

Discovering The Quran

UNDERSTANDING THE QURAN IN
THE SCIENTIFIC FRAMEWORK

MAULANA WAHIDUDDIN KHAN



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Understanding the Quran



There are many verses in the Quran which refer to the phenomena of nature, for instance, mountains, rains, etc. But these references are expressed as hints. Some effort has to be made to understand these hints about natural phenomena in the light of the information discovered by science. In this regard, the discoveries made about natural phenomena through research are (as regards the necessity for an explanation of the Quran) as important as the other agreed-upon sources of information like the prophetic traditions regarding the background of particular revelations.

In the Quran, there is a verse in this regard: “Praise be to God! He will show you His signs and you will recognize them. Your Lord is not unaware of what you do.” (27:93)

From these words of the Quran we learn that a principle, as regards the discovery of God, has been described here. There are many verses in the Quran, where we find mention of the phenomena of nature. But these descriptions being only hints are not given in detail. To understand the content of God-realization in the phenomena of nature, it is essential to find what these hints specify. These details, not being available in the Quran, we have to discover them by pursuing a scientific study of externalities. That is to say, the science or knowledge of nature gives us an explanation of what is merely adumbrated in the Quran.

The above Quranic verse says: “He will show you His signs and you will recognize them.” The words ‘He will show you His signs’ refer to the supporting data, to be discovered

in the later period of history. ‘And you will recognize them’ means you will become acquainted with the signs of God mentioned in the Quran at the level of realization.

For instance, in the words quoted above, concerning the mountains, the Quran states: “You see the mountains and think them firmly fixed, but they shall pass away as the clouds pass away. Such is the work of God, Who has ordered all things to perfection: He is fully aware of what you do.” (27:88)

This verse was revealed in the seventh century AD. It is stated regarding the mountains that apparently they seem to be fixed on the earth but, in reality, they are moving with the earth, just as the clouds. Man did not know about this natural event in the seventh century but later geological studies have revealed that the movement of the mountains takes place because of the shifting of tectonic plates. Their configuration is also affected by earthquakes and volcanic eruptions. These scientific discoveries of recent times make the Quranic verse understandable in that they aid in realizing God’s wisdom at a deeper level.

The Scientific Exegesis of the Quran



There are certain people who think that all the subjects of science are discoverable in the Quran and that with reference to the relevant verses, a scientific exegesis of the Quran may be written. In this matter there are some who have gone to the extent of claiming, for example, that this verse, “Have We not lifted up your heart” (94:1) is a reference to the science of anatomy, or that the verse, “Now We have removed your veil, so your sight today is sharp” (50:22), relates to diseases of the

eyes, etc.

This theory about the inclusion of scientific subjects in the Quran is, without doubt, baseless. In this sense, the Quran is far from being a book of science. But in a quite different respect we can rightly say that modern scientific research is conducive to a proper understanding of the Quran.

For instance, the Quran states: “We have made every living thing out of water.” (21:30) In previous times, a reader of the Quran would have understood this in a general sense, but when the modern reader of the Quran reads these verses in the light of new scientific discoveries, he understands this statement in physical detail. His conviction in the veracity of the Quran thus increases to a great extent.

The Age of Higher Discovery of God



Prophet’s Companion Abu Dhar Ghifari once narrated: “Even when a bird would flutter its wings in the air, the Prophet of Islam would remind us of some knowledge.” (At-Tabaqat al-Kubra, v. 2, p. 354)

Without doubt, the flight of the bird in the air is a great sign of the power of God. In ancient times, this sign of divine power could be understood only by way of mysterious belief, but today it can be understood as a scientific reality. Now, in the age of science, we can say that today when an airplane flies in the air from one place to another, it requires a complicated mechanism external to the airplane, at the point of take-off, as well as at the point of landing.

Without this, no airplane can fly from one place to another. But a bird does not require any external infrastructure to fly through the air. It flies from one place

and lands at another place by gliding through the air on its own. This is without doubt a great sign of the power of the Lord of the Worlds.

In modern times, scientific progress has made a great contribution to the lives of millions. This great role it has played has given us a new framework within which to understand the reality of things. Thanks to this scientific framework, it has become possible for what was earlier understood only as something mysterious, to be understood now on a rationally accepted base. This change in the times has opened up a limitless field of discovering God's wisdom, or attaining a high level of God-realization.

This modern scientific age was predicted in the Quran in the seventh century in these words: "We shall show them Our signs in the Universe and within themselves, until it becomes clear to them that this is the Truth." (41:53)

Faith in the Unseen



When something is present but is not visible, the word unseen or invisible (*ghayb*) will be used. The same is true of God. Although God is apparently in the unseen, in reality, He is more present than any other thing which is present. Faith in the unseen (*iman bil-ghayb*) directly means faith in God, but indirectly it includes all those related things which are included in faith and is a must for a believer. For instance, revelation, angels, Paradise and Hell, etc.

The truth is that we learn of things in two ways, one by observation and the other by inference. In respect of science, both these methods are equally reliable. In terms of validity, there is no difference between the two.

In present times, for academic studies science is regarded as an authentic source of the truth. There are two sides to science, one being theoretical and the other technical. In terms of scientific studies, the sphere of technical science is limited. Through technology one can see only the appearances of things, but all the things which are apparent have, in the last analysis, their unseen aspects. For instance, you can see flowers, but you cannot see their fragrance. It is not possible to see the fragrance of a flower by means of any microscope or telescope. Although, just as the flower exists, so too does its fragrance exist.

According to scientific study, all things are finally a combination of atoms and the atom in its last analysis is a combination of electrons and protons. One scientist, describing this reality, has written that the entire universe is a mad dance of invisible electrons (and protons). Other scientists have interpreted this invisible state of the universe as being waves of probability.

In this respect, it would be right to say that not only is the seemingly invisible Creator unseen, but His visible creation is also in the unseen. The British scientist, Sir Arthur Eddington (d. 1944), wrote extensively on this subject in a book titled *Science and the Unseen World* (Macmillan, 1920).

The truth is that what we see in this world is only their appearance: the reality of things still remains invisible. The same is true of God. God as to His being is apparently invisible, but in His creations He becomes visible to us. The existence of the things He created is in itself a proof of the existence of the Creator. The universe is so meaningful that, without accepting the Creator, it is not possible to explain the universe.

God's being in the unseen is in one sense due to the exigencies of putting mankind to the test. If God were to become visible, there would be no such exigencies. God being in the unseen is why believing in Him becomes a test paper

for us. Had God been visible, having faith in God would not have become a test for human beings. God and all other things related with belief in Him, being in the unseen, are matters of great blessing for man, because it is due to this that the process of thinking has been initiated and stimulated. It is owing to this that we have a limitless sphere in which to ponder and reflect. It is owing to this that realization of God can become for us a self-discovered reality, and without doubt it is a fact that there is nothing having a greater impact in this world than a reality discovered on our own. God and other matters of belief being in the unseen are an endless source of intellectual development for man.

For guidance, the condition of faith in the unseen is no arbitrary condition but for a creature like man, it is rather a very reasonable condition. For the understanding of any great reality, an awakened mind is always required. Only the mind of an awakened person is capable of understanding a great reality. God without doubt is the greatest reality. That is why having faith in God, or the realization of God in the true sense, can be had only by one who has awakened his mind by study and reflection. One whose mind is not awakened is as if suffering from an intellectual blindness and without doubt the realization of God cannot be achieved in a state of such blindness.

The Method for the Discovery of God



The philosophical pursuit of God dates back to ancient Greece. It is believed that the first Greek philosopher was Thales of Miletus, who lived during 546 to 624 BC. Philosophy, in essence, is the search for the Creator, but philosophers could

never be successful in discovering the Creator. Philosophy is commonly defined as the study of general and fundamental questions about existence, knowledge, values, reason, mind and language. This, however, is a superficial statement about the true subject of philosophy. In reality, philosophy is the scholarly search for God or the supreme truth.

All philosophers were in search of the truth, giving different names to their search. But no philosopher was successful in his quest. It is said about the British philosopher Bertrand Russell that he was a philosopher of no philosophy. This is not true of only one philosopher, rather this statement is applicable to all philosophers. The supreme reality has been the centre of search of every philosopher, but no philosopher could find a clear answer to his quest.

Why is it that the philosophers remained engaged in the pursuit of God, but could not discover God with certainty? The reason was that the method they followed was unscientific. All scholars and thinkers who tried to reach God by following the philosophical method could not find God. These people wanted to see God directly, but the truth is that God can only be discovered indirectly. They tried to directly find God, just as they would observe and study other entities of the material world. However, this methodology was not appropriate in the matter of God. This is why those who followed it could not be successful.

What is the right methodology for the intellectual search for God? The Quran has given an indication of the right methodology for the discovery of God. Historically speaking, the quest for the truth began about 3,500 years ago in the age of the Israeli Prophet Moses. We receive guidance for the first time in an incident that occurred in the life of the Prophet Moses. The Prophet Moses was born 3,500 years ago in ancient Egypt. His story has been narrated with detail in the Quran. The relevant incident occurred on Mount Sinai, which

has an elevation of 2,285 meters. The event has been described in the Quran in these words:

“And when Moses came at Our appointed time and his Lord spoke to him, he said, ‘My Lord, show Yourself to me so that I may look at You.’ He replied, ‘You cannot see Me, but look at the mountain; if it remains firmly in its place, then only will you see Me.’ And when his Lord manifested Himself on the mountain, He broke it into pieces and Moses fell down unconscious. And when he recovered, he said, ‘Glory be to You, I turn towards You, and I am the first to believe.’” (7:143)

So, what is the right approach in the matter of discovery of God? When we reflect on this Quranic verse, we arrive at the conclusion that a human being cannot directly see God. A person can gain knowledge about God only indirectly. That is, by pondering over the creation of God one can have knowledge of the Creator. This guidance on the method to be adopted with respect to discovering God was available in the history of the Prophet Moses since past 3,500 years. But philosophers and thinkers did not follow this methodology. They continued to seek a direct observation of God.

However, this methodology could be understood by people only after the Italian astronomer Galileo Galilei (1564-1642) used the telescope to observe celestial objects. Galileo is considered the father of modern science. The beginning of modern science was in 1608 when humans invented the basic form of the telescope. In 1609 Galileo further developed this elementary telescope and from 1610 to 1612 observed the motion of various planets of the solar system: Jupiter, Venus, Saturn and Neptune.

