

For Those Who Believe

لِقَوْمٍ يُؤْمِنُونَ

Model Lectures on
The Glorious Quran

*'...Verily, in remembrance of Allah do hearts find rest'.
Verse 28: Ar-Rad 13*

Dr. Bashir Naeem

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The Glorious Quran

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FOR
THOSE WHO BELIEVE

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DEDICATED

To Professor Abdul Haye Siddiqui Inspirational mentor
and friend

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Special thanks to:

My Lovely Family

&

Mohammed Aslam Al-Vehari
Dr. Mohammad Saeed
Mrs. Bismillah Hameed
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Their support went a long way in completion of this book.
May Allah the All-Mighty give them a big reward.

At a glance

The book, For Those Who Believe, a collection of articles, may serve as a teaching model of the Quranic subjects to make sense to the modern mind. The idea is to make teaching of the Quran appealing deep down to the heart. The method should be inspiring rather than distracting. Obviously, it is only a sensible interpretation of the Quran based upon rationality and logic that would inspire the people to come back to the Divine Message forsaken as irrelevant to life. An honest understanding of the Islamic Monotheism, an axel of the Quran, would facilitate solution of multi-facet problems today's Muslims are afflicted with. There is no other way out.

The book, For Those Who Believe, is a composition of articles like:

- 1) Fragile World – Its Significance
- 2) The Quran Vs. Evolutionary Theory
- 3) Divinity, Preordainment & Human Conduct
- 4) Why does Allah Test the Believers?
- 5) 'Be - and it is! Vs. 6 Day creation of the Heavens & the Earth.
- 6) The Case of Prophet Mohammed (PBUH) – The Final Witness – may serve as a teaching model of the Quran with sensible understanding for the modern inquisitive mind. Stop blind recitation of the Quran please.

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Preface

The Quran is the most read Book without understanding in today's world. Consequently, Allah's Message of Monotheism is fading away. This is adversely impacting life of the Muslims individually and collectively. The problem lies with us. We blame others for our own faults. We should better stop this practice. The moment we stop it – that would be a starting point of our reform. This kicks in the need of reading the Quran with its meaningful understanding.

This underscores a big responsibility of our religious scholars. They should better stop conventional way of preaching. We have had enough of it. We need teaching in the Apostle's (PBUH) ways through models of tangible benefits for the community. The first solid step in this direction is an honest illustration of Allah's Injunctions with reference to the present needs, requirements and aspirations of the people who, in turn, are able to apply them in all walks of their life. Interpretations may vary. Applicability would, however, do the job in achieving the desired results.

This calls for proper clarification of the Quranic terminologies so that their significance is clear to the seekers of truth – i.e. terms are meaningful if supported by corresponding deeds. For instance: 'fear Allah' should not be limited to momentary bodily shake with a cry 'Allah Whoo' and that is it. It implies remembering Allah in performance of all our actions – i.e. doing all our activities with honesty to the full justification of the relevant responsibility. It also means honoring '*Amanat*' (commitments) in total obedience to Allah's Dictates.

The book, For Those Who Believe, deals with some of these terms and explains their true significance. It is a modest attempt to remove 'cob-webs' of misunderstanding and ambiguity, which have been distracting today's Muslims. The idea is to enhance awareness amongst the people in order to inspire them to come back to the Quran for benefit of the self and the society.

May Allah accept this modest service. '*Amen*'

Dr. Bashir Naeem

Author

This Fragile World – Its Significance



'Life is a passing cloud – beautiful to look at'.

'The life of this world is but play and pastime; but if you believe (in the Oneness of Allah – Islamic Monotheism), and fear Allah, and avoid evil, He will grant your wages, and will not ask you your wealth'. Verse 36: Mohammed 47.

✓ Transitory nature of life in this world (like the world itself) has been described as '*rain bubble on water*'. This description of life on the planet earth has been contrasted with eternal everlasting life in the Hereafter. There is no doubt about it. This does not, however, belittle or minimize the significance of life

on earth where every man is born, completes his life-span and dies. This is the destiny of man on earth since 2.7 million years. This is the earth. It has a definite purpose of the Divine scheme of affairs. A little reflection over the subject may lead to a better understanding of the purpose of man's life as a central figure in the entire plan of creation as in the Verse 56: Adh-Dhariyat 51:

'And I (Allah) created not the jinn and mankind except that they worship Me (Alone).'

✓ The great purpose of creation of the universe (4 billion years old approximately) with special reference to mankind has been clarified at the very beginning of Adam's landing on earth in Verse 36–39: Al-Baqarah 2.

'... on earth will be dwelling place for you and an enjoyment for a time'. 'We said: "Get down all of you from this place (the Paradise), then whenever there comes to you Guidance from Me, and whosoever follows my Guidance, there shall be no fear on them nor shall they grieve". "But those who disbelieve and belie our Ayat – such are the dwellers of the Fire: They shall abide therein forever"

Before proceeding further, a few words regarding Adam's experience of celestial life in the Paradise will not be out of place. Adam's experience of heavenly life begins with Allah's Command inviting him to live in the Paradise as in Verse 35: Al-Baqarah 2.

'... O Adam! Dwell you and your wife in the Paradise and eat both of you freely with pleasure and delight, of things therein as wherever you will...' The second part of Invitation contains Allah's Admonition – '... but come not near this tree or you

both will be of the Zalimin (wrong doers)'. It may be emphasized that the same theme – i.e. Invitation to the Islamic Monotheism for reward and Admonition (in case of non-compliance) against humiliation – runs through the singular Message of Monotheism conveyed invariably by all the Messengers of Allah.

A very interesting question commonly asked is why did Allah need to go through this long process of Guidance for mankind? The answer may be found in the Divine Proclamation as in Verse 29: Al-Hijir 15.

'So, when I fashioned him (Adam) completely and breathed into him the soul which I created for him, then fall you (angels) down prostrating yourselves unto him'.

Allah unravels the secret reality of 'mud-man' molded '*in the best of moulds*' (*Ashraf-ul-Mukhlooqat*) the best of all creations Verse 4: At-Tin 95. It implies perfection not only of man's physical appearance but also of his personality including psychological and spiritual traits. The 'Divine Breath' at once transformed the mud-man into human being blessed with distinctive knowledge and faculties of intelligence and reasoning. Infusion of the Supreme Spirit in man entitled him to the highest distinction of the 'Bearer of Divinity'. This is the highest bench mark of man's spiritual elevation, where even the angels had to prostrate themselves.

This imposes upon man a big responsibility. In order to maintain position of spiritual elevation, man has to remember the purpose of his creation as in Verse 56: Adh-Dhariyat 51. *'And I (Allah) created not the jinn and mankind except that they should worship Me (Alone)'. Allah's worship implies obedience and submission as well as expression of gratitude*

for the unlimited blessings the Great Lord has showered on man. Allah loves His Hand-crafted man and wants to reward him. However, reward or punishment to man would not be based upon the deeds performed instinctively or under impulses of some pre-programmed built in chip as is the case with ethereal and celestial objects like the sun, the moon and stars including even the angles. The matter has been elucidated in the following remarks of a religious activist. 'The great Lord does not want that man should obey Allah instinctively but voluntarily exercising his (man) free choice. This is an important point that merits a serious consideration. If man is to obey mechanically under impulse of his instinct, his conduct is in no way superior to that of other creatures like animals. In this case, the institute of Divine Accountability for reward and punishment may look absurd. The All-Mighty God could have done this and every person would have been instinctively pious and righteous. But the Divine Scheme is that man should be thankful to Him by his (man's) free choice in order to earn a big reward in the Hereafter'.

The observation highlights the importance of this world though fragile in nature. There could not be more powerful proof of high importance of this world than Allah's Words in verse 24 – 25 : A'raf 7.

'On earth will be a dwelling place for you and enjoyment for a time being'. '... Therein you shall live, and therein you shall die, and from it you shall be brought out (resurrected)'.

To regain the 'Paradise Lost', this world is the only dwelling place where mankind survives for *lessons to be taught* (Guidance for righteous life leading to the Straight Path to heavenly reward (Paradise)). In other words, man's

performance in this world, though transitory, is the only criteria of determining what kind of life (in Paradise or Hell) he would live in the Hereafter – an eternal / everlasting place. More importantly, living in this world is once a life time chance. It won't be repeated ever.

This negates the theory of Renunciation – '*Tareeqat*', which advocates giving up normal way of life – i.e. run away from realities of life, blow up dwellings, and hide in jungles or caves. This is a negation of Islamic teachings. Islam teaches us to realize the actualities of life howsoever hard these may be and face them manfully according to Allah's Dictates and the Prophet's *Sunnah* (the legal ways). Islamic concept of *Tareeqat* exhorts man to avoid evils in all forms – lusts, temptations, inducements and pervert excitements. Being amongst the vicious distractions, man steers his ship towards the Straight Path of Islam and does not scum to side tracking. So '*Tareeqat*' in Islam implies 'a full comprehensive life free from evil impurities. In brief it is not escapism from life. Rather it is a reconnection with life of piety and righteousness.

All this is possible during the life span of man in this world, which may be described as the only preparatory field for regaining the Paradise Lost.

Once again Allah comparison of the life in this world and in the Hereafter brings out a sharp contrast between the two worlds as in Verse 20: Al-Hadid 57.

'Know that the life of this world is only play and amusement, pomp and mutual boasting among you and rivalry in respect of wealth and children ...' 'And the life of this world is only a deceiving enjoyment'.

The Divine Proclamation does not, however, minimize the importance of life in this physical world. Life in the Hereafter is an abstract phenomenon very difficult to comprehend. In such a case parables / similes with the objects of common experience are set up to fit in the ordinary comprehension of mankind. Allah's Proclamation '*... the life of this world is only play and amusement ...'only a deceiving enjoyment'* – signifies relative value of this world as compared to the Hereafter. Again the relative relationship between the two worlds has been stressed by Allah in Verse 38: At-Taubah 9. '*But little is the enjoyment of the life of this world as compared to the Hereafter'*. The relativity, in this context, carries a complex abstract significance. To make the concept easy to understand, the term '*play and amusement ... a deceiving enjoyment'* are used to denote fragility / transitory nature of this world. It does not, however, negate or undermine in anyway significance of life in this world. The great value of this world could be assessed in Allah's Words of Verse 22: Al-Baqarah 2.

'Who (Allah) has made the earth a resting place for you (mankind) and the sky as a canopy and sent down water (rain) from the sky and brought forth herewith fruits as a provision for you. Then do not set up rivals unto Allah (in worship) while you know (that He Alone has the right to be worshipped).'

The Verse beautifully explains the Divine Objective of creation of the planet earth with all the provisions essential for sustenance of life with special reference to man. Mankind is to live on it for a predetermined period of time. Allah's mention of the bounties that man is blessed with for his comfortable habitation on the earth is to remind him of his obligation to thank the Master Creator. This constitutes the Divine Invitation to believe in the Islamic Monotheism as an

expression of man's gratitude for the limitless favors of Allah, the Compassionate – *'Then do not set up rivals unto Allah (in worship) while you know (that He Alone has the right to be worshipped)'*. Those who accept the invitation – i.e. believe in the Oneness of Lordship, perform virtuous deeds as per Allah's Orders and the Prophet's (PBUH) *Sunnah* (the legal ways) at the exclusion of individual lust and all the devilish temptations – they are successful. They have done well in their life on earth and in the Hereafter they would have no fear and grief. This scenario may explain how important man's transitory life span is in this world. If makes or mars his life career in the Hereafter, which is everlasting / eternal. Man could have not achieved eternity without this fragile world.

✓ The most importantly, the life in this world is given only once i.e. it is once a life time chance to regain the Lost Paradise. This denounces rationality of giving up normal living and seeking refuge in desolated mountains or caves. Islam reconnects man back to his self and purifies his environment to enjoy a full extent of life in this fragile world – a life of piety and righteousness for an ultimate success (the Paradise) in the Hereafter, an eternal world of absolute delight and happiness as in Allah's Words of Verse 57: An-Nisa 4.

'But those who believe in the Oneness of Allah – Islamic Monotheism) and do deeds of righteousness, We shall admit them to Gardens under which rivers flow (Paradise), abiding therein for ever'.

A quick passing reference is made to the title of Allah's Vice-Regent on earth assigned to man. This would help in further highlighting the significance of the fragile world. The designation implies a great responsibility or 'Trust' willingly

accepted by man. The Verse 72: Al-Ahzab 33 explains as:

'Truly, We did offer 'Al-Amanah' (the trust, or moral responsibility or honesty and all duties which Allah has ordered) to the heavens, and the earth and the mountains, but they decline to bear it (i.e. afraid of Allah's Torment). But man accepted it. Verily, he was unjust to himself and ignorant (of its results).

If man chooses to honor the Trust by being obedient to Allah in performing noble deeds, he will be adequately rewarded and be the '*Muqarrabin*' (close) to Allah – the highest elation of man, where no other creature can go. In case of breach of Trust, Allah's Torment will be justified.

This is the destiny of man whom Allah created with '*His Own hands*' and made this fragile world as his dwelling place under the Divine Guidance through a long series of Messengers. Allah's Guidance that came from time to time invariably centered around two things – 1) Invitation: worship Allah Alone, believe in His Angels, His Messengers, the Holy Scriptures and the Day of Resurrection – 2) Admonition: If you do not, then remember the fate of '*... those whom the 'Word (of torment) is justified among the previous generations of jinn and mankind that have passed away, Verily, they were ever losers*'. Verse 18: Al-Ahfaq 46.

“Nature and history and the light of Revelation, Through the ages, show that man, Created by God in the best of moulds, Can yet fall to the lowest depth, unless He lives a life of faith and righteousness Then will he reach his goal: if not, He must stand his judgment – none can doubt – Before the wisest and justiest of judges”.

In the conclusion; it would be appropriate to remark that it is to

the people's attitude towards the Divine Guidance that makes life comfortable in this world with a hope of a big reward in the Hereafter. On the contrary, life is a miserable stress, killing pressure, and lurking gloom of torment in the Hell Fire. To further elucidate the point, a quick review of the present condition of our society may not be out of place. At the very outset, it may be pointed out that the prospect of the state of affairs of our society does not look good. From the pulpit down to the ground floor, in every section, there is going on a free practice of immorality, without reserve or remorse or at least the slightest prick on their conscience. They preach what they do not practice. They pretend to believe while their heart is averse to it. The funny thing is that the parents are teaching immorality to their kids affectionately. Likewise the state high-ups to petty street-vendors back out of their commitments describing their words as not the wordings of the Scripture – infallible. In saying so they violate the very Scriptural injunctions of Verse 2 – 3: As-Saff 61.

'O you who believe! Why do you say that which you do not do?' Most hateful it is with Allah that you say that which you do not do'.

Isn't this pathetic that today's believers willfully flout the Scripture for the sake of their selfish vested interests? In this backdrop of social moral degradation and depravity, it is all the more painful to see our society beset with demons of militancy and extremism, which are in rampage and, if left unchecked, are likely to blast to dust already shaky structure of the state and virtually of the society. The most pitiable thing is that these lurking hazards are being nurtured in the name of religion with intriguing twist making fair-seeming what is actually anti-religion. This has rendered the law and order situation and virtually human society at the mercy of a single explosive

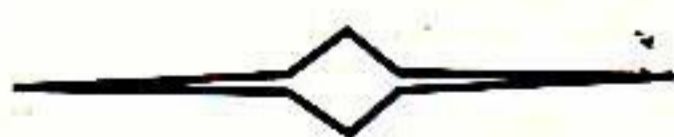
blast. Astonishingly, the pulpit is silent and the state-writ helpless. This gives a free hand to suicide bombers who would come out from nowhere to commit this heinous act of inhumanity in the name of religion, while religion strongly admonishes and proclaims undue killing as an act of oppression and mischief in the land surpassing all limits set by Allah as in verse 32: Al-Mai'dah 5.

'We ordained ... that if anyone killed a person not in retaliation of murder, or (and) to spread mischief in land – it would be as if he killed all mankind, and if anyone saved a life, it would be as if he saved the life of all mankind'.

There seems to be a total lack of socio-religious and political institutions which are indispensable for peace, security and progress of a society. It is sad that during the last 61 years of the establishment of Islamic Republic of Pakistan, no serious attempts, except half hearted efforts, are made for social reforms, political stability and territorial sovereignty.

Is it not the time to reflect seriously over the degraded state of affairs of our present society? Time is ticking on us. Anyhow, it is yet not too late. We have all the necessary Divine attributes to reaffirm the 'Trust' with a resolve to steer the ship of our life on the Straight Path of salvation. Let us salvage our life by putting our acts together according to the Quran and *Sunnah* (the legal ways) of the Prophet Mohammed (PBUH) before the last breath, which is inevitable.

Let us live and let live in Allah's way for goodness of humanity in this world and a big reward of Paradise in the Hereafter. Shouldn't We?



The Quran Vs. Evolution Theory

The Islamic concept of evolution of the universe with special reference to man stands diagonally opposed to the modern theory of evolution as propounded by Charles Darwin, a British Naturalist of the 19th Century. He bases his theory of evolution on the presumption that all species owe their origin to a process of natural selection. His research findings are published in his book, *On the Origin of Species*, in which he argues that 'traits such as size and color vary from species to species and that individual variations of these traits are passed down from parents to offspring'. He further believes that it is 'through this process of natural selection, the highly complex species today gradually evolved from earlier simpler organisms'. Since publication of the book *On the Origin of Species*, voluminous research works for or against the theory have appeared but none of them is conclusive. The advocates as well as the critics are still debating scratching their heads in bewilderment. The thought that 'all species owe their origin to a process of natural selection' is open to a variety of inquiries. The big question is about the 'Origin' itself. What is the cause of the mother Origin – i.e. the First Cause? This is like a situation of head-beating against the wall for a host of modern naturalists.

Likewise, evolution process culminating into man, as per the naturalists, spreads over billions of years. It is supposed to

have passed through a long series of evolution of species from the initial origin to the present form. The gap between the first and the final is supposedly filled with evolutionary stages of color and shape under impact of natural phenomenon like environment, climates condition, feeding means and geographical location. The question is about availability of live-specimens or relics of the evolutionary process. To simplify the matter, example of man as evolutionary form of chimpanzee, believed to be his immediate ancestor, may be quoted. Focusing on the gap between chimp and man, it may be argued that it is too quick a jump, which rocks the very foundation on which the evolutionary theory has been constructed. What to talk about evolutionary shape and color of species in between chimp and man – i.e. missing link/chain. Chimp cannot add 2 plus 2 =? On the other hand, his so-called immediate descendent (man) is proven capable of rapid strides in all the branches of learning – science, engineering, technology, electronics, medicine and other humanitarian disciplines.

Prior to having a deep look into the Quranic version of creation, it would be helpful to understand that the word creation (*Takhleeq*), in the Arabic language, has a wider meaning that an English equivalent could hold. *Takhleeq* (creation) does not imply a finished product and that is the end of it. *Takhleeq* is an ongoing process of growth and development, which never severs relationship with the past (pre-genesis elements). It works constantly on the current developments and focuses consistently on the future. In other words, *Takhleeq* is a process initiated out of nothingness and

continues with its development scheme, relevant to objectivity, with a none stop march to its ultimate finality; yielding place to the preprogrammed Resurrection. With the expansion of human intellect, it has become easier to observe that unity is the denominating factor of the wonderful creation of Allah's Universe. Evolutionary stages with different forms and colors do not, anyway, break up their bond / unity with the original / nucleus – i.e. it maintains its bond of cohesion in one form or the other. The simplest form of cohesive force is water (H₂O), a combination of hydrogen and oxygen. It moulds into any shape and always flows down slope. It evaporates under heat and turns into steam – a strong driving power. This is a unity or cohesive force, which Allah has created to run affairs of the universe. Again, to understand phenomenon like cohesive force running in the universe, it is essential to have Faith in the Supremacy of Allah, the First Cause and the Last Cause with power over all things: *'Inn-Allah-haw ala kulley shain qadeer'*. Allah is the Solo Originator Creator.

Similarly, belief in the Quran, a true revelation of Allah to the Prophet Mohammed (PBUH), would facilitate a right grasp of the significance of creation. The Quran is a unique Scripture that, while endorsing the previous Holy Books, deals with life (pre-geneses conditions) before life. *'His Throne was on water (before creation of the heavens and the earth'*. Verse 7: Hud 11.

'Have not those who disbelieve known that the heavens and the earth were joined together as one united piece, and then We (Allah) parted them? And We made from water every living thing. Will they not believe? Verse 30: Al-Anbiya 21. 'The

heaven before creation was smoke' Verse 11: Fussilat 41.

A close study of the Divine Proclamations may reinforce the belief that superstructure of the universe and its infrastructure were created out of nothingness. This is not difficult for Allah the All-Mighty. When He has decreed something, He says to it only: *'Be and it is'*. Verse 47: Al-Imran 3. Allah's Power of creation is not dependent upon any condition whatsoever. It may be time or means or instruments. His Supreme Will is the primary cause and consequence of existence. The moment He wills a thing, it becomes His Word or Command culminating into instant reality / existence.

This does not, however, exclude the existence of pre-genesis conditions of the objects created by Allah's Command. The Quran reveals: *'His Throne was on water'*. This is the Divine way of revealing secrets of creation before which, there was water. The Proclamation *'His Throne was on water'* suggests that there was nothing except water before the process of creation started. Also it may metaphorically mean that the Lord Alone controlled and regulated affairs of water prior to creation. It is difficult to know exactly what kind of water it was – its form and properties. The Divine Revelation: *'We made from water every living thing'* strengthens the belief that water contained stem-cells of all creations, which the Master Originator, the Super Designer commanded at His Will. The water contains the living matter of organisms regarded as physical basis of life. Subsequent analytical works have detected the complex semi-fluid substances that constitute life function 'the living matter of plant and animal cells and

manifest the essential life function of a cell composed of proteins, fats and other molecules suspended in water'. Allah's Creativity is manifested in every phase of nature. It is continuous, oft-repeated and never ending process. Allah's Power of ceaseless creativity is a serious rebuff to Darwinism as well as Mutation theory of evolution, which advocates that an individual called 'man' is the end product of centuries of organic growth of germ-cell.

A few more instances of the ongoing evolutionary process of the Divine creation may be quoted for better understanding. *'The heaven and the earth were one united piece (before) till separated'* Verse 30: Al-Anbya 21. *'The one united piece'* was partitioned for the great scheme of creating the earth and the heavens. Separation of the earth and the heavens from *'one united piece'* is not an accidental phenomenon. Allah's Master Plan of the earth's creation has been under study by the scientists since the dawn of history. In this respect various theories have been formulated. The most recent theory, based upon 'Quantum Mechanic' research, refutes the previously held notion of the 'Empty Space'. It observes that the outer space is full of virtual particles and antiparticles that materialize constantly in pairs, disintegrating and integrating again and destroy each other in due course of time. During this process, one member of the pair, if a black hole is close by, falls into it. The separating particle, escaping the black hole, appears as radiation coming out of the black hole. Evaporation of the black hole, at various speeds, causes its disappearance in a big blast. This leads to belief that the beginning of the earth was with a 'Big Bang' and its possible end, after consumption

of its fuel, with a 'Big Crunch'.

Interestingly, rocky uneven plateau of the planet earth (mountains and glaciers) is the source of earth balance and stability, despite 80% of it (earth) under water. The unevenness is also responsible for keeping the earth elevation above sea level enough for the survival of its living creatures including vegetation. Leveling up of the mountains would mean jeopardizing the stability, while the earth surface would be about 1000 feet below the ocean surface. With the same token, melting of the polar ice caps would submerge the earth.

As to the evolutionary stages of man's birth, the Quran is very explicit in describing as in Verse 5: Al-Hajj 22:

'... verily We have created you (Adam) from dust, then from a nutfah (mixed drop of male and female sexual discharge i.e. the offspring of Adam), then from a clot (a piece of a thick coagulated blood) then from a little lump of flesh – some formed and some unformed (as in the case of miscarriage) – that We make (it) clear to you (i.e. to show you Our Power and Ability to do what We will). And We cause whom We will to remain in the wombs for an appointed term, then We bring you out as infants, then (give you growth) that you may reach your age of full strength. And among you there is he who dies (young), and among you there is he who is brought back to the miserable old age, so that he knows nothing after having known'.

This is further elucidated in the Prophet's (PBUH) saying as

narrated by Abdullah: 'Allah's Messenger (PBUH) the true and truly inspired said, "(As regards your creation), every one of you is collected in the womb of his mother for forty days, and then he becomes clot for another forty days, and then a piece of flesh for another forty days. Then Allah sends an angle to write four words: He writes his deeds, time of his death, means of his livelihood, and whether he will be wretched or blessed (in the Hereafter)..." (Sahih Al-Bukhari, Vol. 4, Hadith No. 549)

It is 1500 years after the Quranic description of the birth process of man, Biologists and Neurologists have partially learned some details of human origination. The fertilized embryo cell in the womb develops into fetus cell in which bones are formed to be covered subsequently with flesh containing a complete nervous system and a new baby is born. At some specific point in time, during growth process of the fetus cell, certain genetic units are included, which determine hereditary / personality characteristics – i.e. imaging, intelligence, emotions, feelings attitude – a complete map of what he is going to be. This is highly mysterious dominion of Allah the All-Mighty the All-Wise.

The Quran does not stop here. While explaining destiny of man on the earth (birth, youth, old age and death) the Quran gives a graphic account of his life in the Hereafter with the same clarity as it mentions his creation and experience of heavenly celestial life before landing on the planet earth. In other words, the First Cause, the origin, various phases of evolutionary process before and after his birth in the Divine style including life in the Hereafter. This is the Divine reality. In comparison,

human theory of evolution dooms to insignificance as mere supposition based upon conjecture about occurrence of coincident leading to no conclusive proof.

Uniquely, the Quran goes beyond this temporal world with mention of the Resurrection – a brand new world of eternity for the righteous men and women with all the celestial provisions – extraordinary in characteristics beyond the grasp of ordinary human comprehension. The new world will be created '*On the day when the earth will be changed to another earth and so will be the heavens, and (all creatures) will appear before Allah, the One, the Irresistible*'. Verse 48: Ibrahim 14. There is no definite clue whatsoever to the location, formation, shape and size of the new world. Will it be a recreation out of the garbage of destruction? Will it be an automatic resurrection of the dead elements followed by a *violent shake* at the *blowing of the Trumpet*? Allah knows better. He has, however, given twofold information on the subject. First, the New World will consist of Hell with blazing fire and the Paradise with all the luxuries imaginable.

'And when Hell fire shall be set ablaze', 'And when Paradise shall be brought near'. Verse 12-13: At-Takwir 81.

As a matter of fact, none knows or can possibly imagine what kind of life will be in the Hereafter. Anyway, the life in the Hereafter would be a transition of the temporal life to spiritual life i.e. an ever continuous process of the Divine creation.

All the above may prove that basis of all creations is Unity and

benevolence existence with a specific purpose. The creation we see around is not a playful dream of Allah. It is indeed the medium of evolving our spiritual life through tests of our piety and righteousness invoking our Right of Choice. Again the core of all creations is Unity – a relationship never severed for harmonious existence.

The question that baffles the mind of today's Muslims is 'How come astronomical research works on the creation of the universe together with its paraphernalia by the advanced modern sciences are not conclusive enough to understand the dynamics of Allah's system of creation? The answer is simple. All knowledge comes from Allah Who Alone has the grasp of Ultimate Realities. Allah's creation is a process created out of nothingness and continues with its development scheme, relevant to objectivity, with a non-stop march to its ultimate finality, yielding place to the pre-programmed Resurrection. These dynamics of the process, better termed as Ultimate Realities, are just a reflection of the Supreme Wisdom; governing, regulating and sustaining the symphony of light shade, color and sound of the creation.

The Quran is the record of Allah's Revelation to Prophet Mohammed (PBUH). It contains the Divine Proclamations about creation – the absolute and infallible data about the formation of the universe and all its objects. It should be treated as such. Conversely, Charles Darwin theory of evolution like a number of other theories are simply ideas or presumptions based upon human conjecture. These theories should better be treated as theories – a product of human

limited intellect good for further investigation. These theories, as such, should not be taken as final definitive words. These research works are, however, a tremendous help to understand and testify the validity and existence of Allah's Dominion, which is running with the Supreme Wise System. Ignorance keeps you away from the truth. Knowledge brings you back to reality when you recognize Oneness of Supremacy of the Great Lord: *'Allah! La ilaha alla Huwa (none has the right to be worshipped but He), the Ever Living (the First Cause), the One Who sustains, and protects all that exists'*. Verse 2: Al-Imran 3.

'... He created you (Adam) from dust, and then [Hawwa (Eve) from Adam's rib and then his offspring from the semen, and] – behold you are human beings scattered'. Verse 20: Ar-Rad 13.

'...He has subjected the sun and the moon (to continue going round each running) its course) for a term appointed. He manages and regulates all affairs: He explains the Ayat (proofs, evidences, verses, lessens, signs, revelations etc.) in detail that you may believe with certainty in the meeting with your Lord'. Verse 2: Ar-Rad 13.

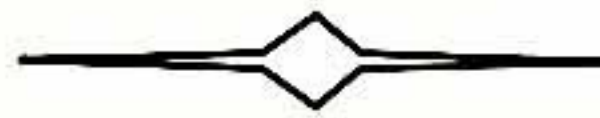
'And it is He Who spread the earth, and place therein firm mountains, rivers and every kind of fruits He made Zawjan Ithnain (two in pairs). He brings the night as a cover over the day. Verily, in these things there are Ayat for people who reflect'. Verse 3: Al-Rad 13.

Let the naturalists and the Biologists theorize their deliberations and ponderings over life of nature. Of course,

they inspire further investigation into secrets of the universe for discovery of the hidden powers of nature to be harnessed for the benefit of humanity. However, their finding should be taken as a useful source of information rather than a definitive verdict parallel to the Divine version.

Allah, the Supreme Architect has created a wonderful world blessed with limitless bounties for mankind. We should be thankful to the Great Lord. As an expression of our gratitude let us live together in peace and harmony in consonance with obedience and submission to the Great Lord for goodness of humanity globally and a big reward (Paradise) in the Hereafter. This is an extreme success.

Let us all go for it.



Kun Fayakoon' (Be – and it is!) Vs. Six Day Creation of Earth & Heavens

Note: The two Divine Proclamations appear contradictory. Is it so?
To find out the truth – read this article.

At the very outset, we read Allah's Proclamation as in Verse 82: Ya-sin 36. *'Verily His Command, when He intends a thing, is only that He says to it "Be –and it is!"*. This is a profound expression, in net-shell, of Oneness of Power and Oneness of Supremacy of the Great Lord of the universe. In other words, this exclusive power is shared by none but the One irresistible the All-Wise. *'... Allah creates what He wills. When He has decreed something, He says it only: 'Be – and it is!'* Verse 47: Al-Imran 3.

In contrast to *'Be –and it is !'*, Allah says in Verse 3: Yunus 10. *'Surely your Lord is Allah Who created the heavens and the earth in six days'*. Seemingly, the Divine Verdict of 6 day creation of earth and the heavens stands in sharp contradiction with the Proclamation – *'Be – and it is!'*. Our study is devoted to analyze the apparent contradiction between the two Divine Proclamations in order to discover the truth. For easy understanding, we break up the Command into two parts. First part includes *'Be'* – this denotes Allah's Command whiles the second part – *'and it is!'* implies compliance with the

Command. It is easy to understand that the Command initiated with 'Be' is a moment followed by compliance '*and it is!*', which is a process of compliance with the Command. To sum up, Command is a moment and compliance is a process subject to the laws of nature. Occurrence (beginning) of the process is initiated instantaneously but completion of the process, under strict laws of nature, requires time and space. The end form of compliance may take time depending upon various phases of the creative process. This explanation could better be understood with reference to Allah's Words as in Verse 45: Al-Imran 3.

'(Remember) when the angel said: "O Maryam (Mary)! Allah gave you glad tidings of a 'word' [Be – and he was! i.e. Isa (Jesus)], the son of Maryam (Mary) from Him, His name will be Messiah, Isa (Jesus) and he will be one of those who are near to Allah".'

The case of Isa (Jesus) serves as an irrefutable proof of Allah's Mighty Words – '*Be – and he was!*'. A close study of the above Verse makes clear two segments of Allah's Command i.e. 'Be!' – the Divine Command for initiation of Isa's (Jesus) birth along with the entire process in three stages: 1) Nutfah (semen), 2) Alaqah (clot), 3) Mudghah (flesh). These stages are developed '*in three veils (chambers) of darkness*' Verse 14: Nuh 71. In the meanwhile, another process is also at work, which predetermines genetic makeup of personality characteristics – imaging including intelligence, emotions, feelings, tendencies, inclinations, attitude, industry, patience – a complete map of what he is going to be in terms of fate and destiny. These personality traits are inhabited in the singular chromosome that ultimately succeeds in fertilizing embryo cell. In Allah's Words of Verse 12, 13 & 14: Al-Mu'minun 23.

'And indeed We created man (Adam) out of an extract of clay (water and earth). Therefore We made him (the offspring of Adam) as a "Nutfah" (a mixed drops of the male and female sexual discharge and lodged it) in a safe lodging (womb of the woman)'.

'Then We made the Nutfah into a clot (a piece of thick coagulated blood), then We made the clot into a little lump of flesh, then We made out of that little lump of flesh bones, then clothed the bones with flesh, and then We brought it forth as another creation, So Blessed is Allah, the best of creators'. |

The realm of such high mystery is perhaps beyond the human intelligence to uncover. The following Hadith of the Prophet Mohammed (PBUH) may serve as a beautiful illustration of the process of man's creation.

