THE STRAIGHT PATH

The Story of Deviations and Interventions

Evil vs. Good Falsehood vs. Truth

وَتَفْصِيل ٱلْكِتَاب اَلْمَحَجَّةَ الْبَيْضاء

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In the name of Allah—the Most Gracious, Most Merciful

From the servant of Allah to mankind

I share with you the knowledge of certitude

No knowledge is as important as this knowledge

Without this knowledge you are blind

So read to receive the healing light!

Don't skip a word so you don't miss a piece

It is your choice to accept or reject this knowledge as the truth

Life is a journey of many paths

I pray that God guides you to the straight path

Peace be upon whoever follows the guidance

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Chapter 1

The Truth Seeker

There comes a time when one becomes curious about this world and the universe. As one explores the different branches of science, from Human Anatomy to Astronomy, one cannot help but notice the underlying creativity of all things that is beyond human imagination, and the precision in measurement and the sheer complexity that is beyond human competence. This creation, from within to the bright stars, is too systematic to originate from randomness, and too meticulous and comprehensive to be unauthored. As a rational thinker, I had little doubt that there is a creator of all things, but how can I be certain?

In my younger days, it was very frustrating to cry out to the skies and receive no response. When I inquired if someone had been in contact with the creator, I found various claims and beliefs. I found people that talked about aliens and pantheons. I questioned, “Have they contacted us and told us they are our creator? If so, where can I speak

to them, or at least examine their message that holds their claim?" These people didn't have any contact details nor a message I could examine, so that was not good enough for me. I found others who claimed that the universe originated from chaos, a big bang, or a seed, and that everything got formed through adaptation and evolution. "Brilliant, but who is the author?" I questioned. "There isn't any", they said. I found them to believe that there is no such thing as "the author of all that exists", but rather a phenomenon called "Nature" that brought everything into existence. This means I became a man from a micro sperm without an author?! No one decided that I need eyes to see, ears to listen, nose to smell, white blood cells in my body to fight infectious diseases?! A body that needs water, food, and oxygen to survive?! Oxygen that comes from plants, seas, and trees?! All material things that happen to be grounded to the Earth by what is called gravity?! The Earth that happens to rotate around an imaginary axis, exposing us to the much-needed sunlight for a limited time, followed by the much-needed darkness to sleep and rest?! The sun that has objects orbiting around it with a precise balance?! A balance that could end life on Earth, if disrupted?! All these interdependent, essential creations came into existence without an author?! This is like telling me that the Mona Lisa has no author, Burj Khalifa has no architect, the

technological devices I use have no inventors, and my home furniture has no designer. As a rational thinker, I found great difficulty in accepting this.

Then there were the three popular religions: Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, which claim the existence of a creator deity. The deity they speak of is the only single deity of supreme powers who is believed to have made contact and to have claimed to be our creator. Let me repeat this: **the only single deity of supreme powers who is believed to have made contact and to have claimed to be our creator**. "Where is he?" I asked when I was a child. "Beyond the skies?! Then how did he contact us?" I had to wonder. As I grew up, I learned that the answer depends on who you ask. In my journey in seeking the truth about religion and my creator, and as someone born to Muslim parents, the obvious and easy choice for me was to start by examining the Islamic story, but I didn't want to be biased. I had to question everything about the Islamic story. With all due respect and love to my parents, their beliefs are simply theirs. Belief by inheritance was not an acceptable option for me, and neither was blind faith. I wanted to build my own convictions. I needed to learn the truth, understand it very well, and make sure it is supported by evidence. The truth cannot accommodate any contradictory claims, nor a claim that can be rebutted, even if it is

only one single claim. The truth is invincible, and I wanted to be on the side of the truth (in Arabic, “a Hanif” [written also “Haniffan” due to Arabic grammar rules]).

Throughout my life journey seeking the truth, I had to confirm that the religion my parents taught me to follow is the religion of truth. My sincere intention was to understand the purpose of my existence, the meaning of life, and find my creator, if indeed he exists. This matter is not a joke. This is not a matter of rooting for a local sports team that I grew up supporting, nor is it about my family and friends calling me a sellout for supporting a different team. This is about my salvation. I felt in my heart—since I was a young child—and determined with my mind—as I got older—that there is a single supreme power that created all that exists, but I needed to be certain by finding proof of its existence and answers to many questions I had. For example, why does God allow suffering, injustice, and evil acts to happen in this world we live in? Why are there three proclaimed monotheistic religions that are similar, yet different? Why do people kill in the name of Islam and get killed for being a Muslim? What will happen to us after we die? If the creator deity indeed exists, why does he not appear and speak to us? And most importantly, what does he want from me and you?

Chapter 2

Investigating the Islamic Story

Many of us want to know the purpose of our existence and if God indeed exists. With knowledge and wisdom comes understanding, and with understanding we can attempt to unfold life's mysteries and have a sense of purpose. If you are searching for the absolute truth about God's existence, good luck finding it. I find the absolute truth to be a claim that can be proven true through direct evidence, and the strongest form of direct evidence is what the naked eye can witness. Until this day, no one can show direct evidence of God's existence, just like no one can show direct evidence of how everything came into existence.

In the absence of direct evidence to prove a claim's truthfulness, humans have accepted—in various aspects of life—to take into consideration indirect evidence. When examining indirect evidence, or what is also called circumstantial evidence, humans learned to also apply the scientific method. The scientific method starts with a

supposition, hypothesis, or simply a claim or a set of claims. Supporting evidence is then presented and analyzed to prove the claim. When the supporting evidence is indirect, inferences are required to assert the claim. Since inferences are not the absolute truth, the scientific method dictates that the inferences be repeatedly scrutinized, and contested, to examine if they have any flaws or inaccuracies. Once the examination process is complete, one can come up with their own conclusion regarding the truthfulness of the claim(s).

Without a doubt, we have applied the scientific method against theories and told stories that lack direct evidence or eyewitnesses. For example, gravity is a theory. No one has seen gravity, yet we believe in its existence because of indirect evidence. We observed objects falling and analyzed measurements (indirect evidence), and then came up with some inferences. We then examined and tested the inferences, to later conclude that gravity exists (although humans are still trying to understand its true nature). Similarly, when one is accused of a felony, without direct evidence or eyewitnesses, the prosecutor presents their story/case to prove the truthfulness of their claim. Their story holds inferences supported by a collection of circumstantial evidence, which is contested/cross-examined by the defendant, and then analyzed and scrutinized by the judge and jury until a conclusion is reached.

In life, there is the absolute truth and what I call the "inferred truth": a truth attained not through direct proof, but rather by piecing together all related findings. You see, the inferred truth is like a jigsaw puzzle picture. A picture of a real thing is not the real thing: it is the image of it. However, when we see the image, it is possible to infer, using reason and intelligence, that the real thing does exist, even if our eyes have never seen it or seen anything like it. For example, none of us lived in the Mesozoic Era to witness what dinosaurs really looked like. We found pieces of fossils and other remnants (indirect evidence), we put them together, then inferred what dinosaurs may look like. The more pieces we collected and analyzed, the more vivid the image of dinosaurs became, granting us certitude in how they may look like. Similarly, I can't see the picture of the puzzle and analyze it if I don't put all the pieces together. Every piece must fit with the adjacent piece. When we have enough pieces fitted together—overwhelming cohesive circumstantial evidence—the picture starts to manifest. The more pieces we have, the more apparent and complete the picture becomes. I consider the story of religion to be a jigsaw puzzle of claims, and the existence of a single creator deity is one of the claims. These claims bear indirect evidence and inferences that can be examined through the scientific method I just explained.

The story of God and his creations consists of many parts and depths. If the story is true, then all the pieces that support or tell the story should fit together, revealing a clear and meaningful picture. And if the story is false or fabricated, then there will be a substantial number of missing pieces or misfits, resulting in a defective puzzle. There are three proclaimed monotheistic religions: Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. They each have their own version of the story, containing both similar and different claims. I consider the story of each religion a jigsaw puzzle box, and I have taken the Islamic puzzle box and attempted to put together the pieces. By the end of this book, you should be aware of my findings and the full picture I uncovered. I'll leave it to you to accept, investigate, scrutinize, contest, or reject this picture.

Arabic is the liturgical language of the religion Islam, and those who follow Islam are called "Muslims". The prime Arabic word for "God" is "Allah", and the Arabic singular word for "deity"—"Elah"—is often translated also to "God", since Muslims believe there is no true deity except Allah. Similarly, in Hebrew, the word for God is "Elohim", and in Aramaic, it is "Elah". Muslims also believe that God sent several

messages to mankind, and his last message was compiled in a holy book called “the Quran”. It is believed that the Quran was revealed to an appointed prophet-messenger that God elected from among mankind, and his name is “Muhammad”. After Muhammad’s death, his sayings and actions were orally narrated by several witnesses, and these gathered oral narratives are called in Arabic “Hadith” (ha-deeth). The Quran and the Hadith form the source of the Islamic story that I am about to share with you. The Quran consists of verses distributed and grouped into 114 chapters. I am considering the Quranic verses to be the pieces of the jigsaw puzzle, and I will use the Hadith for more details and clarifications.

To write this book, I had to delve into the Quran, the Hadith, and some historical events, and as an investigator, not an academic, I will present to you my findings and the picture I uncovered. When I quote the Quran, I will use curly brackets “{ }”, followed by the verse number “(X:XX)”, and when I state something that is mentioned (or alluded to) in the Quran, I will only denote it with the verse number. Similarly, information supported by the Hadith will be denoted with “(Hadith)”. As I present to you the Islamic story, I will also be sharing with you my own interpretations, reflections, inferences, takeaways, discoveries, insights, and some guesses, which I will include in

brackets, starting with my name ([Rami...]). I will do this until chapter 10, because the subsequent chapters of this book are predominantly my own analysis and thesis, supported by the Quran and the Hadith.

Whatever picture I present to you, it cannot be accepted without presenting supporting evidence that the Quran is indeed the words of a deity. In other words, the Quran is indeed a message from the creator I seek, containing his claims. If you are one of the people that think God and his claims are merely a fairytale weaved from the imagination of ancient humans, or that Islam is a fabricated religion, I urge you to turn off your skepticism or disdain until I share with you the full picture. If you cannot, then you might as well stop reading. It is my wish that you become a believer in what I am about to present to you, but this is all up to you. One person should never, and can never, make someone else believe by compulsion. My main intention is that you become cognizant of the purpose of our existence and the inferred truth I had uncovered, using the supporting indirect evidence I will share with you, hoping that you seriously consider it and act upon it before it is too late.

My slow, long, and intermittent venture in learning the Islamic story started when I was in college and 9/11 happened, and by my late

twenties I managed to finally start seeing the picture of this puzzle. It was nowhere near completion, yet I was able to figure out the major important parts, enough to substantiate that the claims of the Islamic story are indeed true. However, because there were still missing pieces and unanswered questions, my drive to seek more knowledge and wisdom to complete the picture persisted, and the full picture did not become clear to me until the time I wrote this book. Throughout my journey, I always contested and scrutinized the inferences I reached. This allowed me to weed out wrong inferences, bolster correct ones, and to continue to uncover new ones. I also inspected other religions along the way, and I will share my discoveries and thoughts on that as well. I tried my best to address as many questions as possible about this worldly life we live in. Depending on how much you know about religion, you might find information you already know, information you do not know, information you thought you knew, and information disturbingly conflicting with your beliefs. Although it was never my intention when I started writing this book, I found myself interpreting several topics and verses in the Quran differently than what most Muslim exegetes, if not all, had interpreted. Accordingly, you will find some of my discoveries, inferences, and insights to be original, not even Muslim scholars over the last fourteen centuries had uncovered.

You will find these original discoveries scattered across various chapters of this book; therefore, I advise you to avoid skipping any part, footnote, or word, even if you believe you are well-informed about a certain subject.

This book is for everyone, but particularly, for all the truth seekers and the good-hearted people that want to do what is right. As your brother in humanity, I feel I have an obligation to share with you the knowledge I gathered over the years and the full picture I uncovered. What you do with this knowledge is up to you. I now believe with certitude that the picture I uncovered is the truth, but you should question and validate[1] every piece of information I present to you, and scrutinize my inferences and insights, before you reach your own conclusion. More importantly, you need to do your own truth seeking, assuming you are sincere about knowing the truth about God and the purpose of our existence. **Seeking the truth is about wanting to accept and follow whatever your mind and heart concur to be the truth, and not what your desires want to accept as the truth**. This is the first and most important step in moving toward the straight path.

[1] I suggest you do that after you finish reading the book, or else it will take a long time to finish. As you are reading, I suggest you note down all that you want to investigate and validate, then come back to your notes when you are finished with the book. Also, you probably have your own picture in your mind of what is true. Don't let your preconceived picture interfere with conceiving the picture I am sharing in this book. And if you find some of the claims disturbing or frustrating, please don't let your emotions get in the way of finishing the book. Thank you.

Chapter 3

The Creator

Whenever I cried out to the Heaven, the Heaven never answered back, but when I read the Quran, I received many answers:

{It is I, Allah! There is no (true) deity except Me, so worship Me and establish prayer for My remembrance.} (20:14)

When I was a young child, I was told that Allah is our creator deity and only lord, but it wasn't until I read the Quran that I finally was able to make contact through what is believed to be his words. This verse is only one of 6,236 verses. "Please tell me more!"

{**Read** in the name of your Lord who created; created Man from a clinging clot. **Read**, and your Lord is the Most Honorable, who imparted knowledge by the means of the pen. **He taught Man what he did not know**. In fact, Man crosses the limits, because he deems himself to be free of need. Surely to your Lord is the return.} (96:1-8)

Over the years, I had to read numerous times to try to understand every piece of information given in the Quran. The first thing I had to clarify: Who is Allah whom my eyes cannot see?

{Allah! There is no (true) deity except Him, the Ever-Living, All-Sustaining. Neither drowsiness nor sleep overtakes Him. To Him belongs whatever is in the Heavens and whatever is on the Earth. Who could possibly intercede with Him without His permission?! He (fully) knows what is ahead of them and what is behind them, but no one can grasp any of His knowledge—except what He wills (to reveal). His Chair extends over the Heavens and the Earth, and the preservation of both does not tire Him. For He is the Most High, the Magnificent.} (2:255)

{Say (O Messenger), "He is Allah—One (and Indivisible); Allah—the Free of Living Necessities. He has never had offspring, nor was He born. And there is none comparable to Him."} (112:1-4)

{And with Him are the keys of the unseen; none knows them except Him. And He knows what is on the land and in the sea. No leaf falls but that He knows about it. And there is no grain in the dark layers of the earth, or anything that is moist or dry that is not (written) in a clear Book.} (6:59)

{Allah is the Light of the Heavens and the Earth…} (24:35)

{Whatever is in the Heavens and the Earth glorifies Allah, for He is the Almighty, All-Wise. To Him belongs the kingdom of the Heavens and the Earth. He gives life and causes death. And He is Most Capable of everything. He is the First and the Last, the Most High and Most Near, and He has knowledge of all things. He is the One Who created the Heavens and the Earth in six Days, then settled Himself on the Throne. He knows whatever goes into the Earth and whatever comes out of it, and whatever descends from the Sky and whatever ascends into it. And He is with you wherever you are. For Allah is all-seeing of what you do. To Him belongs the kingdom of the Heavens and the Earth. And to Allah all matters are returned. He merges the night into day and the day into night. And He knows what is (hidden) in the chests.} (57:1-6)

{Blessed is He who sent down the Criterion upon His servant that he may be to the worlds a warner. The one to whom belongs the kingdom of the Heavens and the Earth and who has not taken a son, nor is there any partner to him in the kingdom, and who has created everything and designed it in perfect measure. Yet they have adopted other (false) deities, beside Him, who do not create anything, as they themselves

are created, and they possess no power to cause harm or benefit even to themselves, nor do they have control over death or life or resurrection.} (25:1-3)

These were some of the main verses where the author of the Quran gives explicit description of himself. They are concise, but they depict the sheer supremacy and omnipotence of this deity and the scope of his dominion. Allah also mentions that he has several names:

{And to Allah (belong) the best names, so invoke Him by them, and leave behind the ones who blaspheme His names; they will soon be recompensed (for) whatever they were doing.} (7:180)

These names are interpreted as Allah's immutable attributes. Here are some of the attributes[2] stated in the Quran:

The Creator, The One, The Originator, The Giver of Life, The All-Hearing, The All-Seeing, The All-Aware, The Most Merciful, The Most Kind, The Absolutely Pure, The Forgiver, The Protecting Ally, The Preserver, The Witness, The All-Wise, The Most Loving, The Subduer, The Unique, The Bringer of Death, The Avenger, The First, The Last.

[2] English translation of these names/attributes/epithets can slightly vary. [Rami: In May 2024, four years after I first published the book, I decided to share my accounting and interpretation of these names, in an epilogue I added at the end of this book.]

In terms of physical features, God does mention figuratively, “Face of Allah” (2:115), “Hand of Allah” (48:10), and “Our Eyes” (54:14), but none are comparable to our human features. As per The Unique, it’s not possible to grasp his entity because “there is none comparable to Him” (112:4) and “no vision can comprehend Him” (6:103). Therefore, in the absence of his appearance in our visible reality—our seen world—we can only get to know of him by examining his signs and names.

Furthermore, Allah affirms that he is the only deity that exists, claiming if there were other deities beside him, they all would have been disputing over the sovereignty of the Heaven and the Earth: their disputes would have caused disorder in both realms.

{Had there been in them (the Heavens and the Earth) other deities beside Allah, both would have fallen in disorder. So glorified is Allah, Lord of the Throne, far above what they (falsely) describe.} (21:22)

{And Allah said, "Do not take two deities. There is only one deity. So of Me, Me only, be in awe." To Him belongs whatever is in the Heavens and the Earth, and to Him (alone) is perpetual obedience. Will you then fear any other than Allah?} (16:51-52)

Chapter 4

The Creation

There was Allah alone, and nothing existed before him. Then he had an objective, so he created all things:

- First, he created water, with his magnificent Throne (85:15) placed on top of the water (11:7). And inside his Throne is his vast Chair, which is bigger than the universe (2:255); yet, the Chair's size relative to the Throne is equivalent to an iron ring tossed into a barren desert (Hadith).
- Then he created the Pen and the Preserved Tablet (85:22). He made the Pen write in the Preserved Tablet all what will be created and what will happen until the Last Day (6:38 | Hadith).
- Then God created the angels. The angels are created from a luminous origin or light (Hadith). They have multiple functions and assignments given to them. Some of the angels are involved in human affairs and earthly matters, working invisibly, as per

God's orders (3:124 | 37:1-3 | 79:1-5). The most notable of them is the archangel Jibra'il (Gabriel) (2:97) *(and I will explain later why that is)*. Angels have wings: two, three, four, and many more (Hadith | 35:1), but if they were commanded by God to appear to mankind, they take on the physical form of humans (19:17), with rare, exceptional appearances in their true form (81:19-23).

- Then God created, in a total of six Days[3] (25:59), the Earth and the seven Skies or Heavens[4] (41:12), stacked above one another (67:3 | 71:15), with what they contain.
- God also created Paradise (3:133), a place of eternal bliss (9:21). [Rami: The Quran (53:14-15) and the Hadith hint that Paradise is located between the seventh Heaven and Allah's Throne. The Quran also mentions Hell (3:12), a place of blazing fire (48:13), but I concluded that Hell will be constructed in the future. God says that on the Last Day Paradise will be brought near (26:90 | 50:31 | 81:13) and Hell will be fully unveiled (26:91 | 79:36) and

[3] These six Days, and the Last Day (i.e., Judgment Day), are not earthly days that span 24 hours of what we count, but rather days as per God's measure of time. God mentioned in the Quran a Day that is equivalent to thousand years of what we count (22:47), and a Day that is equivalent to fifty thousand years (70:4). This is an indication that time is relative (23:112-114).

[4] [Rami: The first Heaven is the lowest Heaven/Sky (37:6), and it encompasses the Earth's atmosphere and what could be light years away, with an undisclosed boundary that separates it from the second Heaven. The seven Heavens are stacked above one another. You will find me using the terms "lower realm" and "upper realm", where I am considering the lower realm to be an indeterminate portion of the first Heaven, and everything beyond that to be the upper realm. You will also find me referring to the upper realm with the word "Heaven" or "Heavens", interchangeably.]

ignited ablaze (81:12). Based on this and some hints in the Hadith, I inferred that Hell exists in elementary form beneath the Earth's crust, but it will be constructed on the Last Day. Allah knows best.]

- Then God created the jinn and mankind (51:56).

The jinn are conscious beings with souls, created before mankind. Many verses reveal that there are jinn inhabiting the Earth along with mankind (27:17 | 72:1), but they are not visible. The Arabic word "jinn" is an attribute that means "hidden and concealed from view". Most jinn live in deserted places (e.g., deserts, islands, mountain tops, caves), and they can be present among us, in our houses and the spaces we occupy *(I will share more information about the jinn later in this chapter and in chapter 8).* **As for mankind, the story of their creation begins with an announcement that God made to the angels:**

{And (mention, O Messenger,) when your Lord said to the angels, "Indeed, I will make upon the Earth a vicegerent." They said, "Will You make upon it one who causes corruption therein and sheds blood, while we declare Your praise and sanctify You?" He (Allah) said, "Indeed, I know that which you do not know."} (2:30)

- At one point in time, God announced to the angels that he will make upon the Earth a successor, a deputy, a vicegerent ("khalifah" in Arabic).
- The angels questioned God's decision when they said, "Will You make upon it one who causes corruption therein and sheds blood, while we declare Your praise and sanctify You?"

  [Rami: The angels must have been shocked to hear this, for them to question God's decision. "Why would the angels say such a thing?" I first wondered. As it can be inferred from all the subsequent verses I will share, this vicegerent had not yet lived on Earth to cause disorder and shed blood, yet the angels arrived at such judgment?! Many scholars interpreted that the angels, at that point in time, had seen another creation(s) on Earth that had spread disorder and shed blood, leading them to assume that this new deputy will be no different than its predecessors, given its appointment to this Earth. When I sat and thought of this, the first thought that came to my mind: Could the creation the angels are referencing be the bloody dinosaurs that were exterminated?

I cannot be certain. This is my own inference and theory. Some scholars say it is the jinn. As you will read in the next verses, we can infer that jinn were created before this new deputy; therefore, if you put the two together, it is possible the angels are referencing the jinn. However, I find their inference to be deficient because there is nothing in the Quran and the Hadith that hints that jinn lived on Earth before mankind. Other scholars have a different theory. They assume that God informed the angels about the characteristics of his new creation. Therefore, their response is based on knowledge given to them by their Lord, but not revealed in the Quran. I disagree with this theory, because God said, “Certainly, I know what you know not.” This is clear evidence that the angels only know what God has taught them, and it seems to me, from their reaction and God’s response, that the angels are quite ignorant about this new creation. I also disagree for other

reasons I will explain at the end of this book. It is a very interesting topic to know what the angels were referencing. Whether it is the dinosaurs, jinn, other creation that God does not mention, or pre-given information about the new creation, as far as my jigsaw puzzle is concerned, the identity of the referenced entity is a very tiny piece of the big picture; therefore, not so significant.]

{And He taught Adam the names—all of them. Then He showed them to the angels and said, "Inform Me of the names of these, if you are truthful."} (2:31)

- This verse, combined with verses (2:30 | 15:26-33), reveals that this new creation is named "Adam", a mortal human being classified as "Insan" ("Man" in English). However, the vicegerent to be appointed by God may be Adam himself, someone of his kind, or both.
- Allah made Adam with his own hands (38:75), and gave him some knowledge by teaching him the names of things.

  [Rami: Allah did not reveal what these things are, but I couldn't stop thinking of how we humans do the same. When we have children, the first thing we try to teach them is the name of things.

Names and words roots, based on sound and image, are the building blocks of knowledge. When we discover something, the first thing we do is give it a name.]

- Then God showed the angels the things that he taught Adam and asked them to name them if they are truthful.

{They said, "Glory be to you; we have no knowledge except what You have taught us. Indeed, it is You who is the All-Knowing, the All-Wise."} (2:32)

- The angels did not know the names. This substantiates that the angels have limited knowledge.

{He said, "O Adam, inform them of their names." And when he had informed them of their names, He said, "Did I not tell you that **I know the unseen** (aspects) of the Heavens and the Earth? And I know what you reveal and **what you have concealed**."} (2:33)

- God affirms that there are unseen things known only to him, and he may reveal them to whomsoever he wills.

  [Rami: I understood from these three verses that the angels had some uncertainty about God knowing things they have not seen—an uncertainty they concealed. Therefore, God put them through

a trial to teach them a very important lesson—that is, what you see and witness is not the full picture. There are unseen aspects of God's creation, the past, and the future, which you do not know, and only God has the full knowledge of the unseen ("Al-Ghayb" in Arabic). Furthermore, the angels rushed to a judgment, based on preconceived knowledge that was insufficient. As humans, don't we do the same? Don't we rush to judge people before we get to know them well? Don't we doubt what we do not see? Even regarding God, if we don't see him, does it mean he doesn't exist? And if he exists, have we attempted to know of him before we judge him? These are important questions to keep in mind as you read this book.]

After this episode, a very interesting and crucial incident happened. This incident is mentioned in the Quran seven times, in seven different chapters. Each time God mentions this incident, he gives us another piece of information. Therefore, as I lay out this incident to you to draw the picture, you will find me referring to various verses that are not grouped together in the Quran. It is like putting together shuffled pieces of a small subset of the jigsaw puzzle. As a matter of fact, this is the case of many stories narrated in the Quran. Let us start with these verses:

{When your Lord said to the angels, "I am going to create a human being from clay. So when I have fashioned him and had a spirit of My Own breathed into him, fall down in prostration to him." So the angels prostrated all together—but not Iblis, who acted arrogantly, becoming one of the infidels.} (38:71-74)

- The exact timing of this incident is not clear. What is clear is that God gathered the angels and ordered them to prostrate to Adam. This is an indication that God gave Adam an exalted rank among his creations (17:70). The angels, always submissive to their Lord (16:49-50), obeyed God's command except Iblis (Ib-lees).

  [Rami: Iblis?! Who is Iblis?! And how dare he disobey God's command?! From these verses alone, it is easy to infer that Iblis is an angel, but in another similar verse God says:

  {And when We said to the angels, "Prostrate to Adam," and they prostrated, except for Iblis. **He was one of the jinn…**} (18:50)

  If Iblis was one of the jinn, then why was he among the angels? One explanation that I favor says that God upgraded Iblis' status to that of an angel and allowed him to be with them in Heaven because of his outstanding devotion to God. I speculate that he was given angel wings with that upgrade. There is definitely some

ambiguity here, a missing piece not addressed in the Quran and the Hadith. Irrespective of this missing piece, we are told in the Quran that Iblis was among the angels when they were ordered to prostrate. Then I ask, “If Iblis was an obedient servant of God, then why did he disobey God by not prostrating to Adam?” This is exactly what God asked him.]

{He (Allah) said, "What prevented you from prostrating **when I commanded you**?" He (Iblis) said, "I am better than him. You created me from fire and created him from clay."} (7:12)

Three things revealed in this verse:

1) Iblis is created from fire.

The jinn were created from a type of fire, smokeless flame of fire (55:15), and fire of the scorching wind (15:27). It is a type of fire that doesn’t seem to be visible to the human eye on Earth (7:27).

[Rami: It should not be absurd to accept that jinn live among us. First, visible fire consists of incandescent soot and hot gases releasing light via a rapid chemical reaction, whereas jinn can be characterized by varying signatures of heat and light. Second, the eye’s vision is limited to the visible light spectrum. Therefore, it

is possible that the jinn are made from an energy frequency that is outside of the electromagnetic spectrum—photon energies—and which we cannot see, feel, nor detect, even with instruments. And speaking of energy frequency bands, can you imagine how miserable our life would be if our eyes were to see all the electromagnetic frequencies that exist around us?! It is very clear to me that the eye was designed with the function to see only bands The Designer wants it to see, and that the angels and jinn are made from energy frequencies not detectable by our human senses. We must realize that there is a wide range of frequencies that make up many, if not all, of God's creations, including matter, that we have not fully discovered. **Science is mainly the practice of discovering the truth about God's creation. So, when scientists discover something about a particular matter, in most cases, they are only discovering part of the truth of that matter—not the complete truth! The complete truth requires an incredible amount of research, and humans will only discover as much as God wants to reveal (2:255)! And if you believe God has nothing to do with humans inventing scientific instruments, I hope the rest of this chapter (and chapter 11) changes your belief (41:53)!**]

2) Adam is created from clay.

In the two prior verses I referenced, it is mentioned that God created Adam from clay, and in other verses, God says he created Adam from dust (3:59), water (25:54), and "We created Man from dried (sounding) clay of altered black mud" (15:26).

[Rami: Which one is it: dust, water, mud, or clay? Turns out it's all of them. If we gather the earth's dust and add water to it, it will turn into mud. As mud dries up, it will turn into clay *(you can search online for how dust/dirt can turn into clay)*. God then took this clay and formed all the details of Adam's body. Isn't this similar to what humans do when they want to make a model of something or a sculpture?! The way I see it—given that living organisms look much different under a microscope—our current human shape and size could be a microscopic version of the first model of the very first human body, before God proportioned Adam to his final size. I imagine if we were to magnify our body a thousand times and heat it up like pottery—to dry out all the

water—we would have a better perception to examine how our body originated from clay. We also have to be mindful that more than fifty percent of our body's composition is water, and in greater percentages in some organs.

There is a Hadith in which prophet Muhammad said that God made Adam 60 cubits tall, and Man has been decreasing in stature since the time of his creation. A cubit is an ancient measure of length, approximately equal to the length of a forearm. 60 cubits is equivalent to 27.4 m / 90 ft. This means that even the final version of Adam's body was around sixteen times larger than our current average body size, and that humans at first were giants before they evolved over time. However, I do question why there are no public records of ancient humans having gigantic figures. Some people claim that we have unearthed giant-size skeletons. If these claims are indeed true, did authorities around the world conceal these findings from the public to evade granting validity to religious claims? This topic also gave me another thought: Could this explain how it was possible for ancient monuments to be erected? Did their large stature, in ancient times, grant humans physical capabilities to do things modern-day humans are not capable of doing, such as walking vast distances? What is certain

is the great ambiguity surrounding this topic. To settle this dispute, it is worth addressing this topic in global public forums.]

Furthermore, prophet Muhammad said that God ordered the angels to bring him mud from the earth, so they collected different soil specimens. This is supported by the following verse:

{**From the earth We created you**, and into it We will return you, and from it We will bring you back again.} (20:55)

[Rami: Collecting different soil specimens could explain human biological diversity—different human gene pools. There is some scientific literature that supports the claim that the human body originated from dust and ends in dust. We originated from the earth's dust, before water was added to eventually develop into flesh, and when we die, our flesh decomposes to dust, after water is dried out of our flesh. Isn't water life (21:30)?! Doesn't this explain why God asked us to bury the body in the ground when we die?! The Quran mentions that God sent a raven to scratch the ground, showing Qabil (Cain) how to bury a corpse, after he killed his brother Habil (Abel) out of envy (5:27-31). Cain and Abel were Adam's first sons, and this was the first case of murder committed on Earth.]

God kept Adam's body standing for some time, perfecting his body form, before he gave him a spirit (Hadith). God says:

{"**So when I have fashioned him and had a spirit of My Own breathed into him**, fall down in prostration to him."} (15:29)

[Rami: I had to stop here and contemplate: Why did Allah take time in making Adam—even in making the Heavens and the Earth—and why did Allah share the process with us? A deity should have the power to say it, and it comes into being. Even Allah says he can do that—is there a contradiction here?

{(He is the) Originator of the Heavens and Earth. When He decrees a matter, He only says to it, "Be!"; and it is.} (2:117)

From studying the Quran, I learned that God has a purpose for sharing every single information with us, so what could possibly be the purpose here? Well, based on scientific evidence and the Quran, I concluded that Allah first created the original living creatures, designed with features (e.g., Deoxyribonucleic Acid [DNA]) that allow them to evolve into variations of their own kind, through the processes of reproduction and germline mutation. I call these original creatures **"The Originals"**. By describing to us how Adam was made, I believe that Allah is

indicating to us that he is indeed The Originator, The Maker, and The Designer of these originals, including Man. Adam is the original human being. God also told us that Adam was made from earth's dust and will return into dust. This means mankind originated from one form of matter, then made into another form, then the made-up form, and its progeny, will decay back to the original form after death (bones and teeth take longer time than flesh). Accordingly, the Law of Conservation of Mass states that matter cannot be created nor destroyed and the total amount of mass and energy in the universe is constant. Adam was not made from nothing: he was made from existing matter, extracted from the earth, and this matter will never be destroyed. There is no conflict here between Allah's claims and science. This also applies to all the creations that are found on Earth and in the universe. The Big Bang theory states that the universe and all matter originated billions of years ago from an infinitely small, dense initial matter, or "atom", which exploded; the universe has been expanding ever since. Science cannot explain where this initial matter originated from. After the "explosion", the building blocks of matter (elements) started to emerge. Scientists also failed to properly explain how the creations on Earth were

designed and made from these building blocks. Their theory, without any absolute direct evidence, is a combination of adaptation, natural selection, and transmutation (i.e., one kind of being can transform into another kind), to finally conclude that all organisms ultimately belong to the same family tree.

{**Have those who disbelieved not considered that the Heavens and the Earth were a joined entity, then We split them apart and made from water every living thing? Would they then not believe?** And We have placed firm mountains upon the earth so it does not shake with them, and made in it broad pathways so they may find their way. And We have made the Sky a well-protected canopy, still they turn away from its signs. And He is the One Who created the day and the night, the sun and the moon—each travelling in an orbit.} (21:30-33)

{And the Sky is constructed by Us with might, **and indeed, We are (its) expander**.} (51:47)

{Ask (them, O Messenger), "How can you disbelieve in the One Who created the Earth in two Days? And how can you set up rivals with Him?" That is the Lord of all worlds! He placed on the Earth firm mountains, standing high, showered His blessings

upon it, and ordained (all) its means of sustenance—totaling four Days exactly—for all who ask. **Then He turned toward the Heaven when it was (still like) smoke, saying to it and to the Earth, "Come (either way), willingly or unwillingly." They both responded, "We have come in submission."** So He formed the Heaven into seven Heavens in two Days, assigning to each its mandate. And We adorned the lowest Heaven with (stars like) lamps (for beauty) and for protection. That is the determination of the Almighty, All-Knowing.} (41:9-12)

The above verses agree with some of the theories that scientists had concluded and even goes further in filling some of the gaps, which science cannot explain. God indicated that after the "explosion"—"fission" is probably a better word—he took these building blocks of matter, after they were formed, all under his command, and designed and made with them all the creations in the Heavens and the Earth and established order in the universe and beyond. This order encompasses what humans had discovered by the will of God and called "the fundamental forces of nature". As for the living creatures or organisms, God created the original ones using water (24:45) and designed them—with a built-in mechanism that allows them to recreate (reproduce) and

evolve with time—as per the purpose and mandate he ordained for them. After their divine origination, the processes of reproduction and evolution began, all under God's command and supervision. I speculate that the names of the things that Adam was taught are the names of "the originals", and possibly also the names of what humans will invent in the future. This is just an educated guess; it could be more than that or something else. Allah knows best.

{Have they not seen how Allah originates the creation then repeats it? That is certainly easy for Allah. Say, "Travel in the land and look how He has originated the creation, then Allah will bring into being the last creation. Surely Allah is Most Capable of everything."} (29:19-20)

Charles Darwin indeed traveled in the land and looked. His findings exhibit how the original creations reproduced and evolved into variations of the same kind (i.e., species), but they do NOT justify transmutation from one species to another. I challenge any sane scientist to prove otherwise. In other words, God confirms that each species ultimately descends from an original, but distinct species do not have the same origin, even if

they have similar design and features. We built laptops and later smartphones, both have similar components and functionalities. One can claim that an ENIAC evolved into a laptop, but can anyone claim that smartphones were once laptops?! Therefore, I consider the claim that humans and apes share a common ancestor species to be a fallacy. I believe that by relying on comparison and genetic similarities, scientists have misconstrued the genealogical aspect of their evolution theory; thus, it remains a postulate grounded in speculative inference rather than a conclusion derived from empirical evidence.]

Every living organism possesses a DNA sequence inherited from a parent or parents. For humans, we get paternal chromosomes from our father's sperm and mother's egg, which both determine our DNA sequence, thus the traits that determine how we look. During sexual intercourse, the male ejaculates millions of sperms, but only one—sometimes more—fertilizes the female's egg. Is human fertilization a random process or is it God who selects the sperm with its chromosomes and controls the genetic recombination process in the mother's womb, to determine the DNA sequence the offspring will inherit?!

{It is He who fashions you in the wombs however He wills. There is no deity except Him, the Exalted in Might, the All-Wise.} (3:6)

Furthermore, for living organisms to survive, they need water. We take it for granted, but water is more than just a liquid we consume daily. Water is like a power potion that keeps us alive in many ways (10:24), and this is by design. Throughout the Quran, God reiterates that it is he who brings life to whoever he chooses, by sending rain in determined quantities, and it is he who ends life by withholding the rain (15:22-23 | 23:18). With scientific and technological advancements, we now understand the processes of wind and cloud formation, which are two key factors in determining when and where rain lands on the Earth's surface (51:1-4 | 25:48-50). However, these two processes depend on one common variable—Solar Radiation!! Are emissions of solar radiation, from the sun toward the Earth, random processes or are they initiated and then controlled by The Initiator, through his dedicated angels, to achieve the outcomes he wills?!!

{And He is the One who sends the winds ushering in His mercy, and We send down pure water from the Sky, giving life to a

lifeless land, and providing water for countless animals and humans of Our own creation.} (25:48-49)

{Indeed, in the creation of the Heavens and the Earth; the alternation of the day and the night; the ships that sail the sea for the benefit of humanity; the water sent down by Allah from the Skies, reviving the earth after its death; the scattering of all kinds of creatures throughout; the shifting of the winds; and the clouds drifting between the Sky and the earth (in all of this) are surely signs for people of understanding.} (2:164)

[Rami: Time depends on speed, and speed is relative and determined by God. Also, nothing in this universe is created from nothing, and there is a process for how things get created. When God decrees something, it will indeed happen (16:40), either instantaneously or gradually (16:1), depending on how fast he chooses to let it be. God could have decided to create everything instantaneously, but if he did, scientists—people of understanding—would have simply uncovered very little to understand anything. On the contrary, I believe that The Architect wants us to discover and understand the processes, the laws of physics, the building blocks of living-organisms, etc., to learn that

there is indeed an author that architected methodically everything, and that nothing is random. Allah claims he is the author and the one in control of every single movement in the universe, as per his will, while many people, who think they are rational thinkers, say it is "Mother Nature". Hmm, is it "natural selection" or is it "Allah's selection"? Is it "random processes" or is it "controlled processes"? Is it "survival of the fittest" or is it "as Allah sees fit"? I received Allah's claims to examine; can we have Mother Nature to step forward and make its claims, please?!]

{There are (countless) signs **on Earth** for those with sure faith, **and within yourselves**. **Can you not see?!**} (51:20-21)

As for the spirit, it does not come from the created universe, it comes from God. Mentioned in a Hadith, God breathed his spirit into Adam's body, and when it came down and reached his nose, he sneezed (God bless you!). It was at that moment in time when he was blessed with life to become alive. This is also mentioned in the verse below, where God describes how he first created Adam from clay and then his descendants from seminal fluid:

{That is the Knower of the seen and unseen—the Almighty, Most Merciful, Who has perfected everything He created. And He

originated the creation of humankind from clay. Then He made his descendants from an extract of a humble fluid. Then He fashioned him and had a spirit of His Own breathed into him. And He gave you hearing, sight, and mind. (Yet) you hardly give any thanks.} (32:6-9)

[Rami: I also had to contemplate what God meant by "spirit of His Own". All humans get a spirit, and humans are definitely not deities and should not be physically compared to God at any stretch of imagination. God indicated he gave us something from him, but he is not telling what exactly it is. God said:

{And they ask you (O Messenger) about the spirit. Say, "The spirit is something from the command of my Lord, and you are not given the knowledge **but a little**."} (17:85)

I understand that God does not want to reveal what the spirit is, because maybe it is impossible for us to comprehend its true nature. But from what I have reasoned, I would say the spirit involves the power that God gives each person and makes the body turn and stay ON. It is like an electric charge that God sends to the body to activate it and keep it alive. The heart's sinoatrial (SA) node is responsible for generating electric signals that

initiates the heartbeats, but what sparks the heart to beat the very first time? I could not find a definitive scientific answer to this question. I am compelled to believe that what activates the SA node to start working is the spirit, as it gets breathed into the body. This energy/spark comes from God. It is not clear to me if this energy is from God's own energy, or he creates it and then sends it; it could be both. Also, in Adam's case, it was God who breathed the spirit into his body, but the Hadith indicates that there is an assigned angel that does the breathing of the spirit into the human embryo in the mother's uterus.

As for the soul, is it the same as the spirit? Most scholars think it is the same, but after many years of looking for a convincing explanation, I stumbled one time over a video by Dr. Iyad Abu Haibeh, which alerted me to how they are different. Although God did not explicitly tell us in the Quran what is the difference, he gave us many clues. In the Arabic language, there are no reflexive pronouns (yourself, himself, herself, themselves, myself), instead there is: your soul, his soul, her soul, their soul, and my soul. Since the Quran is revealed in Arabic, you do not find "himself", you find instead "his soul" (English versions of the Quran use reflexive pronouns for translation purposes). This

is one indication that our true self is the soul. When you think of yourself, think of the soul. God mostly used the word “soul” in the Quran when referring to the actions of living humans, and what happens to the soul in the state of unconsciousness, such as sleep and death. Since the soul needs to interact with its physical surroundings on Earth, God gave it a physical body, with eyes, ears, tongue, lips (16:78 | 90:9), etc. So, now we have a body and a soul. The soul is granted the authority to direct the body as it wills—hence, “free will”. I believe it is the soul that makes decisions and not our brain. Our brain is simply a tool—the central processing unit (CPU) with the memory unit—that projects visuals, processes inputs and decisions, and sends commands through the nervous system to the rest of the body.

For more clarity, think of the body as a car, the soul as the driver, and the spirit as the car’s electric power. The breathing of the spirit into the body is like a wave of energy that inserts the driver into the car and turns on the car’s ignition switch (activating the heart’s SA node). Although God did not tell us exactly what the soul is made of, he did tell us the following:

{(It is) Allah (Who) calls back the souls (of people) upon their death as well as (the souls) of the living during their sleep. Then He keeps those for whom He has ordained death, and releases the others until (their) appointed time. Surely in this are signs for people who reflect.} (39:42)

God is saying that he lifts our souls from our bodies when we die and when we sleep. When we die—that's it—our soul will not return to the body (unless Allah decides to revive the dead). However, when we are sleeping, if God decides that it is still not time for us to die, he will return the soul to the body when we wake up from our sleep. This means that while we are sleeping, God gets the driver out of the car, while keeping the car running. As he chooses, he will either turn off the car, by cutting the car's electric power and never returning the driver (death during sleep), or he simply returns the driver to the car *(I will share more enlightening inferences and insights about the soul and the spirit, which I have derived from the Quran, when I touch on this subject again)*.]

3) Iblis thought he was better than Adam.

According to his limited understanding, Iblis, who is created from fire, thought he was better than Adam, who is created from clay. His pride and arrogance drove him to change from an obedient servant to a disobedient servant. What we also learn from the Quran and the Hadith is that Iblis is envious of the new creation the angels in the Heavens were gathered to honor.

[Rami: How many examples like this can we extrapolate from mankind's behavior on this Earth?! When someone changes their behavior toward others because of pride, envy, and arrogance?! Or when someone considers themselves better than others because of their ethnicity?! Or when someone becomes independent, thinking he is free of need to obey his parents, let alone obey a creator he doesn't see?!]

After Iblis showed blatant disobedience and arrogance:

{He (Allah) said, "Descend from **it**, it is not for you to show arrogance **here**. So get out; indeed, you are of the degraded."} (7:13)

{He (Allah) said, "Get out of **it**, for you are truly cursed. And surely upon you is condemnation until the Day of Requital."} (15:34-35)

- The words "it" and "here" are referring to an undisclosed place in the upper realm where the angels prostrated to Adam. Many Muslim exegetes inferred that this place is Paradise, but I don't believe it is Paradise, based on what I will cover in the next chapter. The verses fall short of giving us any specifics of this place. As I stated earlier, there is a missing piece about this prostration event that holds answers to some mysteries about the place and timing of this event and why Iblis was with the angels. What we know is that The Abaser expelled Iblis from this place and degraded his status.

By now, I am sure you have derived who Iblis is. Yes, Iblis is Satan ("Shaytan[5]" in Arabic), and he is now expelled and cursed by Allah because of his rebellious reaction to Adam's creation and honoring. What will Satan do next?

[5] The word "Shaytan" is an attribute/epithet that means "evil rebel": it is also translated to "Devil". And the word "Iblis" means "hopeless one", since he lost hope in anyone saving him from the torment of Hell Fire. Accordingly, his actual birth name may or may not be "Iblis". [Rami: One of the things I noticed from studying the Quran is that God names many of his creations by their primary epithets, including humans. This could explain why the names of some people mentioned in the old scriptures are different from the names mentioned in the Quran, although they are the same people. I believe that the difference has to do with the different languages used to describe either the same attribute or a different attribute of the same person.]

Chapter 5

Mankind vs. An Overt Enemy

{He (Iblis) said, "Reprieve me until the Day they are resurrected." He (Allah) said, "Indeed, you are of those reprieved." He (Iblis) said, "For allowing me to stray, **I will surely sit for them (in ambush) on Your Straight Path**. Then I will approach them from their front, their back, their right, their left, and then You will find most of them ungrateful (to You)." He (Allah) said, "Get out of it, reproached and expelled. Whoever follows you among them—I will surely fill Hell with you and them, all together."} (7:14-18)

{He (Iblis) said, "Reprieve me until the Day they are resurrected." He (Allah) said, "Indeed, you are of those reprieved until the Day of the time well-known." He (Iblis) said, "My Lord! For allowing me to stray, I will surely tempt them on Earth and mislead them all together, except Your servants that from among them you select."} (15:36-40)

After he was reproached and expelled by God, Iblis responded with an appeal. Here is what we learn from the above verses and others:

1) Satan was granted his wish of postponing his punishment until an appointed time. In his mind, Adam is the reason behind his expulsion and punishment, and he wants revenge. Interestingly, Iblis' idea of revenge is to prevent "them" from following the "straight path", by misleading "them" and making disobedience attractive to "them".