A tradition has been recorded in Sahih al-Bukhari according to which the Prophet once said that God would surely support this religion with the help of a secular (*fajir*) person. (Sahih al-Bukhari, Hadith No. 3062) This tradition of the Prophet gives a clue that in the matter of discovery of

God, there will be a secular person who will provide initial direction.

I have been thinking on this subject since a very long time. I have arrived at the conclusion that the “secular person” mentioned in the above tradition of the Prophet is perhaps the Italian astronomer Galileo who was born four hundred years ago. In this matter, Galileo’s role was not a direct one, but an indirect one. That is, his discoveries indirectly helped in finding an answer to the question of what method one should adopt to discover God.

In the time of Galileo, a very important incident occurred, which was the discovery of the telescope. Like Newton’s ‘apple shock’, we can call this ‘tele-shock’. Einstein has written that Galileo was the father of modern science. It is indeed true that with Galileo science entered a new age. The telescope had already been invented in Holland, but Galileo came up with an improved version of the available telescope and could for the first time observe parts of the solar system.

In 1610, for several nights Galileo observed Jupiter and three objects near this large planet. By closely monitoring their motion over the course of a number of days he concluded that these objects near Jupiter were Jupiter’s satellites which were in orbit around it. Galileo’s findings of Jupiter’s satellites caused a revolution in astronomy: a planet with smaller planets orbiting it did not conform to the principles of Aristotelian cosmology, which held that all heavenly bodies should circle the Earth. Aristotle’s conception of the universe is also called Ptolemy’s geocentric model, according to which the earth is at the centre of the universe with the sun, planets and stars orbiting it. But Galileo’s discovery in 1610 and his subsequent observations of the planet Venus later that year further made the Ptolemaic geocentric model untenable. The new theory of the sun at the centre in the solar system with other planets including the earth revolving around it is called the heliocentric theory.

It would be right to say that just as Newton's discovery of the gravitational force happened after his moment of 'apple shock', similarly Galileo's discovery of the heliocentric theory began after the 'tele-shock'. This incident led to the beginning of modern science. In other words, it can be said that the invention of the telescope helped in bringing science to a new age. The potential utility of the telescope in gaining knowledge about the universe was first employed by Galileo.

Galileo is called the father of modern science because he was able to delink one thing from the other. In this matter, the French biologist Dr Alexis Carrel writes: "Galileo, as is well known, distinguished the primary qualities of things, dimensions and weight, which are easily measurable, from their secondary qualities, form, color, odor, which cannot be measured. The quantitative was separated from the qualitative. The quantitative, expressed in mathematical language, brought science to humanity. The qualitative was neglected." (*Man, the Unknown*, New York, 1939, p. 278)

Although Dr Alexis Carrel has portrayed the distinction between the quantitative and qualitative aspects of things as a negative occurrence, in reality this was the reason why the scientific revolution could at all be ushered in. This delinking opened up the doors of scientific research which until now had been closed due to the influence of philosophy.

After this differentiation between the quantitative and the qualitative, all scientific disciplines such as Physics, Chemistry and Astronomy started developing further. The findings in these scientific fields were not directly related to religion, but indirectly they had a very important bearing on religion. Now all disciplines of science began to be studied freely and independently. Research in these areas indirectly helped in proving God's existence.

Scientifically speaking, the above methodology of Galileo's meant that the observable aspect of things

should be separated from their unobservable aspect. Before Galileo, scientists could not delink one from the other. Because they were so focused on discovering the unobservable aspect of things, they remained deprived of that which was observable. But now the entire focus became concentrated on those aspects which were observable. In this way, it was possible to discover the observable aspect of things and thus also indirectly gain knowledge about the unobservable aspect of things. In other words, it was now possible to scientifically study the 'observable' creation and by way of this discovery, reach the 'unobservable' Creator behind the creation. This method is called the inferential method of argument.

This scientific method resulted in indirectly uncovering divine truths. This is why in the twentieth century several books and articles were penned on this subject. An example is *The Evidence of God in an Expanding Universe: Forty American Scientists Declare their Affirmative Views on Religion* (John Clover Monsma, G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1958, pp. 250) This book has been translated into Arabic with the title *Allahu Yatajalla fi Asr il-Ilm* (1968).

I can say that I have made God the subject of study my entire life. After deep study, I have published several books and articles on this. One of the books is titled in Urdu *Mazhab Aur Jadid Challenge* (1966). This book has been translated into Arabic as *Al-Islam Yatabadda* (1976) and into English as *God Arises* (1987).

By differentiating between the unobservable and observable aspect of things, new scientific knowledge came to light. This can be used to rationally prove the veracity of religious truths.

Elevated Level of Worship



There is a verse in the Quran: “He has subjected whatever is in Heaven and on the earth to you; it is all from Him. In that are signs for those who ponder.” (45:13) From this verse of the Quran, we learn that the entire universe has been made for man.

Here the question arises as to what the purpose is of the whole universe being subjected to man. As we know, the vastness of the universe is limitless. Such a limitless universe cannot be man’s habitat. It is also impossible for man to draw spiritual provision from such a great universe. Then what does it mean, or what does it convey, when the Quran says that the entire universe is created for man?

From other verses of the Quran, for instance, the last verses of the third chapter, we learn that the universe was created so that man might reflect upon it. This reflection takes place by employing reason rather than by any physical exercise. From other verses of the Quran, we learn that God’s signs are so numerous that they cannot be counted. It is these innumerable universal signs upon which man may ponder and thus be able to worship his Lord at an elevated level.

It is man alone who has the capability to contemplate in the signs scattered throughout the universe. This contemplation could be done earlier within a traditional framework. Now this process of contemplation has become possible within a scientific framework. In this way, man discovers the boundless greatness of God. He is able to establish the relationship of intense love for and intense fear of God. He is able to conceive of the eternal Paradise of the Hereafter. It is this contemplation which has been described as universal worship.

Positive Thinking for God's Discovery



Perhaps, the greatest tragedy of human history is man's failure to achieve a high level of God-realization, or deeper discovery of God. The way to attain realization of God is to contemplate in God's creations. Prior to the scientific age, humans knew very little about the creations of God. In ancient times, the framework did not exist which was required for attaining a high level of God-realization.

In present times, the scientific revolution has made available to a person that superior framework which was predicted thus in the Quran: "We shall show them Our signs in the universe and within themselves until it becomes clear to them that this is the truth." (41:53)

In ancient times, because of the absence of any scientific framework, it was difficult to attain a high level of realization. Even in present times, in spite of the scientific framework available to man, he has not been able to attain a high level of God-realization, the reason being that, in present times, man has been diverted from thinking positively. This, without doubt, has been the greatest deprivation for an individual. A high realization of God is the greatest of blessings for a person and it is possible for everyone to reach such a high level of realization. But for this to happen, one must completely desist from negative thinking. Positive thinking is essential in all circumstances. Those who can fulfil this condition will certainly succeed in attaining a high level of realization.

It is a tragedy of human history that the majority of human

beings have fallen into negative thinking on one pretext or the other. They have not been able to adhere to positive thinking and have, therefore, not been able to attain God-realization. This is the greatest reason for the unattainability of a high level of realization.

From Science to God-Realization



What is science? Science is the systemized knowledge of nature and the physical world.

Human beings have always been reflecting and contemplating about the truths of the universe. At first this thinking process started along traditional lines, it then continued in the form of philosophy and finally began to be studied in an organized way according to the accepted principles of science.

The subject of the science is study of the physical world. The universe that has been discovered by scientific research after about four hundred years gives evidence, by way of inference, of its Creator. However, no scientist in the past has openly acknowledged the existence of God. All that can be said about scientists of the like of Albert Einstein is that their case was one of agnosticism and not one of clear atheism.

In the realm of the physical science, we have had three major paradigm shifts in the last four centuries. First, we had the Newtonian hypothesis that matter was the basic building block of the universe. In the early twentieth century, this gave way to the Einsteinian paradigm of energy being the basic building block. And the latest is the David Bohm era when more and more scientists are accepting consciousness to be the basic building block. These shifts have had inevitable

consequences for the New Age philosophy, which has moved away from the philosophy of crass materialism to that of spirituality.

The age of modern science dawned about hundred years ago in western Europe. Gradually, it came to be accepted that science was the most authentic description of reality. If science proves something, it is true and if an idea does not stand true on scientific principles then it must be false. In its initial years, science became the study of only the material world. Since religious truths cannot be proved on the basis of standard scientific arguments, religion came to be understood as unscientific. But the river of knowledge continued to move ahead until a time came when science came to be the study not only of the material world, but also the immaterial world.

History has shown that the evolution of science helped in determining certain arguments and principles of reasoning which were universally accepted as true. There was further development in this direction and finally scientific findings indicated that the universe was the working of a superior intelligent being. A scientist has thus remarked: "The stuff of the world is mind-stuff."

In 1927 a Belgium scientist Georges Lemaitre proposed the theory of the Big Bang for the origin of the universe. This theory has now become an established scientific fact. In 1965 scientists discovered what is known as cosmic microwave background radiation. This was the remnant or the leftover radiation from the moment of the Big Bang, which has been scattered all over the universe. An American scientist Joel Primack said after observing the cosmic microwave background radiations: "The ripples are no less than the handwriting of God."

George Fitzgerald Smoot III (b. 1945) is an American astrophysicist and cosmologist. He won the Noble Prize in Physics in 2006 for his work on the Cosmic Background Explorer. In 1992, when George Smoot announced the

discovery of ripples in the heat radiation still arriving from the Big Bang, he said it was “like seeing the face of God.” (*God For the 21st Century*, Templeton Press, May 2000)

The famous scientist Stephen Hawking once said: “There is a ‘grand design’ to the universe, but it has nothing to do with God. Science is coming close to ‘The Theory of Everything’ and when it does, we will know the grand design.” (www.owlcation.com) At another place, Stephen Hawking says that “one can’t prove that God doesn’t exist, but science makes God unnecessary.” (Wikipedia)

The principles of quantum mechanics show that the physics of matter at the microscopic level is based on probability and uncertainty. Using this line of reasoning, when we say ‘Probably, there is a God’, it would be a valid statement. This is because even though there are certain particles of nature which cannot be seen and whose behaviour cannot be determined with accuracy, scientists study their probabilistic behaviour and consider their estimates equally valid.

