism. The signs which are available about human creation from the Quran also turn the direction of our thinking towards the doctrine of evolution itself.²⁸⁹ The Quran has informed us that:

²⁸⁸ The verse is translated as 'Allah's *Arsh* is over waters' – and then such explanations are given in its interpretation according to which superstition is seen floating around everywhere, but we do not need to go into details of these.

²⁸⁹ I have discussed these issues in detail in my book, *The Human Self and Iblees*. Those who are interested in this topic will find its study useful. Here, we are confining ourselves to a few references only.

...He began the creation of man with clay (i.e. inorganic matter). (32:7)

When this inorganic matter became mixed with water, then this was the next link in this process of evolution. So it is proclaimed:

... We have created them (human beings) out of a sticky clay. (37:11)

Scientific research tells us that this sticky clay is the same as that which is visible at the bottom of lakes and on the banks of ponds. The very first cell of life came into existence through the amalgamation of water and clay. This cell contains within it all the greatest lofty potentials of life, just as a tiny seed containing a mighty tree within itself is desperate to display its blossom and beauty. This is that very first cell of life which the Quran has termed as *Nafs-e-Wabda* (single *Nafs*).²⁹⁰ For example, it is stated in Surah *Al-Anam*:

It is He Who has produced you from a single Nafs; here is a place of sojourn and a place of departure. We detail Our signs for people who reflect. (6:98)

Allah is He Who has advanced you from a single *Nafs*, then different stages were established for you, so that you remain at one stage for a defined period of time, and then that stage will hand you over to the next stage. Undoubtedly, we have explained our laws of life clearly and explicitly for those who reflect and have vision. This transferring i.e. the time taken to reach from one stage to another stage, lasted thousands upon thousands of years. Referring to these progressive stages, it is stated in another verse:

He has created you by putting you through diverse stages. (71:14)

And at another place:

You shall surely travel from one stage to another stage. (84:19)

While transforming from one state to another state, you will of a surety keep progressing forward on the highway of life, and will also keep rising higher. After passing through these early stages, that destination arrived from which the process of reproduction advanced through sexual mating. The Quran has stated:

²⁹⁰ *Nafs* – root (N-F-S) This word has many meanings: the cumulation of a man's internal and external characteristics; the force which distinguishes between awareness and feeling; knowledge and the mind. The word has also been used by the Quran to mean 'human personality' or 'ego'. For more details, see *Lughat ul Quran*, Vol. 2, pp 615-621. (Ed)

*And made his progeny from a quintessence of the nature of a fluid insignificant*²⁹¹.
(32:8)

And in this way:

Verily We created Man from a drop of mingled sperm, to pass through various stages: (after this) We gave him (gifts) of hearing and sight. We showed him the path: whether he be grateful or ungrateful (rests on his will). (76:2-3)

Surely! We created man from sperm in which different latent potentials exist mixed together. Then we kept turning him through various states until he was made into a hearing, seeing being, possessing intent and freedom to choose. After this we showed him the correct path of life, and left it to his choice whether he wished to adopt it or reject it. In this way, a man possessing choice and intent came into existence. The Quran has summed up this long and vast account in a few lines in Surah *Al-Sajda* when it stated:

He rules (all) affairs from the heavens to the earth: in the end will (all affairs) go up to Him, on a Day, the space whereof will be (as) a thousand years of your reckoning.
(32:5)

The condition of the schemes of Allah is such that they are in a latent form in the heights of Allah's knowledge. When it is intended to bring one of these schemes into action, then it is initiated from the lows of the earth (matter); from here that scheme, traversing its evolutionary stages, keeps rising towards its stage of completion. These stages are traversed in very long durations of time in which each interval, according to your calculation, consists of thousands and thousands (rather fifty thousands) of years (70:4). For example, just take the creation of man itself:

... He began the creation of man with clay. (32:7)

Then:

And made his progeny from a quintessence of the nature of an insignificant fluid.
(32:8)

Then by passing through these various stages, it ended up at that destination where its process of reproduction was declared to be via sperm:

²⁹¹ The word used in the verse is *Mabeen*, which means something weak and not significant, pointing our attention towards the creation of man with all the potentials in a liquid apparently so insignificant, but like a seed possessing all the potentialities of a human being. *Lughat ul Quran*, Vol. 2, p 552. (Ed)

But He fashioned him in due proportion... (32:9)

By trimming and adjusting his imperfections, he was corrected in every manner, and due proportion and balance was created in his limbs and parts (82:7). The Quran states:

...and breathed into him something of His energy. And He gave you (the faculties of) hearing and sight and feeling (and understanding): very few among you utilise these abilities for the correct purpose! (32:9)

In this way, mankind (not any one particular individual of humanity) came into existence through the evolutionary process. This is that mankind which has been told that:

O mankind! Follow the laws of that Allah, Who has created you and is also responsible for your nourishment. Obey His and only His laws so that you remain protected from the lethal dangers of life. (2:21)

5.10 Protection from Lethal Dangers

These ‘dangers which destroy life’ are of two types. Firstly, physical incidents in the universe (earthly and heavenly). As far as these events are concerned, just bring this scene to mind that when human consciousness opened its eyes, what kind of world did it find itself in? Above his head, a great blazing sphere continuously spewing fire i.e. the sun; gigantic intimidating mountains; boundless oceans near and far, and their destructive stormy waves; here and there, tumultuous rivers with indeterminate banks; terrifying jungles extending as far as the eyes could see, and very dangerous beasts and reptiles within these; sometimes the terrifying thunder of clouds; sometimes the petrifying flash of lightning; sometimes killer storms and tornadoes; somewhere the deadly lava of volcanic mountains; at other places the destruction of earthquakes all together - this kind of onslaught of deadly perils all around, and surrounded amid these, the progeny of Adam, without a helper and devoid of means and resources! He began his life from this environment. But note the miracle of ‘So that you become righteous,’ that despite all these hazards, the caravan of mankind kept on progressing forward unabated.

5.10.1 *Yaum e A'lust*

At this juncture, a great reality disclosing verse of Surah *Al-A'raf* spontaneously comes before us – that verse which has been twisted into something else through its customary prevalent meaning. In the idol worshipping *Khanqahs* (abodes of Sufis) you may have specifically heard meaningless words such as ‘*Yaum e A'lus'*, ‘*Mast e A'lus'* or ‘*Qalu Bal'a'* etc. and then those myths based on these foundations which (in the words of Iqbal) have been carved out by non-Arab thinking to adorn these fictional tales. The traditional translation of that verse (7:172) is this:

When your Rabb drew forth from the children of Adam from their loins – their descendants, and made them testify concerning themselves (saying), ‘Am I not your Rabb (Who cherishes and sustains you)?’ They said, ‘Yes! We do testify’. (This), lest you should say on the Day of Judgement: (of this we were never mindful).

The entire meaning of this verse will be explained at its own place. Here it will suffice to say that the Quran has stated to Bani Adam (the progeny of Adam) that you tell Us, that despite all these destructive elements which have been noted above, and other than these external hazards, despite even the destructions caused through human hands themselves – is this moving forward of the human race with continuity living evidence of the *Rabubiyat* of Allah or not? The existence of the human race is a talking picture and glaring evidence of Divine *Rabubiyat*. Enquire about this from a scientist, he will tell you what a great reality the Quran has described in this one verse.

As far as earthly and heavenly incidents are concerned, dealing with them was still easier, because the Creator of the Universe had informed man that:

And He has subjected to you, as from Him, all that is in the heavens and on earth: behold, in that are signs indeed for those who reflect. (45:13)

These were those *Malaiika* (forces of nature) which bowed before ‘Adam,’²⁹² therefore there was no danger from them to the children of Adam. The danger was from that *Iblees* which resorted to rebellion and transgression against him – this is *Iblees*, those emotions of man which go outside of the bounds of *Wahi*. The consequence of these very emotions is those *Batil* communal and social systems of man in which the view expressed in (2:36) comes before us i.e. in which man himself becomes the victim of mankind, and the most destructive *Batil* system in these is the one which is related to economics i.e. is connected with the distribution and utilization of the means of sustenance. And it is towards this very issue that the Quran has drawn our attention in the next verse:

²⁹² Details will be covered under the ‘story of Adam’.

Who has made the earth your couch and the heavens your canopy; and sent down rain from the heavens; and brought forth therewith fruits for your sustenance; then set not up rivals unto Allah when you know (the truth). (2:22)

In order to understand in what manner Allah has organised the system of the universe in order to fulfil His responsibility of *Razzaqiyat*, ponder firstly on this fact, how he has laid and spread out the earth despite it being spherical. *Farsb-un* means to lay out and spread something. In order to understand what the state is of a spherical thing on a small scale, stand on a dome, you will see that despite its great size, there is only a very small fraction which is flat and on which it is possible to sit or lie down. From the point at which its roundness begins, no one can even stand there, he slips and falls down.

5.10.2 *Farsh e Zameen* (Surface of the Earth)

But the state of this spherical earth is strange, not only is it round, it is also busily spinning at an electrifyingly high velocity. The Quran has elucidated this rotation of the earth by stating:

... You sit on it peacefully and it also keeps revolving... (16:15)

Observe its being *Firash-an* from another angle. No matter how spread out the topmost part (its flatness) of a spherical thing may be, if you keep walking on it then such a point will arrive when its roundness will be before you, and after this roundness, that emptiness in which that thing is suspended or held. But the state of the spherical earth is such that travelers start walking from one point on it and after completing a full circle come back to that same point. They neither see any of its roundness, nor that emptiness in which this is suspended. In place of this emptiness, that horizon is continuously visible where (in common language) the earth and sky appear to be meeting. Just reflect, what an astounding form of *Firash-un* this is! The Quran has also called this *Meb'dun* (20:53, 43:10). A soft and level bed is called *Al-Mibaad* i.e. level and very comfortable. It is in connection with this that Allah has declared about Himself:

And We have spread out the (spacious) earth: how excellently do We provide good conveniences. (51:48)

5.10.3 The Heavenly Canopy

In this verse (2:22) where *As-Sama' waat wal Ard* is mentioned, a discussion about *Samaa* will be carried out later. Presently, it will be sufficient to say that each one of those things that is covering us from above is called *Samaa*. Hence, the roof of a house is called *Samaa'un*. The fact is that 'above and below' are, however, relative positions. From this point of view, in relation to something below it, everything which is above that thing will be called *Samaa-un*; and *Ard-un* (below) in relation to something which is above it. Keeping this interpretation in view, bring this verse of the Quran to mind and be entranced! The Quran declares:

It is Allah Who has created numerous heavenly bodies in such a way that each Samaa has one Ard... (65:12)

Samaa-un also means clouds.

5.11 Protected Ceiling

In verse (2:22) being discussed, *Sama'a Bina'an* is stated. The meaning of *Bina'un* is a building i.e. whatever is constructed is called *Bina'un*. Furthermore, it also means a roof. Since the word *Firash-un* (floor) appears for earth, therefore, a more suitable meaning for *Bina'un* will be ceiling. At another place the Quran has stated:

And We made the Samaa (sky) a protected ceiling... (21:32)

In other words, such a roof which is safe in itself and a means of protection for you too. And this point is also very remarkable. Experts in astronomy inform us that what are known as meteors or shooting stars are in reality small pieces (debris) of the solar system, which disintegrate and fall down because of the force of gravity and keep falling down like rain. At times planet earth also comes in front of this rain. Though these are termed small pieces, they are in fact so large and fall down with such force that even if one of these falls on the earth in that state, this planet will become devastated. What we call atmosphere, or *Samaa*, is a cover with a thickness of miles, consisting of layer upon layer of dense gases, which surrounds the whole of planet earth. When these meteors enter this atmosphere, it grinds these stones into dust, and that which we call a shooting star is the shining dust of these. Occasionally some rock from among these misses being ground up and thus falls on the earth, but this is extremely rare, generally they become dust in the atmosphere. If the atmosphere did not grind this shower of rocks into ashes, then life on earth would become impossible. In this way this atmosphere serves as a ceiling for us and we remain protected from the devastations of meteors. As is noted in verse (2:21), 'So that you become *Muttaqee'*

- this and many other forms are created by the system of nature itself, and numerous other forms which man himself can create by harnessing the forces of nature.²⁹³

5.12 Land Cannot be in Personal Possession

Moving forward from the external universe, let us come to the economic world of man, and then observe in it how the self-created system of men destroys it. And how obedience to the laws of Allah protects and guards it from these dangers. The Quran has declared this in a very comprehensive manner, that when rain falls from the skies, crops begin to emerge from the land (2:22). The whole issue about this produce and fruits is condensed into one word when it is stated, *Rizq'an-La'kum* - this is means of sustenance and resources for the nourishment of the whole of mankind. The word *La'kum* in this encapsulates the whole economic system of the Quran in such a way as if the heavens are being reflected in the pupil. First of all, addressing mankind, it was stated, 'Your *Rabb* Who created you...' (2:21), and here it is stated, 'Your *Rizq*'... – the way in which He has created the whole of mankind - not one category of men, a group, a family or a nation – the entirety of mankind. Similarly, the *Rizq* bestowed by Allah is not for any specific group, class, or nation, it is for the whole of mankind.²⁹⁴ *Ard* (land) is a fundamental means of production, and about this the Quran has declared repeatedly and with emphasis that no one can have personal ownership of this – neither any individual, nor any group of individuals. First of all, He has declared at countless places that *Ard* and *Samaa* (the earth and the heavens) are created by Allah alone. So when these are the creation of Allah, the question of anyone else having ownership over it does not even arise. This is why He has stated at numerous places that:

Know you not that to Allah belongs the dominion of the earth and the heavens? And is the cause for the completion of His defined programme... (2:107)

Or the means to fulfil those responsibilities which He has assumed for Himself. 'To Allah belongs all that is in the heavens and the earth'... (2:284) also means this. What is this responsibility of His in order to fulfil which He has created the

²⁹³ Becoming *Muttaqee* includes acquiring knowledge of these phenomena of nature and their potential impact on life on earth. (Ed)

²⁹⁴ This has been discussed under verse (2:3), but due to the subject matter it was considered necessary to provide a further explanation.

earth, and has kept His control over it? Regarding this He has stated in Surah *Hud*:

And there is no creature on earth but its sustenance depends on Allah... (11:6)

He has made this fact clear through cross referencing of the verses (by presenting various aspects) that the earth is for the benefit of the whole of humanity, no one can have personal possession or monopoly over it. In Surah *Ar-Rahman* it is stated:

And the earth He has laid out for the benefit of all creatures. (55:10)

In Surah *Al-A'raf* it is stated:

And We have certainly established you upon the earth and provided for you therein means of livelihood... (7:10)

In another verse:

And We have provided therein means of subsistence – for you and for those for whom you are not providers. (15:20)

This means such a creation whose sustenance is not the responsibility of humans. Men are only responsible for those herds and livestock which are in their control. It is for this that it is stated regarding the produce from the land:

Eat (therefrom) and graze your livestock too... (20:54)

In connection with herds and livestock, bring to mind that incident of the people of Thamud which has been discussed in verse (2:3) in relation to *Anfaaq* i.e. in which it was said to those leaders of that nation, who having taken the pastures and springs into their private possession had halted the entry of the herds belonging to the poor and weak, desist from this practice based on blatant dishonesty. This is the she-camel of Allah, and this is the land of Allah – let the ‘camel of Allah’ roam free so that it can graze in ‘Allah’s land’ (11:64). Who are you to prevent the creation of Allah from being able to benefit from Allah’s land. You have no right to place a barrier on this:

...And never have the bounties of your Rabb been restricted. (17:20)

Those things which are bestowed freely from Allah for the benefit of the whole of creation without any effort or payment, and without any recompense, no one has the right to place a barrier on them – they should remain continuously flowing like water (107:7). They should remain freely available to meet the requirements of every needy one equally (41:10).