   [Rami: I had three questions here:

   i. Who is "them"? *(answered in the next point)*
   ii. What is the "Straight Path", and why is it so significant that Iblis is keen on obstructing it? *(answered in the next chapter)*
   iii. Why did God accept Satan's appeal and allow him to pursue his evil schemes against "them"? *(answered in the final chapter of this book)*]

2) The word "them" is referring to all of Adam's Progeny/Descendants/Sons/Children. In another similar verse regarding this incident, Iblis says:

{"Do You see this one whom You have honored above me? If You delay me until the Day of Resurrection, I will surely **destroy his descendants**, except for a few."} (17:62)

Adam's descendants are of his kind—hence the terms "mankind" or "humankind". In the Quran, God mentions how their bodies are developed in their mother's womb and the interrelation he established among them:

{And indeed, We created Man (i.e., Adam) from an extract of clay, then We made him (i.e., Mankind) into a bit (i.e., zygote or blastocyst) in a secure place (i.e., womb), then We developed the bit into a clinging clot (of blood), then developed the clot into a lump, then developed the lump into bones, then clothed the bones with flesh, then We brought it into being as a new creation. So blessed is Allah, the best of creators.} (23:14)

{And it is He who has created from water a human being and made him (a relative by) blood and marriage. And your Lord has been Ever-Determiner.} (25:54)

While many people dispute it, the Quran asserts that humans descended from one couple of male and female (4:1). This implies that the first sons and daughters of Adam had to marry each other.

According to the Hadith, while Adam was in deep sleep soon after his creation, God created from his ribs a woman by the name of Eve ("Hawwa" in Arabic) to be his partner and wife. And after they began their life together on Earth, their first generation of children were fraternal twins of different sexes. Allah allowed those children to marry each other, but not to their fraternal twin.

[Rami: I do not see any logical or scientific issue with this. First, we need to realize that the social definitions of kinship, such as "siblings", and the right to marry are not known innately, but they are rather learned. The first children of Adam and Eve are the very first generation of mankind. To initiate the human race, they could have been taught that their fraternal twin is their only true sibling, who they cannot marry; and afterward, God redefined relationships and rights. Second, if God wants to initiate the human race, he will make sure Eve's offspring are healthy. But for the sake of argument, if one believes that the risk of genetic disorders caused by consanguinity would have prevented Eve from having healthy offspring, then they are wrong, because this risk is low. Even if some of the first offspring were abnormal, Eve could have given birth many times to overcome this risk, simply from a mathematical standpoint.]

3) Iblis is out for vengeance, and humanity is his enemy. Allah mentions eight times that Iblis is a "clear/overt" enemy to mankind. It is no secret in the Quran that Iblis is focused on leading mankind to Hell.

{"Indeed, My servants—no authority will you have over them, **except those of the deviators who follow you**."} (15:42)

{Among mankind there are those who dispute about Allah without knowledge and follow every rebellious devil. **It has been decreed upon such devil that whoever allies with him, he will misguide them and lead them to the torment of the Blaze**.} (22:3-4)

We derive that Iblis does have some sort of indirect (never direct) authority, in the form of influence, only over those who follow him by following his deceptions (34:20-21). In extreme cases, he has firm influence over the people that seek his support (18:50). However, he doesn't have any authority over those who have proven their worth to be selected by God from among mankind.

[Rami: It is clear to me that any authority always comes from Allah, and Satan is not Allah's nemesis: he is mankind's nemesis. Allah has control over Satan, Adam, jinn, mankind, and all his

creations. We are all slaves/servants of Allah (19:93), but what differs is if one is an obedient servant or a disobedient slave. If you are an obedient, devout servant of Allah, Satan will not be able to deceive you nor influence your behavior (16:98-100).]

What will Satan do next, now that he is out for vengeance?

{"And O Adam! Dwell you and your wife in Paradise, and eat from wherever you will but do not approach this tree, lest you be among the wrongdoers."} (7:19)

{So We said, "O Adam, indeed this (Iblis) is an enemy to you and to your wife. Then let him not remove you from Paradise so you would suffer. Here (in Paradise) it is guaranteed that you will never go hungry or unclothed, nor will you (ever) suffer from thirst or heat."} (20:117-119)

When God created Adam and Eve, he told them to dwell in Paradise and eat from it whatever they want, except approaching a certain tree and eating its fruits. He also warned them that Satan is their enemy.

{Then Satan whispered to them in order to expose what was hidden of their nakedness. He said, "Your Lord has forbidden this tree to you only to prevent you from becoming angels or immortals." And he

swore to them, "I am truly your sincere advisor." **So he brought about their fall through deception**. And when they tasted of the tree, their nakedness was exposed to them, prompting them to cover themselves with leaves from Paradise. Then their Lord called out to them, "Did I not forbid you from that tree and (did I not) tell you that Satan is your sworn enemy?" They replied, "Our Lord! We have wronged ourselves. If You do not forgive us and have mercy on us, we will certainly be losers." He (Allah) said, "Descend as enemies to each other. You will find in the Earth a residence and provision for your appointed stay." He added, "There you will live, there you will die, and from there you will be resurrected." O Children of Adam! We have provided for you clothing to cover your nakedness and as an adornment, and the clothing of piety is better. This is one of Allah's bounties, so perhaps you will be mindful. O Children of Adam! Do not let Satan deceive you as he tempted your parents out of Paradise and caused their cover to be removed in order to expose their nakedness. Surely he and his company watch you from where you cannot see them. We have made the devils allies of those who disbelieve.} (7:20-27)

[Rami: There are many valuable takeaways from these verses, so let us go over them, one by one:

1) This incident happened in Paradise, but didn't God tell Satan to "get out of it" during the prostration incident, after the reprieve was granted to him? So how come Satan still had access to Paradise? This is why I inferred that the two incidents happened in two different places. The first expulsion was not from Paradise, but rather from another place referred to by "here" and "it" *(I have a vague idea of what this place may be, but I will not share it in this book)*. In all cases, this incident got Satan expelled from Paradise as well, while he completes his reprieve.
2) These verses dispel any misconception that it was Eve who convinced Adam to approach the forbidden tree and eat its fruit. According to the Quran, it was Satan, and both Adam and Eve bear responsibility for disobeying God.

3) When humans are in a susceptible state, Satan has the power to incite and tempt them (7:200) through his whispers and spells.
4) Satan uses false promises and hopes to tempt humans to disobey their Lord (4:119). In this plot, it was the false promise of becoming angels or immortals.
5) Only us humans have full authority over our own decisions and actions, not Satan, and we are accountable for our actions and the

choices we make. Satan invites our soul, and we have the choice to respond or not.

{And Satan will say after the judgment has been passed, "Indeed, Allah has made you a true promise. I too made you a promise, but I failed you. **I did not have any authority over you except that I called you, and you responded to me.** So do not blame me; blame yourselves. I cannot save you, nor can you save me. Indeed, I denounce your previous association of me with Allah. Surely the wrongdoers will suffer a painful punishment."} (14:22)

6) It could be greed that got Adam and Eve expelled from Paradise. God told them that they can have everything in Paradise except one thing, but they became greedy; they wanted immortality as well.
7) Human beings are very weak when it comes to their desires (4:28), and Satan knows that very well. Even Adam and Eve, who had been in direct contact with The Creator, couldn't resist temptation, even when they knew they were disobeying God.
8) There is a misconception that Adam and Eve lived naked in Paradise. The Quran indicates that their nakedness was concealed. Their nakedness was revealed to them only after they disobeyed their Lord, and when that happened, they felt ashamed and tried

to cover their private parts (pudendum) with tree leaves. Later, Allah provided them with other clothes for their earthly life. On the contrary to what many people like to believe, Allah confirms that human instinct, which is part of our innate knowledge, is to feel ashamed of exposing one's private parts (pudendum) to someone else, and it is NOT natural to live in a constant state of nudity!

9) "The clothing of piety is better." Figuratively speaking, piety is the best attire one can wear, exhibited through one's behavior. However, these words could also have a literal meaning, where there is certain clothing that exhibits piety, and it is more virtuous to wear such clothing than others.

10) Allah immediately punished Adam and Eve by expelling them from Paradise and dropping them to Earth, because he advised them not to approach the tree. When God makes a stipulation, there will always be consequences, good or bad, when the condition is met.

11) Adam and Eve immediately regretted what they did and asked God for forgiveness: "Our Lord! We have wronged ourselves. If You do not forgive us and have mercy on us, we will certainly be losers." Unlike Satan, Adam and Eve were regretful after they

disobeyed their Lord. They were not arrogant and rebellious. I believe that this is one of the reasons why The Forgiver forgave Adam and Eve and gave them a second chance to earn their way back to Paradise, as I will cover in the following chapters. God's postponement of Satan's punishment was not a second chance: it was simply a reprieve. However, due to his deception, Satan is no longer allowed to spend his reprieve in the upper realm.

12) Two verses preceding these verses, God mentioned:

{And We had already taken a pledge from Adam before, but he forgot; and We did not find in him a firm resolve.} (20:115)

What pledge did Adam forget? When you think about this incident, your first guess might be: the pledge of not approaching the forbidden tree. However, if we go back to what Satan told Adam and Eve, he said, "**Your Lord has forbidden this tree to you** only to prevent you from becoming angels or immortals." And he swore to them, "I am truly your sincere advisor." The bolded words make it clear that Satan reminded them of the prohibition. Therefore, if the pledge was only to not approach the forbidden tree, Adam would have been reminded by Satan. There must be another part of his pledge that Adam forgot. What is it?

Muhammad Ash-Sha'rawi, the late renowned Egyptian Muslim scholar (may God bless him for his wisdom and knowledge), explains that Adam forgot two things: his Lord's warning of Satan as his enemy, and his pledge to always obey God and not follow Satan!! This is a very important lesson!! Humans tend to forget that they have to always obey God and to take Satan seriously as an overt enemy. God used the word "overt" to emphasize two things: first, that we are only going to see clearly that Satan is our enemy through our insight and not through our eyesight, and second, to make it very clear that there is a relentless enemy working against us. We already lost against Satan and his deceptions if we do not believe in his existence, or if we keep forgetting about him as our enemy.

On the subject of forgetting, the word for "Man" in Arabic is "Insan" and it comes from the verb "Nasa", which means "to forget" (i.e., neglect). One of the main attributes of mankind is that they are forgetful when they are not mindful of a subject. If they are not constantly or periodically thinking about a certain subject matter, they are going to eventually forget it and not pay heed to it. Even when humans do not forget, they sometimes pretend that they did, especially when they make promises they fail to keep.

This is why God, from that point on, made covenants with mankind (Hadith).

13) God guaranteed there is no suffering in Paradise, but outside of Paradise there are no guarantees.

14) Satan has company; he is not alone. He can't take on all of mankind by himself: he needs agents and loyal helpers. Satan and his allies are called the devils, and devils can be from the jinn and mankind (6:112-113). **Evil jinn are the demons.**]

This was Satan's first deception that got him, any jinn that may have been with him[6], Adam, and Eve out of Paradise. God also told them:

{We said, "Descend from it, all of you. **And when guidance comes to you from Me, whoever follows My guidance, there will be no fear concerning them, nor will they grieve.** And those who disbelieve and deny Our signs, those will be inmates of the Fire; they will abide therein eternally."} (2:38-39)

[6] [Rami: In the Quran and the Hadith, there is no claim that jinn inhabited the Earth before mankind did. Even if we assume they did, I reasoned that they were extinct at the time Adam and Eve were dropped to the Earth. And the jinn that are inhabiting the Earth with mankind are from Iblis' progeny (18:50), similar to how all humans are from Adam's progeny. Therefore, it's highly likely that Iblis had at least a mating partner with him. Furthermore, some Christians interpreted that the jinn are the fallen angels, derived from the Book of Enoch. They may well be the jinn that were dropped to the Earth with Adam and Eve, but they are not angels, or at least that is not their origin. The Quran clearly differentiates the jinn from the angels. As I mentioned before, I believe that Satan may have been given angel wings, but I am not sure if his companion(s) had wings as well. If Satan is Man's enemy, he has every reason to deceive us to believe there are sinning angels who were expelled from Heaven, and that they are the ones tempting humans to sin. The Quran and the Hadith say that angels never disobey their Lord, and God is not going to command them to sin. From Islam's perspective, it is not Enoch's integrity that is in question, for he is indeed a truthful person and a prophet (19:56), but rather the authenticity of the translated book(s).]

[Rami: Since then, the Earth has become mankind's temporary abode—a "provisioned sojourn" ("Mata'a" in Arabic). Some Islamic traditions mention that Adam and Eve landed on Earth in two separate locations, and then they reunited in Arafah, near Makkah, in the Arabian Peninsula; however, there is no supporting evidence of that in the Quran and the Hadith. Nevertheless, related to this subject matter, I discovered a major piece of the jigsaw puzzle that most people, including most of today's Muslims, are unaware of. My discovery began when I was researching the interpretation of the following verses:

{And when your Lord took from the children of Adam—from their backs—their descendants and made them testify of themselves, (saying to them), "Am I not your Lord?" They said, "Yes, we have testified." (God cautioned,) "Now you have no right to say on the Day of Resurrection, 'We were not aware of this' Nor say, 'It was our forefathers who had associated others and we, as their descendants, followed in their footsteps. Will you then destroy us for the falsehood they invented?'"} (7:172-173)

I reasoned that the "children of Adam" in verse (7:172) is referring only to Adam's direct sons. At one point in time, God extracted their

descendants (i.e., the rest of mankind) from their backs, with bodies the size of tiny particles. Then God asked the entire human race, "Am I not your Lord?" They said, "Yes, we have testified." **Then God made a covenant with them (57:8) and asked them to bear witness to this covenant on the Day of Resurrection**.

This incident most likely happened on Earth near Mount Arafah in Makkah Province, Saudi Arabia (90:1-4). Mount Arafah is the place where all Muslims are required to visit, if they have the health and the financial means, at least once in a lifetime, as part of "Hajj" ("Pilgrimage" in English). The first thought that came to my mind when I learned[7] this: this could explain why the mount is called "Arafah"—"get to know" in Arabic!! The Arafah area is the place where the descendants of Adam came to life and got to know their Lord for the very first time. Most Muslims know of Mount Arafah as the place where pilgrims are required to spend the second day of the pilgrimage (Day of Arafah) supplicating and repenting to God, but very few Muslims know why this place was chosen specifically! Most Muslims are told that the significance of this place lies in the fact that this is the place where prophet Muhammad delivered one of his last

[7] [Rami: For a long time, I didn't know this until I learned it for the first time from the Muslim scholar Dr. Muhammad Al-Moubayed (may Allah bless him for his wisdom and knowledge). I later did some research and found a Hadith that supports this.]

famous sermons before his death. It makes more sense to me that this place has a greater significance than what most Muslims are aware of. During the Day of Arafah, the place gets filled with around two million pilgrims, but imagine if every human being to ever live on Earth needs to gather there. It makes sense to me that The Omnipotent first created us as tiny particles, so that we all fit in one place. We consider what we see with our own eyes to be real, but this does not mean that this is the only possible reality with the existence of a creator deity. Even in the image below, people do look like tiny particles around Mount Arafah on the Day of Arafah, from a distant vantage point.

Speaking of fitting in one place, this kindled another thought. Today, the world's population is around 7.5 billion (2020). If we were all Adam's size (27.4 m / 90 ft tall) at today's population levels, would we all be able to fit comfortably on Earth, or produce enough man-made resources to meet our needs? It makes sense to infer here that God

designed our bodies, through our DNA, with certain genes that he mutates to shrink the human size, as human population increases over time, allowing humans to adapt and survive. This is **Allah's selection**, and what I believe is adaptation and evolution **as per Allah's will and authority**.

{O Mankind! If you are in doubt about the Resurrection, then (know that) We did create you from dust, then from a bit, then (developed you into) a clinging clot (of blood), then a lump of flesh—fully formed or unformed—in order to demonstrate (Our power and authority) to you. (Then) We settle whatever (embryo) We will in the womb for an appointed term, then bring you forth as infants, so that you may reach (your time of) maturity. Some of you (may) die (young), while others are left to reach the most feeble stage of life so that they may know nothing after having known much…} (22:5)

This "testimony" event also clarifies the following verse:

{They (people of Hell) will plead, "Our Lord! You **made us lifeless twice and revived us twice.** Now we confess our sins. So is there any way out?"} (40:11)

Based on the above verse and (2:28), plus Hadith, I concluded that we are to be made lifeless twice. After Allah created Adam, he extracted

in one instant all the human souls (31:28) from his back (Hadith). Later he brought all these souls to life, by making for them tiny bodies taken from the backs of Adam's direct sons, so that they can testify that Allah is indeed their Lord. Then he made them lifeless—the first life ended. We are then brought to life, when we are conceived in our mother's womb, to begin the second life. Now, having said all of that, does this mean we should be aware of God's existence in the second life, due to what happened in the first life?

Muslim scholars point out that this incident indicates that mankind's awareness and acceptance of Allah as their Lord is innate. **Accordingly, I derived that innate knowledge, which scientists failed to explain where it comes from, was given to us in the first (brief) life. This innate knowledge (part of "Fitrah" ["Genesis" in English]) is separate from the knowledge we acquire in the second life and store in our brain's memory unit. This also got me to infer that the soul has its own memory, which hosts this innate knowledge.** Does this explain why I felt in my heart, not mind, when I was a young child, that a singular supreme power does exist? Doesn't every young child feel this?! But why did this feeling stay with me and not with someone else who grew up not believing in God? Does the environment we grow up in play a significant factor in reinforcing or

suppressing our innate knowledge—the whole philosophical debate, nature vs nurture? But then, how come I don't remember anything from the first life and that I have a covenant with God? And why were we, the Children of Adam, made lifeless then brought to life again? *(answered in the final chapter, but don't jump to it! You need to read all the other chapters to fully understand the final chapter.)*]

While on Earth, Satan and his army of devils are mankind's enemy. Through his deceptions, Satan will influence and recruit, from the jinn and mankind, members for his army and party. So, with all of Satan's deceptions and deceit, how do we know that we are on the side of good and not on the side of evil? How do we know that we are following the truth and not falsehood? How do we know that we are not blinded by Satan's deceptions? How do we know how to fulfill the covenant we all made with God?

Chapter 6

The Straight Path

{In the name of Allah—the Most Gracious, Most Merciful. (All) praise is (due) to Allah—Lord of the worlds, the Most Gracious, Most Merciful, Master of the Day of Requital. It is You we worship and it is You we ask for help. **Guide us to the Straight Path**—the path of those on whom You have bestowed Your grace, not of those who have evoked Your wrath nor of those who have gone astray.} (1:1-7)

The above seven verses make up a whole chapter in the Quran called "Al-Fatiha" (The Opener). It is the first chapter of the Quran, which is why it is called the Opener. These verses are so important that Muslims recite them in their daily prayers. When examining these verses, we realize that they form a supplication that is broken into three parts. The first part indicates the addressee—that is Allah, Lord of the worlds, the Most Gracious, Most Merciful. The second part asserts our relationship to the Lord—it is he who we worship, and it is he who we

seek help from. Then comes the third part—the request to the Lord to guide us to the straight path. This is the path of those on whom God has bestowed his grace, not of those who have evoked his wrath nor of those who have gone astray.

[Rami: "The Straight Path", again!! Of all the things one could ask of their Lord, God placed emphasis on the guidance to this path and ensured that Muslims invoke him daily for this guidance. What is the straight path and where does it lead us to? Who is guided to it, and how come not everyone? Here is what I concluded:

1) What is the "Straight Path" ("As-Sirat Al-Mustaqeem")?

   The straight path is the path of absolute virtue and piety. To follow this path means to follow ALL of Allah's commandments, while living your life in uprightness and in devoted servitude to Allah alone. This is the way of Allah—the right way to live your life. The following are the <u>overarching main</u> (not all) commandments I extracted from the Quran:

   - Worship Allah alone, without associating with him any partners (3:51 | 4:36 | 6:151 | 17:23 | 36:61), and obey him and obey his messenger (sent to you) (3:132 | 4:59 | 4:80 | 5:92).
   - Be mindful, grateful, and trustful of Allah (2:152 | 8:2 | 31:14).

- Be good to your parents and take care of them at old age (4:36 | 17:23-24), and maintain the ties of kinship (2:27 | 4:1 | 16:90).
- Do what is permitted (Halal) and abstain from what is forbidden (Haram) of lewd and evil acts, aggression, and other prohibitions (e.g., unlawful food, usury, etc.), in open or secret (6:151 | 7:33,157 | 16:90).
- Do righteous deeds and practice virtuous habits (16:90,97 | 17:36-39,53 | 49:1-13).
- Give full measure and weight with equity (6:152 | 17:35), return trusts and rights to their rightful owners (4:58), and do not defraud people of their property and rights (11:85 | 26:183).
- Fulfill your promises (e.g., vows, contracts, etc.) (5:1 | 16:91).
- Uphold justice and equity (4:58 | 5:8), and be honest, truthful, and straightforward when you speak (33:70), even when speaking against your relatives and yourself (4:135).
- Take good care of the orphans and their inheritance (4:36 | 6:152 | 17:34), and feed the deprived (69:34 | 74:44 | 89:18).
- Give Zakat (mandatory charitable contribution) (2:43 | 73:20) and alms, (2:276 | 9:103-104 | 63:10) and avoid miserliness (3:180 | 4:37 | 6:70 | 17:29) and extravagance (6:141 | 7:31 | 17:26 | 25:67).

- Do not kill yourself (4:29) or any other human soul Allah has forbidden to be killed, except by a lawful right (2:178 | 17:33).

These overarching commandments are guiding principles in how we should live our life.

{Worship Allah and associate nothing with Him, and to parents do good, and to relatives, orphans, those deprived, neighbor who is of kin and to the neighbor who is a stranger, the companion at your side, the wayfarer, and those in your possession. Indeed, Allah does not like those who are arrogant, proud.} (4:36)

{For your Lord has decreed that you worship none but Him. And honor your parents. If one or both of them reach old age, never say to them "uff" (i.e., fie—an expression of anger or discontent), nor yell at them. Rather, address them respectfully. And be humble with them out of mercy, and pray, "My Lord! Bestow upon them Your Mercy, as they brought me up (when I was) little."} (17:23-24)

The Source of Goodness says that we need to be good to one another, including neighbors, our spouse, relatives, wayfarers, and those in our possession *(explained in the next chapter)*. However, it is mandatory to care for your parents, the orphans,

and the deprived, because they require the most care and assistance.

God also indicated in the Quran that the inclination toward uprightness is part of our innate instinct (30:30); this is why you sense in your heart that Allah's commandments are the right things to do. This led me to conclude that one isn't considered on the straight path if one isn't following ALL of God's commandments. Also, I reasoned that the duty of performing Salat (prayer), Hajj (pilgrimage), and Siyam (fasting)—during the month of Ramadan—are all integral parts of the "worshiping Allah alone" commandment. In reference to a Hadith, it is widely accepted among Muslims that Islam is built on five pillars:

1. Profession of Faith (Shahada)—to bear witness that there is no deity except Allah and that Muhammad is his messenger
2. Performing Salat
3. Giving Zakat *(if one meets the minimum threshold of wealth)*
4. Fasting in Ramadan *(with some allowances)*
5. Performing Hajj *(if one has the means and health)*

I believe that the "five pillars" concept falls short of summarizing the full tenets of Islam, because it does not cover all the

overarching main commandments I listed and, consequently, it undermines the importance of the missing commandments. In my opinion, the five pillars—as the word "pillar" suggests—form the necessary strong foundation to make one a Muslim, but not enough to make one an upright Muslim on the straight path to reach Paradise directly. Ask yourself this, "If I fulfill the five pillars, but I fail to fulfill my promises to the best of my ability, to be always truthful when I speak, to take care of my parents when in need, or to be just and fair in my actions and speech, does that make me an upright person?" Having said this, when it comes to the Islamic tenets and following the straight path, I believe that the main commandments, not the five pillars, should be front and center—the backbone from which the Islamic law branches out.

2) Who is guided to the Straight Path?

- The guided ones are the people who believe in Allah and hold fast to him (3:101 | 4:175), by surrendering themselves to obeying him and his messenger (4:64-70). On this path, one is in a state of mindfulness of Allah, while observing his commandments correctly without crossing his limits (the path's borderlines), even when faced with difficult life challenges. This guidance comes with the feeling of

contentment and pleasure in the heart in wanting to obey Allah and to seek his pleasure (5:16). If one does not believe in God's existence and the hereafter, or holds firmly to this faith, God will not grant him/her this guidance and the marvelous feeling and purity that comes with it.

- {Whoever needs to be guided to the straight path needs to **make his heart wide open to Islam**.} (6:125-126)

  In several verses (3:51 | 6:83-87 | 37:118-120), Allah claims to have guided to the straight path many others who came before the revelation of the Quran, and the commandments I listed seem similar to the Ten Commandments conveyed by Moses, so why did Allah mention only Islam? *(answered in the verse below, but I will further explain this crucial subject in chapter 12)*

  {He (Allah) has ordained for you of religion what He enjoined upon Noah and that which We have revealed to you (O Muhammad), and what We enjoined upon Ibrahim and Moses and Jesus—to establish the religion and not be divided therein. **Greatly (detested) for those who associate others with Allah is that to which you invite them.** Allah chooses for Himself

whom He wills and guides to Himself whoever turns back (to Him).} (42:13)

3) Can anyone other than God guide people to the straight path?

Only by God's will one is guided to the straight path (28:56 | 2:142 | 4:68 | 5:16 | 6:39 | 6:87 | 10:25 | 42:52), and there are multiple degrees of guidance (18:13 | 47:17). It is not up to us to decide who will be guided; however, The Guide can use his scriptures, messengers, and his guided, righteous servants as means to guide others. If you want someone to be guided to the straight path, you can pray to God to guide that person.

4) Where does the Straight Path lead to?

{He (Allah) said, "This is a path (of return) to Me (that is) straight."} (15:41)

This verse explicitly states the destination of this path—the return path back to Allah. This can also be derived from studying the Quran. Now, where did Adam and Eve dwell before residing on Earth? That is correct, Paradise. Some of the pieces of the puzzle are starting to come together. Adam and Eve, and consequently their descendants, were expelled from Paradise; the way back is

through the straight path. **The straight path is the shortest path to Paradise without spending time in Hell.** Life is a journey of many paths for one to choose from. What is certain, life does not go on forever. We are destined to die. Death is the truth that no one can deny (39:30). The Light says if you want to make it straight to him and to Paradise, you first need to demonstrate to him your sincere faith and trust in him and your obedience, so that he guides you through his light to the right path, which you then must follow. **The divine truth is God's light!!!** In the absence of this truth, you will live in darkness and not find your way to Paradise.]

{Alif, Lam, Ra. A Book which We have sent to you, so you bring mankind out of darknesses into the light by permission of their Lord—to the path of the Exalted in Might, the Most Praiseworthy.} (14:1)

{**And indeed, you invite them to a Straight Path.** And those who disbelieve in the Hereafter are deviating from the path.} (23:73-74)

{And if you obey most of those on the Earth, they will lead you astray from Allah's way; they follow but conjecture and they only lie.} (6:116)

Chapter 7

The People of Paradise

Paradise ("Jannah" in Arabic) is a vast dwelling place of everlasting bliss and peace, filled with majestic rivers and gardens. God often refers to its gardens by "Gardens of Aden" (40:8 |19:61), where "Aden" means "permanent dwelling". Paradise is divided into vertical levels, and each level designates the rank of the people entering it. The gardens in the highest levels are the closest to Allah's Throne and located in the center. These gardens are called "Gardens of Al-Firdaus" (18:107), and they are reserved for the best of the best (23:1-11).

{As for those who **believe and do righteous deeds**, they are the people of Paradise; they will abide therein eternally.} (2:82)

[Rami: When I first studied the Quran, one of the early things that stood out for me was how the words "believe" and "do righteous deeds" are always conjoined together by the conjunction "and" (not "or"), when God mentions admitting people into Paradise. This means

both conditions must be met. Having the right faith alone, or being a righteous person without the right faith, isn't enough to enter Paradise. Many people do not believe in Allah, but they do believe if Allah did indeed exist, and there is indeed an afterlife, they will enter Paradise because they are righteous people. This is not true, according to Allah.

{And whoever does righteous deeds, whether male or female, while being a believer—those will enter Paradise and will not be wronged, (even as much as) the speck on a date seed.} (4:124)

Notice the clause "while being a believer" to emphasize this condition. Essentially, Allah is asking us to maintain two relationships very well—our relationship with him, the Lord (believe), and our relationship with our fellow mankind (do righteous deeds). Ultimately, the final decision of who enters Paradise is God's, and I will cover this later, but according to the Quran, one must do both, and obeying Allah's commandments correctly ensures this (10:25-26). Conceptually speaking, "Believe and do righteous deeds" is the overarching banner of the Straight Path!]

Prophet Muhammad once said, "Faith has over seventy or sixty branches, the most excellent of which is the declaration that there is no (true) deity except Allah, and the humblest of which is the removal of

what is injurious from the path; and modesty is a branch of faith." We also derive from the Quran and the Hadith that the believers are:

- those who believe in Allah, without associating with him any partners or rivals, and in Allah alone they place their trust (64:13)
- those who believe in the unseen (2:3) (e.g., Paradise, Hell, angels)
- those who believe in destiny and are content with what God has decreed for them (Hadith)
- those who believe that they will be returning to their Lord for judgment on the Last Day (2:45-46)
- those who believe in ALL the prophets and messengers and what was revealed to them, and follow their teachings and guidance (2:4 | 2:177 | 2:285 | 4:136)
- {Believers, in fact, are those who believe in Allah and His Messenger, then have no doubt, but strive with their wealth and their lives in the way of Allah. **It is those who are the truthful.**} (49:15)

{Success is really attained by the believers (23:1). Who concentrate their attention in humbleness when offering Salat (23:2). And who keep themselves from vain things (23:3). And who are performers of Zakat (23:4) And who guard their private parts (23:5) except from their wives or those in their possession, as they are not to be blamed (23:6).}

[Rami: I want to comment on three things mentioned in the last verses:

1) **Salat:** Salat means to connect with God by observing prayer, and the chief form of prayer for Muslims is a ritual prescribed by God that must be performed five times a day (Hadith | 4:103). Salat is obligatory for believers, and it is the first thing that God will judge people on (Hadith). You cannot be a Muslim if you don't pray.
2) **Zakat**[8]**:** Zakat is a religious duty for all Muslims who meet the necessary criteria of wealth. This annual, mandatory, self-enforced, charitable contribution can be spent on the poor, the deprived, the debtors, the wayfarers, the Zakat administrators, those in bondage, the comrades, and in the way of Allah (9:60).
3) **Those in their possession:** The word "possession" is referring to female slaves, or bondwomen. I know what you are thinking: How come Allah, who claims to be the most merciful, did not directly call for the abolition of slavery? I had the same question. It was a hard one to swallow at first, but after some years of life experiences and contemplation, I have come to understand God's wisdom. We need to establish first that slavery was a common

[8] [Rami: Just like the words "believe" and "do righteous deeds", I noticed that the words "Salat" and "Zakat" are also always mentioned together in the Quran. Salat is for our relationship/tie with Allah, and Zakat is for our relationship/tie with our fellow mankind. The people of Paradise are {those who maintain the ties Allah has commanded to be maintained and fear their Lord and are frightful of an evil reckoning.} (13:21)]

practice in the medieval era and across many communities, and to establish second that there are verses in the Quran that specifically address the events and circumstances of the time of revelation. At the time the Quran was revealed, Islam was in its infancy and was under attack by those who rejected the divine truth conveyed by Muhammad—the non-believers. This led to battles between the two groups, and prisoners of war were taken as slaves, **as per the social norms of that era.** Captured women became bondwomen. When the Quran was revealed, God could have called for drastic reform by immediately abolishing slavery, but that would have caused social disobedience for two reasons: one, slaves were a high value asset and people were not ready, socially nor financially, to easily relinquish such asset; and two, you must consider what might have happened if the slaves were manumitted, especially single female slaves and widowed women with their children, in that dark era. I have learned in life that reform cannot always be radical, in many cases it must be gradual. It seems to me that this was exactly God's plan. When it came to manumission of slaves, God applied gradual reform to avoid widespread animosity toward his religion, in four ways:

i. Manumission by Virtue: Always treat slaves humanely (4:36 | Hadith) and do what is right by emancipating a slave for free (90:10-13 | Hadith).
ii. Manumission by Compensation: Virtuous slaves must be allowed to buy their own freedom from their master (24:33).
iii. Manumission by Expiation: God made freeing a slave a form of expiation that one can carry out in the event one mistakenly kills another believer (4:92), breaks a sworn oath (5:89), or commits sinful acts, such as the act of Zihar (a banned old Arabian custom) (58:3).
iv. Manumission by Assimilation: God allowed a Muslim man to have sex with his female slave, and if he does so, most likely he'll have a child with her. He cannot abandon nor denounce his new offspring or adopted ones, because that would be against the Islamic law. Therefore, with time, the female slave and the children will assimilate into his Islamic family, which he will then have to support. Most of those bondwomen and their children were getting gradually emancipated into Islamic families. That was a better approach than leaving women of the defeated disbelievers on their own to figure out how to survive. Not to forget, God

wants the disbelievers to become aware of his religion and embrace it. Doubters and haters will always challenge this justification, but what they cannot challenge is what exactly happened. Over time, slavery was abated among believers, without fueling animosity toward a new religion. With faith and the teachings of Islam, believers came to their own conclusion[9] that slavery is cruel and inhumane. To appreciate this more, I will give you an example that you may be more familiar with. It is generally cited that one of the main causes of the US Civil War in 1861 was the abolition of slavery in the Deep South. The people there were not socially or financially ready to free their slaves. By forcing them to make drastic changes to their social norms, hundreds of thousands of people died. Without any doubt, slavery is inhumane and utterly wrong, and Abraham Lincoln might have had the best of intentions. However, human judgment and wisdom are always limited when

[9] [Rami: Many will argue that there are Muslims who persisted in having slaves, centuries after prophet Muhammad's death. Although the numbers of traded slaves are exaggerated, there is truth to this, but who said every single Muslim practiced Islam correctly?! Religion provides the guidelines and laws, but it is still the obligation of humans to follow and abide by them. Islam advocated the manumission of slaves and not for trading and buying slaves. Nevertheless, I do believe that a few generations after the death of prophet Muhammad, when the Islamic doctrine became well-entrenched among the people and state, slavery should have been abolished by a state law. At that time, most Arabians, now practicing Muslims, would have been more receptive to the abolition of slavery than their forefathers had been decades earlier.]

compared to God's wisdom. Figuring out what is the best course of action is not easy. Social reform is an extremely important topic. The prohibition of drinking alcohol is another example of how God implemented gradual reform. A vital lesson I learned here is that at the surface we might not understand—and sometimes even dare to question God's laws and approach—but have we put enough thought into them to really understand the purpose and wisdom behind them?! Who understands mankind's nature and behavior better, mankind themselves or their creator?! Who is wiser, us or The All-Wise?! Lastly on slavery, if Islam encourages it, how come many slaves embraced Islam voluntarily, even against the will of their pagan masters?!!]

Having the correct faith is not enough; one must be a performer of righteous (good) deeds. We can use common sense—part of our innate knowledge—to distinguish between right and wrong. However, because of Satan's deceptions and falsehood, and our forgetfulness, God laid out for us "Al-Furqan" (The Criterion). Al-Furqan is an Arabic word that, in this context, means the criterion to differentiate what is right from what is wrong—and, consequently, the permitted from the forbidden. Therefore, the righteous are those who enjoin what

is right and forbid what is wrong, and they hasten in doing good (3:114). God grants Al-Furqan to the pious believers, who are fearful of disobeying him (8:29), so that they can clearly perceive where God's lines are drawn. Also, Al-Furqan can be found in God's divine scriptures. Similar to how God has many names, and his names are his attributes, God's last revelation/message also has different names/epithets, highlighting its attributes[10]. Here are the main Arabic names, but not all:

1) **Al-Quran**: it means **the Recitation** (16:98) of the divine words
2) **Al-Kitab**: it means **the Book/Scripture** (2:2), a compilation of the scripted divine words
3) **Al-Furqan**: it means **the Criterion** (2:185) for right and wrong
4) **Ath-Thikr**: it means **the Reminder** (15:9) of what is forgotten
5) **Al-Huda**: it means **the Guidance** (2:2) to the straight path
6) **An-Noor**: it means **the Light** (4:174) of the divine truth

[Rami: I heard people say, "We don't need religion to do good things and be righteous." Okay, but how can you be certain that everything you do is right? What if you have been deceived by Satan, or taught wrong things by those who brought you up or those who you listen to?

[10] The Quran clearly indicates that most, but not all, of these attributes are also found in the preceding revelations (2:53 | 3:3-4 | 5:46 | 21:48).

What if you didn't have righteous people around you growing up to teach you to be righteous? God indeed has given you innate knowledge to be righteous, but because of external factors that influence your behavior and knowledge, in addition to your desires for worldly matters, you need guidance. You can get guidance from many sources, but the best guidance by far is Allah's guidance!]

The Quran gives us a glimpse of what to expect in Paradise. Here is what The Possessor of Glory and Honor promised those who believe and do righteous deeds, without going into details:

In Paradise

- grant them an eternal life (2:82 | 29:58 | 65:11 | 98:8), with no grief, boredom, toil, aging, nor fatigue (35:34-35)
- grant them their reward in full, without any interruptions (2:277 | 3:57 | 30:45 | 84:25 | 95:6)
- bless them with honorable provisions (8:4,74 | 22:50 | 33:31)
- accommodate them in mansions with meadow gardens, underneath rivers flow (22:14 | 29:58 | 32:19 | 39:20 | 42:22)
- grant them at no cost whatever they desire and wish for, and much more (9:72 | 40:40 | 43:71 | 50:35)
- grant them pure spouses (2:25 | 4:57 | 52:20)

- grant them the privilege of seeing God (10:26 | 75:23)

Before entering Paradise

- let them have a decent life (16:97) (despite the difficult trials they will have to face)
- make them (genuinely) loved by people (19:96)
- grant them forgiveness (5:9 | 22:50 | 34:4 | 35:7 | 48:29), admit them in God's mercy (45:30), and nullify their bad deeds (29:7)
- eventually, {…make them successors in the land, as He did with those before them; and will surely establish for them their faith which He has chosen for them; and will indeed change their fear into security…} (24:55)

Living an eternal, blissful, luxurious life in Paradise sounds amazing, and I personally would like to end up there; therefore, I need to follow the straight path. However, the prerequisite to being guided to this right path is that I trust and believe in Allah and hold firmly to this faith. If Allah is truly fair, what proof of his existence and authority has he revealed to mankind to establish the certainty of faith required for true trust and obedience? And if Satan is constantly working on misguiding mankind and making them forget or deny God's existence, is God going to intervene and help them against Satan's deceptions? Is God going to remind mankind of what they keep forgetting?

Chapter 8

The Chosen Ones

{People used to be a single ummah (before their deviation). Then Allah sent prophets, delivering glad tidings and warnings, and sent down with them the Scripture in truth, to judge between people in matters of their dispute. And none differed over it (i.e., the Scripture) except the very people who received it after clear proofs had come to them, out of animosity among themselves. Then Allah, by His permission, has guided the believers to the truth regarding those disputes. And Allah guides whoever He wills to the Straight Path.} (2:213)

This verse summarizes people's state of affairs when God sends them the truth of what they dispute. Here is a breakdown of the verse:

1. **People used to be a single ummah:** The story of mankind on Earth started with Adam and Eve, after they were expelled from Paradise. The couple knew what they needed to do to return back to Paradise, and they also knew about the covenant made between

Allah and mankind. It is only logical to assume that they passed down their faith and knowledge to their children and grandchildren, forming a single ummah. “Ummah” is an Arabic word that translates to “community” or “nation” (depending on size). Members of an ummah share a commonality: in most cases, it is their creed. So, the first ummah was a community led by Adam, a single ummah that existed.

2. **Sent prophets:** Centuries and generations later, people started to forget. With Satan’s incitation, disputes among people started to arise in matters related to faith and the told truth: Which deity should we worship? Do we even need to worship anyone? What is right and what is wrong? Throughout human history, these disputes have deviated people off the straight path. And whenever there were very few people, or none, left on the straight path, God intervened. To make indirect contact with mankind on Earth, Allah elected Anbiya' (“Prophets” in English, plural of “Nabi”). The prophets are the chosen ones among us that God sent to mankind. By the word “sent”, God doesn’t mean he dropped them from the Sky in spaceships. He means that he appointed certain individuals to guide others to the straight path, by bringing to

them the divine truth and judging between them in matters they dispute. Who exactly did God appoint?

a. Prophets are from Adam's progeny (19:58). They are human (14:11), and they all belong to the same nation, united in faith—faith in Allah as their Lord (21:92).
b. God informed the prophets of the absolute truth and showed them direct evidence. In exchange for receiving direct evidence, God made a special covenant with them (33:7), obliging them to inform and teach the people the knowledge that was revealed to them.
c. The Quran mentions the names of 25 prophets and indicates that there are many others not mentioned (4:164 | 40:78). Here are the prophets mentioned by name in the Quran:

1. Adam	2. Idris (Enoch)	3. Nuh (Noah)
4. Hud	5. Saleh	6. Ibrahim (Abraham)
7. Lut (Lot)	8. Shu'aib	9. Ismael (Ishmael)
10. Ishaq (Isaac)	11. Ya'qub (Jacob)	12. Yusuf (Joseph)
13. Ayyub (Job)	14. Dhulkifl (Ezekiel)	15. Yunus (Jonah)

16. Musa (Moses)	17. Harun (Aaron)	18. Ilyas (Elijah)
19. Alyasa' (Elisha)	20. Dawud (David)	21. Sulayman (Solomon)
22. Zekariya (Zechariah)	23. Yehya (John)	24. Isa (Jesus)
25. Muhammad		

d. Prophets are the real superheroes. God gave some prophets more favors and preferences than others (2:253). Most of them were granted sound judgment and knowledge, but some were given special knowledge and supernatural powers. For example, prophet Dawud (David) was able to make coats of mail from iron (21:80) and understand the speech of birds (27:16), while prophet Sulayman (Solomon) was able to command the wind (21:81) and interact with the jinn (27:17). Other prophets were able to perform miracles, not by their own authority, but by the authority and permission of Allah. These powers were not given to them to entertain people, but rather to show people strong signs that they were elected by a supreme authority (14:10-11). For example, prophet Isa (Jesus) cured the born blind and the

leper, and he brought life to the dead (3:49). Prophet Moses parted the sea with his staff (20:77), and prophet Muhammad asked God to split the moon, and it fleetingly did (54:1-3). Furthermore, some were given a message from God to convey it clearly to the people (64:12), hence making them Rusol ("Messengers" in English, plural of "Rasool").

[Rami: What is the difference between a "prophet" and a "messenger"? It took me a long time to clearly understand the difference in meaning of the two words. Prophethood is God's gateway to reveal information of the seen and the unseen to mankind. Therefore, a prophet is a special, righteous person chosen by God to inform and teach people of what they learned from him, such as the truth of the matters people dispute (78:1-40), a new craft, and God's rules with the methodology for how to observe them (5:48). They are essentially elected teachers and role models that were told and taught the divine truth by God. If they are ordered to complete a particular mission or convey to people a message from God, then they become messengers as well. The revealed message is God's own words, and it can either be long, conveyed in a divine scripture, or short, which the

messenger can remember (e.g., messages that include admonitions and glad tidings). Those who choose to believe in God and his message must obey the messenger (4:64,80), and those who choose disbelief and disobedience instead, God will punish them according to his judgment.]

e. God communicated with his elected prophets in three ways:

{It is not for a human being to have Allah communicate with them, except through inspiration, or from behind a veil, or by sending a messenger to reveal whatever He wills by His permission. He is the Most High, All-Wise.} (42:51)

i. revelation through inspirations or visions in a dream
ii. revelation through direct communication from behind a veil, where the prophet can hear God speak, but not see him (this is the example of prophet Moses, when God spoke to him from behind a veil)
iii. revelation through an angel messenger (15:75), and the messenger of revelations is angel Gabriel (God communicated with most prophets through this method)

3. **With them the Scripture:** The divine/holy scriptures, or books, are revealed to the prophet-messengers. These scriptures are God's messages to mankind, and they contain various subjects, including the truth that people need to turn to for judgment in matters they dispute. Here are the sent divine scriptures[11] named in the Quran, in the order they were revealed[12]:
    i. Suhuf (Scrolls of) Ibrahim: revealed to prophet Ibrahim
    ii. Tawrat (Torah): revealed to prophet Moses
    iii. Injil (Gospel): revealed to prophet Isa (Jesus)
    iv. Qur'an (Quran): revealed to prophet Muhammad

4. The verse ends with: "Then Allah, by His permission, has guided the believers to the truth regarding those disputes. And Allah guides whoever He wills to the Straight Path." In other words, only those who truly believe in God and follow the truth revealed in the holy scriptures will be guided to the straight path. God has

[11] [Rami: The Quran mentions that prophet David was given "Zaburran" (4:163 | 17:55). The word "Zaburran" is the Arabic word "Zabur" with nunation, and its plural, "Zubor", is also used in the Quran, which indicates there is more than one Zabur. All Muslim scholars agree that Az-Zabur means "the book", but there is great ambiguity regarding the nature of this book. Many said that Zabur Dawud (David) is the Psalms of David. It could be, but not all the psalms seem to be written by prophet David. In all cases and based on my analysis of the word "Zabur" in the Quran, I derived that Az-Zabur is NOT a full compilation of God's own divine words—a message—sent down from the Heavens, like the four holy scriptures I listed, but rather a book authored on Earth by an entity other than God. This book contains words of a human being, **BUT also includes excerpts (i.e., pieces) of God's own divine words.** I also derived that if the Zabur is either inspired, assisted, blessed, or commanded to be written by God, then this book, upon completion, is considered to be from God (e.g., Book of David). I reasoned that the sent-down divine scriptures fall under the classification of "Al-Kitab Al-Munir" (The Enlightening Book) (3:184). Allah knows best.]