Scientifically, we can only say that probably God exists, but as far as human intuition is concerned the existence of God is as certain as the existence of man himself. When it has been established that the universe is very meaningful, exhibits intelligent design and perfect order, all this then points to the existence of a superior mind behind the existence of the cosmos. The universe has innumerable objects, but everything is in its final form. The mathematical precision of the universe is so extraordinary that a scientist has said it appears that the universe has been made by a pure mathematical mind.

There is a lot of scientific literature on this subject now. In the past this field was known as natural theology, that is, a type of theology that provides arguments for the existence of God based on reason and ordinary experience of nature. An example is our solar system in which the planet earth is located. The solar system is in turn part of the Milky Way galaxy. However, our solar system is not right at the centre

of the galaxy, rather it is located on one of the edges of its spiral arm. Being in the outskirts of the galaxy, we can live safely from the hectic activities at the centre, which is a very dangerous place. Due to this location of our solar system in the Milky Way, we were able to survive to build an entire civilization on earth.

Moreover, in the solar system, the earth's location with respect to the sun is at a place which is neither too hot nor too cold. This is the most appropriate habitable zone, because it allows for liquid water on the surface of our rocky planet. Water is a property essential for the beginning of life, as it is important to have some sort of solvent which allows molecules to come into contact to form long chains necessary for life.

The above two examples illustrate the wise planning at work in the universe. This reality had been indicated in the Quran. However, modern research into the universe has helped in bringing forth the hidden meaning behind those verses of the Quran which point to the Creator's intelligent planning for our world. Thus, modern scientific findings provide further insight and detail about Quranic references on nature. These discoveries and the knowledge obtained through them help us reach an understanding that the universe has been created by a higher being, who is called 'God' in religion.

Control Over the Universe



This is the first verse of the Quran: "Praise be to God, the Lord of the worlds." (1:2). These are, in actual fact the words which come spontaneously to man's lips when he observes the universe. Telescopic observation tells us that the universe is

unimaginably vast. Conversely, microscopic study tells us that the unobservable universe is also as great as the observable universe. Despite all human progress, humans have not yet been able to estimate the vastness of the universe, nor have they succeeded in discovering the greatness of the universe.

This vast and great universe is continually in motion. In it, at all times highly meaningful events keep taking place. Moreover, scientific study tells us that this limitless universe is entirely faultless. The existence of a faultless universe is possible only when there is never the slightest deviation in its system. The minutest change or alteration in the universe could disturb its entire system.

Modern study tells us that the universe, despite being inconceivably vast, is completely harmonious. It is being totally controlled by a single force. All its constituents are interconnected.

All the scientists are astonished at this extraordinary harmoniousness of the universe, and are at a loss to explain it. This perfect coordination of the universe is proof that it is under the control of an omnipotent God. Had this not been so, the whole universe could be thrown into disorder in less than a moment. This perfect harmoniousness in the universe is possible only when its coordinator and controller has the attribute of omnipotence.

Man's Powerlessness



In his book, *The Mysterious Universe*, the British scientist Sir James Jeans writes: "It appears that man has strayed into a world which was not made for him." It would be more appropriate to say that, "Man appears to have strayed into a

world which was not made by him, nor is he its controller.”

In this world the existence of human beings is very strange. Man finds himself in this world—not of his own volition—as a living existence. But this existence is a gift: he has not created himself. Man needs a healthy body. Only if he has a healthy body can he lead a full life, but having a healthy body is not within his power. For this, man needs many things which are collectively called the life support system. Only with the aid of this system can he lead a successful life, but to maintain this system is not in his power.

Man needs a favourable climate. With a favourable climate man can lead a life of peace and comfort. But, to maintain this favourable climate is not in his control. Man has the desire for an eternal life. But everyone who is born into this world dies at a certain point of time. It is beyond his power to keep death at bay. Man is in all respects a being who has many needs. But to fulfil his needs, he is entirely in need of an external power.

This aspect of human life is worth pondering upon. Man has been invested with power but not in any complete sense. For, even with such power as he has, there are many of his needs which he cannot fulfil on his own. These two contradictory aspects of human life compel man to think seriously and discover the reality of his existence and plan the building of his life according to this discovery.

Human experience tells us that in this world man is only a taker, vis-a-vis some other being who alone is the Giver. This relationship compels man to think about the reality of his life and then proceed accordingly. Given this state of affairs, he should place himself in the position where he actually belongs and he should acknowledge the position of the Other Being which He deserves.

To put it briefly, if man thinks seriously about his life, he will find that he is in a position of servitude in this world, while the Other Being is in the position of a deity to be worshipped.

It is this discovery which is the real secret of man's success. One who applies his intellect to discover this reality, is a genuine human being. He is destined to have every eternal success. On the contrary, one who fails to make the discovery of this reality is but an animal in human form. For him there will be nothing but eternal loss in this world.

One who discovers this reality will, as stated in the Quran, spontaneously utter these words: "Praise be to God, the Lord of the Worlds." (1:2) This will show gratitude to the superior being who is the Lord of the whole world, who is there to compensate for human deficiency. This acknowledgement will produce a revolution within man when he experiences intense love for God. It is this individual who in the Quran is credited with being a believer.

The God Particle



What is the God particle? 'God particle' does not describe some divine entity. It is, in actual fact, a nomenclature given to the object of a scientific quest. The concept of the God particle is certainly not a mechanical attribute of God, and its discovery is not directly related to any religious creed.

The Standard Model of physics is used by the scientists to explain the building blocks of the universe. According to this model the universe began with a Big Bang. This Big Bang Theory is widely accepted within the scientific community. This theory states that 13.7 billion years ago the universe was in the shape of a very dense and compact cosmic ball. Then an explosion occurred in this compact ball, and all its constituents started flying apart with the speed of light. All the particles released from this cosmic ball began drifting apart from each

other at the speed of light, which is the maximum speed of any object in the universe.

Everything in the universe is made up of atoms. These atoms are in turn made up of electrons and protons. But, after the explosion of the Big Bang, electrons and protons were speeding away from each other. These particles could bind together to form atoms only if their speed was decreased. And their speed could be decreased only by being given mass. This is why the Higgs Boson is so important. Higgs Boson is a subatomic particle. Physicist say its job is to give mass to the particles that make up atoms. Atoms then combined to form molecules, then molecules combined to form compounds, and these compounds gave rise to all the constituents of the universe as it exists today. If the Higgs Boson were taken away, the particles which make up atoms, would have zipped through the cosmos at the speed of light, unable to join together to form the atoms that make up everything, from planets to people. Then all creation would be unthinkable.

On July 4, 2012, scientists announced a discovery or near discovery, of a subatomic particle about which research has been conducted over the last 50 years, during which period this particle had come to be taken as something mysterious. In 1993, an American scientist, Leon Lederman, wrote a book which, out of irritation, he titled *Goddamn Particle*, because he had not been able to present a clear concept of this particle in the course of his analysis. ('Goddamn' is a word used in slang to curse someone or to express anger or frustration.) But the publisher did not approve of this title, so he changed it from *Goddamn Particle* to *God Particle*, and had it printed with this new title. From then on this particle came to be called the God Particle. However, to scientists, this particle is now known as the Higgs Boson.

The word Boson is derived from the name 'Bose'. SN Bose was an Indian scientist, (d. 1974) who, in 1924, wrote a paper on the behavior of subatomic particles. This paper was greatly

liked by Albert Einstein and other scientists. Since then this particle came to be known as the Boson, a name given to it by British scientist Paul Dirac. In 1964, another scientist, from Scotland, Peter Higgs, wrote a highly detailed paper on this subject which was titled, “Broken Symmetries and the Masses of Gauge Bosons”.

Since then this much sought after particle has come to be called the Higgs Boson. From the scientific point of view, the Higgs Boson was very important, and became a major subject of research for the scientists of the world. Finally, in 1998, a special tunnel was made for research on this subject by a European Institute called the European Organization for Nuclear Research (CERN).

This tunnel was called the Large Hadron Collider. In this project 100 countries were involved and 10,000 scientists and engineers worked on it. The result of this project was announced on July 4, 2012, as ‘a near discovery’.

The Higgs Boson is, in actual fact, the missing particle in the standard model of physics, and explains how the universe came into existence after the initial explosion.

The Quran Mentions Natural Phenomena



This verse of the Quran: “Do they not ponder on the Quran? If it had been from anyone other than God, they would have found much inconsistency in it” (4:82), was revealed in the first quarter of the seventh century A.D. This was long before the discoveries made by science. The revelation of this verse of the Quran prior to the age of scientific discovery was as if to claim that all the findings of science will be exactly in

accordance with the Quran. There will be no inconsistency between Quranic statements and scientific discoveries. In this way, this would testify to the fact that the Quran is a book of the Lord, the Knower of the Unseen because, except for the Knower of the Unseen, no one can tell of these realities in advance.

When looked at from this angle, we learn that many phenomena, such as the Big Bang, were alluded to in the Quran far in advance of modern times. We quote here a relevant verse of the Quran: “Do not those who deny the truth see that the heavens and the earth were joined together and that We then split them asunder? And that we have made every living thing out of water? Will they still not believe?” (21:30)

In this verse of the Quran, three stages of creation have been mentioned. The first stage has been described as heaven and earth being joined together, which means that all the particles of the universe were joined together. This indicates the existence of the cosmic ball. The second stage has been called splitting them asunder (*fatq*). This indicates the event of the Big Bang. Then, in the third stage, it is mentioned that everything was made up of water. Here, ‘water’ symbolizes water and all other things.

Water is a substance. Many substances other than water are to be found in the universe. Water is made up of two atoms of hydrogen and one atom of oxygen. The same is true of other material things. Everything is composed of atoms. And the atom could be formed when mass was added to particles released after the Big Bang. Thus, in this verse with the mention of water, all other material things of this nature have been indirectly mentioned.

The Quran is not a book of science. But the Quran makes many references to the phenomena of nature, which are the subject of scientific investigation. The purpose of the Quran in referring to the signs existing in nature is for people to study branches of human knowledge which have discovered in

detail about these phenomena. Many fragmentary references to the phenomena of nature are found in the Quran. Man did not know anything about these natural phenomena in ancient times. The mention of these references in the Quran became a means of informing and enlightening the human generations of the future to increase their knowledge by undertaking studies in this direction. In this way, it would become possible for a person to enhance his understanding of the universe and the natural world, thereby being in a position to deeply appreciate the Creator who has fashioned the world in His exceptional intelligence.