5.13 This is *Shirk*

From the above description it is clear that, according to the Quran, the means of *Rizq* (i.e. the earth) are created by Allah, and only Allah is the Owner. Hence, to think that someone else can also be an owner of them will be *Shirk*. This is why in the verse under view the Quran has stated:

...So do not make Nidd of Allah because you know no one can be His Nidd. (2:22)

At this place in the Quran the word *Nidd* has been used for a partner and an equal of Allah. This is also a marvel of the Quran. The meaning of *Nidd* is to be a partner, a colleague, the equal of someone, but there is a condition in this that the two entities which are considered to be the equal of each other, their state should be such that each one of them should draw towards his own self equally. *Indaad* is the plural of this word *Nidd*. Its meaning is clear, that when you accept the private ownership of men over land, firstly, you will accept them to be equals and of the same status as that of Allah, i.e. will accept them as partners (*Shreeke*). And secondly, that the endeavour of each one of them will be to extract the maximum from this fundamental source of *Rizq* and its produce towards himself, and also to deprive others of it. Just reflect that from the system of private ownership of land, whether it is the private ownership of one individual or a group of individuals i.e. some particular tribe, family, clique, party or the nation's private ownership, there cannot be any other outcome than that every owner among these will be in pursuit of accumulating the maximum, never mind if as a result of this the creation of Allah might die of hunger. You will see that wherever the Quran has mentioned these kinds of *In'daad* other than Allah, directly, or indirectly, their connection is with ownership of the means of sustenance and the distribution of *Rizq*. Firstly, just take this verse being discussed, even in this, after the production of *Rizq*, it is stated:

...So do not attribute to Allah equals... (2:22)

In Surah *Ha-Meem* it is stated:

O Rasul! Say to these people, do you do Kufr of Allah? Of that Allah Who created the earth in two stages. The first stage was when it was still so hot that there was no question of the creation of any life and its survival. In the second stage it was made so cool that survival of life became possible, and it also became possible for the means of sustenance to exist and grow for them. This is that Rabb Who is responsible for the Rabubiyat of the world, with Whom you are doing Kufr. (41:9)

What is this *Kufr*? - that you are establishing *In'daad* with Him, and you are giving the means of sustenance created by Him into the ownership of men. In the next verse it is stated:

Allah has created this earth in such a way that through the mountains He established the system of irrigation. The potential has been kept in the soil so that it produces crops. Then through its rotations defined the seasons so that according to these, in different parts of the year, different crops are produced. The aim of this whole system was so that the produce of the earth remains equally available for meeting the needs of all the needy. When this remains within the possession of Allah, then this purpose will keep getting accomplished, but if it is passed into private ownership, then this purpose will not be served. (41:10)

At another place it is stated that when man becomes engulfed in trouble, then he makes supplications to Allah with great devotion and meekness; at that time he does not include anyone else in his prayers. But when he achieves some prosperity, then he forgets everything and starts to adopt *In'daad* - partners and associates - with Allah. Because of this, he goes astray himself and also misguides others. This is stated to be *Kufr* - you will certainly gain some temporary advantage from this, but ultimately you will be ruined and destroyed (39:8). This very fact is described in Surah *Ibraheem* in these words:

*Have you paid attention to the state of those people who displayed *Kufr* towards the *Naima* (favours) of Allah and in this way deposited the caravan of their nation to that market place where there was no buyer for this produce – all their possessions and wealth were wasted. (14:28)*

This is termed the destruction of hell (14:29). This *Kufr* towards the *Naima* (bounties) occurred like this:

*They established *Nidd* of Allah, and in this way, by leaving the path leading to Him, people went astray. Tell them that this path of yours will provide you with sustenance of life for a while, but your final abode will be the destruction of hell. (14:30)*

In Surah *Al-Baqarah* this has been described in even greater detail. It is stated:

It is a fact that in the creation of the heavens and the earth; in the alternation of night and day; and those ships which float about in the oceans and are a means of sustenance for people; in the rain which Allah showers down from the clouds and through it provides new life to a dead land; in those living creatures which move around on earth; in those winds which blow in different directions throughout different seasons, and those clouds which are suspended between earth and space and

remain tied in the chains of the laws of Allah - all these signs and manifestations are evidences indeed of this fact for men of understanding that all these are created by Allah and are in His ownership. (2:164)

But despite this:

There are such people who invent In'daad of Allah, among whom every single one pulls others towards himself, so that his party becomes greater in number and more powerful. But those people who recognise Allah as Creator and Master, no one can draw them towards themselves – if they are pulled anywhere, it is towards Allah. (2:165)

Why do people become lured towards these ‘false gods’? Purely because they have taken the fountainheads of sustenance into their personal ownership, and in this way there is no other option for those who are deprived and destitute than to approach them willingly, and to obey every command of theirs merely for the sake of bread. These are those various ‘gods’ about whom it is stated:

...Remember! If there had been another deity along with Allah, then the situation would have been such that every god would have pulled its own creation towards itself, and in this way some gods among these would have overshadowed other gods. The reality is that true Allah is far above those concepts which these people form in their own minds. (23:91)

This is why they are told:

Do not accept another Ilah (deity) together with Allah; if you do this, then you will end up humiliated and ruined. (17:22)

5.14 *Ilah of Ard (Deities of the Earth)*

The Quran has termed these *Ilah* as deities of the earth (21:21) and by this has pointed to such a reality that as we keep probing into this further, page after page of facts and perspectives will keep on opening up before you. It is stated:

Have they taken other deities for their earthly (economic) life about whom they think that they provide them with the means of sustenance? (21:21)

Say to them that:

Remember! He is Ilah in the outer universe and also Ilah in the life on earth (the social, communal and economic life of men). And unlike earthly gods, this

Sovereignty of His is not based on injustice and tyranny, exploitation and subjugation, but is based on knowledge and wisdom. (43:84)

Here it is stated that accept the one whom you acknowledge as Allah of the outer universe as being in authority and control in your own earthly life, too. It is not known to what extent people could comprehend this supreme reality at the time of the revelation of the Quran, but in our times it has become unveiled before us in such a way that no difficulty remains now in understanding it. As we have already described earlier, our era is that of materialism or secularism. Secularism means denial of God, which is of two kinds – one is that denial of God on which the construct of the ideology of life of Communism and Socialism is based; in other words, right from the start they deny the very existence of God as an entity.

5.14.1 God of the Universe

The other kind is that which is prevalent in those nations which call themselves theists. These are those people who, though they accept a God of the universe, reject him in their earthly life. Whenever God is mentioned to them, they will say that we accept that God has created the universe and this process is in operation and continuing to function according to His established laws of nature. Their *Eimaan* in God is confined to this point. As far as their communal, social, economic and political life is concerned, they say that religion i.e. God, has nothing to do with this. We will run it according to our own choice and desire. This duality i.e. a separate God for the universe (*Ilah ul Asmaa*) and a separate God for human life (*Ilah ul Ard*), has become a pattern for all of today's 'followers of God'. You may remember that when Western nations (Europe and the US) were threatened by the onslaught of Communism, they raised this slogan that, 'God's worshippers in the world! Come and unite to oppose these rejectors of God'. By worshippers of God they meant those who believed in a God of the universe, because none of them believed in a God as being *Ilah* of the earth, nor do they do so even now. Just observe in what crystal clear words the Quran illustrates this fact fourteen hundred years ago! In some verses it has described this reality in brief words, and in others in more detail. In Surah *Luqman* it is stated:

And if you ask them, 'Who it is that created the heavens and earth?' they would surely say, 'Allah'. Say, 'Hamd be to Allah'. But most of them have no knowledge. (31:25)

If you ask them who has created the heavens and the earth, they will say that Allah has created them. Say to them, that this is certainly correct, but you should also know and accept that Allah's *Hamde'at* is not confined solely to the outer universe, it is all-encompassing. This is because:

To Allah belongs all things in heaven and earth; verily Allah is He (that is) free of all wants, worthy of all Hamd. (31:26) See also (39:38)

This is because, whether it is the heavens or the earth, everywhere sovereignty and authority belongs to Him. And it is as a result of this that He is declared to be totally self-sustaining and deserving of *Hamd* and appreciation.²⁹⁵ In Surah *Al-Zukhruf* firstly it is stated:

If you were to ask them, 'Who created the heaven and the earth?' they would be sure to reply, 'They were created by Him, Who is Aziz and Aleem'. (43:9)

After this in five verses (43:10-14) the Quran has described in greater detail all those means of sustenance which are created for the nourishment and development of mankind, and then has stated that the state of these 'worshippers of God' who acknowledge Allah as Creator is such that:

And they attribute some of His servants to being His partners, rather a part of Him. Indeed, man is avowedly ungrateful. (43:15)

They declare the servants of Allah as His companions and associates, in fact, a part of Him. Just think how openly and blatantly man displays *Kufr*. In Surah *Al-Mominun* it is stated:

Say: 'To whom belongs the earth and whatever is in it? (Say) if you know!' They will say (without hesitation), 'To Allah!' Say: 'Then will you not bear this fact in mind in (all aspects of) your life?' (23:84-85)

After this it is stated:

Ask them, Who has central control over this splendid system of the universe? They will reply, it is only Allah Who has control over this. Ask them again, then why you do not observe the laws of Allah? (23:86-87)

Ask them, in whose hands lies the control of the heavens and who is responsible for their sustenance; Who is the one who has central control over this superb and spectacular system of the universe. They will respond, it is only Allah Who has control over these. After this the Quran states:

²⁹⁵ This relates to the system of sustenance. (Ed)

Say, in Whose control and authority is everything of the universe, and who can harm him who comes within His protection; but no one in the universe can protect the one who transgresses against His laws. They will also acknowledge that all this also belongs only to Allah. Then ask them, that after acknowledging these facts, how is it that you are deluded that what I tell you is not the truth? I do not say anything except that His laws, which He has bestowed through Wahi, should also be in control in human life. (23:88-89)

And then after this, it is stated:

It is not that they are somehow confused in this regard. The issue is that We have sent to them that code of laws which is based on Haqq and truth from start to finish, but they refute it since it affects their vested interests, and they wish to limit their godliness only to the extent that control and authority in the outer universe belongs to Allah – because in this way there is no impact on their vested interests. But they do not accept any control and authority of Allah in their communal life. Remember! This kind of acknowledgement of Allah is meaningless, therefore these people are liars when they claim that they accept Allah. (23:90)

In Surah *Al-Ankabut* first of all this basic principle is noted:

And how many are the creatures who carry not their own provision. It is Allah who feeds them and you. This is because He is All-Hearing, All-Knowing. (29:60)

Say to them, just reflect how many living creatures are there in the universe who carry their own *Rizq* around on their backs? They all receive their means of nourishment according to the universal law of *Rabubiyat* of Allah. Therefore if you also establish a similar system among yourselves, then all of you will keep receiving *Rizq* in this way. This is because Allah hears each and every one, and is aware of the needs of each and every one. After this it is stated that the state of these people is such that though they accept the authority of Allah's laws in the outer universe, they wish to keep Him out of the human world. For example:

If you ask them, 'Who has created the heavens and the earth and subjected the sun and the moon (to His law)?' they will certainly reply, 'Allah'. How then are they deluded from the truth (do not follow Wahi in their own system)? (29:61)

The verse after the next one states:

*If you ask these people who it is that showers down rain from the clouds and through this gives new life to land which is dead, in reply they will say that all this is indeed done by Allah, and He does it with great finesse. Say to them that when you acknowledge that wherever there is the law of *Rabubiyat* of Allah operating, wonder and admiration are evoked, then why do you not establish that same law in your*

society? But the problem is that having reached this stage, the emotions of their vested interests will overwhelm their ability to reason and understand, and in this way they will not make use of this ability, otherwise this is not something which is beyond their intellect and reason. (29:63)

Had we wished, we could have quoted here the sayings of renowned scientists, philosophers and thinkers from Europe, from which this fact would have become apparent how they acknowledge this fact that there is a law operating everywhere in the outer universe, and these laws are neither devised by these things of the universe, nor are they established by man. These laws are formulated by that same Allah Who has created these things of the universe.²⁹⁶ After noting these kinds of observations of theirs, we would have also described how adamant they are that there can be no practical role for Allah in their political, social and economic life. They are able to legislate laws themselves for this. The only intrusion of religion that they can accept is that people should worship God in their respective ways, and hold whatever beliefs they wish, provided these do not clash with national laws – this is what is called the secular system.

To our great surprise, this is not something that only European nations say or do, but this same system is prevalent among Muslim nations as well. Among them, too, politics and religion are two separate departments. Religion is connected to beliefs, worship, or at the most is related to personal laws such as *Nikah* (marriage), *Talaq* (divorce), etc. As with European nations, social, economic and political life operate under a democratic system in which the authority to legislate laws is held in the hands of men without any limits and restrictions. Even among them *Ilah ul Ard* is not Allah. The meaning of *Ilah ul Ard* in economic life was that ownership of resources of *Rizq* by anyone could not be declared legitimate. It should remain under the control of the Islamic system for this purpose so that it can generate the maximum *Rizq*, and so that this is distributed in such a way that no one's needs of life remain unmet, and no one accumulates beyond their needs.

5.14.2 *Nidd* of the Era of *Malukiyat*

Under the system of *Batil* these means of *Rizq* remain in the possession of men – though its forms keeps changing, the spirit remains the same everywhere. *Indaad* (gods) other than Allah have been in existence in every era and are also present today. That which is called the era of ignorance and tyranny, there used to be only

²⁹⁶ I have discussed this in detail in my book on this subject titled, *Insaan nae Kia Socha?*

one *Nidd* in it, who was called the King. Thus Pharaoh, the representative of dictatorship, had declared:

O my people! Is it not a fact that the land and the rivers flowing in Egypt are in my dominion? What, are you blind that you do not see this reality? (43:51)

This was an era of ignorance in which though speech may have been abrasive, it was delivered in forthright words. Now we are in a civilised era in which *Indaad* other than Allah do not make frank speeches - now they do not say that this is in our possession, for this they have invented a very duplicitous concept which is called the State.

5.15 The Modern *Nidd* – the State

The concept of a State is so vague that it simply does not appear in a precise form before anyone. No one can tell what a State actually is? Where does it reside? How does it legislate its orders and how does it implement these? No one knows any of this. But there is such a State which like Pharaoh keeps issuing its orders and ruthlessly eliminates those who rebel against it. When Mahmud of Ghazna invaded Somnath²⁹⁷, he was told that the sacred image of a deity erected in the temple has many supernatural powers – it responds to the prayers of people and fulfils their requests. Mahmud was greatly surprised at this, and he went inside the temple and looked around curiously, and he saw that there was a curtain hanging behind the deity which was not immediately visible, and those voices which people thought were coming from the deity arose from behind this curtain. Despite the objections and resistance from the priests, he tore down this curtain. What he saw was that all the high priests were seated behind the curtain and in the name of this deity they did whatever they desired backstage. In modern times the status of the State is also like that of this deity. If you analyse the business of the State, this reality would become uncovered that whatever is being said and done in the name of the State are in actual fact the decisions and orders of the ruling class, which they issue in the name of the State, and compel people to obey them.²⁹⁸ The soul of *Ilah ul Ard* remains the same, it has just adopted a different form, with this difference that at least the deity had a physical form, the idol of the State has no physical form. Instead of erecting it in some temple, it is erected

²⁹⁷ Quoted from Indian history. (Ed)

²⁹⁸ Nowadays it is large corporations with only a few men holding the reins of power, who appear to have taken over this control, and the political class follows their directions. (Ed)

in the idol house of the minds of the public through propaganda.²⁹⁹ The State is decreed to be the owner of the resources of *Rizq*, but it is actually in the hands of those few people who govern in the name of the State. The Quran declares all these men who directly or indirectly keep these in their personal possession as *Andaad-un min-Du'nillab*.

5.16 *Halal and Tayyab Rizq*

After these explanations of the Quran, when verse (2:168) of Surah *Al-Baqarah* comes before us, we are plunged deep in thought. It is stated in this:

O mankind! Eat of the Rizq which is produced by Allah in a Halal and Tayyab manner, and do not follow in the footsteps of Shaitan, for he is your avowed enemy.
(2:168)

Here the Quran has instructed that the *Rizq* dispersed throughout the earth should be consumed in a *Halal* and *Tayyab* way. *Tayyab* means agreeable, pleasant, and the effects of which are very good. Up until this the matter is easily understood, but the question of consuming *Rizq* in a *Halal* manner merits attention. Allah has specifically declared the dead, flowing blood, meat of pigs, and every one of those things which is associated with non-Allah as *Haram* (see (5:3) and other related verses). But in 'what is in the earth' all edible things are included. What does it mean to eat them in a *Halal* manner. Without becoming enmeshed in religious arguments about *Halal* and *Haram*, consider it enough to state at this juncture that the Quran has elaborated *Rizq e Halal* by calling it *Rizq e Kareem* i.e. earning an honest crust. In Surah *Anfal* 'true *Momineen*' is mentioned at two places, and in both places it is stated:

Those are the Momineen, truly. For them are high positions with their Rabb, and protection and noble provision. (8:4) See also (8:74)

Iqbal solved this difficult point by stating:

*O bird soaring high, death is preferable to that Rizq –
That Rizq through which the flight becomes tainted!*

²⁹⁹ Most people participate in elections thinking that the elected political class will represent their wishes, whereas once in power, the political class only follows what they inherit from the system i.e. follows the dictates of the mega corporations. (Ed)

It is evident that for the acquisition of that *Rizq* in which man is dependent and reliant on another human being just like his own self, leaving aside ‘flight becoming tainted’, the power to soar itself becomes paralysed – ‘when you bowed down before others, neither your body nor your self remained yours’³⁰⁰. This is that *Rizq* which is received through the hands of ‘*Andaad-un min-Du’nillab*’.

In contrast to this is that *Rizq* which Allah has called *Rizq* Allah (2:60) or *Rizq-o-Rabbi’ka* (20:131) and declared it to be *Khair-un wa Abqa* i.e. good as well as sustainable. It is obvious that this is that *Rizq* which becomes available through the Divine system and in this no human being is either reliant on another human being, nor is under the burden of his favour. This is that very system in which the situation is such that there is no one who is begging for alms or who remains deprived, there is no slave or master, no ruler and ruled.³⁰¹

Along with declaring the ‘dead, blood and pig-meat’ as being *Haram*, the Quran has also stated that every one of those things which is associated with other than Allah becomes *Haram*. This characteristic is found only in the Divine system because *Rizq* in this is ‘*Rizq* Allah’, ‘*Rizq* of *Rabb*’, not that of any human being. This is why that *Rizq* is *Rizq e Halal* and *Tayyab*.