[12] The method of how the verses were revealed to the messengers and compiled in an earthly book varies.

given people clear signs and knowledge, enough to make them believe in his words and scriptures. In another verse, God says to prophet Muhammad:

{Indeed, We sent down upon you the Book for the people in truth. So whoever is guided, it is for (the benefit of) his soul, and whoever goes astray only goes astray to its detriment. And you are not a custodian over them.} (39:41)

[Rami: Naive people keep questioning why we need religion: this is one of many reasons. We are constantly disputing among each other what is true and what is false, what is right and what is wrong, mostly out of envy or aversion. God intervenes to clarify any dispute, and to remind us of what we should not forget. What do we dispute and forget, exactly? How did God intervene? What are the stories of these prophets? What lessons can we learn from their stories? And where is Satan, whose main goal is to keep people away from the straight path, in all of this? Let's find out; however, I will not go over the stories of all twenty five prophets named in the Quran, nor the entire course of human history. Instead, I will cover the stories of **the chosen ones among the chosen ones**, in chronological order, from Adam to the last and final prophet, and the valuable lessons from each story. These

stories are concisely revealed in various verses of the Quran. However, I will also share some details sourced[13] from the Hadith and some historical literature that can shed light on these stories. **These stories are not a pastime read. God included these stories so that we understand the morals in them (12:111) and be warned that our fate might be the same as those who had come before us (54:4-51).** They reveal how God intervened through his chosen ones when humans lost the right path. God doesn't explicitly highlight in every story how Satan conspired in deceiving mankind to deviate from the straight path; therefore, I will give you instead my own insights. When you start putting the pieces of evidence together and examining every deviation, it is not difficult to point out the consistency in Satan's conspiracies *(more on this in chapter 12)*. This chapter is like a long bridge that needs to be crossed—don't fall off!]

{By revealing this Quran to you (O Messenger), we hereby narrate to you the best of stories, while before this you were among those unaware (of it).} (12:3)

Who are the chosen ones among the chosen ones?

[13] [Rami: I sourced most of the details from the Kuwaiti historian and storyteller, Dr. Tareq Muhammad As-Suwaidan, who sourced his work from the famous Islamic historian, exegete, and scholar, Ibn Kathir, and from few Christian and Jewish literatures. I did find several of the sourced details conflicting with my interpretation of the Quranic verses, so I had to make corrections, based on what I learned from the Quran and the Hadith.]

{Verily, Allah has chosen **Adam** and **Nuh** and the **Family of Ibrahim** and the **Family of Imran** over the worlds; (they are) descendants of one another. And Allah is All-Hearing All-Knowing.} (3:33-34)

Adam and Nuh (Noah)

After he learned his lessons in the upper realm, Adam became an obedient servant of God on Earth. He is considered the first prophet because God revealed to him the absolute truth and the "Covenant of the Prophets" was made with him (2:37?). His early descendants were the first to learn the truth from him, and they continued to worship Allah alone for several centuries after his death. Then came a time when people began to revere men of faith and righteousness. Those men were named: Wadd, Suwa, Yaghuth, Ya'uq, and Nasr (71:23). When those men died, Satan managed to inveigle the people into erecting statues of them, in commemoration of their legacy and as a reminder for worshiping God and following their footsteps. Generations later, people started to idolize those deceased men, and sure enough, Satan misled them to start worshiping them as idols, by convincing them they were worshiped by their ancestors. With his first major earthly deception, Satan succeeded in making people associate

partners with God, hence how polytheism started. It took one great scheme to misguide the Children of Adam.

[Rami's key takeaways:

- With the devil's advocacy, the truth can get distorted over time, as it gets told from one generation to the next, or even forgotten.
- Satan is always plotting. He didn't immediately tempt people to create idols and start worshiping them. He first convinced some people to create statues for a good cause, and then with time, he convinced the following generations to start worshiping them. Satan is very patient and relentless. He will relentlessly try to influence you, and if he fails, he will work on your children and their children until he gets what he wants. His deceptions may take years, decades, or centuries to come to fruition. He has a lot of time on his hands, since he is going nowhere until a set time.
- Behind every idol stands the advocacy of Satan.]

After this first major deviation on Earth, God intervened by sending the first prophet-messenger Nuh (Noah). Like many other stories narrated in the Quran, the story of prophet Noah is mentioned in several chapters, each providing an additional piece of information or detail. Here is the story, after I put the verses (pieces) together:

{Indeed, We sent Noah to his people. He said, "O my people! Worship Allah—you have no other god except Him. I truly fear for you the torment of a tremendous Day." Said the eminent among his people, "We surely see that you are clearly misguided." He (Noah) said, "O my people! I am not misguided! But I am a messenger from the Lord of all worlds, conveying to you my Lord's messages and giving you (sincere) advice. And I know from Allah what you do not know. Do you find it astonishing that a reminder should come to you from your Lord through one of your own (people), warning you, so you may beware and perhaps be shown mercy?"} (7:59-63)

{But the eminent among those who disbelieved from his people said, "This man is nothing but a human being like you, who wishes to impose his superiority over you. Had Allah had willed (to send a messenger), He would have sent down angels. We have not heard of this among our forefathers."} (23:24)

{But the eminent among those who disbelieved from his people said, "We see you only as a human being like ourselves, and we see that no one follows you except the lowliest among us, who do so (hastily) without thinking. We do not see anything that makes (all of) you any better than us. In fact, we think you are liars." He said, "O my people!

Consider if I stand on a clear proof from my Lord and He has blessed me with mercy from Himself (i.e., prophethood), which you fail to see. Should we (then) force it on you against your will? O my people! I do not ask you for a payment for this (message). My reward is only from Allah. And I will never dismiss the believers (in the message), for they will surely meet their Lord. But I can see that you are a people acting ignorantly. O my people! Who would protect me from Allah if I were to dismiss them? Will you not then be mindful? I do not say to you that I possess Allah's treasuries or know the unseen, nor do I claim to be an angel, nor do I say that Allah will never grant goodness to those you look down upon. Allah knows best what is (hidden) within them. (If I did,) then I would truly be one of the wrongdoers." They said, "O Noah! You have argued with us far too much, so bring upon us what you threaten us with, if what you say is true." He said, "It is Allah Who can bring it upon you if He wills, and then you will have no escape! My advice will not benefit you—no matter how hard I try—if Allah wills (for) you to stray. He is your Lord, and to Him you will be returned."} (11:27-34)

{He (Noah) said, "My Lord, indeed I called my people (to the truth) night and day, but my calls only made them run farther away (from it). And whenever I invite them to be forgiven by You, they press their

fingers into their ears, cover themselves with their clothes, persist (in denial), and act very arrogantly. Then I certainly called them openly, then I surely preached to them publicly and privately, saying, 'Seek your Lord's forgiveness; He is truly Most Forgiving;'"} (71:5-10)

{The people of Noah denied the truth before them, and they denied Our servant and said, "(He is) a madman," and he was repelled. So he prayed to his Lord saying, "I am overpowered, so help (me)."} (54:9-10)

{And it was revealed to Noah that, "No one will believe from your people except those who have already believed, so do not be distressed by what they have been doing. And construct the Ark under Our observation and Our inspiration, and do not speak to Me about those who have crossed the limit, they are destined to be drowned." And he constructed the Ark, and whenever an assembly of the eminent of his people passed by him, they ridiculed him. He said, "If you ridicule us, then we will ridicule you just as you ridicule us. And you are going to know who will get a punishment that will disgrace him and upon whom will descend an enduring punishment (in the Hereafter)." (So it was) until when Our command came and the Tannur[14] overflowed, We said,

[14] [Rami: There are different interpretations of what this Arabic word means. I agree with those who concluded it means "volcano". The eruption of the volcano was a visual signal to the believers that God had commanded the

"Load upon the Ark a pair of two from every species, along with your family, except those about whom the word has preceded, and (include) whoever has believed." But none believed with him, except a few. And he (Noah) said, "Embark therein. In the name of Allah it will be sailing and anchoring. Surely, my Lord is Most-Forgiving, Most Merciful."} (11:36-41)

{But they accused him of falsehood, so We saved him and those who were with him in the Ark. And We drowned those who denied Our signs. **Indeed, they were a blind people.}** (7:64)

{And We certainly sent Noah to his people, and he remained among them a thousand (solar) years less fifty (lunar) years, and the flood seized them while they were wrongdoers.} (29:14)

{(Allah said to Noah,) "And when you have boarded the ship, you and those with you, then say, 'Praise be to Allah who has saved us from the wrongdoing people'. And say, 'My Lord, allow me a blessed landing, and You are the best accommodator.'"} (23:28-29)

{So We opened the gates of the Sky with pouring rain, and caused the earth to burst with springs, and the waters met for a matter already

deluge to start and that they needed to head to the Ark. Based on my research, I reasoned that this volcano is located in Hauran region, in southwest Syria. I found geological evidence of an eruption that occurred there between 2400 and 2800 BCE, which coincides with the estimated time of the great deluge. Allah knows best.]

predestined. And We carried him (Noah) on a (construction of) planks and nails, sailing before our eyes, a reward for he who had been denied.} (54:11-14)

{And it was sailing with them amidst the waves like mountains. And Noah called out to his son, who was at an isolated place, "O my dear son, come on board with us, and do not be in the company of the disbelievers." He said, "I shall take shelter on a mountain which will save me from the water." He said, "There is no saver today from the command of Allah, except the one to whom He shows mercy. "And the waves rose high between the two, and he was among the drowned. And it was said, "O Earth, swallow your water, and O Sky, withhold (your rain)." And the water subsided, and the matter was accomplished, and the ship came to rest on the (mountain that is) Judi. And it was said, "Away with the wrongdoing people." And Noah called to his Lord and said, "My Lord, indeed my son is of my household; and indeed, Your promise is true; and You are the most just of judges!" He (Allah) said, "O Noah, indeed he is not of your household; indeed, he is (one whose) work was other than righteous, so ask Me not for that about which you have no knowledge. Indeed, I advise you, lest you be among the ignorant." He (Noah) said, "My Lord, I seek refuge in You from asking that of which I have no

knowledge. And unless You forgive me and have mercy upon me, I will be among the losers." It was said, "O Noah! Descend with peace from Us and blessings on you and on the people from among those who are with you, and there shall be (new) nations whom We will allow them a provisioned sojourn, then they will be touched with a painful punishment from Us."} (11:42-48)

{And We left it (the Ark) as a sign. So, will any (of you) be mindful? How then were My torment and My warning?} (54:15-16)

[Rami's key takeaways:

- The people denied prophet Noah, not only because they were told to worship Allah alone, but also because of their arrogance and stubbornness. They questioned the Messenger's credibility, because he is not one of the eminent. They told prophet Noah he is only a human being and not an angel, and called him a madman who wishes to impose his superiority over them. They discredited him based on the people following him. "The lowliest among us", they said. As you will see through the rest of the story of mankind, this is a recurring theme among human beings. Many disbelievers do not want to follow what the humble people follow, or at least not be associated with humble people.

- The Most Forbearing patiently gives people time to believe, after presenting them with the truth. He gave the people of Noah about 981[15] lunar years to believe (deluge was in the 982nd year). God understands that Satan has a major role in deceiving people, but people have no excuse after the truth has come to them. Prophet Noah tried everything he could until there was no one left to believe. The disbelievers responded with hostility toward him and the very few believers, crossing God's limits. Then came the command of Allah: fulfilling his promise, saving those who believed, and drowning those who wronged themselves (29:14).

[15] [Rami: In verse (29:14), God mentioned that prophet Noah remained with his people for 1000 **Sana** less 50 **ʿAm**. Essentially, Allah gave us an equation to solve and two terms to derive their meaning, and I have derived that ʿAm means lunar year and Sana means solar year. Since 1 solar year is equivalent to 1.0310734 lunar years, 1000 solar years minus 50 lunar years is equivalent to 981.07 lunar years, so the deluge was in the 982nd year. Remarkably, the chapter this equation/verse belongs to (Chapter 29, "The Spider") is composed of 982 words. Coincidence? And, while I was analyzing these two words, I noticed that Allah used in most cases ʿAm for one and two years and Sana for greater than two years, and in rare cases ʿAm was used for greater than two years. After examining the rare cases, I noticed that God is referring to a period of time that involves dead souls. If we go back to the equation, Allah planned for prophet Noah to be among his people for 1000 Sana, but before that time came to expire, there was no one left to believe, so God ordered the deluge, killing the disbelievers before the 1000 years expired. The difference in time between the deluge and the expiry date is 50 ʿAm and not Sana!! This is because during the 50 ʿAm the disbelievers were dead and not alive on Earth. Not on Earth means their souls are not in our solar system *(I will further explain this in Chapter 10)*. This also applies to the story of the "Man of the Village" in Quran Chapter 2 verse 259. Allah gave us the Earth's orbit around the sun to measure time inside our solar system (17:12), but outside of our solar system, it seems time is measured in lunar years and Allah gave us the moon's orbit to measure this time (55:5) over 12 months (9:36). **I concluded that the difference in time between a solar year and a lunar year—~11 days—is due to gravity. This supports Einstein's theory of general relativity and gravitational time dilation.** My discovery also adds to Einstein's theory that the original state of time is measured in lunar time. By the third year on Earth, the difference in time between lunar and solar years becomes substantial—~ 33 days, which is greater than a month—this is why Allah uses solar years (Sana) for three years or more on Earth. (Side note: There is a scientific claim that says Earth, a very long time ago, used to rotate much faster than today. Faster rotations mean shorter days and nights. This explains why people were able to live for that long, in addition to other factors.)]

- Sometimes, even family members of prophets fail to believe. One of prophet Noah's sons did not believe, and neither did his wife (66:10). Some parents live with guilt for failing to raise their children to become believers. If this gives those parents any easement, not even prophets can convince their family members to believe. Parents have a duty to raise their children to be righteous and in accordance with the correct beliefs, but they cannot force their children to inherit their own beliefs. How so? It is called "free will" *(I will elaborate more on this topic in the following chapters).*
- If the devout believers become a very small minority among a population of impious people (in prophet Noah's time, what seems the entire world's population), The Bringer of Death will not hesitate to exterminate the disbelievers of an entire town or community, **after everyone was reminded of the truth and well-warned of the consequences (6:131 | 28:59),** and then give succession only to the remaining believers. In the Quran, God reiterates this point numerous times. Here are few verses:

  {If He so wills, He can do away with you and bring a new creation. For Allah, that is not something difficult.} (35:16-17)

{Your Lord is the Self-Sufficient, Full of Mercy. If He wills, He can do away with you and replace you with whoever He wills, just as He produced you from the offspring of other people.} (6:133)

In other words, The Expediter can have any group of people succeed another group, in a very short amount of time. The people in this story challenged this claim and ended up dead. The flooding was a radical reset to the entire human civilization.

- God mentions that he left the Ark at where it landed, Mount Judi, as a sign. Have we done enough to look for the Ark's remains[16]?!]

[16] [Rami: The above image is for illustration purposes only. I am not endorsing this location as the correct location of where the Ark settled, due to lack of sufficient evidence. There are several claims of other locations that also lack sufficient evidence. By the way, the Arabic word "Judi", which means "of lavish qualities", is the characteristic of the mountain where the Ark settled and not necessarily its known name among the people.]

Family of Ibrahim (Part I) – The Beginning

After the deluge, new nations emerged, and as time passed, Satan managed once again to deceive mankind to worship idols. In the Quran, God highlights the stories of two nations that succeeded the people of Noah in the Arabian Peninsula. The first story is the story of the people of 'Ad with prophet Hud. They were mighty pagans, distinguished by their tall stature and the lofty pillars they built. God sent them a message with prophet Hud, which called them to worship no one except Allah, and warned them of their destruction, if they do not desist from their evil pagan ways. Most of them chose to be arrogant and to repudiate the message, so Allah saved the few who believed and destroyed the deniers with a violent storm. Then came after them the people of Thamud with prophet Saleh, who also called his people to be righteous and to worship Allah alone. Many doubted the message, requesting to witness a miracle/sign as proof. And when the sign was shown to them, it came with a stipulation to test them. The wicked ones violated the stipulation, and their fate was like that of the idol-worshiping deniers before them. Then after these two divine interventions came a time when there were no more monotheists on this Earth, so God intervened by electing for prophethood a young boy

with a special upbringing by the name of Ibrahim (Abraham). Prophet Ibrahim lived in Ur of the Chaldees, where Iraq is located today. As I narrate the story of Ibrahim and his family, we embark on a new chapter in Man's journey on Earth. Considering that the family of Ibrahim was chosen among the chosen ones, we find that many of prophet Ibrahim's descendants were granted prophethood.

(Before I share the stories of these prophets, I should note that prophet Ibrahim was eventually married to a very beautiful woman by the name of Sara.)

Prophet Ibrahim and his nephew prophet Lut (Lot)

{And mention in the Book Ibrahim. Indeed, he was a Siddiq prophet.} (19:41) {When he said to his father[17], "O dear father! Why do you worship what can neither hear nor see, nor benefit you at all? O dear father! **I have certainly received some knowledge which you have not received, so follow me and I will guide you to the Straight Path**. O dear father! Do not worship Satan. Surely Satan is ever rebellious against the Most Gracious. O dear father! I truly fear that you will be touched by a torment from the Most Gracious, and become Satan's companion (in Hell)." He (his father) said, "How dare you reject my

[17] [Rami: Father can also mean uncle and grandfather. I address this point in another footnote in chapter 12.]

idols, O Ibrahim! If you do not desist, I will certainly stone you (to death). So be gone from me for a long time!" He (Ibrahim) said, "Peace be upon you! I will pray to my Lord for your forgiveness. He has truly been Most Gracious to me. As I distance myself from all of you and from whatever you invoke besides Allah, I will (continue to) call upon my Lord, trusting that I will never be disappointed in invoking my Lord."} (19:42-48)

{As for Ibrahim's prayer for his father's forgiveness, it was only in fulfilment of a promise he had made to him. But when it became clear to Ibrahim that his father was an enemy of Allah, he broke ties with him. Ibrahim was truly tender-hearted, forbearing.} (9:114) {When he said to his father and his people, "What is that you worship?" They said, "We worship idols, to which we are fully devoted." He said, "Can they hear you when you call upon them? Or can they benefit or harm you?" They said, "No! But we found our forefathers doing the same." He said, "Have you considered what you have been worshiping—you and your ancestors? They are enemies to me, except the Lord of all worlds. (He is) the One Who created me, and He (alone) guides me, and the One Who provides me with food and drink, and He (alone) heals me when I am sick, And He Who will cause me to die, and then

bring me back to life, and He is Who, I hope, will forgive my wrongdoing on the Day of Requital."} (26:70-82)

{He (Ibrahim) said, "Certainly, you and your fathers have been in open error." They said, "Have you come to us with the truth, or are you one of the triflers?" He said, "(No), rather, your Lord is the Lord of the Heavens and the Earth who created them, and I am one of those who bear witness to it. And (I swear) by Allah, I will surely plan against your idols after you have turned and gone away."} (21:54-57)

He waited until the day they had to leave the town to celebrate a festival, and pretended to be sick so that he didn't have to leave with them, {and then said, "I feel indisposed." So, they went away from him, turning their backs. Then he (stealthily) advanced toward their gods, and said (mockingly), "Will you not eat? What is wrong with you that you do not speak?" Then he swiftly turned on them, striking (them) with his right hand.} (37:89-93) {So he smashed them into pieces, except the biggest of them, so they might turn to it (for answers). (When they came back from the festival,) they said, "Who dared to do this to our gods? It must be an evildoer!" Some said, "We heard a young man, called Ibrahim, speaking (ill) of them." They said, "Bring him before the eyes of the people, so that they may witness (his

trial)." (When he came,) they said, "Was it you who did this to our gods, O Ibrahim?" He said (sarcastically), "No, this one—the biggest of them—did it! So ask them, if they can talk!" So they came back to their senses, saying (to one another), "You yourselves are truly the wrongdoers!" Then they (quickly) regressed to their (original) mind-set, (arguing,) "You already know that those (idols) cannot talk." He said, "Do you then worship—instead of Allah—what can neither benefit nor harm you in any way? Shame on you and whatever you worship instead of Allah! Do you not have any sense?" They said, "Burn him up to avenge your gods, if you must act."} (21:58-68)

Prophet Ibrahim was arrested, then thrown in a large fire pit. Then The Protecting Ally, who has authority over all things, intervened to protect his messenger. {We said, "O fire, be cool and safe upon Ibrahim." And they intended for him harm, but We made them the greatest losers.} (21:69-70) The people witnessed the miracle of prophet Ibrahim walking safely out of the fire pit, and they still did not believe, claiming it was magic. However, after witnessing this miracle the disbelievers desisted from harming him. Afterward, Namrud (Nimrod), the king who ruled the world from Babylon, asked for Ibrahim to be brought to him, after he found out about the safe exit from the fire. A debate between the two took place (2:258), which

concluded with Ibrahim winning the debate with his arguments and getting expelled unharmed from Babylon. He left Babylon with his wife, his nephew Lot, and other companions. {Surely, Lot is one of the messengers.} (37:133) {And We rescued him and Lot toward **the land we blessed therein <u>for all the worlds</u>.**} (21:71)

[Rami: I believe that this land is Canaan (from Hama's southern end to the Dead Sea's southern end), which encompasses the Holy Land ("Bayt Al-Maqdis" and surrounding area). Bayt Al-Maqdis is what later became known as "Masjid Al-Aqsa". Masjid Al-Aqsa is the second house of worship to be built on Earth, forty years after Masjid Al-Haram was built in Makkah (during the time of Adam) (Hadith). In the Quran, it is mentioned by name once (17:1) in a story that involved prophet Muhammad's miraculous journey of "Isra' and Mi'raj". It was destroyed and rebuilt numerous times over the centuries. It is also worth noting that it was in this land that prophet Ibrahim received God's revelation, which he then wrote down on scrolls—hence the name "Scrolls of Ibrahim" (53:36-37 | 87:19).]

When they arrived at their destination, prophets Lot and Ibrahim split apart, each finding a new group of people to deliver to them God's messages and to guide them to the straight path, by Allah's permission.

The two messengers didn't seem to have great success initially with their calling. The people of Lot (Sodom and Gomorrah) committed highway robbery, lewd acts that no humans had ever committed before (i.e., homosexuality), and other evil deeds (29:28-29). Prophet Lot admonished them that if they did not desist God would destroy them. They chose obduracy and to reject the admonition conveyed to them, meriting their destruction in the most horrific way (54:33-39 | 11:77-83).

As for prophet Ibrahim and his wife Sara, a severe famine struck where they were living. They had to leave for Egypt, but as soon as they arrived, Sara was captured by the Egyptian king, who found out how beautiful she was. When the king tried to physically harass her, she invoked The Responder for protection. The king suddenly started choking and stomping his feet, and his hands became motionless. Fearing that he will die and people accusing her that she killed him, Sara supplicated to God that he recovers. He indeed recovered, and again he tried to harass her. Every time he tried, the same thing happened to him until he finally gave up his pursuit, by asking her to help him recover one last time in exchange for gifts. After his recovery, he let Sara be returned to Ibrahim with her gifts.

After this incident, prophet Ibrahim and Sara eventually settled in the southern part of Canaan, what is today occupied Palestine, but they had company this time. One of the gifts that Sara received was an Egyptian slave named Hajar (Hagar). When prophet Ibrahim and Sara started to age without the fortune of having children, Sara suggested to Ibrahim that he marry her handmaiden Hajar to bear him a child, a common practice back then. So he did, and he was blessed with a forbearing child (37:100-101) named "Ismael" (Ishmael) ("who listens to God" in English).

[Rami's key takeaways:

- God emphasized in the Quran the necessity for Muslims to follow the creed of Ibrahim—"**Haniffan**". The word means "**the one who is innately driven to seek the true Lord and the truth, and incline toward them to achieve uprightness**". I find this creed implicitly explained through the Quranic anecdotes of prophet Ibrahim (6:76-83 | 2:258,260 | 21:52-67), where we see him demonstrating observation and the "Claim, Evidence, Reasoning" framework, when seeking and defending the truth. Moreover, seeking God with a sincere heart is one of the keys to receiving

God's guidance to the straight path. **I cannot stress enough how important it is to understand this key takeaway.**

- To stay behind and destroy the idols without being seen, prophet Ibrahim had to pretend to be sick, but that does not make him a frequent liar. God asserted this by calling him “As-Siddiq”, which means “the truthful person who accepts with certitude the truth sent from God”.
- Messengers are obliged to convey the message, but if the people choose to reject the message, it is up to God to decide what he wants to do with the impious disbelievers on this Earth (17:54). While the people of Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed, the people of Babylonia were not. I concluded that they—the Nabats—were destined to become the ancestors of the Arabian Quraishites (6:133 | 43:26-29); God knows best. One thing is certain: God postpones his punishment, but he does not neglect it.
- When you are on the side of the truth, and you rely only on God, you become brave and invincible. Standing alone, prophet Ibrahim fearlessly confronted his people and a king who ruled the world at that time, and he couldn’t be defeated.

Prophet Ibrahim with his son prophet Ishmael

With the birth of Ishmael, it was natural for Sara to start feeling jealous of Hajar. Gradually, the situation between Hajar and Sara became complex. One day, God ordered prophet Ibrahim to take Hajar and Ishmael from Canaan to a distant place in the middle of a dry valley called “Bakkah” or “Makkah” (in modern-day Saudi Arabia). When Ibrahim and his family arrived in Makkah, it was a bare land with no water, no vegetation, and no other soul in sight. Then Ibrahim did something very surprising. He left Hajar and Ishmael and started to return to where he came from. Hajar ran after him, asking him what he was doing leaving them alone, but no response. She nervously kept asking him. He ignored her until she asked him if his Lord commanded him to do so. When he acknowledged with a “yes”, she surrendered to the fate that God had chosen for her and her infant. Ibrahim returned to Canaan, and Hajar was left alone with her son. It didn’t take long for the supplies she had with her to run out. Like any concerned mother, she had to go look around for food and water, or for anyone nearby that could come to her aid. She first hurried to a nearby small hilltop called “Safa” for a better vantage point, but she couldn’t see anyone. Then she trotted to another small hilltop called “Marwa”. Still,

there was no one to see. She then went back to her baby to check on him, before deciding to go back to Safa. In despair, she rushed between the two hilltops seven times until she heard a voice. She cried, "Help us if you can offer any help." Then she rushed back to check on her baby, only to find near her son water gushing out of the dry ground. The Protecting Ally has sent his angel Gabriel to make the water come out of the ground. This water is called "Zamzam", and to this day this water is gushing out of the underground **well** in Makkah. To commemorate this event, Muslims walk between Safa and Marwa **seven** times, when they perform their Islamic rites in Makkah.

At the time Hajar discovered the water near her son, there was a caravan traveling nearby, belonging to an Arabian tribe that lived near a water dam that collapsed in modern-day Yemen. The Arabians[18] were searching for a new land with water to settle in. They noticed birds circling at close distance, so they took a detour to inspect the area, and to their surprise, they found a mother and her baby next to water coming out of the ground. Relieved to have found water, the Arabians decided to settle in Makkah, and they brought Hajar and her son under their custody. This is how Hajar and Ishmael survived in the desert,

[18] [Rami: I prefer to use the word "Arabians" over the word "Arabs" to distinguish the people from the Arabian Peninsula from all the people that natively speak Arabic (i.e., people from today's Arab countries).]

and how The Giver of Life turned Makkah, a dry valley, into a habitable town. Ishmael grew up among the Arabians, becoming one of them. As for prophet Ibrahim, he did not abandon Hajar and Ishmael. He used to visit them periodically. In one of the visits, he dreamt numerous times that he is slaughtering his son as a sacrifice. {And when he (his son) reached with him (the age of) endeavoring, he said, "O my son, indeed I have seen in a dream that I (must) sacrifice you, what is your opinion?" He said, "O my father, do as you are commanded. You will find me, InSha'Allah (if Allah wills), one of those who endure patiently." So when they had both submitted to Allah's will, and he put him down upon his forehead (to slaughter him), And then We called out to him, "O Ibrahim, You have fulfilled the dream." This is how We reward those who are good in their deeds. **Indeed, this was an obvious trial.** And We ransomed his son with a great sacrifice, and We left for him (favorable mention) among later generations. Peace be upon Ibrahim. This is how we reward those who do good. Surely, he is among Our believing servants.} (37:102-111)

[Rami's key takeaways:

- The test of faith: The stronger your faith in God, the harder God will test you in the form of trials, and the harder the test, the

greater the reward. Even us humans do the same among ourselves. When we are testing someone, if we realize they are good, we make the test harder on them, to gauge how good they are. No man had his faith tested more than prophet Ibrahim. His story with his son is one of the stories in the Quran that touches my heart the most. Can you imagine after waiting for years to have a child, God commands you to take your child and your wife to the middle of nowhere and leave them there with no food, water, and shelter?!! And if that was not difficult enough, God then commands you through visions in a dream to sacrifice your own son?!! I suppose that prophet Ibrahim was conscious that God was testing him, because the nature of the command conflicts with some of God's attributes. Nevertheless, how much do you trust your Lord and have certitude in faith? Prophet Ibrahim As-Siddiq passed the test, by surrendering to the will of Allah. Consequently, God rewarded him by accepting his supplications *(I will cover some of them later).*

Another note on faith, even Hajar and Ishmael's faiths were tested. Hajar accepted her fate of being left in the dry valley alone with her child, after she realized it was God's will. As for Ishmael, can you imagine being asked by your father for your opinion on

being slaughtered, and you respond, "O my father, do as you are commanded. You will find me, InSha'Allah (if Allah wills), one of those who endure patiently"?! What level of faith and understanding is this?!

{And mention in the Book Ishmael. He was truly a person of his word and was a prophet-messenger. He used to enjoin Salat and Zakat upon his people, and he was to his Lord pleasing.} (19:54-55)

Indeed, Ishmael was a person of his word, patiently enduring this difficult trial and surrendering to God's command. Hence, God made him among his chosen ones.

- The Zamzam well in Makkah is a living proof of a miracle. How can a well located in a region with little rainfall continuously supply water for over four thousand years without ever drying up?! Also, the Zamzam well is the true location of "**Be'er Sheeva**" ("Be'er" means "well" and "Sheeva" means "seven"), in reference to the location of Hajjar's seven trips.]

Prophet Ibrahim with his son prophet Ishaq (Isaac) and grandson prophet Ya'qub (Jacob)

{So after he (Ibrahim) had left them (his people) and what they worshiped besides Allah, We granted him Isaac and Jacob, and made each of them a prophet. We showered them with Our mercy and blessed them with honorable mention.} (19:49-50)

{And We blessed him with Isaac (as a son) and Jacob (as a grandson), as an additional favor—making all of them righteous. We (also) made them leaders, guiding by Our command, and inspired them to do good deeds, establish Salat, and pay Zakat. And they were devoted to Our worship.} (21:72-73)

The only story narrated in the Quran that mentions prophet Isaac is when the angels, in human physical form, visited prophet Ibrahim to give him news of two parts. The first part foretold that his wife Sara will have a child to be named "Ishaq" (Isaac) and a grandchild to be named "Ya'qub" (Jacob)[19], while the second part foretold that the people of Sodom and Gomorrah will be destroyed, but not until prophet Lot and his family are ushered to safety. *(This episode is*

[19] Sara rejoiced at the news of conceiving a child, which is why God chose the boy's name to be Isaac—"Rejoicing One" in English. As for the name Jacob (Ya'qub), it means "Succeeding One" since he was destined to succeed Isaac.

narrated multiple times, but since the episode is short, I will include all the verses that cover the first part of the news, so you get an idea how God narrated the same stories in different chapters, with a subtle textual difference in each chapter.)

{Has the story of Ibrahim's honored guests reached you (O Messenger)? When they entered his presence and greeted (him with), "Peace!" He said, "Peace!" (Then he said to himself,) "(These are) an unfamiliar people." Then he slipped off to his family and brought a fat (roasted) calf, and placed it before them, saying, "Will you not eat?" (They did not eat,) so he grew fearful of them. They said, "Do not be afraid," and gave him good news of a knowledgeable son. Then his wife came forward, making a moan, and smote her face (in astonishment), and said, "(A baby from) a barren old woman!" They said, "Such has your Lord decreed. He is truly the All-Wise, All-Knowing."} (51:24-30)

{And inform them about Ibrahim's guests who entered upon him and greeted (him with), "Peace!" He (later) said, "Surely we are afraid of you." They said, "Do not be afraid! Surely we give you good news of a knowledgeable son." He said, "Do you give me good news despite my old age? What unlikely news!" They said, "We give you good news

in all truth, so do not be one of those who despair." He said, "Who would despair of the mercy of their Lord except the misguided?"} (15:51-56)

{And surely Our (angel) messengers came to Ibrahim with good news. They said, "Peace!" He said, "Peace!" Then it was not long before he brought (them) a (fat) roasted calf. And when he saw that their hands did not reach for the food, he became suspicious and afraid of them. They said, "Do not be afraid! We are sent to the people of Lot." And his wife was standing by, so she laughed, then We gave her good news of (the birth of) Isaac, and, after him, Jacob. She said, "Oh, my! How can I have a child at this old age, and my husband here is an old man? This is truly an astonishing thing!" They said, "Are you astonished by Allah's decree? May Allah's mercy and blessings be upon you, O people of this house. Indeed, He is The Most Praiseworthy, The Glorious."} (11:69-73)

[Rami's key takeaways:

- Prophets are always righteous people, with high honors, and are guided by God's commands.
- The mandates of Salat and Zakat did not start with prophet Muhammad and the revelation of the Quran, but were introduced

by God's prophets long before that. However, the practices of Salat and Zakat differ slightly among different nations.

- Some angels are sent by God to Earth as messengers (51:31) to fulfill certain tasks. Sometimes, they appear to mankind in human physical form, but they don't need to eat like us, which is why, when offered the fat roasted calf by the hospitable prophet Ibrahim, the angels declined from eating.
- Even at old age, God gifted Sara a son and filled her heart with joy: another miracle from God, as a reward to those who choose to keep faith in Allah and stay patient.
- God indicated that Isaac and Jacob were an "additional favor" to prophet Ibrahim, because his first son was Ismael.]

Family of Ibrahim (Part II) – Children of Israel

{Peace be upon Ibrahim. He was truly one of Our faithful servants. This is how We reward those who do good. We gave him good news of Isaac—a prophet, and one of the righteous. We blessed him and Isaac. **Some of their descendants did good, while others clearly wronged themselves.**} (37:109-113)

Prophet Isaac had two sons, Esua and Jacob, but God only granted Jacob the prophethood and later changed his name to "Israel" ("who strives in God['s cause]" in English). He is regarded as the patriarch of his descendants, the Children of Israel, or the Israelites, as one may call them. In the Quran, God also calls Jacob's twelve sons and their descendants "Al-Asbat" ("the Tribes" in English) (2:136 | 3:84).

(In this section, I will only cover five of the Israelite prophets mentioned in the Quran, in addition to the story of prophet Ayyub (Job), who is a descendant of prophet Isaac but not an Israelite. I will cover his story because it has a great moral to learn from.)

Prophet Yusuf (Joseph)

Prophet Jacob had twelve sons from four wives. His fourth wife gave birth to the last two of his sons, Joseph and Benjamin, before she passed away. Joseph was Jacob's only son to whom God granted prophethood, and he is considered the most handsome man to ever live on Earth (Hadith). God revealed the story of prophet Joseph to prophet Muhammad when a Jew asked him to tell him what he knew about prophet Joseph. As you may have realized by now, most stories in the Quran are told in parts and distributed over several chapters. However, the story of prophet Joseph is unique. It was revealed in its entirety in

a single revelation and in one chapter, chapter 12, titled “Yusuf”. The narrated story summarizes prophet Joseph’s key experiences, from the time he was a young boy to the time he became a king.

(Since the story is revealed in the Quran in a single chapter, I will be concise in narrating the story, by summarizing certain episodes of the story.)

Joseph’s story starts in south Canaan, where one day he woke up from a dream, which he immediately shared with his father. {"O my dear father! Indeed I dreamt of eleven planets, and the sun, and the moon—I saw them prostrating to me!"} (12:4) Prophet Jacob found the dream to be a sign of prophethood destined for his young boy; however, he became worried. He knew that his ten older sons, Joseph’s stepbrothers, would not be fond of God favoring Joseph over them. They already were envious of their father’s special affection toward Joseph and Benjamin after they lost their mother at a young age. {He said, "O my dear son! Do not relate your vision to your brothers, or they will devise a plot against you. Surely **Satan is to Man an overt enemy!** And so will your Lord choose you, and teach you the interpretation of narratives, and perfect His grace upon you and the descendants of Jacob—(just) as He once perfected it upon your

forefathers, Ibrahim and Isaac! Surely your Lord is All-Knowing, All-Wise."} (12:5-6)

Satan indeed went to work, casting evil thoughts in their chests and misleading them with his deceptions. He convinced them that their father was wrong to favor Joseph over them, so the best solution was to plot against Joseph and kill him. {When they said, "Surely Joseph and his brother are more beloved to our father than we, even though we are a group of so many. Indeed, our father is clearly mistaken. Kill Joseph or cast him out to some (distant) land so that our father's attention will be only ours, then after that you may (repent and) become righteous people!"} (12:8-9) So they plotted to go to the desert with Joseph and throw him in a well, and surely they did. Then they came back to their father. {They said, "Our father! We went racing and left Joseph with our belongings, and a wolf devoured him! But you will not believe us, no matter how truthful we are." And they brought his shirt, stained with false blood...} (12:17-18) However, prophet Jacob was a man of faith and knowledge, and he was aware of Joseph's dream. He didn't believe them, yet his heart was broken, knowing he had lost his beloved son. He can only be patient and trust that his Lord will take care of his son. {…He said, "(No,) but rather your souls have tempted you to do something (evil). So (my course is) beautiful

patience! It is Allah's help that I seek to bear your false claims."} (12:18)

Joseph survived the night in the well, and the next day a caravan travelling to Egypt approached it. When the water-drawer lowered his bucket, he was surprised to find a young boy. The man ended up rescuing Joseph from the well, but eventually sold him at the slave market in Egypt. Joseph was then purchased by Al-Aziz, the Chief Minister of Egypt, who sensed immediately that this was no ordinary boy. He took him to his house, one of the great mansions of Egypt, and said to his wife, {…"Take good care of him, perhaps he may be useful to us or we may adopt him as a son." This is how We established Joseph in the land, so that We might teach him the interpretation of narratives. And Allah is predominant over His Command, but most people do not know.} (12:21)

Joseph grew up to adulthood in the house of Al-Aziz, {And when he reached maturity, We gave him good judgment and knowledge. This is how We reward those who do good.} (12:22) All who knew him recognized Joseph's beauty, honesty, and nobility. Among them was Al-Aziz's wife, who watched Joseph mature into a very handsome man, and with each passing day she became more attracted to him.

Eventually, she tried to seduce him, but her failed attempts only increased her passion. In one of her attempts, {and she, in whose house he lived, tried to seduce him. She locked the doors and said, "Come to me!" He said, "Allah is my refuge! Indeed, He is my Lord, who has given me the fairest of lodging. Indeed, the wrongdoers never succeed." She advanced toward him, and he would have done likewise, had he not seen proof from his Lord. This is how We kept evil and lewdness away from him, for he was truly one of Our chosen servants.} (12:23-24) He then tried to flee, racing to the door, while she chased after him. She reached for Joseph's shirt and tore it from his back. At that moment in time, the door opened and her husband walked in. Immediately, she cried out to her husband, {…"What is the penalty for someone who tried to violate your wife, except imprisonment or a painful punishment?!"} (12:25) This was a clear lie, yet she pronounced it easily and suggested that Joseph be put in prison. Joseph tried to defend himself, {he said, "It was she that sought to seduce me."…} (12:26) One of her relatives appeared and offered a way to solve this predicament. {…(He said,) "If his shirt is torn from the front, then she has told the truth and he is a liar! But if it is torn from the back, then she has lied and he is truthful." So when her husband saw that Joseph's shirt was torn from the back, he said (to her), "This must

be (an example) of (women) plotting! Indeed, your plotting is so shrewd! O Joseph! Forget about this. And you (O wife)! Seek forgiveness for your sin. It certainly has been your fault."} (12:26-29) This incident didn't stop Al-Aziz's wife from her pursuit. She even threatened Joseph with prison if he didn't succumb to her desires. Joseph had to turn to his Lord for help. {He said, "My Lord! I would rather be in jail than do what they invite me to. And if You do not turn their plotting away from me I will yearn towards them and become (one) of the ignorant." So his Lord responded to him, turning their plotting away from him. Surely He is the All-Hearing, All-Knowing.} (12:33-34) By the will of Allah, Al-Aziz, although convinced of Joseph's innocence, ended up locking him up in prison. He saw no other way to safeguard his reputation.

Prophet Joseph spent a few years in prison, but long story short, the king of Egypt found out later about his innocence and his ability to interpret dreams. The king had a dream of his own, later interpreted by Joseph that Egypt will experience a famine in a few years. During his encounter with Joseph, the king learned why Joseph was imprisoned, and after he verified it was true, he released him from prison and entrusted him with a high-ranking position, as per Joseph's request. {He (Joseph) said, "Put me in charge of the storehouses of the land, for

I am truly reliable and adept."} (12:55) The king accepted his request and assigned him as his minister, in charge of Egypt's storehouses. Fast forward, the drought and famine did indeed happen, as interpreted by Joseph. It did not only affect Egypt, but also the surrounding areas, including the town where prophet Jacob and his sons resided in south Canaan. During the drought, Joseph managed Egypt's state of affairs, so well that there was enough grain to feed the people of Egypt and those in the surrounding areas. Thus, people began to flock to Egypt to buy the grain Joseph was selling at a fair price.

Among those seeking grain from Egypt were Joseph's stepbrothers. Long story short, Joseph's stepbrothers eventually found out that the minister in charge of Egypt's storehouses was their stepbrother, who they once threw in a well. {They said (in shock), "Are you really Joseph?" He said, "I am Joseph, and here is my brother (Benjamin)! Allah has truly been gracious to us. Surely whoever is mindful (of Allah) and patient, then certainly Allah never discounts the reward of doers of good."} (12:90) After they admitted regretfully the evil act they had committed, Joseph forgave them. He then asked them to bring his father and stepmother to him. So they did, and after hearing the great news, prophet Jacob and his family gathered their belongings and travelled to Egypt. They went straight to prophet Joseph and found him

sitting on his throne. {Then he raised his parents to the throne, and they all fell down in prostration to Joseph, who then said, "O my dear father! This is the interpretation of my old dream. My Lord has made it come true! He was truly kind to me when He freed me from prison and brought you all from the desert after Satan had ignited rivalry between me and my siblings. Indeed my Lord is subtle in fulfilling what He wills. Surely He is the All-Knowing, All-Wise."} (12:100)

At the beginning of this story, we learned about a dream that Joseph disclosed to his beloved father, when he said, "O my dear father! Indeed I dreamt of eleven planets, and the sun, and the moon—I saw them prostrating to me!" The Quran concludes prophet Joseph's story with the interpretation of the dream: the eleven planets were his stepbrothers, the sun was his father, and the moon was his stepmother. Who said God does not make dreams come true?!

[Rami's key takeaways:

- Pride and envy always corrupt hearts. We can only assume that prophet Jacob raised up his children on the right values, but pride and envy consumed them. This allowed Satan to mislead them into committing a great sin, while justifying their action. They thought they could commit an evil act then repent and be

righteous. They remind me of their descendants that are living among us!

- Parents should be very cognizant of how they show their affection to their children, and they should not discriminate between them.
- Patience in the face of adversity and sorrow: Joseph faced every trial with patience and trust in The Exalter. He was thrown in a well, and then in a prison, only to be exalted to high ranks in Egypt and reunited with his family. Prophet Jacob, not knowing where his son was, also trusted his Lord and stayed patient. What helped him was his insight that his son would become a prophet.
- Sometimes, the best way to escape committing sin is to isolate yourself from the environment that fosters sin. Prophet Joseph believed living in prison was preferable to living in the house of Al-Aziz. The surrounding environment was filled with unlawful opulence and lewdness, perhaps similar to many societies of today. He believed prison would be preferable to succumbing to the temptations surrounding him. God answered Joseph's supplication and isolated him from such an environment.
- God has put prophet Joseph in a leadership position to ensure integrity and fairness in governing people's affairs. He was a role model at a time of crisis, for people to follow his example.

- Every experience Joseph endured can cause a mental disorder, but he had none. How come? He was always mindful of Allah! **Mindfulness of Allah is a potent solution to mental problems.**
- There were 11 planets in Joseph's dream. Could this be a hint from God that there are 12 planets total in our solar system?]

Prophet Ayyub (Job)

When it came to patience, prophet Ayyub (Job) was a paragon. Indeed, he was a prophet (6:84), a descendant of prophet Isaac, from his son Esau, Jacob's brother, and a man of great wealth and philanthropy. After many years of prosperity and wealth, The Distressor willed, as per his wisdom, to put prophet Job through a series of distressful trials. The story of prophet Job starts with the loss of his wealth and the rapid degeneration of his health. In little time, he lost all that he had, including his children. It is said he had between ten and twenty children: one died after the other. Even his friends abandoned him in a time of crisis. This was an excruciating experience to bear, also for his wife, who had to live through his trials. However, despite all these life calamities, his wife didn't forsake him, nor did she lose her sanity. Instead, she stood by her husband and took good care

of him. She had to find a basic job to make ends meet, and at one point, she even had to sell all her belongings so they could survive.

Less than two decades of extreme hardship, and prophet Job was always thankful and always shy of invoking his Lord to come to his aid. He felt shy because God already gave him great wealth and prosperity for many years. He believed he was not entitled to ask for more: the years of extreme hardship were very few compared to the years of prosperity he had. Until one day, he found out that his wife cut her hair and sold it in exchange for food. Seeing his wife experience such hardship and misery overwhelmed him with grief, so he invoked his Lord for help.

{And Job, who cried out to his Lord, "I have been touched with distress, and You are the Most Merciful of the merciful." So We answered his prayer and removed his distress, and gave him back his family, twice as many, as a mercy from Us and a lesson for the (devoted) worshipers.} (21:83-84)

God sent him angel Gabriel, who revealed to him to strike the ground with his foot for cool water to flow out, so that he could drink the water and bathe in it (38:42). The blessed water cured his body and made him young and healthy again. Not only that, God also made his

wife young again, and together they were blessed with children, double what they had before. Even his lost wealth was restored, as a reward for his great patience.