Scientific Principles for God's Existence



People are generally in confusion about Einstein. Some think that he was an atheist, while others believe he was not. Study of Einstein's various statements reveal that Einstein was not a denier of God, rather he was a skeptic, or a person who is not sure about God's existence. I will cite here a report from *The Times of India* about Einstein's view on God:

In 1997, *Skeptic*, a hard unbelief science magazine, published for the first time a series of letters Einstein exchanged in 1945 with a junior officer in the US navy named Guy Raner on the same topic. Raner wanted to know if it was true that Einstein converted from atheism to theism when he was confronted by a Jesuit priest with the argument that a design demands a designer and since the universe is a design there must be a designer. Einstein wrote back that he had never talked to a Jesuit priest in his life but that from the viewpoint of such a person, he was and would always be an atheist. He

added it was misleading to use anthropomorphical concepts in dealing with things outside the human sphere and that we had to admire in humility the beautiful harmony of the structure of this world as far as we could grasp it. But Raner persisted. "Are you from the viewpoint of the dictionary," he wrote back, "an atheist, one who disbelieves in the existence of a God, or a Supreme Being." To this Einstein replied: "You may call me an agnostic, but I do not share the crusading spirit of the professional atheist whose fervour is mostly due to a painful act of liberation from the fetters of religious indoctrination received in youth." (*The Times of India*, New Delhi, May 18, 2012)

Einstein's position about God's existence is almost the position of all other scientists too in this matter. God is not the subject of scientific study. Then what is the reason why scientists do not deny God's existence outrightly, rather they mostly consider themselves as agnostics? Agnosticism is a position wherein you neither deny God's existence nor affirm belief in Him.

It is true that the subject of scientific study is the material world. But the material world is the creation of the Creator. This is why the study of science is indirectly the study of the creations of the Creator. A scientist can thus deny God's existence, but he cannot deny the signs of the Creator scattered all over the universe in His creations.

The truth is that the material world discovered by scientists encompasses immaterial truth, for example, it is marked by meaningfulness, design, intelligent purpose and planning. Such discoveries about the material world indirectly give evidence of God's existence. To arrive at an opinion about God's existence, we can here apply a scientific principle. That is, the principle of determining which explanation of the universe is more in accordance with scientific discoveries — an explanation of the world without a Creator, or an explanation of the world made by a Creator. Certainly, the latter explanation is more in conformity with the kind of world discovered by

science. This principle of reasoning is called verificationism in science.

There is another important scientific principle called the 'principle of compatibility'. That is, a theory which may not have been tested by direct observation of its propositions, but observation of other factors shows that this theory is indeed right. Such indirect observation helps in proving the theory correct. If this principle of science is applied to God's existence, then belief in God will become an established fact. Those scientists who say that they are agnostics are actually skeptics, because their own knowledge cannot make them deny God with certainty. Therefore, they say that they are agnostics.

From a purely scientific perspective, there is no proof for God's existence. Science has discovered the existence of elementary or fundamental particles such as, electrons, quarks and neutrinos. However, scientists have not yet directly seen these subatomic particles neither through their own eyes nor through the microscope. Then why do scientists believe that these particles do indeed exist in reality? The argument that they have put forward is: "Though we cannot see these subatomic particles, we can see their effects."

Further study shows that this is not merely an issue of cause and effect. Study of science has revealed that the universe is characterized by intelligent planning, harmony and wisdom. This fact has been accepted and acknowledged by top scientists, for examples, Sir James Jeans, Sir Arthur Eddington, Albert Einstein, David Foster, Fred Hoyle, and so on. A scientist has remarked: "Molecular biology has conclusively proved that the matter of organic life, our very flesh really is mind-stuff."

A more appropriate statement would be that the God presented in religion is not the direct subject of science, but scientific discoveries indirectly give affirmation of belief in God. Science has not proven God's existence, but it has provided a lot of data that gives evidence of God's existence.

In the scientific explanation of the universe, there is a missing link. This interpretation of the universe describes 'actions' but there is no knowledge about the 'actor' causing the action. On the contrary, the explanation of the universe given by the Quran includes both the actor and the action. In other words, the Quran tells us about both the cause and the causative factor. If science is accepting that there is action or intelligence in the universe, then logically it is not right that there should not exist an actor or intelligence behind this action.

Although Albert Einstein was born in a Jewish family, after his scientific study he developed doubts regarding God's existence. Just a year before his death in 1954 he had written a letter to the Israeli philosopher Eric B. Gutkind. One of the sentences from the letter reads: "The word God was nothing more than the expression and product of human weaknesses."

What Einstein had termed 'human weakness' is not really a matter of weakness, rather it is a great attribute of a human being. It can be more properly phrased thus: man is an 'explanation-seeking' animal. This trait of a human being is at the basis of all kinds of developments. It is because of this characteristic that man tries to understand phenomena and thus achieve success by putting to use the knowledge thus gained. If human beings did not possess this quality, the entire modern civilization would have been left undiscovered to this day.

The Majesty of God



Faith in Islam is based on realization of God. The greater the realization, the greater the faith. This faith is completed only when you are able to discover God in all His majesty. When a person discovers God in all His majesty, his condition

becomes that which has been described thus in the Quran: “True believers are those whose hearts tremble with awe at the mention of God.” (8:2) In this matter, modern astronomy has played a great positive role. It has provided a framework for recognizing the unimaginable majesty of the Creator. With the help of this framework, one can summon up the concept of the unimaginable majesty of God, the Almighty.

Astronomy has been scientifically studied for several hundred years. The telescope was invented in 1608, and with it the Italian scientist Galileo, carried out an observation of space in 1609. Such astronomical observation went on making progress. In earlier times the telescope was installed on some mountain. Now the period of space science has dawned in which powerful telescopes have been launched into orbit in space. Now these space observatories have enabled man to observe very remote areas of the universe whose distance from the earth can only be described in terms of light years. In this way, a whole vast new sphere has come to the knowledge of human beings by which they may conjure up the majesty of God.

In this connection, there has been a recent astronomical discovery of a huge black hole. This was discovered by an electronic telescope far out in space. This black hole is capable of eating up the entire solar system. Astronomers have discovered, what they say, is the biggest ever black hole which weighs as much as 6.8 billion suns. According to the scientists, this black hole, identified as M87, is as large as the orbit of Neptune and is by far the largest and the most distant object in the nearby universe. As a point of comparison, the black hole at the centre of the Milky Way is 1,000 times smaller than this one which has been observed some 50 million light years away. (*The Times of India*, New Delhi, January 18, 2011, p. 19)

This phenomenon, along with other such phenomena, provide a great source of realization of God. They make the

power of God understandable to a formerly unimaginable extent. The hearts of those who think on such great matters will tremble at the concept of the majesty of God, and the hair on their bodies will stand on end. These scientific findings serve as reminders to man of his extreme helplessness and of God's extreme powerfulness. Perusal of them is, without doubt, a universal source for the acquisition of high realization of God.

What is realization? It is, on the one hand, a person's coming to understand his limitations and on the other hand, his discovery of God's limitlessness. As a result of this discovery, the state produced within one is realization of God. For a person who has attained to this, it is as if all the doors to God's blessings, in this world as well as in the Hereafter, have opened up to him. It is the most fortunate of men and women about whom it will be said in the Hereafter: "Enter the Garden! No fear shall come upon you nor shall you grieve." (7:49)

God's Special Blessings



God created men and women with special blessings. These blessings are basically of two kinds. One of these, pertaining to His creation, is a human being having been created "in the best of mould" (95:4). And another blessing, indicated in the Quran, is expressed thus: "He has given you all that you asked of Him." (14:34)

'*Absan-e taqweem*', that is, 'in the best of moulds' has been differently worded thus in another verse of the Quran: *Surat-e-basan*, "in the best form" (40:64). This means man has been given the best body. The human body is a combination

of many organs, for instance, the organs of sight, of hearing, of breath, of speech, of digestion, of circulation of the blood, of motion, etc. When a person grows old, one-by-one the organs become dysfunctional. Many of the systems malfunction until the time comes when all the systems stop functioning and this results in one's death.

Other systems are those which have been provided in the external world, external to the human existence. For instance, the systems of light and heat, of oxygen, of air, of the supply of oxygen, of water and rains, etc. All these external systems are essential for human life. If these systems were to become wholly or even partially nonfunctional, the whole of life would come to an end.

This external system is known as the 'life support system'. The former system can be called the 'organ support system'. Human life is based on these two arrangements. A deeper knowledge of these two systems opens the door to man for God-realization. As a result, noble feelings of thanksgiving are engendered which cause all the exemplary qualities to develop in a person; for instance, modesty, seriousness, acknowledgement of truth, and so on.

Eclipse: A Divine Miracle



An eclipse is an astronomical phenomenon. The word 'eclipse' has been derived from the Greek word, 'ekleipsis'. Different kinds of eclipses keep taking place in space, but generally only two events of these kinds of eclipses are referred to as eclipses. One is the solar eclipse and the other is the lunar eclipse. Generally, solar eclipse occurs, two or three times in a year, while the lunar eclipse occurs twice a year. A lunar eclipse

lasts for a few hours, whereas a total solar eclipse lasts for only a few minutes at any given place.

Solar and lunar eclipses take place in accordance with unchangeable astronomical laws, making it possible to predict them well in advance. For instance, the solar eclipse which took place on January 15, 2010 was predicted by astronomers long before its occurrence. What is an eclipse? An eclipse is, in astronomy, a partial, or complete obscuring of one celestial body by another, as viewed from a fixed point. Solar eclipse occurs when the sun's rays are obstructed by the moon, which happens two or three times in a year. Lunar eclipse occurs when the shadow of the earth falls on the Moon. Such events at the most are seen two times in a year.

In ancient times there were strange kinds of superstitious beliefs about eclipses. For instance, there were some who thought that there was a big dragon in the sky, which, when angry swallowed the moon, thus causing a lunar eclipse. Similarly, some believed that when some king or some great man died on this earth, the sun went dark in grief, causing a solar eclipse, etc.

Superstitious notions of this kind were prevalent for thousands of years in different communities, until finally, the telescope was invented and Galileo, for the first time used it to observe the planetary system in 1609. Subsequently, the telescope was further improved and more extensive observations were made. Finally, it was learned that solar eclipses and lunar eclipses had nothing to do with superstitious notions. Wholly related to astronomical phenomena, they occurred only when during the movement of celestial bodies, a third body came in between two others, creating an obstacle to the light of one falling upon the other. This blockage of light causes the eclipse to take place.