The beginning of this system had already taken place through the distinguished hands of Rasul-ullah, and it is obvious that according to this the process of removing large tracts of land from the clutches of big landlords had commenced in order to bring these under the management of the State. Some verses of the Quran are a witness to this. In Surah *Ar-Ra’d* this has been noted in an eloquent style. This question would have instinctively arisen in the heart of Rasul-ullah that I do not know whether the system for the establishment of which I am making so much effort will become fully shaped in my lifetime or not. In reply, Rasul-ullah was told:

Whether We shall show you (within your life-time) part of what we promised them or take to ourselves your self (before it is all accomplished), your duty is to make (the message) reach them: it is our part to call them to account. (13:40)

Do not concern yourself regarding whether this will occur during your lifetime or not, it will most certainly take place, but you cannot assign any time for this.³⁰²

³⁰⁰ Quote from Iqbal. (Ed)

³⁰¹ Since rule belongs to Allah through the Quranic values, all human beings become equal, which is a fact. (Ed)

³⁰² This means that Rasul-ullah was not able to foresee any time himself; also, that it was simply unknown, and dependent on events and the Law of Requit. (Ed)

Your responsibility is to continue to keep on passing the message to people; it is Our task to see when its effects become shaped and emerge in front.

5.16.1 Restriction Imposed on Tracts of Land

After this it is stated:

See they not that We gradually reduce the land (in their control) from its outlying borders? (Where) Allah commands, there is none to put back His Command: and He is swift in calling to account. (13:41)

This process has already begun. Do these people not see how those great expanses of land over which these leaders had a monopoly are shrinking to become smaller i.e. are gradually leaving their possession. All this is taking place according to the decisions of Allah against which there can be no appeal. He happens to be very strict in taking account. Now they will never be able to impose their domination over these. This process had already commenced during the eminent lifetime of Rasul-ullah, and reached its completion during the era of Umer Farooq, when the lands of Iraq were placed in the possession of the State instead of in the ownership of individuals. And this is indeed what should have happened. During this era it was Allah alone Who was *Ilah ul Asmaa* and also *Ilah ul Ard*, and none of the *Andaad-un min-Du'nillah* remained as entities. During that period *Rizq* was *Rizq Allah* and everyone received it without begging for it.

5.17 Obedience of Forefathers

After this let us return to this verse in which instruction has been given to consume *Rizq* in a *Halal* and *Tayyab* manner i.e. verse (2:168). This admonition has been decreed in this:

...and do not follow in the footsteps of Shaitan... (2:168)

The meaning of the footsteps of *Shaitan* is made clear a verse later by stating:

When it is said to them: 'Follow what Allah has revealed', they say, 'Nay! we shall follow the ways of our fathers'. What! even though their fathers were void of wisdom and guidance? (2:170)

When they are told to obey this Book which Allah has sent down, they say, no, we will continue to follow in the footsteps of our forefathers. At this the Quran

has only stated this much: no matter whether the correct path of Allah was before them (their forefathers) or that they did not use their intellect and reasoning, they will keep following in their footsteps regardless.

The initial addressees of Rasul-ullah were also the People of the Book, and also those Arabs who were not claimants of being followers of any Divine book. As far as the People of the Book are concerned, though ideologically they claimed that they follow those books which were revealed to their *Anbiya*, those books were not with them in their original form. In any event, in whatever shape those books were with them, they did not obey them in their practical life but instead obeyed that *Shariat* which was continuing to be prevalent among them from their forefathers – exactly the way in which today, despite having the Book of Allah (the Quran) with us, in practical terms we follow that path of our forefathers which is continuing to be prevalent among us. Hence, the first addressees of Rasul-ullah, whether they were People of the Book or other people, all used to follow only their forefathers. These were those people who were told to follow the Book of Allah which was being presented before them, and in reply they would say to Rasul-ullah that you are telling a lie (Allah forbid) when you say that the path to which you invite us is defined by Allah. You wish us to give up the path of our forefathers and start obeying you, we are not prepared to do this. We prefer to obey our forefathers rather than follow you. Their objection was this - where is the proof that what you say is not from your own self, that this is from Allah. And from here we proceed to the next verse. The common translation of this verse is:

And if you are in doubt as to what We have revealed from time to time to Our servant (Abd), then produce a Sura like thereunto; and call your witnesses or helpers, (if there are any) besides Allah, if you are truthful in your claim. (2:23)

5.18 *Abd* of Allah (Servant of Allah)

In addition, Allah has called Rasul-ullah His *Abd*, and not only Rasul-ullah, Allah has called all the messengers His *Abd*. From this it is evident that the *Abde'at* of Allah is the highest pinnacle of the eminence and distinction of being human. For man there can be no higher status than this, and this is because the meaning of Allah's *Abde'at* is that such a human being does not remain obedient, subservient and a subject and slave to anyone in the world; he possesses every kind of freedom – this is the natural outcome of *Abde'at* of Allah. And just think how lofty this status is for whoever attains it. The one who bows at the doorstep of Allah passes dauntlessly through the loftiest doorways of the world holding his head high.

5.18.1 What is the Evidence for This ?

In any event, we were saying that the objection of these people was that where is the proof that whatever you are proclaiming is not the product of your own intellect but is *Wahi* from Allah. If we examine this closely, for the claimant of *Nabuwat* this was a most difficult situation. No one who was not a *Nabi* could see the *Wahi* which he received from Allah in a tangible form. It used to be revealed to the heart of the *Nabi* (2:97). After that he used to repeat the words of *Wahi* through his tongue and used to present it to the people by stating that this is not the product of my own intellect, this is *Wahi* revealed from the direction of Allah:

Nor does he (the Messenger) say (aught) of his own desire. It is Wahi which is sent down to him. (53:3-4)

And their question was, what evidence is there for this? This was the same question that the initial addressees of the Quran would ask, and is also asked today, when it is asked where is the evidence that the Quran is a Book sent down from Allah, and not the outcome of the intellect of Muhammed of Arabia (pbuh). Rasul-ullah used to present this proclamation of his on the basis of intellect and vision and make efforts to have it accepted based on reason and evidence. This is why it is repeatedly emphasised in the Quran to say to these people to make use of their intellect and reasoning, to think using their knowledge and vision, and to study this Book with profound awareness and reflection. As a result this reality will become clear to them that this is not the creation of human intellect. Its fountainhead lies outwith human intellect. But who expends so much hard work and effort, especially those people who have been made not only ease-loving and lazy by following the path of *Tagleed* (the way of their forefathers), but which has also paralysed their abilities to think and reason. They used to demand some tangible sign as proof for it.

5.19 Demand for Miracles

Such a sign which is paranormal and supernatural, and which they could witness in front of them using their physical eyes. Such a sign is termed a miracle i.e. such an incident which leaves the human intellect and reasoning dumbfounded, it simply cannot fathom how did it happen like this. Man, being used to the physical world, demands physical signs as evidence for such kinds of proclamations, and

bows his head before them only. Even today, if you look around in your society, among those people who are called saintly (*Auliya* Allah), first of all very few of them possess knowledge and understanding, and those who do have knowledge and who have also written some books, they are not accepted as being *Auliya* Allah on the basis of their scholarly ability. Magical acts are associated with them, and it is on this very basis that they are accepted as being close to Allah. If you sit in religious cloisters, those who take care of the tombs of these elders, or other devotees, will continually narrate marvel after marvel relating to these elders, and those listening will keep nodding their heads in appreciation. If you read their biographies, there will be no record in it of their scholarliness or intellectual pursuits; even if some is found, it will be sparse, the whole book will be filled with tales of their miracles. Their fame will be due to these same miracles and they will earn a great name on the basis of these. This is the same status of a living *Pir*³⁰³. If any of his extraordinary tricks or magic feats become famous, then witness how people are attracted towards him. People used to expect these kinds of unusual feats from the *Anbiya* as well and these were also demanded from them.

5.19.1 Refusal to Do This

We will discuss miracles later under their respective topic. It is enough to say here that the addressees of Rasul-ullah used to demand this same thing from him, and the reply which used to be received from Allah (through the lips of Rasul-ullah) was that my miracle is this Book alone, apart from this no other miracle has been provided to me. This demand from the addressees and this reply from Rasul-ullah have been reiterated in the Quran at numerous places. A few verses are quoted here. In Surah *Bani Israel* it is stated:

They say: 'We shall not believe in you, until you cause a spring to gush forth for us from the earth.' (17:90)

'Or (until) you have a garden of date trees and vines, and cause rivers to gush forth in their midst, carrying abundant water,' (17:91)

'Or you cause the sky to fall in pieces, as you say (will happen) against us, Or you bring Allah and the angels before (us) face to face' ...(17:92)

³⁰³ *Pir* – someone considered to be saintly or viewed as a holy person. (Ed)

'Or you have a house adorned with gold, or you mount a ladder right into the skies. No, we shall not even believe in your mounting until you send down to us a book that we can read'... (17:93)

Just imagine the scene: these were the demands from their side, and it is obvious that in these demands they were all united, some who were making the demands and the rest waiting in anticipation to see whether this claimant of *Nabumwat* can demonstrate this or not! This was the kind of multitude of addressees, and standing before them was this claimant of messengerhood! And you know what response was received from him (based on *Wahi*) - this reply that:

...(O Rasul)! Say to them that, firstly, this very concept of yours about Allah is false that He will break His own laws of nature about which His decree is that these are immutable, and will manifest such feats which go against nature. And that, too, so that you can accept about this Book that it is not a product of the intellect of this Rasul, and is bestowed from Allah.³⁰⁴ (17:93)

In other words, this is about that Book which at every step urges that you should employ your intellect and reasoning. None of my claims is against knowledge and vision. O Rasul! Firstly tell them this, that this very concept of yours about Allah is *Batil*, and then say to them that this belief of yours is also wrong that the messengers of Allah should be superhuman:

Say: 'I am but a man like yourselves'... (18:110)

5.20 A Human Being Just Like You

This is why neither Allah Himself will manifest such incidents against nature, nor will I be able to display these from my side, as I am a human being, and no man possesses this ability and power that he can break the laws of Allah.

You can imagine how their faces must have fallen after such a reply, and how they will have dispersed grumbling and muttering among themselves. And what must not have passed in Rasul-ullah's gentle heart! These were the instances when these kinds of reassuring messages used to be revealed by Allah for the encouragement and strengthening of the heart of the messenger:

³⁰⁴ This is the translation of the meanings as noted by the author. For a literal translation, refer to any traditional translation of the Quran. (Ed)

Rejected were the messengers before you: with patience and constancy they bore their rejection and their wrongs, until Our aid did reach them: there is none that can alter the words (and decrees) of Allah. Already you have received some account of those messengers. (6:34)

After this the Quran states:

If their spurning is hard on your mind, yet if you were able to seek a tunnel in the ground or a ladder to the heavens and bring them a sign - (what good?). If it were Allah's will, He could gather them together unto true guidance: so be not you amongst those who are swayed by ignorance! (6:35) See also (18:6)

Despite so much opposition from these people, you remain immersed in this concern that why do these people not come to the right path. Why do you torment yourself, whether you suffer a thousand torments or grieve a thousand times, they are still not among those who will come to the right path. If you could do this, that you could reach the other side by digging a tunnel through the earth, or reach the heavens by erecting a ladder, and bring back some miracle from there as a result of which their demand is fulfilled, they will still not accept *Eimaan*.

Along with this, also keep this reality in mind, that is it not the case that the objective of these kinds of demands by these people is solely that everyone should start treading on one path alone - if the objective had been to make everyone follow one path by taking away human freedom to choose and decision making, then where was the difficulty in this for Allah to do this? But this is not what the desire of Allah is. He does not wish to snatch away human choice and intent. Hence, it is simply not His wish that the intellect of people should be suspended by displaying supernatural events, and that they are compelled in this way to tread on a single path. This is the real reason for this. So you, too, should not become like these people (obviously, you will never be like them), who due to being ignorant of the truth, always say why did Allah not make all people alike so that they could all walk on one (correct) path.

5.21 The Real Reason for Opposition

It is stated above that even if this kind of demand from these people is fulfilled, even then they are not among those who are going to accept *Eimaan* - from this there is a sign pointing to another very refined reality. These people were not rejecting this invitation of Rasul-ullah because this matter was not comprehended by them. The underlying reason for their rejection and opposition was that the vested interests of these people would have come to an end as a result of the

system which Rasul-ullah wished to establish - on the basis of equality of humanity, all those prides and prejudices which the Koresh used to consider as a mark of distinction because of their race, that respect and power which was accorded to them due to being the custodians of the Kaaba and on the basis of which they were the focus of reverence of all the Arabs, those economic advantages which they possessed due to the capitalist system – all these would have been snatched away from them with the establishment of the system put forward by Rasul-ullah. This then was the real cause for their opposition. They used to demand miracles just for the sake of argument, this is why the Quran has stated that:

If We had sent unto you a written (message) on parchment, so that they could touch it with their hands, the Kuffar would have been sure to say: 'This is nothing but obvious magic!' (6:7)

In another verse it is stated:

They would only say: 'Our eyes have been intoxicated: Nay, we have been bewitched by sorcery.' (15:15)

It is correct that this particular group of vested interests would not have accepted *Eimaan* as a result of such supernatural events, but the general populace would most certainly have been impressed by them and become followers of the messenger. But as has been stated above, this would have been against the *Mashe'at* of Allah. The *Mashe'at* of Allah is purely this - that the right and wrong paths are placed clearly before people, and then it is left to their choice and intent that they select whichever path they wish. The Quran states:

Say, 'The truth is from your Rabb'. Let him who will, accept Eimaan, and let him who will, reject it... (18:29)

It is because of this that man becomes responsible for his decisions and acts and deserving of their consequences. Neither is that *Eimaan* which is accepted under duress, *Eimaan*, nor is that *Kufr*, *Kufr*. It is on the basis of this that Allah has very clearly stated:

If it had been the Will of your Rabb, they would all have accepted Eimaan - all who are on earth! Will you then compel mankind, against their will, to accept Eimaan! (10:99)

If it was in the Will of Allah that all mankind should be *Momin*, then this was not at all difficult for Him to do. He would have created humanity like this, but this would not have been the path selected through their own decision, this would have been like the path of determinism of animals and things of nature. Therefore

the individual who desires that people are made *Momin* by disabling their intellect and reason, this means that he desires that people should be forced to tread on this path. Allah does not wish this and neither does He do this.

This was that reply which was given in response to the demand for miracles by these people and it was stated that:

Yet they say: 'Why are not signs sent down to him from his Rabb?' Say: 'The signs are indeed with Allah: and I am indeed a clear warner.' (29:50)

And after this it is stated:

And is it not enough for them that we have sent down to you the Book which is rehearsed to them? Verily, in it is mercy and a reminder to those who have Eimaan.
(29:51)

What, is it not enough for them, O Rasul! that Allah has sent down to them such a code of life through you, so that whichever people accept *Eimaan* in its truths, they will receive means of nourishment in the world and they will also benefit with eminence and respect. Is this Book not a sufficient miracle for them, that they keep on demanding physical miracles?

5.22 Eimaan of *Sahaba* (Companions of the Messenger)

Pause here for a few moments and cast your glance towards another reality. Despite the demands of the addressee nation of the messenger, no miracle was brought into manifestation. He announced, and repeatedly announced, that my miracle is this very Book of mine. You should reflect and ponder on it. By pondering on it, they would have seen all those advantages being snatched from them which they possessed at that time. Just imagine that in these circumstances, how high the status was from the aspects of both intellect and character of those people who had accepted *Eimaan* in the messengerhood of Rasul-ullah despite this. From the intellectual point of view because recognising the truth via pure intellect and reasoning in a superstitious environment such as the Arabs fourteen hundred years ago is evidence of what a lofty level of perception. And from the aspect of character because it was clearly evident to them that by accepting this truth, how their benefits will be snatched from them, and what great hardships they will have to face. But not caring in the slightest about this, they accepted this truth and accepted it unreservedly. Can there be any iota of doubt in the strength of the *Eimaan* of these individuals and in the sincerity of their acceptance of the

truth? These were those embodiments of truth and *Haqq* whom Allah has designated as ‘*Momin-e-Haqq*’ (8:4) and rewarded them by declaring:

...well-pleased is Allah with them, as are they with Him ... (9:100)

After this brief diversion, let us return to the main subject. We were saying that it was said to them that my miracle is this Book, is this not enough for you?

5.23 The Challenge of the Quran

When this was said to them, they replied that we accept that you present this Book before us, but our objection is indeed this, that when you state that this Book is not drafted by me, it is instead bestowed from Allah, then we are not prepared to accept this. We can also write this kind of book ourselves:

When Our signs are rehearsed to them, they say: ‘We have heard this (before): if we wished, we could say (words) like these: these are nothing but tales of the ancients.’
(8:31)

Following this response they were told, very well, we accept this. Then this is the decisive issue, that if you can author an equivalent and similar book to this Book, then this claim of ours will be false (Allah forbid) that this is not a Book authored by a human being but is a Book from Allah. Allah accepted their challenge and told His messenger:

Say: ‘If the whole of mankind, including those living in towns and those living in the wild, were to gather together to produce the like of this Quran, they could not produce the like thereof, even if they backed up each other with help and support.’
(17:88)

This Quran is not a collection of tales of the ancients as they allege – it contains immutable facts and eternal guidance covering all aspects of human life which We repeatedly present in different styles and ways so that every matter becomes clarified. Who can formulate such a complete and immutable code of life?