{O believers! Seek comfort in patience and prayer. Allah is truly with those who are patient.} (2:153)

[Rami's key takeaways:

- **Patience is the ultimate demonstration of faith.** Never despair from Allah intervening to aid you. No matter how long and difficult the situation gets, The Most Compassionate will come to your aid and reward you if you keep your trust in him. **God is always testing the sincerity of your faith and trust in him by testing your patience.**
- Never undermine the power of invoking God. To receive help from God, God wants you first to invoke him (25:77). Prophet Job was a special person with unique circumstances, but in general, constantly invoking God for support, without despair, is a demonstration of trust in him and of certitude in faith.
- Staying content can help you stay strong during the toughest times. As the Arabic proverb goes, "Contentment is a treasure that never perishes." Despite all the adversity prophet Job had to go

through, he was content with what God decreed for him. He was even shy to ask from God anything, given the great wealth and health he had for many years. Even when he called his Lord, he really did not directly ask or complain, he only said, “I have been touched with distress, and You are the Most Merciful of the merciful.” What kind of faith and manners is this?!!

- Leading by example: Prophet Job was not a messenger, but it is clear to me that God chose a man that can be a role model for his community. Given his faith, wealth, and philanthropy, we can assume that prophet Job was well-known in his community. His social status and activities allowed people to become aware of his story and of how his faith and trust in his Lord empowered him to overcome the most excruciating trials one can experience. We learn here that God’s interventions through his prophets are not strictly for corrective measures, but also for development and learning measures. Furthermore, prophet Job’s wife is also a great role model for what she had to endure and for her loyalty. What she had to go through can break the toughest of souls. May God bless this great soul!!!]

Prophet Musa (Moses) and Prophet Harun (Aaron)

I last mentioned prophet Joseph as the second-in-command in Egypt. Having one of their own at the helm, the Children of Israel left Canaan and settled in Egypt. With time, the Egyptian society became a mix of Israelites, predominantly monotheistic believers, and Egyptians, predominantly non-believers in Allah. Also, the rule in north Egypt changed from the Hyksos kings to the Egyptian pharaohs. Egypt was eventually ruled by a tyrant Pharaoh (most probably Ramses II), who oppressed and enslaved the Israelites. The situation became worse for the Israelites when the Pharaoh learned about a prophecy that foretold the coming of an Israelite savior that would destroy his kingdom and deliver the Israelites from his oppression and tyranny. Fearing the fulfillment of this prophecy, he ordered the slaughtering of the Israelite's male infants. This prophecy was no fairytale. Sure enough, God sent a prophet-messenger with signs, to deliver the oppressed believers and destroy the wicked tyrants and those who reject the signs. This savior was Musa (Moses), an Israelite, destined to be brought up in the house of his enemy (20:39-41).

{We recite to you from the news of Moses and Pharaoh in truth for the people who believe. Indeed, Pharaoh exalted himself in the land and

made its people into sects, oppressing a group among them, slaughtering their children and birthing their women (i.e., by raping them). Indeed, he was one of the corrupters. **And We wanted to confer favor upon those who were oppressed in the land and make them leaders and make them inheritors.** And establish them in the land and show Pharaoh and (his minister) Haman and their armies the very thing they were fearing from them. And We inspired to the mother of Moses, "Suckle him; but when you fear for him, cast him into the river and do not fear and do not grieve. Indeed, We will return him to you and will make him (one) of (our) messengers." And the family of Pharaoh picked him up (out of the river) so that he would become to them an enemy and a (cause of) grief. Indeed, Pharaoh and Haman and their armies were deliberate sinners. And the wife of Pharaoh said, "(He will be) a comfort of the eye for me and for you. Do not kill him; perhaps he may benefit us, or we may adopt him as a son." And the mind of Moses' mother became blank. She was about to disclose (the matter concerning) him, had We not strengthened her heart to remain among those who have firm faith (in Allah's promise). And she said to his sister, "Follow him"; so she watched him from a distance while they were not aware. And We had already barred him (Moses) from (accepting) any suckling women, so she (his sister) said (to the

Pharaoh's people): "Shall I direct you to a family who will nurse him for you, and they will be his well-wishers?" So We restored him to his mother so that she might be content and not grieve and so that she would know that the promise of Allah is true. But most people do not know. And when he attained his full strength and was (mentally) mature, We bestowed upon him judgment and knowledge. This is how We reward those who do good. And (one day,) he entered the city at a time of inattention by its people and found therein two men fighting: one from his sect and one from among his enemy. And the one from his sect called him for help against the one from his enemy, so Moses struck him and (unintentionally) killed him. He (Moses) said, "This is from the work of Satan. Indeed, he is a clear enemy that misleads (people)." He said, "My Lord, indeed I have wronged myself, so forgive me," and He forgave him. Indeed, He is The Forgiving, The Merciful. He said, "My Lord, for the grace You bestowed upon me, I will never be an assistant to the criminals." And he became inside the city fearful and anticipating (exposure), when suddenly the one who sought his help the previous day cried out to him (once again). Moses said to him, "Indeed, you are a troublemaker." And when he wanted to strike the one who was an enemy to both of them, he said, "O Moses, do you intend to kill me as you killed someone yesterday? You only

want to be a tyrant in the land and do not want to be one of the peacemakers." And a man came from the farthest end of the city, running. He said, "O Moses, indeed the eminent ones are counseling each other about you (intending) to kill you, so leave (the city); indeed, I am one of your well-wishers." So he left it, fearful and anticipating (apprehension). He said, "My Lord, save me from the wrongdoing people." And when he directed himself toward Madyan, he said, "Perhaps my Lord will guide me to the right way."} (28:4-22)

With God's guidance, and in response to his supplication, Moses managed to flee the city and survive the crossing of the wilderness until he reached a town called Madyan. There, he encountered an old man (Jethro) with his two daughters. The old man offered Moses to marry either of his daughters in exchange for working for him, for a period that includes at least eight and at most ten annual pilgrimages. Ten years after accepting the offer, Moses decided to commence on a new journey in search for a new home for his family, away from Madyan. Madyan didn't give him the comfort of feeling at home. Not knowing where exactly he will settle, it didn't take long for him and his family to get lost on their journey, as God decreed. In a cold night and without fire, Moses perceived a fire from the direction of a nearby mountain. {He said to his family, "Stay here; indeed, I have perceived a fire.

Perhaps I will bring you from there (some) information or burning wood from the fire so that you may warm yourselves."} (28:29) When he arrived at what he perceived from far, a remarkable thing happened. {But when he approached it, he was called, "O Moses! It is truly I, your Lord! So take off your sandals, for you are in the sacred valley of Ṭuwa. I have chosen you, so listen to what is revealed: 'It is I, Allah! There is no (true) deity except Me. So worship Me, and establish prayer for My remembrance. The Hour is sure to come, almost keeping it hidden, so that every soul may be rewarded according to their efforts. So do not let those who disbelieve in it and follow their desires distract you from it, or you will be doomed.'" (Allah added,) "And what is that in your right hand, O Moses?" He (Moses) said, "It is my staff! I lean on it, and with it I beat down (branches) for my sheep, and have other uses for it." He (Allah) said, "Throw it down, O Moses!" So he did, then—behold!—it became a serpent, slithering. He (Allah) said, "Take it, and have no fear. We will return it to its former state. And put your hand under your armpit, it will come out (shining) white, unblemished, as another sign, so that We may show you some of Our greatest signs. Go to Pharaoh, for he has truly transgressed (all bounds)." He (Moses) said, "My Lord! Uplift my heart for me, and ease my task, and remove the impediment from my tongue so people may understand my speech,

and grant me a helper from my family, Aaron, my brother. Strengthen me through him, and let him share my task, so that we may glorify You much and remember You much, for truly You have (always) been overseeing us." He (Allah) said, "All that you requested has been granted, O Moses!"} (20:11-36)

{And mention in the Book, Moses. Indeed, he was a chosen one, and he was a prophet-messenger. And We called him from the right side of the mount of Sinai, and We drew him near to converse (directly) with him in secret. And We appointed for him—out of Our mercy—his brother, Aaron, as a prophet.} (19:51-53) {(Allah said,) "Go forth, you and your brother, with My signs and don't depart from remembering Me. Go, both of you, to Pharaoh, for he has truly transgressed (all bounds). Speak to him gently, so perhaps he may be mindful (of Me) or fearful (of My punishment)." They both said, "Our Lord! We fear that he may be quick to harm us or act tyrannically." He (Allah) said, "Have no fear! I am with you, hearing and seeing. So go to him and say, 'Indeed we are both messengers from your Lord, so let the Children of Israel go with us, and do not oppress them. We have come to you with a sign from your Lord. **And peace be upon whoever follows the guidance.** It has indeed been revealed to us that the

punishment will be upon whoever denies and turns away.'"} (20:42-48)

As per God's command, the Prophet-messengers visited the Pharaoh and his people to convey Allah's message to them. The message called upon them to fear Allah, purify themselves from their evil ways, and emancipate the Israelites and allow them to leave with the Messengers. {He (Pharaoh) said, "Who then is the Lord of you two, O Moses?" He (Moses) said, "Our Lord is the One Who has given everything its (distinctive) form, then guided (it)." He (Pharaoh) said, "And what about the former generations?" He (Moses) said, "Its knowledge is with my Lord (recorded) in a book. My Lord neither deviates nor forgets."} (20:49-52) The Prophets were also sent with nine signs (27:12) so that they may reason, believe, and obey Allah and his messenger, but if they repudiate the message, they will face their demise. The nine signs were:

1. Moses' staff turning into a serpent (7:107)
2. Moses' hand turning into white shining light (7:108)
3. Years of famine and shortage of crops (7:130)
4. The flood (7:133)
5. The locust (7:133)

6. The lice (7:133)
7. The frogs (7:133)
8. The water turning to blood (7:133)
9. The scourge (i.e., plague of darkness) (7:134)

Moses showed the Pharaoh the first two signs at the first visit, and the first sign again, when he came back to challenge the magicians (20:56-73), but the other seven signs appeared later, after God revealed to the two Prophets to settle in Egypt for some time (10:87). Fearing persecution by the Pharaoh and his chiefs, only a small group of young Israelites believed in Moses as a messenger (10:83) when he arrived. The Prophets had to spend a few years in Egypt, gaining their people's trust and allegiance. As for the Egyptians and the Pharaoh, with all the signs, they refused to believe the Messenger. {And We certainly showed Pharaoh all of Our signs, but he denied them and refused (to believe).} (20:56) {And when the scourge descended upon them, they said, "O Moses! Pray to your Lord, by virtue of the covenant He made with you. If you help remove this scourge from us, we will certainly believe in you and let the Children of Israel go with you." But as soon as We removed the scourge from them—until a set time they will reach—they broke their promise.} (7:134-135)

A few years after Moses' return to Egypt, God commanded him to start the exodus. {And We inspired to Moses, "Travel by night with My servants; indeed, you will be pursued."} (26:52) {So they pursued them at sunrise. And when the two companies saw one another, the companions of Moses said, "Indeed, we are to be overtaken!" (Moses) said, "No! **Indeed, with me is my Lord; He will guide me**." Then We inspired to Moses, "Strike the sea with your staff", and it parted, each part was like a towering mountain.} (26:60-63) {We brought the Children of Israel across the sea…} (10:90) {Then the Pharaoh chased them with his troops. So they were encircled by that (huge wave) from the sea which overwhelmed them. (20:78) {…But as Pharaoh was drowning, he cried out, "I believe that there is no god except that in whom the Children of Israel believe in, and I am (now) one of those who submit." (Allah exclaimed,) "Now?! While you disobeyed before and were one of the corruptors?! Today We will preserve your corpse so that you may become an example for those who come after you! And surely most people are heedless of Our signs!"} (10:90-92)

The Avenger fulfilled his prophesied promise of saving the Children of Israel and inflicting vengeance upon the Pharaoh and his troops for their tyranny and heedlessness. {So We inflicted vengeance upon them, drowning them in the sea for denying Our signs and being

heedless of them. And We caused the people who had been oppressed (i.e., Children of Israel) to inherit the eastern regions of the land and the western ones, which We had blessed therein. And the good word of your Lord was fulfilled for the Children of Israel because of what they had patiently endured. And We destroyed what that Pharaoh and his people used to build and what they used to raise high. And We took the Children of Israel across the sea; then they came upon a people sitting in devotion to idols of theirs. They said, "O Moses, make for us a deity just as they have deities." He said, "Indeed, you are a people acting ignorantly. What these people are engaged in is sure to be destroyed, and their deeds are in vain." He said, "Is it other than Allah I should desire for you as a deity while He has favored you over the worlds?" And (recall, O Children of Israel), when We rescued you from the people of Pharaoh, (who were) afflicting you with the worst torment—killing your sons and birthing your women (i.e., by raping them). In all that there was a great trial from your Lord.} (7:136-141)

Eventually, the Children of Israel camped at the right side of Mount Sinai. God then revealed to prophet Moses to come back up to Mount Sinai, where he spoke to him the first time, and stay there for thirty nights to receive God's second message (i.e., the Tawrat). {And We made an appointment with Moses for thirty nights and perfected them

by (the addition of) ten; so the term of his Lord was completed in forty nights. And Moses said to his brother Aaron, "Take my place among my people, and keep things right, and do not follow the way of the corrupters (among the people)." And when Moses arrived at Our appointed time and his Lord spoke to him, he said, "My Lord, show me (Yourself) that I may look at You." He (Allah) said, "You will not see Me, but look at the mountain; if it should remain in place, then you will see Me." But when his Lord appeared to the mountain, He rendered it level, and Moses fell unconscious. And when he awoke, he said, "Pure are You! I have repented to You, and I am the first of the believers." He (Allah) said, "O Moses, I have chosen you over the people with My messages and by My talking (to you). So take what I have given you and be among the grateful." And We wrote for him on the tablets instruction of every kind and explanation for all things. "So hold on to it firming and order your people to take the best of it. I will show you the abode of the defiantly disobedient."} (7:142-145)

{And indeed, We gave the Scripture to Moses—so do not be in doubt (O Messenger) of him (Moses) meeting (with Allah)—and We made it a guide for the Children of Israel.} (32:23)

Meanwhile, back at where the Children of Israel camped, the people started to question what happened to prophet Moses. He was supposed to be gone for thirty nights and he hasn't come back yet. We learn from the next verse that God intended for prophet Moses to stay longer than the expected thirty nights so that God can put the Children of Israel through another test. {He (Allah) said, "We have then put your people to a test after you (left them) and Samiriyy has misguided them."} (20:85) Samiriyy was a hypocrite who joined the Israelites. He concocted a calf out of some ornaments and misguided the Israelites to worship it as a deity. {So Moses returned to his people, angry and grieved. He said, "O my people! Did your Lord not make you a good promise?! Then, was the time (since its fulfillment) too long for you, or did you wish that wrath from your Lord descend upon you, so you broke your promise (of obedience) to me?!" They said, "We did not break our promise to you by our free will, but we were made to carry weights of ornaments (taken) from the (Egyptian) people, so we threw them (into the fire), and so did the Samiriyy." And he (Samiriyy) extracted for them (the statue of) a calf which had a lowing sound, and they said, "This is your deity and the deity of Moses, but he forgot (that it is)." Did they not see that it could not return to them any speech and that it did not possess for them any harm or benefit?! And Aaron had

already told them before (the return of Moses), "O my people! You are only being tested by it, and indeed, your Lord is the Most Merciful, so follow me and obey my order." They said, "We will never cease being devoted to the calf until Moses returns to us." (Moses) said, "O Aaron, what prevented you, when you saw them going astray, from following me? How could you disobey my order?" He (Aaron) said, "O son of my mother, do not seize (me) by my beard or by my head. Indeed, I feared that you would say, "You caused division among the Children of Israel, and you did not observe (or await) my word." (Moses) said, "And what is the matter with you, O Samiriyy?" He said, "I perceived something they did not perceive, so I (first) took a trace from the Messenger and (then) I discarded it, and thus did my inner self tempted me." He (Moses) said, "Then go away. And indeed, it is (decreed) for you, that throughout your life, to say, 'Do not touch me'. And indeed, you have a guaranteed appointment that you shall not break. And look at your (false) deity to which you remained devoted. We will surely burn it, then dismantle it into the sea. (O People,) your (true) deity is only Allah, there is no deity except Him. He has encompassed all things in knowledge."} (20:86-98) {He said, "My Lord, forgive me and my brother and admit us into Your mercy, for You are the most merciful of the merciful." Indeed, those who took the calf (for worship)

shall be seized by Allah's wrath and by humiliation in the worldly life, and that is how We recompense the inventors (of falsehood), but for those who committed misdeeds, and then repented thereafter and became (true) believers, your Lord thereafter is The Forgiver Most Merciful. And when Moses' anger subsided, he took up the tablets; and in their inscription was guidance and mercy for those who stand in awe of their Lord.} (7:151-154) {And when Moses said to his people, "O my people! Surely you have wronged yourselves by worshiping the calf, so turn in repentance to your Maker and kill yourselves. That is best for you in the sight of your Maker." Then He accepted your repentance. Surely He is the Accepter of Repentance, Most Merciful.} (2:54)

[Rami: There is a difference of opinion among exegetes as to why prophet Moses told the calf-worshipers that they are better off killing themselves. In my opinion, prophet Moses said what he said because he thought to himself: If these people, who are descendants of prophets, dared to worship other than God, after receiving all the truth that had come to them and after God rescued them from the Pharaoh's tyranny, then these people are nothing but a lost cause; it is better for them, than in any other possible way, to seek repentance and then kill

themselves to demonstrate how truly they are regretful of their reprehensible wrongdoing. Allah knows best.]

To rectify the whole situation and to ask God for forgiveness, prophet Moses selected seventy elders (7:155), from among those who did not worship the calf, and took them with him to Mount Sinai. There, the elders got to hear Allah speak with Moses behind the clouds. Reluctant to believe that it is God who they are hearing, the elders then demanded to see Allah openly for further proof. Their arrogant, ungrateful demand was again reprehensible, and it affronted God, so God struck them with a fatal thunderbolt. Since they were the best Israelites he had with him, prophet Moses supplicated to God to forgive them, and as a merciful response to his supplication, The Giver of Life then revived them.{When you (the elders) said, "Moses, we will never believe you till we see Allah openly!" So, the thunderbolt took you while you were looking on. Then, We revived you after your death, so that you might show gratitude.} (2:55-56)

After God forgave them (2:52), he made a covenant with the Israelites *(more on the covenant in later chapters)*. Since upholding the covenant requires a high certitude in faith, God boosted their faith by showing them a great sign/miracle—raising a mount above them like

a canopy (2:63 | 4:194 | 7:171). Afterward, God divided them into twelve tribes, as distinct sub-nations (7:160), with a leading captain for each tribe (5:12). God then directed prophet Moses to travel with the tribes to the Holy Land ("Al-Ard Al-Muqaddasa" in Arabic). Within the Holy Land lived the Amalekites[20], and God ordered prophet Moses to liberate the land from these wicked tyrants. When they reached at the fringes of this land, Moses said, {"O my people![21]Enter the Holy Land which Allah has decreed for you (to enter) and do not turn back (from fighting in the way of Allah), lest you should become losers." They said, "O Moses, in it there is powerful tyrant people, and we shall never enter it until they leave it; but if they leave it, then we will enter."} (5:21-22) Two God-fearing captains of the Israelites, Joshua and Caleb, interfered. {Said two men from among the God-Fearing, on whom Allah had bestowed His grace, "Enter the gate (of the land, charging) upon them. Once you have entered it, you will prevail. In Allah you must trust, if you are (truly) believers." They said, "O Moses, indeed we will not enter it, ever, as long as they are within it; so go, you and your Lord, and fight. Indeed, we are remaining right

[20] [Rami: I reasoned that the "Amalekites/Amalek" and the "Anakim" are the same people or race. They were referred to by different descriptive names depending on the language that each tribe spoke within the region that surrounds them: Arabic (Amalek, Gabbarin), Hebrew (Anakim, Gibborim, Raphaim, Emim), or Aramaic (Nephilin). It seems these strong and tall people used to live in the area between Hebron, Gaza, and Negev, and the Israelites were afraid to fight them.]

[21] [Rami: Prophet Moses was addressing the people standing with him, not the entire Israelite progeny.]

here." He (Moses) said, "O my Lord, I have no control except over myself and my brother. So make a distinction between us and the defiantly disobedient people." He (Allah) said, "Then indeed, this (land) is forbidden to them for forty years (in which) they will wander throughout the land. So do not grieve over the defiantly disobedient people."} (5:23-26)

The Israelites had to now wander in the wilderness, with no place to settle permanently. To keep them alive, God descended upon them quails and manna (like dew drops that can be found on trees, plants, and rocks) to eat. {O Children of Israel, We saved you from your enemy, and We made an appointment with you at the right side of the mount, and We sent down upon you manna and quails, (saying), "Eat from the good things with which We have provided you and do not transgress (or oppress others) therein, lest My anger should descend upon you. And he upon whom My anger descends has certainly fallen." But indeed, I am the Forgiver of the Unforgivable to him who repents and believes and does righteousness and then continues in guidance.} (20:80-82) After a while, they became tired of eating the same food and appealed to prophet Moses. {And (recall) when you (Children of Israel) said, "O Moses, we can never endure one (kind of) food. So call upon your Lord to bring forth for us from the earth its green herbs and

its cucumbers and its garlic and its lentils and its onions." He (Moses) said, "Would you exchange what is better for what is less?! Go down to a town, and you will have what you ask for."} (2:61) Fulfilling their wish, Allah commanded the Israelites, through prophet Moses, to go to a certain town and cultivate its land and eat its produce. They were also commanded to keep repeating the word “Hittah” (absolve us) as they enter the town, indicating repentance from one’s sin. But some of them replaced this word with another one out of mockery, and God punished those people with a scourge. {And (recall) when We said, "Enter this city and eat freely from wherever you please; enter the gate with humility, saying, 'Hittah'. We will forgive your sins and multiply the reward of those who do good." But the wrongdoers changed the words they were commanded to say. So We sent down a punishment from the Heavens upon them for their rebelliousness.} (2:58-59)

The Quran also narrates two additional stories that happened during those forty years, and briefly mentions a few others (e.g., sabbath-breakers). The first story is the story of the cow. One day, one of the Israelites was mysteriously murdered. They came to prophet Moses asking him to supplicate to the Lord to reveal the identity of the murderer. Prophet Moses eventually did, and in response to his supplication, God commanded the Israelites to slaughter a unique cow

and then strike the dead body with one part of the cow. After a great deal of questioning and reluctance, they did what they were commanded, and the dead body came to life to identify its killer, then died afterward. This was another test of obedience and a miracle for the Children of Israel to witness and reason (2:67-73). The second story narrates the story of Moses with one of Allah's servants called "Al-Khidr"[22] (18:65-82). One time, prophet Moses was asked, "Who is the most knowledgeable person among the people?" Prophet Moses replied that it was him, given that he was a prophet. This was not the correct answer. God reproached him for not turning to God before answering the question. He was then ordered to travel to a wise man who possessed greater knowledge than him, and to learn from him what he did not know.

[Rami: I am not going to retell this very insightful story, so as to not drag out the story of prophet Moses. What I will say is that this story helped me understand at a young age that we know very little to comprehend God's enigmatic systems and the hidden reasons behind what we experience. I found this wise man in this story to be a tutor in "Hidden/Esoteric" knowledge, not only to prophet Moses, but to all

[22] The Quran doesn't mention the name of this man. However, the Hadith points out that prophet Muhammad referred to him by "Al-Khidr", and this name is more of an epithet that means "The Green One". [Rami: I wonder if the fiction character "the Green Wizard" was inspired by the Al-Khidr character.]

who study this story. You might feel it is the end of the world for having a car accident and missing your crucial flight, only to find out later that the flight's plane crashed, killing everyone onboard. There are reasons for everything that happens to us and what goes on around us, but with limited knowledge, purview, and insight it is very difficult to identify those esoteric reasons. Ask The Benefactor to grant you beneficial knowledge, insight, and wisdom, and always give him the benefit of the doubt, while staying patient in difficult times and situations.]

Eventually, prophet Aaron dies, then the generation that worshiped the calf dies, and by the end of the forty years, prophet Moses dies. Succeeding prophet Moses in leading the Israelites was Yusha (Joshua). I briefly mentioned Joshua, as one of the two men that tried to persuade the Israelites to fight the Amalekites. It is believed in Islam that Joshua is a prophet, but he is not one of the twenty five prophets mentioned in the Quran by name. He is the son of Nun, son of Ephraim, son of prophet Yusuf (Joseph). After forty years of wandering, and by the decree of Allah, he finally managed to rally the Israelites in a holy war to conquer a large territory of Canaan and settle there. It is narrated that in one of the battles, which began on a Friday morning, the Israelites were close to winning as the sun was nearing to set. In Jewish

and Islamic calendars, the following day begins at the time of sunset, and the Israelites were forbidden by God to work and fight on Saturday. Thus, prophet Joshua started to fear that they may lose the battle if it did not end before sunset. Consequently, he looked toward the sun and said, "You are commanded (by Allah) and so am I; O Allah hold it (from setting)!" The sun did not set until he was able to win the battle. In conclusion, the Children of Israel managed to enter the Holy Land as God decreed, and prophet Joshua ruled by the Torah Law. He divided the conquered territory into twelve divisions, one for each of the twelve Israelite tribes.

[Rami's key takeaways:

- After the death of prophet Joseph, the Israelites deviated from the straight path, so God put them through a great trial to punish them, awaken them, and make them realize that no one can support them other than him (17:2). And after great suffering and humiliation imposed by the Pharaoh, God bestowed his grace upon them, by sending them his messenger to rescue them and guide them back to the straight path.
- Once again, we learn how patient and forgiving God is and how arrogant and ungrateful humans are. One would expect the

Israelites, who were rescued from oppression and were shown great signs from their Lord, to become upright believers and submit to Allah and his messenger. Instead, throughout their journey, many Israelites demonstrated arrogance, ungratefulness, disobedience, or incertitude. Prophet Moses was right: they were better off repenting then killing themselves. This is why the generation that was brought up on the straight path by prophets Moses and Aaron (not the older generation) was destined to enter the promised Holy Land. Also, the Egyptians demonstrated arrogance and ungratefulness. God granted them several years to believe and repent, showing them nine signs as clear evidence (17:102), and they still refused to believe and submit to the Lord of all worlds. The great signs that the Prophets demonstrated were enough to scare the Pharaoh from harming them, but not enough to shatter his arrogance and pride until he faced death.

- It is understandable for the Israelites to be afraid of fighting the Amalekites, but this was a command from God, the same God that parted the sea in front of their eyes and saved them from a tyrant. Who can stop The Subduer from subduing the Amalekites and from making the Israelites victors?! Indeed, the Israelites were nothing like their forefather—the jihadist, prophet Israel.

{Fighting (in the way of Allah) is ordained for you, while it is hateful to you. But perhaps you hate a thing that is good for you; and perhaps you love a thing that is bad for you. And Allah Knows, while you know not.} (2:216)

- God mentioned that he destroyed what the Pharaoh and his people had built (7:137)—and I don't think they built the Pyramids of Giza; they only tried to replicate. I derived that the vanished city of Ramses II (Pi-Ramesses) is where they lived, which today lies beneath the city of Qantir in Egypt. Allah knows best.
- Moses' decision to leave Madyan with his family, not knowing where he would settle, is in itself a trial and a demonstration of trust in God. Returning to Egypt was not an option for him.
- The selection of Moses as the religious leader to guide the Israelites to the straight path must have been shocking to many Israelites: first, because he didn't grow up among them to be like them; and second, because Moses had some impediments and shortcomings that did not make him appear as a qualified religious figure. He was even misled by Satan to unintentionally kill a man—a major sin—but since he repented, God forgave him and put him through a great ordeal in exile to purify him. We learn here that God is willing to forgive those who sincerely repent and

correct course in the right path. Yes, prophet Moses was destined to deliver the Israelites; however, as I will explain later, there is destiny and there is also free choice. Before he became a prophet-messenger, Moses was a believer, always grateful (17:3) and mindful of God. He was a sincere person with a kind heart, and he always had the best intentions. God knew that when Moses reaches his peak maturity and finally settles firmly on the straight path (28:14), he will never deviate again, and that he will become the most pious and the best choice among the Israelites to lead in God's way. I believe that God purposefully did not shield Moses from sin so that his life story would be an example for the sinful Israelites and a source of hope and inspiration to repent from any wrongdoing and follow him on the straight path.

- No one can see The Majestic One on this Earth.]

Prophet Dawud (David)

After prophet Joshua passed away, not all subsequent prophets took on the role of head of state. Prophets that are not messengers are more of religious legislators and teachers, guiding people on how to live their lives on the straight path. Without strong leadership and unity, the Israelites were in disarray, facing several enemies, especially the

Amalekites and the Philistines. At one point in time, the Philistines managed to capture from them the wooden chest—Ark of the Covenant—that had sacred relics, such as Moses' staff and the Torah tablets. This made the situation intolerable. The Israelites realized then that they needed, once again, to get back on the straight path for God to support them against their enemies, and that they needed a leader to unite them. So, their chiefs consulted with the Prophet at that time—Samuel—to choose from among them a king. {Have you not seen those chiefs of the Children of Israel after Moses? They said to one of their prophets, "Appoint for us a king, (and) we will fight in the way of Allah." He said, "Are you not going to cower if ordered to fight?" They said, "How could we refuse to fight in the way of Allah, while we were driven out of our homes and (separated from) our children?" But when they were ordered to fight, they fled, except for a few of them. And Allah has (perfect) knowledge of the wrongdoers. Their prophet told them, "Allah has appointed Talut (Saul) to be your king." They said (in protest), "How can he be our king when some of us are more deserving of kingship than he, and he has not been blessed with vast riches?" He said, "Allah has chosen him over you and blessed him with knowledge and stature. Allah grants kingship to whoever He wills. And Allah is All-Bountiful, All-Knowing."} (2:246-247)

To resolve the dispute, prophet Samuel made a deal with them. If the stolen chest is brought back to them, then that would be a sign that Saul is indeed appointed by Allah as their king, and therefore they should follow his leadership. {And their prophet said to them, "Indeed, a sign of his kingship is that the chest will come to you in which there is serenity from your Lord and a remnant of what the family of Moses and the family of Aaron had left, carried by the angels. Indeed in that is a sign for you, if you are believers."} (2:248) Surely, God sent his angels to find the chest and bring it to Saul, and the Israelites were now obliged to accept him as their appointed king. Next was fighting the Amalekites and the Philistines, who among them was Jalut (Goliath).

Hesitant to fight Goliath and his soldiers, the Israelites were put to a trial aimed at weeding out those who put their desires and needs above God's command. {Then as soon as Saul departed with the soldiers, he said, "Surely Allah will be trying you with a river; so whoever drinks of it, then he is not of me, and whoever does not taste it, then surely he is of me, excepting him who scoops up (a scoop) with his hand." Then they drank of it except a few of them. Then, as soon as he passed over it, he and the ones who believed with him, they said, "We have no energy today against Goliath and his soldiers." (But) the ones who expect that they will be meeting Allah said, "**How often a little group**

has overcome a much larger group by the permission of Allah; and Allah is with the patient." And as soon as they went forth against Goliath and his soldiers, they said, "Our Lord, pour upon us patience and plant firmly our feet and give us victory over the disbelieving people!"} (2:249-250)

Saul started his march with a few thousand soldiers, but after the trial of sifting the devout, strong believers from the rest, only a few hundred (~300) soldiers were left. They were the steadfast believers who fought in Allah's cause, and joining them was a courageous young shepherd by the name of David. Although David was visiting his older warrior brothers to bring them food, he decided to get involved when it was time to face the enemy. He took his sling and struck Goliath in the forehead with a stone, leading to his death by the will of The Humiliator. {So they defeated them by permission of Allah, and David killed Goliath, and Allah gave him kingship and prophethood and taught him from that which He willed. **Had Allah not been pushing back some people by means of others, the Earth would have been corrupted, but Allah is All-Gracious to all the worlds**.} (2:251)

Goliath's death weakened the morale of his soldiers, which ultimately led to the defeat of the enemy in this decisive battle. This

was a turning point for Saul and his growing army, allowing them to restore rule over the territories. David had a vital role in this turning point, which led to his rise to power, and later becoming a prophet-king by God's appointment. Under King David's rule, the Israelites established a unified kingdom, covering most of Canaan and beyond.

Prophet David, who descended from the tribe of Judah, was given by God special knowledge and skills.

{(O Messenger!) Be patient over what they say and remember Our servant, David, the man of strength; indeed, he was one who repeatedly turned back (to Allah). Indeed, We subjected the mountains (to praise) with him, exalting (Allah) in the (late) afternoon and (after) sunrise. And the birds were assembled, all with him repeating (praises). And We strengthened his kingdom and gave him wisdom and discernment in speech.} (38:17-20)

{And We certainly gave David from Us bounty. (We said), "O mountains, repeat (Our) praises with him, and the birds (as well)." And We made iron pliable for him, Saying to him, "Make coats of mail, balancing well the rings of chain armor, and do all of you righteousness. Indeed, I, of what you do, am Seeing."} (34:10-11)

[Rami's key takeaways:

- Our status might be much greater in God's view than the view of the people. No one knows you well like God, not even the closest to you. The Israelites rejected Saul as their leader because he was not a man of wealth and high status, but in God's view he was the perfect and most qualified leader for the mission at hand.

- If you truly believe in God and hold steadfast in fighting in his way, God will make you victorious. The Israelites had been afraid and hesitant to fight Goliath, only for a courageous, young man with a pure heart to defeat a feared warrior, with God's permission. Many people question how a young man can defeat a mighty warrior. That's because The Supreme Resolver (The Opener of Deadlocks) wanted to resolve this conflict in such a manner. We have no control over outcomes. Outcomes are in God's hands. People's belief in having full control over outcomes and their fate is only a delusion. We only have sole control over the decisions we make (i.e., intention). I am sure Canadian author Malcom Gladwell and "manifestation coaches" would disagree.
- Before King David's time, most armor consisted of bronze scales rather than iron rings. Because a coat of mail requires thousands of uniform rings, hand-hammering iron into such delicate,

consistent pieces was nearly impossible for the blacksmiths of that era. This highlights the significance of the miracle where iron was made pliable for David, resolving a big craftsmanship hurdle.

- Holy wars are prescribed by God in the event of liberating the land from tyrants and the impious, wicked disbelievers.]

The Quran briefly mentions an incident that happened with prophet David, where God intended to remind him of a wrongdoing he had done in the past. Allah sent him two litigants—could be angels—while he was engaged in worship in his sanctuary. They came to him in an unusual way, by climbing over the fences, and placed their matter before him. He ended up judging between them, but at the same time, he realized that their matter was a subtle indication from The Subtle One regarding an old matter he did wrong. He prostrated himself before God and repented, and God forgave him (38:21-25). The Quran does not mention the nature of his wrongdoing.

[Rami's key takeaway:

- Prophets are humans, and some might have sinned before they were given prophethood[23], but this does not make them deliberate

[23] [Rami: After becoming prophets, they might still make very few mistakes (e.g., making a wrong decision in a matter that was not clear to them before making the mistake), but they will never commit major sins. God wouldn't have chosen them and entrusted them with prophethood if they were deliberate sinners.]

sinners. It seems there was one old wrongdoing that prophet David was not aware of, so God brought it to his attention, allowing him to learn a lesson and repent. There are many speculations[24] of what the wrongdoing may be, but in my opinion, God chose not to reveal it out of regard for his obedient servant.]

This story not only had a valuable lesson for prophet David, but for mankind as well. After prophet David repented and was forgiven, God said, {"O David, indeed We have made you a vicegerent upon the Earth, so judge between the people in truth and do not follow (your own) desire, as it will lead you astray from the way of Allah. Indeed, those who go astray from the way of Allah will have a severe torment for having forgotten the Day of Reckoning."} (38:26)

[Rami's key takeaways:

- Following your desires will lead you astray from the way of Allah. As I have concluded before, the way of Allah is the straight path. Straying from the straight path will result in a severe punishment, unless one repents and corrects course before then.

[24] [Rami: The told story of his wife Bathsheba seems to me improbable, and quite absurd to think that it would be appropriate for the man God elected as his vicegerent to rule with justice and equity. It is more plausible to me that the wrongdoing has to do with prophet David demanding from Saul's son the return of his first wife, Michal (Saul's daughter), as explained in a thesis by Dr. Muhammad Al-Moubayed. However, these are all speculations, and the wrongdoing should not concern us. What should concern us is the moral lesson of the story, which is: to always be equitable and to not let desires deter sound action and judgment!]

- It seems to me, when God forgave him for this wrongdoing, prophet David learned his final lesson, thereby making him ready to become God's vicegerent on Earth and to rule with justice and equity. To become God's vicegerent/deputy/successor upon the Earth means to succeed The Owner of Kingship, by his decree and permission, in ruling the entire Earth as its ruler and king. The kingdom belongs to God—the Lord gives, and the Lord takes (3:26)—and he entrusted prophet David as his deputy to rule the Earth, for a fixed time. However, it seems to me that prophet David faced many challenges, both internally and externally, and therefore, he ran out of time to further expand his kingdom.]

Prophet Sulayman (Solomon)

Succeeding prophet David was his son prophet Solomon.{And we blessed David with Solomon—an excellent servant, indeed, he was (constantly) turning (to Allah).} (38:30) Prophet Solomon inherited from his father his knowledge and the kingdom he ruled (27:16). To overcome the challenges that he and his father faced in expanding their kingdom, prophet Solomon made a special request to God:

{He (Solomon) said, "My Lord, forgive me and grant me a kingdom such as will not belong to anyone after me. Indeed, You are the

Bestower." So We subjugated the wind for him that blew smoothly on his command to wherever he wished. And (We subjugated to him) the devils, all builders and divers. And others bound together in shackles. This is Our gift. So, do favor (to someone) or withhold (it), without reckoning. And indeed, for him is nearness to Us and a good place of return.} (38:35-40)

{And to Solomon (We subjugated) the wind—its morning (journey was that of) a month—and its afternoon (journey was that of) a month, and We made a spring of (liquid) copper to flow for him. And among the jinn were those who worked for him by the permission of his Lord. And whoever deviated among them from Our command—We will make him taste the punishment of the Blaze. They made for him what he willed of elevated chambers, statues, bowls like reservoirs, and stationary kettles. (We said), "Work, O family of David, in gratitude." And few of My servants are grateful. And when We decreed Solomon's death, nothing indicated to the jinn his death except a creature of the earth (i.e., termites) eating his staff. But when he fell, it became clear to the jinn that if they had the knowledge of the unseen, they would not have remained in humiliating punishment.} (34:12-14)

[Rami: It seems to me that the jinn were very active in straying people, which caused many challenges for the two Prophets; hence, prophet Solomon requested a special kingdom so that he could rule over them. And by God accepting his request, he was now the ruler over the entire Earth. *(Let me make a stop here to revisit the jinn and the devils.)*]

Here is what the Quran and the Hadith revealed about the jinn:

1) The equivalent of "Insan" (Man) is "Jan" (15:27), and "jinn" is the plural of "Jan". Since they are made from a special kind of fire, we cannot see them, but they can see us. Although they are invisible to us, the jinn are capable of taking on the image of humans, or any physical object, as indicated in numerous Hadith. However, some Muslim scholars believe that jinn are very afraid to do so, because, while in a physical form, they will have to adhere to the laws of our physical world, and this puts them at great risk of getting captured, harmed, or killed.

2) Among the jinn are Muslims and rebels (72:13-18), and they will face final judgment like mankind (55:31).
3) God also sent messengers to the jinn from their own kind.

   ("O species of **jinn and mankind**, did there not come to you messengers **from among you**, relating to you My verses and

warning you of the meeting of this Day of yours?" They will say, "We bear witness against ourselves"; and the worldly life had deluded them, and they will bear witness against themselves that they were disbelievers."} (6:130)

[Rami: It is clear from the verse that jinn had messengers of their own kind, but it is not clear when they were sent. I reasoned before Adam was created, because I concluded that this earthly life is not intended for them and that the jinn, who are inhabiting the Earth with mankind, are the descendants of Iblis only. Nevertheless, I believe that his descendants are still accountable for their faith and deeds; therefore, they must believe and follow what the human messengers call for. Allah knows best.]

4) With God's permission, prophet Solomon took many of the evil jinn (demons) as prisoners[25], and were subjugated to work for him as builders and divers. And as builders, most likely, they were involved in constructing his renowned temple, or what is known

[25] [Rami: King Solomon's reign over the entire world meant all humans and jinn needed to surrender to his rule (27:30-31). Since demons, as captured prisoners, were humiliated and subjugated during his reign, it is only logical to infer that they had great animosity toward prophet Solomon and his father prophet David. As the Quran and the Hadith indicate, the jinn had indeed the most humiliating time on Earth during prophet Solomon's reign. This led me to the conclusion that Satan and his devils (humans and jinn) are behind the fabrication of all the false stories that portray these two Prophets as sinners and immoral leaders, as a payback for what they had to suffer. Solomon and David might have sinned before they repented and became prophet-kings, but this doesn't make them deliberate sinners engrossed in sin (38:28), as many fabricated stories about them indicate.]

as “King Solomon's Temple”. The temple was also constructed by human craftsmen and builders, and those who cut, prepare, and build with stones are called “the stonemasons/masons”.

[Rami: Verse (21:82) mentions that prophet Solomon had devils working for him (as prisoners), and since the verse below states that the devils can be from jinn and mankind, I inferred that there were evil humans working alongside the evil jinn.

{And thus We have made for every prophet an enemy—**devils from mankind and jinn**, who seduce one another with alluring rhetoric in order to deceive. Had Allah willed, they would have not done it. So, leave them and that which they invent.} (6:112)

Were the masons among those evil humans? Was there contact between the enslaved masons and the demons, forming a fellowship during prophet Solomon’s reign? Did the masons learn the skill of cutting stones from the time the Israelites were enslaved in Egypt? This also made me think of all the conspiracy theories about the secret society of the Masons/Freemasons, and how they aim to rule the world *(more on this in Chapter 12)*.]

5) Some jinn know some basic magic. [Rami: Let me stop here as well to address magic. We learn from the story of prophet Moses

that humans had some knowledge of magic. How and why is this knowledge not widely known today?

{They (instead) followed the magic promoted by the devils during the reign of Solomon. Never did Solomon disbelieve, rather the devils disbelieved. They taught magic to the people, along with what had been revealed to the two angels, Harut and Marut, in Babylon. They never taught anyone without saying, "We are only a test (for you), so do not abandon (your) faith." Yet people learned (magic) that caused a rift (even) between husband and wife; although their magic could not harm anyone except by Allah's will. They learned what harmed them and did not benefit them—although they already knew that whoever buys into magic would have no share in the Hereafter. Miserable indeed was the price for which they sold their souls, if only they knew!} (2:102)

This verse was revealed to clear prophet Solomon from the false accusation of practicing magic to run his kingdom, subdue the jinn, and control the wind. King Solomon was given special knowledge and authorities by Allah, not magic. God-fearing servants don't practice magic. The verse mentions who really taught magic and why. At the time of prophet Solomon, magic

was forbidden by God; however, it did exist long before. What is important to understand from all of this is that magic is a great evil known by the unseen world, and it made its way to the seen world. It is clearly outlawed by God, but God allowed its passage to our seen world to test mankind's obedience in abiding by his prohibitions. There might be very few people today that know some basic magic spells, especially for breaking human relationships (113:4). God knows best.]

Aside from dealing with the jinn, prophet Solomon also had to deal with the disbelievers who lived outside of the Israelite kingdom. We learn from the story of Saba (Sheba) with their queen Bilqis[26] (27:20-44), and the story of the valley of the ants (27:17-19), that he carried out military conquests in God's cause. These stories also highlight the breadth of his extraordinary reign and the wisdom and authority[27] he was blessed with.

(The sequence of historic events I am summarizing in the next three paragraphs are mostly from the history records, as narrated by

[26] [Rami: The story of queen Bilqis has a great moral lesson on how people can be misguided by wrong convictions.]
[27] [Rami: As a nation, the people of Sheba worshiped the sun, and that was not acceptable to the Muslim ruler of the Earth. In prophet Solomon's letter to the Queen of Sheba, he wrote to her, {It is from Solomon, and it reads: "In the Name of Allah—the Most Gracious, Most Merciful. Be not haughty with me, and come to me in submission."} (27:30-31) And when they showed reluctance to submit to him and Allah, he assembled an army to capture the polytheists. This is an indication that God granted authority to the ruler/king of the Earth over everyone on this Earth, and this is why it is a great trust and responsibility of what happens during his reign.]

historians. They don't hold great significance in my jigsaw puzzle; nevertheless, they do put things into context, in terms of knowing what happened to the Children of Israel, in the time period between prophet Solomon's death and prophet Jesus' birth.)

Under the reign of prophets David and Solomon, the Israelite kingdom lasted between seventy to eighty years; however, after their death, internal divisions and external conquests by surrounding rising powers crumbled the kingdom. The first conquerors were the Egyptians in the south, and the Assyrians from Mesopotamia in the north, then the Chaldeans of Babylonia, who ultimately defeated the Assyrians and the Egyptians and took over the Israelites' territory. One of the Chaldeans kings was a man by the name of Nebuchadnezzar II. In 586 BCE, he conquered the old Israelite territory and destroyed King Solomon's Temple, then captured several thousands of the Israelites and took them as slaves to Babylon—Babylonian Captivity. As for those who were spared, few stayed, and many fled to nearby territories in the Middle East region. After Nebuchadnezzar II's death, the Chaldean Empire fell into the hands of the Persians. The Persian ruler, Cyrus II, allowed the Israelites to return to their old territory, and the first ones that did, led by Zerubbabel, ended up building the "Second Temple".