Hadith

Narrated Abdullah, may Allah hold him in His Favor: "Allah's Messenger (PBUH), truly inspired, said: '(As regard your creation), every one of you is collected in the womb of his mother for the first forty days, then he becomes a clot for another forty days, then a piece of flesh for another forty days. Then Allah sends an angel to write four words. He writes – 1) his deeds 2) time of his death 3) means of his livelihood and 4) whether he will be wretched or blessed (in the Hereafter). Then soul is breathed into his body. So a man may do deeds characteristics of the people of The (Hell) Fire, so much so that there is only a distance of a cubit between him and it, and then what has been written (by the angel) surpasses; and so he starts doing deeds characteristics of the people of the Paradise and enters

Paradise. Similarly, a person may do deeds characteristics of the people of the Paradise, so much so that there is a distance of a cubit between him and it, and then what has been written (by the angel) surpasses, he starts doing deeds of the people of (the Hell) Fire and enters the (Hell) Fire'. (Sahih Al-Bukhari Vol. 4, Hadith No. 549).

Reverting to the case of Isa (Jesus), the entire process of Isa's (Jesus) birth, growth and age of full strength with knowledge and Prophet-hood and his being *near to Allah* (spread over 32 years till he was taken up to the heavens and even the time of his descent on the earth till his natural death) – all is the process – '*and he was!*' in compliance with Allah's Command: '*Be!*'. What we learn from this is that Allah's Command: '*Be:*' is a moment of initiation of the relevant process of compliance subject to the laws of nature. The timeframe of completion of the process (- '*and it is*') may vary depending on the individual case.

There is still another simpler way to understand mechanism of interplay of the Command and its compliance based upon principle of 'Casual sequence' or observation of Allah's Signs (*Ayat*) giving clues to the Divine Way of conducting ordinary affairs of the universe with reference to man. For example, man prays for grant of his wish to migrate to the USA. Allah accepts his invocation. Man does not know about it. He simply hopes for fulfillment of his desire – still there are slips between the cup and lips. His vision is not sharp enough to grasp the event likely to happen in future. There is still a time gap between the moment of acceptance of his prayer by Allah and its actual fulfillment, which is dependent on a certain process – i.e. applying for Visa, grant of the Visa and travel arrangement etc. The process also includes his boarding the airplane and 14 hour flight to New York, USA. This entire process culminating

into actual fulfillment of his ardent wish would have not been possible had Allah not granted his prayer earlier in advance.

Having dwelled on our discussions of the significance of Allah's Command: *'Be – and he was!'*, it would be appropriate to take up the case of Six Day Creation of the Earth and the Heavens as in the Divine Words of Verse 3: Yunus 10.

'Surely, Your Lord is Allah Who created the heavens and the earth in six days then He rose to (Istawa) the Throne (really in a manner that suits His Majesty), disposing affairs of all things'.

The point to remember is that it took 6 days for the process to complete creation of the earth and the heavens along with all the objects between them. The process of creating the humongous universe in 6 days was initiated by Allah's Command; 'Be!'. Details of the process are hinted upon by Allah's Statements with scientific implication: *'... and His (Allah's) Throne was on water...'* (Verse 7: Hud 11). *'Have not those who disbelieve known that the heavens and the earth were joined together as one united piece, then We (Allah) parted them? And We made from water every living thing. Will they not believe?'* (Verse 30: Al-Anbiya 21). The Verse simply implies that there was only water before creation of the universe. What kind of water was it? What were its properties? This is still a big question mark. It is not clear that the water was the same as it is today or it was in the form of liquid nucleus. Only Allah knows better. The Biological science supports the theory that water is the source of origin of all living things. 'Apart from the fact that protoplasm, the original basis of the living water, is liquid or semi liquid and in a state of constant flux and instability, this is the fact that land animals,

like the higher vertebrates, including men, show in their embryological history, origin like fish, an indication of the watery origin of their original habitat'. (A Yusuf Ali: The Holy Quran).

Besides, separation of the earth and the heavens from '*one united piece*' is not an accidental phenomenon. The recent most theory, based upon 'Quantum mechanics' observes that the outer space is full of particles and antiparticles that materialize constantly in pairs, disintegrating and integrating again and destroy each other in due course of time. During this process, one member of the pair, if a black hole is close by, falls into it. The separating particle, escaping the black hole, appears as radiation coming out of the black hole. Evaporation of the black hole, at various speeds, causes its disappearance in a big blast. This leads to a belief that the beginning of the earth was with a 'Big Bang' and its possible end, after consumption of its fuel, would be with a 'Big Crunch'.

The master plan of the earth's creation has been drawn by the Divine Architect with a major objective of supplying essential provisions for different forms of life on it – plants dominion, animals' dominion, sea-world and mankind. Having taken care of the entire planet earth Allah turned to the creation of seven heavens out of the left over material as in Verse 12: Fussilat 41.

'Then He created and finished from their creation (as) seen heavens and He made in each heaven its affair. And We adorned the nearest (lowest) heaven with lamps (stars) as adornment as well as to guard. Such is the decree of Him, the All-Mighty'.

Each heaven has been assigned its respective role and function.

The first heaven has been decorated with the sun, the moon and countless galaxies of stars – all moving without deviation on their fixed orbit for a *'predetermined term'*. A vast number of stars, 88 constellations and two thousand stars, visible to the eye at a time, serve as a source of light, decoration, guidance and protection.

'Verily, We have adorned the near heaven with the stars (for beauty)'. Verse 6 As-Saffat 37.

'Blessed is He Who made constellations in the skies, and placed therein a lamp and a moon giving light'.

Verse 62: Furqan 25.

Allah's creation of the sun, producing light and heat needed for all forms of life on the earth, has been estimated as 4.7 million years old by the modern scientists, whose calculations further reveal that the sun is like a big nuclear fusion reactor with surface temperature 6000 c and center temperature 15000.000 c. Due to the high degree of temperature, fusion of hydrogen atoms generate glowing brightness. Some hydrogen atoms, that escape the transformation into energy, appear as light and heat on the sun's surface. Scientists also argue that the sun would eventually exhaust its fuel and die.

'And the sun runs on its fixed course for a term (appointed). That is the Decree of the All-Mighty, the All-Knower'. 'And the moon, We have measured for it mansions (to traverse) till it turns like the old dried curved date stalk'.

'It is not for the sun to overtake the moon, nor does the night outstrip the day. They all float, each in an orbit'. Verse 38, 39 & 40: Ya-Sin 36.

Winding up the discussion, it may be submitted that the creation of the earth and the heavens together with the entire paraphernalia came to their completion in six days covering various phases of the creative process – initiation, growth and expansion into new formation. Each succeeding phase is dependent on the completion of the previous phase of the process. This cause and effect phenomenon is necessary for continuous growth and development of the new elements of advancement from one phase to the other till the end of creation plan. A series of phases occur one after another taking place and time depending on the relevant laws of nature. It may be reiterated that the sequence order of these phases has to abide by certain laws. No phase, out of the series, can develop or supersede the other. Each subsequent phase has to wait for its turn till the completion of the previous one. In other words, the succeeding phase depends on certain conditions created by the first one because the new phase is always the continuation or extension of the conditions created by the previous one for ultimate creation of the planned object.

For easy understanding the complexity of interdependence and interaction of various phases of creative process set in motion by the single Command, we quote an ordinary example of 'Cake Baking'. Someone wills to bake a cake. 'Will' is a prompting command. The process of cake baking begins including dough – making, turning on oven, setting the required temperature, placing the cake pan in the oven and waiting for one hour baking time. In this instance: '*Be!*' ('Will') is the command – '*and it is!*' (the baked cake after due process time).

To sum up, Allah's Command: '*Be!*' initiated and virtually put into motion all the necessary ingredients as well as governing

laws, which ultimately resulted into creation of the earth and the heavens by virtue of six day process of various phase needed for creation of such a gigantic universe. Allah's Command '*Be! – and it is*' (6 Day creation of the earth and the heavens) is very true without any contradiction or ambiguity. Allah, the All-Knower, the All-Wise knows better.

Important Note

Before closing the narrative, a note of caution against the pitfall of misunderstanding would be appropriate. It should be kept in mind that the terms 'creation' and 'miracle' have different meaning and connotation although they both occur under *Hukmay Rabbi* (Allah's Command). Creation implies a creative process of initiation, development and expansion abiding by the laws of nature. On the other hand, miracle, literary speaking, is an occurrence of event defying all the known natural principles and common experience – an extraordinary event attributed to the act of Allah, which baffles human intellect and perception. Interestingly, the data based upon discoveries of mysteries surrounding these astounding phenomena (miracles) by the modern science have strengthen the belief in the 'Possibility' of 'Power' that controls and regulates the entire system – beyond the limit line of ordinary experience and perception.

There is still another category of supernatural occurrences with inexplicable cause. The occurrences offer a clear-cut definitive purpose of convincing the people in the All-Mighty Power of the Supreme Creator. These events are simply termed as miracles of Allah performed through the agency of His Messengers as a vivid proof of righteousness of their claim to be the 'Chosen Ones'. Mention of a few such supernatural

events out of the Quran would be a fascinating illustration. Coolness of the huge fire on Ibrahim (Abraham), when he was tossed in, as punishment for proclamation of Monotheism (Oneness of Allah) in denunciation of fidelity and repudiation of false deities. As in Verse 69: Anbiya 21: *'We (Allah) said: "O Fire! Be you coolness and safety for Ibrahim (Abraham)'"*.

Another proof of Allah's Absolute Power may be found in Ibrahim's (Abraham) act of slaughtering four birds and scattering their small pieces on the surrounding mountains, Later on, Ibrahim (Abraham) called them and the birds, resurrected out of the pieces, flew back to him – a great sign of Allah's Mighty Power.

'And (remember) when Ibrahim (Abraham) said, 'My Lord! Show me how you give life to the dead'. He (Allah) said, "Do you not believe?" He [Ibrahim (Abraham)] said: "Yes (I believe) but to be stronger in Faith". He said: "Take four birds, then cause them to incline towards you (then slaughter them, cut them into pieces), and then put a portion of them on every hill, and call them, they will come to you in haste. And know that Allah is All-Mighty, All-Wise". Verse 260: Al-Baqarah 2.

There is a story of deliverance of the Children of Israel from the tyrannical clutches of Firaun (Pharaoh), through a dry passage created by split of the sea as in Verse 63: As-Shu'ara 42.

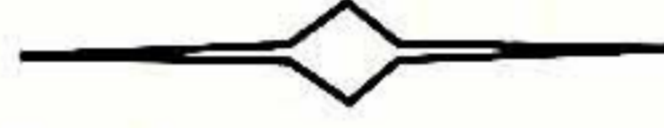
'Then We (Allah) revealed to Musa (Moses) (saying) "Strike the sea with your stick". And it parted and each separate part (of the sea water) became like huge mountain'.

The Children of Israel passed through the partition of the sea to safety. The chasing Firaun (Pharaoh) along with his mighty

army drowned.

Likewise, the Prophet Isa (Jesus) spoke to the people in the cradle (while infant). He made a figure of a clay bird, which came to life when he breathed into it. He could heal the lepers and those born blind. He could revive the dead – all by Allah's Permission. Verse 110: Al-Maidah 5).

It may be remembered that the miracles were wrought for people's security against evil and thereby to strength their belief in the Supreme Being. The miracles, however, were time bound and exhausted their utility with the passage of time. Posterity remembers them as a record of the past.



The Glorious Quran – Not a Mythical Book

Majority of today's Muslims do not read the Quran. A few read it seeking Allah's Blessings although they do not bother to understand the meaning. Unfortunately, a number of myths and superstitions are quoted as a result of reciting certain portions out of the Quran in a specific number at a particular time of the day. This presumption has taken the form of a ritual commonly known as *Chilla* practiced individually or in a group. The idea is to invoke spiritual influence for fulfillment of unsatisfied wishes. As a result, certain Quranic chapters are designated as having a special charm to cure diseases, cast away evil influence on men or their dwelling places, solve economic problem, patch up of property or matrimonial disputes, regain love lost and win litigation cases. There is a much propagated method of reciting these Verses for certain number of times daily with full concentration and solemnity of faith to achieve the desired results. For convenience of the people small booklets, with collection of these Verses, have flooded the market. Consequently, the brain-washed innocent people are reading only these booklets of *Fazails* without understanding their meanings. All this is done blindly ignoring the rest of the Quran. The focus of hope is on the well preached worldly gains without having striven for them. This sounds easy and beautiful. Do you agree?

It may be noted that the meaning of oft-repeated Verses in the booklets neither signify any automatic cure nor so-called impact of a magic wand to solve the people's problems. Besides, the selected Verses in the booklets have no reference

to the context and as such make no sense. Allah revealed these Verses with some truthful purpose, which could be understood better with reference to the background. Whatever the Divine Purpose is, it is definitely not as it is popularly believed and practiced by way of rituals to achieve low demeaning objectives – a hope for quick fix of problems without having worked for it. Is there any where in the Quran mention of *Fazaills* of particular Verses detached from the other ones? Many innocent people are, however, mesmerized to read only these booklets for solution of all their problems. This tendency is taking people away from the Quran as a complete comprehensive Book of Allah. It is like reading certain portions while ignoring rest of the Quran. Is there any authority permitting this? Are we not driving ourselves towards a group of unfortunate people the Apostle (PBUH) apprehended as in Verse 30: Al-Furqan 25?

'My Lord! Verily, My people deserted this Quran (neither listen to it, nor acted on its laws and teachings).'

Besides, reading certain selected parts of the Quran and ignoring the others is like dividing the Book i.e. believing in one part and disbelieving in the other. This practice of pick and choose at one's sweet will has been described as a sinful act – a warning to the disbelievers of the Apostle's (PBUH) period in particular. In general, its implication encompasses all humanity till the Day of Judgment as in Verse 89 – 93: Al-Hijr 15.

'And say [O Mohammed (PBUH)] "I am indeed a plain warner". 'As We have sent down on the dividers (Quraish pagans, Jews and Christians)'. 'Who have made the Quran into parts (i.e. believed in one part, and disbelieve in the other)'. 'So by your Lord, [O Mohammed (PBUH)], We shall certainly call

all of them to account'. 'For all that they used to do'.

It is quite time that the Muslims should understand and remember what the Quran is about. It consists of Allah's Words revealed to Prophet Mohammed (PBUH) '*...as a guidance and glad tidings to those who have submitted to (Allah as Muslims)*'. Verse 102: An-Nahl 17. The Quran may be defined as a teaching Book on the moral ethical aspects of human conduct, which is the best for mankind to live on earth with honor, dignity and happiness as well as a sure guarantee of eternal delight (Paradise) in the Hereafter. This is Allah's Assurance as in Verse 9: Al-Isra 17.

'Verily, this Quran guides to that which is most just and right and gives glad tidings to the believers who perform deeds of righteousness, that they shall have a great reward'.

Reading the Quran is like seeing and hearing the words from Allah. This feeling leads to realization of the Divine Presence when man is in communion with his Lord – i.e. ordinary is connected with the extra-ordinary, finite with the infinite, mortal with the immortal and low with the highest. All this is achieved at once by simply saying *Allah ho Akbar* without intermediary agency. The Supreme Communion unleashes the hidden capacities of an individual to think, understand and plan better his affairs of life for successful results. Performance of piety and righteousness opens up a gate-way to success, honor and prosperity and sky is the limit. This may be understood as a glorious impact of following the Quranic instructions for betterment of humanity in both the temporal and spiritual worlds.

This explains the dynamic power of the Quran. Simple

recitation of the Quran with wrapped up attention and solemnity of faith provides comfort and solace to the heart and mind when one feels above the personal distress and pressure. This is called spiritual comfort – enkindling within light of hope and satisfaction when one feels that he is not alone. Some Superior Being is watching him. *'Verily in the remembrance of Allah do hearts find rest'*. (Verse 28: Ar-Rad 13). Understanding of the Quranic Message and practically complying with Allah's Commands as per the Apostle's (PBUH) ways (Sunnah) give man the ability to find the ways out of difficulties of life – social, moral, ethical, economic and political. Thus wounds of depressing failures begin to heal up by virtue of Allah's Mercy. This is Allah's Promise as in Verse 88: Al-Isra 17. *'And We (Allah) sent down of the Quran that which is healing and a mercy to those who believe ...'* The concept finds support from the Prophet's (PBUH) Hadith (Ref. Sahih Al-Bukhari, Vol. 9 Chap. 2, page 282):

Narrated Hudaifah: Allah's Messenger (PBUH) said to us, "Certainly *Al-Amanah* (the trust or the moral responsibility of honesty, and all the duties, which Allah has ordained) descended from the heavens and settled in the roots of the hearts of men (faithful believers), and then the Quran was revealed and the people read the Quran, (and learnt *Al-Amanah* from it) and also learnt it from the *Sunnah* (the legal ways)".

This means all virtues (piety, righteousness, ability, rationality, will, determination, patience, love, tolerance, mercy, benevolence, compassion etc.) are floating in the atmosphere. Reading of the Quran with understanding of Allah's Message of Monotheism is a way to enkindle the light of these virtues in one's being for their productive impact – starting from the individual self to his environment and the society as a whole.

This is called power impact of the Quran, which Allah explains in Verse 10: Al-Anbiya 21.

'Indeed, We (Allah) have sent down for you (O mankind) a Book (the Quran) in which there is Dhikrukum, (your Reminder or an honor for you i.e. honor for the one who follows the teachings of the Quran and acts on its teachings), Will you not then understand?'

There is no short cut to reap benefits of the Glorious Quran. Pick and choose method is, not at all, of any help. Regular systematic study of the Quran with understanding is a must to grasp the true spirit of the Message, which offers a powerful guidance to *'What is most just and right (morality)'* for salvation of suffering humanity – a sure *'healing'* of the social, moral, ethical and economic wounds as in Allah's Words in Verse 82: Al-isra 17.

'And We (Allah) sent down of the Quran that which is healing and mercy to those who believe ...'

To understand the significance of the above, a quick reference is made to the collapsing Arab society of the pre-revelation period. The people were deprived of the basic rights to a decent life and disconnected from spiritual inspiration. The people were barely surviving under choking exploitation at the hand of a small clique of arrogant tyrants. Their situation was no more different than in some parts of the Muslims soils today. The Quranic ideology of Islamic Monotheism helped the Arabian society. There is no doubt about it. History stands as a witness. Even today, the study of the Quran would help us first to discover the intimate relationship between the Divinity and humanity and secondly to uncover means of adjustment with

today's changing atmosphere. The skeptics should better find an answer to a question: when the Islamic ideology worked for the ancient Arabs then – why it shouldn't for today's Muslims?

Undoubtedly, the Quran is the Divine Inspiration with an eternal element of universality in its appeal. It never stops extending invitation to Islamic Monotheism for temporal reform and spiritual salvation. Its inspirational Message is not confined to a specific climate, territory, people, time and period. Its power impact is an on-going process. The adherents derive out of its Spiritual Inspiration not only aesthetic contentment but also healing balm for temporal ills. The Quran, with its direct address to man – so candid and powerful – connects ordinary with the Most High in such a way that a close communion is established, where harmony of dialogue, between the Lord and His Vice-Regent, reaches its climax. Essentially, the Quran is an eternal guidance for the right conduct of life in this world and enlightenment to the Straight Path of ultimate success (Paradise) in the Hereafter.

It is, therefore, important to read the Quran systematically whole of it rather than splitting it – i.e. believe in certain parts while ignoring others altogether. The practice of reading the Quran in its entirety is necessary to grasp fully the true spirit of its Message of Islamic Monotheism in order to invoke Allah's Guidance for betterment of humanity in both the worlds. It pays to remember that unflinching faith in Oneness of Allah, persistent noble deeds and world-wide winning love of humanity are the indispensable prerequisites of the Quranic Message for changing destiny of peoples globally. The precondition of seeking Allah's Guidance for success, honor and prosperity has been vividly conveyed in Verse 2: Al-Baqarah 2. *'This is the Book (the Qur'an), whereof there is no*

doubt, a guidance to those who are Muttaqun [the pious and righteous persons who fear Allah much (abstain from all kinds of sins and evil deeds, which He has forbidden) and love Allah much (perform all kinds of good deeds which He has ordained)]'.

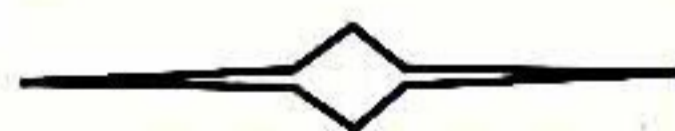
Summing up the discussion, there is no excuse whatsoever for not understanding the Quran and acting upon the Divine Commands. Time for pick and choose is over. It is a time for entering Islam fully. This is the only solution to the present crisis peoples are suffering from in all the Muslim soils. Pakistan in particular is at the brink of destruction and possible collapse if no protective measures are undertaken at urgent basis. The general public of Pakistan is the most hit target. They are being crushed under heavy weight of poverty, disease and unemployment. Seemingly, they have no hope, no will and no aspiration. They are defeated within and without. There seems to be no ray of light at the end of dark tunnel of gloom and destitution. On the top of it, some people are misleading the poor folk in the name of religion for their own vested interests. They have designated some portions out of the Quran as a ready-made solution to their sufferings. The market abounds in such booklets, tapes and videos. This is a bold distraction of the innocent people from the truth. Someone is minting money anyway. Additionally, in the political arena, a tug of war for power and control is going on under the pretext of Islamic cause. Each warring group is accusing the other for heretic activities of jeopardizing the name of Islam. This so-called holy fighting is causing a devastating blow to law and order, state writ, life and property of thousands of helpless people of Fata, Swat and northern regions. There is no check on these barbaric acts of plundering, looting, robbing and blowing up of properties indiscriminately involving thousands of

innocent lives of men, women and children – all in the fair name of Islam. Islam means peace. It is disturbing to see the horrifying drama of inhumanity staged regularly in the name of Islamic Jihad, which has entirely different connotation. The situation has gotten out of control. Human security has become impossible. You step out of the house. There is no surety of your safe return. Suicide explosion, any moment at any place, may disrupt life and destiny of hundreds of peoples. The Quran condemns it and teaches quite the opposite of it as in words of Verse 32: Al-Ma'idah 5.'

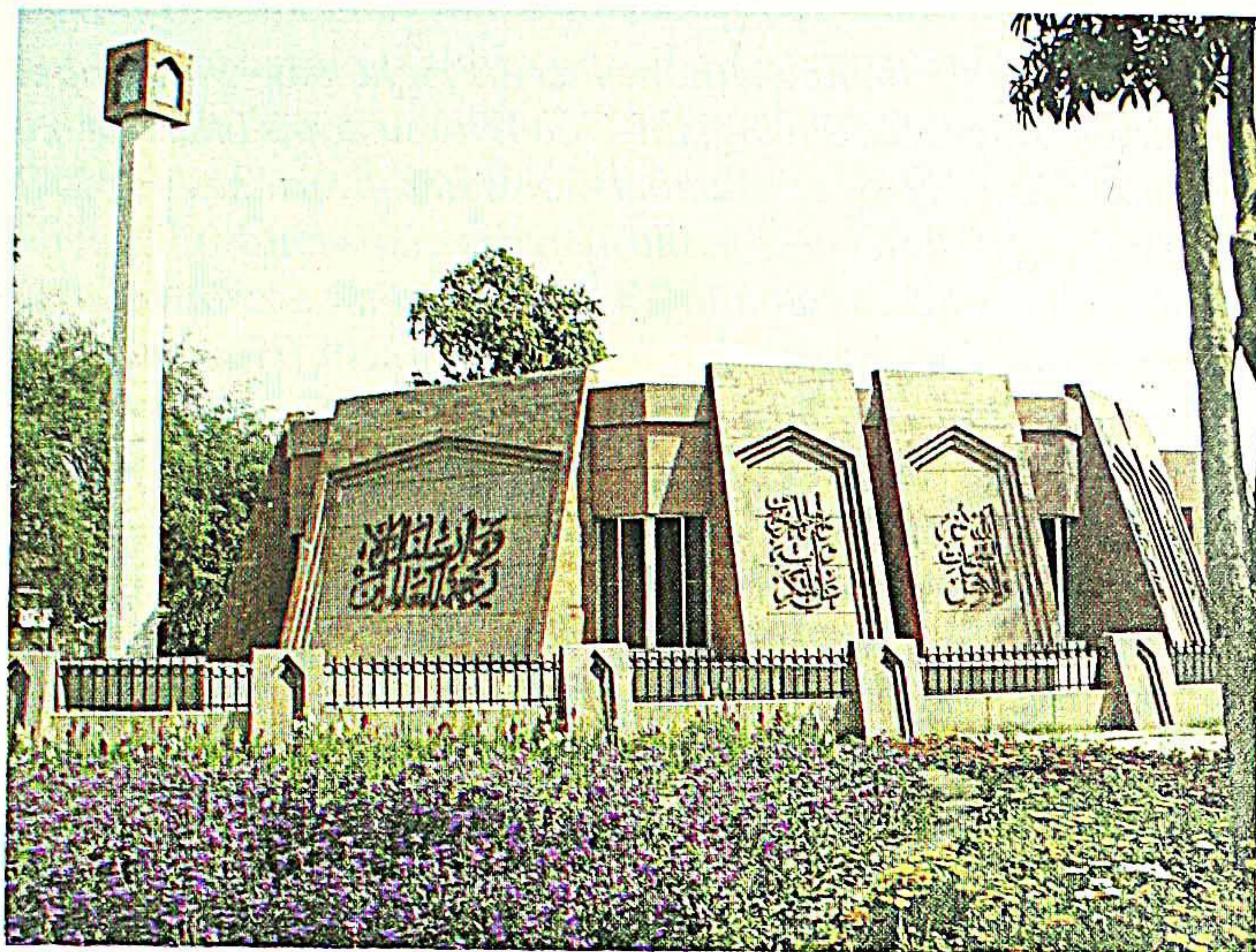
...We (Allah) ordained for the Children of Israel that If anyone killed a person not in retaliation of murder, or to spread mischief in the land – it would be as if he killed all mankind, and if anyone saved a life, it would be as if he saved the life of all the mankind...

It is reasonable to believe that the Quran is the only hope to enlighten the path of redemption in the darkness of selfish exploitation, economic depression, social disparity, moral suppression and spiritual deprivation. How could a Muslim afford not to read the Quran on which, depends salvation of humanity globally in both the temporal and spiritual worlds?

Please read the Quran with understanding of Allah's Message.



Divinity, Preordainment & Human Conduct



One Creator

Whose Command is what His people wish for.

The term 'Divinity' implies a force that controls, regulates and sustains affairs of the universe and all its objects – animate as well as inanimate. As such, it points to the Supreme Being – personification of the force as revealed in the Quranic Verse

255 of Al-Baqarah 2, also known as '*Ayat-ul- Kursi*'. This is a unique Verse, in which Allah describes His Own peculiar characteristics in the Divine Style enriched with deep spiritual significance.

'Allah! La ilaha illa huwa (none has the right to be worshipped but Allah), the Ever Loving, the One Who sustains and protects all that exists. Neither slumber nor sleep overtakes Him. To Him belongs whatever is in the heavens and whatever is on the earth. Who is he that can intercede with Him except with His Permission? He knows what happens to them (His creatures) in this world, and what will happen to them in the Hereafter. And they will never compass anything of His Knowledge except that which He wills. His Kursi extends over the heavens and the earth and He feels no fatigue in guarding and preserving them. And He is the Most High, the Most Great'.

These Verses at once establish Oneness of Lordship, Oneness of Worship and Oneness of Supremacy.

Additionally, the simplest most definition of the 'Divine Force' has been summed up in Verse 20: Al-Baqarah 2 as:-

'Inn-Allah haw ala kulley shain qadir'
(Certainly, Allah has power over all things).

The Great Lord's Force runs in the heavens and all the celestial objects. Likewise, the same Force is operative in every thing on earth – animate or inanimate. This means Allah is the Solo Originator and Creator.

Allah's creation, however, should not be understood in the ordinarily sense of the term. The Divine creation – Takhleeq in Arabic has a much wider meaning than its English equivalent could hold. The term Takhleeq does not denote creation /making of something like a finished product and that is the end of it. For example, Takhleeq of the heavens and earth in six days does not mean that this is the finished end of it. Creation, when it means Takhleeq in Arabic implies an ongoing process of sprouting, growing, flowering, decaying and sprouting again. This is a continuous cyclic process till the End.

The process is necessary to preserve freshness / newness for continuous healthy future expansion. This may explain that the process of creation, as manifested in the present developments, is an extension of the pre-genesis elements. Below is a brief list of pre-genesis condition of some of the creations as revealed in the Quran.

'All the living things are made from water' V 30: Ambyia 21. 'And indeed We created man from dried (sounding) clay of altered mud' Verse 26: Al-Hijir 15. 'And the jinn We created aforetime from the smokeless flame of fire' Verse 27: Al-Hijir 15. 'Angels are created of light'. 'The heavens and the earth were one united piece (before) till separated' Verse 30: Al-Ambyia 21

'The heaven (before creation) was smoke Verse 11: Fussilat 41. His (Allah's) throne was on water before creation of the heavens and the earth' Verse 7: Hud 11.

It was Allah Who first began the process of creation, which brought about the present developments. At the same time, the process never ceased its focus on the future. 'In other words, creation is a process initiated out of nothingness and continues with its developmental scheme, relevant to objectivity, with a non-stop march to its ultimate finality; yielding place to the pre-programmed Resurrection'.

This explains the dynamic nature of Creation. The knowledge of these forces impacting creation, better termed as 'Ultimate Realities' is a reflection of the Supreme Wisdom; governing regulating and sustaining the symphony of light, shade and sound of the Creation'.

The Divinity is recognized by Ayat (proofs, verses, evidences, revelations, lessens, signs and symbols of Allah) spread all over in the heavens and the earth. A close study of these signs would make it easier to understand and recognize Allah:

'He is Allah, The Creator, The Inventor of all things, The Bestower of forms. To Him belong the Best Names. All that is in the heavens and in the earth glorify Him. And He is The All-Mighty, The All-Wise' V24: Al-Hashr 59.

Preordainments / Al-Qadar

Before embarking upon a detailed explanation of the meaning

and significance of Al-Qadar, it would be helpful to first refer to Allah's Words in this context as below:

'Therein (the night of Al-Qadar) is decreed every matter of ordainments [(i.e. the matters of deaths, births, provisions, calamities for the whole (coming) year are decreed by Allah.)]. (Verse 4: Ad-Dukhan 44)

'Verily, We have created All things with Qadar (Divine Preordainments of all things before their creation as written in the Book of Decrees – Al-Lauh Al-Mahfuz)'. Verse 49: Al-Qamar 54. 'And every thing, small and big, is written down'. (Verse 53: Al-Qamar 54) 'No calamity befalls on earth or in your-selves but it is inscribed in the Book of Decrees (Al-Laugh Al-Mahfuz) before We bring it into existence...' Verse 22: Al-Hadid 57.

These Verses make it very clear that Al-Laugh Al-Mahfuz is Allah's Archive preserving the Book of Decrees, which, in the simplest-words, contains record of every thing that befalls or done by its doer in the heavens and the earth before and after their creation till the End (the Resurrection). Even the flavor of post Resurrection life (Paradise or Hell) as revealed in the Quran has already been inscribed in the Book.

It would be quite appropriate to believe that The Book of Decrees, guarded by the honorable angles in the heavens, is a comprehensive document of pre-genesis conditions of the universe and all things that exist in it. Briefly speaking, it is an exhaustive account of the creation and purpose of the heavens – the celestial objects, the angles, the Paradise and the Hell –

and every thing that exists on earth. The process of genesis culminated into six-day creation of the earth, seven heavens, and celestial bodies like the sun, the moon and the stars along with their well determined purpose. Six-day time frame also covered assignments of the angles, programming of the sun, the moon and stars for their continuous rotation in their pre-determined orbit for an appointed time – all this is spelled out in detail in the Book of Decrees including spreading of the earth with lofty mountains as pegs to maintain its balance. The animals and plants dominions – their chemistry, botany, biology etc. that control the growth, development and sustenance of life – are measured out with due measurements. The contents of the Book of Decrees are especially devoted to affairs of the Alamin (mankind, jinn and all that exists). It contains a detailed reference to the creation of man – his nature, psychology and, above all, '*blowing of the soul in man (Adam) with Allah's Breath*'. The Divine Breath infused in the 'mud man' spirit of walking and talking along with distinguished characteristics like thinking, analyzing, calculation, resolution, determination and feeling of compassion, joy, sorrow and remorse, which made him an intelligent human being – superior to all the creations (*Ashraf-ul-Mukhlokat*) with 'mega billion forces concentrating on him as well as emitting out of him'.

The Book of Decrees may simply be understood as the Divine Ultimate Document consisting of an elaborate account of nature, meaning and explanation of all affairs of the universe and its all things / actions / activities before their occurrence. In short, it deals with matters before and after creation and even

affairs in The Hereafter. The Quranic Verse 2: Al-Furqan 25 proclaims:

'He (Allah) has created everything, and has measured it exactly according to its due measurements'.

Likewise, the Verses 1 – 3: Al-A'la 87 further explain working of the All-Mighty regarding creation as:

*'Glorify the Name of your Lord, the Most High,
'Who has created (everything) and then proportioned it.'
'And Who has measured (preordainments for every thing even to be blessed or wretched); and then guide (i.e. showed mankind the right as well as the wrong paths and guided the animals to pasture)'.*

This evidences the belief that all knowledge is with Allah, the Wise Author of the Book of Decrees. All the objects, animate and inanimate, proceed from His Supreme Power. With His Command, some knowledge of the seen as well as the unseen is given to His Messengers through Revelation. The other avenues of learning are intelligence and reasoning through the media of senses, which discover hidden forces, harness them and exploit them for gainful productive uses. Animals and plants are endowed with a peculiar genetic culture and instinct, which eliminate the need of intelligence and reasoning ability in them. Animals and plants do not have a freedom of choice, as opposed to the humans. The birth, growth and all the allied activities of the life cycle of animals, insects including plants, are exclusively subject to a built-in (pre-programmed)

mechanism, which is highly automotive, self-contained and independent. The species, both on land and in water, do not require any guidance or training to perform the life function. The same is true for the inanimate objects. Their pre-planned composition constantly changes without departure from the laws of nature, under impact of external and internal action forces.