It is stated here that as you have claimed yourselves, demonstrate by producing a whole Quran like this Quran. At another place, by reducing the demand from His side, it is stated:

Or they may say, ‘He forged it,’ Say, ‘Bring you then ten Surahs forged, like unto it, and call (to your aid) whomsoever you can, other than Allah! If you speak the truth!’
(11:13)

Say to them that if you are true in your claim, that this is not a Book of Allah, it is the pronouncement of a human being, then leaving aside a whole Quran, bring forth ten Surahs like it. And leaving Allah, ally yourselves with whoever you wish. Here a figure of ten Surahs is mentioned, and in Surah *Yunus* by reducing this further, it is stated:

Or do they say, 'He forged it'? Say: 'Bring then a Surah like unto it, and call (to your aid) anyone you can besides Allah, if you speak the truth!' (10:38)

And after this the issue was taken to its extremity by stating the following:

Let them then produce a recital like unto it, if they speak the truth! (52:34)

Inform them that if you are true in your claim, then leaving aside even one single Surah, demonstrate this by producing just one reality, just one matter like the realities which are noted in this. How great is the self-confidence about this claim that it is impossible for any human being to produce any example or anything similar to any truth revealed in *Wahi*³⁰⁵ and this was that extreme self-confidence on the basis of which, after accepting their challenge, it was stated:

But if you cannot - and of a surety you cannot- then fear the fire³⁰⁶ whose fuel is men and stones, which is prepared for those who adopt Kufr. (2:24)

Firstly, you will not even have the courage to do this, and even if you made an effort and attempted it, you will fail totally, you will simply not be able to do this. And when this is the position, then is this matter not clear that this Book is based on *Wahi*. This is not the product of this messenger's own thought process, but if even after this you will not accept this, then it is of no matter to us. You yourselves will fall into the hell of destructions.

5.23.1 The Meaning of Surah

Before moving forward, a few points need clarification. In this there is mention of the Surahs of the Quran. From the linguistic point of view, the meaning of the

³⁰⁵ The Quran is not (and cannot be) the product of the human intellect, and it is free from human emotive biases. The thinking process of human beings is intensely influenced by emotions, feelings and desires. The Quranic guidance is from Allah, Who is free from all these human limitations, and this is why anything like the Quran cannot be produced by the human intellect as we do not think like it. (Ed)

³⁰⁶ This fire referred to by the Quran is a reality. Without the guidance of the Quran, the self cannot be developed, and as a consequence, will fail to move on to the next stage of evolution in the hereafter. (Ed)

root (*S-W-R*) is that of height and superiority, eminence and loftiness, elevated status and honour, power and splendour, force and authority. The manifestations of these meanings will appear before us at various points as we move on and they will be elucidated at their respective places. In order to understand the meaning of the word Surah, it is enough to depict that among the Arabs this word was used for that building which, together with splendour, keeps rising up to the sky, floor by floor. Every level of this building was called a Surah. From this respect, the Quran, as a totality, is a structure which, while possessing extreme beauty and magnificence, keeps on gradually rising, and its every level is called a Surah. From this a great fact comes before us.

5.24 The Arrangement of the Quran

You may have heard people often questioning why the Quran was not arranged according to the order in which it was revealed i.e. the verses which were revealed from time to time over a period of twenty-three years should have been written down in the same order, and this Book should have been compiled in that way. I do not wish to become embroiled in any argument with people who say this. I would only like to state that it is a fact that Rasulullah gave the Quran to the Ummah in this compiled form with this order of arrangement.³⁰⁷ I am an ordinary student of the Quran and have been studying it continuously for the last almost forty years, and this fact has become evident to me through my own understanding and insight that the existing arrangement of the Quran is also a miracle. I have found it to be an academic textbook. An academic book is set in such a way that at the beginning its fundamentals and basic precepts are explained in a summarised form, and then slowly, gradually, step by step, an explanation of these fundamentals is given in such a way that its every next chapter carries with it the essence of the previous chapter or chapters, and keeps moving forward as well as ascending, until the reader reaches its last part, when the writings of the whole book embed in his mind with a precise balanced order. This is exactly how I have observed the Quran and how I have understood it. And according to my understanding, I can say with certainty that this arrangement of it is also part of that miracle whose challenge has been put to the world. In order to explain its meanings, this supreme Book of Allah is neither in need of any *Shaan e Nazool*³⁰⁸ nor of any other arrangement. It is self-sufficient, and keeps clarifying itself by

³⁰⁷ I have written about this in detail in my book titled, *The Heavenly Books of the Religions of the World*, which is in Urdu. Further details in this exposition will keep appearing at the corresponding places.

³⁰⁸ The order in which it is claimed to have been revealed. (Ed)

itself. It has called itself *Nur* (Light) and light does not require any external evidence for its claim to brightness.

In any case, if it is reflected on further, then this fact that its arrangement is also from Allah will also appear glaringly before us. Allah has called it His Book, and only that is called a book which is presented in a compiled form. Lack of order, scattered sentences (verses), and disconnected chapters (Surahs) can never be called a book.

Another point is what means do we have today through which we can say with certainty in what order the Quranic verses were sent down – i.e. which verse was revealed when. Inevitably it could be said that the source can be the Ahadeeth (this is what is said), and the unreliable state of these Ahadeeth is such that there is no need to say anything about that. (Ahadeeth also state that Rasul-ullah never even gave the Quran in an organized form to the Ummah: it was compiled and arranged later and this compilation and arrangement was also done in such a way that on seeing this, one can only hold one's head in one's hands!). Asserting the Quran put together through these unreliable means to be better than the Quran which was given by Rasul-ullah himself (from the direction of Allah) to the Ummah, is a gross injustice. What can the outcome of such endeavours be other than to create doubts about the Quran. The Quran in its present form and arrangement is that Book of Allah for the protection of which Allah Himself has taken the responsibility, and this is the very Quran which is a challenge to the world.

After this brief discourse, let us return to that challenge which was being discussed.

The Quran gave this challenge to its addressee nation. Leave aside other people, the Koresh opposed the invitation of Rasul-ullah continuously and persistently right from the first day until the time that Makkah was conquered. In this opposition there were continual confrontations with them. They (the Koresh) fought battle after battle, and war after war. The number of difficulties they had to face, and the losses they had to bear in this is obvious. Its ultimate end was that after the Makkan victory, they lost everything for the protection and preservation of which they did all this. Just reflect that if it had been possible for them to accept this challenge which the Quran had given them – to produce just one Surah like this Quran - then with what ease they could have been able to terminate the message of Rasul-ullah. As we will explain later on, they were linguists, and they had great pride in their language. Such pride that for them no other could compare with it. Among them great linguistic contests used to be held and their poets used to cause revolutions merely through the power of their

words. It was in their language that the Quran was revealed. What difficulty was there for them in accepting this challenge. The Quran had also stated that they can partner the Bedouin tribes with them too. And apart from them, they can also include whichever other people they wished. It was openly proclaimed to them:

...and call your witnesses (Shu'hada) or helpers if there are any besides Allah ...
(2:23)

The meaning of *Shabeed* is the one who gives evidence, the one who watches, and also the one who decides. So, in other words, it was said to them that if by accepting this challenge you wish to have this decided upon in a gathering, then you can manage that meeting under your own supervision. Your own people themselves will give evidence in evaluation about what you present. Just think that if they had thought it was possible to do this, would they not have jumped at this challenge. They fought battles all their lives, sustained losses of their lives and possessions; their closest relatives, even their wives, left them and joined the opposing side (*Jamaat e Momineen*). This continued over the course of twenty years, but they did not come towards accepting this challenge because they knew they cannot be successful in this.

We ask all the historians of the world to ponder on this evidence from history, and then reflect, what conclusion did those Arabs reach about this Book? And finally, when they felt that this Book cannot be the outcome of human intellect, then why did they not give up their opposition and confrontation and accept this Book? We have already explained the reason for this. Its reason was the same as that which the Quran has described in these words with respect to the account of the people of Pharaoh:

And they rejected those signs in iniquity and arrogance, though their selves were convinced thereof... (27:14)

They kept on persistently opposing the message of Musa, though their hearts recognised that it was based on truth. They kept rebelling against it because their egotism, their unjustified pride, and their proclivity to tyranny was an impediment on their path. They considered it to be an extreme humiliation for themselves. And what an immense psychological reality this is which the Quran has illustrated in a few words. How many facts are there which we keep on denying merely due to false pride and arrogance, though we are convinced of these being true.

The Koresh were ahead of the people of Pharaoh in this. The state of their pride and arrogance was such that in the battlefield of Badr, when the sword was about

to be brought down on the neck of Abu Jehl³⁰⁹, he told his killer to cut his neck a bit lower down even if it causes me far more pain. He asked him, why did you wish this? He replied that when, after the battle, a procession takes place with the heads of those killed stuck on the tips of spears, then I want the head of Abu Jehl to be visible higher compared to other heads. Just ponder, how could this kind of nation have accepted the truth of the message of Rasul-ullah just like that. They did not accept it, but for scholarly minds this event became an evidence for all times of this fact that they were simply incapable of doing this. They viewed it to be impossible. Is this event not living proof of this fact that the Quran is not the creation of the intellect of some human being, its fountainhead is beyond the realms of human intellect, it is knowledge from Allah!

And then this matter is not just confined to the addressees of the time of the revelation of the Quran – this challenge is for the whole world, and is being repeated for fourteen hundred years. During this period, even among non-Muslims (Arab and non-Arab), there have been such scholars of the Arabic language who hold a very elevated status in literature. During these fourteen hundred years, in any era, has any nation in the world or any individual proclaimed that I accept this challenge?

5.25 Even Today This Challenge Exists

The Koresh of Makkah had only fought battles for six or seven years. Never mind other nations and their opposition to Muslims, European Christian nations collectively fought the Crusades for nearly three hundred years. To what extent they suffered losses at the hands of Muslims, had their kingdoms destroyed, bore all this, but they could not take on this challenge, even though by doing this how easy it would have been to defeat the Muslims!³¹⁰ This fact that no one has accepted this challenge up until today, is this not living evidence that this Book is not the product of human intellect?

And even if we leave aside events of the past, this challenge is still present today before the world. The way in which all the non-Muslim nations of the world are fully engaged in opposition to the Muslims, and all the labours and intrigues they are resorting to for this - those endeavours and conspiracies which are disturbing

³⁰⁹He was one of the leaders of the Koresh tribe. (Ed)

³¹⁰ The Muslims were defeated however – internally by their own actions, since they themselves turned their backs on the Quran, and turned their faces towards seeking alternative sources for their primary guidance e.g. the *Abadeeth*. (Ed)

the peace of their days and the sleep of their nights - can they not even understand such a small matter as this, that if by accepting this challenge success is achieved, then Islam can be ended and eliminated forever from the world. And after this there cannot remain any remnant and sign of a Muslim nation! These nations are not so unwise that they cannot even understand such a small matter. But their men of knowledge and vision know that this challenge cannot be accepted. When the British came to India, an army of their clergy came with them, and they started to engage in dialogues and debates with the Muslims at place after place. The European Christian nations were behind them, and within India itself they had the support and help of the British government. They debated with Muslims on every topic, some they won and some they lost, but none of them accepted this challenge. They never made this the topic of their debate at any place and at any time.

In any case, the discussion was about this challenge which the Quran presented to the addressee nation or nations of the world. The question is whether this challenge was related to the style of expression of the Quran, or to the facts noted in it; we think that it was related to both these aspects. The Quran is both a miracle from the point of view of facts and explanations, and selection and use of words, as well as a miracle from the standpoint of its style of expression. As far as facts are concerned, *Wahi* sent down (on every *Nabi*) from Allah used to be a miracle. The fundamental characteristic of *Wahi* was indeed that it was not a creation of human intellect, it was knowledge bestowed from the direction of Allah, in which there is no role of the effort, skill and striving of the individual (human being) in receipt of *Wahi*. Therefore, from this aspect every Book revealed from Allah was a miracle. This is the very reason that the Quran instructed Rasul-ullah to inform the People of the Book (Jews) that:

Say: 'Then bring you a book from Allah, which is a better guide than either of them, that I may follow it! (Do) if you are truthful!' (28:49)

The book which was given to your messenger (People of the Book) is no longer with you now, this Book (the Quran) is in front of you. Hence, present a better book of guidance than this one, if you are true in your claim that this is not from Allah. Therefore this challenge was also from the aspect of the Quran being a Book of guidance but if this challenge had only been confined to this, there would have been the possibility of argument and disagreement. Contrary to this, the challenge about the style of expression was such that as a result of this, the issue could have become evident from a tangible and factual point of view.

5.25.1 A Book in the Arabic Language

This was that aspect of this challenge about which it was repeatedly stated that this Book has been revealed in the Arabic language. The word Arabic itself means that which makes something comprehensive and clear. As has been stated before, the Arabs had such pride in their language being comprehensive and clear that, excluding themselves, they used to call the rest of the world *Ajmi* i.e. dumb. This is why, in view of this fundamental meaning of the word Arabic, the style of expression of the Quran is called very perspicuous. In many verses of the Quran it is stated:

We have sent it down as an Arabic Quran, in order that you may learn wisdom.
(12:2)

The meaning of an Arabic Quran will be that of a perspicuous book. In Surah *Al-Zumar* this point is clarified by stating:

(It is) a Quran in Arabic, without any crookedness (therein); in order that they may guard against evil. (39:28)

A perspicuous Quran in which there is no complication, no ambiguity, no confusion, very clear and transparent, a Book explaining its meanings with precision and in detail. See also verses (20:113, 41:3, 42:7, 43:3). In these verses, ‘Arabic Quran’ can also mean a perspicuous Book, and also a Book in the Arabic language. At one place it is stated:

...and this book confirms (it) in the Arabic tongue... (46:12)

At another place:

In the perspicuous Arabic language. (26:195)

From this it is evident that by this repeated statement of the Quran about itself that this is a Book in the Arabic language, its intention is also that it places great emphasis on the incredible character of its style of expression and its technique of presentation. This issue will become clearer by an example. If some individual authors and publishes a book in the Urdu language, and then says repeatedly in it that the language of this book is Urdu, then his saying this will appear meaningless, because the language of this book will itself be evidence that it is written in Urdu. Moreover, from the statement of the Quran that this is a Book in the Arabic language, and then also in that Arabic language which is very perspicuous, it becomes apparent that its aim was that same challenge which was presented before the Arabs i.e. they were told that this is a Book in your own

language, so you should have no hesitation in accepting this challenge. If it had been a Book in any language other than Arabic, then you would have immediately raised an objection that this is not our language, we cannot even comprehend it, hence this challenge is pointless. It is stated in the Quran itself that:

Had we sent this as a Quran (in a language) other than Arabic, they would have said, 'Why are not its verses explained in detail?...' (41:44)

At another place it is stated that these people say that there is someone else who instructs and teaches this claimant of *Risalat*, and he presents this by calling it *Wabi*:

We know indeed that they say, 'It is a man that teaches him.' The tongue of him they wickedly point to is notably foreign, while this is Arabic, pure and clear. (16:103) See also (25:5)

From these explanations the purpose was to make it clear that the challenge of the Quran was from the aspect of language and also the style of expression. And those people, despite the fact that Arabic was their own language, remained unable to accept the challenge. Moreover, many other points have appeared in the Quran from which further light is cast on this aspect of this challenge. The first issue is that the state of ignorance of the Arabs of that era about facts and knowledge was such that before the advent of the Quran, there had been no Divine book among them right from the beginning. In Surah *Saba* it is stated:

But We had not given them Books which they could study, nor sent messengers to them before you, as warners. (34:44)

5.25.2 Before Becoming a Nabi Rasul-ullah was Illiterate

History is a witness on this that the Quran was the very first Divine Book among the Arabs. The state of their knowledge was such that in Makkah, which was the centre of their civilisation and culture, there were only seventeen people in the whole of the population who were acquainted with reading and writing. Rasul-ullah was not included among these seventeen, evidence for which is present in the Quran itself. In Surah *Al-Ankabut* it is stated:

*And you were not able to recite before it any scripture, nor did you transcribe one with your right hand. Otherwise the falsifiers would have had (cause for) doubt.³¹¹
(29:48)*

This was the issue related to reading and writing. As far as *Nabuwat* and *Risalat* is concerned, it is stated in the Quran:

... You did not know (before this) what is the Book or (what is) Eimaan... (42:52)

Not only this, but:

And you were not expecting that the Book would be sent to you, but (it is) a Rahmat from your Rabb... (28:86)

This was the situation of that individual who presented this challenge to his people, to come, let all of you join together and show us by producing a similar example to some part of this Book, and then it was not even the case that the presenter of this challenge had come from somewhere outside and those people did not know what his past was? Otherwise they may have had a suspicion that he had been tutored somewhere else and had arrived to present this claim by declaring himself to be simple and uneducated. When Rasul-ullah stated that prior to this I did not even know how to read and write, and I could never have imagined that I will be able to present such a Book before you, together with this he also made it clear that I am not a stranger among you:

...A whole life-time before this have I tarried amongst you: will you not then understand?' (10:16)

Both issues are covered in these proclamations of the messenger. Firstly, that you yourselves are aware that I was an illiterate person, and I had never ever imagined that I will be made a *Nabi*. Therefore, this is also not hidden from you that, despite being illiterate, I am presenting such a Book. And secondly, the way in which I have spent my whole life among you, do you think this type of life is that of an honest, truthful individual, or of such an individual who is thinking of making a false proclamation of messengerhood?

³¹¹ This belief that Rasul-ullah remained uneducated all his life is contrary to the evidence presented in the Quran. It has clearly stated that before the proclamation of *Nabuwat*, your condition was such that you did not know how to read and write. From this it becomes obvious that after the proclamation of *Nabuwat*, this was no longer the state of Rasul-ullah. It cannot, in any case, be imagined that the being whose duty it is to provide teaching about the Book and wisdom, such a great intellectual, and the head of a great and vast nation, will not even learn to read and write.