Two hundred years later, the Greek kingdom, led by Alexander III of Macedon—commonly known as Alexander the Great—captured the old Israelite territory through his conquests and invasion of Persia. After his death, these territories changed hands numerous times during the ensuing wars until the Seleucid Empire gained control of it, around 200 BCE. The Seleucids treated the Israelites with brutality, forcing them to worship their god Zeus instead of Allah—"Elohim" in the Hebrew language—or at least adapt to the Greek culture and rituals (Hellenism), turning many of them into "Greek Jews". Those who abstained fled and later formed their own group called the Maccabees, named after their leader Judas Maccabeus. The Maccabees revolted against the Seleucid Empire in 167 BCE. And after several years of guerrilla warfare, they captured Jerusalem in 164 BCE, allowing them to cleanse the Second Temple from Greek deities and rituals and rededicate it to Allah. They celebrated by relighting the Temple's ritual lamps—an event commemorated today by Jews worldwide as "Hanukkah", the Festival of Lights. Eventually, their continued victories forced the Seleucid Empire to grant them tax exemption and complete autonomy in the Judea/Judah/Yehudah province. By then, the province was established as a sovereign Jewish state for the Jews, and their ruler eventually transitioned from a regional governor to a

king. During the Hasmonean dynasty, many disputes occurred between the Jews, resulting in multiple Jewish factions and sects.

By 63 BCE, the Roman Republic conquered Judea and took on the responsibility of assigning the king of Judea, with the expectation that their assigned (puppet) king supports their own interests [Rami: Sounds familiar??]. They eventually brought an end to the Hasmonean dynasty by appointing Herod I—known as Herod the Great—as king. He maintained a close alliance with Rome, but ruled over the Jewish population with a tyrannical hand. Despite his brutality, he managed to renovate the temple and enlarge the territory, turning it into the Herodian Kingdom of Judea. After his death, the Romans divided the territory between his sons and sister. During this period, a very special family was established, changing the course of history.

Family of Imran (Amram/Joachim)

"Al-Imran" (Family of Amram) is the title of the third chapter of the Quran. Among the descendants of prophet Harun (Aaron) (19:28)—the Aaronites or Aaronic Levites—was a pious man by the name of Imran ("Establishment" in English). Imran was a priest at the temple

and was married to another Aaronite (named Hannah), mentioned in the Quran as Imran's wife. Hannah remained sterile until middle age. One day, while sitting in the shade of a tree, her desire to have children of her own was awakened when she saw a bird feeding its offspring. She supplicated to God again to grant her a child, and The All-Hearing finally fulfilled the wish of his pious servant by miraculously fixing her impairment. She eventually became pregnant, and while expecting a boy, she pledged to God to dedicate him to serving the temple.

{When the wife of Imran said, "My Lord, indeed I have pledged to You what is in my womb will be devoted exclusively for Your service, so accept this from me. Indeed, You are the All-Hearing, the All-Knowing."} (3:35)

Her husband, Imran, died before his child was born, and instead of a male offspring she delivered a female. {But when she delivered her, she said, "My Lord, I have delivered a female"—and Allah was most knowing of what she delivered—"and the male is not like the female. And I have named her Maryam, and I seek Your protection for her and her offspring from Shaytan (Satan), the accursed one."} (3:36)

[Rami: When Imran's wife said, "And the male is not like the female", I don't think she meant that one sex is inferior to the other in the

holistic sense. No devout believer or righteous person believes that, especially if you are a female yourself. Men and women are equal, but God created them with different characteristics and advantages, favoring men over women in certain matters, and women over men in other matters. According to her religion, only men can be priests, and Hannah, an Aaronite married to an Aaronite, wished for a son that can grow up to be a priest ("kohen") like his father, focused on establishing worship at the temple. This is why I believe she wished to have a male child and said, "And the male is not like the female." Nevertheless, God granted her more than what she wished for. He granted her a daughter of utmost purity, named Maryam (Mary), and a grandchild who will be among the closest to Allah (3:45).]

Maryam (aka Virgin Mary) is the only female in the Quran mentioned by name. Not only that, the nineteenth chapter of the Quran is titled "Maryam". She is the greatest woman to ever live on Earth.

{And when the angels said, "O Mary, indeed Allah has chosen you and purified you and chosen you above the women of the worlds. O Mary, be devoutly obedient to your Lord and **prostrate and bow** with those who bow (in prayer)."} (3:42-43)

To fulfill her vow to her Lord, Imran's wife sent Mary to the temple to live and serve there, within the allowable limits. At the temple, every newcomer was assigned a guardian, and all the priests at the temple wanted to be the guardian of Imran's daughter. One of the priests was Zechariah, the husband of Mary's aunt (Elizabeth), who later also became a prophet. To settle the dispute, the priests agreed to cast lots, and it was prophet Zechariah who eventually won by the will of Allah, making him her guardian.

{This is news of the unseen that We reveal to you (O Muhammad). As You were not with them when they cast lots to decide who would be Mary's guardian, nor were you there when they argued (about it).} (3:44)

{So her Lord accepted her graciously and blessed her with a pleasant upbringing—entrusting her to the care of Zachariah. Whenever Zachariah visited her in the sanctuary, he found her supplied with provisions (e.g., food). He exclaimed, "O Mary! Where did this come from?" She replied, "It is from Allah. Surely Allah provides for whoever He wills without reckoning."} (3:37)

[Rami: This is an indication of the high ranking, care, and love that God bestowed upon Mary, for her purity and religious devotion.]

When the pious Zechariah realized how blessed Mary was, he got a reminder, with a boost of certitude that he needed, to turn once again to The Sufficient Satisfier of Needs and supplicate to him, hoping he also could experience a miracle, fulfilling a long-time need. {Then and there, Zachariah supplicated to his Lord, saying, "My Lord! Grant me (by your grace) righteous offspring. You are certainly the Hearer of (all) supplications."} (3:38) {So We responded to him, and granted him Yehya, and made his wife fertile. Indeed, they used to race in doing good deeds, and call upon Us with hope and fear, totally humbling themselves before Us.} (21:90)

[Rami: Does this sound familiar? Prophet Ibrahim's wife, Sara, wife of Imran, Hannah, and prophet Zechariah, all in a moment of high certitude in faith, turning to their Lord and supplicating, asking for a miracle. They were all pious, righteous believers and of old age. You know what this means? They spent a long time invoking God to grant them a child, over and over again. They probably had several moments of despair, but that did not make them forsake God because God didn't grant them something their hearts ached for. They had complete faith and trust that their Lord could make anything happen at any given time. At old age, and after great patience and devotion, The Thankful One granted them their wish—a great reward!]

{So the angels called him while he was standing in prayer in the chamber, "Indeed, Allah gives you glad tidings of Yehya, confirming a word from Allah, and a master, and chaste, and a prophet from among the righteous." He said, "My Lord, how will I have a boy when I have reached old age and my wife is barren?" The (angel) said, "Such is Allah; He does what He wills." He (later) said, "My Lord, make for me a sign." He said, "Your sign is that you will not (be able to) speak to the people for three days except by gesture. And remember your Lord much and exalt (Him with praise) in the evening and the morning."} (3:39-41) {Then he came out to his people from the prayer chamber and signaled to them to exalt (Allah) in the morning and evening. (Allah) said, "O Yehya, take the Scripture with determination." And We brought him judgment (while yet) a boy, and affection from Us and purity, and he was fearing of Allah, and dutiful to his parents, and he was not a disobedient tyrant. And peace be upon him the day he was born and the day he dies and the day he is dispatched alive.} (19:11-15)

“Yehya” is also known as “John the Baptist”. God answered prophet Zechariah's supplication and granted him (through a miracle) a pious son, blessed with sound judgment and prophethood, and with a name that never existed before (19:7). Although it is not mentioned in the

Quran and the Hadith, it is generally accepted among Muslims scholars that prophet John used to baptize people in the Jordan river, as a form of a purification ritual. They also accept that prophet John was beheading, based on Christian traditions. It is said that the king at that time wanted to marry his niece for her beauty. Out of courtesy, he called for prophet John to ask him if the religion finds it acceptable to marry one's niece. Before prophet John gave him the answer, he publicly announced that it is unlawful for one to marry their niece. Now that the prohibition was made public, it placed the king in a predicament. The niece was enraged by prophet John's action, so in one of the nights where she was seducing the king, she informed him that he can only marry her if he brings her John's head as dowry. The king was reluctant to kill a prophet, but he eventually ordered the capturing and beheading of prophet John.

[Rami: There are other versions of this story, but what is consistent in all versions is John's beheading for obstructing the king's marriage. If this story is true, I speculate that prophet John knew from The All-Seeing that they were coming to capture him; nevertheless, it seems from the story it was time for him to leave this world. However, why did God say about prophet John, "Peace be upon him the day he was born and the day he dies and the day he is dispatched alive"? As

Muslim scholars explain, the birth, death, and resurrection of a human soul are not necessarily peaceful matters. One may be born with health problems and may die while suffering. God promised that prophet John will be born and deceased in peace. Hmm, getting beheaded does not seem like a peaceful death to me. What about "the day he is dispatched alive"? Muslim scholars explain that it means the day of resurrection. I disagree with the scholars here, because on the Last Day we are resurrected from the state of death (16:20-21 | 29:57). For me, this verse raises questions and adds ambiguity to John's beheading story *(I'll come back to this shortly).*]

A few months (or years) after prophet John was born, one of the greatest miracles of all time happened. {And mention in the Book Mary, when she withdrew from her family to a place toward the east, (in seclusion) screening herself off from them. Then We sent to her Our Spirit, appearing before her as a perfectly formed human being. She said, "Indeed, I seek refuge in the Most Gracious from you! (So leave me alone) if you are God-fearing." He said, "I am only a messenger from your Lord, (sent) to bless you with a pure son."} (19:16-19) {When the angels said, "O Mary! Allah gives you good news of a Word from Him, his name will be the Messiah, Isa, son of Mary; honored in this world and the Hereafter, and he will be one of

those closest (to Allah). And he will speak to people in the cradle and adulthood and will be one of the righteous." She (Mary) said, "My Lord! How can I have a child when no man has ever touched me?" He (angel) said, "So will it be. Allah creates what He wills. When He decrees a matter, He simply tells it, 'Be!' And it is! And Allah will teach him the Scripture and wisdom and the Torah and the Gospel **and (make him) a messenger to the Children of Israel** (to proclaim,) 'I have come to you with a sign from your Lord: I will make for you out of clay, a figure in the shape of a bird, breathe into it, and it will become a (real) bird—with Allah's permission. I will heal the blind and the leper and revive the dead—with Allah's permission. And I will inform you of what you eat and store in your houses. Surely in this is a sign for you if you (truly) believe. And I will confirm the Torah revealed before me and legalize some of what had been forbidden to you. I have come to you with a sign from your Lord, so be mindful of Allah and obey me. **Surely Allah is my Lord and your Lord. So worship Him. This is the Straight Path.**'"} (3:45-51)

{And the one who guarded her chastity, so We breathed spirit of Our Own into her, making her and her son a sign for the worlds.} (21:91)

{So she conceived him, and she withdrew with him to a remote place. And then the labor pains brought her to the trunk of a palm tree. She said, "O, I wish I had died before this and was in oblivion, forgotten." But he called her from below her, "Do not grieve; your Lord has provided beneath you a stream. And shake the trunk of the palm tree toward you, it will drop fresh ripe dates upon you. So eat and drink and put your heart at ease. And if you see any human being, say, 'I have vowed silence to the Most Gracious, so I am not talking to anyone today.'"} (19:22-26)

{Indeed, the likeness of Jesus to Allah is as the likeness of Adam. He created Him from dust; then He said to him, "Be," and he was. **The truth is from your Lord, so do not be among the doubters.**} (3:59)

[Rami's key takeaways:

- Isa, or Jesus, is a prophet and a messenger of God. He is not God nor the son of God, but merely a human being, a servant of Allah, who called people to worship Allah alone as their Lord. Similar to how prophet Adam was created, prophet Jesus was created from dust instead of a male sperm, which made its way to Mary's womb with the command, or word, "Be", and by God breathing a spirit of his own into her womb. He came into existence in Mary's

womb by The Giver of Life, when she was around fifteen years old. **If Jesus is Almighty God, or his beloved son, then I don't believe it is befitting of him to appear to us in this world in struggle, from between the legs of a human being—he is not!!**

- "THIS IS THE STRAIGHT PATH"!!! God sent another messenger to the Children of Israel to remind them of submitting to Allah alone and following the right path in this worldly life.
- It is Allah who granted Jesus the permission to perform miracles.
- Allah gave us a hint here of when Jesus was born. He mentioned ripe, fresh dates. Dates are typically ripe from August to October. There are no ripe dates in December. This indicates that Christmas Day, as we know it, is not the birth date of Jesus. In fact, the origin of Christmas has to do with a pagan winter festival that has nothing to do with Jesus.]

{Then she brought him to her people, carrying him. They said, "O Mary, you have certainly done an unprecedented thing. O sister of Aaron (i.e., sisterhood in Aaronite blood tie), your father was not a man of evil, nor was your mother unchaste." So she pointed to him. They said, "How can we speak to one who is a child in a cradle?" He (Jesus) said, "Indeed, I am the servant of Allah. He has given me the

Scripture and made me a prophet. And He has made me blessed wherever I am and has enjoined upon me Salat and Zakat as long as I remain alive. And (made me) dutiful to my mother, and He has not made me a disobedient tyrant. And peace is on me the day I was born and the day I will die and the day I am dispatched alive." That is Jesus, the son of Mary—the word of truth about which they are in dispute. **It is not (befitting) for Allah to take a son; exalted is He! When He decrees an affair, He only says to it, "Be!" and it is. (Jesus said,) "And indeed, Allah is my Lord and your Lord, so worship Him. This is the Straight Path.**" Then the (various) groups differed (concerning Jesus) from among them, so woe to those who disbelieved—from the scene of a tremendous Day. How clearly will they hear and see on the Day they will come to Us! But today the wrongdoers are clearly astray.} (19:27-38) For their safety, God eventually guided Mary and her son to their refuge. {And We made the son of Mary and his mother a sign, and gave them refuge on high ground—a (suitable) place to settle with flowing water.} (23:50)

{The Messiah, son of Mary, is no more than a messenger; (other) messengers have passed on before him. And his mother was a Siddiqa. They both used to eat food (like any human being). Look how We make clear to them the signs; then look how they are deluded.} (5:75)

[Rami's key takeaways:

- Mary was put through an arduous trial. Piety was everything to her, and now her piety is in question for carrying to her pious community a baby without marriage. I could only imagine the fear and distress she had to go through. Who in his right mind would believe her claim that her newborn is a miracle?! This is why The Protecting Ally interfered with no delay to aid his pious servant with a major sign, by making baby Jesus speak while still in a cradle—to immediately clear his mother from any false accusations. And for passing this trial she experienced, Mary was awarded great honors. The Exalter exalted her by giving her the epithet of "As-Siddiqa", naming a chapter in the Quran after her, making her the only female mentioned by name in the Quran, and making her remembered, for many centuries to come, as "Virgin" Mary, the most pious woman to ever live. Peace be upon Virgin Mary!!! Nevertheless, supplicating to Virgin Mary, or taking her as a lord instead of Allah, is a great sin. Do you still remember how Satan managed to deceive and misguide the people that prophet Noah was sent to admonish?
- "And peace is on me the day I was born and the day I will die and the day I am dispatched alive": this is almost the same phrase that

God used with prophet John[28], but this time Jesus is addressing it to himself, after he declared he is the servant of Allah.

- Based on my study, I concluded that God guided Mary and her son to take refuge in the Galilee region, where Jesus grew up.]

Prophet Jesus grew up to be an adult blessed with sound judgment, wisdom and knowledge, and special abilities, ready to start his mission. {When Allah said, "O Jesus, Son of Mary, remember My grace upon you and upon your mother when I supported you with the Holy Spirit and you spoke to the people in the cradle and when you became an adult; and when I taught you the book and wisdom and the Torah and the Gospel; and how to make from clay a figure in the shape of a bird, and you breathe into it, and it became a (real) bird—with My permission; and you healed the blind and the leper—with My permission; and when you revived the dead—with My permission; and

[28] [Rami: There are many aspects of prophet John's story that I found intriguing. For example, why did God delay granting prophet Zachariah his wish until Mary entered his life? How come John began at a young age using the Torah to preach and judge among people (19:12), but Jesus waited until he was around thirty years old? If John was Jesus' forerunner, why did Jesus need a forerunner, given that him and John were of close age, and Jesus announced his prophethood first, while he was still in the cradle (19:29-30)? There is a puzzle here I haven't been able to completely solve. I have an incomplete thesis that says prophet John didn't die!! God raised him so he wouldn't be captured and beheaded, and that his existence and prophethood were purposed by God to rebut all the arguments around the divinity or trinity of Jesus, and **to confirm that Jesus was born with Allah's Word "Be"**. {So the angels called out to him (Zechariah) while he stood praying in the sanctuary, "Allah gives you good news of (the birth of) John **who will confirm the Word of Allah** and will be a great leader, chaste, and a prophet among the righteous."} (3:39) There seems to be a missing piece regarding whether the soldiers really managed to capture and behead prophet John. I find "the day I am dispatched alive" to be the day of the second coming, but, apart from the verse I am highlighting here, there is nothing else in the Quran and the Hadith to support my thesis. Now, given that this verse confirms that he will eventually die, and assuming my incomplete thesis is correct, does that mean prophet John also has a second coming to the Earth to complete his life?]

when I prevented the Children of Israel from harming you, when you came to them with clear proofs, and the disbelievers among them said, 'This is nothing but obvious magic.'"} (5:110) {And when Jesus came with clear proofs, he said, "I have come to you with wisdom, and to clarify to you some of what you dispute. **So fear Allah, and obey me.**"} (43:63)

[Rami's key takeaways:

- Notice how every time God mentions prophet Isa (Jesus), he says, "the son of Mary." I see three reasons for this:
    1. to honor Mary
    2. to emphasize that Jesus is Mary's son and not his
    3. to confirm that Jesus has no biological father

  Furthermore, the term "Messiah" in Hebrew means "anointed one", but in Arabic it's "Masih", and I find it to mean "traveling one". I believe God gave him this epithet because Jesus used to frequently travel to the synagogues across the land for preaching.

- God gave each prophet special abilities, knowledge, powers, and permissions. Notice the repetition of the phrase "with My permission". The repetition is to emphasize that no one has authority over anything without God's permission. It is God who

grants authority and permissions to any of his servants. Prophet Isa (Jesus) was permitted to cure people from blindness and leprosy, and there is wisdom and purpose behind why God chose those abilities for him. For people to appreciate a sign/miracle, and come to accept it as a sign from God, the subject matter of the miracle should be related to what those people are exceptionally specialized in, and the sign should outmatch their capabilities. For example, the Egyptians had people among them who knew magic, when prophet Moses came to them with the miracle of the staff turning into a serpent and his hand turning into light. The people in Galilee (in Nazareth and surrounding area, where Jesus was mostly active) had people among them who knew medical therapy. This means they had some knowledge of how to cure people, but not to cure blindness and leprosy, nor to revive the dead. They could not match what Jesus was capable of.

- Notice how prophet Jesus formed the shape of a bird from clay, before he breathed into it, and it became a living bird. Does it remind you of anything? Yes, God created Adam from clay. Does that mean Jesus is God or his son?! If Colonel Sanders gave me permission to use his KFC secret recipe, does that make me Colonel Sanders…or his son?!!

- The term “Holy Spirit” is mentioned four times in the Quran: three times when God mentions the Holy Spirit supporting Jesus, and one time when God says that the Quran was sent down to prophet Muhammad by the Holy Spirit. By considering the below two verses, we can infer that the Holy Spirit is archangel Gabriel. Other verses and the Hadith support this inference.

  {Say (O Muhammad), "**The Holy Spirit has brought it (the Quran)** down from your Lord in truth to make firm those who believe and as guidance and glad tidings to the Muslims."} (16:102)

  {Say (O Muhammad), "Whoever is an enemy to **Gabriel (should know that) it is he who has brought it (the Quran)** down upon your heart, by permission of Allah, confirming what came before it and as guidance and glad tidings for the believers."} (2:97)

  Jibril (Gabriel), like Mikha'il (Michael), Israfil (Raphael), and Azra'il (Azrael), is a special angel that God shared his name with us. “Holy” is one of his attributes. In the Quran, God also referred to angel Gabriel as the “Trustworthy Spirit” (26:193) and the “Messenger” (81:19), for sending him on earthy missions and carrying revelations and messages from God to the prophets.

When it came to prophet Jesus, the Holy Spirit Gabriel was responsible for supporting him.]

Prophet Isa began his mission in the Galilee region, and when he sensed disbelief from the people, he started seeking support. He managed to gather a few young men who were willing to support him in conveying God's message to the people and in overcoming his adversaries. These men are known as his close disciples, or apostles (in the Quran, "Al-Hawariyyun" ["the Apologists"]). However, to feel reassured that Jesus is truthful, the disciples asked Jesus for a miracle. {When the disciples said, "O Jesus, Son of Mary, can your Lord send down to us a table (spread with food) from the Heaven? He (Jesus) said," Fear Allah, if you should be believers." They said, "We wish to eat from it and let our hearts be reassured and know that you have been truthful to us and be among its witnesses." Said Jesus, the son of Mary, "O Allah, our Lord, send down to us a table (spread of food) from the Heaven to be for us a festival for the first of us and the last of us and a sign from You. And provide for us, and You are the best of providers." **Allah said, "Indeed, I will send it down to you, but whoever among you disbelieve afterwards will be subjected to a torment I have never inflicted on anyone of My creation."**} (5:112-115)

[Rami: God showed the disciples the miracle they asked for (and it has nothing to do with the “Last Supper”). The miracle had one stipulation: the disciples cannot disbelieve after the miracle occurs, and if they do, they will face a torment like no other. This is because when God allows for a great miracle to happen, or he shows something from the unseen world in the seen world, he is revealing to an eyewitness direct evidence of the absolute truth. And God judges people based on the level of certainty of the truth that God reveals to them. This is equity in judgment. This is a very important point to understand.]

{And when I (Allah) revealed to the disciples, "Believe in Me and in My messenger." They said, "We have believed, so bear witness that indeed we are in submission to Allah."}(5:111) {O you who have believed, be supporters of Allah, as when Jesus, the son of Mary, said to the disciples, "Who are my supporters for Allah?" The disciples said, "We are supporters of Allah." And a group of the Children of Israel believed, and a group disbelieved. So We supported those who believed against their enemy, and they became dominant.} (61:14)

After becoming dominant in Galilee, Jesus turned his attention to Jerusalem. The Jewish religious leaders there, from various sects, found him to be a major threat to their establishments, because he was

rebuking their wrongdoings and undermining their authority. It did not take long for them to conspire to kill him, with the assistance from the Romans. Given that Jesus was a prophet-messenger furtively supported by the Holy Spirit, and given that he has yet to complete his mission, he became aware of their evil conspiracy. It was then when God raised him to the Heavens before they could capture him. And to deceive his persecutors, God transfigured another man's body, making it look like him. Therefore, the Romans captured and crucified someone else that looked like Jesus, but was not him. This is explained in the following verses, revealed to prophet Muhammad when the Arab Jews came to him, bragging that they had killed Jesus:

{And (for) their saying, "We killed the Messiah, Jesus, son of Mary, the Messenger of Allah." But they neither killed nor crucified him—**it was only made to appear so. Even those who argue for this (crucifixion) are in doubt**. **They have no knowledge whatsoever—only making assumptions.** They certainly did not kill him. Rather, Allah raised him up to Himself. And Allah is Almighty, All-Wise.} (4:157-158)

[Rami: I understand that this is a very controversial subject, a point of dispute between Muslims and Christians. However, God never willed

for Jesus to die because he has yet to complete his mission. Christians and Muslims believe that Jesus will come back to this Earth in end times—The Second Coming (43:61). Also, God decreed that him and his messengers shall be the victors (58:21); hence, Jesus cannot be defeated. His crucifixion would've been a defeat, so to prevent it, God had someone else take on Jesus' image. God could have kept Jesus' body, lifted his soul, and replaced it with another soul. However, I believe that God didn't do that because Jesus' body is still needed for the second coming. There is a lack of certainty on who took on the image of Jesus, and if anyone was initially aware that Jesus was raised to the Heavens. One claim says that Jesus asked his disciples, "Who will sacrifice his life for me in exchange for the reward of joining me in Paradise?" One disciple volunteered and Jesus then ascended to the Heavens. Another claim, from the gospel of Barnabas, says that God mirrored Jesus's image onto the disciple Judas Iscariot's body, for his betrayal of Jesus by disclosing his location to the Romans. I favor the latter claim: first, because Judas deserved to be punished for his betrayal; second, because disclosing his location to the Romans hints that Judas (and perhaps others as well) was not aware that Jesus is ascending to the Heavens; and third, because there is a big mystery around what happened to Judas' body after his presumed suicide.]

Jesus was a messenger sent to the Children of Israel (3:49), and God made him one example of his many signs (43:59) for them to consider. He was sent to convey a message and outlaw all the fabrications and misguidance invented by the Jewish scribes, Pharisees, and Sadducees (2:75-79 | 5:13). Jesus also had with him the Injil (Gospel), which was guidance, light, and confirmation/authentication of the Torah. Jesus taught the Injil to those who followed him, and he used it to judge among people what they dispute (5:46-47), similar to what prophet Moses did with the Tawrat (Torah) (5:43-45). Jesus also taught the Torah Law, and he was not alone, prophet John was there as well during Jesus' silent years. They both: called for the worshiping of Allah alone and following the truth instead of falsehood; admonished people from sinful and lewd acts and reminded them that every minute they live is an opportunity to repent; reminded and warned people about the torment of Hell and that mankind has an overt enemy, who succeeded in getting them to deviate from the straight path; reminded the Children of Israel that God sent them prophets and messengers, whenever they transgressed in the past, in effort to guide them back to the right path; and performed the greatest miracles, with the permission from their Lord, because they were the final intervention chiefly aimed at the Children of Israel. Unfortunately, few of the Israelites accepted

the full truth without any distortion, and many did not. Few followed the straight path, and many went astray.

Family of Ibrahim (Part III) – The Final Prophet

{Surely the first House (of worship) established for humanity is the one at Bakkah—a blessed sanctuary and a guide for (all) people. In it are clear signs and the standing-place of Ibrahim. Whoever enters it should be safe. Pilgrimage to this House is an obligation by Allah upon whoever is able among the people. And whoever disbelieves, then surely Allah is not in need of (any of His) creation.} (3:96-97)

{And when We made the Sacred House a center and a sanctuary for the people (saying), "(You may) take the standing-place of Ibrahim as a site of prayer." And We entrusted Ibrahim and Ishmael to purify My House for those who circle it, who take it as sanctuary for worship, and who bow and prostrate themselves (in prayer). And when Ibrahim said, "My Lord, make this a secure land and bestow upon its people fruits (for sustenance), such of them as believe in Allah and the Last Day." He (Allah) said, "As for those who disbelieve, I will let them enjoy themselves for a little while, then I will condemn them to the torment

of the Fire. What an evil destination!" And when Ibrahim was raising the foundations of the House and (with him) Ishmael, (saying), "Our Lord, accept (this service) from us. Indeed You are the All-Hearing, the All-Knowing! Our Lord and make us in submission to You and from our descendants a nation in submission to You. And show us our rites and accept our repentance. Indeed, You are the Accepter of Repentance, the Most Merciful. Our Lord, and send among them a messenger from themselves who will recite to them Your verses and teach them the book and wisdom and purify them. Indeed, You are the Almighty, All-Wise." And who turns away from the creed of Ibrahim except he who befools himself?! Indeed We had chosen him in this world, and indeed he, in the Hereafter, will be among the righteous. **When his Lord said to him, "Submit", he said, "I have submitted to the Lord of the worlds."** And Ibrahim instructed his sons and (so did) Jacob, (saying,) "O my sons, indeed Allah has chosen for you this religion, so do not die except while you are in submission." Or did you (O Muhammad) witness when death came to Jacob, when he said to his sons, "What will you worship after me?" They said, "We will worship your deity and the deity of your fathers, Ibrahim and Ishmael and Isaac—one God. And we are in submission to Him."} (2:125-133)

[Rami's key takeaways:

- The first to name himself a "Muslim" was prophet Ibrahim, after God asked him to submit to his Lord. Non-Arabic speakers might not know that the word "Muslim" is an Arabic noun that comes from the verb "Aslama", which means "to submit/surrender oneself". Hence, the word "Muslim" means "the person who is in submission". In religious context, it means "the person who accepts to be in submission to the authority and will of the one God". The word implies obedience and complete trust in the Lord. Another word that comes from "Aslama" is "Islam", which means "submission", or better, "living in submission to the authority and will of Allah". And the third related word is "Salam", which means "Peace". Anyone who submits to Allah's authority in peace and obeys his commandments is a Muslim, and therefore all prophets are Muslims. Prophet Ibrahim instructed his sons to be Muslims and so did prophet Jacob (Israel). Prophet Ibrahim might be the first to use this word—and maybe not in Arabic—but the word has a meaning that applies to anyone who submits.
- We learned before how God ordered prophet Ibrahim to take his wife and son Ishmael to Makkah and leave them there, and how the Zamzam water came out of the ground to save them.

Metaphorically speaking, God asked prophet Ibrahim to plant a seed in a dry valley, and made blessed water come out of the ground so that the seed sprouts and grows into a tree. The seed is prophet Ishmael, the tree is a new nation/ummah to initiate from among the Arabians, and the fruits of the tree are new Muslims. That was the first of two trees that prophet Ibrahim planted. The second tree is the Israelite ummah, through the second seed, prophet Isaac in Canaan. There isn't a third seed, because Jesus was sent to the Israelite ummah, with a new covenant and scripture. The two seeds were planted in two holy lands.

- If you also remember, prophet Ibrahim lived in Canaan, while his son Ishmael grew up in Makkah among the Arabians. Prophet Ibrahim visited Ishmael periodically. In one of his visits, he was ordered by God to rebuild, with the help of his son, the first house of worship established for mankind on this Earth. During that visit, prophet Ibrahim made four momentous supplications:

  1. **"My Lord, make this a secure land and bestow upon its people fruits (for sustenance), such of them as believe in Allah and the Last Day."**

     Indeed, Makkah was blessed with security and prosperity despite the odds.

2. **"Our Lord, accept (this service) from us. Indeed You are the All-Hearing, the All-Knowing!"**

   In recognition of their service, God responded to prophet Ibrahim's supplications.

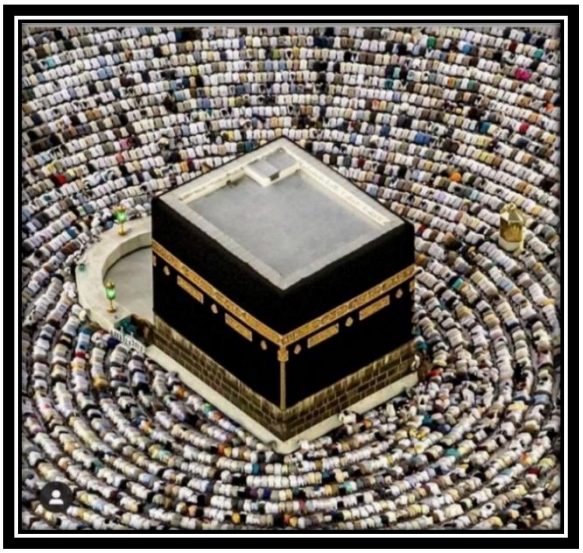
3. **"Our Lord, and make us in submission to You and from our descendants a nation in submission to You. And show us our rites and accept our repentance. Indeed, You are the Acceptor of Repentance, the Most Merciful."**

   Indeed, a Muslim nation emerged from the lineage of the prophets Ibrahim and Ishmael.

4. **"Our Lord, and send among them a messenger from themselves who will recite to them Your verses and teach them the book and wisdom and purify them. Indeed, You are the Almighty, All-Wise."**

   Indeed, a messenger was sent to their descendants to teach them scripture and wisdom, and to purify them.

- The old name for Makkah is "Bakkah/Baca", and it means "crowded place". This name is mentioned in the Quran (3:96) and the Book of Psalms (Chapter 84).
- Unless you live in your own bubble, I am sure you have seen the "black cube" with people circling around it. The black cube is a



brick-and-mortar building called “Ka'bah”, covered in a black silk cloth. Muslims do NOT worship the building. The Ka'bah area is the first house of worship on Earth (3:96), built at the time of Adam and demolished by the deluge at the time of Noah. This is why God called it “the Ancient House” (22:33). It is also a point of reference for prayer. All Muslims, wherever they are in the world, are required to perform Salat facing the shortest distance to it (2:144). Personally, I find the Ka'bah to be a symbolic substitute for Allah’s Throne. Most of the people you see circling around the Ka'bah are pilgrims performing one of the two Islamic rites, “Umrah” and “Hajj”. Prophets Ibrahim and Ishmael had to dig the ground to find the foundation of the Ka'bah and rebuild it. Moreover, when the Ka'bah was built, God commanded prophet Ibrahim to call for prayer so that people would come from every distant path to perform Hajj (22:27). It is reported that prophet Ibrahim said, “How will my voice reach those who are out of reach?” Allah replied, “You call, and the delivery (of the calling) is on me.” This

is how the pilgrimage to Makkah was initiated. I find Hajj to be a portrayal of the human race gathered and united in faith, pledging their servitude to the Lord. It is a demonstration of unity, obedience, and submission to Allah alone. The days of Hajj are among the most important days in the year, including the Day of Arafah—the day of repentance. This day holds aeonic significance. Do you still remember what happened at Arafah?]

Two thousand years after the time of prophet Ishmael, the Arabian Peninsula got corrupted with idolatry and evil acts—a time of darkness and ignorance. "Religion in the region consisted of indigenous polytheistic beliefs, Ancient Arabian Christianity, Nestorian Christianity, Judaism, and Zoroastrianism. Cities like Makkah and Yathrib acted as important centers of trade and religion. In Makkah, Ka'bah was a place to worship the deities of Arabia's pagan tribes. Makkah's most important pagan deity was Hubal, whose idol had been placed there by the ruling Quraysh tribe in the 5th century. The Quraysh tribes were in control of Makkah and became skilled merchants and traders. In the 6th century, they joined the lucrative spice trade since battles in other parts of the world were causing traders to divert from the dangerous sea routes to the more secure overland routes. Makkah became a leading trade hub in the region, making the Makkah trade to

be the primary binding force in Arabia in the late 6th century. The harsh conditions and terrain of the Arabian Peninsula meant a near-constant state of conflict between the local tribes, but once a year they would declare a truce and converge upon Makkah in a pilgrimage. Up to the 7th century, this journey was undertaken by the pagan Arabs to pay homage to their shrine and drink from the Zamzam well. However, it was also the time each year when disputes would be arbitrated, debts would be resolved, and trading would occur at Makkah fairs. These annual events gave the tribes a sense of common identity and made Makkah an important focus for the peninsula."[29] Although Allah was still worshiped in Makkah, many of prophet Ishmael's descendants considered pagan deities as partners with Allah.

[Rami: Satan and his old trick. To deviate people in the Arabian Peninsula from the straight path and the creed of Ibrahim and Ishmael, Satan managed to mislead most of them into worshiping idols and associating partners with The One. And idolatry was not the only deception: Satan made it acceptable to them to bury alive female newborns, trade their children for goods, appear nude and fornicate in

[29] https://courses.lumenlearning.com/boundless-worldhistory/chapter/pre-islamic-arabia/

public, fight each other for honor, own slaves, get involved in prostitution, earn Riba (usury), and other evil acts.]

Sheltered from idolatry and lewdness was a young man by the name of Muhammad bin (son of) Abdullah bin Abd Al-Muttalib. Muhammad's father passed away before he was born, and so did his mother when he was six. He was under the care of his grandfather for a few years, and after his death, he lived with his uncle. Muhammad's uncle was considered one of the honorable chiefs of Quraish, but since he supported a large family on a very modest income, Muhammad had to rely on himself to earn a living. As a young boy, he started as a shepherd, and when he got older, he worked with his uncle in trade, before he was recommended to a businesswoman by the name of Khadija. Khadija was a wealthy widow in her thirties or early forties. She worked with several traders to put her money to work and was looking for someone she could trust with her money. Muhammad's noble manners and integrity were well-known among his community, allowing him to secure a job with Khadija. It didn't take long for Khadija to fall for Muhammad's excellent character, manners, faith in Allah alone, good looks, and the high earnings he made for her. Although he was younger than her, and of lower social status, it did not stop her from having a friend suggest to Muhammad that he marry

her. Muhammad did not mind, and he indeed proposed to her and got married at the age of twenty five.

A few kilometers away from where Muhammad and Khadija lived, there was a mount that housed near the top a small cave called “Hira'”. In his late thirties, Muhammad started to frequent this cave for contemplation and devotedness to God. In 610 CE, and in one of the nights of Ramadan (9th month in the Hijri [lunar] calendar), Muhammad, around the age of forty, was sleeping in the cave when a man wearing white entered. The man woke Muhammad from sleep and said, “Read!” Horrified Muhammad responded, “I cannot read!” Then the man embraced him tightly and then said, “Read!” Muhammad responded again, “I cannot read!” Then the man hugged him tightly again and said, “Read!” Muhammad did not know what to say other than the truth, “I cannot read!!” Then the man recited:

{Read in the name of your Lord who created; created Man from a clinging clot. Read, and your Lord is the Most Honorable, Who imparted Knowledge by the means of the pen. He taught man what he did not know.} (96:1-5)

A couple millenniums after prophet Ibrahim’s supplication, God chose Muhammad, a descendant of prophet Ishmael, to be his final

prophet on Earth (the tree's trunk!) and a messenger (2:151) sent to all mankind (7:158), revealing to him the above verses through his angel Gabriel, for the very first time.

{Whatever is in the Heavens and whatever is on the Earth glorifies Allah—the Sovereign, the Most Holy, the Almighty, the All-Wise. He is the One Who raised for the illiterate (people) a messenger from among themselves—reciting to them His verses, purifying them, and teaching them the book and wisdom, for indeed they had previously been clearly astray—along with others of them who have not yet joined them. For He is the Almighty, All-Wise.} (62:1-3)

{Say (O Muhammad), "**O Mankind! I am Allah's messenger to you all**. To Him belongs the kingdom of the Heavens and the Earth. There is no deity except Him. He gives life and causes death." So believe in Allah and His messenger, the illiterate prophet, who believes in Allah and His words. And follow him, so you may be (rightly) guided.} (7:158)

{O Mankind! The Messenger has certainly come to you with the truth from your Lord, so believe for your own good. But if you disbelieve, then (know that) to Allah belongs whatever is in the Heavens and the Earth. And Allah is All-Knowing, All-Wise.} (4:170)

[Rami: I did not cover prophet Muhammad's biography, from his birth to the first revelation, and why he favored seclusion in the years leading up to the first revelation, nor I am going to cover the details of his life story, from the time he ran out of the cave that night in terror until his death. Since I am examining the Islamic story, it is challenging to avoid going into details about prophet Muhammad. There are extensive collections of narrations documenting the words and deeds of prophet Muhammad during his lifetime, and recounting them is not the goal. The main goal of this book is to understand the full story of this life and its purpose and the path that will get us back to Paradise.

On the subject of documenting prophet Muhammad's life, one time I came across an online documentary, by a historian who questioned the traditional Islamic story and re-labeled the events of the 7th century as an "Arab Conquest". He was surprised by the lack of historical evidence of Muhammad living in Makkah. He was looking for evidence in the UK libraries and surveying camel tour Bedouins in the Jordanian desert. He even visited Palestine and Istanbul, asking everyone but Muslim historians. This "historian" did not see a need to investigate the place Islam was founded. He did not see the need to talk to Muslims scholars in Saudi Arabia and other Muslim countries. He did not see the need to investigate how the oral narratives (Hadith)

were gathered and meticulously verified for authenticity over the centuries. Ironically, he dismissed documented reports of eyewitnesses that lived in Makkah and Madinah during the time of prophet Muhmamad, yet he accepted documented reports of foreign skeptics. The point I want to get to here is that there is a great deal of deceiving information about Islam and prophet Muhammad that is purposed to distort the truth about Islam. The true followers of every prophet that walked this Earth are Muslims, but the first to give them the name was prophet Ibrahim. Muslims have always been under attack. Before, it was the Muslims that followed prophets Moses and Jesus, and today it is the Muslims that follow prophet Muhammad. This is one of several reasons why I decided to write this book and make people aware of the truth. Having said that, I will not cover in this section prophet Muhammad's biography; instead, I will focus on the subjects that people are mostly misinformed about or simply ignore.]

{They wish to extinguish Allah's light with their mouths, but Allah will only allow His light to be perfected, even to the dismay of the disbelievers.} (9:32)

{And say, "Truth has come, and falsehood has departed. Indeed is falsehood, (by nature), ever bound to depart."} (17:81)

The (re-)Birth of Islam in Arabia

After the cave incident, prophet Muhammad eventually became aware of his prophethood and his responsibility to convey a new message to mankind, not only to the Arabians. Verses of the Quran continued to be revealed to him over the days, months, and years, through the Holy Spirit Gabriel. In the early years, his preaching was focused on purifying the heart, mind, and body, asserting the oneness of Allah ("Tawheed" in Arabic), adopting virtuous habits, and warning about the Last Day. However, fearing a backlash from the pagans, prophet Muhammad only preached in private social settings and to the people of reason. The first to believe in his prophethood and become Muslims were his household and his close relatives and friends. {And warn your closest relatives and be gracious to the believers who follow you. But if they disobey you, say, "I am certainly free of what you do." Put your trust in the Almighty, Most Merciful, who sees you when you rise (for prayer at night), as well as your movements (in prayer) along with (fellow) worshipers. He (alone) is indeed the All-Hearing, All-Knowing.} (26:214-220) In the first three years, he had between thirty and forty something followers. However, things were to change after God commanded prophet Muhammad to start preaching publicly.

{O Prophet! We have sent you as a witness, and a deliverer of good news, and a warner, and a caller to (the way of) Allah by His command, and a beacon of light.} (33:45-46)

{Invite to the Way of your Lord with wisdom and good advice, and only debate with them in the best manner. Surely your Lord knows best who has strayed from His Way and who are the guided ones.} (16:125)

Proclaiming God's oneness was not only thought to be a threat to polytheism, but also to the economy of Makkah, where many pilgrims visit to worship their idols. Furthermore, honor is something sacred among the Arabians. Prophet Muhammad's preaching implied that whoever worshiped those false deities was wrong or a fool. The proud chiefs of Quraish became very concerned, even their slaves were getting influenced by Muhammad. They tried everything to silence him, from discrediting him by throwing false accusations against him, to harassing him and his followers, verbally and physically, to offering him wealth and their eligible women to wed, to negotiating with him, and so forth. When all their attempts failed, they turned to terrorism. At first, they could not attempt to kill prophet Muhammad, because of the protection he got from his uncle and his clan. However, when his uncle died, his clan withdrew the protection, and the Quraish idolaters

started plotting to imprison or kill him, but all of their plots failed by God's protection and will (8:30).

As a prophet-messenger responsible for conveying Allah's message to all the people, prophet Muhammad kept preaching publicly, and he was keen on inviting to Islam the visiting pilgrims. This allowed the message to start spreading to various towns and cities beyond Makkah. Among those cities was a desert oasis, about 340 kilometers north of Makkah, named "City of Yathrib". The city was named after the leader of the first clan that founded the city. By the early 7th century, Yathrib had disparate Arabian tribes and clans. While prophet Muhammad was facing his battles in Makkah, Yathrib was also facing its never-ending intertribal fighting. As numerous families in Yathrib started to embrace Islam, it became apparent among the city leaders to pledge their allegiance to prophet Muhammad and to invite him and his followers to come live in Yathrib under their protection and support. They also hoped he would end the bitter intertribal fighting among them. Prophet Muhammad accepted their invitation, after God inspired him in a dream that Yathrib was the right destination. This came after ten years of Muslims tolerating ongoing disrespect and persecution for believing in one God and obeying him and his messenger.

{Whoever emigrates for the way of Allah will find many safe havens and bountiful resources throughout the Earth. Those who leave their homes and die while emigrating to Allah and His Messenger—their reward has already been secured with Allah. And Allah is The Forgiver, Most Merciful.} (4:100)

Once prophet Muhammad and his Quraishite followers settled in Yathrib, he indeed managed to establish peace through alliances and treaties among the different parties, especially with the Jews. After prophet Muhammad was declared the leader of the city, he dropped "Yathrib" from the city's name and just called it "Madinah" (means "City" in English, and he also called it "Taiba"). The Muslims from Madinah became identified as "The Supporters" (Al-Ansar) and the Muslims from Quraish as "The Emigrants" (Al-Muhajireen) (9:100).

[Rami's key takeaways:

- Words are powerful! Many elected messengers were sent to the people with a sign to prove their divine assignment, and the sign was often related to what the people of their time specialized in. Prophet Muhammad's prime public sign was the words of the Quran. Although he was an illiterate man (7:158 | 13:16), the words he recited were no match to any poetry Quraish had ever

heard. The Quraish tribes were known for their poetry and command of the Arabic language, but the linguistic syntax of the Quran was much superior. Those who did not want to believe in the message accused prophet Muhammad of magically making up the words to cast a spell on them.

{Or do they say, "He has made it up"? Rather, they have no faith. So let them produce a statement like it, if they should be truthful. Or were they created by nothing, or were they the creators (of themselves)?} (52:33-35)

- I believe that there are several reasons why prophet Muhammad was destined to live in two places—Makkah and Madinah. One of them has to do with demography. Makkah had mostly idol worshipers and defiant disbelievers, while Madinah had a community of new Muslims and People of the Scripture (i.e., the people who inherited any portion of the Torah and Gospel, or any of their ordinances). Now, if you read the Quran, you will notice that many of the verses are responding to events and life interactions that prophet Muhammad experienced. Since the Quran is a message from God to all people, and prophet Muhammad is the final prophet and a messenger sent to the

worlds (i.e., to all people to exist until the Last Day), the message had to address everyone: the Muslims, disbelievers, polytheists, hypocrites, and the People of the Scripture, etc. This would only be possible if prophet Muhammad interacted with all of them during the time of his prophethood—hence the two places, and their proximity to nearby towns.]

Establishing the Religion

In Prophet Noah's day, human societies were far less complex than those that came later. Because of this, God's initial laws were simple, matching the needs of the era. As humanity expanded through migration and exploration, people became more diverse, informed, and distracted by their own inventions. To keep pace with this growing social complexity, each new divine law had to be more exhaustive than the one before it. Thus, the final prophet was sent with the final scripture to establish on Earth God's final law: the Quran superseding all what came before it (2:106 | 13:39), and prophet Muhammad serving as a good example to follow (33:21).