The process continues systematically bringing about new formations with new characteristics and properties. This transformation of forms and peculiarities, under impacting forces, is an automated activity in total compliance with the pre-determined laws. In other words, form, animation, flowering and decaying are not accidental activities of nature. The very fact of the occurrence of these activities is a proof enough of the existence of a 'Wise System' of originating the action and subsequently controlling and sustaining it according to the pre-determined 'plan'.

Human Conduct

For convenience of understanding the significance of preordainment concerning human conduct, it would be helpful to mention some of the Verses of the Quran as follows:

'Whomsoever Allah guides, he is the guided one, and whomsoever He sends astray, – then those! They are the losers'. (Verse 178: Al-Araf 7). 'Say: Verily, Allah sends astray whom He wills, and guides unto Himself those who turn to Him in repentance'. (Verse 27: Ar-Rad 13) 'Then (Allah) misleads

whom He wills and guides whom He wills' (Verse 4: Ibrahim 14). *'Allah guides not those whom He makes to go astray'* (Verse 37: An-Nahl 16) *'And had Allah willed, He could have made you (all) one nation, but He sends astray whom He wills and guides whom He wills'*. (Verse 93: An-Nahal 16). *'He punishes whom He wills and shows mercy whom He wills'*. (Verse 21: Al-Ankabut 29). *'Verily, Allah sends astray whom He wills, and guides whom He wills'*. (Verse 8: Fatir 35). *'Thus Allah leads astray whom He wills and guides whom He wills'*. (Verse 31: Al-Muddaththir 74).

A preliminary study of these Verses, without reference to the context, may give rise to a number of questions. Some of these questions are as follows:

- 1) If it is Allah's Will alone that controls human affairs, man's deeds should depend on some sort of built-in pre-programmed mechanism. He seems to have no will or control over his behavior. Why should he be punished?
- 2) Man is preordained (as per the Book of Decrees) to be righteous or wretched. Why should he be accountable for his actions in the Divine Court?
- 3) What about Freedom of Choice Allah proclaims to have granted man?
- 4) What is the rational / justification of the Divine Institution of Reward & Punishment.
- 5) Do preordainments (Divine Decrees) influence human conduct in any form?
- 6) What is the significance of a long series of Guidance since the time Adam put his step on the planet earth?

An answer to the above inquiries may well be found during the process of understanding the working of Allah's Will – guiding or misleading.

Human beings are not treated as preprogrammed objects like the sun and the moon revolving in their predetermined orbit. Allah has made Laws for guidance on the human conduct, a detail of which would follow later. Those who obey these Laws of being pious and righteous are entitled to Allah's Blessings of honor and prosperity in this world and the Hereafter. Compliance with these Laws of piety and righteousness is a sure guarantee of success. Allah is the Author of these Laws carrying His Will /Permission for man to be rightly guided. On the other hand, those who do not obey – disbelievers, disobedient and rebellious – go astray (misguided ones) as per the Divine Laws. In other words, both reward and punishment are determined by the Divine Laws of human conduct. No body is righteous unless the Laws support his conduct. On the contrary, man has gone astray. In both cases of human conduct Allah's Will / Permission is the governing factor as in the Verse 7: Ibrahim 14:

'And (remember) when your Lord proclaimed: 'If you give thanks (by accepting Faith and worshipping none but Allah) I (Allah) will give you more (of My Blessings), but if you are thankless (i.e. disbelievers), My punishment is indeed severe'.

Throughout the Quran, Allah has, at various places, explained the working of His Will with reference to human conduct. It is not like, as commonly understood, the Great Lord, at some

distant place of the universe, is governing affairs of the heavens and the earth in an aristocratic and despotic manner. Allah's Guidance on the human conduct started right after the creation of Adam as in Verse 31: Al-Baqarah 2: '*And He taught Adam all the names (of every thing)...*' This is the beginning moment of relationship between the Divinity and humanity.

'And We said: "O Adam! Dwell you and your wife in the Paradise and eat both of you freely with pleasure and delight, of things therein as wherever you will, but come not near this tree or you both will be of the Zalimun (wrong doers)" (Verse 35: Al-Baqarah 2).

This is the first ever Allah's Command and Admonition to mankind i.e. two-way choice – obedience to Allah for honor or disobedience for disgrace. Adam's exit from the Paradise followed by Allah's Proclamation in Verse 38: Al-Baqarah 2:

'We said: "Get down all of you from this place (Paradise), then whenever there comes to you Guidance from Me, and whosoever follows My Guidance, there shall be no fear on them, nor shall they grieve".

So the Divine Standard of Judgment on human conduct was made clear on the day one of Adam's exit from the Paradise to begin his career on the planet earth. It was further clarified that non-compliance (disobedience) would lead to disgrace and humiliation in the Hell fire.

'But those who disbelieve and belie Our Ayat – such are the

dwellers of the Fire. They shall abide therein for ever' Verse 39: Al-Baqarah 2.

Having set up Standard of Judgment of right and wrong, Allah took out element of compulsion on the part of man by way of granting him (limited) Freedom of Choice to be righteous or otherwise. Allah loves man whom He created with His Both Hands. He wants to reward him for his obedience – not as an instinctive act on his part but as a voluntary practice exercising his right to be otherwise (Freedom of Choice). Only the worthy and deserving people are rewarded while others are punished. Allah, the All-Knower is aware of either aspect of man's conduct anyway. In other words, Allah misleads only those who are *Al-Fasiqun* / disobedient and rebellious (Verse 26: Al-Baqarah 2). There is no fear or grief for those who are obedient and submissive – rightly guided. This is an absolute Divine Justice.

Allah's Promise of guidance / enlightenment and admonition resulted into revelation of four Scriptures: Taurat (Torah) to Moses; Zabur (Psalm) to David; Injeel (Gospel) to Jesus and the Quran to Mohammed (Peace be upon them) in addition to 104 small Scripts through 124000 Messengers out of which only 25 are mentioned in the Quran. All of them carry the same invitation to Monotheism – a Straight Path of salvation and admonition of horrible destruction in case of disobedience / violation of Allah's Laws governing human conduct.

“Then He showed him what is wrong for him and what is right for him”. V 8: Ash-Shams 91.

'Verily, We showed him the way, whether to be grateful or regretful'. Verse3: Al-Insan 76.

Man tends to go astray under pressure of the worldly temptations, Allah the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful sent His Messengers to guide him on the Straight Path. Man accepts or rejects it, not instinctively but consciously and willingly by exercising his right of 'Free Choice'.

'Indeed he succeeds who purifies own self (i.e. obeys and performs all that Allah ordered by following the true Faith of Islamic Monotheism and doing righteous good deeds'. 'And indeed he fails who corrupts his ownself'. V 9 & 10: As-Shams 91.

This justifies reward or punishment on the Day of Judgment. The important key-point is that every man is born Muslim, a believer in (Monotheism) and under 'Oath of Allegiance' to God. The worldly temptation, enticement, greed, prejudice, arrogance and devilish pursuits combine to diminish the flame of internal light in him. He is lead astray plunging into darkness of infidelity, barbarity, exploitation and moral degradation. At this critical stage of almost collapse, Allah, out of His Mercy and Grace, sent Divine guidance to the Straight Path of salvation of the mankind for 1,24000 times.

On the basis of the above narrative, it may be appropriate to conclude that 'Two Ways – good or bad' and man's 'Freedom of Choice' do not, however, negate the importance of interplay of the Divinity and humanity. They always go hand in hand. Human conduct is not possible without the Divine Will. To

understand the puzzle, one has to believe that man is guided only when Allah wills. The big question is when Allah wills. In other words, what conditions are to be fulfilled to invoke Allah's Blessings of Guidance to the Right Path of success and honor in both the worlds. The first and foremost of these conditions is total Faith in the Oneness of Allah (Monotheism), Oneness of Lordship and Oneness of Worship. This is what Allah promises in Verses 70 – 71: Al-Ahzab 33:

'O you who believe! Keep you duty to Allah and fear Him, and speak (always) the truth'. 'He will direct you to do righteous good deeds and will forgive you your sins. And whosoever obeys Allah and His Messenger (PBUH), he has indeed achieved a great achievement'.

This means Faith has to be supported by righteous deeds enjoined by Allah like *Al-Adl* – i.e. justice and worshiping none but Allah Alone; *Al-Ihsan* – patience in performing duties to Allah exclusively for Allah's sake; *Kith and Kin* – fulfilling obligations to blood relatives. For complete self-purification, one has to practice all that is good (*Al-Maruf*) and avoiding evils (*Al-Munkar*).

Another precondition of Allah's Blessings is sincere repentance for sins and invocation for His Forgiveness by staying away from *Al-Fahsha* – polytheism, illegal sexual acts, disobedience to parents, false witness and killing without right; *Al-Baghy* – all kinds of oppressions as Allah proclaims in Verse 13: As-Shurah 42. 'Allah chooses for Himself whom He wills and guides unto Himself who turns to Him in repentance and in obedience'.

Allah not only forgives sins of *'those who turn to Him'* but also facilitates their march on the Straight Path. They are blessed with the Divine Light to steer their ship out of darkness of ignorance to bright enlightenment. *'...and He brings them out of darkness into light and guides them to the Straight Way'* (Verse 16: Al-Maidah 5). Even the angles in the heavens *'ask (Allah) for forgiveness for those on earth. Verily, Allah is the Oft-Forgiving, the Most Merciful'* (Verse 5: As-Shura 42).

Above all, Allah showers on them *'Ultimate Blessing'* by changing their wretched destiny in the Book of Decrees as Allah has proclaimed in Verse 39: Ar-Rad 13:

'Allah blots out what He wills and confirms (what He wills). And with Him is the Mother of the Book (La-Lauh Al-Mahfuz).'

This is the highest elevation of man when he is the master of his fate. This stage of man's sublimation makes him the author-controller of his own destiny. Allah is pleased to ask man: *'What is your wish?'*

*'Khudi ko kar blund itna key her taqdeer say phaley
'Khuda bandey say khudh poochey 'batah teri raza kia hai'.*

All this supports the fact that it is man's own deeds that make or mar his life career – successful or unsuccessful. Of course, Allah has full knowledge in advance of man's performance. This advance knowledge of Allah does not, however, impact man's actions.

Before concluding the narrative, it would be appropriate to take up a frequently asked question:

'Why should Allah misguide people?'

The question becomes all the more relevant in the light of Allah's Proclamation in Verse 9: An Nahl 16:

'And upon Allah is the responsibility to explain the Straight Path. But there are ways to turn aside (such as paganism, Judaism, Christianity. And had He willed He would have guided you all (mankind)'.

Allah has established Straight Path (Islamic Monotheism) for mankind. This implies that Allah has explained mankind legal and illegal as well as good and evil things. The Quran revolves around two-fold theme – invitation and admonition. It invites to what is legal and good and admonishes against illegal and bad. Whosoever accepts the guidance to what is good, he is rightly guided. Whosoever does not refrain from evil, he has gone far astray from the Right Path of success (misguided one).

'Whosoever goes right, then he goes right only for the benefit of his ownself. And whosoever goes astray, then he goes astray to his own loss. ... And We never punish until We have sent a Messenger (to give warning)'. (Verse 15: Al-Isra 17)

Allah does not guide those who are *Musrifun* – polytheists, criminals, sinners – those who trespass Allah's set limits in

evil-doings by committing great sins. This category of people cannot revert to right guidance due to their excessive evil deeds. Reference to deplorable state of the Prophet Noah's people preached (Monotheism) in vain for 950 years may illustrate the point. They had gone to the point of no return and the Prophet Noah finally decried as in Verse 34: Hud 11. *'And my advice will no profit you, even if I wish to give you good counsel, if Allah's Will is to keep you astray. He is your Lord and to Him you shall return'*.

This stage of *'Allah's Will to keep you astray'* comes when all attempts at guidance to the Straight Path fail. People continue doing evil deeds surpassing all limits ordained by Allah. This provokes displeasure of the Lord Who ceases to be their *Maula* –Master, helper, protector. Consequently, Allah locks up their senses of seeing, hearing, feeling and thinking. They cannot hear good counseling and see light (guidance). As such, they cannot be guided as in Allah's Words of Verse 35: Ghafir 40 and Verse 16: Muhammed 47:

'Thus Allah seals up the heart of every arrogant (so that they cannot guide themselves to the Right Path)'.

'Such are men whose hearts Allah has sealed, and they follow their lust (evil desires)'.

It may be concluded that Allah already knew that they would not become righteous despite years of counseling [the people of Prophet Nuh (Noah)]. But Allah's Knowledge in advance did not play any role in their negative performance. It was their

persistent disobedience and arrogant rebellion, despite the Divine Guidance longest ever (950 years), that provoked displeasure of the Lord.

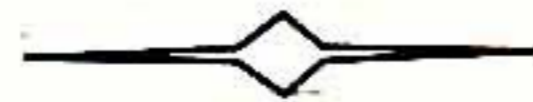
To sum up, Allah, the Owner Creator of *Alamin*, has the exclusive Ultimate Knowledge of the affairs of people – before and after their occurrence. His Knowledge in advance, however, does not impact human conduct. It depends totally upon man's performance to *be blessed or wretched* invoking his Freedom of Choice as per Allah's Verdict in Verse 9 –10: Alt-Taghabun 64:

'And whosoever believes in Allah and performs righteous good deeds, He will expiate from him his sins, and will admit him to Gardens under which rivers flow (Paradise) to dwell therein for ever; that will be the great success'.

'But those who disbelieved (in the Oneness of Allah – Islamic Monotheism) and denied Our Ayat, they will be the dwellers of the Fire, to dwell therein forever. And worst indeed is that destination'.

Amal sey zindgi bunti hai Junnet bi jehanum bi
Ye khaki apni fitrat mai na noori hai na nari hai

(Actions lead to life in Heaven or Hell –
By nature, the mud man is neither of Light nor Fire)



Why Does Allah Test Believers?

The question becomes all the more important when we read Verse 79: An-Nisa 4:

'Whatever of good reaches you, is from Allah, but whatever of evil befalls you, is from yourselves'.

This means that evils or mishaps befalling people are a sure result of their follies and wrongdoings. Man is often blinded by worldly temptations and evil pursuits of his lust. Consequently, he falls headlong into trouble caused by his own-self. Allah's Statement is true '*... Whatever of evil befalls you, is from yourself*'. Allah made this phenomenon very clear at the completion of Adam's creation by blowing his soul in him (Adam) with the Divine Breath. The Divine Breath at once transformed the mud-man into human being bestowed with life, knowledge, power of hearing and seeing. These characteristics made Adam superior to all the creations (*Ashraf-ul-Mukhlookat*). But to justify the entitlement, Adam had to undergo a test before the Grand Assembly of Angels.

On successful passing of the test, Adam was commanded to live in the Paradise in any which way he was pleased, but warned not to go near a certain tree as in Verse 35: Al-Baqarah 2.

'And We (Allah) said: 'O Adam! Dwell you and your wife (Eve) in the Paradise and eat both of you freely with pleasure and delight things therein as wherever you will, but do not come

near this tree or you both will be of the Zalimun (wrong doers)!

This was the second test of the human's obedience to the Command of the Creator. Adam was, however, persuaded by *Shaitan* (Satan) to eat of the tree in violation of the Divine Admonition. Adam did wrong to himself. He was expelled out of the Paradise to live on the planet earth. The thing to be noted here is that Allah's Grace blessed Adam to enjoy celestial life experience with no restriction of the time frame. Adam fell into trouble because of his own folly of disobedience to the Great Lord**.

** Did Adam willfully commit the sin of disobedience to Allah? This would be debated later on. It is, however, certain that Adam's exit was quite consistent with the Lord's Grand Plan of settling mankind on earth, which was designed with absolute perfection to make it suitable for human habitation in all respects (climate, temperature, life-giving gasses, plants dominion, animals' dominion – all subservient to the humans).

Henceforward, it became Allah' *Sunnah* (tradition / practice to reward the faithful and punish the evil doers for their sins (of arrogant disobedience), History has a full record of such individuals as well as nations who earned Allah's Reward of honor and prosperity for obedience, while the others incurred His wrath for violation of their covenant / oath. As a result, they were wiped out of the earth surface. Verse 70: At-Taubah 9 sums up the fatal end of the ancient nations for their blatant disobedience to the All-Mighty. This is a conclusive proof of the truth of Allah's Proclamation as in Verse 44: Yunus 10.

'Has not the story reached them of those before them? – The people of Nuh (Noah), Ad and Thamud (Themud), the people of

Ibrahim (Abraham), the dwellers of Madyan (Median) and the city overthrown [i.e. the people to whom Lut (Lot) preached]; to whom came their Messengers with clear proofs. So it was not Allah Who wronged them, but they used to wrong themselves'.

Allah reiterates the truth of His Statement mentioned above again in Verse 44: Yunus 10 as:
'Truly, Allah wrongs not mankind in aught, but mankind wrong themselves'.

It is reasonable to believe that Allah has mysterious ways of managing affairs of the heavens and the earth. With reference to human conduct, He has established institutions governing activities of the people in various segments of their life. The most important one is the institution of Reward and Punishment after having shown the people both the ways (good as well as bad) and given them limited Freedom of Choice. The Reward and Punishment institution is enforced after the Divine Guidance through the Messengers at different intervals since man put his first step on the planet earth. Other objects like the sun, the moon, animals etc. perform their respective functions as per their built-in preprogram, which may be termed as instinct or unlearned ability. They do not need guidance unlike man. It may be remembered that should man choose to be righteous, Allah opens up on him gates of His Mercy / Grace. Conversely, if man opts to follow the wrong path, Allah's Torment is imminent as in the Verse 125: Al-An'am 6.

'And whomsoever Allah wills to guide, He opens up his breast to Islam; and whomsoever He wills to send astray, He makes his breast closed and restricted, as if he is climbing to the sky. Thus Allah puts the wrath on those who believe not'.

Reward of honor, prosperity and influence in the world is the Grace of Allah, while torment like humiliation, loss of property and alike mishaps are the result of human follies. The above said Verse explains a subtle relationship of the Divinity and humanity. Both go hand in hand. Humanity cannot act without the Divine Guidance, which is imparted to mankind by revelation to Allah's chosen Messengers. Other sources of knowledge are human senses of observation, calculation and analyzing. With the help of their senses men discover the hidden forces of nature for the benefit of humanity. Obviously, advancement of various disciplines of knowledge for goodness of mankind is the great Mercy of Allah for those who pay heed. Those who desist from the Straight Path are the losers exposed to hardship, disgrace and humiliation. Once again, Allah's Words are true as in Verse 79: An-Nisa 4.

'Whatever of good reaches you is from Allah, but whatever of evil befalls you is from yourself'.

By the way, Allah's Grace / Mercy for people is depended upon their attitude towards the Creator. Those who conduct their life activities seeking Allah's Pleasure are blessed with the Divine Help in enjoying life with dignity, honor, success and prosperity in this world and a great reward of Paradise in the Hereafter as in Verse 29, Al-Anfal 8.

'O you who believe! If you believe and fear Allah, He will grant you Furqan (a criterion to judge between right and wrong), or Mukhraj (i.e. a way to get out from every difficulty), and will expiate for you your sins, and forgive you; and Allah is the Owner of the Great Bounty'.

It may be mentioned here that confusion arises in

understanding the Divine Significance of Verse 142: Al-Imran 3 when studied in the context of the above narrative, which sums up as 'Happiness / prosperity is Divine, trouble / misery is human' – i.e. Grace / Mercy is from Allah while problem / difficulty is due to human faults. The Verse reads:

'Do you think that you will enter Paradise before Allah tests those of you who fought (in His Cause) and (also) tests those who are As-Sabirun (full of patience).'

The same subject is stressed again in Verse 2: Al'Ankabut 29:

'Do people think that they will be left alone because they say, "We believe", and will not be tested?'

The point to be stressed here is that the believers called *As-Sabirun* (patient) and *Al-Mutakun* (the pious and the righteous) or *Mujahidun* (fighters in Allah's Cause) have achieved these designations by virtue of their unflinching devotional obedience and submission to Allah. The big question that boggles the inquisitive mind is why these proven believers are tested or tried, which carries an element of hardship. Obviously, they have not earned the trouble because of their faults. Nuh (Noha), the Prophet and the Messenger of Allah preached for long 950 years amidst mockery, humiliation and disgrace at the hands of his own people. Ibrahim (Abraham), the Messenger and *Khalil-ullah* (Allah's intimate friend) was exposed to the risk of burning alive in fire. Dream of sacrificing his son followed by his practical attempt to do it – was indeed hard for a father. Subsequently, Ibrahim (Abraham) leaving his baby-son Ismail (Ishmael) in the desolation of the Arabian deserts without food or water, the bear means of subsistence must have been heart-rendering for

an old father. Musa (Moses) was the Messenger with an exclusive privilege as Allah spoke to him directly. He, however, had a life threatening encounter with Firaun (Pharaoh) of Egypt for deliverance of the Children of Israel out of centuries old humiliating bondage. Likewise, Isa (Jesus the Christ), a live interpretation of Allah's Words: '*Be! And he was*' suffered humiliation of parading in the streets carrying Cross over his shoulder to a place of crucifix. Even the Prophet Mohammed (PBUH), the last of the line of the Messengers, suffered untold hardships during his life in Makkah – the trauma of Sahib Abi-Talib – social boycott, hunger, insults and the worst of all, his repulsion from the city, At-Taif amidst jeers and stoning his body with blood flown down both his legs – a rare savage brutality. After his forced migration to Medina, the Prophet's (PBUH) career was not a bed of roses. Continuous frantic efforts of the Quraish to extinguish the light of Islam lead to various battles, some of them painfully testing like the battle of Badr, Uhud, Al-Ahzab (the Confederates) and Tabuk. At each such event like, many others, the believers were tried and tested in the real sense of the term imaginable. The big question is why the believers confirmed pious and righteous were subjected to such hardships? What was their fault?

A quick answer is that the element of hardship of the Divine trial is always covered with a silver lining of hope and reward for the successful ones. The Divine Reward of the Paradise delight awarded to the successful believers is Allah's Grace, Mercy and Blessings. Trials are designed to create justification for award of greater degrees of status in this world and more so in the Hereafter as in Allah's Words of Verse 21: Al-Isra 17.

'See how We (Allah) prefer one above another (in this world) the Hereafter will be greater in degrees and greater in preferment'.

Again in Verse 165: Al-An'am 6, the same theme has been explained: *'He (Allah) has raised you in ranks – so that He may try you that which He has bestowed you on'*.

Trial / test is a necessary condition for justification of reward or punishment on the basis of merits in both the worlds. Hence, justification, through trial / test, is the rock-bed of Allah's Ultimate Justice without exception whatsoever as Allah proclaims in Verse 214: Al-Baqarah 2.

'Or think you that you will enter Paradise without such (trials) as came to those who passed away before you? They were afflicted with severe poverty and ailments and were so shaken that even the Messenger and those who believed along with him said: "When (will) come the Help of Allah?" Yes! Certainly, the Help of Allah is near'.

As a quick side remark, reference is made to a man who has reached his old age. He is awfully weak, unable to move and take care of even his personal ordinary needs independently. He is sick and totally bedridden. In short, his condition is a live illustration of Allah's definition of man's old age as in Verse 5: Al-Hajj 22: *'... and among you there is he who is brought to the miserable old age, so that he knows nothing after having known'*. He is good for nothing and indeed a painful liability for kith and kin. Even his own children do not know what to do. Their silence is, however, a vocal question: What is the purpose, any longer, of hopeless life of the old man?

Besides, there are, in the world, a large number of people who are born handicap – the crippled ones. They simply crawl on the surface of the earth and die – the end of their existence. The big question is: What is the purpose of such people? What good

have these people for their own-selves or the society? These as well as many alike questions should not be shoved aside as meaningless. At the very outset, it may be asserted that everything created in the universe has the Divine Purpose – one or the other.

Prior to a detailed discussion, it would be helpful to narrate a story of a boy who was born maimed. His body above the legs was normal and healthy. He could not, anyway, stand and walk on his own. He was an intelligent bright student. He dreamed of playing baseball match one day in the national league. This was indeed his ardent desire like obsession. The school authorities made necessary arrangement to see that his life dream came true. The stadium was packed with thousands of spectators. As a side show, the boy was brought in amidst a huge roar of the spectators. He was finally helped to stand on the pitch with baseball bat in his hand. The boy was nervously shaking but glad within. Here comes a ball and the boy fell down without even touching it. So the life-dream was shattered just at the time when it was about to fulfill. The entire stadium crowd felt sorry for the boy. In the mind of people with wet eyes was a question: Why this? For what fault of his own did the boy suffer this painful frustration?

Allah knows better what His Designs are. One thing is, however, certain that the boy's situation of helplessness in the stadium aroused amongst the spectators emotions of pity and compassion – all the Divine Characteristics. This is like enkindling dormant feeling of love and mercy for the weaklings, the downtrodden and the helpless. It nurtures humanity in people who develop, in turn, an attitude of love and kindness towards their fellow beings. This may explain, to some extent, the purpose of existence of such a boy. The boy's

miserable plight may have sharpened the sense of gratitude to Allah amongst the onlookers for blessing them with healthy body and a sound mind. Thus Allah through His *ayat* (signs, evidences, proofs) guides whomsoever He wills. Those who take lessons from Allah's signs spread all over in the environment are rightly guided in this world for a big reward (Paradise) in the Hereafter.

With the same token, the case of old, feeble, and absent minded bed-ridden person is a test of patience and forbearance on the part of his dependents. The Divine secret of giving man a miserable old age is difficult to determine. It is, however, certain that Allah has numerous ways of showering Mercy on people. The old age must have some hidden blessing for mankind and the environment. The laws of nature determine birth, growth, decay of the objects – animate as well as inanimate. This cyclic process is indispensable to preserve newness and freshness, which are the essentials of development and expansion. Whatever the case may be, one thing is certain that old men are a source of Allah's Blessings for the dependents, whose patience is at test for a big reward from Allah. In the words of Verse 23 & 24: Al-Isra 17:

'And your Lord has decreed that you worship no one but Him, And that you may be dutiful to your parents. If one of them or both of them attain old age, say not to them a word of disrespect, nor shout at them, but address them in terms of honor'.

'And lower unto them the wings of submission and humility through mercy and say: "My Lord! Bestow Mercy on them as they did bring me up when I was young".'

Respect for the parents especially when they grow old is a great way of worshipping Allah. Worshipping Allah is the best means of invoking the Divine Mercy for redemption of human sins, shortcomings and follies for sure reward of honor and prosperity in this world as well as eternal delightful life in the Hereafter. Allah's Promise is true as in Verse 70 – 71: Al-Ahzab 33.

'O you who believe! Keep your duty to Allah and fear Him, and speak always the truth'

'He will direct you to do righteous deeds and will forgive you your sins. And whosoever obeys Allah and His Messenger (PBUH), he has indeed achieved a great achievement (i.e. he will be saved from the Hell-fire and admitted to Paradise)'

It would be appropriate to assert that Allah loves His- Hand crafted man and wants to reward him not for his deeds performed instinctively but voluntarily in accordance with the Divine Guidance as implemented by the Prophet Mohammed (PBUH). It may be remembered that Allah is full of Mercy for the mankind as proclaimed in Verse 6: Ar-Ra'd 13.

'But verily, Your Lord is full of forgiveness, for mankind in spite of their wrong doing'

The Lord does not, however, reward or punish people arbitrarily sitting somewhere high above. He is the Best of the judges to administer absolute justice based upon justification. He has various ways of creating necessary justification for award of Mercy to the people.

(1) The most important of them is the Divine Guidance full of

incentives and inducements. Those who follow it are the successful ones. Those who do not pay heed, go astray. Allah does not, anyway, leave them alone in the darkness of falsehood. They are tried with hardships and other afflictions. The idea is to shake them with a serious shake. They may perhaps wake up from their slumber of ignorance and ask for Allah's Forgiveness.

'...We seized its people with sufferings from extreme poverty (or loss in wealth) and loss of health (and calamities), so that they might humiliate themselves (and repent to Allah)'. Verse 94: Al-A'raf 7.

'...And We tried them with good (blessings) and evil (calamities) in order they might turn (to Allah's Obedience)'. Verse 168: Al-A'raf 7.

Thus Allah grants a fair chance to people (with good (blessings) and evil (calamities) to become obedient and righteous – a justification for reward of the Divine Mercy as in Verse 96: Al-A'raf 7. *'And if the people of the town had believed and had Taqwa (piety), certainly, We should have opened for them blessings from the heaven and the earth...'*

(2) Allah's trial of the believers is a blessing in disguise. The trial has double implication. First it is designed to purify sins and other wrong doings committed by the believers intentionally or under ignorant stupidity. Secondly, Allah, out of His Grace, helps the afflicted believers to pass the test by granting them patience and forbearance at the difficult time. In other words, Allah afflicts hardships on the faithful as well as creates ways and means of the needed relief. The Divine Idea is to create justification for raising the believers on higher grades. In Allah's Words:

'And that Allah may test (or purify) the believers (from sins) and destroy the disbelievers'. Verse 141: Al-Imran 3. '...but Allah might test what is in your breasts; and to purify that which was in your hearts (sins), and Allah is All-Knower of what is in (your breasts)'. Verse 154: Al-Imran 3.

(3) Tests in life span of this world are Allah's standard of judging who are the best in performing noble deeds and deserve higher grades on fair basis in the Hereafter. This is quite consistent with the requirement of the Divine Court of Ultimate Justice.

'Verily, We (Allah) have made that which is on earth as an adornment for it, in order that We may test them (mankind) as to which of them are best in deeds [i.e. those who do good deeds in the most perfect manner, that means to do them (deeds) totally for Allah's sake and in accordance with the legal ways of the Prophet Mohammed (PBUH)]'. Verse 7: Al-khaf 18.

(4) Exemplary punishments to bring the evil doers around and admonish them of the serious consequence. This is Allah's unlimited Mercy and Supreme Characteristic of Forgiveness, which could be understood somewhat by the fact that He does not hasten to punish people for their crimes. He postpones the final decision granting a fair chance for reform as in Allah's Words in Verse 61: An-Nahl 16.

'And if Allah were to seize mankind for their wrong-doings, He would not leave on it (the earth) a single moving (living) creature, but He postpones them for an appointed term and when their term comes, neither they can delay nor can they advance it an hour (or a moment)'. :

In conclusion, the Great Benevolent Lord is Merciful and Forgiving. For goodness of mankind in this world and eventual salvation in the Hereafter, Allah sent His Messengers to all the nations from amongst them speaking their respective language to convey the Message of Monotheism proclaiming *'Worship Allah (alone) and avoid Taghut (i.e. do not worship false deities besides Allah). Then of them were some whom Allah guided and of them were some upon whom the straying was justified'*. Verse 36: An-Nahl 16.

Allah did not stop guiding people despite certain disobedient nations who surpassed all limits of decency. They provoked Allah's Wrath. They were destroyed while the faithful believers saved as a fair justice to them for their strong faith / trust in Allah. As per Allah's Words in Verse 104: Al-An'am 6:

'Verily, proofs have come to you from your Lord, so whosoever sees will do so (for the good of) his own-self, and whosoever blinds himself, will do so to his own harm...'

Allah's Proclamation is true:

'Truly, Allah wrongs not mankind in aught; but mankind wrong themselves'. Verse 44: Yunus 10.



Spirituality Crises

The topic is prompted by so called religious practices/rituals performed today to invoke spiritual help and protection in various regions of Indo-Pakistan subcontinent. How did it start? It is an interesting question.

Quest for the answer takes us centuries back to the ancient Indian times when the element of 'fear' or 'awe' urged the people to designate certain signs and symbols, which, they believed, would protect them from the striking elements of nature by invoking a certain unknown spiritual power. Consequently, the world got mythical gods in partnership with One and the only One Allah, the All Pervasive Super Power. With the passage of time, development of human intellect replaced superstitions with ground reality of life. Creating force of life with a variety of its dimensions became the favorite subject of study. The age of Vedas ushered in. It is not known when and who composed the Vedas. History is silent about it. These Vedas formed bedrock of all the Hindu philosophy. These are believed to be the original scriptures of Hindu spiritual teachings on all aspects of life.

It would be appropriate to hint upon the destiny of India which was ever ruled by the foreign conquerors. With the passage of time, cultural cohabitation of the foreign rulers with the local races evolved new society on the basis of divergent norms and patterns of life. Subsequently, people celebrated some hidden force of nature that was supposed to govern and regulate

various segments of human life. They worshipped the awe-inspiring forces through signs, symbols and metaphors – idolatry / polytheism.

The spiritual life of the ancient Indians was further eroded with the emergence of Cast System, which divided the society into four tiers: 1) Brahmans – the high priests 'untouchable' with infallible spiritual authority. They had exclusive rights of learning, education and unchallenged judgment on the affairs of the people under their despotic control. 2) Rajputs – warriors. 3) Koshuterics – agriculturists, artisans, carpenters and blacksmiths. 4) Shooders – the menial class engaged in petty odd jobs. The class system segregated the society into class divisions widely apart from each other in terms of status, privileges and rights. The depressed most class was the Shooders who were thriving on the verge of social hate and condemnation being denied all rights of co-existence as human beings. This was the age of ignorance, injustice and atrocities meted out to the lower strata of society. The arrogant despotic Brahmans had created social and economic mayhem. This social and moral degeneration adversely affected the political stability of the local rulers called the Indian Maharajas who easily came under domination of the foreign invaders known as the Sultanate of Delhi and later on the Mughal Dynasty.