In ancient times, the eclipse was explained only in terms of superstition. In the nineteenth century, it was learned from scientific observation that this is an event in space of an easily

explainable nature. There was nothing mysterious about it. A number of books have been written on the subject of eclipses. Some of these are: *Eclipses of the Sun and Moon* (1937) by Sir F.W. Dryson; *Eclipse Phenomenon in Astronomy* (1969) by F. Link; and *Eclipse in the Second Millennium BC* (1954) by G. Van Bergh.

There are three periods in human history in each of which eclipses have been differently regarded. The first period of the history of the eclipse was shrouded in superstitious belief. The second period was that of the Islamic period. The third period of the history of the eclipse started with the invention of the telescope in modern times.

According to Islam, the eclipse is not a matter of superstition. It is purely an astronomical event of a material nature. Rather, it is a part of nature as created by the Creator of the universe. It is a manifestation of the omnipotent power of God. It is an introduction of the Lord of the world. The eclipse wordlessly announces God's wise creation.

Towards the end of the Prophet Muhammad's life, the Prophet's wife Maria Qibtia bore him a beautiful son in Madinah. The Prophet named him Ibrahim after the Prophet Ibrahim. Ibrahim was just one and half years old when on January 6, 32 A.D. he died. It so happened that the death of Ibrahim coincided with a solar eclipse. From ancient times one of the many prevailing superstitions was that the solar and lunar eclipses were caused by the death of some king or other important personage. They were meant to show, they believed, that the heavens mourned the death of the exalted person. At that time the Prophet Muhammad was the head of state in Madinah. For this reason, certain inhabitants of Madinah began attributing the eclipse to the death of the Prophet's son. As soon as the Prophet heard this, he refuted it. There are several accounts of this event in different books of Hadith. One of these was recorded as follows: "One day, the Prophet came in great haste to the Mosque. At that time the sun was in eclipse. The Prophet began to say prayers and, by the time

he had finished, the eclipse was over. Then, addressing the congregation, he said that ‘people imagine that the sun and moon go into eclipse at the death of some important person, but this is not true. The eclipses of the sun and moon are not due to the death of any human being. Both the sun and the moon are just two of God’s creations, with which He does as He will.’ He told them that ‘when they saw the eclipse, they should pray to God.’” (Sahih al-Bukhari, Hadith No. 1042)

“The lunar eclipse and solar eclipse are two of God’s signs.” This is no simple matter. It is in fact indicative of some real meaning. It is not just in a literal sense, but rather some deeper meaning is suggested here. This means if we ponder deeply, upon the way solar eclipses and lunar eclipses occur, it will become a source of discovery of God. Instead of simply being two astronomical signs, they will represent God’s signs in a deeper sense.

Lunar eclipses and solar eclipses are unique miracles of God’s creation. As mentioned above, an eclipse takes place when three astronomical bodies, the earth, the moon and the sun come into a straight alignment while orbiting. There is a great difference between the sizes of the three bodies. If the moon is considered equal to a grain of sand, then the earth is equal to a football, while the sun would be greater than the Himalayas.

Although of different sizes, when directly aligned and viewed from the earth, they appear to be of equal size. When the moon is between the sun and the earth, a solar eclipse will occur and when the earth is between the sun and the moon, a lunar eclipse will occur. This is the result of a unique and well calculated positioning of three moving bodies, highly unequal in size, in the vast space.

According to Encyclopedia Britannica: “An eclipse occurs when, by a remarkable coincidence, the sizes and the distances of the sun and moon are such that they appear as very nearly

the same angular size as the earth.” (The Encyclopedia Britannica, vol. 6, p. 189)

The writer of this article in the Encyclopedia Britannica has attributed this unique event of the eclipse to coincidence. But this is totally illogical. This kind of unique coincidence is, first of all, not possible and suppose it were possible, it could hardly occur only once, whereas the history of astronomy tells us that this event has been occurring over millions and millions of years with calculable regularity. This kind of complete regularity can never take place by coincidence. Indeed it is possible only through the continued instrumentality of an All-Powerful Being. The word ‘coincidence’ is totally insufficient to explain this unique astronomical phenomenon.

The eclipse is one of those innumerable miraculous events which take place in space about which we learn in the Quran: “That is the disposition of the Almighty, the All-Knowing.” (36:38)

There are innumerable bodies in the vastness of space. All these bodies are totally under the control of the Lord of the universe. The movement of the planets and the stars is regulated by God with unfailing accuracy. The solar system in which the planet earth is located is one such example. This system announces in silent language that there is an Omnipotent God of this universe who is completely in control of this immeasurable space.

The solar eclipse and the lunar eclipse are things which come under our close observation and are seemingly miraculous. People see them either as miracles or at best as astronomical happenings, but the truth is that, in the words of the Prophet of Islam, they are God’s great signs. That is why Islam teaches us that at the occurrence of eclipse the believers should worship God. This worship is called *salat-e khusuf* (prayers said on the occasion of lunar eclipse) and *salat-e kusuf* (prayers said on the occasion of solar eclipse). Worshipping God at the time of the eclipse is an acknowledgement that

the eclipse is a divine phenomenon rather than just an astronomical event.

Science is simply another name for the study of the universe. The Quran tells us that the believers are “those who remember God while standing, sitting and (lying) on their sides, and who ponder over the creation of the heavens and the earth, saying, ‘Lord, You have not created all this without purpose.’” (3:191)

In this respect, a scientist does the same as the believer does. However, there is a great difference between the two. The actions of the scientist are purely for research while the actions of a believer are for learning lessons. To the scientist, knowledge is for the sake of knowledge, but to the believer, knowledge is for a purpose. A scientist is satisfied with gaining some knowledge, while the believer is satisfied only when his faith increases with knowledge.

The Discovery of Noah’s Ark



The Prophet Noah belongs to the early age of human history. He was sent to Mesopotamia in Iraq, where he performed the task of conveying the message of God to people, for a long period of time. Yet very few believed in him. Finally as the result of a flood, all the people of this area were drowned. At that time, before the tempest, God commanded Noah to build a large boat (ark). Noah did so and then asked all the believers to board this ark. This ark floated on water, until finally, it reached Mount Ararat in eastern Turkey. Later, when the flood subsided, all the people disembarked from the ark and settled in different parts of the world.

This event dates back 5,000 years. The Quran foretold that this ark would remain preserved and would be discovered in later times to serve as a sign for mankind. In chapter 54, the Quran has this to say about the ark: “We have left this as a sign: but will anyone take heed?” (54:15). The same point has been made in chapter 29, “And We made this event a sign for mankind.” (29:15)

At the end of the nineteenth century, the passengers of an aeroplane saw the remains of an ark hidden under a Glacier on Mount Ararat. But repeated efforts to find out more precise details about this was unsuccessful. Then in the twenty-first century, when as a result of global warming the glaciers began to melt, air passengers could see that a whole ark lay buried on Mount Ararat. Subsequently, a group of Chinese and Turkish Christians climbed up there. With modern equipment, they determined the exact age of the ark by carbon dating. Now it was established that this ark belonged to the very age when there had been floods during the time of Noah. The details of this discovery were reported in the media. The following news report was published in *The Times of India*, New Delhi, April 28, 2010:

“Hong Kong: A group of Chinese and Turkish evangelical explorers said they believe they may have found Noah's Ark—four thousand meters up a mountain in Turkey. The team say they recovered wooden specimens from a structure on Mount Ararat in eastern Turkey that carbon dating proved was 4,800 years old, around the same time the ark is said to have been afloat. “It's not 100% certain that it is Noah's Ark but we think it is 99.9% that this is it.” Yeung Wing-cheung, a Hong Kong documentary filmmaker and member of the 15-strong team from Noah's Ark Ministries International said: “The structure had several compartments, some with wooden beams, which were believed to house animals, he said. The group of archaeologists ruled out an established human settlement

on the grounds that one had never been found above 3,500 meters in the vicinity.”

Of the signs of approaching Doomsday this is perhaps the clearest one. Man has been building wooden boats and arks for several thousand years. But of these boats of ancient times, there are no fragments extant in the world today, for after a period of time the wood naturally decays and crumbles. In the history of boats or arks, Noah’s Ark is the exception. God alone knew of this exception. God knew that this ark would float over the waters and then it would reach Mount Ararat, where as a result of a natural process, it would become submerged under the glacier and in this way it would remain preserved. God also knew that by the end of the twentieth century, global warming would take place and the ice on the Mount would start melting until the ark became plainly visible. In the twenty-first century, the appearance of Noah’s Ark is a sign that just as 5,000 years ago a huge tempest had destroyed the whole population, similarly another greater tempest is going to come when all human beings will be wiped out and only those will survive whom God will select as inhabitants of Paradise.

The Distinction between Good and Bad



Since ancient times the notion has persisted that the ability to make the distinction between good and bad is inherent in human nature. The divine origin of this gift is expressed in an invocation set forth in the Quran: “...by the soul and how He formed it, then inspired it to understand what was right and

wrong for it.” (91:7-8) But in present times certain thinkers of the West have presented the opposite theory, for instance, Sigmund Freud (d. 1939) and others who, in their self-styled or self-concocted psychological studies, held that human nature by birth was like a blank slate with no consciousness of how to discriminate between good and bad. All such consciousness was produced by social conditioning. This theory dominated the thinking of the educated classes in the twentieth century.

But research in the field of psychology in the twenty-first century has refuted this theory. It has proved that man is responsible for his actions, because wherever he does anything wrong, he does so by deviating from the consciousness with which his nature has been endowed. Man’s ethical sense stems from his inner nature. It does not owe its existence to external influences. In this way, there has been a restitution of the religious stand in modern history.

In America there is a scientific institute of international repute, the Infant Cognition Center, Yale University, Connecticut, whose objective is to carry out scientific research in matters relating to children’s issues.

Details of research recently conducted by this institute, under the guidance of the Professor of Psychology, Paul Bloom, were published in *The Times of India*, May 11, 2010. We reproduce here the summary of this research.