5.25.3 Two Marvels

And the fascinating thing is that those people i.e. those who had reached extremes in their opposition, were unable to say that you know how to read and write. Not one among them said even a word against the previous life of Rasul-ullah. Therefore, for us these were two remarkable evidences of the proclamation of messengerhood of Rasul-ullah – one, such a pure character of the messenger against which his opponents could not say a single word; and second, the Quran, whose challenge they could not accept throughout their whole lives.

As far as this claim of the Quran is concerned, that even based on its words it is not possible for human intellect to present anything like it; the proof for this is very clear and evident. (As has also already been stated) in this period of fourteen hundred years great literary figures of the Arabic language and renowned men of eloquence and expression have come and gone, among whom there are Muslims as well as non-Muslims. Thousands of books authored by them exist which are viewed as being at a very high status from the point of view of expression and degree of comprehensiveness. Keep these books in front of you, and then reflect on any part of the Quran: a glaring difference will become clear between both. Even in the collections of *Abadeeth* attributed to Rasul-ullah, wherever some verse of the Quran appears, whether someone is aware of it or not that it is a verse from the Quran, he will sense a difference between the two purely from the linguistic aspect. We have many *Tafasir* in Arabic which are such that in them explication and eloquence have been specifically emphasised; even in them wherever a verse of the Quran appears, it glows among the rest of the writing like a shining diamond among a heap of stones.

5.26 The Quran Cannot be Translated

The aspect of the Quran being a miracle is such that, never mind authoring a similar example to it in the Arabic language, it cannot even be translated in any language of the world. This is acknowledged by us as well as others. For example, the famous historian and renowned writer of the Arabic language, Imam Ibne Qateebah (died 277 AH), after describing the different styles of expression of the Arabs, writes in his book, *Kitab al Qar'tain*, that:

The revelation of the Quran was according to all these styles of delivery, and this is the reason that no translator can (precisely) translate the Quran into another language, in

the way in which translators managed to translate the Bible into the Ethiopian or Roman language from the Syrian language. In this same way, translations were done into Arabic of the Torah and Zabur (Talmud), and the rest of the Divine books, because non-Arabic (Ajmi) languages do not possess as much expansiveness for the expression of abstract to physical realities as are available within the Arabic language.³¹² As an example, just see that if you wish to translate this verse of the Quran:

*Wa Imma Takhaafanna Min Qau'min Khiyaanatan Fambiz Ilaihim Alaa Sawaa'in...
(8:58)*

Until eternity you will not be able to come up with such words which can express those meanings which are implied in this verse, other than by breaking this order and sequence, and joining up the parts differently, and in this way make apparent those things which were noted in it. And say thus, that if there is peace and agreement between you and another nation, and you fear treachery and the breaking of the agreement on their part, then firstly inform them that you have ended the conditions which you had accepted for that, and along with this also declare war against them, so that both you and they become equal in knowing about the cessation of the agreement. There is another verse of the Quran similar to this:

Fadarabnaa Alaa Azani'him Fil'kahfi Sineena Adaa'dan.³¹³ (18:11)

If you wish to convert this subject into the words of another language, then by doing so, this subject will never be understood in the way in which it is understood through these words. And if you say that its translation is 'We kept them sleeping for a few years,' even then, though you translated the subject, you were not able to translate the words. In the same vein there is a third verse of the Quran:

³¹² There is no doubt in this that in non-Arabic languages there is no expansiveness of abstract to physical expressions like the Arabic language. But the question is not simply about the breadth of the language, the Arabic language with all its comprehensiveness was also present with the Arabs of that era and exists even today. If the question had only been of the breadth of language, then synonyms, which were not scarce in this language, could easily have been substituted for the Quranic words. From this it is evident that the question is not about replacing the Quranic words with synonyms, the real question is about the style of expression of the Quran, about which Muslim and non-Muslim linguistic experts have not even been able to ascertain what name should be given to this style of expression. This is the reason why, leaving aside translating the Quran into another language, even if synonyms from the Arabic language are put in place of its words, they cannot be a substitution for them.

³¹³ 'Then We drew a veil over their ears, for a number of years, in the cave (so that they heard not).'

*Walla'zeena iza Zukkuru Bi-ayaati Rabbi'him lam Yakhirru Alai'ha Summan wa Umya'nan.*³¹⁴ (25:73)

*If you translate this verse according to its words, then it will become a confused matter, and if you say that 'those people do not treat it with ignorance' then by doing this you have interpreted the subject in different words, you did not translate it.*³¹⁵

This was the opinion of a Muslim literary author. Among others, whoever has studied the Quran closely has also reached this conclusion that the Quran cannot be translated into any other language. In our time, the renowned author H.A.R. Gibb, is counted as being among the most famous scholars of the Arabic language. He writes in his book titled, *Modern Trends in Islam* (1945 edition, p 4):

...for the Koran is essentially untranslatable, in the same way that great poetry is untranslatable. The seer can never communicate his vision in ordinary language. He can express himself in broken images, every inflection of which, every nuance and subtlety, has to be long and earnestly studied before their significance breaks upon the reader – images, too, in which music of the sounds plays an indefinable part in attuning the mind of the hearer to receive the message. To paraphrase them in other words can only be to mutilate them, to substitute clay for finer gold, the plodding of the pedestrian intelligence for the winged flight of intuitive perception...

An English translation of the Quran must employ precise and often arbitrary terms for the many faceted and jewel-like phrases of the Arabic; and the more literal it is, the grayer and more colorless it must be. In passages of plain narrative, legislation, and the like, the loss may be less great, although not only unevenness and the in-cohesions of the compilation but also the fine shades, die hammer strokes, and the eloquent pauses (if they can be reproduced at all) may have disconcerting or as Carlyle said, a 'crude and incondite' effect. Even in so simple a sentence as 'Verily We give life and death and unto Us is the journeying (50:43)', it is impossible to present in English (or perhaps any other language) the force of the five-times repeated 'we' in the six words of the original.

Inna Nahnu Nuhyee wa Nu'meeetu Wa-ilai'nal Maseer. (50:43)

We feel that after this there remains no need to say anything further in this respect.

³¹⁴ 'Those who, when they are admonished with the signs of their Rabb, droop not down at them, as if they were deaf or blind.'

³¹⁵ *Qar'tain*, Vol. 2, p 163

5.27 The Meaning of *An-Naar* (the Fire)

After this we return to the verse under discussion in which it is stated:

But if you cannot - and of a surety you cannot - then fear the fire (An-Naar) whose fuel is men and stones, which is prepared for those who adopt Kufr. (2:24)

They were told that when you will fail in meeting this challenge, even then will you not accept this reality that this Book is not the creation of some human intellect, it is *Wahi* from Allah. But if you do not accept this reality it will not cause any harm to anyone else, you will fall into the fire of destruction: into that fire, whose fuel are *An-Naas* (human beings) and *Al-Hijara* (stones), and which is the natural consequence of rejection of these truths.

In this verse the first word requiring explanation is *An-Naar*. The ordinary meaning of this is fire. But just as phrases such as the fire of rage, the fire of vengeance, the fire of enmity, the fire of jealousy, and the fire of hate are commonly used among us, the word *An-Naar* was also used among the Arabs for these meanings. Furthermore, the Arabs used to call that fire which was burnt on the tops of hills to declare war as '*Naar ul Harb*', and the meaning of '*Naar ul Qaum*' was that that nation was defeated. From this the meaning of the word *An-Naar* becomes clear. The Quran itself has used it for the meanings of destruction and ruin, and defeat and humiliation. In Surah *Al e Imran* the *Jamaat e Momineen* are told to remember that favour of Allah, when you were bitter enemies of each other, and He put mutual affection in your hearts, and in this way you became brethren:

...And you were on the brink of the pit of fire, and Allah saved you from falling into it...(3:103)

It is obvious that the meaning of fire here is the essential consequence of mutual enmity and civil war between the people of a nation. The Quran itself has called this *Naar ul Harb* (5:64). In Surah *An-Nur* it is firstly stated that Allah will establish the *Jamaat e Momineen* in the land (24:55-56) and then it is declared:

Never think that those who do Kufr are going to frustrate (Allah's plan) on earth: their abode is the fire, and it is indeed an evil refuge! (24:57)

It is evident that *An-Naar* here means defeat and a life of humiliation. The meaning of *An-Naar* in the Quran is generally *Jabannum* (hell) and the common belief among us is that hell is such a place where flames of fire blaze and the *Kuffar* will be pushed into it. There is no doubt in this that *Jabannum* in the life of the hereafter is the product of a life of crime and transgression, and we have *Eimaan*

on this. But *Jannat* and *Jahannum* are the names for those states of the heart whose process commences from this very life (details about these matters will come later at their respective places). Here we consider it sufficient to briefly describe what *Jahannum* means, and what is the Quranic meaning of it?

5.28 The Meaning of *Jahannum*

In ancient times in the south of Jerusalem there was a valley in which there was the temple of the god *Maluk*. There men were burned alive in the presence of this god as a sacrificial offering. In the Hebrew language a valley is called *Jee*, and the individual in whose name this valley was, was called *Hanum*. On this basis the valley in which human beings were burnt and sacrificed was called *Jee-Hanum* (or *Jahannum*). From this aspect *Jahannum* will mean ‘sacrificial altar of humanity’ and the meaning of the punishment of *Jahannum* will be a destruction which chastises humanity, whatever form it may have. The Quran explains its abstract truths through tangible metaphors and allegories. It has also explained this state of *Jahannum* through various metaphors and allegories, and it is these which will be called details of *Jahannum* as described by the Quran. Nonetheless, these should only be considered as metaphors.

The nature and form of the life in the hereafter is not possible at our current level of consciousness. This much is nonetheless clear that *Jahannum* is not the name for some pit in which a fire has been set ablaze. This is a term for agony of the heart. For example, it is stated in the Quran:

It is the flames of the fire of the Law of Requital of Allah kindled to a blaze, which mounts right to the hearts. (104:6-7)

Similarly, bring to mind the incident of the *Zarrar* mosque as described in Surah *At-Tauba* which has been mentioned earlier. It is stated in this that the hypocrites kept the foundation of this mosque on the edge of destruction, the consequence of which was:

...this structure went into hell with its founder... (9:109)

And what was this hell:

... their hearts became an abode for continual suspicion and shakiness, until this internal strife cut their hearts to pieces... (9:110)

This is what hell is.

In the verse under view it is directed, ‘Be fearful of that fire whose fuel is *An-Naas* (men) and *Al-Hijara* (stones)’. The word *Waqud* has been used for fuel. Fire is called *Waqad-un* and *Waqud-un* are those sticks which are used to light fire. Wood which is kept as fuel is called *Hata-bun* and these logs are called *Waqud-un* when they are kindled. Hence the meaning of *Waqudu-ha An-Naasu wa Al-Hijaratu* will be that fire whose flames will have been produced by *An-Naas* and *Al-Hijara* themselves. In the book, *Bang e Dara*, by Iqbal, there is a poem with the title *Sair e Falak*, which depicts the truth of *Jahannum* in a very meaningful and visionary style. In it he has stated that when his desire to see and hear *Jannat* was completed, he noted a freezing abode at a distance. He asked his guide, what is that frozen land? He replied, it is *Jahannum*. At this he uttered in amazement that we had heard that there will be blazing flames in *Jahannum*, and you are telling me this frozen tract is *Jahannum*. He replied that this is definitely *Jahannum* but its flames are not of its own – the inhabitants of the world who come here bring their own fire with them! This is the meaning of *Waqudu-ha An-Naasu wa Al-Hijaratu*.

This is also stated at a few other places. For example, in verse (66:6) these same words have appeared. In Surah *Al e Imran* it is stated about the *Kuffar*:

... *They are themselves but fuel for the fire. (3:10)*

In Surah *Anbiya* it is said to those who follow *Batil*:

Verily you (unbelievers), and the (false) gods that you follow besides Allah, are (but) fuel for Hell ... (21:98)

In Surah *Al-Jinn* it is said about those who turn away from the right path:

... *they are (but) fuel for Hell-fire (Hata-ban). (72:15)*

5.28.1 *An-Naas wa Al-Hijara*

It is stated in the verse that the fuel for this *Jahannum* will be *An-Naas* and *Al-Hijara*, which are commonly translated as men and stones. And the meaning which is taken from stones is those idols which people worship. This meaning is fundamentally incorrect because the next words in the verse are ‘that fire which is prepared for the *Kuffar*’ (2:24). Now it is obvious that stone, whether uncarved or carved into some figure is neither *Momin* nor *Kafir*. *Momin* and *Kafir* are human beings, not stones. Therefore, the fire which is prepared for the *Kaffar*, what is the purpose of throwing stones into it?

The common meaning of *An-Naas* is humanity, but when this word is used for comparison, then its meaning will be that of people generally. For example, the Quran states about the religious clerics:

Your state is such that you advise the people to do righteous deeds and forget about your own selves; though you study the Book yourselves. Do you not understand this much that the commands of the Book are equally applicable to the people and the clergy? (2:44)

In another verse it is stated about these religious clerics:

...who in falsehood devour the possessions of men...(9:34)

It is apparent that at these places *An-Naas* means the people following the religious clergy. In Surah *An-Nisa* it is stated:

These are those who are niggardly, and enjoin niggardliness on other people...(4:37)
See also (57:24)

From this it is evident that by *An-Naas* is meant the general public, and those who are giving the commands are the leaders of the nation or those holding power. From these (and other similar verses) it is clear that *An-Naas* means the public i.e. those people who follow behind the national leaders, religious clergy, and rulers.

Now we come to the word *Hijara*. Its root is *H-J-R* whose basic meaning is to stop and forbid, and from this is meant the intellect which tells man at what point he should halt.³¹⁶ The word *Aqal-un* itself also means to stop and to forbid. From this aspect a man who is very shrewd and astute is called *Hajar-un*. The Quran has called such people *Zee Hijr-in* (89:5) i.e. individuals possessing intelligence and insight, but only those possessing intelligence and insight who are very clever and shrewd. These are the very people who, having become religious clerics, national leaders or rulers, become impediments on the paths leading to Allah. So from this the meaning of *Waqudu-ha An-Naasu wa Al-Hijaratu* will mean the public and their leaders. The mutual altercations in *Jabannum* between the public and their leaders are described in a metaphorical way in a very instructive style in the Quran. In Surah *Saba* it is stated:

The Unbelievers say: 'We shall neither have Eimaan in this scripture nor in (any) that (came) before it.' Could you but see when the wrong-doers will be made to stand before their Rabb, throwing back the word (of blame) on one another! Those who had been despised will say to the arrogant ones: 'Had it not been for you, we should

³¹⁶ A stone is called *Hijr* because it creates an obstacle.

certainly have been Momineen!’ The arrogant ones will say to those who had been despised: ‘Was it we who kept you back from guidance after it reached you? Nay, rather, it was you who transgressed’. Those who had been despised will say to the arrogant ones: ‘Nay! it was a plot (of yours) by day and by night: Behold! You (constantly) ordered us to be ungrateful to Allah and to attribute equals to Him!’ They will declare (their) repentance when they see the penalty: We shall put yokes on the necks of the Kafirun: It would only be a requital for their (ill) deeds. (34:31-33)

But this excuse of theirs will not be considered acceptable and they will all be made to enter hell together. In Surah *As-Saffat* it is stated:

Those entering Jahannum will accuse each other.³¹⁷ The followers will say to their leaders that you used to bombard and assault us and in this way used to put us on the wrong path. They will reply that, what control and authority did we have over you – you yourselves never desired to tread on the right path. It is true that we were on the wrong path, but we never compelled you to follow this path. You followed us yourselves. We are all now sharing this punishment together.³¹⁸ (37:27-33)

In Surah *Momin* it is stated:

Behold, they will dispute with each other in the fire! The weak ones (who followed) will say to those who had been arrogant, ‘We but followed you: can you then take (on yourselves) from us some share of the fire?’ Those who had been arrogant will say: ‘We are all in this (fire)! Truly, Allah has judged between (His) servants!’ (40:47-48) See also (2:166-167, 26:95-102)

From these explanations it is intended to explain that what has been stated in verse (2:24) is that if despite these clear evidences you keep on denying these truths, then you will fall into the hell of ruin and destruction – you as well as the public following you – that destruction which is the natural consequence of treading on the wrong path.

In contrast to this is that *Jamaat* which, after accepting these truths, remains steadfast on the programme decreed by Allah. What kind of abode of successes and triumphs their life becomes, this is described in the next verse:

³¹⁷ We can see these accusations and counter accusations amongst people and political parties on the media every day. (Ed)

³¹⁸ See these verses in any copy of the Quran.

But give glad tidings to those who accept Eimaan and work righteousness, that their portion is gardens, beneath which rivers flow. Every time they are fed with fruits therefrom, they say: 'Why, this is what we were fed with before,' for they are given things in similitude; and they have therein companions pure; and they abide therein forever. (2:25)

The Quran has called the *Anbiya* as *Naz̧eer* (warners) and *Basheer* (givers of glad tidings) i.e. those who warn people about the destructive consequences of their wrong path, and givers of glad tidings about the pleasant results of their righteous deeds. In verse (2:24), after the performance of the duty of warning, the Quran comes to communicating glad tidings.

A detailed description of *Eimaan* has already been given under verse (2:3), there is no need to reiterate it. As far as *Aml e Saleh* (a righteous deed) is concerned, its general concept has been given in the context of the word *Fasad* in verse (2:11), in which it is stated that *Fasad* and righteous deeds are the opposite of each other. By this comparison the meaning of righteous deeds can be comprehended.