The conquest of India by the Mughals turned out to be a blessing in disguise for the Indians in so many ways. The Muslim Mughal rulers did a good job of administration, control and governance. The law and order situation based upon equal justice and fairness was given a top priority. Social

inequality and cast discrimination was uprooted to keep in harmony the warring regions widely apart. Trade and commerce got a special boost. A unique class of art and architecture emerged with inspiring excellence. These landmarks of the Mughal rule explain a strong political and religious hegemony of the Muslims in India prior to the British domination. The importance of this hegemony could be measured by the fact that it became a powerful genesis of the two-nation doctrine: the Hindus and the Muslims, the only workable solution to eventually get rid of the yoke of the British rule. This may account for establishment of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan – a separate independent homeland of the Muslims in the Indo-Pak subcontinent.

A quick comment would not be out of place that the ancient India was already familiar with Monotheism. This has been endorsed by the observation: 'The final analysis of study of comparative religions of the world reveals explicit or implicit worship of the same One Allah – a doctrine sacred to all Faiths. Whatever you call it submission in Muslim terms, conversion in Christian terms, t'shuva (turning towards God) for the Jews, Namustkar for the Hindues, Prame for the Buddhists, Sat Sri Akal / Wahe- guru (One Allah) in terms of Sikhs – all it is love of Allah. Love of mankind is to love Allah'.

'One Truth the sages call by many names' (Rig Veda)

Allah-o-Akbar (Allah is the Greatest)
'Worship Allah, my Lord, and your Lord'
(The Quran)

The inference that the ancient India too, like other nations all over the world, might have gotten a Messenger at one time or the other has been derived out of the repeated Quranic proclamation:

'And for every Ummah (a community or a nation) there is a Messenger; when their Messenger comes, the matter will be judged between them with justice, and they will not be wronged'. Verse 47: Yunus 10.

'And We sent not a Messenger except with the language of his people, in order that he might make (the Message) clear for them...'. Verse 4: Ibrahim 14.

'And verily, We have sent among every Ummah (community, nation) a Messenger (proclaiming): 'Worship Allah (Alone), and avoid Taghut (all false deities)...'. Verse 36: An-Nahl 16.

The Quran is, however, silent about the name of Messengers in India. History has a sketchy reference to certain saintly personalities with possible hollow of holy characteristics. There is, however, no acceptable authority to support the belief. Among such figures the name of Gotum Buddha stands out. In case, Buddha is one of the 1, 24000 Messengers of Allah, the Muslims have to believe and revere him as Allah's Prophet as ordained in the Quranic Verse 265: Al-Baqarah 2.

'The Messenger (Mohammed PUBH) believes in what has been sent to him from his Lord, and (so do) the believers. Each one believes in Allah, His Angels, His Books and His

Messengers. (They say) "We make no distinction between one another of His Messengers".

The religion Islam with Monotheistic Doctrine (Oneness of Allah) was first introduced in India with the invasion of Sindh by Mohammed Bin Qasim and subsequently the Sultanate of Delhi followed by a long reign of the Mughal Dynasty. These Muslim rulers were indeed good administrators and governors. They, however, paved the way for the Muslim scholars, saints and Sufis to preach and further the cause of Islam as religion in hostile Indian Territory infested with polytheism, idolatry and infidelity. These religious scholars, devotees to the cause of Islam, dauntlessly pursued their mission of spreading Islam even to those Indian regions where no body had gone before. Anyway, the task was not easy. There were so many challenges, some of them formidable and threatened efforts of enkindling 'Light of Enlightenment' in a dark pit of ignorance, falsehood and disbelief. The major problem was centuries' old 'mind-set' on worshipping idols, signs and symbols through strange rituals and ceremonies. This practice was believed to be the only way of invoking supernatural powers for help, immunity and protection – a sure means of salvation of their individual (personal) as well as collective (communal) social, economic and political problems. It was believed that battles were won or lost, tribes got prosperity or suffered poverty, gaining of control (domination) or facing humiliation (slavery) – all such ups and downs were controlled and governed by the supernatural deities depending on their pleasure or anger. The people were strongly hooked up on such superstitious belief and to undo it

was a tough nut to crack.

The concept of Oneness of Allah was hard sell in a society addicted to polytheism and idol-worship since ages. They found their ancestors following certain rituals to please their idol-gods over the centuries. Above all, they felt comfortable with what they had been doing in the realm of spirituality. How could right guidance to the Straight Path, as preached by the foreign Muslims, impact favorably on the mind of the Hindu society? Besides, Man is a blind traditionalist – a copy cat.

He tends to follow practices, customs, norms and patterns of his social setup. This tendency of blind duplication is so deeply engraved that it is mostly difficult to erase it. In this context, example of Prophet Noah's people is very relevant. Majority of them were affluent enjoying all possible luxuries of the time. Nine hundred and fifty (950) years of preaching by Prophet Noah could not put any dent in their sinful stubbornness to stick to their ways of infidelity and disobedience to Allah's Commands. Still there is another incredible case of a quick reversal to polytheism and infidelity on the part of Prophet Moses' people (Children of Israel). Allah showed them His Signs especially splitting of the sea, which provided a safe freedom passage for Prophet Moses and his people after 500 years of Pharaoh's bondage of humiliation. They saw Pharaoh and his host drowned in the sea. The striking memory of the event was still fresh in their mind. They, however, started calf-worship during forty day absence of Moses to see Allah. How could this happen? Did the Children of Israel suffer from a short memory? They resorted to calf-worship forgetting all

about Allah's Blessing of their deliverance from Pharaoh's bondage. This explains how difficult it is for the people to desist from following a certain way and religion of their ancestors even if they are brought better guidance. With the same token, people of Prophet Mohammed's (PBUH) time felt it difficult to embrace Islam. They insisted on the ignorant ways of their misguided religion and even the Divine Guidance of the Quran could not show them the light to the Straight Path of redemption. Their only excuse was as in the Quranic Verse 22 & 24: Az Zukhruf 43

'We found our fathers following a certain way and religion and we guide ourselves by their footsteps'.

'(The Warner) said: "Even if I bring you better guidance than that which you found your fathers following?" They said: "Verily, we disbelieve in that with which you have been sent'.

In India, the land of multi-gods worshipped through images (idols), introduction of Invisible One Allah (Monotheism) met with rousing opposition primarily because they wanted to see, feel and touch like their idols. It was a problem for them to reconcile with the Divinity without image. How could they believe in the logic of Invisibility of the Supreme Being (Allah)?

Before proceeding further, it would be interesting to remark that if Allah were to be visible, He would have been confined to one time and space. The Divine Attribute of Omnipresence would have been refuted. It is His Invisibility that supports the

Quranic proclamation that Allah the All-Knower is everywhere free from the shackles of time and space. Invisibility of Allah still has another deeper significance. Seeing and believing Allah would be an instinctive act. Allah wants to reward or punish man for his deeds performed not instinctively but consciously by free choice. This defines the Divine Institution of reward or punishment with absolute justice.

The Muslim missionaries in India were wise enough to by pass discussions on the philosophical significance of Allah's Characteristics to avoid confusion amongst the already confused folk. They took up the basic teachings of Islam and explained their blessings by following the practice of the Prophet Mohammed (PBUH). The Prophet (PBUH) explained Allah's Ordinances and Injunctions in a way that interpreted people's needs and aspirations. The Prophet's (PBUH) blissful method was to demonstrate practical and tangible results of the Divine Commands by utilizing all the available sources and resources of the time. His followers saw with their own eyes the solid benefits, enjoyed them and so did their relatives. This promoted amongst them a sense of pride in belonging to the newly born society. We the Muslims of today would be better off if we believe what we preach. Our sermons should be talking to the people; otherwise our preaching would be meaningless like falling on deaf ears.

Reverting to our narrative of the Muslim Missionaries in India of the Muslim rule, we have Nizamud Din Auliya, Data Gunj Bakhsh, Khawaja Najamud Din Kobri and the list goes on. However, we mention here a brief account of life history of

Bahauddin Zikariya Multani, a philanthropist Tahueed activist as a representative illustration of our thesis. He devoted his entire life to uphold the cause of Islam in Multan and Sindh zone of the year 6th Hijra. He had a subtle method of preaching and training the poor helpless folks crushed under depression and exploitation at the hands of a cruel minority of tribal and feudal lords. Shah Sahib provided the people with opportunity to become economically self sufficient and morally righteous. Shah Sahib developed the latest means of agriculture. He constructed canals and gave land to the people for cultivation to make them capable of earning their livelihood independent of their lords. This infused in them a sense of self honor and dignity. They got jobs – a chance to enjoy fruits of hard work / Rizq-e-Hilal – a core of social, moral, ethical uplift of a society. This process of preaching and training through models worked very well in convincing the mind and pleasing the heart. 'They saw with their own eyes that 'Monotheism' was not just a word signifying certain vague spiritualities ascribed to it. Invoking Allah's Presence in every affairs of life is a sure guarantee of success and prosperity in this world and a big reward of high honor in the Hereafter'.

People of India remembered these pious men with respect and reverence long after their death. Subsequently, the light of spirituality began to dwindle under pressure of greed and selfishness. People suffered internal crisis with practically no out-let. This pressure of internal crisis of generation after generation misguides man to false religion of ignorance 'when infidelity and pantheism rule – a devastating blow to human social and ethical values of equality, justice, fairness, love and

care'. These saints devoted their entire life to champion the cause of Tahueed. How could they preach their devotees to worship them in partner with Allah? How could they enjoin upon them grave-worship by way of prostration, washing it with milk or flowers extract or covering the tomb in green silk shawl (sheet) with golden embroidery in order to invoke some spiritual power for the solution of their problems? Obviously, the pious saints of Allah did not ordain any thing like that. The truth is that custodians (Sajjadah Nasheen) of these shrines, with the passage of time, began to commercialize the fair name of the saints for their own vested interests under the pretext of paying homage to the dynamic personalities of the shrines. For their personal monetary gains the custodians introduced innovated religious rituals, which actually distracted the people from the Straight Path of Monotheism. The devotees are eventually convinced that the shrines are the only source of healing balms for soaring wounds of their temporal and spiritual sufferings, agonies and pains. In this way, the flame of internal spirituality gradually diminishes and they forget the truth that Allah Alone accepts prayers as ordained in Verse 60: Ghafir 40 of the Quran:

'And your Lord said: "Invoke Me, I will respond to your (invocation). Verily those who scorn my worship [i.e. do not invoke Me] they will surely enter Hell in humiliation'.

'Those whom they invoke besides Allah have not created anything, but are themselves created'. Verse 20: An-Nahl 16.

'They are dead, not alive, and they know not when they will be raised up'. Verse 21: An-Nahl 16.

'And those who take Auliya (protectors, helpers, lords, gods) besides Him (say): "We worship them only that they may bring us near to Allah". Verily, Allah will judge between them concerning that therein they differ. Truly, Allah guides not him who is a liar and a disbeliever'. Verse 3: Az-Zumar 39.

'And they (disbelievers, polytheists) worship besides Allah, that which can neither profit them nor harm them, and the disbeliever is ever a helper (of the Satan) against his Lord'. Verse 55: Al-Furqan 25.

It may be pointed out that reverence for Pirs (saints) turned into grave-worship at some point in time after their death. This tendency of grave-worship presumably found its origin in Hindu cult worship of their Brhaman Gurus believed to be living moving reflection of their multi-gods. Besides, Brhaman Gurus are regarded as symbol of incarnation of certain attributes of their deities. Such as, these Gurus are believed to be guardian-saviors of the humans in this life and life after death – Hindu Doctrine of Transmigration. With the passage of time, grave-worship brought in a number of rituals in close imitation of the prevailing culture of Indian society. Celebration of annual Urs, shower of shrine, grave cover in green silk, burning oil lamp especially on Thursdays, Naat and Qwali glorifying the saints. Feeding the poor (Misakeen) has been replaced by observance of Gayarveen Sharif and Baba Fareed Kheer i.e. ceremonious feast offering to the saints on particular days supposed to be ideal for invoking Allah's Blessings through intercession of the holy-people in order to ward off evils of misfortune (poverty, disease, loss of health,

failure in business, love life and so on). This also includes rich feast to relatives and friends of a person on the 1st, 3rd and 40th day of his death. The gathering scene at such occasion is very festive as guests – men and women – are nicely dressed up ready to pounce upon the food as if they are to eat to live for the day. Still there is another custom of Daras-e-Quran with Tasbeeh (Hamdo-Sinnah) favorite of ladies in their forties and above. Ladies are dressed up in their best attire and precious ornaments over high fashion makeup. It is a great occasion of show off, gossips, self expression of mind and heart – an excellent means of physical entertainment and mental recreation under the pretext of Ziker-e-Ilahi. Whither Spirituality? Who cares?

This is an interesting case of mixing personal desires with obscure belief in superstition in the name of spiritualism. This tendency generates element of insecurity, fear and awe shaking purity of Faith. This may be termed as a disease of heart and soul. Victims of the disease resort to symbolism as a 'quick fixing' cure. Tying of Imam Zamin around arms while going on certain enterprise or expedition is believed to be a guarantee of protection and success. A framed picture of Masjid-e Nabvi [the Prophet (PBUH) Mosque] and seeing it daily is regarded as a sure means of blessing. The same spiritual status has been assigned to drawing-image of the Prophet (PBUH) foot or shoe hanging by the walls in certain Muslim houses. Interestingly, display of a horse shoe fallen off the hoof at threshold of business places is deemed as a source of flourishing success. Yes! There is a new 'kid on the block'. Appearance of dangling black cloth tied to exhaust-pipe of

new vehicles to deter hijackers by some mysterious supernatural force. Very recently, the practice has taken the entire town by storm. Not surprising at all in a society nurtured on superstitions when rationality and reasoning are fast fading away.

It is shameful, though not surprising, the way the Quran is treated. The Quran is a sacred record of the Divine Guidance and Admonition in Allah's Words revealed to Prophet Mohammed (PBUH). There is absolutely no doubt in it. As proclaimed in Verse 9: Al-Isra 17:

'Verily, the Quran guides to that which is most just and right and gives glad tidings to the believers who perform deeds of righteousness, that they shall have a great reward'.

'By 'Al-Asr' (the time). Verily! Man is in loss'. 'Except those who believe (in Islamic Monotheism) and do righteous and good deeds ...' Verse 1-2: Al-Asr 103.

In other words, the Quran is Allah's Message that has to be understood in order to lead a righteous life by acting upon its injunctions and commands. Interestingly, the Quran is the most read book in the world without understanding its meaning. Allah's Message is thus lost. It may be clarified that there is no intention of insinuating here that simply reading of the Quran is something undesirable. The intriguing most situation, however, is that the Quran wrapped up in silk cloth cover has been shoved somewhere in a cabinet only to be taken out on the day the new bride must pass under its shadow before

leaving for her In-laws house. Bahratees (wedding gusts) are supposed to kiss the Quran one by one. Apparently, this show is put up to invoke Allah's Blessings. Whither spirituality? Who knows?

Still there is another use of the Holy Book and people are very serious about it. A group of women are invited to a house where they read a Sapara (Part) each almost in an hour. In this way, reading of the entire Quran is complete in an hour or so. Certain Masques and Madressas (Religious schools) have organized a team of the Quran readers for hire. The team consists of the youngsters at call. Whosoever wants to hire services of the team is welcomed. A complete reading of the Quran in one sitting at one place is believed to be a sure way of invoking Allah's Blessings for the departed soul of the loved ones. Besides, it is considered as an easy means of repentance, forgiveness and hope for a quick solution of personal or family troubles. It may be true. We need to investigate into it though. Anyway, experience of a few of such gatherings of youngsters hired to read the Quran supervised by their teacher is not much encouraging. The young boys dressed shabbily are busy reading the Quran. Mouth watering dishes of hulwa, plaaow, naans and kibabs are arranged on the side ready to be served after recitation of the Quran. O my Lord! Some boys are simply skipping pages pretending to be reading, while some of them very secretly elbowing each other for fun. Still some of them are having a good time in their own way – hee hee! ha ha whenever the teacher-in-charge is not watching. Recitation of the Quran is followed by much awaited feast. Every body pounces upon it and eats like buffalo. Finally, the teacher-in

charge gets his fee and the show thus comes to an end. What will you call it? Think about it please.

Still another practice with the Quran is that it is used for an oath in the court of law that you will speak the truth and nothing but the truth. Interestingly, both the culprit and the victim swear by the Quran to speak the truth. Who is violating the sanctity of the Holy Scripture – the criminal or the victim or the judge?

A very recent trend that has become almost a fad is recording of the Quranic Verse on cell-phones to replace the regular ringing tone. It seems to be a brain-child of commercial promoters. The innocent Muslims are brain washed to believe that it is another means of listening to the Quran for Allah's Blessings the whole day long irrespective of time, place and situation one may be. The moment the recording of Verse starts playing in place of the ringing tone, the recipient tends to pick up the phone for answer thus killing the Verse in the middle. This is a willful interruption during recitation. Is interrupting recitation of the Quran permissible? It is probable that the call-recipient is not in a purified position required to honor sanctity of the Holy Verses. Please pay heed to the joint unanimous Fatwa against the practice by the religious exegetes of Saudi Arabia and others. You be the judge.

It may be reiterated that these rituals and ceremonies are the product of superstition confused with spiritualism and Faith. Blind practice of the irrational rituals may be described as favorite sports of the people who are prone to short-cuts or quick fix of their problems. Such people fall an easy victim to

con-men, expert in giving doses of devilish mixture of superstition and spiritualism. They exploit, for selfish monetary gain, ignorance of their clients who are incapable of reasoning or rationalizing assurance of utopia. Mostly, golden assurance of a quick remedy of the problems turns out as 'too good to be true'. These believers in ready-made solution of their personal, social and economic troubles, however, cling to the rituals through signs and symbols including odd looking intelligible words for two fold reason. First, it is their mind-set, which is difficult to undo with truthful reasoning. Secondly, they feel comfortable within regardless of the proven meaninglessness of their practice. In this context, a simple true story would further illustrate the point.

It happened in the USA. Once the author met a very decent Indian man called Remash who would carry a mini replica of Hindu deity known as Ghenesh (with elephant face) glued right on the dice-board of his car. It was a simple old wood carving. Remash was Hindu by faith not because he believed in it but as an expression of his ancestral allegiance. His case was not surprising at all. This is a common trend amongst the modern youth all over the world regardless of their religious affiliation – Jews, Christians and Muslims. They profess a faith blindly following the foot prints of their parents. Their religious alliance is coincidental and not by choice. As such, today's young folks feel free of religious obligations. Remash happened to be one of such young men. What was the wooden replica of Ghenesh on his car dice-board supposed to mean? Remash looked around in an innocent way and smilingly said: 'I do not know. Anyway, I feel inwardly comfortable driving

whole day'. This is a typical case of mind-set and very difficult to shake off. Another glaring example of mind-set may be found in the episode of the Children of Israel as mentioned above in detail. Again it is difficult to believe that the newly liberated Children of Israel from the humiliating bondage of Pharaoh could so suddenly follow calf-worship in partner with Allah. How can this phenomenon be explained? They saw with their own eyes an irrefutable proof of existence of the Supreme Being. Splitting of the sea for their safe passage and a death knell for Pharaoh and his host was a startling experience to haunt memory for years to come. Anyway, the Children of Israel resorted to calf-worship. It is an obvious case of mind-set very tough to change except when Allah wills. The Great Lord opens man's heart to the Divine Guidance and facilitates him to be pious and righteous for honor and prosperity in the world and a big reward of Paradise in the Hereafter. Allah has explained this aspect of human nature and the Divine Benevolence in Verse 84: Al-Isra 17.

'Each one does according to 'shakilatihi' (i.e. his way or his religion or his intentions) and your³ Lord knows best of him whose path (religion) is right' – Islamic Monotheism.

A few words about the modern demons commonly described as terrorism, militancy, fascism and Islamic extremism (in the West). It would be irrelevant here to go into political and socio-economic feeding factors of terrorism. Suffice would be to say that the demons are unpredictable, devastating and horrifying. They have already rocked the very foundation of world society, which is in a fix to understand how to eradicate the

menace. Pakistan is not exception to it. Now and then, loud explosions are heard destroying innocent life and expensive property. Apparently, this is an expression of anger, disgust and vendetta against injustice, inequality and unfairness. It may hold some water. Laws are made to break suiting to convenience of a few in powers, while the majority of under dogs suffer the hurt. Businesses are disrupted at the free will of the goons mocking at the deplorable law and order situation. Families are destabilized by an abrupt disappearance of their members who remain mysteriously missing. Some of them make a news-line in the paper: 'Killed in encounter'. The irony is that some of them, without trial, are dubbed as rebels (so called freedom fighters) – enemies of the state and hence enemies of Allah and the Prophet (PBUH). But the big question is who passes the judgment? Dare to ask?

The dreadful state of terrorism has become all the more critical by the emergence of some self-styled chiefs (Imams) in North Waziristan and Blochistan. These regions are save haven for foreign refugees, madressas, seminaries and religious sectarian friction. It is indeed a perpetual living threat to territorial integrity, economic and social moral values. The recent agreement between the state and warring tribes is, however, a sort of a good relief in spite of shaky future. An ugly aspect of the scenario, however, is frequency of suicide-bomb-blasts. Who are they? Where from they come? What county do they belong to? What is exactly their religion? All these puzzling questions boggle the mind. It is generally believed that majority of suicide-bombers belong to 'petty groups of semi-literate youngsters disconnected with their roots,

disappointed by the environment and mostly frustrated within and without. They are scattered and despaired folks ready to fall an easy prey of exploitation in the name of religion by the foreign agencies as well as the local feudal and tribal lords – power grabbers with vested political interest'. The observation cannot be taken as an absolute truth. Suicide-bombers, some of them, are well educated and financially affluent members of prestigious families. The subject, as such, requires more research work into various dimensions of the perennial terrorism.

Limiting our discussion to the regions like Swat, Landhi Kotal, Fata and their environs we find, as a matter of routine, killing, robbing blowing up music shops, barber shops, girls' schools and restaurants. Army convoys are fired upon by rocket launchers. Even peaceful wedding as well as funeral processions are not safe. This drama of holocaust is being staged under the pretext of Shariah Laws enforcement. A Muslim is killed by a Muslim because of difference in religious sectarian belief. If you do not live in my way, you are infidel and enemy of Allah. Death by blowing up is justified. It is believed to be a crusade against infidelity to uphold the supremacy of Monotheism. In other words, it is propagated as Jihad (Qatal) fighting in the cause of Allah. Suicide bombers are hypnotized, as a part of training, to believe that self-blowing in a targeted place is Shahadat – an instant visa to Paradise at the main gate of which, the Prophet (PBUH) is waiting to shake hands with them. Is it true or false? Is there any authority to endorse it?

First we consult the Quran on the subject of taking innocent life.

'And do not kill anyone whose killing Allah has forbidden, except for a just cause. And whoever is killed wrongfully (Mazlumun, intentionally with hostility and oppression) We have given his heir the authority (for revenge)'. Verse 33: Al-Isra 17,

'... if anyone killed a person not in retaliation of murder, or (and) to spread mischief in the land – it will be as if he killed all mankind, and if anyone saved a life, it would be as if he saved the life of all mankind...' Verse 32: Al-Ma'idah 5.

'Verily, Allah enjoins 'Al-Adl' (justice) and 'Al-Ihsan' (i.e. patience in performing your duties to Allah), and giving (help) to kith and kin, and forbids 'Al-Fahahsa' (evil deeds), and 'Al-Munkar (all that is prohibited by Islamic Law) and 'Al-Baghy' (all kinds of oppression). He admonishes you, that you may take heed''. Verse 90: An-Nahl 16.

Secondly, the Quran and the Sunnah explicitly explain the preconditions for justification of the call for Jihad. 1) Who is qualified to make the call? 2) What has prompted the call? 3) Which and how are the preconditions for the call met? 4) Are the necessary preparations for Jihad, as ordained in the Quran, already made both in peace and war?

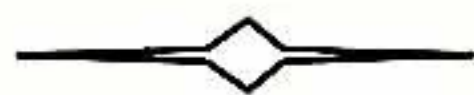
'And make ready against them all you can of power, including steeds of war (tanks, planes. Missiles, artillery) to threaten the

enemy of Allah and your enemy, and others besides whom, you may not know but whom Allah does know'. Verse 60: Al-Anfal 8.

Concluding the narrative, it may be observed that man's inner spirituality, enkindled by the Divine Breath, starts diminishing in pursuit of actions not endorsed in the Quran or the Sunnah. The most critical, however, is the tendency of falsely ascribing certain practices to the Divine Will as a cover up. The militant activities at the Frontiers of our country are anti-sate, anti-humanity, anti-religion and anti-Muslims. The tragedy is that even 'Fatwas' from the religious exegetes have failed to defuse bomb blasts. It is rather on the rise with no end in sight. Every one feels concerned. None is showing guts to speak the truth. National media often organizes panel of discussions by the country scholars and luminaries who just touch the subject in a round-about way as if ducking the truth. This is very sad indeed. All know that terrorism has been destabilizing institutions, disrupting economic growth and shredding social fabric of the society. Its advocates do not believe in writ of the land. They go after what has been engraved on their conscience led astray due to interpretation of the Quran and the Sunnah by rigid conservative obscurants for their vested interests. This tendency distorts the very image of Islam home and abroad.

This scenario poses a serious problem for the Muslim youngsters who are to compete for survival in this highly competitive society world-wide. The youngsters definitely need a competitive edge for progress in highly advanced world of science and technology. It is, therefore, imperative that preaching of Islam should be inspiring rather than disgusting

with a set of dogmas and irrational rituals. Islam, should, therefore, be talking to their needs and aspirations. This calls for a proper education of the Muslim masses on the meaning of Allah's Message in the Quran beyond ceremonial rituals. Blind recitation of the Quran, when replaced by meaningful understanding is likely to enhance awareness and liberate thinking. An average Muslim needs to be equipped with knowledge adequate enough to determine his life conduct, instead of being driven blindly by dogmas and prejudices. This brings in the need of 'honest rethinking, re-planning and redesigning a rational curricula for mass education in place of custom tailored syllabuses'. It may be an effective means of encountering sectarianism and pave the way for re-defining Islam compatible to the main stream of life. Obviously, it is a tough job fraught with serious challenges and cannot be accomplished over-night. Anyway, the process of restoration / revival of Islam should begin somehow – sooner the better with a strong conviction in the universal character of the Divine Message.



The Case of Prophet Mohammed (PBUH) The Final Witness

The big idea of the article is to explore the Divine Significance of the Verse 143: Al-Baqarah 2

'Thus We (Allah) have made you 'Ummatun Vasata' [a just and the best nation – true Muslims, the real believers of the Islamic Monotheism, and the sincere believers of Prophet Mohammed (PBUH) and his Sunnah (the legal ways)], that you be witness over mankind and the messenger [Mohammed (PBUH)] be a witness over you'.

The word *'Ummamun Vasata'* in the Verse is like a stumbling stone. There is no equivalent translation available. Some may like to interpret it as a Middle Nation in term of time and space. This seems to be a far-fetched interpretation. Mohammed (PBUH) *'is the Messenger of Allah and the last (end) of the Prophets'* (numbering 1,24000). Verse 40: Al-Ahzab 33. His *'ummat'* referred to in the Verse may be regarded as the final nation on earth chosen by Allah i.e. the best one worthy of performing the role of *'Imamat'* (leadership) of the Alamin (mankind and Jinn) – Allah knows better.

In consideration of multi-dimensional meaning of *'Ummatun Vasata'* religious scholars have explained it in various ways to

unravel the hidden significance. Maulana Fatah Mohammed Jalundhry has translated '*Jaulnakum ummatun vasata*' as We (Allah) made you moderate / plausible ummat (the believers of true Monotheism). To elucidate the meaning, Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanvi, in his explanatory note, creates a situation like the Divine Court hearing a case, in which one party consisting of all the Prophets are the defendants. The other group i.e. 'opposing forces' are the challengers. The witnesses to testify the validity of the claim (i.e. the Messengers did convey Allah's Message to their respective people) are the followers (the true believers) of the Prophet Mohammed (PBUH). To crown all, the Prophet Mohammed (PBUH) would himself endorse the trustworthiness of testimony of his followers. This is the highest summit of spiritual accession of the Muslims of post Revelation time.

Illustrating the meaning of this Verse, Maulana Abu-Ala-Maududi says the term '*Ummatun Vasata*' denotes a super elevated group that truly believes in fairness, justice and moderation. By virtue of their equal justice, pristine righteousness and piety, these people occupy a pivotal position among the nations globally. They are the super models of the Prophet's (PBUH) teachings of right thinking, pious deeds, and institutions of equality, fairness and justice for all. On the Judgment Day, these chosen followers of Islamic Monotheism would stand as witness that the Messengers, at their respective time, did convey Allah's Message and we, the followers, further carried out the Message for information and goodness of humanity. On the top of this, the Prophet Mohammed (PBUH) himself would testify the validity of their testimony.

For further clarity, the Verse under discussion may be studied in conjunction with the following Hadith No. 14 Vol. 6: Sahih Al-Bukhari.

Hadith

Narrated by Abu Sa'id al-Kudhri: Allah's Messenger (PBUH) said, 'Nuh (Noah) will be called on the Day of Resurrection and he will say, 'Labbaik and S'a-dail, (I respond to your call and I am obedient to your orders) O My Lord! Allah will say: 'Did you convey Our Message of Islamic Monotheism?' Nuh (Noah) will say, 'Yes'. His nation will then be asked, 'Did he convey Our Message of Islamic Monotheism to you?' They will say, 'no warner came to us'. Then Allah will say to Nuh (Noah), 'Who will bear witness in your favor?' He will say, 'Mohammed (PBUH) and his followers'. So they (i.e. the Muslims) will testify that he conveyed the Message – and the Messenger [Mohammed (PBUH)] will be a witness over you, and that is what is meant by the statement of Allah: 'We made you [true Muslims – real believers of Islamic Monotheism, true followers of Prophet Mohammed (PBUH) and his Sunnah (the legal ways) a just and the best) nation – *Ummatun Vasata* – that you be witness over mankind and the Messenger [Mohammed (PBUH)] will be witness over you'.

It is indeed a special blessing of the Great Lord Who preferred the followers of Mohammed (PBUH), true believers of Islamic Monotheism over the entire Alamin (mankind and jinn) since Adam. As a token of preference, Allah called them 'Ummantun Vasata' (a just and the best nation). What is the Divine Standard of Judgment in this context? It may be remembered that all the

times since Adam landed on the planet earth, a certain individual or group has to be the Vice-Regent of Allah who is worthy of discharging responsibilities of Imamah (leadership) of people as in Verse 33: Al-Imran 3:

'Allah chose Adam, Nuh (Noah), the family of Ibrahim (Abraham) and the family of Imran above the Alamin (mankind and jinn) (of their times.)

The status of Imamah is the highest bench mark of man's spiritual elevation. Imamah of the world is a distinctive honor, although it carries along with a heavy load of responsibilities. The followers of the Prophet (PBUH) were granted the title of 'Ummatun Wasata' in recognition of their unflinching faith in Islamic Monotheism and consistent deeds of piety as per Prophet's (PBUH) Sunnah (the legal ways). These believers are the real inheritors of religious knowledge full of wisdom. They voluntarily carry out the tough duty of furthering the cause of Islam. The process of spreading Islam for goodness of mankind would continue till the Day of Resurrection as in the Quran Verse 104; Al-Imran 3.

'Let there arise out of you a group of people inviting to all that is good (Islam), enjoining Al-Maruf (i.e. Islamic Monotheism and all Allah orders one to do) and forbidding Al-Munkur (polytheism and disbelief and all that Islam has forbidden) and it is why they are the successful'.

The success level of these pious people can be measured by their entitlement to act as witness to testify that all the

Messengers, irrespective of time and space, did convey Allah's Message of Monotheism in a befitting manner. Not only this, the Prophet (PBUH), *Rahamat ul Alamin* (a true symbol of Mercy for mankind and jinn) himself would endorse the truthful testimony of Ummatun Vasata (a just and the best nation).

It appears that the proceedings of the Divine Court hearing the claim of the Messengers [i.e. they conveyed Allah's Message and the denial of their respective nations (the challengers)] would not be complete and decisive without the Final Witness of Prophet Mohammed (PBUH), the last of a long line of the Messengers.

The final witness of Prophet Mohammed (PBUH) is indispensable for the Divine Court to arrive at an ultimate verdict of reward and punishment beyond any reasonable doubt. What are the qualifying distinctions of the Prophet (PBUH) that make him a true decisive final witness? The first and foremost is the Divine Testimonial of his high character as in Verse 4: Al-Qalam 68.

'And verily, you [O Mohammed (PBUH)] are on an exalted (standard) of character'.

The Islamic Monotheism the Prophet (PBUH) preached is an extension of the religion of Ibrahim (Abraham) as in the Verse 123: An-Nahl 16:

'Say' Allah has spoken the truth; follow the religion of Ibrahim

(Abraham) hanifa (Islamic Monotheism) i.e. he used to worship Allah Alone, and he was not Al-Mushrikin (idolaters, polytheists)'.

It was not an accident that the process of revelation of Allah's religion of Monotheism, starting from Adam to Isa (Jesus the Christ) and all the Messengers in between, culminated finally into perfection during the period of Mohammed (PBUH).

'This day, I (Allah) have perfected your religion for you, completed My Favors upon you and have chosen for you Islam as your religion'. Verse 3: Al-Ma'idha 5.

This may be construed as the Divine certification of the title of *'Ummatun Vasata'* (just and the best followers) on the one hand and on the other, par excellence of the Prophet (PBUH) whose exemplary devotion to the cause of Allah has been described in Verse 162: Al-An'am 6'

'Say [O Mohammed (PBUH)] 'Verily, my salat (prayer), my sacrifice, my living, and my dying are for Allah, the Lord of the Alamin (mankind and jinn and all that exist)'.