{Then We put you (O Muhammad) on an ordained way concerning the matter (of religion); so follow it and do not follow the desires of those who do not know.} (45:18)

{Whoever obeys the Messenger has truly obeyed Allah. But whoever turns away, then (know that) We have not sent you (O Muhammad) as a custodian over them.} (4:80)

{We have sent down to you (O Muhammad) this Scripture with the truth, as a confirmation of previous Scriptures and a supreme authority on them. So judge between them by what Allah sent down, and do not follow their desires over the truth that has come to you. To each of you We have ordained a law and a practicing methodology. If Allah had willed, He would have made you one nation, but His Will is to test you with what He has given (each of) you. So compete with one another in doing good. To Allah you will all return, then He will inform you (of the truth) regarding your differences.} (5:48)

[Rami: Religion is a mandatory standard practice that is based on a specific creed. God indicates that if you want to ensure you are on the straight path and make it to Paradise, then you must follow what prophet Muhammad said and practiced, as the practicing methodology (revealed by God), known as "Sunnah". Following the religion of Islam is following the Quran combined with the Sunnah. Islam is the navigation system—the guidance and light (57:28)—to the path that will lead straight to Paradise. Now, there is something also interesting

in verse (45:18): notice how God says, “Do not follow the desires of those who do not know.” **People that do not know, or believe in the hereafter, want to follow what they desire of this worldly life and not a path that leads straight to Paradise.** And if Islam is the guidance to this path, who does not want us to know this? Who has interest in concealing this truth? Yes, Mr. Satan, our overt enemy. He will do everything to make sure that those that follow Islam—Muslims—either do not practice Islam correctly, or they are constantly attacked by ignorant or wicked people until they cease to practice Islam. And for those that do not follow Islam, to know nothing of the truth, or even better, to have a false perception that makes them want to hate the religion and never desire to follow it.]

The established religion had to be comprehensive and applicable to all generations to come. This meant that prophet Muhammad had to go through all imperative activities so that the Quran and Sunnah address those activities, and indeed they do. The Quran and Sunnah lay out a comprehensive religious system and law (“Sharia” in Arabic), covering acts of worship, ethics and morality, family matters, charity, civil and criminal law, economics, military conduct, and other areas of human activity. The Sharia was established by God and implemented by prophet Muhammad. In Madinah, prophet Muhammad brought

reform with the new doctrine and legal system, while establishing the first Islamic state[30] for Muslims to live in.

[Rami: Today, there are people who argue that Islam, or religion in general, is no longer suitable to meet the requirements of our modern time, or in other words, religion is quite archaic. The truth is that people tend to overcomplicate life affairs in pursuit of vanity, wealth, and power. Those people want to live their lives based on how they desire it and not based on how God wills it, this is why God said, "Do not follow their desires over the truth that has come to you." Who knows more about how we should conduct our life affairs than The Creator himself?! Throughout human history, people have invented their own rules, ideologies, systems, philosophies, etc. I will never doubt human competence to achieve "a model" in how we should live our lives. What I always question is if the model is sufficient, balanced, and virtuous. **Balance is equity and justice**. To achieve balance, it requires a complex undertaking that I do not believe humans have the knowledge nor the aptitude to achieve. This is because there are countless parameters to consider in building a balanced model, and not

[30] [Rami: When today you read "Islamic state", you immediately think "terrorism" due to classical conditioning. ISIS is nothing but a coverup for false flag operations, operated by evil special interest groups. These groups were successful in attracting and recruiting naive deluded Muslims, who thought they were doing Jihad. It worked well in Iraq and Syria, and now they are using this coverup in Africa to rob their natural resources. The mastermind of all of this is Satan. He wants to condition people to believe that "Islamic state" means "a harbor for terrorism".]

to forget personal human interests and desires (45:18) that create biases and imbalance. I believe that God defined a calculated balance in his laws and in what he created. To support my conviction in this regard, I found a few verses where God mentions he has sent down "**the Balance**" to this world. These are some of them:

{We sent our messengers with clear proofs and sent down with them the Scripture and **the Balance** that people may uphold equity}(57:25)

{The Most Gracious taught the Quran; created Man; taught him articulate speech. The sun and the moon (well) calculated. And the stars and the trees prostrating. And the Sky, He raised it (high), **and set the Balance. That you do not disrupt the Balance**!} (55:1-8)

Accordingly, every human-invented social, economic, and political system has been somewhat excessive, corruptive, destructive, or unjust to a large or small portion of a population. God's laws are balanced, just, virtuous, and wise. Humans might not understand or appreciate how they are balanced, because humans do not have the same knowledge and wisdom as The Creator. I am not going to explain the balance and wisdom in every Islamic law; instead, I will share with you my own personal view of the most popular fabrications and misconceptions about prophet Muhammad and Islam:

1) Muhammad was a warlord who ruled by the sword, and Islam is the religion of violence.

Military might can convert territorial sovereignty, but not people's faith. Muhammad, like many prophets before him, instigated contention with the call: "There is no deity except Allah. Worship and obey him." When polytheists of Quraish and surrounding Arabian tribes rejected his call, instead of reacting and dealing with the contention in a peaceful manner, they chose to defy Allah and his messenger and persecute the believers. Eventually, prophet Muhammad and his companions had to fight back. This made him, in the eyes of the ignorant, a warlord. Every prophet that walked this Earth had enemies (25:31), and prophet Muhammad is not the only prophet to lead holy wars (3:146): prophets Enoch and Joshua before him, as examples. Since prophet Muhammad is the last prophet to reveal God's last and final set of laws, he had to combat opposition the most, to ensure God's complete religion is entrenched among the people before his death. Also, let's not forget the environment of the region Islam was born into. The Arabian Peninsula was a very corrupt and lawless place, where tribal feuds were business as usual. Before his prophethood, prophet Muhammad had never fought in

any battle (but he proved he had what it takes to be a great military leader). He lived his adult life as a businessman until he was given the responsibility of conveying God's message and establishing God's law in the land. God chose him for his virtue and character. When divine knowledge merges with excellent character, you become the perfect man to be followed.

{And We have not sent you (O Messenger), except as a **mercy to the worlds.**} (21:107)

{And you are surely on an **excellent standard of character.**} (68:4)

This is not his mommy telling her beloved boy that he has great moral character—this is The All-Knowing!! Many people do not know how peaceful and merciful prophet Muhammad was.

Several verses and oral narratives, which mention fighting and killing, have been taken out of context and highlighted in public forums—online in our day and age—to deceive people to think the deity of Islam calls for violence. What they fail to explain is that Allah and his messenger are ordering the monotheist believers to fight back and kill the transgressing and treacherous disbelievers who were the first to attack the believers (9:13).

{Indeed, Allah defends those who believe. Surely Allah does not like whoever is deceitful, ungrateful. **Permission (to fight back) is (hereby) granted to those being fought**, **for they have been wronged.** And Allah is truly Most Capable of helping them (prevail).} (22:38-39)

{Fight in the way of Allah **those who fight you but do not transgress**. **Indeed. Allah does not like transgressors**. And kill them wherever you overtake them and expel them from wherever they have expelled you, and (creating) discord is worse than killing. And do not fight them at Al-Masjid Al-Haram (i.e., sacred mosque in Makkah) until they fight you there. **But if they fight you, then you may kill them**. Such is the recompense of the disbelievers. And if they cease, then indeed, Allah is The Forgiver and Most Merciful.} (2:190-192)

{They ask you about the sacred month—about fighting therein. Say, "Fighting therein is great (sin), but **obstructing the way of Allah and disbelief in Him and (preventing access to) Al-Masjid Al-Haram and the expulsion of its people therefrom are greater (evil) in the sight of Allah**. **And (creating) discord is greater than killing." And they will continue to fight you**

until they turn you back from your religion if they are able. And whoever of you reverts from his religion (to disbelief) and dies while he is a disbeliever—for those, their deeds have become worthless in this world and the Hereafter, and those are the companions of the Fire, they will abide therein eternally.} (2:217)

In action movies, you often have the villain/antagonist and the protagonist. The villain and his army transgress, and then the protagonist and his army fight back, kill the bad guys, and finish victoriously. We cheer and applaud them for their bravery and for defeating evil, as most people do. It is human instinct to be on the side of good. How come this is acceptable, but when God asks Muslims to do the same it becomes the religion of violence?! If you assault others unrightfully, or kill innocent people, then indeed you are not adhering to Islamic law. Yes, there are Muslims that have transgressed or killed innocent people, but they are the bad apples in the barrel, and there will always be bad apples in any barrel, as long as Satan is determined to spoil every barrel. The people who do not practice Islam correctly should be blamed, not the religion itself. God says do not be afraid to defend yourself, the oppressed, and the way of Allah. This is what "Jihad" ("strive" in English) is all about—it is applied not only in

combat but in life as a whole. **One should always strive to be righteous.** Someone unjustly occupied your land or oppressed you because of your faith in Allah, you have every right to retaliate, under the rules God ordained and prophet Muhammad implemented. Those who blow themselves and kill innocent people are deluded Muslims (some are even cowards) who have crossed Allah's limits *(more on this in chapter 12)*.

Also, righteous Muslims have a responsibility toward their fellow humans (2:143 | 22:78 | 41:33) in calling them to Islam (Da'wah), but in a peaceful and intellectual manner. Disbelievers might get annoyed by this, for obvious reasons, but trust me, on the Last Day, they will wish Muslims were more forceful in awakening them from the ignorance and heedlessness they were in. Resentment toward Islam provides no legal or moral justification for disbelievers to attack Muslims or to obstruct them in the fulfillment of their religious duties. The minute you unlawfully attack or kill Muslims, you have granted them the right of retribution. And it is not I nor you who determine our human rights and duties. They are decreed by The Supreme, and victory always comes from him (8:10)—he grants it to whom he wills (30:5), for he is The All-Wise, The All-Aware.

2) Muhammad was a polygamist and a pedophile.

Haters, who do not know prophet Muhammad, claim that he established a cult for sex and wealth, because he had eleven wives in total. They hide the fact that prophet Muhammad had only one wife, Khadija, for the first fifty years of his life. For twenty five years, Khadija was his only true love, standing by his side through thick and thin. Let's not forget she was at least ten years older than him. Before Khadija's death, it was very easy for prophet Muhammad to have several younger wives. When the tribes of Quraish were trying to convince him to stop the threatening movement he ignited, they offered him wealth and any eligible woman from their own families to wed, but he refused all offers. The ten wives he married after Khadija's death were for various reasons, and he treated them all kindly and fairly. Every marriage has its own story, and if you study each story, you will realize that the marriage was intended to benefit the woman he married and the Muslim community as a whole. You have to be mindful that he was establishing an ummah, a nation united by creed, in a society composed of diverse clans, tribes, and faiths. For example, his ninth wife was the daughter of a Qureshi leader and a widow who defied her father by accepting Islam early on. This

marriage helped build bridges with the defiant Qureshi leaders. The youngest of his wives was Aisha, the daughter of Abu Bakr. Abu Bakr was the closest companion of prophet Muhammad and the first to succeed him after his death.

Haters accuse prophet Muhammad of pedophilia because he married someone very young. He married (on paper) Aisha a few years before he consummated his marriage. The consummation didn't happen until after Aisha reached puberty, whatever her age was at that time. By today's standards, marrying someone underage is disturbing, but if everyone, in any part of the world, digs into their family tree, they will find a family member that married very young. In past centuries, it was very normal for girls to marry as soon as they could bear a child. We are judging people in the 7th century based on what has become socially acceptable in the 21st century. What if it was the 7th century people to judge us on our social norms? How about we also ask the 19th century people? I am sure they would all be shocked and disgusted with us. The increasing complexities of living (and other factors which I will highlight later) have made people change their social norms, but it is very naive to think our ancestors were wrong. It was simply different times and circumstances. Second, there is a

crucial reason for prophet Muhammad marrying someone several decades younger than him. Earlier, I mentioned the Sunnah, the practices of prophet Muhammad. **There had to be someone close to the Prophet to bear witness to his life's private practices and be able to narrate them long after his death**, hence the age difference. Third, the trauma of childhood abuse often derails the educational trajectory of young girls while stifling their capacity for healthy love. Aisha loved prophet Muhammad and she was surrounded by her family and loved ones. "Aisha was extremely scholarly and inquisitive. **Her contribution to the spread of Muhammad's message was extraordinary, and she served the Muslim community for 44 years after his death. She is also known for narrating 2210 Hadith,** not just on matters related to Muhammad's private life, but also on topics such as marriage, Islamic inheritance, Hajj and Islamic eschatology, among other subjects. She was highly regarded for her intellect and knowledge in various fields, including poetry and medicine, which received plenty of praise by the traditionist al-Zuhri and by her student Urwa ibn al-Zubayr."[31] Fourth, God indicated in the Quran that the Prophet's marriages, after Khadija, were exceptional and

[31] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Muhammad%27s_wives

under his guidance and supervision (33:38,50-52). Aisha even appeared in the Prophet's dreams twice before he married her. Aisha narrated that prophet Muhammad said to her, "You have been shown to me twice in (my) dreams. A man was carrying you in a silken cloth, and said to me, 'This is your wife.' I uncovered it; and behold it was you. I said to myself, 'If this dream is from Allah, He will cause it to come true.'"

In conclusion, Aisha was destined to be the "**Sunnah Recorder**". She had to be very young to give the succeeding generation many playbacks to relay. Therefore, her marriage to a prophet much older than her was exceptional and decreed by God. So tell me again, what wrong was committed that prophet Muhammad is guilty of? If prophet Muhammad and his followers were a cult, evidence indicates they were a cult devoted to obeying their Lord and to reforming society for the better, not to achieving sexual pleasure and wealth. If false, where are the records of their sexual practices, comparable to those of the Roman emperors? If Muhammad led conquests in pursuit of fame and money, where is the wealth he amassed and the monuments he erected? Haters and skeptics may be doubtful, but the only legacy prophet Muhammad left behind consists of the Quran and his Sunnah.

3) Islam oppresses women.

As humans, men and women are equal, but designed differently for different duties. God created each gender with special characteristics and advantages, allowing both imperfect genders to support and be there for one another as partners in life. It is no secret that God created Adam and Eve—the originals—with different identities and roles. You find gender identity and role differentiation in various species that God created in pairs, and humans are no different in this regard. Accordingly, God advised humans to be content with the advantages and the roles he has assigned to them, and to be rest assured that both men and women will be rewarded fairly and in full for what they earn in life.

{And do not covet that whereby Allah has favored some of you over others; men shall have the benefit of what they earn and women shall have the benefit of what they earn; and ask Allah of His favor; surely Allah knows all things.} (4:32)

Since men and women need to live with one another as partners for a lifetime, while each fulfilling their role, God made a natural bond between them. This bond is established by affection and mercy, allowing the partners to live together in tranquility.

{And of His signs is that He created for you spouses from among yourselves so that you may find tranquility in them. And He has made between you affection and mercy. Surely in this are signs for people who reflect.} (30:21)

Today, you find mutual genuine love, kindness, and mercy between spouses getting eradicated by society: men acting selfishly and women reacting hatefully; nudity and sexualization of women prevailing across all media platforms; infidelity, divorce, and sexual harassment becoming commonplace; people enslaved to their work and careers, leaving little to no time for spousal and parental fostering; and the list of issues goes on. As I covered earlier, God sent us his wise and balanced laws so that we conduct our life affairs correctly, in an organized and fair manner, and to avoid immorality and the issues that can corrupt a society. Among those laws are ones that superficially seem more generous toward men, and others that are more restrictive toward women. Accordingly, Islam is guilty of gender inequality and oppression against women, in the view of the superficial, naive person and the disobedient. Maybe if I share with you my (matured) view of women, you will get to understand how God's laws are indeed balanced and wise, and that God is not unjust nor

cruel toward women; quite the contrary, he is very protective of them. The issue is not God's laws, but the human mentality, which Satan managed to corrupt and deplete from any wisdom. Today, most people lack wisdom and are very shallow.

a) A Woman is a Partner

Marriage is a partnership that I find to be similar to a partner dance. The partner dance must have a leader, or else it will fail. This is why the male dancer leads and the female dancer follows his lead. Both dancers understand and accept each other's roles very well. This understanding is predicated on trust and respect, and sometimes deepened by love, resulting in a successful dance that brings joy to both partners. The partners are seen as equal, and they both get equal credit for the dance's success. Nevertheless, the dance can fail if:

i. the male dancer is a bad/weak leader, or the female dancer is a bad/weak follower
ii. both, the male and the female dancer, want to lead (or follow) from the outset
iii. one or both partners are not serious, nor they have any intention in making the dance to work (they're having fun)

Marriage is very similar. God assigned the husband to be the leader in this partnership, and the wife should follow and obey her leader. This does not mean women do not know how to lead, or that marital decisions cannot be delegated between the partners. What it means is that the partnership needs someone to lead it, and God gave the man the upper hand (2:228) and the final decision, especially when there is disagreement, because he is more suited of the two to do so (by design and experience, this is why it is better if he is older). In the event there is constant disagreement between the partners, reaching an impasse, God asked that close, reasonable family relatives to interfere and help arbitrate in fixing the disputes (4:35), in effort to avoid breaking the partnership. If divorce is the only option left, it should be conducted in a fair and honorable manner (2:231). God covers in the Quran the guidelines of marriage and divorce, and in most cases, these guidelines are to protect women's rights. For example, God has endowed a woman with the right to accept or reject a man offering her his hand and heart, as well as to determine for herself the size of the dowry she deems reasonable (4:4). Dowry helps in protecting women from men who are not serious in maintaining

a long-term relationship, since it makes the man well invested in the marriage, and it can also be retained as an emergency reserve to be used in the event of a divorce. Love, trust, mercy, and respect will always be the most crucial factors in establishing and holding together this partnership, but when love, trust, mercy, and respect are lost, who will safeguard the rights of either partner? Exactly, the law! And who is wiser to set the law, humans or The All-Wise, The Utterly Just?!!!

The most common issues I see with broken marriages have to do with either bad communication, negligence in maintaining intimacy, or selfishness from either side. Certain men view their spouse as an inferior subordinate who is required to only serve their needs, and not as a partner that has rights and needs of her own to be served—within reasonable limits. It is selfish men that neglect or oppress women, not Islam. God says, "Your spouses are a garment for you as you are for them" (2:187), to emphasize the intimacy and mutuality in this partnership. Throughout the Quran, God condemns oppression in all aspects of life. Bad leaders are not only found in a marital partnership, but in many facets of society. They abuse their position, becoming oppressors, instead of being responsible

leaders, caretakers, mentors, and protectors. Here are words of advice from God for married women that find themselves in a similar situation:

{If a woman fears ill-treatment, or neglect, from her husband, there is no blame on them if they seek (fair) settlement[32]—and settlement is (the) best (option)—even though the souls are now in a state of selfishness. And if you do good and fear Allah, then surely Allah is all-aware with all that you do.} (4:128)

b) A Woman is a Mother and a Domestic Custodian

One of the privileges that God may bless women with is motherhood (39:6 | 42:50). Although it is a blessing, motherhood is a heavy burden on a woman (46:15). To relieve her from unnecessary burden, God entrusted the man with the responsibility of protecting and providing for her (4:34). In other words, God placed the financial burden on the man as the breadwinner. The man is tasked to provide all the care, support, and protection his wife and children require, and to spend his money wisely on them (4:5). Does that mean God is undermining a woman's ability to take care of herself or be the

[32] [Rami: This is not a divorce settlement, but more of a fair and peaceful compromise, as an alternative to a divorce. It is like renegotiating the partnership agreement, by making some concessions in exchange for some demands without breaking this partnership, which has lost its intimacy. This is one of several avenues God presents in the Quran to avoid divorce and the detrimental ramification it may have on the family.]

breadwinner? Indeed not (as proven), but women have other roles to play without any shortcomings, so why put them in great distress? Just ask a single mother how much distress and pain she had to endure to raise a family on her own. Islamic law also mandates that men, who divorce their pregnant wives, to continue to fully support them until they give birth, and to pay alimony, based on their financial means, at least until the child reaches a certain age (65:6-7). The extent to which Western legal systems have been influenced by or copied from Islamic jurisprudence is often surprising. Islamic law guaranteed women individual rights to inherit and own property (4:7) in the 7th century, predating similar rights in the West. However, to account for the male's financial responsibilities for his family, the Quran dictates that a son's share of inheritance is twice that of a daughter (4:11). This differential is considered equity at the macro-level, not inequity. Inequity arises when individuals performing the same job receive unequal pay due to gender discrimination.

This brings me to women’s right to work. In Islam, women indeed have the right to enter the workforce. However, what concerns God’s obedient servants, or any decent person, are

mainly two things: first, whether the workplace is a safe environment for women to work in; and second, whether the woman's workload leaves her sufficient time to fulfill her domestic duties without any shortcomings. It is quite a burden on a woman and a man to be a parent, let alone to be also a spouse, and a worker, and find time for other social affairs. In my opinion, parenting is THE most important job in the world: a job that no one gets the proper training for. And both parents have a vital role in being there for their children, but since in normal circumstances the man is the breadwinner, the woman must play the leading role in child-rearing. All the power to the women that can juggle all three roles without any shortcomings, but they are the rare exception, not the norm. Low fertility rate, child gender disorientation or resentment, infidelity, multiple mental disorders, etc., are all issues due to various factors, but primarily due to the shortcomings of the parents in putting the adequate time and effort in providing the emotional and mental support their family members require from them. Some of these issues become apparent short-term, and some take years, or even decades, to manifest. Today, life has become expensive, and making ends meet, or affording a

certain lifestyle, has taken precedence over properly raising children and maintaining family ties. Families are the building blocks of a society; if Satan can corrupt family values and bonds, he gains leverage in corrupting society and its culture.

c) A Woman is a Flower

Women are like flowers, not only because they are beautiful, but also because they need something essential to blossom and thrive. For flowers, this necessity is sunlight and water, but for women, it is love and attention. It is not that men do not need love and attention, but in general, women need it more than men, while (real unselfish) men are more satisfied with providing their love and care to women—real men are the gardeners. Aligned with this concord, The Designer made the female body attractive to the male, and he designed the opposite sexes in the manner that allows them to physically express their desires to one another and to have a progeny. It is absurd to deny we are sexual beings[33]. However, to behave in

[33] [Rami: Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) is a common practice in some towns in Africa and other parts of the world. Some Muslims might be practicing FGM, but FGM has nothing to do with Islam. Also, the Quran mentions that God did not ordain Monasticism (57:27), which includes the practice of celibacy. Monasticism was invented by devout Christians that wanted to seek God's pleasure, but many monks and priests couldn't observe it correctly. God's laws and rules are moderate and balanced: overburdening oneself with extreme restrictions can lead to mental illness and, consequently, deviance. Many priests, who attempted to practice celibacy all their life, became mentally ill. The child molestation cases against members of the church are a testament to this.]

the most non-corruptive manner possible, God placed rules for both genders to follow. From among those rules, God asked believing women to guard their chastity, and to not expose their adornment[34] nor show their beauty (Tabarruj) to anyone, except a few. Foolish and disobedient people found those rules to be oppressive toward women, while in fact God wants to protect and purify his obedient servants and curtail corruption and lewdness in the land.

{And tell the believing women to lower their gaze and guard their chastity, and not expose their adornment except what normally appears. Let them draw their veils over their chests, and not reveal their adornments except to their husbands, their fathers, their fathers-in-law, their sons, their stepsons, their brothers, their brothers' sons or sisters' sons, their fellow women, those (bondwomen) in their possession, male attendants with no desire, or children who are still unaware of women's nakedness. Let them not stomp their feet, drawing

[34] [Rami: I want to briefly clarify the Islamic law of mandating women to cover their hair, a topic that most Muslim scholars failed to explain correctly. It is common sense to conclude that a woman's hair is NOT considered part of her nakedness. Why then do women need to cover their hair? Because the moment a woman fixes her hair, the hair becomes part of her attractive adornment, and God asked believing women to not expose their adornment and beauty to everyone, as explained in the next verse. The same idea with the face. Women don't need to cover their face in public, unless they want to put on cosmetics (adornment), or they feel they might get harassed for whatever reason (33:59). Also, there is nothing in the Quran and the Hadith that mandates women to wear the niqab, but there is nothing wrong if a woman chooses to or her husband wants her to.]

attention to their hidden adornments. Turn to Allah in repentance all together, O believers, so that you may be successful.} (24:31)

Rules are not only made to curtail short-term risk of harm, but also to curtail long-term risk. For example, if a rule is made to deter people from smoking, this doesn't mean the rule is to only prevent short-term health risks, but also from potential long-term health risks. Moreover, when limits get set, they don't get set at borderlines. For example, speed limits are not set at speeds that have 95-99% risk of a fatal car accident, but rather much lower. Rules are mostly for risk management and to prevent disorder; this does not mean that anyone who breaks the rules will suffer harm or will harm others. Yet, rules are rules that everyone needs to abide by, and you get penalized for breaking them. God's rules and limits are no different.

Today, ignorant and rebellious people find God's rules and limits archaic and backward because they are raised so far away from those limits. Imagine being brought up to drive a Formula One (F1) car anywhere you want, and then being told that you can only drive a F1 car on a private circuit to avoid the risk of

harming yourself and others. You are not going to like it at all, and you are going to wrongfully think it is very backward. However, if you were brought up to drive a sedan car in public, but allowed to drive a F1 car on a private circuit, your perspective would be different. The social norms you inherit tend to be your baseline.

Indeed, God does not need me to justify his rules. He ordered and we should obey. But even if we disregard God and religion, do women who resist dress restrictions understand that women who openly expose their body and beauty are collectively doing a disservice to themselves and all other women? When a woman exposes her body, she draws men's attention. This is a natural phenomenon that women understand very well and instinctively desire it. Yet, many women like to pretend to be oblivious to this phenomenon, while complaining that they have the right to wear whatever they want and men should not be bothered. With time, as women's clothes became more revealing, competition and peer pressure to draw attention—and money, for some—started to develop among women, negatively affecting their mental health. After all, not everyone has a stunning face or a perfect figure. Consequently, women

started to face many issues that were not prevalent in previous ages, such as:

- Sexual objectification of women. It used to be men sexually exploiting women in private settings, then it became mainstream with the traditional media, and then technology and the internet exploited women to the degree that women now are sexually exploiting their own selves!
- Self-image anxiety or vanity, driving women to resort to unnecessary beauty enhancement procedures and products, and many of them are starting to look alike and look fake. Those women are transforming themselves into fake flowers, but are not fake flowers only good for show?! Sadly, little attention is being given to manners, decency, and mental maturity. Outside the privacy walls of marital intimacy, I find a woman's manners, decency, and mental maturity like the smell of a flower. How long can one bear a flower that looks pretty but smells bad?!
- Sexual harassment of women, especially at the workplace, where women and men mostly interact these days.

Without a doubt, men have their share of responsibilities, and issues as well—did I not say it takes two to dance and that men lead?! When it comes to their desires, God said humans were created weak (4:28), but this is not a justification for women and men to not discipline themselves. Indeed, it is God who created us with sexual desires, but it goes without saying that those desires should only be discharged through lawful marital sex (2:223 | 4:22-28). And if couples have issues in this area, there are various solutions to fix them, but infidelity and lewd acts should never be any of them. Also, any man that harasses or assaults a woman should be held accountable and sternly punished. This is unacceptable behavior that should not be tolerated. Nevertheless, to be fair, but not to be taken as an excuse, men in our day and age are getting constantly exposed to women's sex appeal, especially in environments that do not follow God's rules. Their immoral surrounding environment is playing a vital role in dictating their immoral behavior, hence the alarming growing sexual harassment. Factor in intoxicating substances and devil's incitations, impaired judgment is inevitable. Prophet Muhammad said, "No man is alone with a woman, but the demon is the third one present." God wants to

curb disorder and protect us, not to oppress us!!! We should embrace God's rules and not despise them like rebellious kids who despise their parents for telling them, "No! You are not allowed!" We need to stop acting like kids and strive to become disciplined, wise, righteous adults; otherwise, Satan will get his way in corrupting our societies and our minds (as proven). I do not claim to be an infallible person, for I have indeed made many mistakes in my life, and God punished me severely for my sins. However, I have come to realize and accept, through my life experiences and observations, that the only right solution to our societal issues is to abide by God's laws and limits—this is the straight path we should all follow!

{O Mankind! Fear your Lord Who created you from a single soul, and from it He created its mate, and through both He spread countless men and women. Honor Allah—in Whose Name you plead (for rights)[35]—and the ties of kinship. Surely Allah is ever watchful over you.} (4:1)

[35] [Rami: This is when people mention a higher power, God, when pleading for rights: like saying, "Oh my God" or "for God's sake" or "I swear to God" (in various languages). Why is it that even people that don't believe in God tend to mention God unconsciously? Is it because people grow up learning such phrases and they unconsciously use them, or it is much deeper than that?]

{O Mankind! Remember Allah's favors upon you. Is there any creator other than Allah who provides for you from the Heavens and the Earth? There is no deity except Him. How can you turn away (from obeying him)?} (35:3)

4) Muhammad is a false prophet and not a messenger of God sent to all of mankind.

{Muhammad is not the father of any of your men, but is the Messenger of Allah and **the seal of the prophets** (i.e., last and final prophet). And Allah has knowledge of all things.} (33:40)

{Indeed, **this (Quran) is spoken by a noble Messenger**. It is not the prose of a poet, (yet) you hardly have any faith. Nor is it the mumbling of a fortune-teller, (yet) you are hardly mindful. **(It is) a revelation from the Lord of all worlds**.} (69:40-43)

These verses, and others, clearly indicate that Muhammad is the last and final prophet and a messenger, not a poet. If someone denies these verses, it means they have an issue with the Quran being a revelation from the Lord of all worlds *(which I will address in chapter 11)*. Moreover, the knowledgeable People of the Scripture were well aware, through the foretold prophecies, that there will be a prophet after Jesus and what his traits will be,

so that they can verify it's him. Prophet Muhammad's name was also mentioned in the Tawrat and Injil (7:157) (and there are claims that his name was mentioned in the Gospel of Barnabas). Some knowledgeable Arab Jews were waiting for him, and when they heard him recite the Quran, they knew it was a revelation from God. However, because the elected prophet was not a Jew, they denied him and concealed the truth in their chests (29:47-49). **Part of the glad tidings brought by Jesus was the coming of prophet Muhammad.**

{And when Jesus, the son of Mary, said, "O children of Israel, indeed I am the Messenger of Allah to you confirming what came before me of the Torah **and bringing glad tidings of a messenger to come after me, whose name is Ahmad**[36]." But when he (Muhammad) came to them with clear evidence, they said, "This is obvious magic."} (61:6)]

[36] [Rami: "Ahmad", "Muhammad", and "Mahmoud" are names/attributes that mean "praised one", and they come from the word "Hamd", which means "praise". The nuance between these words is that "Muhammad" is in the present tense, "Mahmoud" is the present continuous form, and "Ahmad" is in the comparative form of the attribute. Arabic and Aramaic are Semitic languages that are very similar and share common words. Since prophet Muhammad was not yet born to be praised, Jesus was only able to use the comparative form of the attribute (Ahmad). Remarkable precision in choosing the right word, don't you think?!!]

The Truth Ultimately Prevails

Aiming to spread the message and the truth beyond Arabia, prophet Muhammad sent letters to major world leaders, including the Byzantine Emperor Heraclius, Persian Emperor Chosroes II, the Negus of Abyssinia, and the ruler of Egypt (Al-Muqawqis). The letters called leaders to worship one God (Allah) and follow Muhammad as his servant and messenger. The responses varied, shaping how Muslims dealt with neighboring empires in the ensuing years and what transpired afterward in the course of history.

As for Makkah, prophet Muhammad and his monotheistic followers assembled an army of 10,000 soldiers to conquer the city, eight years after being forced to leave it. Prophet Muhammad emphasized refraining from fighting unless Quraish resisted. They marched into Makkah from the north and south side of the city. The entry was peaceful and bloodless on the north side. After little resistance at the south side, Muslims had full control of the city. Upon his entry, prophet Muhammad destroyed all the pagan idols at the Ka'bah, while reciting these verses:

{And say, "Truth has come, and falsehood has departed. Indeed is falsehood, (by nature), ever bound to depart."} (17:81)

{Say, "The truth has come, and falsehood can neither originate nor restore (anything)."} (34:49)

When the people gathered at the Ka'bah, prophet Muhammad stood at its elevated doorway and addressed the assembly:

"There is no deity except Allah. He has no associate. He fulfilled His promise, supported His servant, and defeated the confederates alone. Bear in mind that every claim of privilege, whether that of blood or property, is abolished, except the custody of the Ka'bah and supplying water to the pilgrims. Bear in mind that anyone who is killed by mistake, the blood money is a hundred camels. O people of Quraish! Surely God has abolished from you all pride of the time of ignorance and all pride in your ancestry, because all of you descended from Adam, and Adam was made from dust."

He then recited the Quranic verse:

{O mankind, indeed We have created you from male and female and made you peoples and tribes that you may know one another. **Indeed, the most honorable among you with Allah is the one who is most pious**. Indeed, Allah is All-Knowing All-Aware.} (49:13)

Then he added:

"O people of Quraish, what do you think of the treatment that I should accord to you?"

They replied:

"Goodness, (from) a noble brother and a son of a noble brother."

Thereupon, prophet Muhammad declared:

"I speak to you in the same words as Yusuf (prophet Joseph) spoke to his brothers. This day there is no reproof against you; go your way, for you are free."

That was Muhammad, the Messenger of God! As-Salam-u 'Alay-ka ya rasul Allah (Peace Be Upon You O You Messenger of God)!!!

{Indeed, Allah and his angels confer their blessing upon the Prophet. O you who believe, do pray to Allah to bless him, and send your salam (prayer for his being in peace) to him in abundance.} (33:56)

After the Makkah conquest, prophet Muhammad eventually returned to Madinah and remained there for two and a half years, before he passed away. The following were among the last verses revealed[37]:

[37] No one knows for certain what was the last verse revealed.

{…This day those who disbelieve have despaired of (defeating) your religion; so fear them not, but fear Me. **This day I (Allah) have perfected for you your religion, and completed My grace upon you, and I am pleased to have Islam as the religion for you (to follow)**. But whoever is forced by severe hunger with no inclination to sin—then indeed, Allah is The Forgiver and The Most Merciful.} (5:3)[38]

{And fear a Day when you will be returned to Allah. Then every soul will be compensated for what it earned, and they will not be treated unjustly.} (2:281)

All these narrated stories of the prophets in the Quran are not for pastime reading, but for guidance and mercy for people who believe.

{There was certainly in their stories a moral lesson for the people of reason. Never was the Quran a narration invented, but a confirmation of what was before it and a detailed explanation of all things and guidance and mercy for people who believe.} (12:111)

[38] It is said that this verse was revealed in Arafah (Hadith). [Rami: You remember what I said about Arafah in chapter 5?]

Chapter 9

The People of Hell Fire

{O Children of Adam! If messengers from among you come to you conveying My verses to you, then, those who fear Allah and correct themselves will have no fear, nor shall they grieve. But the ones who deny Our verses and stand arrogant against them—those are the people of the Fire; they will abide therein eternally.} (7:35-36)

Hell is a place of severe torment and blazing fire, reserved for those who strayed from the straight path and did not follow Allah's guidance.

[Rami: There would be no balance and divine justice if Paradise existed without Hell. Imagine if in our earthly life there are rules, but no punishment for breaking them. Indeed, God is the most loving and merciful, but God is also The Equitable and he is severe in punishment (5:98). Adam and Eve got punished immediately when they disobeyed God in Paradise. However, God did not send them straight to Hell because they repented, granting them a second chance called "Life on

Earth". Every day we wake up is another chance to repent, correct our wrongful ways, and be grateful to God's grace (25:62). Sin is anything that goes against the command of Allah or crosses his limits. Again, here is what I consider to be the main commandments:

- Worship Allah alone, without associating with him any partners, and obey him and obey his messenger (sent to you).
- Be mindful, grateful, and trustful of Allah.
- Be good to your parents and take care of them at old age, and maintain the ties of kinship.
- Do what is permitted and abstain from what is forbidden of lewd and evil acts, aggression, and other prohibitions, in open or secret.
- Do righteous deeds and practice virtuous habits.
- Give full measure and weight with equity, and return trusts and rights to their rightful owners, and do not defraud people of their property and rights.
- Fulfill your promises.
- Uphold justice and equity, and be honest, truthful, and straightforward when you speak, even when bearing witness against your relatives and yourself.

- Take good care of the orphans and their inheritance, and feed the deprived.
- Give Zakat and alms, and avoid miserliness and extravagance.
- Do not kill yourself or any other human soul Allah has forbidden to be killed, except by a lawful right.

There is a long list of what is forbidden. Instead of listing them all, I will highlight here the main groups of sinful acts, with a few examples:

1) Concealed sin vs. Apparent sin (6:120): Concealed sin is what is concealed from view, or hidden in the heart (2:283), such as envy and pride, while apparent sin is witnessed bad deeds.
2) Major sin vs. Minor sin (4:31): Examples of major sin are perjury, usury, fornication, blasphemy, backbiting, homosexuality, vanity, murder, and invoking other than Allah. Examples of minor sin are harmless lies, littering, insolence, cursing, and unlawful gazes.]

According to the Quran, the people of Hell Fire are:

- those who disbelieved in Allah, the Last Day, his angels, his scriptures, his messengers, or in his signs (4:136)
- those who worshiped or invoked anything besides Allah (21:98 | 39:8)
- those whose bad deeds outweighed their good deeds (23:103)

- those who opposed Allah and his messengers (4:14 | 9:63), and prevented Allah's name from being mentioned in his places of worship and strived to destroy them (2:114)
- those who killed prophets and people who bid for justice (3:21)
- those who earned evil deeds and were engrossed in sin (2:81)
- those who invented lies about Allah or repudiated the truth

  {And who is more unjust than one who invents a lie about Allah or denies the truth when it has come to him? Is there not in Hell a (sufficient) residence for the disbelievers?!} (29:68)
- the hypocrites that used to say that they believe in God and the hereafter, but in reality they did not (they might have deceived the people, but not God)

  {And of the people are some who say, "We believe in Allah and the Last Day," but they are not believers. They (think to) deceive Allah and those who believe, but they deceive not except themselves, although they are unaware of it. In their hearts there is malady, so Allah has made them grow in malady; and for them is a painful punishment because they used to lie.} (2:8-10)
- those who deliberately killed a believer (4:93)
- those who devoured the property of orphans unjustly (4:10)

- those who forsake Allah and were defiantly disobedient (59:19)
- the criminals who caused corruption and disorder on Earth (2:27 | 32:12) and treated people unjustly (4:168-169)
- those who took Riba (usury or interest on loans) (2:275)
- those {"Who took their religion as distraction and amusement and whom the worldly life deluded them." So today We will forget them just as they forgot the meeting of this Day of theirs and for having rejected Our verses.} (7:51)

Rejecting the truth sent by God makes one a “kafir” (“infidel” or “disbeliever” in English). The original meaning of the word is “one who conceals”, and we derive from the Quran that anyone who conceals or denies any part of the divine truth, rebuffs the prophets and the messengers, refuses to submit to God and obey his orders, associates others with God, or does not believe that there is a Day of Judgment is considered a kafir. And while disbelief is the main reason for admission into Hell, prophet Muhammad said that what mostly drives people to Hell is their tongue (for saying what they should not) and their genitals (that drive them to fornicate or commit a sin). He also mentioned that the majority of the people of Hell are women. Is it because women are, more often than men, swayed by their emotions?

{And the likeness of **the ones who have disbelieved** is as the likeness of one who shouts out to that which hears no more than a call and a cry; **deaf, dumb (and) blind, so they do not consider**.} (2:171)

{Or do you intend to ask your messenger as Moses was asked before? And **whoever exchanges belief for disbelief has certainly strayed from the Straight Path**.} (2:108)

{**If you disbelieve—indeed, Allah is free from need of you; however, He does not like for His slaves to be disbelievers.** And if you are grateful, He is satisfied with it for you; and no bearer of burdens will bear the burden of another. Then to your Lord is your return, and He will inform you about what you used to do. Indeed, He is aware of whatever lies in the chests.} (39:7)

[Rami: I believe that it is unacceptable for human beings to be evil or worship anyone other than Allah because of their Fitrah (innate knowledge[39]), even if they have not received the divine truth *(I will revisit this point in chapter 13)*. Apart from that, I believe that God judges people based on how much of the divine truth was accessible to them. God holds people accountable for seeking or confirming the truth, and claiming ignorance is not an excuse. It's not only did you

[39] [Rami: If you want to learn about innate knowledge, interview a large number of uncorrupted young children.]

know, but did you care to know when the truth was accessible to you? Nowadays, everyone must have heard about the Muslims and the scripture that, according to them, was sent from God to mankind.]

It is also important to mention that God will assign a devil to every person that defiantly turns a blind eye to God's reminders.

{And whoever turns a blind eye to the reminder of the Most Gracious—We assign unto him a devil, and he is to him a companion. And indeed, the devils avert them from the way (of Allah) while they think that they are on the right path. Until, when he comes to Us (on the Last Day), he says (to his companion), "Oh, I wish there was between me and you the distance between the east and west—how wretched a companion."} (43:36-38)

[Rami: By assigning a devil—human or jinn—the defiant person is now constantly getting incited to sin. This is like offering healthy food to a person, but he does not like or want such food, so he turns a blind eye to the offers. After numerous failed attempts to remind the person to eat the healthy food, you decide instead to hire a chaperone to stay with him at all times and offer him the unhealthy food he craves. He is now incited to keep eating unhealthy food and bear the consequence of his arrogance, ungratefulness, or obduracy.]

What about the disbelievers who are righteous?

{The (righteous) deeds of those who refuse to believe in their Lord are like ashes blown away by the wind on a stormy day. They will not be able to gain anything (in the Hereafter) from what they did. That is the farthest point of straying away from the right path.} (14:18)

{Say (O Messenger), "Shall we tell you about the greatest losers in respect of (their) deeds? Those are the ones whose effort in the worldly life has gone in vain, while they think they are doing well." Those are the ones who rejected the signs of their Lord and (the concept of) meeting with Him, so their (righteous) deeds have gone to waste, and We shall assign to them no weight at all. That is their punishment, Hell, for they disbelieved and took My signs and My messengers by way of jest and mockery.} (18:103-106)

What about the disobedient believers?

Not all believers are equal in faith and deeds. There will be believers who deserve to enter Hell due to their shortcomings and misdeeds. As I will further explain in the next chapter, all souls to ever live on Earth will be judged on the Last Day for their actions and beliefs. This day is also called the Day of Reckoning (21:1 | 38:16). All of our righteous (good) and evil (bad) deeds are accounted for by two angels that live

with us, one seated on our left side and one on our right side (50:17). They are recording our deeds and whatever trail they leave behind (16:25 | 36:12), in a scroll, a record, or, as it may be called, a "book of deeds" (17:13-14). Then on the Day of Reckoning, all of our deeds will be put on a weighing scale. Each deed will have its own weight; therefore, not all deeds are equal.

[Rami: I call believers with more bad deeds than good deeds "believers with an overdraft account" or "bankrupt believers". Think of our book of deeds as a virtual bank account. All humans have a personal bank account that The Reckoner opened for them at birth. This account has capital and debt. Your good deed is the virtual currency of your capital, and your bad deed is the virtual currency of your debt. As God says, "Surely, good deeds erase bad deeds." (11:114) Your capital can erase your debt, but your net balance will be settled on the Day of Reckoning. Having a surplus of debt means a negative net balance—an overdraft account! Believers with a negative net balance are bankrupt people who deserve to enter Hell (101:8-9). Although they believed in God and the hereafter, they did not correctly observe what their Lord commanded them, resulting in many shortcomings in their behavior and duty toward Allah and their fellow humans. They essentially did not try hard enough to be pious and righteous.

Many believers have certain misconceptions. Some might think, "I can rack up debt now, and then earn capital when I get older to cover my debt", or some might say, "I have lots of capital (good deeds), I can afford to take on some debt (bad deeds)." Here are the caveats:

1) Can you guarantee you will live another day? another hour?
2) Are you fully aware of all what God considers sinful acts, and how much exactly of it you have committed?
3) Do you know the weight (value) of each type of good or bad deed you earned, or your balance at any given moment?

The obvious all-encompassing answer is "No": we have no visibility to our accounts. That's what the straight path is for. The straight path ensures we maintain a positive account balance, or in other words, it ensures that we become righteous believers to avoid spending any time in Hell. **Believers that die with an overdraft account failed to take the shortest path to Paradise. They'll have to experience Hell as a repayment for their overdraft debt, unless pardoned by Allah.**]

Furthermore, it is important to highlight that God also taps into our accounts for worldly requital. He draws from our bad deeds (thus, debt reduction) to pay for any punishment he may inflict on us (5:18), and may draw, if he chooses, from our earned good deeds (thus, capital

reduction) to pay for the good things we experience in this life. And every adversity a believer faces, whether it is social, financial, or health related, erases a number of misdeeds from their record (Hadith). This is a blessing in disguise for the believers that do not have a massive amount of debt, because it diminishes the amount in their account that they will carry with them to the Last Day. Also, adversity and humiliation can humble a person and turn them back to remembering Allah and following his commandments (7:168 | 30:41).

{Whatever affliction befalls you is because of what your own hands have committed. And He (Allah) disregards much.} (42:30)

In contrast, it is a loss if Allah chooses to pay for our worldly rewards and good things/times with our capital (46:20), because we need to reserve every good deed we can earn to ensure we end up with a positive balance on Requital Day, and because the rewards of the hereafter are far more valuable than the rewards of the herein (12:57). This is why prosperity or good times can be a curse in disguise for the heedless.

{**Whoever desires the worldly life and its adornments**—We fully recompense them for their good deeds therein, and they therein will not be deprived. Those are the people for whom there is nothing in the

Hereafter (for them left) other than (Hell) fire, And lost is what they did therein, and worthless is what they used to do.} (11:15-16)

Accordingly, the believers are blessed if:

- The Pardoner, by his mercy, chooses to clear out their debt, either through a pardon, a sacrifice they make for Allah's cause, or by having them go through great distress (e.g., illness before death)
- The Extender, by his mercy, considers only their very best deeds to pay for the reward of the hereafter, or chooses to extend to them rewards of the herein and/or hereafter for free without reckoning, meaning, without the need to pay for the rewards with their own money or good deeds, as a favor from God to them (24:37-38)
- The Withholder, by his mercy, withholds the amount of capital required for a positive balance on Requital Day

{Who then does more wrong than those who lie about Allah and reject the truth after it has reached them? Is Hell not a (fitting) home for the disbelievers? And the one who has brought the truth and those who embrace it—it is they who are the pious. They will have whatever they desire with their Lord. That is the reward of those who do good. As such, Allah will absolve them of (even) the worst of what they did and reward them according to the best of what they used to do. Is not Allah

sufficient for His servant? Yet they threaten you with other (powerless) gods besides Him! Whoever Allah leaves to stray will be left with no guide. And whoever Allah guides, none can lead astray. Is not Allah Exalted in Might, Owner of vengeance?} (39:32-37)

One's best effort is to avoid debt, earn abundance of capital, and gain God's favor to enjoy the good rewards of the herein and hereafter.