5.29 *Amaal e Saleh* (Righteous Deeds)

The root of this is *Sd-L-H*. *Aslaba Ilai'hi* means *Absana Ilai'hi* i.e. he performed such a deed as a result of which the flaw, fault, or deficiency of another individual became eliminated. Therefore *Amaal e Saleh* means those deeds which produce balance and proportion. The meaning of *As-Salah* is for circumstances to become balanced and straight in accordance with the demands of the intellect and guidance, in other words, for something to be in precisely that state in which it is meant to be, to remain in an absolutely suitable, correct, orderly and appropriate state. From the aspect of the vastness of this meaning, *Amaal e Saleh* will denote such tasks due to which the latent potentials of man become awakened, and in this way the ability to traverse evolutionary stages of life is created within him; and in addition, beauty and balance in society remains in place and imbalances are eradicated; whatever deeds bring prosperities with them both in this life and in the hereafter. These will, in any case, be those tasks which are in accordance with the laws of Allah.

You will see that '*Amanu*' and '*Ami'lus-Sale'bat*' have appeared as intrinsically linked together in the Quran from beginning till end i.e. having *Eimaan* in the truth of the laws of Allah, and together with this performing those deeds which draw out potentials according to the procedure described by the Quran. It is clear from this that those deeds whose origin is not from the conviction of the heart

(*Eimaan*) are merely the product of habit or custom which keep being performed mechanically. Correct results cannot be attained by these because the foremost consequence of correct deeds should be to produce a transformation within man himself, his self should develop, as a result of which purity in his character and eminence in his conduct should be produced. This result can never be attained from those tasks which are performed mechanically. On the other side, that *Eimaan* which never becomes the motive for *Amaal e Saleh* is not conviction of the heart, but is merely the name for customary expression from the tongue which remains futile in the same way that deeds without *Eimaan* are futile. Furthermore, only those deeds are *Amaal e Saleh* which the Quran has declared to be *Saleh*, not those which we consider to be *Amaal e Saleh* according to our own criteria and opinion. It should be made clear that the Quran has described many deeds as being *Amaal e Saleh* but has not given any comprehensive and definitive list of these deeds. If we say about *Eimaan* that it is the name for firm conviction in the truth of those lofty values which the Quran has defined for the development and growth of the human self, and *Amaal e Saleh* is the name given to the protection of those values (i.e. working according to them), then this will be in accordance with reality. This is what, in other words, will be called character. Hence, character cannot be created until there is conviction in the truth of the higher values of life. It is recognised through those deeds which are performed by this individual, and its tangible outcome should be that the issues of humanity are resolved and beauty and balance are created in human society. The Quran has called the outcome of these as being *Al-Jannat*.

5.30 The Meaning of *Jannat*

Al-Jannab is a very fundamental and comprehensive term of the Quran, the complete meaning of which cannot be expressed at any one place, because its details are spread like sparkling stars from beginning to end in the pages of the Quran. Linguistically, the meaning of this root *J-N-N* are to hide. A number of words emerge from this root and many of them are mentioned in the Quran at different places. But here we will only consider one of these words (*Jannat*). *Jannat* means a garden, particularly that garden whose land is concealed because of an abundance of trees and copious vegetation and is not visible. In the Quran the consequence of *Eimaan* and *Amaal e Saleh* is declared to be *Jannat* of this world and also *Jannat* in the hereafter. We have already stated that the life in the hereafter and the form and reality of its states cannot be comprehended at the existing level of our consciousness. This is why the Quran has presented them in the form of metaphors and similes. It is stated in Surah *Ar-Ra'd*:

The parable of the garden which the righteous are promised! Beneath it flow rivers: perpetual is the enjoyment thereof and the shade therein... (13:35)

Similarly, these same words have appeared in Surah *Muhammad* (47:15). From this it is evident that the description of *Jannat* of the hereafter is metaphorical and allegorical. Therefore, those meanings should not be taken from these words in which we use them in our physical world. In order to inform us that *Jannat* is not the name of some location, the Quran has stated:

... and a garden (of bliss), the width whereof is as the width of heaven and earth... (57:21) See also (3:133)

About its springs, it is stated:

A fountain where the devotees of Allah do drink, which they will bring out from the depths of their hearts. (76:6)

Regarding the Quranic metaphors, it has stated:

From these parables, those people will be able to reach the truth who make an effort to understand their meanings via knowledge. (29:43)

Those people who infer from this that this implies the physical things of this world should understand that:

Now no person knows what delights of the eye are kept hidden for them - as a reward for their deeds. (32:17)

As far as the description of their metaphors and similes is concerned, it is obvious that these examples should have been such that the initial nation being addressed by the Quran could understand them. In a country like Arabia, where there were hot deserts spread all around in which one odd oasis could be found and around this spring a few trees would grow, it is obvious that for them what could be a greater luxurious, peaceful and comfortable scene than this, that there should be lush gardens in which there are clear and pure springs. Cool water from these springs flowing all around, no vestige of heat in this garden, trees laden with fruits, where there is such an abundance of honey and milk it is as if streams of them are flowing. For food the flesh of delicious game birds is available, extremely comfortable tents are erected in these gardens. For them, what could have been a more splendid means of sustenance than this? Moving forward, the trappings of comfort and luxury which those people among them who used to travel to and from the cities which were under the shadow of Persian and Roman rule used to witness, would most certainly have seemed to them to be a *Jannat* personified, and a melodious heaven, which was a product of their civilisation and culture. In

connection with the issue of *Jannati* life, the Quran has also mentioned those accoutrements, and has done so in a very appealing style. Exquisite carpets, couches spread around, magnificent palaces in which hang silk and linen curtains, crystal glassware, utensils of silver and gold, extremely delicious beverages; such a heart-warming environment, and together with this, compatible company, one outlook, gatherings of the people – these Arabs could only be made to understand *Jannati* life through these kinds of metaphors. If the concepts of life of the initial people addressed by the Quran had been something different, then metaphors and similes in accordance with those would have been used to explain the abstract realities of *Jannat* to them.

From the streams which have been described as flowing in these gardens is meant that the effects of the balanced deeds of human life are not confined to time and space. The gardens resulting from them will always remain perennially lush and green i.e. as long as these deeds are being carried out by men, these effects resulting from them will keep becoming established. This is why it is stated in Surah *Ar-Ra'd*:

The parable of the garden which the righteous are promised! Beneath it flow rivers: perpetual is the enjoyment thereof and the shade therein; such is the end of the Righteous... (13:35)

In Surah *Ibrabeem* this reality is described in an even more appealing way. In this first there is mention of gardens and streams flowing beneath them, and then it is stated:

See you not how Allah sets forth a parable? A goodly word like a goodly tree, whose root is firmly fixed, and its branches reach to the heavens, of its Rabb. It brings forth its fruit at all times, by the leave of its Rabb. So Allah sets forth parables for men, in order that they may reflect profoundly (to know the truth). (14:24-25)

But the Quran has not mentioned only one *Jannat*. It states:

But for such as fear the time when they will stand before their Rabb, there will be two gardens. (55:46)

In other words, one *Jannat* in this world, and the second *Jannat* in the hereafter. Then it is stated about these *Jannats*:

In these Jannats life will not be monotonous, rather will consist of great variety. (55:48)

5.31 *Jannat* on Earth

Like the *Jannat* of the hereafter, the Quran has also described the nature of *Jannat* on earth in great detail. It begins this from the *Jannat* of Adam. And as we will explain later on, the story of Adam is not the tale of some individual, but is the story of man himself - the story of mankind, which is presented in a very attractive, dramatic, and allegorical style. Nonetheless, it is related very much to this world because it is stated:

Behold, your Rabb said to the Malaika: 'I will create a new creation (following the previous one) on earth, who will possess free will'...(2:30)

It is apparent that the purpose of this is to describe this very life of man, and after this Adam is told to live in *Al-Jannah*. And the foremost characteristic of this *Al-Jannah* was this:

...and eat of the bountiful things therein as (where and when) you will...(2:35)

In this there were no restrictions placed on the means of sustenance. There was no question of 'mine and yours'. The situation in it was such that one could eat to the full wherever one wished. In another verse Adam was told:

There is therein (enough provision) for you not to go hungry nor to go naked; nor to suffer from thirst, nor from the sun's heat. (20:118-119)

Then it is stated:

There, no sense of fatigue shall touch them, nor shall they (ever) be asked to leave. (15:48) See also (35:35)

For acquisition of the means of sustenance, there will be neither any need to bear great hardships, nor will there be any anxiety or sorrow. And the most important thing being that there will be a total guarantee that no one will turn you out. Not only will the means of sustenance be available there, but communal life there will be so pure that:

No frivolity will they hear therein, nor any taint of ill - only the saying, 'Salam-un (Peace)! Salam-un'. (56:25-26) See also (13:24, 14:23)

This is because there will be no kind of reservation, resentment or jealousy in the hearts of the members of that society i.e. there will be no such thing which needs to be kept concealed from others (7:43, 15:47). And the greatest thing of all that no one will be able to humiliate or dishonour anyone else. There will be full

protection for respect for humanity and the dignity of mankind, so much so that the situation there will be that:

...neither will there be external fear, nor internal grief and unhappiness. (6:48)

This was that earthly *Jannat* which those nations in this world achieved who lived their life according to *Eimaan* and *Amaal e Saleh*, and which appeared in front of the world fourteen hundred years ago during the harmonious and prosperous era of Muhammad, Rasul-ullah, and his companions. With regard to the conflict between Pharaoh and Bani Israel, the Quran has stated:

According to Our Law of Requitat, We turned the people of Pharaoh out of this land which had gardens and springs, which had the places of their wealth and sites of great reverence and We made Bani Israel their owner. (26:57-59) See also (44:25-28)

He told the *Jamaat e Momineen* that if you live your life according to Our laws, then:

...and admit you to Gardens beneath which rivers flow, and to beautiful mansions in gardens of eternity: that is indeed the supreme achievement. (61:12)

And when this earthly *Jannat* was eventually bestowed on them, they exclaimed spontaneously:

They will say: 'Hamd be to Allah, Who has truly fulfilled His promise to us, and has given us (this) land in heritage: We can dwell in the garden as we will: how excellent a reward for those who work righteousness!' (39:74)

The Quran has stated that the purpose of the agreement of Hudaibiyyah³¹⁹ which was a precursor to the Makkah victory, was this:

That He may admit the men and women who have accepted Eimaan to gardens beneath which rivers flow, to dwell therein for aye, and remove the imbalances from their society - and that is, in the sight of Allah (as per His criterion) the highest achievement (for man). (48:5)

5.32 For Men and Women Both

³¹⁹ This was the treaty between Rasul-ullah representing the state of Medina, and the Koresh tribe of Makkah in 628 AD. (Ed)

Two things have been mentioned here: one that this *Jannat* is not only for men, rather it is for both men and women i.e. for both *Momineen* and *Mominaat*³²⁰. Hence, it is stated at another place:

Whoever does deeds of righteousness - be they male or female - and are Momin, they will enter Jannat, and in the reward for their righteous deeds nothing will be held back. (4:124)

And the second point which becomes apparent is that these promises of Allah about earthly *Jannat* were fulfilled close to the time of the Makkan victory i.e. following a lifetime spread over twenty years which was full of perilous confrontations and adversities which has been depicted by the Quran in the following words:

Or do you think that you shall enter the garden (of bliss) without such (trials) as came to those who passed away before you? They encountered suffering and adversity, and were so shaken in spirit that even the messenger and those of Eimaan who were with him cried: 'When (will come) the help of Allah?' Ah! verily, the help of Allah is (always) near! (2:214) See also (3:141, 9:16, 29:2, 33:10)

5.32.1 *Jannat* Will be Achieved Through Collective Life

Regarding earthly *Jannat*, we are confining ourselves to these descriptions only, and only consider one additional point worthy of mention, and that being that *Jannat* will only be achieved through living a collective life, not through the isolated individual life within monasteries. As a consequence, the very condition given in the Quran for this has been declared to be:

Join My devotees and, in this way, enter My Jannat. (89:29-30)

Jannat is achieved through the formation of a Quranic society.

5.33 *Azwaaj*³²¹ in *Jannat*

Regarding life in *Jannat*, it has also been stated:

³²⁰ The Quran generally uses *Momineen* to include both men and women. (Ed)

³²¹ *Azwaaj* – companions. Singular is *Zauj*. (Ed)

...and there will be noble Azwaaj in it...(2:25)

The general belief among us is that *Jannat* will be provided in the life of the hereafter, and *Jannati* men in this will be given very beautiful wives who are termed as *Hoor'ain*. Since huge misconceptions arise as a result of this belief, and the opponents of Islam raise great objections to this, we therefore consider it important that this point becomes clarified right here.

The meaning of *Azwaaj* amongst us is taken to mean only wives, so much so that *Zauja* is the name given to a wife, and a husband is not even called *Zauj*. But according to the way in which this word is used in the Arabic language (and the Quran), its meanings are very wide. Linguistically, those two things are called *Zaujun* which are complementary to one another. When two things are such that without the one the other cannot be completed, then among them one will be called the *Zauj* of the other e.g. the two wheels of a car will be called the *Zauj* of each other because if one wheel is missing, the other will remain ineffective. In addition, it is also necessary that both these wheels should be alike. If there is any lack of compatibility between them, the car will not be able to be drivable. From this point of view, the meanings of *Azwaaj* are same values, same conduct, harmony in companionship – men and women are both included in this. And since according to the criterion of the Quran, a husband and wife should be the most harmonious companions of each other in both conduct and similarity of outlook, therefore the husband is the *Zauj* of the wife (58:1) and the wife is the *Zauj* of the husband. If we look at it from this viewpoint, then *Azwaaj* in earthly *Jannat* will also mean that there will be companions of one outlook and similar values, and also husbands and wives of similar outlook and values. But since the concept of *Jannat* in the hereafter is not a physical one like this one, hence *Azwaaj* in it will mean companions of one ideology, in which men and women will all be included. We cannot say whether in that life the existing biological or gender differentiation of a man of woman will stay the same, or its mode will be something different as well, because we cannot say anything about the nature and form of life there.³²² But it is obvious that by the mere use of the word *Azwaaj*, the mind should not divert to the sexual connotation, only the meaning of companions should be taken from this. Because we have seen that the life of *Jannat* is the name for a collective life, it is essential for the devotees of Allah in it to live in harmony (89:29). They will all be the *Zauj* of each other in it.

³²² At the level of the human self there is no procreation, therefore, since there will be no need for procreation in the life of the hereafter, there will be no gender differentiation. (Ed)

5.34 The Meaning of *Hoor*

In connection with *Jannat* there is also mention of *Hoor*, and due to its conventional meaning, the mind switches to sexual relations between man and woman in the *Jannat* of the hereafter. It should be made clear that if in the *Jannat* of the hereafter the process of sexual relations between man and woman continues, then this is also not something objectionable, but as we have repeatedly stated, details of the life of the hereafter should not be brought to mind in a physical sense. We feel it is enough to make this much clear here that the word *Hoor* is not just used for the feminine, it is also used for the masculine. This word is a plural form, and its singular forms are *Ab'warun* which is masculine, as well as *How'raa*, which is feminine. Its meanings are such people (men or women), whose whiteness of eyes is very pure and its blackness is very intense. Among the Arabs, such an eye was considered to be very beautiful. But later on this word began to be used among them for those people whose character is sterling, and whose outlook is very pure, because the meaning of the word *Ab'warun* (plural *Hoo'run*) is of pure intellect i.e. not a cunning and devious intellect, instead a pure and clean intellect.

At some places in the Quran, together with *Hoo'run*, the word *Ai'nun* has also appeared (44:54, 52:20). The meaning of this is also of such an individual whose eyes are very beautiful, and it is used for both male and female. Hence, in the life of *Jannat*, the state of mutual companions (*Hoo'run Ai'nun*), whether they are just comrades or husband and wife, will be such that their intellect and reasoning will not be used to deceive one another. That intellect will be employed for good from the heart i.e. a pure and clean intellect, not devious and deceitful. These are the meanings in this verse:

...and they have therein companions pure...(2:25)

In other words, the life of *Jannat* (whether it is in this life or in the hereafter) will consist of such companions whose character will be very lofty, and intellect will be very pure.

After these elucidations, we now come to that part of the verse under consideration whose meaning remains to be explained:

...when they will be provided with Rizq, they will say this is the same which was provided before. They will be informed, nay, this is not exactly the same, but is similar ... (2:25)

In this, too, a profound reality is implied – the meanings of the word *Rizq* are of those means of sustenance which are available on time i.e. precisely according to the requirements of life. It has been explained in the discussion about verse (1:2) that the process of evolution in the universe is continual and ongoing. To summarise, it is that commencing from the foremost life cell, after traversing various evolutionary stages, life has reached the form of a human being. In this lengthy journey, though the essence of life remained the same, great differences continued to appear in its forms. In whatever state its form was in, it kept receiving means of sustenance according to its need. It was as a result of this that it remained capable of existing and of being able to move forward. From the point of view of purpose, though this *Rizq* was the same, there used to be great differences in terms of its properties. We do not require the mind of a scientist to understand this difference.