This American research shows infants to be moral beings. According to a new study, contrary to the Freudian theory that humans start their lives with a moral “blank slate,” children may be born with the ability to tell good from bad. Newly born babies apparently start making moral judgements by the time they are six months old, claims a team of psychologists at the Infant Cognition Center at Yale University in Connecticut. The scientists used the ability to tell helpful from unhelpful behavior as an indication of moral judgement. Infants can even act as judge and jury in the nursery. Researchers who asked one-year-old babies to take away treats from a “naughty”

puppet found they were sometimes also leaning over and smacking the figure on the head. As part of the study, they conducted multiple tests on infants, who were less than a year old. Firstly, an animated film of simple geometric shapes was screened for the kids to watch. It showed a red ball, with eyes, trying to climb a hill. A yellow square helped, pushing it up, while a green triangle forced it back down. Later, the children were asked to “choose” between the “good guy” square, and the “bad guy” triangle. In 80% of cases, the infants choose the square over the triangle. In a second study, the children were shown a toy dog trying to open a box. One teddy bear helped him, while another sat on it to stop him from getting inside. The observer found that most babies opted for the friendly teddy bear. To further confirm that the babies were responding to niceness and naughtiness, the scientist devised another test. A toy cat played with a ball while two cuddly rabbit puppets stood on either side. When the cat lost the ball, the rabbit on the right side returned it to him, while the rabbit on the left side picked it up and ran away with it. The children were asked to handle any one puppet. Most picked the naughty rabbit and smacked it on the head. Paul Bloom, the professor of psychology who led the study, said the research counters theories of psychologists such as Sigmund Freud who believed humans began life as “amoral animals” and William James who described the baby’s mental life as “one great, blooming, buzzing confusion”. “There is a growing body of scientific evidence that supports the idea that perhaps some sense of good and evil is bred in the bone,” the Times quoted Bloom as saying. Kiley Hamlin, author of the team’s infant morality report, said: “We spend a lot of time worrying about teaching the difference between good guys and bad guys in the world but this might be something that infants come to the world with.” Peter Willatts, a lecturer in psychology at Dundee University said: “You cannot get inside the mind of the baby. You cannot ask them. You have

to go on what most attract their attention.” “We now know that in the first six months babies learn things much quicker than we thought possible. What they are born with and what they learn is difficult to divide,” he added. (*The Times of India*, New Delhi, May 2010, p. 17)

The Age of Atheism



Our present times, in a broad sense, is the age of atheism. Atheism is the ideology of denial of the existence of God.

In present times, the West became the intellectual, or ideological leader of the world and, as we know, during the Middle Ages, a serious conflict had arisen between the Church and western scholars. The details of this conflict have been set forth in a book titled *The History of the Conflict Between Religion and Science* (1874) by J. W. Draper.

The age of modern, atheistic thinking dawned in Europe in the nineteenth century. This age was not the result of some scholarly research but was rather the result of reaction. In those times the criterion of the success of academic and scientific research was that it should be totally explainable in secular terms, which would eliminate the instrumentality of God. As a result of this way of thinking, atheism, a non-religious philosophy, which negated the existence of God, was produced.

Man, by his nature, is an explanation-seeking animal. In the ancient age, this explanation was based on supposition. In the present atheistic age, this explanation has come to be offered in the name of academic or scientific research. In this new age, many thinkers have been born in the western world who have attempted to explain life and the universe by eliminating God.

As a result of following this line of thought, a new age has come into being. Significantly, it was in this age that the printing press came into existence. Earlier books had been written by hand in very limited numbers, but from the advent of the printing press onwards, they spread everywhere once they were printed in large quantities. In this way, modern atheism was produced, transmitted and disseminated in the form of books, became a dominating intellectual world force. The thinkers of the modern atheistic age introduced a non-religious way of thinking. Many intellectual scholars contributed to this. However, symbolically, there were four scholars who gave human history a new direction—that of atheism. They were, Isaac Newton, Charles Darwin, Sigmund Freud and Karl Marx:

1. Isaac Newton led the way from divine interpretation to mechanical interpretation.

2. Charles Darwin favoured natural selection over special creation.

3. Sigmund Freud advocated following desires rather than placing constraints on desires.

4. Karl Marx wrote of the need for society to be rights-conscious rather than duty-conscious.

The British scientist Isaac Newton (d. 1727) was basically a scientist. His subject was to explain motion in the physical world. He discovered that the system of motion was governed by mechanical laws. For instance, he formulated the laws of the motion of the planets in the solar system. The discovery made by Newton had nothing to do with religious belief, but atheistic thinkers used this discovery in favour of atheism. They said, “If events are due to natural causes, they are not due to supernatural causes.”

This argument was without doubt an illogical one, for, what was indicated by Newton’s explanation was only the apparent cause. The question still arose as to what was the cause of the causes. In this matter, the argument of the atheists

was based on a fallacy: it was not at all a scientific argument. But this explanation of the atheist thinkers was in consonance with the spirit of the times. As such, this explanation gained popular support.

The evolutionary theory of Charles Darwin (d. 1882) was fundamentally based on the principle of natural selection. Darwin and his ilk, through their books, tried to give the impression that evolution was a scientific theory. But by scientific definition, the concept of evolution was not at all scientific. It was purely speculative in nature. But thanks to the general thinking of the times, the theory of biological evolution gained widespread popularity. It came to be felt that now there was no need to accept the Creator's instrumentality in order to explain biological phenomenon, that is, without any reference to the Creator, all biological phenomena could be accounted for.

But this was only a fallacy. Other discoveries of science proved that this theory of evolution was entirely baseless. Modern discoveries of science indicate that intelligent design inheres in a perfect form in nature. This discovery put an end to, or demolished the theory of evolution academically and scientifically, for intelligent design proves the existence of an intelligent designer: it can never be the result of any haphazard, unconscious kind of natural selection.

Sigmund Freud (d. 1939) put forward the theory that the intellectual progress of man is possible only when he has the total freedom to fulfill his desires without hindrance. The result of this theory of Freud's was that all the dos and don'ts imposed by religion were done away with. Man was free to do just as he pleased.

But later research proved that this theory given by Freud was unnatural. Therefore, far from being helpful, it came in the way of man's intellectual progress. The modern study of psychology tells us that man's intellectual progress takes place

when he has to face challenges rather than through acting on the permissiveness of society or through having total freedom. The ethical constraints imposed by religion act as a spur to creative thinking. In this way man by saving himself from frittering away his energy, never ceases to make intellectual progress.

The ideology presented by Karl Marx (d. 1883) advocated the replacement of the individual control of economic resources by social control. According to Marx, this was the only way to safeguard human rights. But practical experience showed that the dictates of this philosophy must lead to all economic resources being placed under the direct control of the state. The aim of this ideology was apparently to bring about a classless society, but in actuality, it resulted in the emergence of two kinds of classes diametrically opposed to each other.

This ideology had two grave repercussions—one, the elimination of competition which acts as a natural incentive for all kinds of progress. The second, the negative consequence of socialistic ideology was to make people, in general, rights-conscious, whereas the secret of success for any society is for its members to be duty-conscious. On reaching this point, the class conflict took a form which was never going to come to an end. Because, in life, whereas duties can be determined, rights cannot be guaranteed.

In ancient times, worship of nature became a deterrent to establishing the relationship between God and man on the right lines. What man had to do was to totally associate his thinking, his feelings of love and fear with God. This is the essence of belief in God, and this is what produces every kind of noble and high quality in man. But the culture of associating partners with God caused man to deviate from fostering true, sublime love for God Almighty. As a result, man was stultified in his spiritual development.

Man, by nature, needs an ideal to focus upon. The source

of this natural human urge is just one and that is his Creator. Establishing the relationship of a servant with his Creator is like establishing the connection of an electric bulb with the powerhouse. The harm of giving the status of God to ‘other than God’ was that it gave man a false focus for this inner urge. As such, man failed to satisfy this natural urge and, as a result, the development of his own personality, which was destined for him by birth, took a wrong and stunted course.

In the age of modern atheism, man, in another respect, again became deprived of the blessing of a profound relationship with God Almighty. The Quran tells us that man has been given little knowledge (17:85). Freedom is very good for man, but man is so constituted that total freedom is something which he utilizes imperfectly. A more realistic attitude would be for man to know his limitation and be willing to accept guidance about how to use his freedom. Modern atheism held freedom to be the summum bonum and this caused man to stray from the path of his true nature. This is why, despite all kinds of apparent progress, man remained deprived of that most important thing, peace of mind.

The Age of Communication



Chapter 17 of the Quran has this to say: “We have honoured the children of Adam, and have borne them on the land and the sea.” (17:70) In this world, all the animals travel by foot, and the birds travel by flapping their wings. It is only man who has the unique ability to travel by mechanical conveyances which are external to himself. In present times, the advent of modern communications has also greatly enhanced the means of conveying information. It has become possible for man

not only to undertake journeys with great speed by means of physical transportation, but he can also communicate ideas with much greater rapidity.

This verse of the Quran directly mentions only transportation by animals, but indirectly it also includes all kinds of transportation, including communication by technology. If a person comprehends the extended meaning of this verse, it will become a great source of universal God-realization. In this verse, he will discover the universal blessings of God. This one verse will become an immeasurably great source of meaning for him.

The Quran is not a book of knowledge in the general sense. But in the Quran, all such knowledge is conveyed as is related to the discovery of God, or God-realization. This knowledge is mostly set forth in the form of clues. By perusing these verses, we can discover the meaning hidden in them. It is this pondering over or reflecting upon the verses which takes the realization of God to a higher plane. This is what brings a person's faith to the level of conviction. This is why the Quran says that it is by pondering over its messages that one can learn lessons.

Paradise: Complement to the Present World



We learn from the Quran that there is the reward of Paradise in the Hereafter for those who lead a life of faith. There is a Quranic verse which says: “No soul knows what joy is kept hidden in store for them as a reward for their labours.” (32:17) In this verse the words ‘hidden in store for them’ are very

meaningful. From this we learn that Paradise is not something to be built or created in the future, rather it exists today itself. Just as our planet earth is a world present in actual fact, similarly Paradise is a world which is present in actual fact.

We learn about our earth that it is a planet of the solar system which is observable by the telescope. But Paradise is not observable in this way. We cannot see Paradise through any telescope. But certain scientific discoveries have given us the opportunity to make a guess. Scientific research says that a great part of space is in the form of dark matter. That is, it exists in space but we cannot see it with our own eyes. Now, to believe in Paradise, we may infer that perhaps the world of Paradise is hidden at some point in space in this dark matter.