{…There are some who say, "Our Lord! Grant us (Your bounties) in this world," but they will have no share in the Hereafter. And of them there are some who say, "Our Lord! Grant us the good of this world and the Hereafter, and protect us from the torment of Hell Fire." It is they who will receive a reward for the good they have done. Surely Allah is swift in reckoning.} (2:200-202)

Here are some scary descriptive verses, for those who do not know what it means to be among the people of Hell Fire:

{But those whose scales are light (of good deeds)—those are the ones who have lost their souls, (being) in Hell, abiding eternally. The Fire will sear their faces, and they therein will have taut smiles. (It will be said,) "Were not My verses recited to you and you used to deny them?" They will say, "Our Lord, our insubordinate overcame us, and we were a people astray. Our Lord, remove us from it, and if we were to return

(to evil), we would indeed be wrongdoers." He will say, "Remain despised therein and do not speak to Me."} (23:103-108)

{Indeed, Hell lurks in ambush as a home for the transgressors, where they will remain for ages. There they will not taste any coolness or drink, except boiling and bitter freezing (water)—an appropriate recompense. For they never expected any reckoning, and totally rejected Our signs.} (78:21-28)

{And say (O Messenger), "The truth is from your Lord. Whoever wills let them believe, and whoever wills let them disbelieve." Surely We have prepared for the wrongdoers a Fire whose walls will surround them. When they cry for aid, they will be aided with water like molten metal, which will burn (their) faces. What a horrible drink! And what a terrible place to rest!} (18:29)

{These are two opponents (the believers and the disbelievers) that disagreed about their Lord: as for the disbelievers, garments of Fire will be cut out for them and boiling water will be poured over their heads, melting whatever is in their bellies, along with their skin. And for them are hooked rods of iron. Whenever they try to get out of it, from anguish, they will be brought back into it, "Taste the torment of burning!"} (22:19-22)

{I will cast him into Saqar[40]! And what will make you realize what Saqar is? It neither leaves (anything) behind nor it spares (anyone)—a corroder of the skin. Over it are nineteen. And we have not made the wardens of the Fire except angels. And We have not made their number but a test for those who disbelieve, so that those who were given the Scripture arrive at a certainty and those who believe increase in faith, and so that those who are given the Scripture and those who believe have no doubt (about the Quran), and so that those who have malady in their hearts and the disbelievers say, "What does Allah intend by this example?" Thus, Allah leads astray whomever He wills and guides whomever He wills. And none knows the soldiers of your Lord except Him. And this (mention of Saqr) is nothing else but a reminder to humanity.} (74:26-31)

{And those in the Fire will say to the wardens of Hell, "Supplicate to your Lord to lighten for us a day from the punishment." They will say, "Had your messengers not been coming to you with clear proofs?" They will say, "Yes." They will reply, "Then keep supplicating"—but supplication of the disbelievers (in the Hereafter) is only in vain.} (40:49-50)

[40] Saqar is the name of a place in Hell Fire.

Chapter 10

The Last Day & The Mercy of The Judge

{And do not invoke any other deity with Allah. There is no deity except Him. Everything is bound to perish except He Himself. All authority belongs to Him. **And to Him you will be returned.**} (28:88)

Everything that exists on Earth is bound to perish at an appointed time, and when that time comes, it will be the beginning of the Last Day. The Last Day is the Day of return to Allah for judgment on all what was done on Earth, and the length of this Day is equivalent to fifty thousand earthly years (Hadith). During this tremendous Day, a series of events will occur, which is why God gave this Day various names that describe these events, among which is "Yawm Al-Qiyama" (Day of Resurrection)—the most popular and mentioned name in the Quran. Before I recount the key events occurring on this Day, here is what happens to the human soul at the time of death:

- God has decreed the time of death (56:60) from the moment the soul enters the body in the mother's womb, and there is no escape from death (29:57). When that predestined time comes, the angel of Death (Azreal) will extract the soul (32:11), and he will have angels with him to carry it. However, as the soul departs the body, it may realize its departure (75:28), while few exceptional (good or bad) souls may also witness the angels for a second or a few.

  {With the daze of death will come the truth. This is what you were trying to escape!} (50:19)
- There is a long Hadith that explains what will happen to the soul immediately after death, but in short, the angels will carry the virtuous soul to the seventh Heaven to register the soul's book of deeds in the 'Illiyyin registry (83:18-21), and they will carry the vile soul to the lowest earth[41] to register the soul's book of deeds in the Sijjin registry (83:7-9). If the soul's body is buried in a grave, the soul is then taken back to the body, to stay there for a predestined time. While there, the guilty soul may experience "Torment of the Grave", as one of the three places a soul may get tormented (i.e., in the Earthly Life, in the Grave, and in Hell).

[41] [Rami: It is not clear what is meant by "lowest earth". As I will explain in the next chapter, the Arabic word for "earth" can mean multiple things, and verse (65:12) hints that there are "seven earths". I think it is a reference to the seven layers of the Earth, and the lowest earth is the Earth's core.]

- Irrespective where the soul is taken right after death, it will eventually be dispatched to a place near "Al-Barzakh" ("The Barrier" in English), to stay there until resurrection time (23:100). Up to that point, no one had made it through the gates of Paradise or Hell.

  [Rami: We are told very little about Al-Barzakh and where it is located, but since it is a barrier, I reason that it is in the top portion of the first Heaven, acting as a borderline between the lower realm and the upper realm. At this border, the souls of the dead are on standby, waiting for mankind's existence on Earth to end and the Last Day to begin. I imagine this "Al-Barzakh world" to be a massive border station that hosts souls that are not inside a body (whether in the time between the first and second life, during sleep/coma in the second life, or in the time between the second and third life). Verse (40:46) and the Hadith hint that the soul in Al-Barzakh may be presented with certain "visuals", viewing in a dream-like manner whatever God wants it to view. This could explain the vivid visuals that some people see in their dreams. It seems these vivid dreams often get recorded in the brain's memory, which is why people may remember them clearly when

they wake up. Since the souls in Al-Barzakh world are not occupying a body, their free will is useless. Allah knows best.]

- As for the bodies after death, they will eventually decompose, reduced to dust and bones, returning back into the earth, which Man originated from (20:55).

Life on Earth will continue until stage 1 of the Last Day begins:

Stage 1: The Inevitable and Striking Hour

- The Hour[42] is the time when everything on Earth and in the Heavens will perish, except whom The Everlasting chooses to keep alive (e.g., some angels). This Hour will strike with the first blow of the trumpet, by angel Israfil (Raphael) (Hadith), signaling the beginning of the Last Day. The Earth's inhabitants will then experience the greatest most horrific catastrophe the planet has ever witnessed (79:34). However, sometime between the death of prophet Jesus and the Hour, God will send a pleasant wind to seize any remaining believing and righteous souls, so that they do not

[42] [Rami: I imagine our solar system as a clock, where the connecting lines between the sun and each planet form the hands of this "solar clock". As the planets encircle the sun, the hands form different formations, like how a clock works. I reasoned that the formations of these hands tell time—the time of certain events that Allah has decreed to happen on Earth. I inferred that there is one unknown formation that will indicate it is time for Doomsday (20:15), which is why God called it the "Hour" (the twelfth hour?), and the Hour doesn't mean 60 minutes. At the Hour, I believe that the traveling sun will reach its destination (36:38)—the end of the second life. If my theory is correct, this makes the structure of the Hour/clock now known, but its timing will always be unknown. This could explain why God said to prophet Moses about the Hour: "I almost conceal it." (20:15) God knows best.]

experience these terrifying moments, leaving behind only the remaining evil wicked souls (Hadith).

{O Mankind! Fear your Lord, for the (violent) quaking at the Hour is surely a dreadful thing. The Day you see it, every nursing mother will abandon what she is nursing, and every pregnant woman will bring forth her load (from fear and panic). And you will see people (as if they were) drunk, though they will not be drunk; but the torment of Allah is (terribly) severe.} (22:1-2)

- God did not tell anyone when exactly the Hour will strike, but he did share with the prophets the signs and events of end times that would indicate that the Hour is nigh.

  {They ask you (O Messenger) about the Hour: when is it due to happen? Say, "Its knowledge is only with my Lord. None will reveal its time except Him. It shall weigh heavily in the Heavens and the Earth and will only take you by surprise." They ask you as if you had full knowledge of it. Say, "Its knowledge is only with Allah, but most of the people do not know."} (7:187)

- When the Hour strikes, an epic transformation will happen to the Earth and the universe, where the Heaven will break apart (82:1), and the planets and the stars will fade (81:2 | 82:2), and the sun and the moon will be combined (75:9), and the mountains will be

lifted up and crushed with one blow into dust particles (56:5-6), and the seas will erupt (82:3), and the Earth's crust will be shaken violently (56:4), then crushed (69:14) and stretched out (84:3).

- In between the first and second blow of the trumpet, The Ultimate Inheritor, of what is left of the Heavens and the Earth, will remodel the Earth's crust into a large, bare, flat/leveled plain/ground (20:106-107 | Hadith).

  [Rami: As I noted in chapter 4, I reasoned that God will use the other six layers of the Earth, with the Hell Fire they hold, as building material to construct Hell. It is possible that volcanic lava is part of Hell Fire. Allah knows best.]

Stage 2: The Resurrection

- God will first water this remodeled, smooth, bare, flat ground, then he will create graves ("Ajdath" in Arabic) for all the souls. In each grave, he will place the preserved coccyx—tailbone—of every body that died on Earth (Hadith), like planting seeds in the field (80:22-27). This is how The Repeater will recompose our bodies. Indeed, God is capable of this, he is even capable of restoring our fingertips (75:3-4). What is special about fingertips? Correct, fingertips are unique! No two people can ever have the

exact same set of ridges printed on their fingertips, not even identical twins. Also, some bodies (of the disbelievers) will have a deformed shape. For example, some will be walking on their faces (17:97) instead of their legs.

- After the creation of the new bodies (53:47), The Dispatcher will transfer/dispatch, in one instant (31:28), all the dead souls from Al-Barzakh world to their bodies in the new graves.
- Then the trumpet will be blown again, signaling the resurrection of all humans in their new graves (36:52), and causing everyone to spring up in a rush, like swarming locusts covering a vast ground (54:7). This will be the real shock and awe for the disbelievers (21:103), who will cry in fear: "This is a difficult Day!" (54:8) People will see and realize then that what was told by the warning messengers is true (78:5 | 102:4-7). Allah's told truth is now the absolute truth (56:95 | 69:51)—Allah is The Absolute Truth. Some people will question how long they lived their entire life. It will seem to them not long at all (23:112-114). People then will feel (e.g., assured, shocked, humbled, terrified, etc.), look (e.g., glowing face, blue [sick] face, gloomy face, etc.), and be greeted differently (by the angels), depending on what kind of people they were on Earth.

{And the Trumpet will be blown, and suddenly they will be rushing from their graves toward their Lord. They will say, "O woe to us! Who has raised us up from our sleeping place?" (The reply will be), "This is what the Most Gracious had promised, and the messengers told the truth." It will not be but a single cry, and at once, they are all brought present before Us. So today no soul will be wronged at all, and you will not be recompensed except for what you used to do.} (36:51-54)

{But whoever turns away from my reminders will certainly have a miserable life, then We will gather him up blind on the Day of Resurrection. He (the blind) said, "My Lord! Why have you gathered me up blind, although I used to see?" He (Allah) said, "It is so, just as Our signs came to you and you neglected them, so today you are neglected." This is how We reward whoever transgresses and does not believe in the signs of their Lord. And the punishment of the Hereafter is far more severe and more lasting.} (20:124-127)

Stage 3: The Gathering

- People will hear a caller calling everyone to the area of gathering (50:41), as instructed by The Gatherer. Everyone will then rush toward the caller (54:8), no one caring for anyone else, not even

for one's next of kin (23:101), and that everyone is naked (Hadith). The only thing on people's minds is their fate. They will be accompanied by two angels (50:21): one angel as their escort (77:1-6), and another angel carrying their book of deeds (50:23), to testify as a witness to what they had said and done on Earth.

- Everyone will arrive at the area of gathering, humbled and anxious, only daring to speak in whispers (20:108). People will be divided into three sections: people of the right, who are the ones that will enter Paradise; people of the left, who are the ones that will enter Hell; and the forerunners, who are the distinguished ones that achieved the highest merits on Earth (56:7-56). Everyone will then be ordered to kneel on the ground and wait for God Almighty to arrive (45:28). This is the Second Gathering and the Return to Allah that many people have doubted and mocked *(remember, the First Gathering was in the first brief life)*. The angels will also be present at this gathering, quietly standing in rows (25:25 | 78:38), and in the Sky is the scorching sun.
- Allah will then arrive with his elevated Throne, carried by eight angels (69:17). On this hot Day, there will be no shade except the shade of his Throne, and only certain types of people will be covered by this shade (Hadith), from among them:

- a ruler who governed with justice and equity
- a person who devoted his youth to worshiping Allah
- a man whose heart was attached to spending his time at the places of prostration and worship ("masajid" in Arabic)
- two persons who frequently met for matters that are associated with Allah, establishing a bond of admiration between them
- a man who was tempted by a woman of high status and beauty, but resisted her advances, saying, "I fear Allah!"
- a person who gives in charity and conceals it so well that his left hand does not know what his right hand has given
- a person who is moved to tears by the remembrance of God in his seclusion

Stage 4a: The Requital and Judgment

- God will first deliver a speech, then the trials will commence. People will be lined up (18:48), and each person will be first judged alone on what they have done and uttered on Earth, without a translator or a helper (Hadith). The angels will present their books of deeds to The Judge and it shall be laid open in front of them so that they read from it. Nothing will be missed by The All-Enumerating (21:47). On this Day, even seized rights will be

restored back to their rightful owners and pending scores will be settled between disputing sides (Hadith). The prophets will also be present at the trials to testify that they have informed the people of the truth they were told.

{And every person We have bound his fate upon his neck, And on the Day of Judgment We will bring forth to each (person) a book which they will find laid open. (And it will be said,) "Read your book (of deeds). You are sufficient this Day to take account of yourself." Whoever chooses to be guided, it is only for their own good. And whoever chooses to stray, it is only to their own loss. No soul burdened (with sin) will bear the burden of another. And We would never punish (people) until We have sent a messenger (to warn them).} (17:13-15)

{And the book (of deeds) will be laid (open), and you will see the wicked in fear of what is (written) in it. They will cry, "Woe to us! What kind of book is this that does not leave any sin, small or large, unlisted?" They will find whatever they did present (before them). And your Lord will never wrong anyone.} (18:49)

- There will be a portion of both the winners and the losers who possess overwhelming evidence in their books, warranting their high-rank admission into Paradise or Hell, respectively, without

reckoning or questioning by God (3:77 | Hadith); thus, they will bypass the trials. Nevertheless, the evil losers that did not attend the trials will have their eyes, ears, and skin testify against them when they arrive in Hell, so they cannot claim they were sentenced to Hell without any proof of guilt.

{And (consider) the Day (when) the enemies of Allah will be gathered for the Fire, all driven in ranks. When they reach it, their ears, eyes, and skin will testify against what they used to do. They will say to their skin, "Why have you testified against us?" It will say, "We have been made to speak by Allah, Who causes all things to speak. He (is the One Who) created you the first time, and to Him you were bound to return. You did not (bother to) hide yourselves from your ears, eyes, and skin to prevent them from testifying against you. Rather, you assumed that Allah did not know much of what you used to do. It was that (false) assumption you entertained about your Lord that has brought about your doom, so you have become losers." Even if they endure patiently, the Fire will be their home. And if they (beg to) appease (their Lord), they will never be allowed to.} (41:19-24)

- At the trials, there will be weighing scales to balance the good deeds against the bad deeds; however, the good deeds of those

who disbelieved in the signs of their Lord, and in the claim of meeting him in an afterlife, will be nullified to have no weight (18:105-106).

{And We place the scales of justice on the Day of Resurrection, so no soul will be treated unjustly at all. And if there is (even) the weight of a mustard seed, We will bring it forth. And sufficient are We as reckoners.} (21:47)

{The weighing on that Day is the true (weighing). As for those whose scale will be heavy (with good deeds), they will be successful. But those whose scale is light, they have doomed themselves for wrongfully denying Our signs.} (7:8-9)

As for the believers, if they have a positive net balance, they go to Paradise, but if they have a negative net balance, then they deserve to enter Hell with the disbelievers.

[Rami: I have been using the word "deserve" because the final decision is in God's hands (9:106). The Ultimate Decider is the one who decides at the end who enters Paradise or Hell, and what are the final rewards and punishments. In other words, during the trial and before passing judgment, The Judge may abrogate one's bad deeds (write off the debt), or pardon anyone of his choosing, except those who have associated a partner with him. Prophet

Muhammad said that God has divided his mercy into a hundred parts: he sent one part to the Earth, for his creatures to experience his mercy and for them to have mercy among themselves, and left the remaining ninety nine parts for the Last Day.

{Indeed, Allah does not forgive associating others with Him, but forgives anything else of whoever He wills. And whoever associates others with Allah has committed a grave sin.} (4:48)]

- For those who will deny what is recorded in their books when questioned, God will make their own body parts testify against what they deny. You can deny your bad deeds and the witnessing angel that recorded them, but how can you deny your own body parts that witnessed what you have done and uttered (75:13-15)?! Wrongdoers will surrender themselves to Allah (37:26), repent, apologize, and wish they can go back to the worldly life and be among the doers of good deeds (39:58), but by then it is too late (30:57).
- At the end of their trial, those who are sentenced to Paradise will be handed their book of deeds in their right hand, and those who are sentenced to Hell will be handed their book in their left hand and from behind their backs (84:6-15) ([Rami: It seems similar to students receiving their degrees at a commencement]).

Stage 5: The Hawd and Sirat

- After the trial stage concludes, people will once again be gathered into groups, but this time based on what they used to worship and follow (6:22 | 10:28-29 | 37:21-23 | 68:42). They will also be extremely thirsty, after enduring a long and hot journey.
- Those who are sentenced straight to Paradise will regroup with the prophet they followed at his Hawd ("water basin" or "cistern" in English). God will have a water basin dedicated for each prophet, allowing his arriving followers quench their thirst (Hadith) before they are escorted to the Sirat. Prophet Muhammad's water basin will be the largest, given that he has the most followers, and he promised he will quench with his own hands the thirst of some of his followers.
- Paradise will be drawn near (81:13) the vast land that everyone is standing on, and Hell Fire will be ignited (81:14) and placed with the Sirat ("path" or "pathway" in English) in between them. The Sirat will be a straight bridge laid over Hell Fire that every person must attempt to cross. No one is exempted from crossing the Sirat. {There is none of you who will not approach it (Hell Fire). (This is) a decree your Lord must fulfill.} (19:71)

- However, before crossing the Sirat, Allah will stop the different groups from advancing and he will question them one more time on who they used to worship. He will ask them to call upon who they invoked and associated as partners. And the partners, whether human beings or idols (made by God to speak), will deny that they were worshiped or even capable of hearing and answering the calling of the people.

  {And the Day We will gather them all together, then We will say to those who associated others with Allah, "(Remain in) your place, you and your 'partners.'" Then We will separate them, and their "partners" will say, "You did not used to worship us, And sufficient is Allah as a witness between us and you that we were of your worship unaware."} (10:28-29)
- The Sirat will be very dark and narrow, and prophet Muhammad will be the first to lead groups from his ummah across it. The way people will attempt to cross it is a manifestation and reflection of the way/path they took in their worldly life. **Those who followed the Straight Path on Earth will safely cross the straight path of the Last Day.** Since it's dark, the believers will have a mark of light on their forehead (like a white blaze on the horse's head [Hadith]), and the strength of that light is equivalent to the

strength of their faith (57:12 | 66:8 | Hadith). Moreover, each person will carry their own burden (of unexpiated sins) (35:18). This means the less burden they carry, the faster they can cross the bridge without having to experience the heat of Hell Fire from underneath. Accordingly, the righteous ones will cross it at different speeds: some at the speed of light and blink of an eye, or the speed of the wind, or the speed of a swift horse, and some will have to walk across or even crawl. The sinners, hypocrites, and disbelievers will not have the means to complete the passage. From among them, there will be those who simply lose their way and fall off the bridge, and others who will be detained, or snatched violently and thrown off the bridge by large, thorn-like hooks installed on the sides of the Sirat (Hadith).

{The wicked will see the Fire and realize that they are bound to fall into it, and will find no way to avoid it.} (18:53)

{Remind (them of) the Day when We will say to Hell, "Are you filled up?" and it will say, "Are there some more?"} (50:30)

- Believers, who were sent to Hell because of disputes they had with other believers and rancor they had in their hearts, will be given a chance to enter Paradise after settling their disputes and purifying their hearts at a place between Paradise and Hell (Hadith).

Stage 4b: The Intercessions

- In parallel with the trials, crossing the Sirat, and entering Paradise/Hell, Allah will permit some (e.g., prophets and angels) to intercede for those sentenced to Hell, and then he will decide if he wants to accept the intercessions and admit them into Paradise.
- At the time of the intercessions, there will be believers that have already landed in Hell. God will pull some of them out for the intercessions. (This will happen again, several times later.)
- There will also be another group of believers held in a place, with no one to intercede for them. They will go around looking for an intercessor. Prophet Muhammad said, "On the Day of Resurrection, the believers will assemble and say, 'Let us ask somebody to intercede for us with our Lord.' So they will go to Adam and say, 'You are the father of all the people, and Allah created you with His own hands, and ordered the angels to prostrate to you, and taught you the names of all things; so please intercede for us with your Lord, so that He may relieve us from this place of ours.' Adam will say, 'I am not fit for this (intercession for you).' Then Adam will remember his sin and feel ashamed thereof. He will say, 'Go to Noah, for he was the first messenger Allah sent to the inhabitants of the Earth.' They will

go to him and Noah will say, 'I am not fit for this undertaking.' He will remember his appeal to his Lord to do what he had no knowledge of, then he will feel ashamed thereof and will say, 'Go to the Khalil Ar-Rahman (i.e., Ibrahim).' They will go to him and he will say, 'I am not fit for this undertaking. Go to Moses, the servant to whom Allah spoke (directly) and gave him the Torah.' So they will go to him and he will say, 'I am not fit for this undertaking.' and he will mention (his) killing a person who was not a killer, and so he will feel ashamed thereof before his Lord, and he will say, 'Go to Isa (Jesus), servant of Allah, His messenger and Allah's Word and spirit coming from Him. Jesus will say, 'I am not fit for this undertaking, go to Muhammad the servant of Allah whose past and future sins were forgiven by Allah.' So they will come to me and I will proceed and I will ask my Lord's permission and I will be given permission. When I see my Lord, I will fall down in prostration and He will let me remain in that state as long as He wishes and then I will be addressed.' (Muhammad!) Raise your head. Ask, and your request will be granted; say, and your saying will be listened to; intercede, and your intercession will be accepted.' I will raise my head and praise Allah with a saying (i.e., invocation) He will teach me, and then

> I will intercede. He will fix a limited number for me (to intercede for) whom I will admit into Paradise. Then (at a later time) I will come back again to Allah, and when I see my Lord, the same thing will happen to me. And then I will intercede and Allah will fix a limited number for me to intercede whom I will let into Paradise, then I will come back for the third time; and then I will come back for the fourth time, and will say, 'None remains in Hell but those whom the Quran has imprisoned[43] (in Hell) and who have been destined to an eternal stay in Hell.'"[44]

(There are some more details to share about these stages and about how people will enter Hell and Paradise after the Sirat, but in short, this was a summary of how people will make it there.)

It is still not late to ask for forgiveness and repent to The Acceptor of Repentance, as long as you are still alive and the sun has yet to rise from the west[45]. God repeatedly reminds us in the Quran that if we

[43] This is referring to the wrongdoings mentioned in the Quran that can make a disbeliever dwell in Hell forever.
[44] The Hadith is copied from: https://sunnah.com/bukhari:4476.
[45] Prophet Muhammad had prophesied that before the Hour there will be minor signs (most of them happened) and ten major signs of end times (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Islamic_eschatology#Signs_of_the_End_Times). One of the major signs is the sun rising from the west instead of the east. When that happens, Allah's Gate of Repentance will be closed (Hadith). In other words, repentance will no longer be accepted. If you were a kafir, you will die a kafir, even if you believed afterward. If you were a criminal, you will die a criminal. If you had many sins in your book of deeds, or associated other deities and lords with Allah, or believed Jesus was God or son of God, you will no longer be forgiven. The Hadith does not reveal the precise order of the ten major signs. [Rami: Based on my understanding and analysis of the end times events, I foresee the sun rising from the west right before the second coming of prophet Jesus *(I explain how I reached this conclusion in the final chapter)*. Muslim scholars have reached different conclusions regarding the order of the major signs.]

truly repent, then correct ourselves and perform righteous deeds, he is willing to forgive us (20:82) and write off our sins, or even convert our bad deeds to good deeds (25:70-71). Nevertheless, this does not mean we commit evil deeds and once we approach death we repent.

{But repentance is not (accepted) of those who (continue to) do evil deeds up until, when death comes to one of them, he says, "Indeed, I have repented now," or of those who die while they are disbelievers. For them We have prepared a painful punishment.} (4:18)

Allah—The Most Gracious, Most Merciful—giving us multiple chances to believe and do righteous deeds, and sending us multiple reminders and warnings, are in and of themselves acts of mercy. However, how can you receive more of his grace and mercy if you keep denying him? This is why the greatest beneficiary of God's grace and mercy are the God-fearing believers (57:28). For example, he allowed angels to ask him to forgive the wrongdoing believers who repented (40:7-9). He gave the believers many worldly means of protection to shield themselves from Hell Fire, such as Salat, and from the evil work of the demons. The Bestower of Favors even gave the believers bonus good deeds to earn in their account!!! *(No loyalty program can beat this!)*

{Indeed, Allah never wrongs (anyone)—even by an atom's weight. If there is a good deed, he multiplies it and gives from Himself a great reward.} (4:40)

1) Bonus of 10x Good Deeds

   {Whoever comes (on the Day of Judgment) with a good deed will have ten times the like thereof (to his credit), and whoever comes with an evil deed will not be recompensed except the like thereof; and they will not be wronged.} (6:160)

2) Bonus of 700x Good Deeds or More

   {The likeness of (the ones) who spend their wealth in the way of Allah is as the likeness of a seed (of grain) which grows seven spikes; in each spike is a hundred grains. And Allah multiplies (His reward) for whom He wills. And Allah is All-Encompassing and All-Knowing.} (2:261)

3) Bonus of 1 Good Deed

   "**Whosoever intends to do a good deed but does not do it, Allah records it with Himself as a complete good deed**; but if he intends it and does it, Allah records it with Himself as ten good deeds, up to seven hundred times, or more than that. **But if he**

intends to do an evil deed and does not do it, Allah records it with Himself as a complete good deed; but if he intends it and does it, Allah records it down as one single evil deed." (Hadith)

Allah's generosity, mercy, favors, and grace do not end here:

{Allah accepts the repentance of those who do a wrong in ignorance and repent soon (after they realize their wrongdoing); it is they to whom Allah will forgive and Allah is All-Knowing, All-Wise.} (4:17)

{Say (on My behalf), O servants of Mine who have acted recklessly against their own selves, do not despair of Allah's mercy. Surely, Allah will forgive all sins. Surely, He is the One who is the Most-Forgiving, Most Merciful.} (39:53)

{O believers! Turn to Allah in sincere repentance, so your Lord may absolve you of your sins and admit you into Gardens, under which rivers flow, on the Day Allah will not disgrace the Prophet or the believers with him. Their light will shine ahead of them and on their right. They will say, "Our Lord! Perfect our light for us, and forgive us. (For) You are truly the Most Capable (of anything)."} (68:8)

{And those who, when they commit a lewd act or wrong themselves, remember Allah and seek forgiveness and do not knowingly persist in

sin—and who forgives sins except Allah?—their reward is forgiveness from their Lord and Gardens under which rivers flow, staying there forever. How excellent is the reward for those who work (righteousness)!} (3:135-136)

{O believers! Be mindful of Allah and say what is right. He will bless your deeds for you, and forgive your sins. And whoever obeys Allah and His Messenger, has truly achieved a great triumph.} (33:70-71)

God's mercy and grace are unlimited, but most people are ungrateful.

{And He has granted you all that you asked Him for. If you tried to count Allah's grace, you would never be able to enumerate them. Indeed humankind is truly unfair, (totally) ungrateful.} (14:34)

{And if We give Man a taste of mercy from Us and then We withdraw it from him, indeed, he is despairing and ungrateful. But if We give him a taste of favor after hardship has touched him, he will surely say, "Bad times have left me." And thus he will become exultant and boastful—except for those who are patient and do righteous deeds; those will have forgiveness and great reward.} (11:9-11)

(Thank you for making it this far in the book. Let me briefly share with you here my inferences about the soul and spirit. This is part of the esoteric knowledge I extrapolated from the Quran and the Hadith.)

{And by the soul and (Him) Who fashioned it; then He inspired it with (the knowledge of) right and wrong. Successful indeed is the one who purifies their soul, and doomed is the one who corrupts it!} (91:7-10)

God indicates in the Quran that the soul can be in three different states:

1) **"The self-inciting to do evil" soul (An-Nafs Al-Ammara bil Sou')**

   This is the corrupted soul that has deviated significantly from the straight path, captivated and blinded by its desires. It is human to have desires, but you cannot allow your desires to drive you to cross the limits that Allah laid out in his laws. Desires vary; one might desire wealth, fame and prestige, sexual activities, power, nonconformity, vengeance, vanity, esteem, etc. God asked us to be patient and to restrain these desires within the boundaries he laid out for us, because without restraint—and with reinforcement from the devils—they can lead us astray, and even captivate us to the level of forgetting God and unlawfully hurting others. Allah

decreed his boundaries and limits, yet many humans choose to define their own to satisfy their desires. It is not the soul that is innately evil or disobedient, but it is its desire that can drive it to be so.

2) "The self-reproaching" soul (An-Nafs Al-Lawwama)

This is the soul that is struggling to remain on the straight path, often failing to restrict itself from crossing Allah's limits. Having succumbed to temptation, it eventually remembers Allah and feels remorse, subsequently correcting its behavior. Essentially, it keeps swinging between pleasing its desires and pleasing Allah.

[Rami: My soul had been in this state for a long time. Every now and then, after a long attempt to stay away from temptations, I would succumb to my desires and commit sin, only to later be remorseful, seeking God's forgiveness. Very recently, I made a vow to myself and God (21:87)—for the very first time—that I will conquer my desires once and for all, purifying my heart from any blemishes and restraining my soul from crossing God's limits (becoming a devout, ascetic man). I'm sharing this private matter to encourage and remind others to do the same. As long as we are breathing, it is never late to turn to Allah, repent, and mend our

ways. We live in a time full of temptations and where you are seen as a stranger for holding on to your religious values. Prophet Muhammad said, “There will come a time when holding on to your religion will be like holding a burning coal.” Sadly, we are living in this time. Nevertheless, and for whatever the case may be, one must develop firm resolve, which requires great patience and self-discipline (31:17).

{And keep reminding because reminding benefits the believers.} (51:55)]

3) **“The self-reassured” soul (An-Nafs Al-Mutma'anna)**

This is the disciplined, pure soul, reassured that it has conquered its desires and settled firmly on Allah’s right path—the Straight Path—ready to meet its Lord.

{(It will be said,) "O reassured soul! Return to your Lord, well-pleased and well pleasing (to Him)! So enter among My (righteous) servants! And enter My Paradise!"} (89:27-30)

[Rami: This is the state that I seek and feel I’m getting closer to—the state we all should aim for. I pray we all die in this state.]

[Rami: So, where does the soul reside in our body? No, I do not think it is in our brain or covering the whole body. I believe it resides in the HEART! The heart is the soul's house, and the heart's condition reflects the soul's condition. This is why our feelings come from the heart! THIS IS ONLY MY OWN CONCLUSION—NOT A FACT, and here is how I got to it (God knows best):

1) When God speaks about people in the Quran, most of the time he mentions their hearts and chests. Here are some of the verses:

   {They (the hypocrites) are those **Allah knows what is in their hearts**. So turn away from them, caution them, and speak to them with eloquent speech that will touch their souls.} (4:63)
   {And is collected (at death) **what is in the chests.**} (100:10)
   {Those who have believed and whose hearts are assured by the remembrance of Allah. Unquestionably, **by the remembrance of Allah hearts are assured**.} (13:28)

   {No disaster strikes except by permission of Allah. And whoever believes in Allah—**He will guide his heart**. And Allah is the All-Knowing.} (64:11)

2) God mentioned hearts that do not understand and that are blind (7:179 | 22:46). How could that be if it is not for the soul in the

heart that Allah is referring to? I believe that it is the soul in the heart that makes the calls for action, which are then transmitted in signals to the brain, and the brain houses the memory storage unit and the CPU. Moreover, I believe that the soul has its own memory unit, loaded with innate knowledge—including instinct—it received in the first brief life. I also reasoned that the memory in the brain is transferred over to the soul's memory at the time of death, so it can be used in the third life. Allah knows best.

3) There is a famous Hadith that says, "God does not look at your physical images nor to your wealth, **he looks at your hearts and your deeds**." God looks at us in the heart. After death, our body and possessions remain on Earth, but not our soul and deeds.
4) One time, while I was reviewing the life of prophet Muhammad, I discovered that when he was a young boy, two (or more) men dressed in white approached him while he was outside playing. They grounded him to the floor, opened his chest, took his heart out, then put it back in, and closed his chest. After he became a prophet, he asked the Holy Spirit Gabriel about that incident. Angel Gabriel—peace be upon him—told him that it was the angels that removed a black clot from his heart by washing it with

Zamzam water in a golden bowl. The Arabic word used for clot is “Alaqah”, which also means congealed clingy substance. That was the first time I had heard of the black clot. This clot is like a small window that God puts in our hearts to enable Satan and his devils to seduce us with their whispers. As I established before, the self is the soul. This reaffirms my theory that the soul is located in the heart, since God placed the black clot there, close to the soul. At birth, the clot starts very tiny; therefore, it is a tiny window for the devils to have any influence on us. However, as we grow older, each time we commit a sin, a tiny dark blemish is added to it (83:14 | Hadith). It is our sins that make it grow and harden, and the larger and harder it gets, the more receptive the soul becomes to the devil’s invitations and temptations. I reasoned that this black substance is the rust, malady, and disease in the heart that God mentions in the Quran. When God says that our hearts are purified if we pray, remember him, repent, or ask for his forgiveness, I believe he means that he will purify our hearts (using the spirit?) from this black, hard substance, shrinking the clot back to its original size. Allah figuratively describes hardened hearts like stones, but if people with hardened hearts were to surrender to him, rivers (tears?) will gush out of

their hearts (crying souls?) in awe and fear of him (2:74). Before I found out about the black clot, I was under the assumption that the devils whisper in our ears and was confused whenever I read the verses below. Then it made sense. By gaining divine knowledge, everything starts to make sense!

{Say, "I seek refuge in the Lord of mankind, The King of mankind. The Deity of mankind, from the evil of the retreating whisperer—Who whispers (evil) **into the chests** of mankind—From among the jinn and mankind."} (114:1-6)

This topic made me think of the jinn devils (demons) that possess human bodies. I previously used the analogy of a car and the driver, where the soul is the driver and the body is the car. If the black clot grows and wraps around the soul in the heart, like a snake wrapped around its victim, does that allow demons to jump inside the body without the soul's ability to resist? Basically, “hitching a ride”?

I also have my own theory of evolution. I believe that we are all given the same copy (template) of the soul Adam got. However, in the second life, each copy develops and evolves differently, based on the body, the surrounding environment it inherits, and its unique life journey.

This might explain God's wisdom behind creating identical twins, to give us strong evidence on how the surrounding environment (nurture) has a vital role in our development[46]. God always knows best.

As for the spirit, I imagine it to be like an invisible ghost that encloses all living creatures and the angels that get sent down to Earth to interact with humans (16:2). This might explain why God referred to angel Gabriel as the "Spirit", where there is one unique spirit (78:38) that is holy. I see the spirit having three main functions:

1) **Source of Power:** It is the power that brings any being to life and keeps it alive (15:29). I believe that this power can change, depending on the level of certitude in faith one has in the existence of Allah and the Last Day (58:22).
2) **Connectivity:** *(think of the wireless connectivity network)* Since God is the one commanding it (17:85), the spirit is an instrument that God uses to connect with us (8:24), to connect us with other souls—"spiritual connection"—and to keep the soul in Al-Barzakh connected to our body while we are sleeping. The spirit is God's window to our soul, just how the black clot is the

[46] [Rami: I recommend watching the documentary "Three Identical Strangers". When it comes to our mentality, it is nurture and not nature. We are really NOT "born this way", but rather "nurtured this way". Our mentality begins to develop from the first breath we take on Earth, if not sooner. And because people are unconscious of how they were nurtured when they were very young, they wrongfully think they are born this way.]

demon's window to our soul. I inferred that God uses the spirit to:

a. listen to our inner thoughts (8:24 | 50:16)
b. reveal to us thoughts and ideas for inspiration (e.g., eureka[47] moments) (28:7), guidance (64:11), and support (58:22)
c. shield the souls of the obstinate, impious disbelievers from any guidance (2:7), and even misguide them (6:39)

3) **Control:** The spirit is also an instrument Allah uses to control our body parts, when needed. This could explain how God controls the genetic recombination process to select our genetic code (3:6).

God used the word "spirit" in various contexts, which makes it difficult to figure it out with certainty. My inferences could be wrong or deficient. God said:

{And they ask you (O Messenger) about the spirit. Say, "The spirit is something from the command of my Lord, and you are not given the knowledge **but a little**."} (17:85)

Is it possible that I managed to uncover this little hidden knowledge? God knows best.]

[47] [Rami: This makes me chuckle because it reminds me of a book I read that explains how we can generate our own eureka moments. We are not in control of anything other than our choices. God is in control of everything else, and the spirit has a major role in that. Keep reading and you will find out what I mean by this.]

Chapter 11

The Miracle of Our Time

{Have you not seen that Allah has subjected for you whatever is in the Heavens and whatever is on the Earth, and has lavished His Graces upon you, both apparent and concealed? (Still) there are some who dispute about Allah without knowledge, or guidance, or an enlightening book. When it is said to them, "Follow what Allah has revealed," they reply, "No! We (only) follow what we found our forefathers practicing." (Would they still do so) even if Satan is inviting them to the torment of the Blaze?} (31:20-21)

In the past, people believed that there is a supreme creator, but they invented different gods for various matters (e.g., thunderstorms, love, prosperity, death, etc.). Today, people brazenly deny the existence of a creator deity—Allah—without any knowledge or supporting evidence, and then they tell you they are rational thinkers. From among the things they say: “We live in the 21st century, do you still believe in

this nonsense? Religious stories are nothing but tales of the ancient people. People who believe in God are irrational. We rely only on empirical evidence and scientific discoveries. God is a made-up entity, accepted by the humble and the gullible. We don't need a deity to tell us what we can and cannot do." I would like to inform those people that they are not the first to think that they are special. As stated in many examples in the Quran, throughout human history, people made similar arguments whenever a messenger was sent to them. As special and as informed we think we are, the people before us also thought they were very special and more informed than the people before them. Nevertheless, people today have the right to ask for evidence that proves that the Quran is a divine message from a deity; after all, the conveyer of the message, Muhammad, is not alive among us. This raises the question, "How can we be certain that the Quran is indeed divine and uncorrupted?" Very fair question and let me start with this claim: **The Quran is a living miracle, to exist from the time it was revealed until end times. It is the sign that proves a supreme power indeed exists (4:174), and this sign has been preserved to stand the test of time**. Anyone has the right to dispute the validity of this claim and what I have shared; however, one cannot dispute a claim without at least examining the supporting evidence for that claim. The

fundamental principle of rational thinking, through the scientific method, is to think critically and analyze all the evidence and inferences presented, and then apply reasoning to reach a conclusion.

Before I present the evidence that proves that the Quran is indeed a living miracle and that its verses are the true words of a supreme power, I want to reiterate that Muslims believe that the Tawrat (Torah) and Injil (Gospel) are also the true words of God. From an Islamic perspective, anyone who denies this is an infidel (kafir) for denying this truth. However, the previous scriptures were corrupted and are no longer a reliable source for seeking and confirming the truth. What chiefly distinguishes the Quran from the previous scriptures is the following:

1) The Quran contains plenty of evident signs of its divine origin.
2) The Quran is preserved by God (15:9) to stand the test of time—no one will be able to add falsehood to this book (41:41-42).

{And We have certainly sent down to you **evident signs**, and no one would deny them except the defiantly disobedient.} (2:99)

{And recite (O Muhammad) what has been revealed to you of the Scripture of your Lord. **There is no one to change His words,** and never will you find a refuge beside Him.} (18:27)

Prophet Muhammad conveyed God's words to the people through oral recitations, which is why it is called the "Quran" ("Recitation" in English). To prevent his own words from being confused with Quranic verses, the Prophet initially forbade the formal documentation of his sayings; however, he allowed several close companions to maintain private records for their own reference. Until this day, the verses of the Arabic Quran have been intact. All hard copies of the Quran should have the exact same Arabic text (however, there can be few different pronunciations: an English language analogy would be, "Tuh-may-toh" versus "Tuh-mah-toh", "Day-tah" versus "Dah-tah", or "Off-in" versus "Off-tehn"). So, the first point I want to start with is that the Quran and the Hadith are separate, and that the Quran has been protected from tampering *(I will explain how shortly)*. This is not the case with the books that the Christians and Jews follow today.

Today, Jews and Christians follow either the Pentateuch, Nevi'im, Ketuvim, the Old Testament, the New Testament, or various bibles among the Orthodox, Catholics, Ethiopians, and the Protestants. The words of God in the Tawrat and Injil got mixed with oral narratives and human commentary and philosophy, morphing into new books. Many of these books were also translated from one language to another. This tampering made it difficult to identify all of God's true

words in these books, and not to forget that some dared to conceal many of God's words. **God did not mention in the Tawrat and Injil that he will protect them from corruption** *(why didn't God protect them? I will answer this in the next chapter)*. As for the Quran, God had to protect it from corruption because it's "THE Sign" to stand the test of time and it is the last and final scripture sent to all of mankind, confirming/authenticating the previous scriptures and to have a supreme authority over them (5:48 | 2:106). In other words, if Allah was to permit the corruption of the Quran, he would later have to intervene and rectify what is false with a new long message (42:24); however, since the Quran is his final sent scripture, it had to be preserved until end times. When a group of the Jews managed to corrupt the Tawrat (after the reign of prophet Solomon, and resulting in the J, E, D, and P sources), and disputes started to arise among the Jews, God eventually sent Jesus with the Injil (43:63), to rectify some of what has been falsified and concealed until the final scripture is revealed. However, in that interim period, some Christians started inventing. A substantial portion of the Quran is focused on exposing the falsehood that was fabricated and the truth that was concealed by some of those who received the previous scriptures (People of the Scripture).

{O People of the Scripture, why do you confound the truth with falsehood and conceal the truth while you know (it)?} (3:71)

{And they (the Jews) have not appraised Allah to His true measure when they said, "Allah has revealed nothing to any human being." Say (O Messenger), "Who then revealed the Scripture brought forth by Moses as a light and guidance for people, **which you split into separate sheets—revealing some and concealing much?** You have been taught what neither you nor your forefathers knew." Say (O Messenger), "Allah (revealed it)!" Then leave them to play in their vain discussions.} (6:91)

For further clarity, let me give a very simple example of how Allah's words in the old scriptures have been distorted or mistranslated. It is said in the Old Testament that God created the Heavens and the Earth and what is in them in six Days, then he rested on the seventh Day (Genesis 2:2-3), hence the "Biblical Sabbath". This is not completely accurate. God settled on the Throne after the sixth Day, but he didn't say to rest from work. God made sure to clarify this in the Quran.

{And We did certainly create the Heavens and Earth and what is between them in six Days, **and in no way has any fatigue touched Us.**} (50:38)

{Indeed, your Lord is Allah, who created the Heavens and Earth in six Days, **and then settled Himself on the Throne…**} (7:54)

How can one believe that The Omnipotent needs to take time off to rest?! In all cases, God says that the People of the Scripture need to believe and follow the Quran and prophet Muhammad (7:155-158)**.**

{**O you who were given the Scripture, believe in what We have sent down (to Muhammad), confirming that which is with you**, before We obliterate faces and turn them toward their backs or curse them as We cursed the sabbath-breakers. Whatever Allah orders is destined to occur.} (4:47)

As for the various English translations of the Quran, I found few to be bad, many to be good, but none are perfect—and they can never be perfect! Translation between any two languages can't always be literal, more so when translating an ancient rich language to a modern limited language. Therefore, translators often rely on the interpretation of the Arabic context, which opens the door to error and inaccuracies. Due to a few wrong interpretations—according to me—I did find a few wrong translations. Here is another perfect example that illustrates how imprecise choice of words in translation can lead to misunderstanding. I presume that the same mistake was done with the translation of the

Hebrew Bible. This mistake wasn't serious until a growing number of uneducated people, or people that want to follow their desires, became encouraged by it to believe that the Earth is flat. The mistake has to do with the translation and interpretation of the Arabic word "Al-Ard".