5.35 Variation in the Form of Nutrition

This is our daily observation e.g. just take the example of a human child. Its *Rizq* is the milk of its mother. In the early stages of a child's life, since his stomach is weak, therefore in the milk of his mother there is a greater proportion of water and the proportion of constituents is quite low. As his stomach keeps becoming stronger, the water content in the mother's milk keeps reducing, and the constituents keep increasing. So much so, that after two to two and a half years, the milk becomes quite dense. During this whole period, though it will be called milk, there will be a distinct difference in the milk of the first day and that of two and half years later. With this example in mind, look again at this verse of the Quran which has been quoted previously:

Everything in the universe owes its means of sustenance to Divine Rabubiyat. The state of these things of the universe is not such that they remain in one state from beginning till end, their forms keep altering, and according to these circumstances, there is a continual change in the requirements of their means of sustenance. The state of the Rabubiyat of Allah is such that He provides the means of nourishment to everything according to the requirement of its state at a particular time. (55:29)

Now extend this fact towards the domain of the consequences of deeds. Leaving aside the form in which they will appear in the hereafter, just take a look at this world itself. Today's bounties will be of a different hue from the form and nature of the bounties of Allah which were acquired as a consequence of these deeds fourteen hundred years ago. The essence and soul will be the same but their forms

will be different. This is that very reality which the Quran has expressed in this metaphorical style, that the means of sustenance which the inhabitants of *Jannat* will receive will not be the same in every era (specifically this world and the hereafter), it will appear similar. The essence will not change, but its forms will keep changing according to the circumstances.

Now let us move on. The meaning commonly taken of the next verse is:

Allah disdains not to use the similitude of things, lowest as well as highest. Those who have Eimaan know that it is truth from their Rabb; but those who reject Eimaan say: 'What means Allah by this similitude?' By it He causes many to stray, and many He leads into the right path; but He causes not to stray, except those who forsake (the path). (2:26)

We have seen that the Quran helps us to understand abstract realities (especially metaphysical) through tangible metaphors and examples, and this is the most thorough way to have them understood. An example can be quoted about any suitable thing. When the Quran has described that the reaction to these metaphors is different from the *Momineen* and from the *Kuffar*, then there is a psychological reality concealed within this. In the outer world the matter may be one, but different people have a different perception of it according to the viewpoint of each individual.

5.35.1 Difference in Perceptions

One individual, on viewing a vibrant rose on a blossom laden branch, drowns himself in a state of delight and joy at its beauty, colour, fragrance, and varieties. Contrary to this, another individual turns out to be a constant complainer about its thorns. This difference is due to the point of view. If we wished to expand on this topic then a reasonably large tome can be compiled about it, but we do not consider there is any need for this. This is our daily observation that regarding the same thing, the same event, or the same person, different people not only have impressions which are different, but at times are contradictory as well. This disparity is the product of a variation in viewpoint.

The Quran changes the viewpoint of man. The consequence of this change is that he sees everything in its true form, and defines its worth according to the scales set by the Divine values. This is that transformation in the self produced by the Quran, referring to which Iqbal says:

Now I comprehend that the world is nothing: the world is my heart,

By its transformation, the colour of everything has altered.

In Quranic terminology this changing of the colour of the heart is called *Eimaan*. This is an immense fundamental change which is created within the human psyche and becomes the foundation for changes in the outer world. As a result of this, the scales of the things of the universe change, their values change, their objectives change, their requirements change. This is the fact which the Quran has described in the verse under view by stating that though the example is only one, the impressions are different of the people looking at it with varying perspectives. Later on in verse (3:7) of Surah *Al e Imran*, we will see that this same issue is mentioned in relation to ‘metaphors’.

In the Quran different facts or subjective conditions have been made comprehensible via different examples. These examples will keep appearing before us in the verses coming later. Here, we will present a few as illustrations.

5.35.2 Examples from the Quran

- (1) The intellect of those opposing the commands of the Sabbath are compared to apes (2:65).
- (2) Those who do not use their intellect and reasoning, and follow the path of their forefathers, are compared to sheep and goats (2:171).
- (3) The example of those who have insatiable greed is like that of a panting dog (7:176).
- (4) The simile of *Kalma Tayyab* is as a virtuous tree, and *Kalma Khabeeth* as an evil tree (14:24-26).
- (5) Fear and uncertainty, and insecurity created by *Shirk*, is explained by giving the example of a fledgling which falls out of its nest and some eagle or vulture snatches it away, or a dry blade of grass which a gust of wind can blow in whichever direction it wishes (22:31).
- (6) The example given about nations who squander the results of their hard work through their own hands is that of an old woman who toils the whole day long spinning, but who at the end of the day shreds it into pieces herself (16:92).
- (7) Expectations attached to idols of *Batil* are compared to the thread of a spider’s web (29:41).
- (8) The example given about idle religious clerics is like that of a donkey on which a pile of holy books is loaded (62:5).
- (9) Purity of character is compared to a transparent pearl inside an oyster shell (56:23). And,

- (10) The heavenly torch to which the Quran has been compared, that can only be elaborated in its own place as the cause for enlightenment of the heart and vision, because it is feared that by trying to encapsulate it here, the majesty and sublimity of this allegory may become diminished (24:35).

These and numerous other metaphors like these are examples through which the Quran has explained different realities, and as has been stated earlier, descriptions of all the states in the life of the hereafter are metaphorical and allegorical.

5.36 The Meaning of *Fasiqeen*

These are the metaphors and similes about which it is stated that for many people these become the light of their path, while for others they are a reason to criticise and for fault finding. Such people are called *Fasiqeen* by the Quran. Among us the words *Fisq* and *Fajur*, *Fasiq* and *Fajir* are commonly used, but few people know the correct meaning of these. There is a skin over the fruit of a date within which it grows and reaches fruition (this is also the state with other fruits). That skin is like the pattern of this fruit within which its potentials are fulfilled and it reaches maturity. But sometimes it also happens that the fruit exits its skin from one side. Such fruit never reaches maturity and instead rots. Arabs used to use the word *Fisq* for this state. The Quran bestows the pattern of that system of society, or collective life, by remaining in which the potentials of the individuals of society become correctly developed. The individual or faction who exits from the pattern of this system will be declared as *Fasiqun*, their development will not be able to take place. Hence, every individual who goes outwith the sphere of the Divine values, and the pattern devised by it, is a *Fasiq*. In the next verse the Quran has elucidated this by stating :

Those who break Allah's covenant after it is ratified, and who sunder what Allah has ordered to be joined, and do mischief on earth: they cause loss (only) to themselves.
(2:27)

5.37 Those Who Break Covenants

In other words, *Fasiqeen* are those who break the firm covenant made with Allah, and disintegrate into fragments that which Allah has enjoined to be united, and in this way they spread *Fasad* (mischief) in the nation or on the earth. The main points referred to in this verse have been explained in the discussion of verse

(2:11) under the topic of *Fasad*. Furthermore, what the covenant which is struck with Allah consists of has also been described – one example is that agreement according to which a *Momin* sells his life and possessions into the Hand of Allah (9:111). Further details about it have also been given at numerous other places which will be discussed at their respective places. Here it will suffice to state that when an individual accepts *Eimaan* in Allah, then he commits to this fact that he will obey every command of His. If he does not do this, then this will be contravention of the covenant. The term *Abid ul Shayyi* means to continuously protect something, and to keep watch over it, sustained supervision. According to even this basic meaning, fulfilment of an agreement made with Allah will mean to observe His commands.³²³ When *Ilaa* comes after this word then its meaning is that of giving a command. The meaning which we have given above also becomes evident from this i.e. fulfilment of *Abad Ullah* in reality means obedience and observance of Allah's commands. It is obvious that this commitment will only be from those people who claim to have *Eimaan* in Allah. Only they can be the ones about whom it can be said that they had made a covenant with Allah, had made a promise which they now do not fulfil. All those people are included in this clause who claim that they have *Eimaan*, but in practical terms do not obey the commands of Allah - they will all be termed as being *Fasiq*. This is the reason that at some places He has called the *Zalimeen*³²⁴ as being *Fasiq* (2:59) and at other places as those people who seek ways to contravene the commands of Allah (3:81). And in summary, but in very comprehensive words, He has declared that *Momin* and *Fasiq* are the opposite of each other (3:110) i.e. the one who does not obey the commands of Allah (the one who departs from His defined pattern) can simply never be called *Momin*. Details of these matters have been covered under the exposition of verse (2:2), where the difference between a *Momin* and traditional Muslims and those who are Muslims by name has been explained. It has been stated about these people that:

...they are those who suffer loss (*Al-Khasiroon*). (2:27)

5.38 Who are Those in Loss

The word *Khus'ran* also comprises a breadth of meanings. The meanings of *Al-Khasir* are someone who has lost direction, one who gets killed, or an individual who is unable to succeed, who remains in loss in commerce. In *Khus'ran* both a

³²³ *Abid* – responsibility and sanctuary, a covenant, a commitment, the promise of a thing. (Ed)

³²⁴ *Zalimeen* – those who are unjust and transgressors. (Ed)

reduction in material things and loss of meaningful things are included i.e. loss in wealth and possessions, and a decrease in intellect and *Eimaan*, and in eminence and dignity. The word *Khus'run* is used for both. The Quran has described this in Surah *Al-Asr* in very concise yet comprehensive words when it states:

By the token of time through the ages, verily man is in loss, except such as have Eimaan and do righteous deeds, and join together in the mutual teaching of truth, and of patience and constancy.³²⁵ (103:1-3)

The history of mankind is a witness to this fact that if man does not follow Divine guidance then he remains in loss, and ultimately becomes destroyed and ruined. Only those people can save themselves from this destruction who have *Eimaan* in the truth of the Divine values and are acting upon the programme defined by Him which helps to manifest latent potentials. According to this programme, such a system becomes established in which every member not only considers his own duty that he has fulfilled the task which was assigned as being his responsibility, he also tells his companions that they, too, should remain steadfast on the path of truth, and whatever difficulties appear in this, to face these with patience and perseverance. This admonishing of each other regarding *Haqq* and perseverance become a means of mutual harmony and discipline among them (3:200). They remain treading on this path resolutely and persistently, and in this way continue to leave the marks of their footsteps on their era for coming generations. This is that *Jamaat* which lives a life of success and prosperity. Apart from them, the life of other people is nothing more than woeful tales of failures and unfulfilled desires. The pages of history are a witness to this.

After presenting the history of humanity as a witness on this great truth, the Quran asks, 'Say, how can you deny this truth?'

How can you reject Eimaan in Allah? Witnessing that you were without life, and He gave you life; then will He cause you to die, and will again bring you to life, and again to Him will you return.³²⁶ (2:28)

5.39 Hayat (Life) and Maut (Death)

In this verse, first of all one evidence which Allah has provided for (the existence of) His Being is that He has bestowed life on you. It is obvious from this how

³²⁵ This is the translation, next comes the meaning as noted by the author. (Ed)

³²⁶ This is the common translation.

much significance the creating of 'life' holds. First of all, let us examine the linguistic meanings of these two words, *Maut* and *Hayat*.

The root of the word *Hayat* is H-Y-Y. Linguistic scholars have engaged in many detailed discussions relating to its fundamental meaning which are not of any import to us. Opposite to this is the word *Maut*. As far as usage is concerned, this word also has numerous meanings. Fundamentally:

- (1) The words *Hayat* and *Maut* are also used for the physical meanings of life and death.
- (2) The Quran also calls those people as being dead who are alive physically, but whose human potentials have become defunct. In comparison to them, it declares those human beings as alive who, by using their intellect and consciousness, are treading on the path defined by Allah.
- (3) It also calls those nations dead which are in a state of decline. If there is any potential or ability remaining in them to achieve resurrection, then they can achieve life again by acting on the Divine laws. And,
- (4) After the physical death of man, the next life is also termed as *Hayat* – this is that life in the hereafter which is part of *Eimaan*.

In the verse under discussion, first of all the question of the physical life of man comes before us. In the previous pages we have observed what an insoluble puzzle this question is for scientists as to how this physical universe began! Regarding this, their confession about their inadequacy in determining it has appeared before us.

5.39.1 Flawed Conception of Scientists About the Fountainhead of Life

But even more than this, the question of how did 'life' take birth is even more insoluble for them, and in this respect the greatest scientist and philosopher of modern times is holding his head in his hands, lost in thought, just like those men of intellect and wisdom were perplexed two thousand five hundred years ago. If we had wished, we could have quoted here scores of confessions of Western thinkers and philosophers in this connection. But there is no need to go into this detail. For the purpose of comprehension, one or two excerpts will suffice. In the field of biology, the name of J. S. Haldane is held to be among the renowned scholars. In his book, *The Philosophical Basis of Biology*, he writes:

Now there is no hesitation in accepting this fact that life is not merely a creation from physical and chemical states. It existed before these physical states and was always present. Furthermore, there is no difficulty in accepting this fact that behind this

*physical universe there is another world in the light of the interpretations of which we should practically coincide our principles of biology. Hence, considering the problem of life as a physical and chemical problem is in itself wrong. Life and the existence of the human self is proof of this reality that mere physical interpretation of our universe is impossible, and this interpretation remains impossible no matter how far back we go in time and how high from the point of view of space. By taking life backwards its physical origin will never be able to be found, nor by taking the human self backward in time will we reach such a point where we can say that the human self became created from matter like this.*³²⁷

The beginning of the theory of evolution is attributed to Darwin but after this great changes have taken place in his doctrine. Among one of the scientists who have made these changes is G. G. Simpson who holds a prominent status. He writes about the first link in the beginning of life and the process of cause and effect:

*How life began, with all honesty the answer to this is that we have no knowledge of this. Effort is being made to resolve this puzzle and is gradually nearing this. But the final point in this puzzle (i.e. the point of the beginning of life) is that place which lies outside of the realm of scientific discoveries and perhaps even outwith the sphere of human intellectual reach as well. The very first link in the beginning of the universe and the process of cause and effect is an insoluble problem and science cannot reach to this. This foremost link is a mystery. And in my opinion the human mind will never be able to unearth this secret. If we wish, according to our own ways, we can bow our head before this very first cause, but we can never bring it into the sphere of our cognition.*³²⁸

Since this issue is beyond the limit of human cognition, therefore the Quran also does not go into any detail about it. It does not speak about how life came into existence. It begins its proclamation by stating how life manifested itself. In this connection there has been a discussion under verses (1:2, 2:6, 2:21). You can cast another glance at them.

5.39.2 An Example of Manifestation of Life

In connection with the manifestation of life, we too cannot say much more than to try and explain it by an example. The sound which is broadcasted from a station

³²⁷ *The Philosophical Basis of Biology*, pp 38, 111, 122

³²⁸ George Gaylord Simpson, *The Meaning of Evolution*, pp 13, 135.

spreads out in the atmosphere, but we do not have any sensation of its presence. We are aware of it at that time when that sound reaches our ears tangibly through our radio set. Before entering our awareness (hearing), this sound was not absent, it was present. But we were not able to be aware of its presence. After this, if our radio set becomes faulty, then we think that sound has ceased (or vanished), although it has not ceased or vanished. It does not reach our ears due to the fault in the radio set. Later on, if our radio set is repaired or we receive a new set, then the existence of this sound enters our awareness again. It is possible that Allah has created life before it enters the physical form (the first life cell). But since it had not entered the awareness of our senses at that time, therefore he has termed this state of ours as death (*Maut*). The only further indication given about this state is that you were not a thing worth mentioning (76:1). (The word *Ziker* noted in this verse will be explained at its own place). When its manifestation occurred in a concrete form, then it was called *Hayat* because it entered the grasp of our awareness. When it again left the grasp of our awareness, it was termed as death. After this, when it will again be manifested, this will be termed as *Hayat* after death (life after death). (We cannot say how we will sense its manifestation at that time because at that time our ‘radio set’ will be different from the existing set). This is the metaphorical explanation of life being hidden and being manifested.

In the verse under view, the Quran has mentioned death before the existing life, then life, then death after it, and then the life of the hereafter. At another place it has called this two deaths and two lives (40:11). And about life after death it has stated that following this no death will become imposed (37:59, 44:56). According to the Quran, true importance is only given to the question of life after death because its connection is with the Law of Requit, which is the reality and basis of Deen. The existing life of man becomes the issue of physics. The relationship of *Kufr* and *Eimaan* is with life after death. It is based on this that Iqbal has said:

*What can I ask of the wise ones, as to what is my beginning?
That I remain in this concern, as to what is my ultimate end.*

5.40 Life After Death

Indeed, our concern also should only be about this because (as stated above) this is connected to *Kufr* and *Eimaan* and with the basis of Deen. And whichever individual is not convinced of life after death, he thinks (in his own mind) that in this life I can do whatever comes to mind, if I make such arrangements that my crimes cannot be witnessed by anyone, and even if they are witnessed I do not have to suffer any punishment for them, then no one can touch me. Following

this there is death, and with death human life ends. To whatever extent a man commits injustice and excesses, its fundamental reason is this same false assumption (i.e. denial of life in the hereafter). And if today deceit and immorality are becoming so widespread, then the cause for this is also denial of life in the hereafter (or of the Law of Requit), as though it has acquired the form of some doctrine. This is why the Quran emphasises *Eimaan* in the life of the hereafter, because as a result of this human society remains in a balanced state, and the selfs of the individuals are also enabled so that these can traverse further evolutionary stages of life in a balanced and beautiful way. This is why the Quran has stated:

He Who created Death and Life, that He may provide you with an opportunity to test your own deeds: and He is the exalted in Might, All-Protecting. (67:2)

At another place:

...It is He Who begins the process of creation, and repeats it, that He may reward with justice those who have Eimaan and work righteousness; but those who reject Him will have draughts of boiling fluids, and a penalty grievous, because they did reject Him. (10:4)

This means that Allah is the One who initiates creation and then passes it through various processes so that the outcome of *Eimaan* and *Amaal e Saleh* (righteous deeds) becomes precisely manifested according to the Law of Requit, and the crimes of those who reject *Haqq* and truth do not remain unaccounted for. In other words, the aim of the creation of death and life is that the present abode becomes an arena of deeds, and for those deeds whose results cannot materialise in this life to manifest them in the life of the hereafter.³²⁹ Regarding life in the hereafter, a discussion has already taken place in the *Tafsir* of verse (2:4). Further explanations about it will be covered under the topics of *Qiyamat*, *Hashr*, *Nashr*, accountability, *Jannat*, *Jahannum*, etc, as those are the most suitable places for this. At this point, it is necessary to additionally make it clear that the Quran does not place so much emphasis on the life of the hereafter so that people become 'fearful' of the punishment in the hereafter, and start doing good deeds - not at all. Life after death is a fact, and the Quran describes it as a fact (like other facts). The aim from this is to tell man that his present life is not the last link of life. Life still has to traverse further evolutionary stages, and for this the course of life will continue beyond physical death. Mention of the outcomes of deeds is in relation to the process of these evolutionary stages.