The Quran tells us that in this world everything is created in pairs (51:49). This also gives us a clue that our earth is also one of a pair. From this we may infer that the other world is the completion of the present world. In this present world, no one's desires are fulfilled. No one attains the fulfillment of his desires. This state of affairs is a pointer to the fact that this other world is perhaps the world which has been called in the Quran the eternal Paradise.

Our Real Habitat



There is a verse in the Quran which states: “We have created everything in pairs so that perhaps you may take heed.” (51:49)

This verse of the Quran addresses those who have the ability to reflect and, by reflecting, learn a lesson. It is clear that this verse is addressed to human beings. It is asking an individual to ponder over the creation and pay heed to it.

Further pondering tells us that all the things that are

present in this world have a habitat which is suitable for them. For instance, the orbiting stars have the vastness of space for their movement, vegetation has favourable soil to grow, the animals have the plains and the forest to serve their needs, the fish have water, etc. Similarly, in the universe, every creature has its own favourable habitat.

But there is only one creature which does not have the desired habitat. A human being finds himself in a world where he can barely survive. He has not found a world which has all the resources to meet his needs. This is the reason that man always lives in this world like a fish out of water. He is always in distress. He never finds a propitious habitat. If man reflects on this reality, he will discover Paradise. And he will plan his life in a way which may lead him to his destination, that is, Paradise. The discovery of Paradise is the discovery of the wisdom of creation. This is what is meant by the exhortation of this verse of the Quran: "Therefore hasten to God." (51:50)

The Meaningfulness of the Universe



Science is the study of nature. Nature comprises of everything we call the universe. The study of science began initially with very few discoveries, however, as research in the subject increased and advanced knowledge was gained, it became clear that the universe is extremely meaningful. Any explanation of the universe which does not take into account its meaningfulness contradicts the findings of science.

Consider, for instance, that scientific knowledge has revealed that our vast expanding universe is characterized by intelligent design in its every aspect. Now if it is not accepted

that the universe has an intelligent designer behind it, then this extraordinarily meaningful universe and all of its phenomena become strange and inexplicable. Similarly, research on the universe has shown that it is custom-made for human beings, or in other words, the universe is completely in accordance with the requirements of sustaining a creature like man. If we do not believe in the existence of a Creator who created such remarkable consonance between the universe on the one hand and human beings on the other hand, then there would not be any other coherent explanation for this harmony between two distinct entities.

Moreover, discoveries in various scientific disciplines indicate that there is meticulous coordination among the numerous components of the universe. An aspect of the universe which has astonished scientists is the presence of fine-tuning in the constants of nature. For example, the cosmological constant is responsible for the acceleration of the universe at its current rate. This constant has a very precise value, a value it had to have for galaxies to form, for stars to form, and for us to be here. Such features of the universe are truly mind-boggling.

Science is not a religious subject and its concern is certainly not the discovery of God. The subject of science is simply the objective study of creation. However, the study of creation naturally includes the study of the Creator as well. This is why scientific research into creation has become a means for revealing aspects of the Creator. The findings of study on nature are, in other words, discoveries of the signs of God, which have been called *ayatullah* in the Quran (51:20). From this perspective, it would be right to say that the discovery of the meaningfulness in creation is essentially the discovery of an intelligent Creator.

The Preservation of the Planet Earth



The devices invented in present times, have made it possible to observe the events taking place in space with perfect accuracy. One of these events was the magnetic storm that occurred on the surface of the sun on July 23, 2012. This storm could have wrought havoc on earth, but that did not happen, because this storm occurred when the earth was in orbit on the other side of the sun. Such events take place in our world on a daily basis. These events could explain the underlying meaning of this verse of the Quran: “Say, ‘Who guards you by night and by day from the Beneficent God?’ Yet they turn away from the remembrance of their Lord.” (21:42).

Some years ago, an Indian national daily carried this headline:

Massive solar storm almost hit Earth in 2012

London: A massive magnetic storm with a speed of 3,000 km per second, enough to circle the earth five times in one minute and the likes of which has not been seen in the past 150 years, almost hit the world in 2012. But as it tore through the earth’s orbit, releasing energy equivalent to that of about a billion hydrogen bombs, good fortune prevailed on the Blue Planet, which was placed on the other side of the sun at the time. Had the eruption come nine days earlier, it would have hit the earth, potentially destroying our electrical grid, disabling satellites and GPS and disturbing our increasingly electronic lines, wreaking havoc and causing fireworks. Experts confirmed on Wednesday that a fierce solar eruption known as coronal mass ejections blasted away from the sun and sent a pulse of magnetized plasma barreling into space

and through the earth's orbit. (*The Times of India*, New Delhi, March 20, 2014, p. 19)

This arrangement for the preservation of humans in the universe tells us how gracious God is! How many blessings He has given to people and on such a large scale. But man, because of his ignorance, remains unaware of this reality. If man could understand this reality, he would, without doubt, experience a godly revolution in his life.

The Vastness of the Universe



With the advent of the telescopic observation of space, new galaxies and new stars began to be revealed. Recently, such a revelation was made by a team of western scientists while observing events in space from the Cote d'Azur Observatory. This team discovered a star which is 1,300 times bigger than our sun and is situated at a distance of 12,000 light years from the earth. It is about 1 million times brighter than the sun.

Found: A Yellow Star that is 1,300 times bigger than the Sun

The largest-ever yellow star, measuring 1,300 times the size of our sun, has been discovered nearly 12,000 light-years from the earth. The star, dubbed HR 5171 A, located in the constellation Centaurus, is the largest known member of the family of yellow stars to which our sun belongs. It is also one of the 10 largest stars found so far – 50% larger than the famous red supergiant Betelgeuse and about one million times brighter than the sun. The team, led by Oliver Chesneau of the Cote d'Azur Observatory in Nice, France, found that the yellow hypergiant star had a diameter 1,300 times greater than that of the sun. (*The Times of India*, March 14, 2014)

Before the invention of such devices as the telescope and the microscope, humans knew very little about the wonders of the cosmos. The twentieth century is an age of knowledge explosion. In this age, many unique revelations have been made about the universe and this is an ongoing process.

Now the time has come for man to discover the Creator on a far higher plane, achieve a far greater realization of the Majesty of the Creator and discover the new aspects of the signs and wonders of God. With such wonderful apprehension of the Majesty of God, the believer will spontaneously say: "Praise be to God, the Lord of the Worlds." (1:2)

There is a tradition of the Prophet on this aspect of the Quran: "The wonders of the Quran will never cease." (Sunan at-Tirmizi, Hadith No. 2906). These wonders are not the wonders of the book, but are rather the wonders of the God who has sent us the Quran. In later times, all the discoveries relative to the universe are only indications of God's Omnipotence and Omniscience, and as such are expressions of the unlimited Majesty of the Creator.

One important aspect of this space discovery is that a newly discovered star and the sun belong to the same family. Just as the newly discovered celestial body is a star so also is the sun a star. But the newly discovered star is thirteen hundred times bigger than the sun. Had this star been in place of the sun and sun in place of that star, the earth would have been so hot that no kind of life would have survived here. There would have been neither human life nor any kind of water, vegetation and animals.

This positioning of stars is extremely meaningful. The Quran alludes thus to this aspect of space: "I swear by the setting of the stars—and, indeed, that is a most mighty oath, if you only knew." (56:75-76)

In this verse, 'swear' means bearing witness and 'setting' means the light of the stars vanishing with the coming of the day. The very positioning of the stars at exactly the right places

in the vastness of space is a great testament to the limitless power and limitless wisdom of the Creator. The position of the stars cannot be accidental. This meaningful placement testifies to the fact that the Creator of this universe is a Great Being who has established the system by means of His great power. There is no other explanation for the great happenings in the universe.

Nature Subjected to Mankind



One of God's blessings to man is the subjecting of nature to him. There are two verses in the Quran which say: "It is God who has subjected the sea to you so that you may sail thereon by His command, and so that you may seek His bounty, and so that you may be grateful. He has subjected whatever is in Heaven and on the earth to you; it is all from Him. In that are signs for those who ponder." (45:12-13)

'Subjecting' something means harnessing something to make it usable. God, who is the Creator of the entire universe, has subjected all things in nature. Everything is governed by the laws of nature and by determining them one can tap into the potential of the world around. As such it has become possible for man to make use of God's creation to fulfill his own needs. Had natural phenomena not been conquered or subjected by divine laws, it would not have been possible for man to make use of them.

One example is that of the sea. The natural water reservoirs in the form of seas, are spread over about 71% of the earth's surface. Modern scientific research has revealed that there is a great law of nature which maintains these reservoirs of water on the earth, a spherical planet, which is continually in motion.

On the one hand, the extraordinary gravity of the earth is pulling these reservoirs of water towards it, and on the other hand, there is about a five-mile thick cover of air over the seas, which maintains pressure over the seas. For these two reasons the water remains continuously in the seas, otherwise all the water would have flown up into space. The same is true of ships floating on the seas. Here also the law of nature laid down by God is in force.

According to this law whenever anything is put into water, the upward pressure by the fluid on the body, partly or wholly immersed therein, is equal to the weight of the fluid displaced. This, in terms of the discipline of hydrostatics, is known as buoyancy.

Another matter of subjection relates to outer sphere. The vast space all around the earth is filled with huge hot stars, hence the expression, starry universe. All these stars are situated at a fixed distance from the earth. If this fixed distance were not maintained, the entire earth would be burnt to ashes.

When we look at the open sky at night from the earth, we see many stars of an apparently diminutive size. These stars are actually huge, but they appear small because of their remoteness. When we observe with the naked eye, about 10,000 stars are visible. These stars are part of our galaxy, the Milky Way.

In the vastness of space, there are innumerable very big stars which are always in motion. There are more than one hundred billion galaxies and in every galaxy there are about one hundred billion stars.

Man could not see this vast world of stars by the naked eye, so God placed such material resources in the world by discovering and developing which man was enabled to build powerful telescopes. That is how in modern times man has made use of these resources to develop space telescopes, and is now able to see countless stars in the galaxies.

The subjection of seas and animals meant that man was

able to learn the laws of nature and by the help of these laws could use them for his needs. In the matter of celestial bodies, subjection does not mean making use of them for one's needs, but rather that man may see the world of stars by using the equipment that he has developed, and ponder upon all these things. And by contemplation and pondering he may make the world of stars a means of attaining a high level of realization of God.