This is a state of total merger of the self with the Will of Allah when man transcends the blessed *Maqam Mahmood*, the highest spiritual elevation – a pinnacle of praise and glory. This is a supreme standard of ultimate accession. People may try to conquer the height. Some may come closer to it. It is, however, the limitless Grace of Allah that the Prophet Mohammed (PBUH) alone would be awarded the blissful *Maqam Mahmood* – the highest bench mark of the distinguished

privilege and honor.

The Prophet's (PBUH) accession to *Maqam Mahmood* supports the legitimacy of his distinctive title of *Rahmat ul Alamin* (mankind and jinn) as in Verse 107: Anbita 21:

'We have sent you [O Mohammed (PBUH)] not but as a mercy for the Alamin'

To illustrate the significance of the title, a brief reference to the deplorable condition of pre-revelation Arabian Peninsula would be helpful. In this secluded part of the world, no Messenger was sent prior to Mohammed (PBUH). At certain point in time, this region, however, came under the influence of Judaism and Christianity. It is reasonable to believe that the people were already familiar with Allah – Monotheism. But it was a distorted fake form of Monotheism. The Rabies and the Christian missionaries exploited the local ignorant inhabitants devoid of education under heavy burden of socio-economic stringency. These missionaries, under the garb of socio-religious reformists, were free to³ twist Lord's Commandments to befool people for selfish monitory gains. They had set a vicious process of exploitation, robbing and looting. Consequently, the lot of common people of the Arabian Peninsula went from bad to worse – no rights, no privilege, no hope and no aspiration. Even the religion was monopolized by a few with baseless innovations and rituals, which were very expensive beyond the affording limit of the commons. In brief, the people were under financial pressure, socially demoralized, politically segregated and spiritually defeated

within and without. Individualism was at the rampage while collectivism was extinct. In this Age of ignorance when gloom and destitution were the order of the day, coming of the Prophet Mohammed (PBUH), an indisputable symbol of mercy, broke down centuries old shackles of slavery, emancipated the suffering people, taught them the true criteria of right and wrong with prophetic wisdom and sound religious knowledge based upon Islamic Monotheism. It is by virtue of the Prophet Mohammed's (PBUH) hard ministerial efforts that mankind saw light of spiritual and economic emancipation as explained in Verse 157: Al-A'raf 7.

'... he [the Apostle PBUH] releases them from their heavy burden of (Allah's Covenant), and from the fetters (bindings) that were upon them. So those who believe in him [Mohammed (PBUH)] honor him, help him and follow the light (the Quran) which has been sent down with him, it is they who will be successful'.

The Prophet Mohammed (PBUH), a symbol of Rahmat (mercy), has not only rescued mankind in this world but also would save people from the burning Hell on the Day of Resurrection. Allah, the All-Mighty *'taught Adam all the names of everything'* pertaining to this earth. As a token of special Divine Favor, the Prophet Mohammed (PBUH) would be taught proper wordings of intercession acceptable to Allah for forgiveness and redemption of the people of Hell. The below mention Hadith No.3 Vol. 6, Sahih Al-Bukhari evidences the truth of the statement.

Narrated Anas (May Allah hold him in His Favor): 'The Prophet (PBUH) said: 'On the day of Resurrection, the believers will assemble and say; 'Let us ask somebody to intercede for us with our Lord. So they would go to Adam and say: 'You are the father of all the people, and Allah created you with His Own Hands, and ordered the angels to prostrate themselves to you, and taught you names of all things; so please intercede for us with your Lord, so that He may release us from this place of ours'. Adam will say, I am not fit for this (i.e. intercession for you)) Then Adam will remember his sin and feel ashamed thereof. He will say, 'Go to Nuh (Noah), for he was the first Messenger, Allah sent to the inhabitants of the earth'. They will go to him and Nuh (Noah) will say, 'I am not fit for this undertaking'. He will remember his appeal to his Lord to do something of which he had no knowledge, then he will feel ashamed thereof and will say, "Go to Khalil -ur-Rehman [i.e. Ibrahim (Abraham)]. They will go to him and he will say, 'I am not fit for this undertaking. Go to Musa (Moses), the slave to whom Allah spoke (directly) and gave him the Taurat (Torah)'. So they go to him and he will say, 'I am not fit for this undertaking', and he will mention (his) killing a person who was not a killer. And so he will feel ashamed thereof before his Lord, and he will say, 'Go to Isa (Jesus), Allah's slave, His Messenger and Allah's Word and a spirit coming from Him'. Isa (Jesus) will say, 'I am not fit for this undertaking, go to Mohammed (PBUH), the slave of Allah whose past and future sins were forgiven by Allah'.

So they will come to me [Mohammed (PBUH)] and I will proceed till I ask my Lord's Permission and I will given the permission. When I see my Lord, I will fall down in prostration and He will let me remain in that state as long as He wishes then I will be addressed: '[Mohammed!

(PBUH)] Raise your head and ask and your request will be granted, say and your saying will be listened to, intercede and your intercession will be accepted.' I will raise my head and praise Allah with a saying (i.e. invocation) He would teach me and then I will intercede. He will fix a limit for me (to intercede) whom I will admit into Paradise. Then I will come back again to Allah, and when I see my Lord, the same thing will happen to me. And then I will intercede and Allah will fix a limit for me (to intercede) whom I will admit into Paradise, then I will come back for the third time: then I will come back for the fourth time and will say, 'None remains in Hell but those whom the Quran has imprisoned (in Hell) and who have been destined to an eternal stay in Hell'.

Abu Abdullah said; 'But those whom the Quran has imprisoned in Hell' refers to the Statement of Allah: *'To abide therein forever'* Also see *Hadith No. 242 Vol. 6, Sahih Al-Bukhari.*

The Divine Permission for intercession granted exclusively to the Prophet Mohammed (PBUH), in preference to all the Messengers, speaks loudly of Allah's Blessings and Love for the Apostle (PBUH). The angels in heavens praise and pray for success, wellbeing and ultimate high stature of the Prophet (PBUH). Of course, love for mankind is a means of closeness to Allah. But to love the Prophet (PBUH) is to love Allah. As in Verse 80: An-Nisa 4:

'He who obeys the Messenger [Mohammed (PBUH)] has indeed obeyed Allah...'

Obedience with total submission to Sunnah (the legal ways) is a demonstration of true love for the Prophet (PBUH). In other words, unflinching faith in the Islamic Monotheism supported by pious deeds is a standard mark of the pristine love for the Prophet (PBUH). In so doing the believers join in the mass supplication for the Messenger (PBUH) as enjoined by Allah In Verse.56: Al-Ahzab 33.

'Allah sends His Salat (Graces, Honors, Blessings, Mercy) on the Prophet [Mohammed (PBUH)] and also His Angels (ask Allah to bless) him. O you who believe! Send your salat on him (i.e. ask Allah to bless him) [Mohammed (PBUH)], and you shall greet (salute) him with the Islamic way of greeting (salutation i.e. Asslamun Alaikum).'

Summing up the narrative, the above mentioned are a few of many distinctive characteristics of the Prophet Mohammed (PBUH) that endorse high qualifications that should be present in the Prophet (PBUH) of *Ummatun Vasata* who inherited the knowledge of Islamic religion and its wisdom of right and wrong where no ordinary human being has any access.

The Knowledge of the Quran revealed to Mohammed (PBUH) is not limited to any time and space. It is eternal in nature and universal in scope. It encompasses the three cross over Monotheistic Faiths – Judaism, Christianity and Islam. The Quranic Verse 84: Al-Imran 3 explains the subject as:

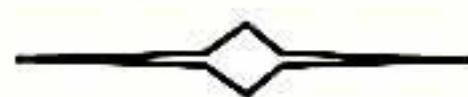
'Say [O Mohammed (PBUH)] "We believe in Allah and in what has been sent down to us, and what has been sent down to

Ibrahim (Abraham), Ismail (Ishmael), Ishaq (Isaac), Yuqub (Jacob) and Al-Asbat [the offspring of the twelve sons of Yaqub (Jacob) and what has been given to Musa (Moses), Isa (Jesus) and the Prophets from their Lord. We make no distinction between one another among them and to Him we have submitted (in Islam)'

This constitutes a solemn witness (Mohammed (PBUH) and his followers, the true believers in the Islamic Monotheism. Besides, the previous nations especially the Jews and the Christians already knew the coming of Mohammed (PBUH) '*...whom they find written with them in the Taurat (Torah) [Deut, xviii] and the Injeel (Gospel) [John xiv 160]*' Verse 157: Al-A'raf 7.

This brief account of the personal character, high intellectual caliber and matchless spiritual accession of the Prophet Mohammed (PBUH) may clearly answer why particularly he alone is chosen as the final witness for the ultimate verdict of reward or punishment in the Divine Court where all the Messengers, their respective nations and the members of '*Ummatun Vasata*' are in attendance for the purpose described above.

Allah the All-Wise knows better.



'We Make No Distinction In Any of Them'

The focal theme of the Quran revolves around the Islamic Monotheism. This is a singular Message conveyed invariably by all the Messengers from Adam to the last line of the Prophets i.e. Mohammed (PBUH). The Quran, as such, confirms and endorses all the previous Scriptures without any distinction along with other article of Faith – angles, Resurrection, and Preordainments (The Book of Decrees). In Allah's Words as in Verse 136: Al-Baqarah 2:

'Say (O Muslims), 'We believe in Allah (God) and that which has been sent down to us and that which has been sent down to Ibrahim (Abraham), Ismael (Ishmael), Ishaq (Isaac), Yaqub (Jacob) and to Al-Asbat [the offspring of the twelve sons of Yuqub (Jacob)] and that which has been given to Musa (Moses) and Isa (Jesus) and that which has been given to Prophets from their Lord. We make no distinction between any of them and to Him we have submitted (in Islam)'

The Quran, an excellent 'exposition of everything, guidance and mercy' abounds in historical account of ancient people and their respective Messengers. The Quranic tales of the by-gone nations beautifully illustrate Allah's Promise of prosperity, honor and power for those who believed in Monotheism and performed pious and righteous deeds in compliance with the

Divine Dictates as revealed to various Messengers at different times for onward transmission to their respective people. Those who believed and did righteous deed for self purification as well as goodness of humanity were blessed with the distinguished status of Vice Regent of Allah in recognition of their outstanding performance in discharging responsibilities of leadership of humanity as in Verse 33: Al-Imran 3:

'Allah chose Adam, Nuh (Noah), the family of Ibrahim (Abrham) and the family of Imran above the Alamin (mankind and jinn of their times)'.

These true followers of their respective messengers are Allah's chosen people. They are on the high position of spiritual elevation by virtue of their consistent Faith in Monotheism supported by spotless virtuous conduct as per Allah's Commandments. Besides, Allah's Blessings on them should be assessed by the fact that the Lord honored them by making His Messengers from amongst their offspring. This may construe as the Divine stamp of approval of their piety, righteousness and total submission to His Command and Will.

This may serve as an abundant reason to equally respect and honor the true followers of Monotheism (i.e. Ummah) of the previous Messengers of Allah regardless of the time and space difference. We do not give preference to one over any of the other ancient people – the true believers of Monotheism. Rather it would be good to avoid unqualified judgment in over emphasizing the qualities of one in comparison with the other.

These pious ancients may excel each other in terms of their devotional allegiance to the Lord. This is, of course, a matter of degrees. Only Allah the All-Knower has the better knowledge.

Besides, a close study of the Quran reveals that the ancient people whosoever believed in the Message of Monotheism, followed what was right and abstained from evils, enjoyed security, prosperity, affluence and power as proclaimed in Allah's Words of Verse 73: Al-Anbiya 21:

'And We made them leaders guiding (mankind) by Our Command and We revealed to them the doing of good deeds, performing Salat (Iqamat-as-Salat) and giving Zakat and of Us (Alone) they were the worshipers'.

The high position of prosperity, power, and invincible kingdom, which the Prophet Daud (David) and Prophet Suliman (Solomon) had enjoyed, could be quoted as a proof thereof. There is a long list of earlier nations who were blessed with Allah's Mercy and Grace. We skip their details for brevity sake.

But the big question is what went wrong that some of the ancient nations incurred Allah's Torment. As a result, many of them were whipped out of the earth surface never to be heard ever. As per the Quran, these nations were rewarded for their obedience to Allah's Commands. They grew in prosperity with fabulous wealth and numerical strength as a reward for their submission to Allah. With the passage of time, they grew complacent and transgressed from the Straight Path of

Monotheism. In this situation, Allah withholds His Favors because of violation of the Covenant with Allah which is two-way deal anyway. Allah fulfills His Own binding of the Covenant only when people honor their part. In other words, compliance with the Covenant leads to success while its violation leads to total ruin. Once again, non-obedience leads to gradual deterioration till the point of final collapse. Even at this stage of near finality, Allah sends His Messenger as a last ditch effort to avert ultimate collapse of a nation as proclaimed in Verse 15 & 16: Al-Isra 17:

'And We never punish until We have sent a messenger (to give warning)'.
'

'And when We decide a town (population) We (first) send a definite order (to obey Allah and be righteous) to those among them [or We (first) increase in number those of its population] who lead a life of luxury. Then they transgress therein, and thus the word (of torment) is justified against it (them). Then We destroy it with complete destruction'.

The people of Nuh (Noah), Ad, Thamud, Ibrahim (Abraham), Lut (Lot), Musa (Moses) and the dwellers of Madayn (Median) were destroyed for their disobedience to Monotheism and surpassing all limits of decency and righteousness. The end final result of their evils illustrates adequately the true significance of the said Verses. It may be a serious admonition to the Muslims of the present time. Allah's Promise is true. He helps people as long as they are true to their covenant of being pious and righteous with unflinching faith in Islamic

Monotheism. Violation of the covenant leads to inevitable disgrace, humiliation and ultimate annihilation. The same warning is given in the clear most Divine Verse 9: Ar-Rum 30:

'Do they not travel in the land and see what was the end (destruction) of those before them? They were superior to them in strength, and they tilled the earth and populated it in greater numbers than those (Pagans) have done ...'

The admonition for today's Muslims is intended to remind and extend Allah's Invitation to Islamic Monotheism for salvation and goodness of humanity as in the Quranic Verse 42: Ar-Rum 30:

'So set you [O Mohammed (PBUH)] your face (in obedience to Allah, your Lord) to the straight and right religion (Islamic Monotheism), before there comes from Allah a Day (Resurrection) which none can avert...'

The Divine Proclamations dispel the common erroneous notion that the Muslims will not be burnt in Hell fire because they say with their tongue 'Lailaha Illallah' (none has the right to be worshiped but Allah) but do not bother to implement it in their life conduct. Such folk would be better off if they understand the true meaning of 'Ameynu wa amelusalehat' i.e. faith supported by the righteous deeds is the only criteria of judgment for reward or punishment in the Divine Court.

Referring back to our narrative of the ancient nations, which suffered Wrath of Allah, it may be reiterated that torment was inflicted only upon those who digressed from the Straight Path

– disbelievers and arrogant rebels to Monotheism. The true believers, however, escaped the torment as Allah saved them because of their piety, righteousness and unflinching devotion to the cause of Allah. They deserve respect, honor and good remembrance at all times. These chosen ones are always clean, fresh and faithful devotees to the cause of Islamic Monotheism during their respective times and till the Last Day. Regardless to what happened to their contemporaries for rebellion to Allah, these spotless champions of Monotheism are a constant source of light, guidance and inspiration for mankind of all times. It would not be fair to prefer one pious nation over the other in terms of their characteristics and achievements. They are blessed by Allah's Security and enjoy the honor of an extreme success i.e. their abode in Paradise. In short, the true believers of Monotheism amongst the ancient nations are a role-model for today's Muslims as they are the live-illustration of the Divine Significance of 'Invitation' and 'Admonition' – an indispensable axis around which the entire theme of the Quran revolves. The Quranic Verse 111: Yusuf 12, Verse 34: An-Nur 24 and Verse 56: Az-Zukhruf 43 support the view as:

'Indeed in these stories, there is a lesson for men of understanding'. '... and a detailed explanation of every thing and a Guide and Mercy for the people who believe'.

'And indeed We have sent down for you 'Ayat (signs) that make things plain, and the example of those who passed away before you, and admonition for those who are Al-Muttaqun (the pious persons)'.

'And We made them a precedent and example for latter generations'.

Before concluding, it would be appropriate to make a mention of the Ummat, the true followers of the Prophet Mohammed (PBUH). Allah describes them '*Ummatun wasata*'. The term denotes a superior elevated group that truly believes in fairness, justice and moderation. By virtue of their equal justice, pristine righteousness and piety, these people occupy a pivotal leadership position amongst the nations globally. They are the super models of the Prophet's (PBUH) teachings of right thinking, pious deeds and institutions of equality, fairness and justice for all. On the Judgment Day, these chosen followers of the Islamic Monotheism with their excellent righteous deeds as per the Prophet's (PBUH) teachings would stand as witness that the earlier Messengers, at their respective time, did properly convey Allah's Message for reformation and goodness of humanity. For more details, read the article entitled 'The Case of Prophet Mohammed (PBUH) – The Final Witness'.

It may be remembered that designation of '*Ummatun Wasata*' granted to the true followers of the Prophet Mohammed (PBUH) is a demonstration of the limitless Grace and Mercy of Allah the All-Mighty. This does not, in any way, differentiate or undermine the noble status of the believing ancient nations. Winding up, it may be reinstated that the Divine Rules governing man's conduct in life are absolute and invariably applied to all nations equally from the day one of the creation of mankind. There has been no exception ever. It is, therefore, imperative for today's Muslims around the globe to understand

that Allah's Promise is true and none can avert its fulfillment. It is important, more than ever, to read the Quran to get into the real significance of the Message, which seems to have been lost. How can the Muslims afford, any longer, a blind recitation of the Quran? The practice should be stopped for the sake of meaningful understanding of the Message in order to act upon its injunctions for salvation and goodness of humanity worldwide. Why to understand the Message of the Quran? The answer is as in Verse 9: Al-Isra 17:

'Verily, this Quran guides to which is most just and right and gives glad tidings to the believers [in the Oneness of Allah and His Messenger Mohammed (PBUH)], who work deeds of righteousness, that they shall have a great reward (Paradise).'

This is an open 'Invitation' to piety and righteousness for a big reward of Paradise. This is followed by stern 'Admonition'. In case of none compliance, man would be left out deserted, humiliated and destroyed without a trace in this world. In the Hereafter, eternal Hell fire will be waiting for him as in Allah's Words of Verse 8: Al-Isra 17:

'It may be that your Lord shows mercy on you, but if you return (to sins) We shall return (to Our punishment). And We have made Hell a prison for the disbelievers.'

The admonition is addressed to Bani Israel (the people of Israel). Its application is universal. This may serve as a serious warning for today's Muslims. As mentioned earlier. Allah has designated the true believers of Islamic Monotheism, the

followers of Mohammed (PBUH) as *Ummatun wasata*, a high bench mark of spiritual elevation. To retain the honorable designation, it is about time for the present Muslims to reflect deeply over their situation. They should be better off to avoid bragging about their past glory. A reasonable progress would be definite the moment they come out of their shell to see the light of reality. The statement is supported by Allah's Guarantee of success and prosperity as mentioned in Verse 29: Al-Anfal 8;

'O you believe! If you obey and fear Allah, He will grant you Furkan (a criteria to judge between right and wrong) or Mukhraj, i.e. a way for you to get out from every difficulty), and will expiate for you your sins and forgive you; and Allah is the Owner of the great bounty'.

The interesting question is how to begin? Of course, there should be beginning somewhere. The process should be initiated by breaking shackles of egoism and individualism by following the Quranic Injunctions and the Prophet's (PBUH) Sunnah (legal ways). Why are we not paying heed? Why are we lost in the bewilderment of superiority complex mostly dwelling on the past and sunning our responsibility under obscure explanation – an excuse without excuse?

May Allah the All-Mighty help us. Amen



Why Prostration? (As-sijda – Bowing)

The word Prostration was first heard in the heavens when creation of Adam was perfected by blowing of soul in him with the Divine breath. As a result, the mud-man became walking and talking human being endowed with distinctive qualities of reasoning, analyzing and rationalizing including emotion of compassion, love and care. These exclusive characteristics qualified Adam as *Ashraf-ul-Mukhlooqat* (superior to all the creatures). A successful knowledge test, in front of the angels, gave Adam an upper-hand. The angels were commanded to prostrate themselves before Adam as in the Quranic Verse 34: Al-Baqarah 2:

'And (remember) when We (Allah) said to the angels: "Prostrate yourselves before Adam". And they prostrated except Iblis (Satan).'

The Divine Command for prostration was not meant to brow beat the angels in anyway. It was purely a compliance with Allah's Command – a gesture of unconditional obedience and submissiveness with humility to the Divine Will. It was also an expression of adoration for the Supreme Lord, the All-Knower, the All-Wise. It may be remembered that the angles are pre-programmed to perform their respective assignments without any option or choice to be otherwise. How could Iblis

invoke his choice of non-compliance with Allah's Command? Originally, Iblis was jinn created *'from the smokeless flame of fire'* (Verse 27: Al-Hijir 15). By virtue of his unflinching obedience and constant glorification of Allah, Iblis had earned the title- status of an angel. Iblis, as jinn, had freedom of choice (unlike the angels), which he exercised because of his arrogance as in Verse 12: Al-Arif 7:

'Iblis said: "I am better than him (Adam). You (Allah) created me from fire and him You created from clay"'.

This is how from the day one, Allah, in a dramatic way, gave a clear Message, that obedience to the Great Lord was a guarantee of honor while non-compliance would lead to disgrace and humiliation as in Verse 13: Al-Araf 7:

'(Allah) said: "(O Iblis) get down from this (Paradise). It is not for you to be arrogant here. Get out, for you are of those humiliated and disgraced"'.

This was a prologue of the Lord's Great Grand Plan to settle man on the planet earth. Eating of the 'forbidden fruit' against Allah's admonition led to the exit of Adam and His wife Eve from the Paradise down on the earth with the first ever Divine guidance to mankind as in Verse 38: Al-Baqarah 2:

'We said: "Get down all of you from this place (the Paradise), then when there comes to you Guidance from Me, and whosoever follows My Guidance, there shall be no fear on them, nor shall they grieve"'.

Subsequently, a long series of Guidance to various nations at different intervals is an extension of the Divine Promise as mentioned above. Allah established a rule for all times to come till the Resurrection that *'whosoever follows My Guidance, there shall be no fear on them, nor shall they grieve'*.

The effective most way of following Allah's Guidance is 'Prostration' to the Supreme Lord – a physical act symbolizing total submission to Oneness of Allah, Oneness of His Lordship and Oneness of His Supremacy. In other words, prostration implies not only acknowledgement of the exclusive Lordship of Allah both in this world and the Hereafter but also a firm commitment on the part of man to obey the Divine Commands for the righteous life conduct. Above all, prostration is an excellent means of invoking Allah for forgiveness and guidance to the route to Paradise – a supreme success (no fear no grief). Besides, prostration – a physical act of casting one's head on the ground, signifies expression of extreme humility in man, recognition of Omnipresence of the Supreme Being and a solemn commitment to obedience / submission to the Divine Will. The part joins the Whole; the mortal merges with the Immortal; a unity of the insignificance with the Significance is established. In this environment of congruity man achieves exceptional elevation when all the barriers of distinction are broken as portrayed below:

'Aik hi saf mein kharay ho gey sub Mehmood o Ayaz
Na koi bandah raha no koi bandah nawaz'

Such an evaluation of prostration may suggest a clue to the

significance of Divine Ordinance of Iqamat-as- Salat (daily five compulsory prayers). Simply speaking, prostration is an integral part of physical acts of prayers. A quick analysis of these acts highlights a special importance of prostration. First, recitation of Surat Al-Fatihah:

'All the praises and thanks are to Allah, the Lord of the Alamin. The Most Gracious, the Most Merciful. The Only Owner of the Day of Recompense (i.e. the Day of Resurrection). You (Alone) we worship, and You (Alone) we ask for help. Guide us to the Straight Path'... is followed by Raku and Sijda (prostration). The wordings of Surat Al-Fatihah constitute a solemn oath, which a worshiper takes to Allah for Allah in front of Allah. By acknowledging Allah's Supreme Sovereignty in the universe, man commits himself to execute all the Divine Injunctions with total obedience and submission. The oath is followed by prostration i.e. putting down one's head on the ground (a state of humility) – a symbolic expression of gratitude to Allah as well as adoration of His All Pervasive Supremacy. Glorification and Praises of Allah in the state of prostration is the best way to seek the Good Pleasure of the Supreme Being 'Oft-Forgiving Most Merciful'.

'And your Lord said: "Invoke Me and ask Me [i.e. Believe in My Oneness (Islamic Monotheism) and ask Me for anything] I will respond to your (invocation)". Verse 60: Ghafir 40.

'... I (Allah) am indeed near (to them by My knowledge) I respond to the invocations of the supplicant when he calls Me (without any mediator or intercessor). So let them obey Me and

believe in Me so that they may be led aright'. Verse 186: Al-Baqarah 2.

In the electronic age, prostration may be described as 'knee mail'— faster than the E-mail when the mortal is connected with the Immortal, the ordinary communes with the Extraordinary, and the part joins with the Whole. This state of communion of the lowest below with the Highest above is the summit elevation of man (Moqam-e- Mehmood) when he is an architect of his destiny and processor of his fate being the owner of Al-Lauh Al-Mahfuz, a book of the Divine Decrees. This stage of man's sublimation is described as:

'Ye jahan cheeze hai keya loho qalam teray hain'

The spiritual benefits of prostration may include Allah's Blessings of calmness, comfort, solace and tranquility when heart and soul are soothed into ecstasy. Man feels relaxed and rejuvenated free from the heavy burden of life disappointments and frustrations. He feels induced within to carry on acts of piety and righteousness with more zeal and passionate devotion. This is why Zikar Allah [remembering Allah (glorifying and praising Him)] is a sure source of contentment of hearts and minds free from the worldly disturbances as in the Verse 28: Ar-Rad 13:

'Those who believed in (the Oneness of Allah – Islamic Monotheism). And whose hearts find rest in the remembrance of Allah: Verily, in the remembrance of Allah do hearts find rest'.

Hadith: Narrated Abu Musa: The Prophet (PBUH) said: 'The example of the one who remembers (glorifies and praises of) his Lord, (Allah) in comparison to the one who does not remember (glorifies and praises of) his Lord, is that of a living creature compared to a dead one'. (Sahih al-Bukhari, Vol. 8, Hadith No. 416).

Still another benefit of a sincere prostration – not to show off or gain reputation of being pious – is to ensure a privilege of seeing Allah and bowing before Him on the Day of Resurrection – the privilege granted only to Al-Muttaqun (the pious and the righteous people) as in the Quranic Verse of 42: Al-Qalam 68:

'(Remember) the day when the Shin shall be laid bare (i.e. appearance of Allah on the Day of Resurrection) and they shall be called to prostrate themselves (to Allah), but they (hypocrites) shall not be able to do so'.

It may be concluded, based on the narrative above, that Zikar Allah is the heart and soul of prostration. The concept of prostration, however, is generally misunderstood. It is commonly believed that simple repetition of Allah's Name, with swinging head and occasional body shake with loud cry 'Allah Hoo' is good enough. This is not the whole truth. Wordings of Zikar Allah have to be supported by actions/deeds. This is all about Ibadit (worship) of Allah. Respect for human rights (Haqooqul Ibad)– love, care, sympathy and regard for the fellow beings; fair and honest mutual dealings; awareness and consideration for others; honesty/fairness in the discharge of

duties and responsibilities at all levels of social, ethical, economic and political infrastructure of a community; prudent fulfillment of obligations at home or out in public sectors; keeping environment clean of disruptive elements – small or big. The list may go on. All these activities are in compliance with Allah's Commands/ Injunctions. In other words, performing these obligations constitutes 'remembering' Allah all the time i.e. Zikar Allah in true sense of the term – real Ibadit. Words not supported by actions/deeds are high sounding meaning nothing. The same theme predominates in Verse 1-3: Al-Asr 103:

By Al-Asr (the time)'. Verily, man is in loss'. Except those who believe and do righteous good deeds, and recommend one another to the truth [i.e. order one another to perform all kinds of good deeds (Al-Maruf) which Allah has ordained, and abstain from all kinds of sins and evil deeds (Al-Munker) which Allah has forbidden] ...'

Reflect over it. Will you please?

A quick reference to various places in the Quran marked for prostration. Interestingly, the Saudi Arabian publication of the Quran counts 15 such places while others 14 with no explanation of variation in the number. The Quran is silent about the places for obligatory prostration. Is it reasonable to believe that prostration at these places is not compulsory/obligatory? Anyway, based upon narration of some of the Prophet's (PBUH) Companions especially Hazaret Omer Farooq (May Allah hold him in His Favor), it is learnt that the Prophet (PBUH) once interrupted recitation at the end of Verse

49-50: An-Nahl 16: *'And to Allah prostrate all that is in the heavens and all that is in the earth...'* *'They fear their Lord above them, and they do what they are commanded'* and performed prostration, while at other time the Prophet (PBUH) at the same place did not stop for prostration. Similarly, other personalities amongst his Companions narrated the same story of the Prophet (PBUH) stopping at certain places of the Book for prostration at one time while he did not at other time.

It is, however, save to believe that prostration at the places indicated in the Quran is a good practice as agreed upon by the Muslim religious scholars including Imam Shafi. The following invocation is usually recited during the prostration:

Sajada wajhia lilladhi khalaqahu wa sawwarahu wa shaqqa sama'ahu wa basarahu tabarak-Allajhu Ahsan-ul-khaliqueen
[Sahih Muslim, Vol 4, Hadith N0 201]

Concluding our discussion, it may be appropriate to quote a non-Muslim European scientist who has conducted an interesting research on Electro-Magnetic Waves we absorb in our body daily by using electronic equipments like TV, computers, micro-ovens, shining neon lights, digital hoardings and cell-phones etc. As a result, we experience symptom like head-ache, feeling of discomfort, and laziness in actions including pains in different body parts. The scientist has found out a sure solution to this problem. He suggests that the best way to remove the injurious positive Electro-Magnetic charges that hurt the body is putting down head on the ground several times. The ground would discharge the positive

harmful Electro-Magnetic charges to a great relief of the patient. This process works similar to grounding of building, which helps discharge of positive electric signals like lightning and thunder-bolt.

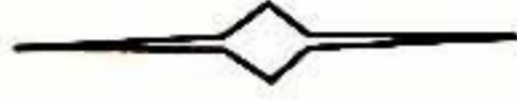
For prostration, one casts his fore-head on the ground and thereby positive electric signals are discharged. We the Muslims practice prostration in prayers in glorification and praise to Allah in obedience to His Command. In the light of this scientific research finding, it may be said that prostration in prayers is the best way to discharge harmful Electro-Magnetic signals from our body. Besides, we enjoy the blessing of being close to the All-Mighty Who has created the universe. The research further strengthens the belief that Commands of Allah, the All-Wise the All-Knower always carry a profound purpose in truth. We may not understand it because of limited human perception and power of comprehension. It could be safely professed that whatever the Muslims do in obedience to Allah's Orders brings goodness individually as well collectively. We close the narrative with a prostration to Allah as an expression of our gratitude to His countless blessings of health, wealth and knowledge. May Allah accept this humble service. Amen.

'Surely, those who are with your Lord (angels) are never too proud to perform acts of worship to Him, but they glorify His Praise and prostrate themselves before Him'. (Sijda) Verse 206: Al-Araf 7.

'And unto Allah (Alone) falls in prostration whosoever is in the

heavens and the earth, willingly or unwillingly, and so do their shadows in the mornings and in the afternoons'. (Sijda) Verse 15: Ar-Rad 13.

'So fall you down in prostration to Allah and worship Him Alone'. (Sijda) Verse 62: An-Najm 53.



Significance of *As-Salat* (Prayer) *Ziker-e-Elahi* (Rememberance of Allah)

Allah, the All-Mighty ordains Iqamat-as-Salat (perform prayers), i.e. five compulsory congregational prayers for the Muslims, offered in a timely manner as in Verse 103: An-Nias 4.

'Verily, As-Salat (the prayer) is enjoined on the believers at fixed hours'.

Offering of prayers involves certain physical rituals along with recitation of Surat Al-Fatihah followed by a brief portion of the Quran as per Sunnah of the Prophet Mohammed (PBUH). Al-Fatihah is recited invariably in each Rakat of the prayers without exception. Al-Fatahah serves as a key to the solemn significance of Allah's Ordinance of As-Salat. This article is dedicated to explore and explain the Divine Purpose of the Salat Ordinance, which has been generally ignored or attempted half heartedly. As a result, performance of Salat, by those who care to do it, has become almost a sort of mechanical exercise while body finds a few moments of relief and mind is free to roam about like day-dreaming in which, forgotten matters are flashed back, unsatisfied desires and wishes are

fulfilled and personal problems are solved – a sort of moments of escape from grim hardships of life. This is all about a general experience ordinarily performer of Salat encounters with. This is, however, not the end- purpose of Allah's Object of the Salat Ordinance. The question is why it is so? Why don't the promised blessings of Salat by Allah descend from the heavens and find roots in the Muslims' heart? What is the problem? Who is to blame?