³²⁹ The results of all our deeds in this life will manifest in the hereafter too, as our self, which we take to the hereafter, is comprised of the imprints of all of them. (Ed)

The part in this verse which requires examination is *Summa Ilai'hi Turja'un* (2:28). A preliminary discussion about this has been carried out under verses (1:5, 2:18) but in view of its importance further elucidation is also required here.

5.41 The Meaning of *Ilai'hi Turja'un*

The root of *Turja'un* is R-J-Ain. The meaning of *Raju'un* are to turn over, come back, to return. *Raja'a Ilai'hi* means to turn to someone for help, etc. And the meaning of *Raj'un* is for results to become established. These are the meanings which have particular significance. According to the first meaning, *Rij'at Ila-llah* will mean to turn towards the law of Allah for the solution at every stage in life, and according to the second it will mean the manifestation of the consequences of human deeds according to the Law of Requit. This word has appeared numerous times in the Quran in these meanings. This exposition of it will appear clearly before us in the relevant verses. For the present, we consider it necessary to mention those two wrong meanings of *Inna Ilai'hi Raji'un* according to which gross misconceptions are created about the Being of Allah and man himself. The prevalent concept among us about life in the hereafter is that when human beings will be given life again after death, then there will be a very big court in which all the people will be gathered. Allah will be established on the throne of the court. Every person will be presented to Him as an accused. There he will be judged according to his accountability, and verdicts will be announced from the direction of Allah. Criminals will be consigned to *Jahannum* and those who are not proven to be criminals will be made to enter *Jannat*.

There is no doubt in this that the Quran has also drawn such a map for the reward and punishment of deeds according to the Law of Requit. But (as has already been stated) whatever has been reported in the Quran about life in the hereafter is explained metaphorically, not literally. If it is accepted that there will, in reality, be a physical arena, and Allah will be established there on the seat of justice, and criminals will be brought into His presence, then from this it will become essential for Allah to be confined to space and time. Such a concept about Allah is contrary to Quranic concepts (He is beyond these limits and outwith these confines). Thus the meaning of being brought into His presence, or of going towards Him (*Ilai'hi Raji'un*), will be of the manifestation of results according to the Law of Requit of Allah. How this will take place after death, what its practical procedure will be, and what its form will be, we cannot comprehend at our present level of consciousness. At this point in time, it will be necessary to understand this much, that this will not take place in some particular venue. The true meaning of *Ilai'hi*

Raji'un (returning to Allah) can be understood through an example like this, that an escaped convict is at large, running and hiding to escape arrest. An announcement is made about him by the court that you cannot run anywhere, sooner or later you will have to return here, there is no escape from this. This is what is meant by human beings ultimately returning to the court of Allah (i.e. *Ilai'hi Raji'un*).

The other incorrect concept of *Ilai'hi Raji'un* is a creation of those who practice mysticism, according to which it is claimed that the human self is a part of the Divine Self, which by separating from it has become buried in the quagmire of matter. Now the objective of life becomes that after escaping from this quagmire of matter, this part should rejoin the Divine Self. A detailed discussion regarding this non-Quranic belief of mysticism has taken place under verse (1:5) and there is no need to add anything further to it.

And that which we say on hearing the news of the death of someone, *Inna Lillabi Wa Inna Ilai'hi Raji'un* (2:156) and from which is meant the expression of extreme grief, sadness and sorrow, shock and pain, as has been noted in the explanation of verse (2:16) and related verses (2:154-156), this is a great earth-shattering proclamation of life-giving, revolutionary, supreme zeal, limitless passion and joy which has been unfortunately turned into a message for the outpouring of grief after a death. When Deen turns into a religion, then its every life-giving concept turns into a death-inviting belief. Religion is nothing more than sermons in graveyards, whereas Deen is the claimant of persistent striving in the arena of life. (Details have been covered under verse 2:16).

The concluding words of the verse under view (*Summa Ilai'hi Turja'un*) invite us to come to the next verse, which is as follows:

Allah is He Who has created whatever is in the earth for the benefit of all of you. Like the earth, He also has control over the (numerous) heavens which He has kept established with great balance, and this control and authority of His is based on perfect knowledge. (2:29)

The beginning of this chapter was with these words:

O Mankind! Follow your Rabb, Who created you ... (2:21)

And in the next verse it was stated that He has created the means of sustenance for you from the earth and the heavens. Now, when it is proclaimed that you should turn towards this same fundamental reality, this means that this same fact has been reiterated in this verse and that truth is this:

Allah is He Who created whatever is in the earth for the benefit of all of you...
(2:29)

Whatever is in the earth is for the good of the whole of humanity, not for any particular family, tribe, group, nation or class – for the whole of humanity. Here, after *Ard* there is mention of *Samaa*, in fact *Sama'waat* is cited. The meaning of *Samaa* is the atmosphere of the sky above, and *Sama'waat* means those different stellar bodies (planets) which are dispersed in this universe and are moving around in their orbits (36:40). There will be a detailed discussion about *Ard* and *Sama'waat* at that place where we discuss the system of the universe. Here it is important to understand the meanings of a few words which are used in the verse under view.

5.42 *Saba Sama'waat* ('Seven' Heavens)

Among us we commonly translate *Saba Sama'waat* as the 'seven Heavens'. There is no doubt in this that in the Arabic language *Sab'un* is the digit of seven. But since this digit is viewed by them as a perfect number, therefore they also use it to mean 'many' or 'numerous'. When we say in our language³³⁰ that I have admonished you ten times; or I have gone there twenty times; or never mind coming once, you can come a hundred times, some specific number is not implied in this. All that is meant from this is 'many' – hence, *Saba Sama'waat* will mean numerous heavenly bodies.

The root of *Istwa* is *S-W-Y* which means for something to be in complete balance within its own self. For every energy to be present in precise proportion and at its extreme state of development. The meaning of *Istwa ila Shai* is to have an aim and intention for something, or to direct attention towards it, and in *Istwa ala* there is the meaning of control and empowerment. In the verse under consideration the meaning will be:

*...And then He turned His attention towards Sama'waat and created numerous planets therein; in them extreme balance and proportion are to be found...*³³¹ (2:29)

Summa is a conjunction and generally appears at the place where the aim is to explain some sequence of events e.g. we say that first he ate food and then (*Summa*) drank water. But it is not necessary that in every place it is used solely to mean sequence. It is also used to mean 'and'. Furthermore, in the verse (2:29)

³³⁰ Here the author is referring to the Urdu language. (Ed)

³³¹ '*...Summa Astawa ila Assama'i Fasanwa-hunna Saba Sama'waat ...*' (2:29)

being discussed it does not mean that He first created the earth, and then turned His attention to *Samau* and arranged it into numerous stellar bodies. Here it will mean exactly this, that He created the earth and turned His attention to the heavens. Support for this appears in a verse of Surah *An-Nazj'at* in which firstly it is stated about the heavenly bodies: 'He raised the height of the heavens and created it precisely' (79:28). And after that it is stated 'and after this hurled planet earth at a distance' (79:30). He has, in fact, also stated that:

...(initially) the heavens and the earth were joined together (as one unit of creation – nebular mass), before We clove them asunder ... (21:30)

The meanings of these verses will be explained at their respective places. Here the aim is only to explain that in the verse under view the word *Summa* is not used to mean sequence, it has appeared in the meaning of 'and'.

Bring this reality to mind again, that this topic began with *Ibudu*, and after this the creation of *Rizq* was mentioned. In this verse the creation of *Rizq* is again repeated. As has been explained in the previous pages in detail, the production of *Rizq* takes place according to the natural laws defined by Allah, and whichever individual (or nation) works according to these laws, they can obtain this *Rizq* – in this there is no distinction even between *Kafir* and *Momin*.

5.42.1 *Rizq* and *Rizq e Kareem*

But there is one kind of *Rizq* which the Quran has termed as *Rizq e Kareem* (sustenance with dignity). This is that *Rizq* in which no human being is dependent on another human being, or is a slave. This is achieved within that system which is established according to those laws which Allah has defined (in the Quran) for the communal life of human beings. This *Rizq* is conditionally linked with that *Ibudu* which is interpreted as the authority of Allah. You have seen in the discussion of Surah *Al-Fateha* that the devotees of Allah accept and proclaim in the presence of Allah that:

We only accept Your authority and seek only Your assistance. (1:4)

5.43 Mutual Connection of Asking for Help and Obedience

From this it is clear that only the one who adopts His authority has the right to ask for help from Allah. This is a very important point. Today in the world

everywhere there is a clamour for ‘rights’ but no one tells these people demanding rights that every right is conditional on fulfilling a responsibility. Only he who first of all fulfils his obligations can demand a right. Allah has linked His promises of fulfilling commitments of *Rizq e Hasna*, *Rizq e Kareem*, or His help and assistance, to the condition of *Eimaan* and *Amaal e Saleh*. He even states that:

*And He responds to those who have Eimaan and do deeds of righteousness...
(42:26)*

He even only responds to the supplications of those people who fulfil the condition of *Eimaan* and *Amaal e Saleh*. The reason for our remaining deprived of His help and assistance, and remaining far away from *Rizq e Kareem*, is solely that without fulfilling the pre-requisite of ‘We accept Your obedience’, we keep saying ‘We seek Your help’.

Following this clarification, this chapter is ended.

5.44 Summary of Chapter 5 (Verses (2:21-29))

O band of humanity! You should not be duped by the eye deceiving glamour of the self-devised system of these nations. You should bring yourselves under the obedience of the laws of your Rabb – that Rabb who created you and your forefathers, and despite so many destructive forces of the universe, passing the human race through different stages, He brought them to this point (7:172). This is the only one way by which you will be able to remain protected from the dangers of the journey.

You will obtain this protection through the universal system of *Rabubiyat* of Allah, according to which he produced the means of sustenance for your abode in the earth. He scattered heavenly bodies above in the heavens so that these remain in their own respective orbits through their mutual gravity and attraction. Then He made such an arrangement so that water rains down from the skies from which the means of *Rizq* is produced for you. It is obvious that you have received all this means of sustenance from Allah without any remuneration and payment. Only Allah has ownership of this. You have only been given permission to use it. Therefore never do this, that you make human beings its owners. If you did this, then it would be deliberate *Shirk* with Allah. Private ownership (no matter whose it may be) of the means of production is to make men as Allah, these should be kept available for meeting the requirements of all those who are needy (41:10).

If despite all these concrete facts and evidence, you are suffering from some doubt or suspicion, or from some psychological dissonance in this respect about that code of life which We have given to you through Our servant, whether it is truly based on fact or not, then the easy technique to prove this is for you to show us by presenting an alternative map to the one presented by this code for human life – if not of the whole structure, then at least of one floor i.e. produce one clause like a clause of this code (10:38, 11:13). For this there is no need to put responsibility on one person, make a committee of all the writers and thinkers, social and political lawmakers, who are to be found in your society, and leave only the *Wahi* of Allah on one side, and challenge them to make one like this – if you are truthful in your claim that you cannot decide whether this code is from Allah or not. And if you are not merely playing tunes of suspicions and doubts in order to keep on clinging to your vested interests, then you should accept this challenge.

But if you do not accept this challenge of Ours – and We can affirm that you will never accept it – and you do not try to understand this matter using intellect and vision, and instead continue to advance in your opposition blindly and become an obstacle in the path of *Haqq*, then the consequence of that will be that hell of destruction and ruin in which your public and intelligentsia, cunning leaders and their followers, will all plunge into together with their pomp and wealth, whether this is in the form of battle, whose fire is kindled by human hands and instruments of war, or through the destructive consequences of the wrong system of life. In any case, this is that hell which the deeds of those who reject the correct code of life and resort to transgression have prepared for them (66:6).

In this confrontation there is nothing to be apprehensive about for the *Jamaat* which has *Eimaan* in the laws of Allah and the truths of the higher values of life, and remains in pursuit of the programme which is defined by Allah for developing potentials. O Rasul! Give them glad tidings that such a society will be shaped for them, whose prosperities will be enduring and whose conveniences will never know decline (14:25, 13:35) – such springs in this life which never witness autumns, and an eternal life in the hereafter too.

These promises of prosperities and successes are not specifically confined and limited to your existing *Jamaat* only – when and wherever any *Jamaat* adopted such a path, this was the very same outcome (24:55, 39:74), and this will be the case for the future as well. The results of these deeds are always alike, although their forms are according to the changing requirements of the time.

In this society, other people will keep joining them and becoming their companions. Like them, they too will be holders of a virtuous character. As long

as this society remains established on the foundations of the laws of Allah, it will keep bearing its fruits like this; *Fasad* and change will never materialise in it.

We have painted this society as an evergreen and blossoming garden (*Jannat*) and have used the simile of delicious fruits for the results of righteous deeds, because lofty realities can be explained through tangible similes. Therefore, this matter is not counter to the Divine status, that He describes realities using metaphors. He has also described *Jannat* in the hereafter in a metaphorical style (13:35). These are parables of gardens and fruits, but if need be, He will have no hesitation in quoting an example of something as miniscule as a mosquito, or something even tinier than this in order to illustrate a matter. Those people who have *Eimaan* in this, that all this is being expounded from the direction of Allah (via *Wahi*), they will understand from these metaphors that this is an established fact from their *Rabb*. But those people who reject this fundamental reality itself, they will also seek a thousand faults in these similes and metaphors, and will say, what is the ultimate purpose of these kinds of similitudes? Nevertheless, if a simile is to make one comprehend a reality, then its outcomes are factual and visionary, and if these are for the concealment of *Batil*, then what can its outcome be other than destruction! This is how conflicts spread. From this you can understand how from one narrative two conflicting conclusions can be drawn. The difference is in the point of view. Look at it from one viewpoint and start treading on a path leading to misguidance because of it; look at it from another viewpoint and paths of successes and achievements open up. But only those people set out on the wrong paths who do not wish to spend their life within the mould of the laws of Allah, and instead, by finding divergent paths, select different paths for themselves.

These are the people who disintegrate the sum total of all these responsibilities which are required of them according to the universal *Rabubiyat* of Allah. Furthermore, they even break that covenant which they had agreed with the Divine system (9:111), and in this way, by severing all the relationships of humanity (13:21, 13:25), break it into pieces through the unnatural discriminations of race, clans, nations, countries. And make individual or national vested interests the aim of life, although the requirement of the law of *Rabubiyat* of Allah is that, by joining these relationships, the whole of mankind should be deemed to be members of one brotherhood and branches of one tree (2:213, 10:19, 31:28). The outcome of this way of life is that imbalances become created in society, and ultimately nothing falls into their share other than destruction and annihilation.

Say to these people (whose path of life is mentioned above), on the basis of what evidence can you deny the laws of Allah, when your own being³³² is living evidence of this. From whatever angle you view it, you will have to accept this reality that there was a time when there was no sign of life whatsoever on planet earth. This whole planet was a heap of lifeless matter. Then life manifested in it, and traversing its evolutionary stages, it reached the human form. Before this, leaving aside being a living human being, you were not even a thing worth mentioning (76:1). Having reached this point, you became a living, conscious human being and became enabled to be addressed as ‘you’ (39:9). From this it is apparent that life is not a creation of yours – this is bestowed by Allah alone. After this, when you die according to the physical law of Allah, then what difficulty will there be in this for Allah to cause you to become alive again (37:58, 40:11, 44:56). Hence, life does not end with death. Life moves forward for the requital of deeds. Therefore, you simply cannot go outside the realm of this law. You can try to escape it a thousand times, ultimately you will have to return to it – in fact, understand it like this, that even now your every step is taking you in its direction.

This law is established by that Allah who created you on this earth, and together with this also provided the means of sustenance for you. Then pay attention to the vastness of the universe and see how numerous stellar bodies in it are busy in carrying out their assigned duties with balance and harmony (57:1-2). This is also taking place according to the law of Allah – according to the law of that Allah Who is well aware of the hidden potentials and requirements of everything.

This universal system of the heavens and earth is in action for this purpose that the results of the deeds of men are precisely established (11:7, 45:22, 53:31). In order to understand this reality, it is necessary that firstly the characteristics of man and his status in the universe is well understood. This has been described in a metaphorical style in the story of Adam, which is, in reality, the account of man himself.

In this chapter there has been a discussion principally about humanity. After this, the Quran has noted the communal life of man, and its beginning is done with the metaphorical description of the ‘story of Adam’. We will leave this for the second volume of this book.

³³² Being – ‘I amness’ as per Iqbal. (Ed)