The subjection of the seas and animals was meant to serve man. And the subjection of the galaxies of stars was meant to enable man to discover the Majesty of the Creator after pondering upon these things, thus finding a high level of spiritual provision for God-realization. One scientist observed that "as a scientist and as a geographer, I have become much more grateful to the Creator."

When a scientist studies nature, an unbounded feeling of the majesty of the powers of nature is engendered and his inner existence bows down before the Being who has created such a meaningful universe. It is a fact that in the present times it was not scientists who promoted such thinking as lead to the denial of God. It was in actual fact certain atheist philosophers who gave a wrong slant to scientific discoveries which lead to a self-styled interpretation of the denial of God. In reality, these scientific discoveries more rightly, encouraged and reinforced the acceptance of God.

The Journey of God's Discovery Begins with Oneself



A person proceeds on the journey of truth very naturally. Every individual can begin his journey with his own self.

For instance, once an Arab bedouin was questioned on the evidence for God's existence. He replied: "Camel dung strewn on a path gives indication of a camel that has walked along the path. A person's footsteps point to the course taken by him. Then why will not the sky ablaze with lightening, the earth with verdant greenery scattered all over and massive waves striking the ocean, point toward the existence of a Creator, who is subtle and well-aware?"

This conversation was an example of a common man's reasoning for belief in God. The truth is that discovery of the Creator is so straightforward that a person can arrive at it with reference to phenomena occurring near him. One need not spend hours in the library or travel to distant lands in order to discover God. The only prerequisite is that a person must be a sincere seeker of the truth.

Someone once asked me how he could discover God. I asked him to reflect on his fingers and toes. Then I remarked that had one's toes been the size of one's fingers and one's fingers the size of the toes, life would have become extremely difficult. Such profoundly meaningful planning could have only been done by an intelligent designer and sustainer. If one does not acknowledge the existence of such a Creator, then one will become deficient in understanding even the most obvious things.

Understanding God is as simple as understanding one's own self. This is why one can discover God at the level of common sense. In today's age, scientific findings about nature and the universe have helped in providing evidence for God's existence in the light of modern discoveries. An indication of this had been given in the Quran in these words: "We shall show them Our signs in the universe and within themselves, until it becomes clear to them that this is the Truth." (41:53)

The History of God-Realization



The vast universe and all the human beings in the world have, without doubt, been created according to the divine plan, in terms of which all things have to have a meaningful conclusion. This, without doubt, must be the subject of serious study, related as it is to the individual as well as to the whole of human history. The picture that is formed by a thorough study of the relevant literature is presented below. According to scientific study, God, the Lord of the World, initiated the beginning of the universe about thirteen billion years ago. During this period the entire universe gradually came into existence in a planned way. This period may be broadly divided into six major phases.

1. **The Big Bang:** As is known, the first event which took place in the universe was that the Creator caused a huge explosion to take place in space about 13 billion years ago. This explosion was called the Big Bang by the English astronomer, Fred Hoyle, in 1949. This Big Bang has now become a scientifically established fact. This explosion which started the present universe has been hinted in the Quran: “Do not those who deny the truth see that the heavens and the earth were joined together and that We then split them asunder?” (21:30) This means that, in the light of scientific knowledge, there was initially a super atom within which existed all the particles of the universe. After this explosion, the particles of the Big Bang spread rapidly in every direction and then, as a result of very wise planning,

passing through different stages, the combination of these particles brought into existence the present universe.

2. **The Solar Bang:** Another major event pertaining to this gradual process may be called the Solar Bang. After a long process, the solar system, with all its planets, came into existence. This event of the universe has been implied in the Quran thus: “It is He who created the night and the day, and the sun and the moon, each gliding in its orbit” (21:33).

This solar system is situated at the border of the great galaxy which is called the Milky Way. Due to its positioning, the solar system had a safe area in the universe which is essential for the survival of a creature like man.

3. **The Water Bang:** The third event of the universe is what we may call the Water Bang. That is, the cooling of the planet earth and then the coming into existence of the reservoir of water on earth. And then the birth of all kinds of life due to the presence of water. This event is alluded to in the Quran: “And that We have made every living thing out of water? Will they still not believe?” (21:30). Water is of major importance to all living things. In some organisms up to the 90% of their body weight is made up of water. Up to 60% the body of the human adult consists of water.

4. **The Plant Bang:** The fourth major event to take place on the earth was the world of vegetation having come into existence. This may be called the Plant Bang, which made the earth a green planet. This event is described thus in the Quran: “From the rain clouds We send waters pouring down in abundance, so that

We may bring forth thereby grain and a variety of plants and gardens dense with foliage.” (78:14-16)

5. **The Animal Bang:** The fifth phase is that of different kinds of living things coming into existence on earth, right from insects to elephants and tigers. This fifth phase of creation may be termed the Animal Bang. The number of living species is so great as to be almost incalculable.

“Eight million seven hundred thousand is the latest estimated total number of species on the earth and the most precise calculation ever offered, according to a study co-authored by a researcher working with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). Around 6.5 million species have been found on land and 2.2 million (about 25% of the total) dwell in the ocean depths. The report also shows that 86% of all species on land and 91% of those in the seas have yet to be discovered, described or catalogued.” (Census of Marine Life, Washington DC, August 23, 2011)

6. **The Human Bang:** The sixth Bang is what may be called the Human Bang. In this last phase, man was created, and human beings spread across earth by reproduction, generation after generation. It has become apparent that over 13 billion years, every kind of creative event has taken place in a planned way. The purpose of this was that in the last phase man would be created and settled on the earth and then given the opportunity to bring civilization into existence by his own independent efforts. Civilization amounted to the partial unfolding of the words of God (Quran 31:27, 18:109) in a limited sense. The result of these workings of nature was to give a human being the opportunity to elevate his mind to a high level of development.

Paradise – An Ideal World



The present universe has two parts to it, the human and the non-human. On reflection we realize that the non-human world is being externally managed, whereas the human world is self-managed. Now history is advancing towards a super-developed world (Paradise) where, according to the record of the past, undesirable human beings will be set aside from the desirable ones who will be given the opportunity to lead their lives in eternal peace in an ideal world called Paradise. This is the event which is thus referred to in the Bible: “The righteous will inherit the land, and dwell in it permanently.” (Psalms 37.29)

The same reality has been expressed thus in the Quran: “We have already written in the Psalms following the Reminder, ‘My righteous servants shall inherit the earth.’” (21:105)

In the course of human history, this world will become a society of select individuals who are cognizant of the influence of the past upon the present world. Here, selected individuals will be given an opportunity to engage in a high level of intellectual activity. This superior society is referred to thus in the Quran: “Whoever obeys God and the Messenger will be among those He has blessed: the Messenger, the truthful, the witnesses and the righteous. What excellent companions these are!” (4:69) That is, these people of Paradise will be in the company of those whom God has rewarded, that is, the prophets, the truthful, the witnesses, and the righteous. In the Quran, this next phase of life is called Paradise.

Creation Plan of Man



A human being is a unique phenomenon in the entire universe. As per his creative capabilities, a human being is an eternal creature, but he lives in the present world for a limited period of time. In this world the average age of a person is about 70 years. An individual desires eternity, but in reality, fails to find it. But this is not a matter of deprivation for him. This is in accordance with the creation plan of the Creator and is unrelated to human desires. According to the creation plan of the Creator, a human being has to live here for a limited period of time, then he is taken to a habitat where he will have the opportunity to live eternally in a world which is to his liking.

What man has to do here is to understand the creation plan of the Creator and prepare himself accordingly. God is the Creator of man but determining one's future is totally in the hands of man. What man has to do is to develop such a personality as will make him a deserving candidate for Paradise in the next world.

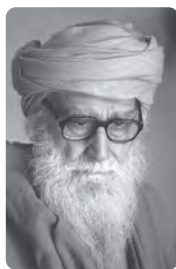
It was because of this purpose of creation that the Creator made the entire universe as if custom-made to suit the needs of mankind. This reality has been thus expressed in the Quran: "He has subjected whatever is in the heavens and on the earth to you; it is all from Him." (45:13) The words "it is all from Him" mean that this matter of subjection is not just accidental, but has rather taken place according to a well-considered plan.

Man enjoys a special creation in the entire universe. He has been given a mind by the Creator, which no other creature has been granted. Man has been given unlimited capabilities by the Creator. Furthermore, man's unique position is that he

has been granted God's trust (33:72). 'Trust' here refers to total freedom. Man is the only creature who has been given total freedom. It was destined for man that if, on having his freedom he did not misuse it, but used it according to the creation plan of God, he would be held deserving of the reward of eternal Paradise. Research shows that all the other creatures save man— physical things, vegetation, animals, all are subservient to the law of nature. Even animals are governed by their instinct. It is man alone who is the exception to this rule, for he has the opportunity to think independently and plan his life with total freedom.

There is no doubt about it that man is a totally free creature but this freedom relates purely to personal action, in the sense that man is free to act either according to the vaster creation plan, or become a transgressor. But, so far as the result of his actions is concerned, man has no power over consequences. Here God has laid down that if man acts according to the creation plan of the Creator, he will be granted eternal Paradise.

There are many passages in the Quran which urge the reader to ponder over creation, natural phenomena and the universe at large. It is such contemplation in the vast ever-expanding cosmos that aids in understanding the Creator's majesty and intelligence. This contemplation, however, could be done earlier within a traditional framework. Now this process of reflection and contemplation has become possible within a scientific framework. The meaningfulness, harmony and intelligent design in the universe unfolded by scientific discoveries provide further insight and detail about Quranic references on nature. In this way, an individual can discover the boundless greatness of God and appreciate His wisdom at a deeper level. He is able to establish a relationship of intense love for God.



Maulana Wahiduddin Khan (1925-2021) was an Islamic scholar, spiritual guide, and an Ambassador of Peace. He authored over 200 books and recorded thousands of lectures giving the rational interpretation of Islamic concepts, prophetic wisdom, and the spiritual meaning of the Quran in the contemporary style. His English translation, *The Quran*, is widely appreciated as simple, clear and in contemporary style. He founded Centre

for Peace and Spirituality (CPS) International in 2001 to re-engineer minds towards God-oriented living and present Islam as it is, based on the principles of peace, spirituality, and co-existence. Maulana breathed his last on 21 April, 2021 in New Delhi, India. His legacy is being carried forward through the CPS International Network.

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