The fault does not lie with any individual or group. It is how Islam is presented to the people – neither clear nor inspiring. The problem was hinted upon by a well known British writer, Karen Armstrong in a TV interview during her visit to Pakistan. She observed: 'There is nothing wrong with the ideology of Islam. It is, nevertheless, preached in a way that does not talk to the people who are lost in the bewilderment of ambiguity and disgust'. This may mean that there is a need of drastic change in the way Islam is preached. Islam should be interpreted in a way that clearly appeals to the issues, needs and aspirations – social, political, economic and moral ethical values. Islam guides to a way of life. A religion becomes irrelevant if detached from life. The Prophet Mohammed's (PBUH) illustrated Allah's Injunctions with a close reference to socio-moral needs of the time. In other words, the Prophet (PBUH) utilized the available sources and resources to demonstrate blessings of Allah's Message with the help of solid models. His companions saw them and benefitted themselves together with their relatives. This worked wonder in promoting Faith and a spirit of pride in belonging to a newly reconstructed society under one canopy of Islamic order. It

would be appropriate to conclude that 'Right preaching through 'models' would be more appealing and convincing to the modern mind. This is perhaps the only way to reconnect the Muslims with Islam'. Where are such 'models' today?

Refocusing our discussion on the institution of As-Salat in Islam, today's Muslims seem to have lost touch with its spirituality – Allah's Grace, Mercy and Blessings – despite performing it on regular basis by some. The simplest most definition of As-Salat includes a supreme combination of Faith and total obedience to Allah in all its practical respects. As-Salat is, therefore, a conscious active attitude rather than passive physical movements made sub-consciously as a habit. As such, it is very important that recitation of Surat Al-Fatihah during prayer should be slow in tone and decent in style with correct pronunciation and comprehension of the meaning. Simply speaking, one should understand wordings of his address to Allah during prayer. He makes a solemn oath to Allah in front of Allah as witness when he says:

'All the praises and thanks are to Allah, the Lord (Rabb) of the Alamin (mankind, jinn and all that exists)'. 'The Most Gracious, the Most Merciful'. 'The Only Owner (the Only Ruling Judge) of the Day of Recompense (i.e. the Day of Resurrection)'. 'You (Alone) we worship, and you (Alone) we ask for help (for each and every thing)'.'

We profess five times a day that Allah is the Greatest, the All-mighty, the Sole Owner of both the worlds (this world and the Hereafter). This is our solemn oath of acknowledgment as well

as commitment to the Great Lord. The very acknowledgment of the Divine Absolute Sovereignty imposes upon man a serious obligation of obeying Allah's commandments, injunctions and obligations in all walks of life. It is a commitment repeated under a solemn oath five times a day – every day for the rest of life [i.e. do deeds of piety and righteousness and refrain from evil-activities as per Allah's Injunctions implemented by the Prophet Mohammed (PBUH)]. The practice is sure to invoke Allah's Blessings (of success, health, honor and prosperity), which would descend from heaven to enliven the heart and soul of the people contributing to goodness of a society. The practice of Salat has an additional special reward (i.e. Paradise) in the Hereafter.

It may be reiterated that As-Salat is the best mode of worship when body, heart and soul are on one single wave-length – an ideal union – in direct communication with Allah, the All-Mighty, the All-Merciful, the Oft-Forgiving. Invocations, during such communion do not go unanswered. There are, however, certain pre-conditions for attaining the blessed level of the Divine Unification.

Man, the seeker, should belong to the category of 'Al-Muttaqun [*the pious and the righteous persons who fear Allah much (abstain from all kinds of sins and evil deeds which He has forbidden) and love Allah much (perform all kinds of good deeds, which He has ordered)]*'. 'Who believe in the Ghaib and perform As-Salat (Iqamat-as-Salat) and spend out of what We have provided for them [i.e. give Zakat, spend on themselves, their parents, their children, their wives, and give charity to the

poor and also in Allah's Cause – Jihad]. Verse 2 & 3: Al-Baqarah 2.

Iqamat-as-Salat with sincerity of heart and purity of mind is a gateway to achieve the level of Al-Muttaqun. As-Salat brings in Allah's Blessings, which enshrine the heart of pious people. It acts, in a spiritual way, as a guide to righteousness, an ability to understand problem for right decision, strength to over-come difficulties / hardships of life by facing them in a manly manner. Additionally, As-Salat is a source of Allah's Mercy that provides a strong shield against devilish attractions and paves the way to ultimately success in the life to come (i.e. Paradise) as in the Quranic Verse 45: Al-Ankabut 29:

Recite [O Mohammed (PBUH)] what has been revealed to you of the Book (the Quran) and perform As-Salat (Iqamat-as-Salat). Verily, As-Salat (the prayer) prevents from Al-Fahsha (i.e. great sins of every kind) and Al-Munkar (i.e. disbelief, polytheism, and all other evil wicked deeds) and the remembering (praising) of (you by) Allah (in front of the angels) is greater indeed [than your remembering (praising) of Allah in prayers]. And Allah knows what you do'.

It would be appropriate to believe that performing As-Salat is the superior most form of Zikr-e-Elahi when supported by noble and righteous deeds. Undoubtedly, the wordings of Surat-Al-Fatihah clearly imply a solemn oath of obedience to Allah and refreshing of commitment to do invariably righteous deeds on the part of the Muslims. The oath (commitment) is refreshed daily in all the five compulsory congregational

prayers. Performance of As-Salat invokes Allah's Mercy to descend on the earth and plant roots deep into the heart of the Muslims on the one hand and on the other, implementation of As-Salat's wordings into deeds is a sure guarantee of success, honor and prosperity in this world and high degree of honor (i.e. Paradise) in the Hereafter. This is perhaps the best answer to a frequently asked question: How come As-Salat wards off evil and promotes righteousness?

It is, therefore, very important that As-Salat, the most superior form of Zikr-e-Elahi, should better be preached in an inspiring way promoting in hearts sweet love for remembrance of Allah rather than disgust with sense of meaningless waste of time.

Human psychology is a unique phenomenon. Man is not moved to do anything unless he knows clearly: what is in it for him? This relates to all his life activities – starting from ordinary personal matters and daily mundane activities to high level affairs of a society. With the same token, simple sermon on performance of As-Salat does not ring the bell in mind unless supported by assurance of convincing benefits. In the absence of definite benefits of Salat, the sermon is like high sounding meaning nothing. It is, therefore, necessary, to elaborate the blessings of As-Salat as an effective means of Zikr-e-Elahi to invoke the Divine Blessings for salvation of the self as well as goodness of society globally. Allah says in Verse 152: Al-Baqarah 2

'Therefore remember Me (by praying, glorifying) I will remember you, and be grateful to Me (for My countless Favours

on you) and never be ungrateful'. Another Verse 28 -- 29: Ar-Rad 13:

'Those who believed (in the Oneness of Allah – Islamic Monotheism), and whose hearts find rest in the remembrance of Allah: verily, in the remembrance of Allah do hearts find rest'. Those who believe and work righteousness, Tuba (it means all kinds of happiness or name of a tree in Paradise) is for them and a beautiful place (final) return'.

These Verses explicitly explain what As-Salat / remembrance of Allah (*Zikr-e-Elahi*) carries in its folds for the believers. First it is the humble most expression of man's gratitude for the unlimited bounties the Great Lord has showered on him by making all the objects of the vast universe subservient to humanity. Secondly, a peaceful unity of heart and soul, which one enjoys in remembrance of Allah, works wonders in helping to stay focus on right planning to achieve new heights of success and progress for the benefit of mankind. Thirdly, he has reached higher degrees of spirituality when he is the master of his own destiny.

The superiority of *Zikr-e-Elahi* has been beautifully endorsed in various Hadiths of the Prophet (PBUH):

Narrated Abu Hurairah: The Prophet (PBUH) said, 'Allah says, I am just as My slave thinks I am (i.e. I am able to do for him what he thinks I can do for him) and I am with him if he remembers Me. If he remembers Me in himself, I too remember him in Myself; and if he remembers Me in a group of people, I remember him in a group that is better than them; and

if he comes one span near to Me, I go one cubit nearer to him; and if he comes one cubit nearer to Me, I go a distance of two outstretched arms nearer to him; and if he comes to Me walking, I go to him running'. (Sahih Al-Bukhari, Vol. 9, Hadith No. 502)

Narrated Abu Musa: The Prophet (PBUH) said, 'The example of the one who remembers (glorifies the praises of) his Lord in comparison to the one who does not remember his Lord, is that of a living creature to a dead one'. (Surah Al-Bukhari, Vol. 8, Hadith No. 416).

The holy Prophet (PBUH), expressing benefits of Salat, used probable of a flowing crystal clear water stream in which the prayers dip five times daily. As such, all infectious dirt and other pollutant elements are washed away for healthy body and pure mind. (Based upon narration by Abu Hurairah).

Summing up, benefits of *As-Salat / Zikr-e-Elahi* (worshipping Allah) are so many. Although these cannot be shown like pictures of an instant Polaroid camera, their signs (*Ayat*) are visible within an individual and his environment. In other words, the benefits are subjective experience supported by material gains. It may be remembered that *As-Salat / remembering Allah* is more an attitude than a mere physical exercise. The attitude is nourished by Faith in Allah's Guidance and grown into full bloom with ultimate fruits of happiness, progress and honor. To be able to relish the fruits one has to work hard in conducting worldly affairs in pious and righteous manners even amidst difficult odds (i.e. noble deeds, honesty, love, care, regard and mutual consideration under all

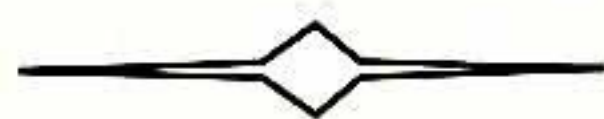
circumstances whatsoever) – all these constitute worship of Allah. In short, remembering Allah, in every situation with righteous deeds, fairness and justice, is what the term *Zikr-e-Elahi* actually means. Besides, this is the only way to harmonious communion with Allah – a blessed state of spiritual elation when man is the author of his destiny. To attain such a blessed height of spiritual elevation, Allah the All-Wise has prescribed certain conditions as in Verse 23: Az-Zumar 39 and Verse 35: Al-Ahzab 33:

The skins of those who fear their Lord shiver from it (when they recite or hear the Quran). Then their hearts soften to the remembrance of Allah. That is the guidance of Allah”.

'... and the men and women who remember Allah with their hearts and tongues, Allah has prepared for them forgiveness, and a great reward (i.e. Paradise)'.

As-Salat (Prayer) purifies man by washing away filth of sins and wrongdoings, promotes purity of heart and mind, nourishes solace of soul and creates congenial atmosphere to march on the Straight Path with full concentration of attention and perfect focus on achieving direct communion with Allah for peace and progress in this world and higher degree of special honor (i.e. award of Paradise) in the Hereafter.

Let us go for it. May Allah be our Guide. *Amen*



Is Satan A Symbol of Injustice To Mankind?

Some responded to the question in a positive term, the others were skeptical while still others neutral. It is interesting to analyze the question in depth to discover the truth. The result of our live interview with people reveals an interesting fact that none, with whatever belief, has ever felt the need of seeing Satan under a microscope. This is very strange. Allah warns people against *Shaitan* (Satan) as a 'plain enemy' in Verse 60: Ya-Sin 36.

'Did I (Allah) not command you, O Children of Adam, that you should not worship Shaitan (Satan), he is a plain enemy to you.'

It is reasonable to learn about the 'plain enemy' of mankind before answering the captioned question. *Shaitan* is mentioned in the Quran by the name *Iblis*, which literary means 'extreme disappointment'. He is thought to be a personification of desperateness and perversity – a Dark Side of evil. Anyway, he is definitely a separate living being created out of 'smokeless flame of fire' (Verse 27: Al-Hijir 15. The Quran clarifies his personality as in Verse 50: Al-Kahf 18.

'And (remember) when We said to the angels: "Prostrate yourself unto Adam". So they prostrated themselves except Iblis (Satan). He was one of the jinn; he disobeyed the command of his Lord...'

It may be remembered that *Iblis*, though jinn by origin, had

been given the status of an angel by virtue of his meritorious devotional services. The best way to put it is that he was an angel of Jinn origin. He too was supposed to prostrate himself to Adam along with the angels as per Allah's Command. All the angels in the Grand Assembly obeyed Allah's Order except *Iblis*. He refused out of arrogance. As a result, he was condemned and cursed.

How could *Iblis* dare disobeying the Divine Command? He is not an angel by origin. He was elevated to the status of angels. Unlike the angels, Jinn as well as mankind have the Right of Choice. In other words, angels do their respective assignments without deviation according to their built-in preprogrammed chip. *Iblis* as jinn had the Right of Choice, invoking which he disobeyed Allah's Command and suffered disgraceful curse forever. There is a serious lesson to be taught to mankind. Obedience to Allah is a gateway to success while disobedience leads to disgrace and humiliation in this world and a dreadful torment in the Hereafter.

The question is how did *Iblis* dare disobeying Allah's Command considering his elevation to the status of angels? It was his arrogance that misled him to commit an act of disobedience to the Divine Command. He was made out of '*smokeless flame of fire*' – a superior stuff to '*sounding clay, from a molded mud*' of which, Adam was created (verse 26: Al-Hijr 15). It was under impulse of superiority complex, *Iblis* refused to prostrate himself to Adam. He did not like subordinate position to Adam whom Allah gave the title of *Ashraful Makhlooqat* (superior to all creations). As a result, *Iblis* was condemned as outcast rebel. Consequence of gross disobedience has been portrayed in allegorical way in Verse 13,14,15,16,17: Al-A'raf 7.

'(Allah) said: "(Iblis) get down from this (Paradise), it is not for you to be arrogant here. Get out, for you are of those humiliated and disgraced".

'(Iblis) said: "Allow me respite till the Day they are raised up (i.e. the Day of Resurrection)".'(Allah) said: "You are of those respited".

'(Iblis) said: "Because you have sent me astray, surely I will sit in wait against them (human beings) on Your Straight Path". "Then I will come to them from before them and behind them, from their right and from their left, and You will not find most of them as thankful ones (i.e. they will not be dutiful to You)".

Allah Alone has the better knowledge. The episode took place in front of the assembly of angels in heaven culminating into exit of Adam and his wife Hawa (Eve) from the Paradise at the instigation of *Iblis* (Satan). This event was quite consistent with the Grand Scheme of Allah to ultimately settle man on the planet earth. The initial teaching of names of things to Adam – '*He taught Adam all the names (of everything Verse 31: Al-Baqara 2)* – was followed by his (Adam) experience of celestial life in Paradise. Adam's encounter with *Iblis* (Satan) leading to the expulsion of both [Adam and his wife Hawa (Eve)] from the Paradise was a reconfirmation of Allah's *Sunnah* that obedience to Allah's Command was not an option. Obedience guarantees the highest point of glory and disobedience drops to the lowest of the low. This is a lesson to be learnt and remembered by mankind of all the times till the End.

Looking from any point, *Iblis* (Satan) appears to be a symbol of evil – Dark Side. Some view Satan as a fallen star, an omen of

bad luck, miseries and frustrations. This view is popular amongst the worshippers of Astrol – a Zodiacal constellation or a planet believed to be influencing human fate and destination. For the disbelievers, there is no devil as a distinct independent entity. It is all within man who has been defined as 'rational animal' Elements of rationality and animalism in man keep on struggling for predominance and man behaves according to which of the two (elements) gets upper hand. Like rationality and animalism – delight, happiness, suffering, relief, virtue, evil etc. all are abstract ideas and cannot be seen, touched or hold. These ideas have to be compared with something of common experience i.e. similes are used to convey sense. For instance: white like milk and sweet like honey.

Dark Side of evil is depicted through *Shaitan's* (Satan) arrogant disobedience to the Divine Command. He subsequently instigated Adam and Hawa (Eve) to eat the forbidden fruit and suffer consequential disgrace – [Exit of Adam and Hawa (Eve) from the Paradise]. The concept of obedience for reward and disobedience for punishment was thus clarified right from the day one of human existence. In other words, two opposite forces are operative right from the beginning of life. This notion finds some support from the Quranic wordings '*He (Allah) made Zawjain Ithnain (two in pairs)*' – which may mean two kinds or verities. Verse 3: Ar-Ra'd 13. It may mean two opposites or attraction (sex) between two opposite kinds to maintain and sustain creation process. This mysterious force is observed 'in man, in animal life, in vegetable life ... Then there are pairs of opposite forces in nature, e.g., positive and negative electricity etc. The atoms itself consists of a positive charged nucleus or proton, surrounded by negatively charged electrons. The constitution

of matter itself is thus referred to pairs of opposite energies'. Likewise, abstract objects – day and night, light and darkness, beauty and ugliness, virtue and evil and the list goes on – are compared to similes of common experience for easy understanding. Existence of Iblis (Satan) – Dark Side of Evil stands in contrast with sublimity of piety and righteousness. The episode of Adam and *Iblis* (Satan) explains, in an allegorical format, the difference between the two opposite poles – obedience and rebellion, reward and punishment. Is it not a great service to mankind that Allah guided them through example and precedence?

In the light of the above, it would be easy to understand the real purpose of introducing *Iblis* (Satan) in the tale of Adam and Hawa (Eve) in heaven. The case of *Shaitan* popped up not by chance. Allah had a definite mysterious purpose beyond comprehension of an ordinary mind. Whatever was the Divine Purpose, it could be anything but not detrimental to the interest of Adam's offspring (mankind). Allah made *Shaitan* an Arch Enemy of man. There is no doubt about it. Anyway, Allah did not abandon mankind – deserted and forsaken. He took care of the humans crafted by '*His Own Hands*'. This Divine mysterious puzzle could be understood by the fact that Allah continued supporting people by His Guidance through 1,24000 Messengers at different times.

Adam's grooming started right from the time when '*He (Allah) taught him all the names' (of everything)*' before taking him to the angels for competition. Angels' ignorance established the superiority of Adam. As a token thereof, the angels were to prostrate themselves to him. *Iblis* refused to bow down before Adam as per Allah's Command. As a punishment, *Iblis* was stripped of the status of an angel, cursed and condemned.

Adam's tasting fruit of the forbidden tree brought him down to the earth from heaven. Thus Adam was taught a lesson by example that obedience to Allah is a surety of honor while disobedience brings disgrace and humiliation. It does not matter who commits the crime – elevated angel or Allah's Hand crafted Adam. Besides, it was a clear demonstration of the truth as in Allah's Words; '*Verily, Shaitan is 'an open enemy unto you'*'. Verse 22: Al-A'raf 7. Allah's repeated Admonition and a series of Guidance is a convincing proof of Allah's Love for mankind.

All the objects of nature are functioning according to their preprogrammed built in chip. As such, they are not entitled to reward or punishment. Their functions are instinctive and not voluntary. They are bound to do what they are commanded. They have no Freedom of Choice. On the other hand, man has the limited Right of Choice. Allah wants to reward His hand-crafted man for his good deeds performed not instinctively but voluntarily after having exercised his Right of Choice. For such people, *Shaitan*, despite his animosity, is a blessing in disguise. They remember Allah's Guidance even during tricky and treacherous situation and thereby elevate their grade in Allah's Evaluation. The true believers are safe from the onslaught of *Shaitan* as in Allah's Words of Verse 65: Al-Isra 17. '*Verily, My slaves (i.e. the true believers of Islamic Monotheism) – you have no authority over them. And All-Sufficient is your Lord as a Guardian'*.

The presence of *Shaitan* is a live-reminder to the true believers of the Islamic Monotheism to keep on the Straight Path by not yielding to evil attractions. The following Allah's Admonitions are a safety shield of defense against the satanic attack as in Verse 99 & 100: An-Nahl 16.

'Verily, he (Shaitan) has no power over those who believe and put their trust only in their Lord (Allah).'

'His (Shaitan) is only on those who obey and follow him, and those who join partners with Him (Allah) (i.e. those who are Mushrikun – polytheists).'

The surest most weapon of defense against the Arch Enemy of mankind is as in the blessed words of Verse 98: An-Nahl 16.

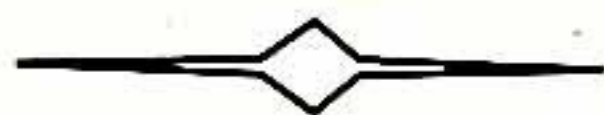
'So when you want to recite the Quran, seek refuge with Allah from Shaitan, the outcast (the cursed one).'

This is a precautionary measure against the possible attack by *Shaitan*. In the event of attack, man is given the option either to resist or yield. Thus man is in control of the situation and *Shaitan* is helpless.

Summing up the final analysis of the above observations, it may be remarked that existence of *Shaitan* and his respite till the Day of Judgment is a blessing rather than a curse for mankind. Allah used *Shaitan*, as a training model for the father of mankind in the area of abstract elements like significance of obedience (to the Great Lord) and adverse consequence of disobedience. The notion of blissful righteousness and devastating evil would have been obscure (not clear) without the example-behavior of *Shaitan* in heaven when personality of man was still in the making in order to fit in the title of Vice-Regent of Allah on earth. All the subsequent Holy Scriptures invariably revolve around two objects – Invitation and Admonition. Whatever happened in the heavens before Adam's landing on earth taught a good lesson to mankind that acceptance of Invitation to Islamic Monotheism (i.e.

obedience to Allah's Commands) is a Straight Path to success. Admonition against horrible consequence in case of disobedience (e.g. *Shaitan's* refusal and Adam tasting fruit of the forbidden tree in violation of Allah's Command) – *Shaitan* lost his elevated status of an angel and Adam lost the Paradise. Had there been no *Shaitan*, the concept of Allah's Torment would have not been clear to man. Besides, man is a rational animal – a composition of rationality and animalism. If he is left to himself, he may cause havoc. There is a need to keep him in check. Fear of Allah's Torment keeps animalism in him under control. Man clearly learned this during his encounter with *Shaitan* in heaven. On earth man has to be righteous to protect himself from the onslaught of *Shaitan*. Hence, *Shaitan* was a learning model for man in heaven and a constant reminder to stay away from the evil temptations in order to be pious and righteous on earth. Allah the All-Wise knows better.

'All praises and thanks are to Allah'.



The Divine Court of Ultimate Justice

'And only on the Day of Resurrection shall you be paid your wages in full'. Verse 185: Al-Imran 3

Do you believe in justice? The question seems to be simple if it could be answered in Yes or No. The more you think over it the more puzzling it becomes. It is not surprising that the question preoccupies, like obsession, millions and millions of people all over the world. Social depression, economic imbalance, political exploitation and a new element termed as 'religious obscurantism' have made all the clues to the answer more complicate and mind boggling. Grass root poverty is contrasted with fabulous riches amassed by open inhumane practices. Backlash of such practices continues breeding depressing frustration. The situation is further aggravated by economic inequality – very rich or very poor with no middle class. The very rich form a small group in power while a colossal number of very poor are subservient with no power, no control and no will. The class gap is widened by a poor law and order enforcement mechanism, which is corroded by the apathy of those in power and influence. No wonder, there is, louder than ever, cry for reform for revival of social values. 'Please give us society first before you talk about the values'. This remark of a socialist thinker should not be shoved aside. It is full of a profound significance and merits attention. A congenial society is a must for implanting seeds of values,

which would, in turn, be helpful in restoring right institutions – of course an improvised version of institutions speaking to people in terms of fulfilling their changing needs and aspirations not detached from the rest of the world. This emphasizes responsibility of the state, which symbolizes power, authority, influence and control – all the necessary elements to administer justice for a healthy prosperous society. The people in power must honor the trust assigned to them. This requires sacrifice of selfish vested interests. Practice of individualism has to be replaced with benevolent collectivism (pluralism). This is, of course, a big challenge considering unchecked exploitation of authority being carried out every day in all segments of the state – from the lower most to the highest one. Who is going to bell the cat?

May be the religious exponents with firebrand lustrous sermons would do the job. The common innocent public reverts to religious guidance as a last hope of redemption or escape from the grim realities of their woes and miseries. It is indeed great to be inspired by the spiritual guidance and enlightenment. It lifts up man to the highest elevation of spirituality where he is the master and controller of his destiny. Man occupies a sublime state of spiritual elation where the Divinity is not shy of asking man: 'What is your wish?

'Khuda bandey sey khudh poochey 'Bata teri raza kia hai'.

Collectively, this ultimate state of spirituality works to change destiny of a nation. A new civilization is born, which is a role-model for the world. Tragedy today, however, is that the

Message of Allah's Guidance is not understood or at least not conveyed properly. It is made obscure beyond common sense. It is unfortunate that certain religious obscurantists associate the significance of the Message with such elements, which encourage disruption and carnage involving loss of innocent lives and property. The pity is that all this is carried out in the pious name of religion. This ruthless tendency is shredding the social fabric, shattering economic infrastructure, weakening national sovereignty and damaging image of the peaceful religion at home and abroad. Islam means peace, which connotes submission to the Supreme Being. Departure from submission to the Divinity, in any form, is to land into conflict of belief and practice. Eradication of evil with evil never solves crisis. It rather adds to its destructive intensity. Replacing one order with another one more grim in nature and devastating in consequences is like working for more chaos and disruption. This is not Islamic at all. Islam advocates a peaceful, harmonious and balanced reconstruction of social norms and patterns based on piety, righteousness, justice and fairness – a fine balance to support and sustain development of a good society.

No wonder, the Great Lord created the universe with a fine tuning of its equilibrium to maintain and sustain its balance. Allah says in Verse 7 & 8: Ar-Rahman 55 : *'And the heaven: He raised it high, and He has set up the Balance'. 'In order that you may not transgress (due) balance'*.

After the creation of the universe, the Divine Great Grand Plan began to unfold culminating into creation of man *'from dried*

(sounding) clay of altered mud'. (Verse 28: Al-Hijr 15).

"So, when I fashioned him (Adam) completely and breathed into him the soul which I created for him, then fall (you) down prostrating yourselves unto him". (Verse 29: Al-Hijr 15).

The Divine Breath transformed the mud-man into walking talking human being endowed with faculties like thinking, analyzing, calculating and other distinguishing characteristics. Man *'created in the best stature (mould)'* [Ashraf-ul-Mukhlukat (the best of all creations)] and prostrated by the angels was not designed to be in competition or in supercession of the existing creatures as it is commonly thought. This would have not been fair. Allah, the Supreme Judge wanted to make a Vice-Regent on the earth as in Verse 30: Al-Baqarah 2: *'Behold, thy Lord said to the angels: 'I will create a Vice-Regent on earth....'*

In other words, Adam who was assigned added responsibility of 'Amana' (Trust) after the heavens and earth declined to accept it. Likewise, Adam's expulsion from paradise cannot be construed as the result of deliberate willful sin on his part. This was quite consistent with the Divine Great Plan of establishing, on the planet earth, Adam – generations after generations – as His Vice-Regent. The Lord did not forsake man after his descend from heavens. All these activities were planned to train man to handle the heavy burden of responsibility of Allah's Vice-Regent on earth. Allah is Benevolent Judge full of Mercy and Compassion. Allah did not abandon His hand-crafted man on account of eating the forbidden fruit. He wanted to reward him based upon his performance on the

earth to uphold the Divine Justice. Prior to the Judgment Day, Allah guided man as in Verse 8: Ash-Shams 91:

'Then He showed him what is wrong for him and what is right for him'.

The guidance justifies Allah's Reward or Retribution, which is swift, equitable, subtle Justice – a few characteristics of the Divine Justice. The assertion is supported in Verse 25: Al-Hadid 57:

'Indeed We have sent Our Messengers with clear proofs, and revealed with them Scripture and the Balance (Justice) that mankind may keep up justice'.

It is out of the Supreme Grace and Mercy for mankind that Allah sent, at intervals, 124000 Messengers and revealed four Scriptures [Torah (to Moses), Psalms (Zahbur) (to David), Gospel (to Jesus) and the Quran (to Mohammed) – Peace be upon them] in addition to 104 small Scripts. The Supreme Idea was to guide and enlighten people to the Straight Path of Salvation lest they should be wronged as ignorant innocents. This is the highest bench mark of the Divine Justice – equitable reward or retribution after proper guidance with a clear note of invitation to Monotheism and admonition of punishment in case of non-compliance. This is not all. Allah guided 'souls' well before they were assigned to their respective corporeal human bodies. At a certain point in time, Allah summoned a Grand Assembly of souls as revealed in Verse 172: Al-A'raf 7:

'And (remember) when your Lord brought forth the Children of Adam, from their loins, their seed (or from Adam's loin his offspring) and made them testify as to themselves (saying): 'Am I not your Lord?' They said: 'Yes! We testify'. Lest you should say on the Day of Resurrection: 'Verily, we have been unaware of this'.

This is the first Oath of Allegiance between the Divinity and humanity concluded in the wording: *'Am I not your Lord? They said: Yes! We testify'*.

In other words, the Oath of Allegiance draws a clear cut line between good and evil'. It is two-way commitment between the Divinity and humanity. This means that Allah's Mercy and Security in both the temporal and spiritual worlds would be for those people who fulfill their part of the obligation by way of performing noble deeds on earth.

This event of Grand Gathering leads to undeniable truth that man is born essentially noble endowed with righteous instincts. The question is how man acts against his instincts and becomes corrupt. Interestingly, man, even when he becomes corrupt, is not acting against his instincts as it appears. As a matter of fact, man is, contrary to other creatures, given 'Freedom of Choice'. *'Then He (God) showed him what is wrong for him and what is right for him'*.

Man does not accept or reject the Divine Guidance instinctively but consciously with full exercise of his right of 'Free Choice'.

The important key point is that every man is born believer in Monotheism and under Oath of Allegiance to God to lead a pious and righteous life. The worldly temptation, enticement, greed, prejudice, and other devilish pursuits work together to diminish the flames of internal life in him. He is lost in the darkness of infidelity, exploitation and moral degradation. In short, compliance with the Oath of Allegiance is the only Straight Path of salvation in both the temporal and spiritual worlds.

The big question, however, is about the existence of Grand Assembly and its audience pledging their Faith as the signatories of Oath of Allegiance to the Supreme Lord. When did this happen? Who has the memory of it? It is, anyway, lying dormant. The memory of this Grand Allegiance is awakened through pious and righteous deeds in compliance with Allah's Injunctions. Certain clues could be found in extraordinary exploits of the ordinary people. From where did come the ability to perform wonder in the common affairs of ordinary life? This is a spiritual phenomenon linked with the Oath of Allegiance with the Divinity. Submission and obedience to Allah promotes spiritual power in man who finds himself on the highest elevation where he makes progress in temporal and spiritual matters with a quantum leap – the sky is the limit.

Another equally important question is regarding the need and rationale of subsequently sending a host of Messengers spread over centuries with the same Message of Monotheism. A quick response to the inquiry is that the Message is the same anyway without any deviation whatsoever. The world history is an

open testimony to the fact that nations gained in power, influence and prosperity while they remained obedient and submissive to Allah's Commands. After having gained power, they became complacent and eventually deviated from the Straight Path of Submission to Allah. The result was corruption, decay and ultimate collapse. It may be noted that Allah never destroyed any nation without having first sent a Messenger as a last ditch effort to save them from destruction. This may explain the need of sending a long series of Messengers at different times for invitation and admonition. All the Messengers invariably repeated and reinforced the same Message of Monotheism, which was first initiated in the Grand Assembly referred to above. This scenario also refutes the criticism leveled against Allah's Wrath alleged to have been leashed out unjustifiably to destroy certain ancient nations. The criticism is, however, ill-founded as in the Quranic Verse 70: At-Taubah 9:

'—The people of Nuh (Noah), Ad, and Thamud, the people of Ibrahim (Abraham), the dwellers of Madyan (Midian) and the cities overthrown [i.e. the people to whom Lut (Lot) preached]; to them came Messengers with clear proofs. So it was not Allah Who wronged them, but they used to wrong themselves'.

The first of such known ancient nations who were destroyed for disobedience to the Supreme Lord in violation of their Covenant of Allegiance are the people of Prophet Noah who, for long nine hundred and fifty years (almost 10 centuries) invited them to Monotheism with a strong oft-repeated

warning of total extinction from the earth surface in case of non-compliance. These people, with the exception of a few (80 in number from the tribes called Shem, Ham, and Japheth) went deeper and deeper into the evil ditch of arrogance, tyranny and rebellion. And they surpassed all limits of decency and tolerance when their total destruction was justified. It was a supreme act of the Divine Benevolent Justice to purge the then humanity of evil elements so that the believers (pious and righteous) could prosper free as a reward for their patience in sufferings on account of their Faith in the Doctrine of Monotheism. The pious and righteous people had to be separated as they were to prosper and grow into strong nations worthy of becoming ancestors of a long line of the Messengers to carry out Allah's Message of Monotheism for salvation of humanity (the Messengers from the progeny of Bani Israel).

With the same token, the righteous amongst the progeny of Noah like the people of Ad, Thamud and Midian were made inheritors of great power, influence and prosperity. For ten centuries they enjoyed Allah's Grace, Bounty and Mercy in terms of affluence, numerical³ strength and impressive achievements as a reward for their submission to the Divine Will. With the passage of time, these people began drifting from the Straight Path and turned arrogant tyrants on the land far away from the Straight Path to the point of no return. 'Their evil designs and practices repudiated the Covenant with the resultant spread of corruption and infidelity. They provoked the Divine wrath and suffered '*a painful torment*' -- admonition stipulated in the Covenant'. Allah's Torment was justified. They were all destroyed except the righteous ones who

remained true to their Oath of Allegiance.

Allah has the most subtle and mysterious ways of administrating justice, which defy human logic and their limited power of comprehension. To substantiate the statement, a brief reference to the saga of Moses' meeting with Khidr would be quite appropriate. Khidr, whom Allah had given special knowledge, agreed to take Moses along with on a journey on the condition that he (Moses) would remain silent and not ask any question. They proceeded and embarked a ship, which Khidr scuttled (made defective). They met a boy and Khidr killed him. Further, they came to a town and asked for food, but the town people refused. In the town they found a wall about to collapse and Khidr set it up straight. Each time Khidr's action could not make any sense to Moses who repeatedly broke his silence to know the reasoning in violation of his promise to remain silent. Since Moses could not keep up his promise the third time, Khidr parted with him after telling interpretation of (those) things over which Moses was unable to hold patience.

'As for the ship, it belonged to Masakin (poor people) working in the sea. So I wished to make a defective damage in it, as there was a king behind them who seized every ship by force.'"

'And as for the boy, his parents were believers, and we feared lest he should oppress them by rebellion and disbelief'. 'So we intended that their Lord should change him for them for one better in righteousness and nearer to mercy'.

'And as for the wall, it belonged to two orphan boys in the town; and there was under it a treasure belonging to them; and their father was a righteous man, and Your Lord intended that they should attain the age of full strength and take out their treasure as a mercy from your Lord. And I did them not of my own accord. That is the interpretation of those (things) over which you could not hold patience'. Verses 79 to 82: Al-Kahf 18.

Allah knows what man does not know. Only Allah controls, manages and regulates affairs of the heaven and the earth and all that is in between. There is no doubt that the Divine Control of affairs in the universe is based upon perfect balance and justice. The boy is killed – an apparent loss of innocent life, the ship is damaged – a loss of the only source of economy for the poor town and the collapsing wall is set up straight in the town where people are discourteous and inhospitable. These signs prove that *'Allah knows and you know not'*. Allah wanted to protect the righteous parents from the devilish son, save the ship – the only means of livelihood of the poor—from the tyrant king and the treasure hidden under the collapsing wall for the young orphans of the pious parents. Allah knew it well and guarded the life and property of the weak innocent people in a way He willed. The obvious unjust act of cruelty of the story (the boy killed, the ship damaged) has a hidden object of the Divine Mercy – saving the boy from being guilty of misconduct to his parents and the king from the crime of usurping property (ship) of the poor. Allah is Able to do every thing – no doubt about it,

Before concluding the narrative, a true story of a young freedom fighter some where at Iraq war front would not be out

of the place. The budding youth in his late twenties is standing dauntlessly in a trench surrounded by piles of dead bodies all around. The youth was an eye witness of ruthless butchery of his parents and kith and kin. His house was burnt with an explosion and he was helpless spectator of the dread and destruction. Finding justice no where he took up arms to fight back injustice against humanity. He had an automatic gun with limited ammunition. Still he was standing dauntless forgetful of danger of imminent death any moment. A German press reporter somehow sneaked into the trench gasping wild out of horror. He was amazed to see the lonely youth stuck to his gun with absolutely no fear of the lurking death. The reporter asked the young soldier: 'Are you not afraid of being killed any minute?' The young fighter fixed a curious look on the reporter and said: 'I am only afraid of God'. 'Do you believe in God?' inquired the reporter. The soldier quickly answered with a counter question: 'Do you believe in justice?' The reporter said: 'Yes'. The soldier smiled and spontaneously argued: 'God Alone administers justice. As such, God is an ever Living Being'. The reporter was so inspired by the young soldier's unflinching faith in the Divine Justice that he went back to his camp with no fear.

Total faith in the Divine Ultimate Justice generates in man a spiritual energy strong enough to over power raging flames of suffocating frustration and choking destitution of the world life. The faith uplifts man to the highest most spiritual elevation (*Mehraj*), where he is free from all the shackles of material dependence. He makes wondrous exploits and achievements defying all worldly logic and scientific

explanation. The significance of this concept has been beautifully expressed by the great philosopher thinker, Dr. Allama Iqbal as:

'Kaafer hai to shamsheer pay kerta hai bharosa
Momin hai to bey taigh bhi larta hai sipahi.'

This is the dignity of a '*Momin*' belonging to the class of '*Al-Muttaqun*' – the pious and righteous people '*Who believe in 'Ghaib' [Belief in Allah, Angels, Holy Scriptures, the Messengers, Day of Resurrection and Al-Qadar (Divine Pre-Ordainment)] and perform As-Salat (Iqamat-as-Salat and spend out what We have provided for them [i.e. give Zakat, spend on themselves, their parents, their children, their wives and also give charity to the poor and also in Allah's Cause—Jihad] Verse 3: Al-Baqarah 2.*

Additional characteristics of a '*Momin*' are as described in Verse 90: Al-Nahl 16:

'Verily, Allah enjoins Al-Adl (i.e. Justice and worshiping none but Allah Alone – Islamic Monotheism) and Al-Ihsan [i.e. to be patient in performing your duties to Allah totally for Allah's sake and in accordance with the Sunnah (legal ways) of the Prophet (PBUH) in a perfect manner], and giving (help) to kith and kin, and forbids

Al-Fahasha (i.e. all evil deeds – like illegal sexual acts, to give false witness, to kill a life without right), and Al-Munkar (i.e. all that is prohibited by the Islamic law: polytheism of every

kind, disbelief and every kind of evil deeds), and Al-Baghy (i.e. all kinds of oppression). He (Allah) admonishes you, that you may take heed'.

These injunctions and admonitions clearly speak of irrefutable Divine Justice, Grace and Mercy for mankind globally. A standard charter of man's righteous conduct of life has been prescribed which also serves as the Divine criteria of ultimate reward and retribution on Judgment Day. Whosoever follows the Laws – believer or non-believer – is rewarded with justice i.e. in conformity with the Laws. The only difference, however, is that a non-believer has no share of Allah's Bounty in the Hereafter as Allah has mentioned in Verse 196 – 197: Al-Imran 3.

'Let not the free disposal (and affluence) of the disbelievers throughout the land deceive you'.

A brief enjoyment; then their ultimate abode is Hell: and worst indeed is that place for rest'.

The same Message of Allah has been explained in Verse 55: At-Taubah 9.

“Let not their wealth or their children amaze you; in reality Allah's Plan is to punish them with these things in the life of this world and that their souls shall depart (die) while they are disbelievers'.

In other words, right practices of humanity socio - economic and political rules and regulations bring wealth, prosperity,

affluence and power in the temporal world. For reward in the spiritual world, however, faith and total submission to the Supreme Being is necessary precondition as stipulated in the Quran :

1) Acknowledgment of Monotheism (*'Join not any thing in worship with God'*).

2) Respect For Parents (*'Be good and dutiful to your parents'*

3) Refrain From Illegal Killing (*'Kill not your children out of poverty'. 'We (Allah) provide substance for you and for them. And kill not anyone whom Allah has forbidden, except for a just cause (according to the Islamic Law)'. 'This He commanded you that you may understand'*)
Verse 151: Al-Anam 6

4) Committing No Adultery (*'Come not near the Al-Fawahisha (shameful sins and illegal sex) whether committed openly or secretly'*).

5) Safeguarding The Orphans' Rights (*'And come not near the orphan's property except to improve it, until he (or she) attains the age of full strength'*).

6) Just And Equitable Dealings (*'And give full measure and full weight with Justice'. 'And whenever you give your word (i.e. pledge between men or give evidence) say the truth, even if a near relative is concerned, and fulfill the Covenant of Allah. Thus He commands you that you may remember'*). Verse 152:
Al-Anam 6

This is a brief list of Allah's Injunctions for guidance of humanity to the Straight Path. The entire Islamic jurisprudence emanates from them. Allah guides, controls and regulates affairs of the universe with balance. All the objects – animate as well as inanimate – obey the rules for their existence. Likewise, Allah has created an element of reward and punishment for man who, like the jinn, is given the right of Freedom of Choice. Righteous man is rewarded – he could be other way round by invoking right of his Freedom of Choice. This is the high bench mark of the Divine Justice. Man is rewarded or punished not on account of his instinctive actions (deeds) but because of his conscious deliberate acts performed exercising his Right of Choice.

A brief comment may elucidate the significance of man's Right of Choice. Man is superior to all creations. He is endowed with a distinctive element of intelligence, rationality and reasoning. He is expected to follow Allah's Rules like all other objects of nature. He may or may not follow the rules as he has the right of Free Choice. If he adheres to the rules, he is rewarded but punished in case of violation. In the absence of the Right of Choice, reward or retribution is meaningless – there is no accountability for the actions (deeds) performed instinctively.

All objects of nature follow Allah's rules and do not budge a bit (these objects have no 'Choice' to be otherwise). 'Man, with autonomy of choice, is put to a serious test by the Creator for ultimate reward or punishment on the Day of Judgment.

'And it is He Who created the heavens and the earth in six days

and His Throne was on the water, that He might try you, which of you is the best in deeds... Verse 6: Hud 11.

Superiority of man's creation and his Freedom of Choice justify such reward or punishment. If man were to be accountability free in the discharge of his responsibilities without the element of reward or punishment, the very purpose of creating the entire universe and man, as VIP, would have been insignificant'. This explanation is illustrative of the Divine Absolute Justice – the Merciful, the Compassionate. Allah reserved His Ultimate Judgment to an appointed time He knows the best. Mankind need to be thankful to Allah for guidance along with His countless bounties. Allah Alone is to be worshipped as an expression of man's gratitude. Allah's Compassion and Mercy have been highlighted in the Verse 79: An-Nisa 4.

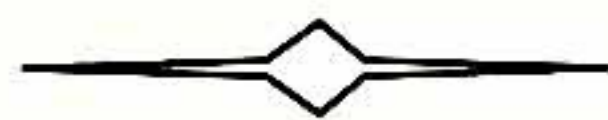
'Whatever good reaches you is from Allah, but whatever of evil befalls you, is from yourself'.

This is Allah's Promise to mankind in the temporal life. In the Hereafter, however, the Divine Court will administer Ultimate Justice as in Verse 6 – 8: Az-Zalzalah 99.

'That Day mankind will proceed in scattered groups that may be shown their deeds'. So whosoever does good equal to the weight of an atom (or a small ant) shall see it'. 'And whosoever does evil equal to the weight of an atom (or a small ant) shall see it'.

Hadith

Narrated Safwan bin Muhriz: While Ibn Umar was performing Tawaf (around the Kabbah), a man came up to him and said, 'O Abu Abdur Rahman!' or said, 'O ibn Umar! ' Did you hear anything from the Prophet PBUH about An-Najwa?. Ibn Umar said, 'I heard the Prophet PBUH saying. 'The believer will be brought near his Lord'. (Hashim, a sub narrator said, reporting the Prophet's words), 'The believer will come near (his Lord) till his Lord covers him with His Screen and makes him to confess his sins. (Allah will ask him), "Do you know (that you did) such and such sins.' Then Allah will say, 'I did screen your sins in the world and I forgive them for you today'. Then the record of his good deeds will be folded up [i.e. the record (Book) of his good deeds will be given to him]. As for the others or the disbelievers, it will be announced publicly before the witnesses: 'These are ones who lied against their Lord'. (Sahih Al-Bukhari, Vol. 6, Hadith No.207)



Preach not what Islam did Teach what it can do today

There is absolutely nothing wrong with the Islamic ideology. It has the same Message of Monotheism for humanity as started with Adam and flowed down, through a long line of the Messengers, to the last Prophet Mohammed (PBUH) some 1500 years ago. The Message invariably guided on the principles of salvation of humanity regardless of the race, color and time. History of the glorious period of Prophet Mohammed (PBUH) and subsequent eight centuries is a documentary proof of unprecedented impact of the Islamic teachings on the well-being of mankind as guaranteed in the Quran. This is attributed to the element of universality of Allah's Message since its revelation up to the present time. The big question today, however, is why the Message is not putting any dent on the deplorable state of today's Muslims worldwide. What happened to the claim of universality of the Message – as good for all times as it proved to be in the period of its revelation?

The fact is that problem lies within the folds of Muslims community globally. Today, the Quran is perhaps the most read book without understanding its meaning. It is simply believed to be a means of invoking Allah's Blessings for salvation of the departed souls, success of wedding contracts and redemption of socio-economic miseries. In other words, recitation of the Quran is believed to be like a spiritual magic-wand to change the lot of people without struggling or at least working for it. It is, however, encouraging that respect for the Holy Book has not diminished over the centuries in spite of so many

upheavals suffered by the Muslims world. Even today, there are people, though a few of them, who read, understand and act upon the Quranic Injunctions for self enlightenment as well as promotion of their socio-ethical values for progress and prosperity. But a vast majority of today's Muslims, anyway, demonstrate their respect for the Book in different funny ways. They read the Quran casually, while a few of them have learned it by heart and never bothered to understand its meaning. In every Muslim house, there is a copy of the Quran with a beautiful silk cloth dust-cover embroidered in fancy designs and kept high on a book-shelf as a *Taveez* (amulet / talisman / a charm) as a protection against evil mishaps and misfortunes. The Quran is believed to be a powerful defense against evil influence of supernatural elements – jinn, bad spirits, magic, witch-crafts, mutual jealousy and hatreds. But the interesting thing is that people hardly bother to understand what is in the Quran that makes it so powerful instrument of salvation of mankind. Consequently, the Quran is mainly regarded just as a symbol of spiritualism. You read it or not, it does not matter. This attitude could be described in simple words: 'God in heaven, all is well with the world'. What about Allah's Message in the Quran? Honestly, the Message has been lost today.

This indifferent attitude of the masses towards Allah's Message could be attributed to the oft-repeated practice of blind recitation of the Quran. People do not know what to believe and what to leave. Taking advantage of the general public ignorance, traditional Imams take their audience to flight any which way they please giving rise to split in opinions and beliefs. Interestingly, each Imam sticks to what he believes regardless of the truth. This has given rise to a serious rift of beliefs in the Muslims community – sometimes a bloody one.

Perhaps the only way out of the deadly sectarian friction, besides other things, is to stop blind recitation of the Quran. Let the Muslim masses understand the meaning of the Message beyond ceremonious rituals. Blind recitation of the Quran, when replaced by meaningful understanding is likely to enhance awareness and liberate thinking. An average Muslim needs to be equipped with knowledge adequate enough to determine his life conduct, instead of being driven blindly by dogmas and prejudices. Let people be their own judge.

With the same token, a common Imam generally prefers to impress the audience with the magic lore of his rhetoric art neither caring about the contents of his speech nor worrying whether he is connected with the audience who seem to be least interested in the sermon full of oft-repeated devotional stories of the past glory. This is another big problem with today's preachers. They fascinate you with heroic stories of the past with no relevance with the present life. Some are expert in beaming up people to the realm of high spirituality and leave them there totally deserted and detached with this world. The people are baffled and lost in bewilderment. No wonder, religious speeches today are nothing more than a cheap source of mental entertainment and spiritual recreation. Some people feel within so much spiritually elated during the sermons that they begin to feel that the purpose of their life existence is best served. This momentary spell of irrational spiritual elevation is soon over. They find themselves walking out of the mosque empty handed'. They find with them left nothing, which could be helpful in proper conduct of their life affairs.

Undoubtedly, it is Allah's Great Mercy for mankind to have revealed the Quran, which contains a comprehensive guidance on pious and righteous conduct of man of all times till the

Judgment Day. The Quran is an infallible document of the Divine Guidance on practice of Islam – a religion chosen and perfected by Allah the All-Wise the All-Knower as in the words of Verse 3: Al-Ma'idah 5 and Verse 9: Al-Isra 17

'This day I have perfected your religion for you and completed My Favor upon you, and have chosen for you Islam as your religion'.

'Verily, this Quran guides to that which is most just and right ...'

The Quran mainly deals with *Al Ahkum* (commandments), *Al-Faraid* (obligatory duties) and *Al-Hudud* (legal laws for the punishment of thieves and the adulterers). The Quran was revealed in parts and completed in 23 years. This may explain that each new piece of Revelation was either guidance on human conduct or solution to some problem or instructions to cope with new situation or warning against the coming events. Since the people of Revelation period were fully aware of the backdrop of the state of affairs, they had no problem at all in fully understanding Allah's Message for proper compliance.

Today's Muslims, some of them, read the background history of the Apostle's (PBUH) age. The background scene has, however, undergone a tremendous change – better to say transformation – over the period of 1500 years. Simple literary explanation of the Islamic teachings without their application on the current matters has made the Message insignificant.

It is, therefore, important today that all matters, especially legal ones, should better be taught within the framework of the present day needs and requirements. This exercise is necessary

to explain how today's matters are handled in keeping with the spirit of Islamic Laws. In short, the laws governing the Divine Injunctions need to be reinterpreted and redefined to meet the growing requirements of today's progressive Muslim *Ummah*. The idea has been beautifully summed by M. Yusuf Ali, a renowned religious exegete, in these words: 'The problem which our age has to meet may not be the same as the problems which puzzled earnest minds of the fourth or sixth or later centuries of the *Hijra*. Therefore it is no merit to hug the solutions offered in the fourth or sixth centuries when our souls cry out in hunger for solace in the fourteenth century of the *Hijra*'.

Undoubtedly, the Quranic Injunctions governing human conduct to promote social, moral and ethical values are absolute and cannot be changed. Traditional method of preaching their significance, though good but not enough, needs to be changed. People have enough of empty sounding sermons. They need to see models of Islamic teachings amongst the Muslims, their environment and the society as a whole. In the absence of the models, people's faith is shaken; confidence shattered and hopes for salvation frustrated. This is not a farfetched idea. This is quite consistent with the Prophet's (PBUH) *Sunnah*. The Apostle (PBUH) always worked hard in demonstrating blessings of the Divine Message by utilizing the available resources of the period. The result was that his Companions invariably saw, with their own eyes, tangible manifestation of Allah's Blessings and benefited themselves out of them along with their relatives. The practice promoted amongst the adherents ever growing pride of 'belonging' to the Islamic community, which translated their wishes and aspirations of enjoying righteous way of life.

In this context, it would be quite appropriate to suggest an ideal role that Tableeghi Jamaat could possibly play in alleviating human sufferings by way of working out a program: 'reach out', 'touch someone', alleviate sufferings and promote happiness like a big brother's hand. We cannot change the world overnight. There should, however, be a beginning from somewhere. Important thing is to make a right start. Then sky is the limit. As observed by a socio-religious activist: 'A modest beginning could develop into multi-dimensional society, a powerful administrator of justice, balance, equality, fairness on the basis of piety and righteousness –a trustworthy Path to please Allah. Love of mankind is to love Allah'.

It is just a matter of chance that the other day, we met a proclaimed religious scholar in the mosque of our locality. We requested him for a little time to chat on the subject under discussion. He shrugged us aside with a passing suggestion: 'Read the Quran full of Allah's Guidance'. The advice sounded good at its face value. The following day we read the Quranic Verse 208: Al-Baqarah 2.

'O you who believe! Enter perfectly in Islam (by obeying all the rules and regulations of the Islamic religion) and follow not the footsteps of Shaitan (Satan). Verily, He is to you a plain enemy'.

The question is how to '*enter perfectly in Islam*' in today's environment of hypocrisy, affectation, dishonesty, selfishness and individualism. For instance, one resolves under solemn oath to conduct one's mundane affairs of life in compliance with the Islamic rules and regulations. He is very serious about it. What happens is that from the very moment he steps out of his house, he is confronted with difficulties, which shake and

crack into bits his resolution. He is confused by the mess of greed and indecency all around. He is a helpless victim of social, economic, political and moral set up of the society. He finds no way out. Finally, he resorts to learned religious people for solution. Anyway, he finds no solution or solace. He finds himself lulled by the distant glorious past or suspended high in the realm of spirituality with no chance of landing back on earth. This is how he is left to himself frustrated and lost. Why is it so? What about the Divine Laws – a glorious source of guidance for humanity of all the times?

Undoubtedly, meaning and significance of Allah's Rules and Regulations are infallible and absolute. Their application, however, changes depending on intellectual level, geographical and socio-economic condition of a society. People's intelligence has a big role in interpretation and application of the rules. The fact is that man's intelligence is limited. Its level grows and declines according to the strength of his ability of observation and experience. This may explain variations in people's interpretation, which may be good for a society of a certain time and may not be so for another one of a different time and space. Therefore, there is a need of progressive interpretation of the Islamic rules for the sake of their adequate compatibility and adaptability with the ever changing nature of socio-economic and moral-ethical demands. This kicks in the need of restoration of the institution of *Ijtihad*.

The practice of *Ijtihad* is the most powerful instrument to convince the masses of the real significance of Allah's Message and thereby to restore their broken bond with Islam today. Islam claims universality of the Divine Message. How come it is not cutting muster today? It is, therefore, highly

important to prove how Allah's Message in the Quran could be beneficial for the present ills as a glorious healing balm. In the absence of a clear cut Divine guidance or precedence in *Sunnah* [the Apostle's (PBUH) practices or way of life] on a particular matter, a panel of experts' deliberation and the resultant verdict becomes a law as a solution. This supports the need for revival of practice of *Ijtihad* for upholding the integrity of Islamic Fundamental Laws.

The Quran teaches what is the best for mankind. Allah's Message is explained by *Ayat* – revelations, evidences, signs, symbols, narrations, hypothesis, metaphors and similes. It is, therefore, very important that true concept of the Quranic terms should be clarified in a way that the common Muslims grasp their significance properly. This could be done with application of Allah's Dictates to the present day situation – issues, needs, requirements and aspirations. This is the only way to prove the Quranic Message as meaningful for solution of the problems, which today's Muslims are reckoned with.

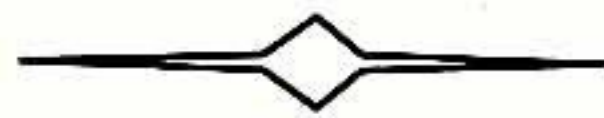
Still there are certain terminologies that could better be illustrated with reference to the present time events and situations. These are commonly used words like worship, fear of Allah, *Haqook-ul-Ibad*, *Darood/Salat*, *Rehmat-ul-Alamun*, *Jihad*, *Rizk-e-Hilal*, patience, piety, righteousness and the list goes on. To illustrate the point further, we take up the term *Jihad*, which is commonly understood as fighting, killing, bloodshed, fire, explosion, blast etc. This is of course a serious misinterpretation of *Islamic Jihad*. What is happening on the North Western Mountains of Pakistan Boarder? Take the case of Swat, a peaceful valley of astounding natural beauty, a safe haven of peace, serenity and delight. The valley, now a breeding place of suicide bombers, has been turned into a

devastating ball of fire – interestingly in the name of *Jehad* for Allah's Cause. The people living in the plain areas of the country are not safe. They are under constant scare of insecurity likely to be blown up into bits any time. Is this a *Jehad* as ordained in the Quran?

The pity is that the question has never been taken up seriously in the religious forums. It is rather painful to note the speaker hurriedly skipping over the subject when mention of *Jehad* pops up during the speech. All one hears is the term '*Jehad-fi-Sabee-lillah*'. People are confused and nervously wait to know the truth. A number of innocent lives are being lost, houses ransacked, businesses shut down and learning centers blowing up. The survivors are rendered destitute with no let up in their wretched plight. All these heinous acts of barbarous inhumanity are committed in the name of Islam. There is no check or vocal protest against the tyrants – self-styled Puritan Clergy. They have a strict mandate of regulating affairs of the people as per their own interpretation of the Quran and *Sunnah* [the Prophet's (PBUH) ways]. They are unmindful of today's advancement bringing along with news demands and requirements. While image of Islam is tarnished, these advocates, confused as they are, have suffered disappointment amidst disarray and confusion for lack of objectivity and rationality in their so-called *Jehad* for implementing *Shariah* (the Islamic Jurisprudence). They will never be successful. They have failed to come up to the model of Apostle's (PBUH) practices inspired by the element of universality in Allah's Message. The Apostle's (PBUH) solemn approach of implementing the Divine Injunctions was never forgetful of the prevailing social, political and economic conditions and their demands. Interpretation of the Message by way of its close application on the prevailing problematic conditions was

a secret weapon of success of the Holy Prophet (PBUH). Islam religion is a way of life. Its significance is lost when detached from life.

The big question is how to restore self-confidence amongst the Muslims? They are disconnected and swept far away from the spiritual blessings of Allah's Message. It is about time to reconnect them back with Islam to enjoy benefits of the Divine Mercy, Grace and Benevolence in this world and extreme success in the Hereafter (i.e. Paradise). What we need is the right leadership free from clutches of bias and prejudice. The devoted leadership would create resources of regaining the lost glory by way of promoting economic self-sufficiency, political independence and spiritual will to achieve honor and prosperity. Independence and self-subsistence of the means of regulating our affairs may best be achieved by proper interpretation of Allah's Message with reference to the global circumstances inclusive of a rapid advancement of science and technology. In this context, it is important to be sure that the process of revival of Islam is global in character and inspiring in appeal with 'healing' power for ills and sufferings of humanity international. 'The Quran was not revealed for a particular occasion only, but for all time. The particular occasion is now past. Our prime interest is to see how it can guide us in our present lives'.



Understanding Islamic *Shariah*

The term *Shariah*, literal meaning 'waterway or path', implies codification of the Islamic Laws derived from the Quran, ways (practices) and sayings of the Prophet Mohammed (PBUH). It is a legal framework to govern and channelize the members of Muslim society not excluding minority rights under the Muslim protectorate. *Shariah* is static in substance but dynamic in contents as it proceeds to regulate ordinary affairs of the people individually as well as collectively. As such, its scope encompasses areas of socio-politics, commerce, banking, business contracts, family affairs, personality building, civic-sense promoting, healthy hygienic environment and other issues of public interests. *Shariah's* dynamic contents envisage the task of coping with ever new needs and requirements of a progressive society of all the times. It has to be universal in character to be compatible to the demands of human society, which inevitably grows and progresses as per the Divine Scheme: 'Old order changes yielding place to new'.

In the beginning, *Shariah* (based on the Quran and Hadith) was regarded as the monopoly of the traditional school of thought. With the passage of time, expansion and development of the Muslim political and social order brought about diversified new situations with peculiar problems demanding equitable solution under the legal system of the law. This necessitated the practice of *Jima* (consensus) *Qayas* (analogy), *Fiqah* (interpretive law).

The spirit of *Shariah* laws envisages satisfaction of the spiritual as well as physical requirements of the people as summed up in the Quranic Verse 7: Al-Imran 3.

'It is He Who has sent down to you Mohammed (PBUH) the Book (the Quran). In it are Verses that are entirely clear and they are the foundations of the Book [and these are Al-Ahkam (commandments), Al-Faraid (obligatory duties) and Al-Hudud (legal laws for the punishment of thieves, adulterers)]; and others not entirely clear'.

For easy understanding, the Muslim scholars have earmarked people's activities as Obligatory [the Five Pillars of Islam – *Shahada*, *Salat*, *Zakat*, *Saum* (fasting), *Hajj* (pilgrimage to *Makkah*)], Meritorious, Permissible, Reprehensible and Forbidden. Adding to that are Islamic values: Obedience/ Submission, Honesty/ Truthfulness, Integrity, Regard, Consideration and Patience / Forbearance. Combined practice of the Pillars of Islam and the Values of Islam is a sure guarantee for peace, prosperity and power of a society in this world and a big reward (Paradise) in the Hereafter.

Since the advent of Islam, the Muslim society has been governed under various titles. The earliest one is *Khulapha-e-Rashedun* period succeeded by Dynasty rule, Sultanate kingship and Monarchies. This period, comprising 10 centuries, saw tremendous changes in the social, political and economic norms and patterns of the Muslims society along with new needs and challenges. To keep the Islamic Jurisprudence compatible, the law scholars worked very hard to find a legal answer to the issues especially when no concrete rules exist under the available sources – the Quran, the Hadith and *Jima*. They practiced *Qiyas* – various forms of reasoning

-including analogy. The consensus of the public interest was accepted as an additional source as long as it did not contradict the primary fundamentals of the Quran and Hadith, which were held supreme most at all the times. In other words, the Quran and *Sunnah* constitute the Basic Code, which should be kept separate from ever evolving interpretive law (*Fiqah*)'.

Over centuries, the development of the Islamic Jurisprudence continued getting boost at different stages of Islamic history. Beginning from the period of *Khulafa-e-Rashidun*, history has recorded two powerful Muslim Dynasties – the Umayyad (661-750) ruled for a century and the Abbasids (750-1258) dominated for five long centuries. This does not include seven hundred years of the Moors in Spain – an unprecedented cradle of higher learning with the resultant emergence of, first ever, culture and civilization while the West was still the Third World. In the words of a Western thinker: 'He [Mohammed (PBUH)] brought the Arabs a spirituality that was uniquely suited to their own traditions and unlocked such reserves of power that within a hundred years they had established their own great empire, which stretched from the Himalayas to the Pyrenees, and founded a unique civilization'. This was primarily due to the religious scholars who kept alive institution of '*Ijtiyad*' and were never shy of practicing it to keep the Islamic laws compatible to the issues in all the areas of human affairs, whenever no direct answer or analogous precedent was available in the conventional set up of the laws of governance. By the 7th Century of the Hijra, Islamic Jurisprudence was already at the peak. Subsequently, the fall of Ottoman Rule precipitated disintegration of the Islamic Empire into petty kingdoms perhaps never to regain the lost glory and splendor. Institution of *Ijtiyad* was shelved aside. The Muslims began to suffer humiliation and disgrace due to

foreign domination and its un-Islamic dictates. Consequently, today's situation of the Muslim world could be described as going downhill of shame and dismay

Some scholars emphatically believe that the only way to get out of this mess of ignominy of the Muslims world-wide lies in going back to the time of *Khulafa-e-Rashidun*. They do not, however, elaborate the point. May be, it is a great idea to turn back the clock some fifteen hundred years. The idea, however, needs a lot of deliberations before any attempt at its implementation.

An average Muslim is pleased to hear the idea of revival of *Khulafa-e-Rashidun* system of government. Anyway, he keeps on wondering how the idea could possibly be materialized. Finding no equitable answer, he gets confused and frustrated all the more. At individual level, he solemnly resolves that, hence onward, all his life activities would be quite in accordance with the Islamic laws (*Shariah*). The moment he steps out of the threshold of his house, he is caught up with devastating challenges – street market, work place, public or state departments inclusive of public or private transactions of ordinary business of mundane life – he is constrained to obey man-made laws, rules and regulations. He is stuck in a 'foreign' (not Islamic) social, economic, legal and political system and there seems to be no escape. He is tired and bewildered. He is trying to understand how one can possibly roll back fifteen hundred years and hope for egalitarian society. There is definitely a need of much more explanation work on how to take care of the missing links, (to connect the present with fifteen hundred year old past).

Reverting to the idea of turning the clock backward (revival of the

Puritan period of *Khulafa-e-Rashidun*), the big question that haunts the mind is practicality and feasibility of the proposition including timeframe. There is a wide gap of fifteen hundred years and by now the life has grown into new dimensions never known before. How can we consider clockwise motion to connect the past with the present by pulling the past forward to connect it with the present in a way that we may feel reconnected? In this context, the glorious past clock (cover) shall have to be reexamined to determine its dimensional sufficiency. Perhaps it may not, as it is, be adequate enough to cater for the present requirement in its entirety. There are definitely serious missing gaps to be filled in before embarking upon the enterprise. This is not the job of a few theologians alone who, on the pulpit, say: '*Be-and it is*'

It involves a sufficiently big group of people of divergent expertise in the field of theology, sociology, psychology, economics, political science, law and jurisprudence, and various branches of science and engineering including medicine to deliberate collectively and work out some sort of rational and realistic mechanism for making transitional process possible. The panel of experts, as one of their vital priorities, may review and provide a safeguard against sensitive challenges of antagonistic religious sectarian divides that have been shredding the peace and tranquility in the Muslim soils – a tarnished image of Islam abroad. Another equally important aspect of the panel's deliberations encompasses the task of interpreting and tailoring the tenets of Islam suiting the present-day needs for righteous living by way of coordinating religion with life. 'The problem which our age has to meet', as observed by a religious exegete, A. Yusuf Ali, '... may not be the same as the problems which puzzled earnest minds of the fourth and sixth or later centuries of the Hijra. Therefore, it is no merit to hug the solutions offered in the

fourth or sixth Centuries when our souls cry out in hunger for solace in the fourteenth Century of the Hijra'. This advocates the need of progressive interpretation of the spiritual significance of the Divine Message with its various shades and colors.

This kicks in the need of revival of the important practice of *Ijtehad*, which was, somehow, given up in the 7th Century of the Hijra. Institution of *Ijtehad* would help a long way in facilitating the task of reviving the spirit of *Khulafa-e-Rashidun* compatible to the present needs and requirements – filling in the gaps by the supply of missing links. Islam must speak to the present time people in order to be convincing.

The big question, however, is how to do it. Of course, it seems to be a monumental task. There should be a beginning from somewhere somehow. Here, it would be worthwhile to limit our study to the case of 61 year old Islamic Republic of Pakistan. We hear eloquent speeches on the subject exhausting all rhetoric art – high sounding meaning nothing when it comes to results. Earnest intentions marred by sectarian divide have kept the matter in a melting pot. The Constitution of Pakistan passed in 1973 could be mentioned as a great tool for reform of social structure on the legal basis of justice, equality and fairness. Unfortunately, brilliance of the Constitution was eclipsed from time to time by periodical army coups, feudal aristocratic vested interests and the rise of Islamic extremism. These elements shook the national stability precipitating political and socio-economic deterioration. The situation offered a sort of fertile ground for appearance of Talibanisation. It may be mentioned that, despite these political upheavals, need for wholesale reform in every segment of the society was realized – each time more seriously

than the previous one. This advocates the need of creating an atmosphere of peaceful coexistence when people, with their respective sectarian alliance, feel comfortable. This egalitarian state is attainable by establishing, first of all, a high-level State sponsored forum with participation from all the leading religious groups for discussions on various issues of common interest. There would be a consensus of opinion on some issues, which could be enacted as law of the land. Disputed matters are thoroughly debated and put to vote. The majority opinion is a decisive power to enact law of the land. Still undecided sensitive matters are to be referred to the Head of State for final decision, which becomes a law and all the parties are to abide by. This may advocate the need of reactivating a long forsaken practice of *Ijtehad*.

The good news is that in Pakistan there already exists a constitutional body, namely, Islamic Ideological Council, to ensure that all law making addresses to Islamic tenets. So far, the nation is still waiting for some tangible results of the Council deliberations. It is, however, encouraging that the Pakistan government has very recently taken a positive step to shake up the Council from slumber by revamping its structure and invigorating its spirit by bringing in fresh brains. One hopes that this new Islamic Ideological Council, with transfusion of new blood and activated spirit, will improve its working with experience and function well as the forum for reconciliation of divergent sectarian visions on top of their agenda.

The State action to strengthen the Islamic Ideological Council is laudable. The primary objective of the Council, it is believed, would be to draw a line between Law of the Land and beliefs, practices, procedure of Zakat or prayers in mosques

including family laws as well as inheritance laws. The second category comprising beliefs and procedures should be left at the discretion of people with full liberty to comply with them as per their respective *Fiqah*. As to Law of the Land, there is no exception or option. It is mandatory for all. The stumbling block for the Council, however, will be two main rivals i.e. principles of *Hanfi Fiqah* and *Jafari Fiqah* held supreme in all the Islamic soils.

To eliminate this bone of contention, perhaps the only equitable way is that the high powered panel of Islamic Ideological Council should consist of all the sectarian representatives - a legislative body quite competent to practice *Ijtihad* by way of contemplation, argumentation and interpretation of various matters and thereby thrash out a workable solution of the issues facing today's Muslim society in the light of the Quran and *Sunnah*. In case of a dead-lock, as mentioned earlier, the Head of State, empowered by the Constitution, makes a final determination, which becomes the law of land obeyed invariably by all under penalty. The moment we earnestly recognize the reality that Islamic state is an ideological concept, it would already be a step forward. We should shoot for the ideal and strive to come closer as much as possible.

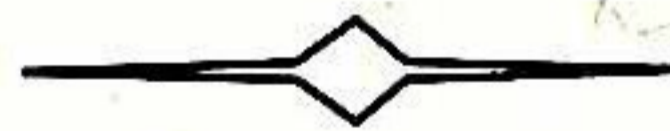
Is there any chance of better days for today's Muslims with Faith going downhill? The situation has become all the more confusion with the emergence of self-styled *Shariah* legalizing plunder, killing and blowing up property. This atrocious bloodshed, denial of human rights and flouting values have created an atmosphere of fear, uncertainty and insecurity in the name of Islam – all the devilish abominations under cover of Islam. This is a louder ever call to put our acts together in order

to build up our future on whatever is left out. Still our hearts throb with Islamic spirit of unity and enkindled sense of pride in belonging to a society welded together by the tenets of Islam regardless of geographical and linguistic difference. This sense of oneness helped us in the past in the face of political upheavals. Why not today?

Our society is blessed with diversity of talents and suckled by the nectar of Islamic tenets – all the necessary ingredients for advancement and progress. All we need is to channelize our energies to reconstruct our legal mechanism on the principle of equal justice, fairness, equality and balance based upon the Islamic injunctions and precepts – a realistic and workable *Shariah* to meet the needs, demands and challenges of the present time.

A society, where justice prevails, cannot fall. It is high time to fully understand this secret – the sooner the better. Should we fail to do it, our children will not forget us.

May Allah the All-Mighty help us. Amen



Surah Ya-Sin

Heart of The Glorious Quran

Surah (chapter) *Ya-Sin*, the heart of the Quran is a metaphorical expression of its significance predominating throughout the Holy Book. For easy understanding of the main thesis of *Surah Ya-Sin*, the following points are worth remembering.

- Allah's Oath by the Book at once establishes the glorious characteristics of the Quran.
- The Quran is revealed to the Apostle (PBUH) well guided on a mission to proclaim the Message of Islamic Monotheism
- The Quran is a revelation from the Supreme Lord '*The Exalted in Might, Most Merciful*'.
- Objective of the Quran is to guide mankind to the Straight Path of success and honor in this world and salvation in the Hereafter.
- Followers of the Divine Guidance are rewarded while the others suffer severe torment.
- The Great Lord, single-handedly, created the Universe with all its objects (including man) out of nothing for the service of mankind as a token of His Mercy, Grace and Benevolence.
- Allah is quite capable of recreation (Resurrection) after total destruction, which is inevitable.
- All the objects of nature obey Allah.
- Why should man not be thankful to Allah by way of

obedience to His Commands with pious and righteous deeds?

This is a multi-dimensional thesis of *Surah* (Chapter) *Ya-Sin*, that throbs throughout the spiritual attires of the Holy Quran. No doubt, content and substance of the Quran revolve primarily around two pivotal points – Invitation to believe in the Oneness of Allah (Monotheism) by acting upon Allah's commands at the exclusion of everything else. This is what mankind owes to Allah, the Solo Creator of the earth and heavens and all their objects. More importantly, all the objects of nature are made subservient to man for his goodness in this world – i.e. facilitating his living as well as his conduct based upon piety and righteousness leading to the Straight Track of ultimate success (Paradise) in the Hereafter. Rightfully, man owes much to Allah for the limitless Bounties showered on the 'Mud-Man'. Worship of One Allah Alone (Monotheism) is the only acceptable legitimate expression of man's gratitude to the Great lord. In case of disobedience to Allah's Orders, man is admonished against the horrible torment (the Hell Fire).

This is the core gist of the Noble Quran distilled in the single exclusive *Surah* entitled *Ya-Sin* in the Divine Style of excellence dipped in heavenly fragrance. Like the opening Verse of the Quran: '*This is the Book (the Quran), whereof there is no doubt, a guidance to those who are Al-Muttaqun*' (Verse 2: Al-Baqarah 2), Sura *Ya-Sin* begins with a bold emphasis on the glorious wisdom of the Noble Quran revealed to the Prophet Mohammed (PBUH) who is rightly guided on a mission to proclaim Allah's Message of Islamic Monotheism without any selfish interest of worldly gain or fame. The true credentials of the Prophet-hood of Mohammed (PBUH) are beautifully summed up as '*Obey those who ask of*

*you no wages for themselves and who are rightly guided'.
(Verse 21: Ya-Sin 36).*

The truth of legitimate credentials of Mohammed's (PBUH) Prophet-hood has been endorsed by no one other than the Supreme Being the All-Knower, the All-Wise – with an absolute power to do everything He wills. The Great Lord's Power could be judged by the creation of the Universe and its objects including mankind. Indeed Allah created them out of nothing like giving life to the lifeless environment as in Verse 33: *Ya-Sin 36*.

'And a sign for them is the dead land. We gave life, and We bring forth from it grains, so that they eat thereof'.

It may be remembered that the Divine Creation of the universe is not a chance or accidental occurrence. Allah explains, in a nutshell, the core cause of creation, procreation and sustenance of the objects around us. It is interaction of two opposite forces (male and female; negative and positive) that is responsible for birth, growth, decay and rebirth to preserve freshness and ensure newness of the objects of nature including mankind – birth, growth, old age and death and eventual resurrection. In Allah Words of Verse 36: *Ya-Sin 36*:

'Glory to Him Who has created all the pairs of that earth produces, as well of their own (human) kind (male and female), and of that which they know not'.

- Allah's Mercy and Grace on mankind could be judged by the creation of solar system, air, water, light, heat, animal dominion and plant dominion (with abundance of fruits

and foliage) and interchanging day and night. Besides, all of them are made subservient to man for safety, comfort and prosperity in this world. This establishes the co-relation of the Divinity and humanity – the Creator and the creation; the Supreme Master and the bonded slave. The Revelation and the Messengers are a source of continuation or sustenance of the co-relationship. Again, the universe and all its objects – including humanity – are visible signs of Allah's Supremacy full of Grace and Mercy, which is an exclusive source of existence of mankind in a hostile atmosphere on earth. Man owes to Allah in a big way. As an expression of his gratitude, man should accept the Absolute Lordship of Allah by doing pious and righteous deeds as per *Sunnah* (legal ways) of the Prophet Mohammed (PBUH).

Also *Surah Ya-sin* is a short but comprehensive portraiture of the abstract Divine Philosophy of destiny of the ethereal world and its inhabitants – their creation, purpose, destination (where are they heading to?) and an inevitable destruction to be followed by ultimate Resurrection. This dispels the doubt in finality and Resurrection for the Divine Ultimate Justice as in Verse 53 and 54: *Ya-Sin* 36.

'It will be but a single Saihah (shout), so behold they will all be brought up before Us!'

'This Day (Day of Resurrection), none will be wronged in anything, nor will you be requited anything except which you used to do!'

General notion of the skeptics in Allah's Power of recreation –

'Who will give life to these bones after they are rotten and have become dust?' – has been refuted as in Verse 79: *Ya-Sin* 36:

'Say: [O Mohammed (PBUH)] 'He (Allah) will give life to them who created them for the first time! And He is the All-Knower of every creation'. (Verse 79: Ya-Sin 36). 'Is not He Who created the heavens and the earth, Able to create the like of them? Yes, indeed! He is the All-Knowing Supreme Creator'. 'Verily, His Command, when He intends a thing, is only that He says to it. "Be!" – and it is'. Verse 81 and 82: Ya-Sin 36.

The significance of *Surah Ya-sin* has been beautifully emphasized by the Apostle's (PBUH) referring it as 'The Heart of the Quran' like Surat Al-Fatihah as 'Um-ul-Quran' (Mother of the Quran). Of course, the contents and substance of *Surah Ya-Sin* present central theme of the Quran like a healthy heart collecting spiritual blood from all the veins and pumping it to the main arteries of the Holy Quran, which primarily addresses man proclaiming Allah's Message of Islamic Monotheism i.e. worship of One Lord Alone. Brilliant sparks of spirituality illuminating the glorious pages of the Book emanate from and concentrate on *Surah Ya-Sin* like a living spirit / soul. The other Quranic themes like a comprehensive universal system subservient to humanity, human conduct in life on earth (righteous or evil deeds), the Divine Ultimate Justice on the Day of Resurrection followed by total collapse of the existing transitory world, reward or punishment and Paradise or Hell Fire – all initiated in *Surah Ya-Sin* find their reference or illustration throughout the Quran like throbbing vibrations.

To find out the truth about *Surah Ya-Sin* as the heart of the

Quran, please try it for yourself. Read *Surah Ya-Sin* several times in a composite mood till you have properly understood its main theme and thoroughly grasped its significance. Take up any of the remaining 113 *Surah* (Chapters) of the Quran and read it with understanding its meaning. You will be amazingly inspired by the feel of throbbing pulses shooting directly from the heart of the Quran – *Surah Ya-Sin*.

- To illustrate significance of *Surah Ya-Sin* sub-title, Heart of the Quran, we examine below some of its throbs pulsating in the entire organism / composition of the Quran.

Surah Ya-Sin, Heart beat of the Quran

a) Revelation from Allah

'This is a Revelation) sent down by the All-Mighty, the Most-Merciful'. Verse 5: Ya-Sin 36.

Pulsations in the Quran

Verse 9: 3; V106: 6; V114: 6; V2: 10; V14: 11; V 1: 14;
V44: 16: 42; V43: 69;

Heart beat

b) Resurrection / Repeat & Return to Allah The All-Mighty

'And surely, all – every one of them will be brought before Us'. Verse 32 Ya- Sin: 36.

Pulsations

Verse 28: 2; V 87: 4; V 105: 5; V 12: 6; V 72: 6; V 29: 7; V 57: 7; V 24: 5; V 4 & 56: 10; V 9: 10; V 34: 10; V 5: 13; V 19, 21: 14; V 25, 85: 15; V 3, 98, 99: 16; V 51, V 99: 17; V 38: 19; V 40, 80, 95: 19; V 35, 40, 93, 104: 21; V 7, 48, 57, 58 & 66: 22; V 16: 23; V 87: 26; V 7, 19, 20 & 57: 29; V 11, 44: 30; V 32: 31; V 9: 35; V 47: 42; V 43: 50; V 5, 6: 51; V 4: 75; V 10: 79;

Heart beat

C) Creation out of nothing; Solar system; Plants & Animals – subservient to man (service for mankind)

'And a sign for them is the dead land. We give it life, and We bring forth from it grains, so that they eat thereof'. 'And We have made therein gardens of date-palms and grapes ...' 'So that they may eat the fruit thereof ...' 'Glory is to Him Who has created all the pairs of that which the earth produces, as well as of their own (human) kind (male and female) and that of which they know not'. 'And a sign for them is the night, We withdraw there from the day, and behold they are in the darkness'. 'And the sun runs on its fixed course (appointed). That is the Decree of the All-mighty, the All-knowing'. Verse 33 to 38:

Ya-Sin 36.

Pulsations

Verse 12 & 29: 2; V 164: 2; V 1, 2, 73, 96 & 97, 99 & 141: 6; V

45: 7; V 5: 10; V3-4, 23, 24: 13; V 23, 32 & 33: 14; V 19-20: 15; V3 – 10, 12 – 15, 65 – 67: 16; V12: 17; V 67, 67: 19; V 53, 54, 55: 20; V 30 – 33 & 104: 21; V 5, 6 & 65: 22; V17 – 21: 23; V 61, 62: 25; V 60 – 61 & 64: 27; V 8, 50, 55: 30; V 8, 20 & 29: 31; V 4, 6, 9: 32; V 13 & 16: 35; V 18: 37; V 21: 41; V 3, 4, 5: 45; V 7: 64; Created all things in pair – V 3: 17; V 52: 55;

Heart beat

d) All belong to Allah All-Mighty Lord the Most Merciful.

'So Glorified is He and exalted above all that they associate with Him, and in Whose Hands is the dominion of all things: and to Him you shall be returned'. Verse 83: Ya-Sin 36.

Pulsations

Verse 20, 116, 143, 284: 2; V 28, 103: 3; V 126, 131, 132: 4; V 120: 5; V 29: 8; V 116, 129: 9; V 55: 10; V 123: 11; V 13: 13; V 52: 16; V 44: 18; V 6: 20; V 9: 27; V 30: 31; V 6: 32; V 1: 34; V 66: 36; V 4, 29: 42; V 7: 44; V 27: 45; V 4: 48; V 1, 2, 3: 57; V 1: 61; V 1: 62; V 7: 63;

Heart beat

e) Worship Allah Alone (Monotheism)

'And that you should worship Me [Alone – Islamic Monotheism, and set up not rivals associate gods with Me]. That is the Straight Path'. Verse 61: Ya-sin 36.

Pulsations

V 21, 132, 163: 2; V 2, 62: 3; V 102, 163: 6; V 29, 59, 65, 70, 73, 85: 7; V 31: 9; V 3: 10; V 2, 26, 50, 61, 84: 11; V 40: 12; V 30, 36: 13; V 52: 14; V 94, 99: 15; V 22, 51, 123: 16; V 102, 110: 18; V 65: 19; V 8, 12, 98: 20; V 25, 52: 21; V 26, 31, 34: 22; V 32: 23; V 70, 88: 29; V 30: 30; V 46: 33; V 35: 37;

Heart beat

f) Paradise for the righteous & Hell Fire for the *mujrimun* (disbelievers)

'This Day (Judgment Day), none will be wronged in anything, nor will you be requited anything except that which you used to do'. Verily the dwellers of the Paradise, that Day, will be busy with joyful things'.

'(It will be said): And O you Mujrimun (disbelievers, sinners)! Get you apart this Day (from the believers)'. 'This is the Hell which you were promised!' 'Burn therein this Day, for that you used to disbelieve'. Verse 54, 55, 59, 63, 64: Ya-Sin 36.

Pulsations

Verse 25 38, 39, 81, 82: 2; V 56, 57: 3; V 56, 57, 124, 146, 173: 4; V 9, 10: 5; V 48, 49, 6; V 2, 4, 9: 10; V 23: 11; V 2: 18; V 18: 13; V 7, 23: 14; V 36, 97: 16; V 9: 17; V 26: 19; V 19, 20: 17; V 107: 18; V 96: 19; V 74, 75, 76, 111, 112, 123, 124: 20; V 14, 56, 57: 22; V 52: 24; V 2, 3, 4, 5: 27; V 67: 28; V 7, 58, 68, 69: 29; V 15, 16, 27, 43, 44, 45: 30; V 19, 20: 32; V 4, 5, 37, 38: 34; V 7: 35; V 4: 41; V 30, 31: 45; V 12: 47; V 5, 6: 48; V 24, 25: 84;

Heart beat

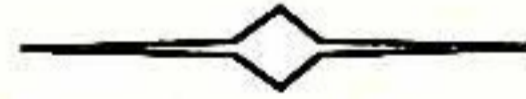
g) Honorary Mission (No wages) -- True credential of the Prophet Mohammed (PBUH)

'Truly, you [O Mohammed (PBUH)] are one of the Messengers'. 'On the Straight Path (i.e. on Allah's religion of Islamic Monotheism)'

'Obey those who ask no wages of you (for themselves), and who are rightly guided'. V 3, 4 & 21: Ya-Sin 36.

Pulsations

Verse 90: 6; V 72: 10; V 29: 11; V 104: 12; V 57: 25; V109, 127, 145, 164, 180: 26; V 47: 34; V 86: 38; V46: 68;



The First Public Address of Mohammed (Peace be upon him)

Events Preceding the First Address

*“Read! In the name of your Lord Who created
(all that exists)”*. Verse 1 : Al-Alaq 96.

The Divinity of these words, in the form of a pure and candid composition of the very First Revelation, crystallized at once the Truth about the universe and mankind. The profundity of Divine significance, coupled with a unique form of dramatic Revelation through a spectacular appearance of the angel Jibrael (Gabriel), produced a terrifying impact on Mohammed (PBUH) who had no previous notion of it.

The situation became all the more painful for the Apostle (PBUH), when after these First Words, no further Revelation came for a long time. This disturbing pause in Revelation, anyway, turned out to be a blessing for the perturbed mind of the Apostle (PBUH). It acted as a healing balm and vital tonic for the Apostle (PBUH) to normalize his receptive mood. It also enkindled in him a genuine yearning for Revelation with no more puzzling fear and nervousness. He was now prepared to receive commission of Prophet-hood in a befitting manner.

The taxing wait at last came to an end, when the Revelation of Surah 'Ad Duha' 93 came with a definite seal of Apostolicity with Allah's assurance of His Pleasure and His Help in spreading the Message of Monotheism.

"By the night when it darkens (and stands still)".

"Your Lord (O Mohammed, Peace be upon him) has neither forsaken you nor hates you".

"And indeed Hereafter is better for you than the present (life of the world)".

"And verily, Your Lord will give you (all good) so that you are well pleased". Verse 1, 2, 3, 5 and 5 : Ad Duha 93.

The First to Embrace Islam

Amongst women, Hazarat Khadijah (May Allah hold her in His Favor), the Apostle's (PBUH) wife, was the first to believe in Mohammed (PBUH).

The Apostle's (PBUH) nephew, Hazarat Ali (May Allah hold him in His Favor) was the first³ and foremost, amongst the young boys, who readily expressed his unflinching faith in Allah and His Messenger (PBUH).

Outside the Apostle's (PBUH) own household, Hazarat Abu Bakr ibn Abu Quhafah al Taymi (May Allah hold him in His Favor) responded favorably to the call of Monotheism and repudiation of idols at all cost. His suit was soon followed by his friends and associates like Uthman ibn Affan, Abd al Rahaman ibn Awf, Talah ibn Ubayd Allah, Sa'd ibn Abu

Waqqaas and al Zubayr ibn al Awwam – all enjoyed Allah's Blessings of being the earliest converts to Islam.

Call for Open Proclamation

It was three years after the First Revelation, Allah commanded His Messenger (PBUH) to go public with his invitation to Monotheism and admonition of the consequences which would seal the fate of disbelievers in this world as well as in the Hereafter.

'And warn your tribe (O Mohammed, Peace be upon him) of near kindred'.

'And be kind and humble to the believers who follow you'.

'Then if they disobey you, say: 'I am innocent of what you do'.
Verse 214, 215 and 216 : Ash-Shu'ara 26.

'Therefore proclaim openly (Allah's Message – Islamic Monotheism) that which you are commanded and turn away from Al-Mushrikun (polytheists, idolaters and disbelievers)'.
Verse 94 : Al-Hijr 15.

'O you (Mohammed, Peace be upon him) enveloped in garments'.

'Rise and warn'.

'And magnify your Lord (Allah)'. *'And purify your garments!'.*

'And keep away from 'Ar-Rujz' (the idols)'

Verse 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 : Al-Muddaththir 74.

In compliance with Allah's Command, Mohammed (PBUH) invited his kinsmen to a feast with the purpose to convey them Allah's Message of Monotheism. The Apostle's (PBUH) invitation fell on deaf ears mainly due to an aggressive intervention by his uncle, Abu Lahab. The following day, the Apostle (PBUH) again called upon his kinsmen to dine with him. After they had eaten the food, the Apostle (PBUH) said: 'I do not know of any man in Arab history who served his people better than I have served you. I have brought the best of this world as well as the next. My Lord has commanded me to call you unto Him. Who of you then would stand by me on this matter?' Except Hazarat Ali (May Allah hold him in His Favor), still a young boy, no body expressed any support. They, however, dispersed laughing and mocking at what they heard.

The First Public Address

The unfavorable response of the kinsmen to Islam did not deter Mohammed (PBUH) who, inspired by the Divine light of Truth, felt all the more resolute to carry out Allah's Message of Islamic Monotheism. Mohammed (PBUH) decided to take Allah's Message to the general public of Makkah. For the purpose, one day, the Apostle (PBUH) went on the top of the mountain, al Safa and called aloud, "Ya Sabahah!" (O people of Quraish!). Hearing the call, the people gathered around him and inquired about the matter. Mohammed (PBUH) answered, 'Tell me, O men of Quraish: 'If I were to tell that I see a cavalry on the other side of the mountain, would you believe me?'. They replied, 'Indeed for we trust you and we have never known you telling a lie'. The Messenger of Allah said, 'Know

then that I am a warner and I warn you of a severe punishment, O Banu 'Abd al Muttalib! O Banu 'Abd Manaf! O Banu Zurah! O Banu Taym! O Banu Makhzum! O Banu Asad! God has commanded me to warn you, my nearest kinsman, that I can guarantee you no good on earth or in heaven unless you witness that there is no God but God' . (Sahih Al Bukhari, Vol . 6 Hadith No. 495)

The call did not invoke a favorable response amongst the audience who could not reconcile with the futility of their centuries old practices and, thereby, the necessity of abrupt repudiation of the beliefs they revered since ages. They dispersed angrily. The most infuriated among them was the Apostle's (PBUH) uncle Abu Lahab who shouted at the pitch of his voice, 'Woe to you on this day! Did you assemble us for this?'

Post-Public Proclamation Events

A chain of events, proceeding the first Public Proclamation to Islamic Monotheism, narrates a gripping tale of all out opposition translated into untold miseries, inhuman atrocities and shameless persecutions meted out to the followers of the new Faith, without regard to any limit of civil decency. The proclamation was a serious one, but received, nevertheless, casually by the Arabs in the beginning. Obviously, it was a plain and simple proclamation of Islamic Monotheism.

Islamic Monotheism

In essence, it was like headlong collusion against the combined forces of 'Fake-Monotheism', 'Trio-Monotheism', Paganism,

Zoroastrianism and Sabeanism. Some sections of the Arab population, who knew history believed in the ultimate triumph of true Monotheism. In this case, they foresaw the end to their political hegemony, economic superiority and social dominance, which they had achieved after centuries long exploitation of their people. No wonder, they were adamant to put up a tough resistance to the new Faith right at the start.

A series of awful persecutions and gruesome atrocities inflicted by the Quraishites forced some Muslims to leave for Abyssinia (Ethiopia) twice. This was followed by a social boycott of the Hashimites and the Holy Prophet (PBUH) by the Quraishites. For three long torturous years, the Hashmites and the Apostle (PBUH) remained confined in a glen outside Makkah.

These unprecedented hardships and troubles could not quell the fervor of the Muslims' Faith in Monotheism and high hope of Allah's help. The Holy Prophet (PBUH) dauntlessly continued Allah's Mission of reforming evils for reconstruction of a pious and righteous society. As the Muslims demonstrated a high degree of patience during extreme adversities and never relinquished Faith, Allah helped them in His mysterious way. The Quraishites got disgusted with the futile barbarity of boycott and were forced to yank it, amidst feelings of shame and indignation.

Allah's Message began spreading in and around the Arabian Peninsula despite serious resistance and all out opposition. This resulted into an historic event of Migration of the Holy

Prophet (PBUH) to Madina in 622.

Madina the Center of Holy Mission

In Madina, the Holy Prophet (PBUH) and his emigrant followers ('*Al-Mohajar*') together with the local believers ('*Al-Ansar*') directed all their energies to the spread of Islam by smashing down all the barriers, one after another. They were soon successful in establishing an Islamic State on the foundation of the Divine Principles of piety and righteousness.

The Nakhla Expedition in 623, the Battle of Badr and expulsion of the Bani Qainuqa Jews (from Madina) in 624, the Battle of Uhud and exit of Banu Nadir Jews (from Madina) in 625, the Expedition of Mustaliq in 626, the Battle of Trench and subsequent ousting of Banu Quraiza Jews in 627 – all these events were geared to the task of establishing peace and security, which were indispensable for carrying out Allah's Mission to an ultimate completion. With the same token, the Truce of Hudaibiya in 630 followed by the Expedition of Khyber, was a golden key to the Conquest of Makkah with almost no bloodshed and Allah's Words came true.

'Verily, We have given you (O Mohammed, Peace be upon him) a manifest victory'. Verse 1 : Al-Fath 48.

"That Allah may forgive you your sins of the past and the future, and complete His Favor on you, and guide you on the Straight Path".

“And Allah may help you with strong help”.

“He it is Who sent down 'As-Sakina' (calmness and tranquility) into the heart of the believers, that they may grow more in Faith along with their (present) Faith. And to Allah belong the hosts of the heavens and the earth, and Allah is Ever All-Knower, All Wise”. Verse 2, 3, and 4 : Al-Fath 48.

Aftermath of the Conquest of Makkah

Grand entry of the victorious Army of Islam into the Holy city of Makkah and general amnesty to the vanquished by the compassionate Messenger of Allah (PBUH) miraculously abridged up the wide gulf of divergent differences amongst the Arabian tribes, which were long torn apart by mutual hatred and animosity. The sublime spirit of Islamic Faith welded them together in a bond of brotherhood on the basis of equality, justice, love, piety and righteousness.

The impact of victory enlivened with the Islamic Faith in Divine power was awesome. The display of high standard of social justice and spiritual purity on the part of the Muslims offered an irresistible temptation for amazing diversity of people to embrace Islam and puffed up the folds of Muslim community.

'When there comes the help of Allah (to you O Mohammed, Peace be upon him, against your enemies) and the conquest (of Makkah)'.

'And you see that the people enter Allah's religion (Islam) in crowds'.

'So glorify the Praises of your Lord, and ask His Forgiveness. Verily, He is the One Who accepts the repentance and Who forgives'. Verse 1, 2 and 3: An-Nasr 110.

The enhanced strength of the true faithful believers, with extraordinary zeal for the cause of Islam, may account for utter destruction of paganism, which suffered a succession of crushing defeat in the Battle of Hunain, Auras and Taif (in 630) and the Expedition of Tabuk (in 631). This was the Divine judgment, which polytheism could not escape.

'And say: 'Truth (Islamic Monotheism or this Quran) has come and 'Batil' (polytheism or falsehood) has vanished. Surely 'Batil' is ever bound to vanish'. Verse 81 : Al-Isra 17.

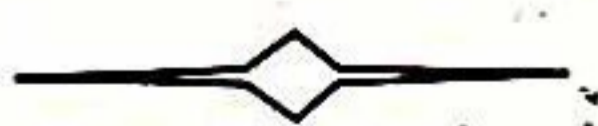
Completion of Prophet's Mission

The ultimate triumph of Islamic Monotheism with utter destruction of polytheism and establishment of the Islamic State with the emergence of Muslim Society on Allah's Principles of fraternity, equality and justice brought the commission of Allah's Messenger, Mohammed (PBUH) to a brilliant conclusion.

"This day, I have perfected your religion, completed my Favors upon you, and have chosen for you Islam as your religion". V 3: Al-Maidah 5.

The Islamic Faith infused in the believers the high spirit of self-recognition and spiritual elevation – a sublime state of communion with the Supreme Being, when individual enjoys bounties of this world and salvation in the Hereafter. The Muslim Society, thus created by Mohammed (PBUH) was so inter-connected and welded together by the spirit of Allah's Cause that the power of their great ambitions could be measured by their actions directed 'to becoming, within a short time, the nucleus of a great civilization ready for a destiny of absorption of the Persian, the Roman and the Egyptian civilization.' (The Life of Mohammed: Dr. Husyan Haykal).

The Holy Prophet (PBUH) performed '*Hajjatul-Wada*' (Farewell Pilgrimage to Makkah) in 632, where he delivered his Last Sermon, attended by a hundred twenty four thousand (124,000) Muslim pilgrims from all over the world. This was irrefutable testimony of the all pervasive and all conclusive impact of the Muslims' achievements in the area of social reform, economic viability, political consolidation and, to crown all, elevation of humanity to the highest limit. This overwhelming multitude of devotees to the cause of Islam, surrounding Allah's Messenger (PBUH) filled the air with one echo of their voices, '*Labbaik*' (Lord! Here we are worshipping, glorifying and magnifying Allah and thanking Him)



'Who can define the Spirit of Inspiration?
Its gift is the highest of God's Mercies
To man. The Quran is divine, and no carpings
Can effect its greatness or the greatness
Of the Messenger who brought it to men'.



The Last Sermon of Prophet Mohammed

(Peace be upon him)

O People, lend me an attentive ear, for I do not know whether, after this year, I shall ever be amongst you again. Therefore, listen to what I am saying to you carefully and take these words to those who could not be present here today.

People, just as you regard this month, this day, this city as sacred, so regard the life and property of every Muslim as a sacred trust. Return the goods entrusted to you to their rightful owners. Hurt no one so that no one may hurt you. Remember that you will indeed meet your Lord, and He will indeed reckon your deeds. Allah has forbidden you to take usury (interest); therefore all interest obligations shall henceforth be waived...

Beware of Satan, for safety of your religion. He has lost all hope that he will ever be able to lead you astray in big things, so beware of following him in small things.

People, it is true that you have certain rights with regard to your women, but they also have right over you. If they abide by your right then to them belongs the right to be fed and clothed in kindness. Do treat your women well and be kind to them for they are your partners and committed helpers.

And it is your right that they do not make friends with any one of whom that you do not approve, as well as never to commit adultery.

People, listen to me in earnest, worship Allah, say your five daily prayers (Salah), fast during the month of Ramadhan, and give your wealth in Zakat. Perform Hajj if you can afford it. You know that every Muslim is the brother of another Muslim. You are all equal. Nobody has superiority over other except by piety and good action.

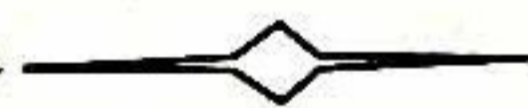
Remember, one day you will appear before Allah and answer for your deeds. So beware, do not go astray from the path of righteousness after I am gone.

O People, no Prophet or Apostle will come after me and no new faith will be born. Reason well, therefore, O people, and understand my words, which I convey to you. I leave behind me two things, the Quran and my example, the Sunnah and if you follow these, you will never go astray.

And those who listen to me shall pass on my words to others and those to others again; and may the last ones understand my words better than those who listen to me directly. Be my witness, oh Allah! that I have conveyed Your Message to Your people”.

This Sermon was delivered on the 9th day of Dhul Hijjah, 10 AH in the valley of Uranah at mount Arafat

**'Proclaim the Message of God, and pray
To Him for purity and guidance.
God's Revelation carries its own
Proofs and is recognized by men
Of wisdom. Its rejecters but lose
Their own chances of profiting
By the Truth, and attaining the Paths,
That lead to God's own gracious Presence!'**



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O God! Forgive us for our mistakes.
You are Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful. 'Amen'.



Dr. Bashir Naeem

It is good to read and understand The Glorious Quran. Feeling of its spiritual significance, however, elevates the reader to a high level of sublimation when secrets of the Divine Guidance begin to

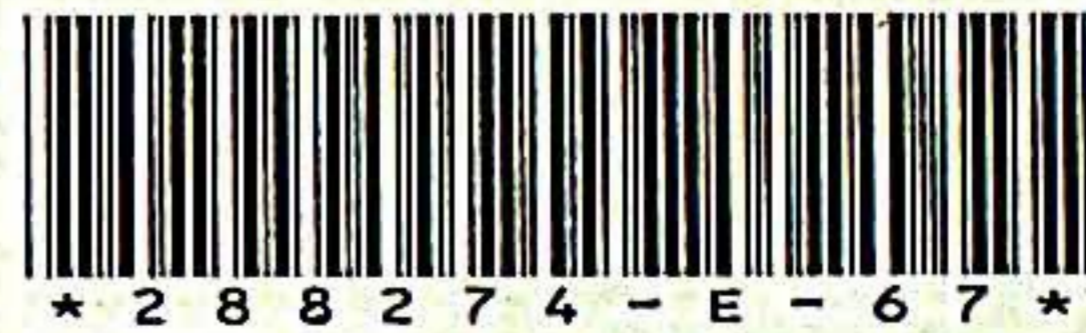
unravel. The Message, if understood through inward experience, illuminates the Straight Path of honor and prosperity in this world, and a big reward (Paradise) in the Hereafter.

For Those Who Believe contains a set of model lectures on The Glorious Quran with an object of clarifying the truth in order to make it meaningful to the common man. The Quranic terminologies are explained without the help of high philosophy, so that the readers feel connected with the Message. This is like a straight talk, which was the secret method of the Prophet Mohammed (PBUH), to convey Allah's Message, which won hearts of the millions in a short time.

The book, **For** offer model simplify the truth and promote understanding of the Divine Message. This is the only way to connect today's Muslims back to Islam.

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**For
Those Who Believe**

لِقَوْمٍ يُؤْمِنُونَ

**Model Lectures on
The Glorious Quran**

*'...Verily, in remembrance of Allah do hearts find rest'.
Verse 28: Ar-Rad 13*

27

4

Dr. Bashir Naeem