{And He is the One Who spread out **Al-Ard** and placed firm mountains and rivers upon it, and created fruits of every kind in pairs. He covers the day with night. Surely in this are signs for those who reflect.} (13:3)

The word "Al-Ard" means "the earth", and "earth" can mean "planet Earth" or "ground/land". Therefore, while using the word "earth" is not technically a mistake, I believe that translators should have used the words "ground" or "land" to avoid any misunderstanding of the verse. God made the LAND flat, **as far as the naked eye can see** (88:17-20), to live and traverse on it (67:15), and for the LAND to have vegetation (2:61). The word "Al-Ard" can cover different ranges (as does the word "As-Sama'" ["the Sky/Heaven" in English]). It can be a "geographical land/ground", as in the intersection of a tangent plane with the surface of a sphere, or the "Earth's crust", as in the first layer of the sphere, or "planet Earth", as in the all-inclusive seven layers of the sphere. One might argue that the Arabic word "Al-Barr" is a better

word for land. “Al-Barr” means “dry land”, but even so, how come in the following two verses the word “Al-Ard” is translated to “land” but not in other verses?!

{(Prophet Moses said to the Israelites,) "O my people! Enter the Holy **Land** which Allah has decreed for you (to enter) and do not turn back, lest you should become losers."} (5:21)

{They (people of Paradise) will say, "Praise be to Allah Who has fulfilled His promise to us, and made us inherit the **land** to settle in Paradise wherever we please." How excellent is the reward of those who work (righteousness).} (39:74)

In these two verses, it is obvious that the translators cannot use the word “earth”. Nevertheless, isn’t this a clear indication that God used the word “Al-Ard” for “land”, so why not use “land” for the verses where God is describing the flattening and stretching of the land on the planet’s surface?! The next question that comes to mind: if God is very meticulous in choosing his words, why didn’t he use a unique word for planet Earth? This question opens up a broader question: why are there words and verses in the Quran that are open for interpretation? Here is one answer straight out of the Quran:

{He is the One Who has revealed to you (O Muhammad) the Scripture, of which some verses are precise—they are the foundation of the Scripture—while others are elusive. Those with deviant hearts follow the elusive verses seeking discord and seeking to interpret it. And no one knows its (true and complete) interpretation except Allah. And those well-grounded in knowledge, they say, "We believe in this (Quran)—it is all from our Lord." But none will be mindful (of this) except the people of reason.} (3:7)

I understood from this verse that the Quran includes both principal verses—the core/foundation of the Quran—which are precise in meaning, and elusive verses, which are open for interpretation. Elusive verses are there to expose people's intelligence, intentions, and what lies in their hearts; their true meaning may remain hidden until God deems the time has come to reveal it. On the one hand, you have a group of people, who want to follow their desires more than the truth, championing false or literal interpretations. Those people could be Muslims and non-Muslims. Among the non-Muslims, there are haters who seek to interpret the Quran in a way that allows them to slander Allah and Islam. You find these haters always referencing the elusive verses, as if all other verses in the Quran don't exist. On the other hand, you have a different group of people, who Allah describes as the

believers “well-grounded in knowledge”. This group’s main objective is to seek the truth and not interpret verses, and they know that no one can single-handedly interpret correctly all the verses of the Quran except Allah. In other words, there are people who will take the tip of the iceberg as the complete picture, while there are others who will go further, diving underneath the surface, to unravel the complete true picture. I find elusive verses like a watermelon rind. Let’s assume I hand a watermelon to a group of people who have never seen a watermelon before, and I tell them this is an edible fruit. The rind will make them doubt it is edible. Those who have no desire to believe me and give me the benefit of the doubt will rush to deny it’s edible without decisive proof. As for those who trust me and believe in me—because of other easier to comprehend claims I shared with them—they will accept my obscure claim, regardless. And for the curious and well-grounded in knowledge, among those who trust me, they will attempt to discover how it is edible. The Quran is also the Guidance, and Allah, in principle, will not guide those who are not willing to believe in him and his signs (16:104)!! Deniers with ill desires can read the Quran a million times and they will never be guided by it. **To be guided by the Quran, you have to be either a true believer in Allah or a person who is sincere in wanting to learn what is in the Quran.**

Many of the interpretations that I learned over the years came from Muslim exegetes who dedicated their entire lives to studying the Quran. When it comes to elusive verses and the meaning of old Arabic words and expressions, you need to take into consideration explanations and interpretations given by Arabic language experts and Muslim exegetes. For me personally, whenever I encountered elusive verses in the past, or verses and words I did not understand, I tried my best to learn the interpretations of multiple exegetes. If I found a common interpretation among all exegetes that is reasonable, I accepted it. Otherwise, I either went with the most convincing interpretation, I kept researching to find one, or simply I relied on my own intelligence and tenacious efforts to uncover the correct interpretation[48], and you cannot always be 100% accurate. In all cases, as a believer, I never doubt the elusive verses and claim they are false. Furthermore, it is important to note that relying on exegetes alone is not enough to attempt to interpret some of the elusive verses: scientists are needed as well (29:43). If you have not realized this by now, you will shortly.

[48] According to my study of the Quran, I concluded that there is no abrogation in the text of the Quran. I believe that Muslim scholars have misinterpreted some verses, which led them to believe that there is "Abrogation" ("Naskh" in Arabic). Yes, during the time of the revelation, there were few new rulings that invalidated older ones, but I did not find any of the invalidated rulings stated in the Quranic text.

Unlike the previous scriptures, because the Quran had to be a living miracle available to all the people to come after the final prophet, Allah had to embed evidence in the Quran that people can examine to determine that indeed the Quran holds the words of a deity. As Allah mentioned in the Quran, the signs of its divine origin are made clear to the **people of reason.** The believers among them are the ones who follow Allah's advice (39:18), have knowledge (6:97), ponder (3:191) and contemplate (38:29) his words, are mindful of his signs (6:126), and have certitude (2:118) in faith. I personally strived to be one of those people. The way I see it, the signs can be grouped into three categories, and which I find highlighted in these two verses:

{Say, "If (all) humans and jinn were to come together to produce the equivalent of this Quran, they could not produce its equal, no matter how they supported each other." And We have truly set forth every example in this Quran, yet most people persist in disbelief.}(17:88-89)

The Quran's Language

As I previously mentioned, several messengers were sent to the people, bringing knowledge and signs relevant to the specializations of their most knowledgeable members—the pundits. The pundits of Egypt were specialized in magic, the pundits of Galilee were

specialized in medical therapy, and the pundits of the Arabian Peninsula were specialized in poetry. Thus, we find in the Quran a diverse, unrivaled array of Arabic linguistic syntax, semantics, lexicon, expressions, and rhetoric, which was—and remains to this day—superior to any linguistic work ever produced. To any Arabic-speaking believer, the Quran's eloquent language is considered compelling evidence of its divine origin. However, what about having compelling evidence for those who do not speak or read Arabic?

The Quran's Claims

Since the Quran is a message to all mankind until end time, and since The All-Wise The All-Aware was well aware when he sent down the Quran that people over time are going to become more diverse in their specializations, God made sure to include in the Quran signs that address a diverse set of specializations—or scientific studies—not only linguistics. If the Quran was intended only to the Arabians at the time it was revealed, then signs relating to language (linguistic signs) would have been sufficient, because this is all what the Arabians were going to understand at that time. However, it was not the case. The Quran includes various claims about humans, the Earth, and the universe that were not known or scientifically discovered before its revelation.

These specific claims are not detailed explanations, but rather indications: this is why these claims are called "signs". I'm sure those claims, embedded in the Quran, sounded mysterious to the early medieval Arabians. With progressive scientific discoveries over the subsequent centuries (41:53), those claims became understandable to those who are well-grounded in knowledge of what humans had discovered. How could Muhammad have known about the post-seventh century scientific discoveries, findings, and theories, or in other words, scientific claims? I don't believe these claims, as signs, were intended to the Arabians, but intended instead to the non-Arabians, which is why most scientific discoveries have been made by non-Arabians!! In other words, I believe that The All-Wise deliberately inspired non-Arabians of the East, and later of the West, to achieve many scientific discoveries, so they become the pundits that can examine these signs as supporting evidence (34:6). In my opinion, The All-Aware, aware that humans will come centuries later and say, "We believe only in science and what only science can prove", embeds in the Quran claims to be examined and confirmed by scientists at the right time in the subsequent centuries. And when the time of confirmation comes through their scientific discoveries, how can the people that claim they believe in science deny that the Quran is indeed

a divine revelation from Allah?! You cannot be a rational person who says, "I BELIEVE IN SCIENCE!" and then dismiss or deny the conformity between Allah's claims, revealed in the 7th century, and the scientific claims, made by scientists in the subsequent centuries!!

{We have indeed sent down signs clarifying (the truth). But Allah (only) guides whoever He wills to the Straight Path.} (24:46)

The signs sent down include Allah's claims regarding his creations. The people who have sound knowledge of both—Allah's claims and the scientific claims—were the ones to uncover the conformity between the two. In the past, these people shared their findings in books, and today they are well publicized online. Here are some of my picks and own findings:

❖ **Signs for Marine Scientists**

Scientific Claim: *In the deep sea there are layers of underwater waves and dark clouds.*

Allah's Claim: {Or (their deeds are) like the darkness in a deep sea, covered by waves upon waves, topped by (dark) clouds. Darkness upon darkness! If one stretches out their hand, they can

hardly see it. And whoever Allah does not bless with light will have no light!} (24:40)

❖ Signs for Gynecologists

Scientific Claim: *The fetal development goes through three stages: Fertilization, Implantation, and Embryo Development.*

Allah's Claim: {And certainly did We create Man from an extract of clay. Then We made him into **Nutfah** (placed) in a firm lodging. Then We made the Nutfah into an **Alaqah**, and We made the Alaqah into a **Mudghah**, and We made (from) the Mudghah, bones, and We covered the bones with flesh; then We developed him into another creation. So blessed is Allah, the best of creators.} (23:12-14)

{Does Man think that he will be left unchecked? Had he not been (once) a bit from semen emitted? Then he was a clinging clot, and (Allah) created (his form) and proportioned (him) producing from him both sexes, male and female.} (75:36-39)

{Read in the name of your Lord who created; created Man from a clinging clot.} (96:1-2)

Clarification: "Nutfah" means "a bit", and I find it to be a reference to the zygote or blastocyst, after the sperm fertilizes the egg. "Alaqah" means "the clinging thing", and this is a reference to the blastocyst ball clinging to the wall of the uterus to start the implantation phase. At the beginning of this phase, the "Alaqah" starts looking like a clot of blood on the uterus wall. "Mudghah" means the "chewed-like lump". This is exactly how the embryo looks like by week four. Then the bones start to grow, followed by the flesh or muscles.

❖ **Signs for Astronomers**

Scientific Claim: *The sun is not fixed but moving.*

Allah's Claim: {The sun travels for its fixed term. That is the design of the Almighty, All-Knowing.} (36:38)

Scientific Claim: *The universe is expanding.*

Allah's Claim: {And the Sky is constructed by Us with might, and indeed, We are (its) expander.} (51:47)

Others: Indications of a "Big Bang" (21:30), speed of light (22:47), and the round shape of the Earth based on the alternation of day and night (3:190 | 22:61 | 36:40 | 39:5).

❖ **Signs for Atmospheric Scientists**

Scientific Claim: *The atmosphere acts as a protective shield.*

Allah's Claim: {And We made the Sky a guarded canopy, and (still) they turn away from its signs.} (21:32)

❖ **Signs for Geologists**

Scientific Claim: *Mountains are anchored in the Earth's moving crust for stabilization.*

Allah's Claim: {Have We not made the earth a wide expanse, And the mountains as pegs?} (78:6-7)

❖ **Signs for Hydrologists**

Scientific Claim: *The water cycle: Evaporation, Condensation, and Precipitation.*

Allah's Claim: {And those dispersing dispersers (i.e., wind dispersing water vapor to the Sky). Then those carrying a load (i.e., clouds carrying water droplets). Then those sailing (clouds) with ease. Then those distributors (of rain) as commanded (by God).}(51:1-4)

Other supporting verses: (7:57 | 13:12 | 15:22 | 25:48-50 | 30:48).

❖ **Signs for Botanists**

Scientific Claim: *Male and female pairs exist in plant populations.*

Allah's Claim: {Glory be to the One Who created all the pairs of what the earth grows, and of themselves, and of what they do not know.} (36:36)

❖ **Signs for Entomologists**

Scientific Claim: *Beyond the structural flimsiness of the spider's web, the family ties within the "spider house" are equally fragile.*

Allah's Claim: {The likeness of the ones who have taken to themselves allies apart from Allah is as the likeness of the spider that takes to itself a home; and surely the feeblest of homes is the spider's house, if they knew (the truth).} (29:41)

Others: Ants are reasonable communicable creatures (27:18).

❖ **Signs for Zoologists**

Scientific Claim: *All birds and animals live in communities.*

Allah's Claim: {All living beings roaming the Earth and winged birds soaring in the Sky are communities like yourselves. We

have left nothing out of the Book. Then to their Lord they will be gathered altogether.} (6:38)

❖ Signs for Nutritionists

Scientific Claim: *Working bees are female, and the honey stored in their bellies can heal people from several illnesses.*

Allah's Claim: {And your Lord revealed to the (female) bee, "Make homes in the mountains, and among the trees and in the structures they raise. Then eat from all the fruits and follow the ways of your Lord laid down (for you)." From their bellies emerges a drink, varying in colors, in which there is cure for people. Indeed, that is a sign for people who ponder.} (16:68-69)

Clarification: The verses in Arabic mention the female bees.

❖ Signs for Biologists

Scientific Claim: *All living things are composed of water.*

Allah's Claim: {Have those who disbelieved not considered that the Heavens and the Earth were a joined entity, then We split them apart and made from water every living thing? Would they then not believe?} (21:30)

Even if one insists on arguing that there is no conformity between these verses and the scientific claims noted, how did an illiterate man in the desert know of these very diverse and peculiar subjects, and why did he see a need to inform the people about them?

{We will show them Our signs in the universe and within themselves until it becomes clear to them that this (Quran) is the truth. Is it not enough that your Lord is a Witness over all things?} (41:53)

{Indeed, We have set forth in this Quran (of every subject) an example for the people, **and Man was mostly argumentative**.} (18:54)

The Quran's Production and Composition

Since there will always be doubters and disputers, and for the sake of argument, I am going to play devil's advocate here and assume the following: first, that Muhammad is a brilliant poet, a philosopher, a soothsayer, and an explorer for giving us the answers to many questions about life; second, that he acquired a lot of knowledge about religion and the prophets from the Christians and Jews, or went through a phase of enlightenment, or maybe he had a few inspiring dreams; and third, that he had a flying carpet and all the necessary tools—hidden in a cave—which allowed him to discover the universe,

the Earth, and the human body. Irrespective of how and where Muhammad got his knowledge from, can he produce the Quran? Can any human being?

The Islamic story that I have shared with you so far covered:

- God and his creation
- Adam and Satan in Heaven, and how humans ended up on Earth
- The straight path and why humans need to follow it
- The prophets and the stories of the chosen ones among them
- The promise of a Last Day and what will happen then
- Paradise and Hell, and who will make it there

Let's focus just on this story for now, because this is the told Islamic story that I am examining. Let me call it "STORY" for simplicity. Is Muhammad, or any human being, capable of producing the verses and the chapters that tell this STORY in the manner it was done? Is anyone capable of composing a book like the Quran? If yes, then the source of the verses still remains in question, and if not, then the verses of this STORY must be authored by a supreme being, who claims that these verses are his own words and they tell the truth. Let me first share with you the Islamic account of how the verses were revealed:

1) In Ramadan 610 CE, Allah sent down to the first Sky/Heaven, with the Holy Spirit Gabriel (16:102 | 80:11-16), his divine words in a book[49] (4:105 | 38:29 | 97:1) covered in brocade (Hadith | 56:77-80). Angel Gabriel then brought down this book to prophet Muhammad (4:166), who happened to be at the cave, and asked him to read from it. Prophet Muhammad truthfully stated three times that he does not know how to read. Therefore, angel Gabriel had to visit him from time to time to furtively reveal to him the verses **from the book**, in successive revelations, over a span of about twenty three years.

   {Recite what has been revealed to you **from the Book** and establish prayer. Indeed, prayer should deter (one) from lewdness and the forbidden. The remembrance of Allah is (an) even greater (deterrent). And Allah knows what you (all) do.} (29:45)

[49] Muslims are unaware that angel Gabriel had a physical book with him, because there is no authentic Hadith that explicitly says that. However, based on my understanding, "Al-Kitab" (the Book/Scripture) is a physical written book, and I did find one little-known Hadith that supports my understanding (although there is a disconnect in the Hadith's chain of narrators). I believe that when prophet Muhammad stated three times that he does not read, he implicitly announced that giving him a written book to read from is pointless; hence, the book was kept only with angel Gabriel, who then sent down (i.e., transmitted) the verses from the book **upon** prophet Muhammad. I believe that this cave incident wasn't a random event, but a deliberate act by God, to acknowledge that Muhammad will not be reciting verses to the people from a physical book in his hands, nor will he be given all the content of the book at once *(why? I will explain shortly)*. Even if illiterate Muhammad was to carry with him a book, it would have not made much difference with the disbelievers: {Had We sent down **upon you** a book in paper and they were to touch it with their own hands, the disbelievers would still have said, "This is nothing but pure magic!"} (6:7). Furthermore, one may question: If the Quran was already sent down with angel Gabriel before Muhammad was appointed as a prophet-messenger, then how come many verses address events that happened during the twenty three years of the revelation? This is because The Knower of the Unseen knows the future and is in full control of what happens on Earth (13:2). This is similar to how God shared with his prophets and in his scriptures prophecies of what will happen in end times and the hereafter *(I will briefly touch on this topic again in the final chapter)*.

{We have divided the Quran in portions, so that you may recite it to people gradually, And We have revealed it in successive revelations.} (17:106)

{Said those who disbelieved, "If only the Quran had been sent down upon him all at once!" (We have sent it) as such so We may strengthen your mind (i.e., intellect and consciousness) with it. And We have revealed it at a deliberate pace.} (25:32)

2) The verses were transmitted into prophet Muhammad's heart.

{Say (O Muhammad), "Whoever is an enemy to Gabriel (should know that) it is **he who has sent it (the Quran) down upon your heart,** by permission of Allah, confirming what came before it and as guidance and glad tidings for the believers."} (2:97)

{And indeed, it (the Quran) is the revelation of the Lord of the worlds, which the Trustworthy Spirit (i.e., angel Gabriel) **sent down upon your heart[50] (O Muhammad)**—so that you may be one of the warner—in a clear Arabic tongue.} (26:192-195)

{(O Muhammad!) Do not rush your tongue trying to memorize it (the Quran). It is certainly upon Us to (make you) memorize and recite it. So once We have recited a revelation (through Gabriel),

[50] Why upon the heart? This substantiates my inference that the soul is located in the heart, and that the soul has its own memory unit that is different from the brain's memory unit.

follow its recitation (closely). Then it is surely upon Us to make it clear (to you).} (75:16-19)

3) Prophet Muhammad did not read from a book with his eyesight, he only recited the verses from memory (of his soul in the heart). {And you (O Muhammad) could not read any book before this (revelation), nor could you write at all. **Otherwise, the people of falsehood would have been suspicious**. But this (Quran) is (a set of) clear revelations (preserved) in the hearts of those who have been given knowledge. And none denies Our revelations except the (stubborn) wrongdoers. They say, "If only signs (i.e., miracles) had been sent down to him from his Lord." Say, "Signs are only with Allah. And I am only a clear warner." Is it not enough for them that We have sent down upon you the Book, (which is) recited to them. Surely in this (Quran) is a mercy and reminder for people who believe. Say, "Sufficient is Allah as a Witness between me and you. He knows whatever is in the Heavens and the Earth. And those who believe in falsehood and disbelieve in Allah, it is they who are the losers."} (29:48-52)
4) People used to memorize the verses that prophet Muhammad repeatedly recited in praying congregations. There were also scribes who wrote them on different materials, such as paper,

cloth, bone fragments, and leather. The scribes were told by prophet Muhammad the surah (chapter) the verses belonged and their correct place in the chapter (16:101), as instructed by angel Gabriel (Hadith).

{And if you are in doubt about what We have sent down upon Our Servant (Muhammad), then produce a surah (chapter) similar to this, and call upon your supporters other than Allah, if you should be truthful. But if you do not—and you will never be able to—then fear the Fire, whose fuel is men and stones, prepared for the disbelievers.} (2:23-24)

5) Long story short, after the death of prophet Muhammad, the first caliph (successor), Abu Bakr, ordered twelve trusted people, led by Zayd bin Thabit, to form a delegation to compile all the verses into a written paper book. There was a long authentication process of gathering all the written verses and matching them with what was memorized. The delegation concluded with a written paper book ("Mus-haf" in Arabic) that included 6,236 verses across 114 chapters. The first written book was read aloud to prophet Muhammad's companions at a general assembly meeting. There was no objection; all the companions agreed that every word and verse of the written book was in the correct place.

I should also note that the chapters in the Mushaf are not in the same order as in which they were revealed. For example, the verses of the first chapter revealed are in the ninety sixth chapter of the Mushaf. When compiling the Mushaf, the companions went with the order in which prophet Muhammad taught them: it is the final order that the Holy Spirit Gabriel taught prophet Muhammad, after all the verses of the Quran were revealed (16:101-102 | Hadith). The chronological order of the revealed verses is simply related to the interactions of prophet Muhammad over the twenty three years. Something happens or a topic is addressed, God then orders angel Gabriel to reveal new verses to prophet Muhammad. As for the order of the verses in the Mushaf, it is the order in which God wants all its readers to follow, because it is the scripture that will make its way to the rest of the world. After the first chapter in the Quran, "The Opener", comes chapter 2, "The Cow" (i.e., Cow of Children of Israel), chapter 3, "Family of Imran", and then chapter 5, "The Table Spread". Essentially, the first six chapters of the Mushaf, after the Opener, have many verses that address the People of the Scripture. I reasoned that God wanted the compiled written book to begin with condemning all the wrongdoings of the People of the Scripture and exposing

the falsehood they invented, in addition to highlighting his laws, which all of mankind must follow. Furthermore, you will also notice that the first few chapters of the Mushaf have the greatest number of verses, except for the Opener. As you move forward with the chapters, the number of words per chapter starts to decline intermittently. I believe that this was done intentionally and is not a coincidence. It has a positive psychological effect in aiding people to manage, read, and memorize the Quran from cover to cover. How many +70,000 word, or even +50,000 word, books do you know that can be memorized from cover to cover?!

{**That**[51] **Book, there is no doubt about it**—a guide for the pious.} (2:2)

[51] If you look up the English translation of this verse, you will find "This Book", but the correct translation should be "That Book". The incorrect translation is due to Muslim exegetes failing to find a proper justification for why God would say "That"; so, the translators went with "This" to avoid confusion. When I analyzed this, I managed, by God's favor, to find a different justification from what is explained by exegetes. I believe that the word "Book" in this verse is referring to the compiled written book (Mushaf), not to the original book sent down from the Heavens with angel Gabriel. At the time this verse was revealed, the Mushaf did not exist yet, which is why I believe that Allah, who is all knowing of the future, used "That" instead of "This". When God mentions the book that was sent down—like in this verse, for example, {And **this** is a Book which We have sent down, blessed and confirming what came before it…} (6:92)—he is referring to the book with angel Gabriel. Now, since the order of the chapters and verses in "that book", to be compiled in the future, is different from the revelation order, some people will come later and raise doubt about its authenticity. So, Allah is affirming in this verse that no one should doubt its authenticity and correctness, and this is how God willed it to be. This is why I believe that God made it the first claim after the opening chapter. Muslims scholars failed to realize this nuance because they didn't fully perceive the method in how the full revelation/message from Allah was sent down in two stages (17:105) *(I will share an analogy shortly, to better explain this method)*. Allah Knows best.

The more I studied the Quran, the more I comprehended its various subjects and stories. However, when I first read the Quran, I used to be perplexed with the repetition of phrases and the fragmentation of many stories. "Why are various narratives broken into portions and shuffled with other verses, like shuffled pieces of a puzzle?" I wondered. To understand what I mean, here are two case studies:

Case Study 1: Let me take the story of prophet Moses—peace be upon him. The story is mentioned in more than twenty different chapters instead of one chapter, making prophet Moses the most frequently mentioned prophet in the Quran. To tell the story in a chronological order, I had to go back and forth between the most recounting chapters of this story (chapters 28, 19, 20, 26, 27, 10, 7), and there are parts of the story that I had summarized instead of writing the verses. If prophet Muhammad wrote or told this story, this is a very strange way to present it—not to ignore the oddness of taking several years to complete the narration of a story. To show you clearly what I mean, let me take the part[52] of the story where prophet Moses challenges the magicians. We can find this part mentioned in the Quran in chapter 7, chapter 10, chapter 20, and chapter 26:

[52] The actual case study covers a larger part of Moses' story, but to shorten this example, I will cover here only the part where Moses challenges the magicians, after they were called for a duel at an appointed date.

{And the magicians came to Pharaoh. They said, "Shall we receive a (suitable) reward if we prevail?" (113) He said, "Yes, and you will certainly be among those closest to me." (114) They (then) said, "O Moses! Either you throw or we shall be the (first) ones to throw." (115) Moses said, "You throw (first)." So when they did, they deceived the eyes of the people, stunned them, and made a great display of magic. (116) Then We inspired Moses, "Throw down your staff," and—behold!—it devoured the objects of their illusion! (117) So the truth prevailed and their illusions failed. (118) So Pharaoh and his people were defeated right there and put to shame. (119) And the magicians fell down, prostrating. (120) They said, "We (now) believe in the Lord of all worlds—(121) the Lord of Moses and Aaron." (122) Pharaoh said, "You believed in Him (his Lord) before I gave you permission?! This must be a conspiracy you devised in the city to drive out its people, but soon you will see! (123) I will certainly cut off your hands and feet on opposite sides, and I will crucify you all." (124) They said, "Surely to our Lord we will (all) return. (125) Your rage toward us is only because we believed in the signs of our Lord when they came to us. Our Lord! Shower us with perseverance, and let us die in submission (to You)." (126)} (Chapter 7 | Order Revealed[53]: 39)

{So when the magicians came, Moses said to them, "Throw whatever you wish to throw." (80) So when they did, Moses said, "What you have produced is mere magic, Allah will surely make it useless, for Allah certainly does not make righteous the work of the corruptors. (81) And Allah establishes the truth by His words—even to the dismay of the wicked ones." (82)} (Chapter 10 | Order Revealed: 51)

[53] These revelation order numbers are unverifiable estimates deduced from narratives by few researchers; therefore, they might not all be accurate.

{Moses said to them, "Woe to you! Do not fabricate a lie against Allah, or He will wipe you out with a torment. Whoever fabricates (lies) is bound to fail." (61) So the magicians disputed the matter among themselves, conversing privately, (62) they said, "These two are only magicians who want to drive you out of your land with their magic, and to do away with your exemplary way (of life). (63) So orchestrate your plan, then come (forward) in a line. And whoever prevails today will certainly be successful." (64) They (then) said, "O Moses! Either you throw or we shall be the first to throw." (65) Moses said, "No, you throw." Then behold, their ropes and staffs appeared to him—by their magic—to be slithering. (66) So Moses concealed fear within himself. (67) We reassured (him), "Do not fear! It is certainly you who will prevail. (68) Throw down what is in your right hand, and it will swallow up what they have made, for what they have made is no more than a magic trick. And magicians can never succeed wherever they go." (69) So the magicians fell down in prostration. They said, "We (now) believe in the Lord of Aaron and Moses." (70) Pharaoh said, "You believed him (Moses) before I gave you permission?! He must be your great (master) who taught you magic. I will certainly cut off your hands and feet on opposite sides, and I will crucify you on the trunks of palm trees, and you will surely know whose punishment is more severe and more lasting." (71) They said, "By the One Who created us! We will never prefer you over the clear proofs that have come to us. So decree whatever you want to decree, you can only decree (matters) of this worldly life! (72) Indeed, we have believed in our Lord so He may forgive our sins and that magic you have forced us to practice. And Allah is far better (in reward) and more lasting (in punishment)." (73)} (Chapter 20 | Order Revealed: 45)

{So the magicians were assembled at the set time on the appointed day. (38) And the people were asked, "Will you join the gathering, (39) so that we may follow the magicians if they prevail?" (40) So when the magicians came, they said to Pharaoh, "Shall we receive a (suitable) reward if we prevail?" (41) He said, "Yes, and you will then certainly be among those closest to me." (42) Moses said to them, "Throw whatever you wish to throw." (43) So they threw down their ropes and staffs, saying, "By Pharaoh's might, it is we who will surely prevail." (44) Then Moses threw down his staff, and—behold!—it devoured the objects of their illusion! (45) So the magicians fell down, prostrating. (46) They said, "We (now) believe in the Lord of all worlds—(47) the Lord of Moses and Aaron." (48) Pharaoh said, "You believed him (Moses) before I gave you permission?! He must be your great (master) who taught you magic, but soon you will see! I will certainly cut off your hands and feet on opposite sides, and I will crucify you all." (49) They said, "(That would be) no harm! Surely to our Lord we will (all) return. (50) We really hope that our Lord will forgive our sins, as we are the first to believe." (51)} (Chapter 26: Order Revealed: 47)

You can read each portion and understand what happened, but what is fascinating is how all four portions are aligned perfectly together, without revealing inconsistencies. Here is how the text looks like, when I combine the four portions together, minus the repetition:

So the magicians were assembled at the set time on the appointed day. And the people were asked, "Will you join the gathering, so that we may follow the magicians if they prevail?" And the magicians came to Pharaoh. They said, "Shall we receive a (suitable) reward if we prevail?" He said, "Yes, and you will certainly be among those closest

to me." Moses said to them, "Woe to you! Do not fabricate a lie against Allah, or He will wipe you out with a torment. Whoever fabricates (lies) is bound to fail." So the magicians disputed the matter among themselves, conversing privately, they said, "These two are only magicians who want to drive you out of your land with their magic, and to do away with your exemplary way (of life). So orchestrate your plan, then come (forward) in a line. And whoever prevails today will certainly be successful." They (then) said, "O Moses! Either you throw or we shall be the first to throw." Moses said to them, "No, you throw whatever you wish to throw." So they threw down their ropes and staffs, saying, "By Pharaoh's might, it is we who will surely prevail." So when they did, behold, their ropes and staffs appeared to him—by their magic—to be slithering. They deceived the eyes of the people, stunned them, and made a great display of magic. So Moses concealed fear within himself. We reassured (him), "Do not fear! It is certainly you who will prevail. Then We inspired Moses, throw down what is in your right hand, your staff, and it will swallow up what they have made, for what they have made is no more than a magic trick. And magicians can never succeed wherever they go." So Moses said, "What you have produced is mere magic, Allah will surely make it useless, for Allah certainly does not make righteous the work of the corruptors. And Allah establishes the truth by His words—even to the dismay of the wicked ones." Then Moses threw down his staff, and—behold!—it devoured the objects of their illusion! So the truth prevailed and their illusions failed. So Pharaoh and his people were defeated right there and put to shame. So the magicians fell down, prostrating. They said, "We (now) believe in the Lord of all worlds—the Lord of Moses and Aaron." Pharaoh said, "You believed in Him (his Lord) before I gave you permission?! You believed him (Moses) before I gave you permission?! He must be your great (master) who taught you magic, but soon you will see! This must be a conspiracy you devised in the

city to drive out its people, but soon you will see! I will certainly cut off your hands and feet on opposite sides, and I will crucify you all on the trunks of palm trees, and you will surely know whose punishment is more severe and more lasting." They said, "(That would be) no harm! Surely to our Lord we will (all) return. We really hope that our Lord will forgive our sins, as we are the first to believe. By the One Who created us! We will never prefer you over the clear proofs that have come to us. So decree whatever you want to decree, you can only decree (matters) of this worldly life! Indeed, we have believed in our Lord so He may forgive our sins and that magic you have forced us to practice. And Allah is far better (in reward) and more lasting (in punishment). Your rage toward us is only because we believed in the signs of our Lord when they came to us. Our Lord! Shower us with perseverance, and let us die in submission (to You)."

Prophet Muhammad revealed these four portions to the public over intervals spanning months or years. If prophet Muhammad authored the Quran, how did he manage to recite or narrate this story to the public in this fragmented manner and with remarkable consistency?!!! I know this is done deliberately by the author, because the author did include in the Quran other stories that are narrated in a single chapter and chronologically, such as the story of prophet Joseph. As one would expect, it is only normal for the author to do the same for all the narrated stories, but the author decided instead to diversify the method in how a story is presented. What is even more fascinating and mind-blowing, half of chapter 28 in the Quran is narrating the story of

prophet Moses, yet the duel with the Egyptian magicians is not covered, and chapter 28 is titled “Al-Qasas”, which means, “The Stories”, or more accurately, “The Case Studies”!!! Is my discovery a hidden sign from God? Also, what caught my attention is how some segments of a narrative are repeated in multiple verses and in different chapters, but with subtle variations. These subtle variations contain additional details of the story. For example, the following two verses, which mention a segment of a narrative, are almost identical, but have subtle variations that hold additional details:

{Pharaoh said, "You believed him (Moses) before I gave you permission?! He must be your great (master) who taught you magic, **but soon you will see!** I will certainly cut off your hands and feet on opposite sides, and I will crucify you **all**."} (26:49)

{Pharaoh said, "You believed him (Moses) before I gave you permission?! He must be your great (master) who taught you magic. I will certainly cut off your hands and feet on opposite sides, and I will crucify you **on the trunks of palm trees, and you will surely know whose punishment is more severe and more lasting**."} (20:71)

This level of diversity, precision, and detail, in how the stories are presented in the Quran and narrated by prophet Muhammad, are peculiar and extraordinary, which brings me to the second case study.

Case Study 2: Let me take the story of Adam's creation and his honoring ceremony. The narrative of the story is brief and mentioned in various chapters. What I want to emphasize in this case study is the repetition of identical phrases in the Quran. Let me pick the part of the story where Allah commands the angels to prostrate to Adam and Satan refuses to do so. I added in the table below all the verses that cover this part:

Chapter Number	Order Revealed	Verses
2	87	And when **We said to the angels, "Prostrate to Adam", so they prostrated, but not Iblis.** He refused and was arrogant and became one of the infidels. (34)
7	39	And We have certainly created you (O Mankind), and given you (human) form. Then **We said to the angels, "Prostrate to Adam", so they prostrated, but not Iblis.** He was not of those who prostrated (11)
15	54	**"So when I have fashioned him and had a spirit of My Own breathed into him, fall down in prostration to him." (29) So the angels prostrated all together—but not Iblis (30)**. He refused to be with those who prostrated. (31)

17	50	And when **We said to the angels, "Prostrate to Adam," so they prostrated, but not Iblis**. He said, "Should I prostrate to one You created from clay?" (61)
18	69	And when **We said to the angels, "Prostrate to Adam", so they prostrated, but not Iblis.** He was of one of the jinn, so he rebelled against the command of His Lord. Do you still take him and his progeny as allies instead of Me, while they are enemies to you? What a miserable exchange for the wrongdoers. (50)
20	45	And when **We said to the angels, "Prostrate to Adam", so they prostrated, but not Iblis**; he refused. (116)
38	38	**"So when I have fashioned him and had a spirit of My Own breathed into him, fall down in prostration to him." (72) So the angels prostrated all together (73)—but not Iblis**, who acted arrogantly, becoming one of the infidels. (74)

You will notice that the author has presented the same information in two different phrases:

- **Phrase 1:** We said to the angels, "Prostrate to Adam", so they prostrated, but not Iblis

- **Phrase 2:** "So when I have fashioned him and had a spirit of My Own breathed into him, fall down in prostration to him." So the angels prostrated all together—but not Iblis

Phrase 1 is repeated five times (there are five instances of this phrase) and Phrase 2 is repeated twice, yet the description of Iblis' (Satan's) action after each phrase is presented in various forms. This subtle variation in the verses seems deliberate so that the entire verses are not identical. The words in the repeated phrases are identical, but the verses they belong to, as a whole, are not. In other words, no one can say it is the same verse inserted in the Quran multiple times. The time interval between the revelations of the above verses could have spanned days, months, or even years. If prophet Muhammad produced these verses himself, he would have had to remember to recite these two phrases exactly the same way every time—while also remembering to change his wording immediately afterward when describing Satan's action. This seems to me very odd and difficult to do. Some might say, "He had a great memory, what is the big deal?!" The big deal is that I only shared with you a few samples in my two case studies. The Quran has more than a hundred phrases that are repeated multiple times, and has several stories that are fragmented and distributed in verses across various chapters!!

If these two case studies are not extraordinary enough to refute that prophet Muhammad had composed the Quran—at any point in time of his life—then add the fact, if he had authored the Quran, he also needed to be very sharp in playing in his head the role of God to address himself, the believers, the Children of Israel, the People of the Scripture, the polytheist idolaters, the Children of Adam, etc., and yet he never claimed to be God!!! Add the fact that he was an illiterate man, with no evidence of him having an office or any stationeries to compose a book, like a book writer would do, nor any report of him reading or writing anything (29:48), or even carrying with him a book, as affirmed by those who denied him (4:153 | 17:93). Add that his religious duties, family affairs, political affairs, military affairs, social affairs, and his enemies left him little to no time to compose an extraordinary book "on the go". Add the recently uncovered extraordinary concurrences between content and composition, based on numerical analysis of the numbering of words and verses. Add the extraordinary, soothing, harmonic composition you hear when the Quran is recited by a beautiful voice, which makes even non-Arabic speakers get emotional when hearing it. Add how reading the Quran regularly could heal the soul and purify the mind and heart, as the author claimed it would (10:57 | 17:82 | 41:44). And I can keep adding,

and adding, and adding. As a rational person, taking all this overwhelming evidence into account, I am compelled to conclude that no human being could produce such a book—even if I disregard the author's claims or the testimony of prophet Muhammad. This mirrors how I concluded the Earth is round based on overwhelming evidence, even if I disregard photographs from space or astronaut testimonies. The Quran is a masterpiece of precision, a level unattainable by any human being. If the author is not a human being, then he must be a supreme being. Thus, the author of the Quran proved his divinity to me through its extraordinary composition: one of many signs of his existence. This is why God called his verses in the Quran "'ayat", which translates to "signs". **The abundant signs are the indirect evidence of Allah's existence!!!** Furthermore, I accept the author's claim that he is the only creator deity that exists, because if there were other creators that have sovereignty over any part of this universe, they would have indeed disputed or challenged him to claim their creations and parts.

{Allah has not taken any son, nor has there ever been with Him any deity. (If there had been), then each deity would have taken what it created, and some of them would have sought to overcome others. Exalted is Allah above what they falsely claim (about Him).} (23:91)

This leaves me with one more crucial mystery: did God have a system in place to protect the Quran from corruption? While looking for clues in the Quran to answer this question, I came upon some remarkable inferences, possibly no one before me had realized, at least not of which I am aware. I initially reasoned that the repetition in the Quran is for emphasis and to constantly remind the reader of what is important. The important main claims, guidelines, commandments, and moral lessons in the Quran are straightforward and easy for anyone to extract and understand. However, the answers to the enigmatic questions are like cryptic messages, fragmented into details, and distributed among more than seventy seven thousand words. You don't notice these details until you become an adept scholar of the Quran, ready to decrypt the messages. I believe that God deliberately did this because he wants his servants to stay close to him by studying his words regularly. God is not going to present to you all the answers on a silver plate. To infer the answers to the hard and deep questions, he wants you to put in the effort. He wants you to learn, think, and contemplate every word, and to demonstrate to him your sincerity and perseverance in seeking the truth. Once you reach this spiritual and analytical level, God rewards you with high level of consciousness and knowledge to notice these details and to start unlocking connections

and explanations hidden in the Quran you never noticed before—as if the Quran is not one-dimensional but multi-dimensional, and every dimension is a sub-puzzle of its own that reveals more explanations. The first dimension is the core of the Quran that every person should know, which is why it is the easiest sub-puzzle to piece together.

From analyzing the verses of the Quran—over and over again—I also began to notice how God drew esoteric parallels between ancient and modern times. Here is a simple short example: In chapter 26, titled "The Poets", God does not mention the poets until the very end of the chapter, along with the devils that descend on every sinful falsifier of the truth. On the surface, you think that God is referring only to the 7th century poets, but if you discern carefully, you will realize that God is also referring to modern-day poets—The Politicians!! They are everywhere, delivering eloquent speeches, and most of them are sinful liars. Most people today follow lying politicians as if they are gods, and they take their speech as the truth. Replace in the following verses the words "poets" with "politicians" and "valley" with "city" and you will see what I mean:

{Shall I inform you upon whom the devils descend? They descend upon every sinful falsifier. They incline their ears, and most of them

are liars. And as for the poets, they are followed by straying people. Did you not see that they roam in every valley? And that they say what they do not? Except those (poets) who believe and do righteous deeds and remember Allah often and defend themselves after they were wronged. And (without a doubt,) the wrongdoers will come to know what (humiliating) end they will meet.} (26:221-227)

When I recently devoted all my time to studying the Quran, I felt like I had entered a never-ending cave of many hidden treasures to extract. This allowed me to fully perceive how everything in the Quran is connected and how the Quran is a brilliant, enlightening, and a mind-blowing masterpiece. I imagine if we were to upload the Quran to a supercomputer and perform various analytical and mathematical studies, we would be blown away with the findings. We should indeed study the work of past Muslim exegetes; however, I have come to realize, accidently, when I entered the cave of the Quran, that there are still more explanations (10:37 | 11:1 | 17:12) to uncover. I believe that God left in the Quran signs and answers to unsolved mysteries for each century or era to uncover, depending on what the people are in need of to believe—this is why the Quran is a "living" miracle. And as God said:

{…And We have sent down upon you the Book **as clarification for all things** and as guidance and mercy and glad tidings for the Muslims.} (16:89)

The more time and thought you dedicate to the Quran, the more it yields its hidden treasures of insight—helping you better understand God, his predestined story, and his signs. I did not see the full picture—which I will share with you at the end of this book—and understand many of life's mysteries until I devoted my full time to studying the Quran. This is indeed one of several reasons why many stories and subjects in the Quran are like shuffled pieces of a jigsaw puzzle; however, I realized there is something even more interesting. As I was writing this book, I had an "aha moment" regarding why there are repeated phrases in the Quran and why God revealed his final scripture through oral recitation. I derived that the repetition of phrases in the Quran is also intended by God to be a **built-in authentication system** that makes his words firm in the Quran (11:1), not every word, but the principal words—the core of Allah's message—which every reader should be aware of. **The repetition (39:23) is not only for emphasis, but also for protection!**

Each instance of the repeated phrases authenticates the other instances. These instances are distributed across multiple chapters. If you tamper with one instance in a chapter, to change its meaning, then you must change the repeated instances in all the other chapters, or else you will create a discrepancy in meaning. It is enough to have two instances of a phrase to authenticate it; nevertheless, the greater the repetition, the firmer the authentication and claim become in the Quran. Not only this, some of the repeated phrases in the Quran are embedded within other phrases. If we take, for example, the repeated phrase, "**Allah! There is no deity except Him**", we find that it holds a very important claim; therefore, it had to be thoroughly protected through repetition. This phrase is also embedded within the following phrase, "That is **Allah**—your Lord**! There is no deity except Him**".

Furthermore, in the two case studies I shared previously, I noted some examples of the repeated phrases within a narrative of a story. These examples narrate real important events that happened in the past. I find these examples to be a sign from the author that no human being can tell those stories in the fragmented manner they were told without having discrepancies or contradictions; therefore, they are authored by a superior intelligence. I was not able to find any contradictions in the Quran, and I challenge anyone if they can. People who claim they

found contradictions have misinterpreted the elusive verses or old Arabic vocabulary. Even I, in my early days of reading the Quran, thought that I had found contradictions, only to realize later I had wrong understanding of the verses.

{Do they not, then, contemplate the Quran? **Had it been from someone other than Allah they would have found a great deal of contradictions**.} (4:82)

{(All) praise is (due) to Allah, who has sent down upon His servant the Book and **has not made therein any deviance.**} (18:1)

Hold on, there is more! This built-in authentication system that I just explained is also wrapped by a **public authentication system** to preserve ALL the verses of the Quran and to prevent anyone from tampering with any word in the Quran. This public authentication system is similar to how blockchain security works. Let me explain. God gave his last revelation different names—the Quran ("the Recitation") is the primary name that is mostly used, not the only one. In the verse that God mentions he has preserved his revelation, he used the name "the Reminder".

{It is certainly We Who have revealed **the Reminder**, and it is certainly We Who will **preserve it**.} (15:9)

In this verse, I find a subtle indication that this revelation is preserved by remembrance. What does remembrance need? Human Memory!!! The Quran was recited in portions (transactions), gradually and over time, to the public community (blockchain network), resulting in its preservation in many human memory units (blockchain nodes)—not in a book secured in an underground vault. It is impossible for one person to alter a verse without someone else from the public community, who memorized the verses, noticing the alteration (e.g., "Uthmanic Recension")—Security Breach! The Quran is a divine revelation that can be recited in its entirety from memory or from reading a written book. This is the most remarkable attribute that distinguishes it from all previous revelations *(I'll share another analogy on this, by end of this chapter)*.

I believe that God chose his last revelation to be initially revealed to the people through oral recitations for various reasons—I highlighted in this chapter—but the chief reason is to ensure its preservation and to prevent its corruption. This is how the Quran has been preserved for the last fourteen centuries. Today, even if one dares to expunge all the recorded verses of this revelation that one can find—print or digital—the verses can be rewritten and compiled into a book, by regathering what thousands of people, if not millions, have memorized, without

having one word missing or out of its place. This is another aspect of the miracle of the Quran's composition. What was perplexing and frustrating, when I first read the Quran, turned out to be a magnificent arrangement by Allah.

YA ALLAH HOW MAGNIFICENT YOU ARE!!! INDEED YOU ARE OUR MAGNIFICANT LORD!!!!

If all these signs are not persuasive enough for you to believe in the existence of Allah and to submit yourself to him, then be warned of a major sign that will terrify you (26:4-6 | 44:10-15,59)! However, if you choose to believe and accept that the Quran is the true words of a deity that have been preserved, then you must also accept that the Quran is a reliable source of the truth. One must accept all of Allah's claims presented in the Quran, including the ones that our mind cannot comprehend. We have very limited knowledge and understanding of the laws of creation. I believe that mathematics, sacred geometry, and quantum physics (25:2) have something to do with those rules and laws, but humans uncovered very little of such knowledge. The more we know, the more we realize how much we do not know. We were not given the knowledge to comprehend how The Maker will make our body parts talk on the Last Day, or how in the

first life we were tiny particles, or how God made the fire cool to save prophet Ibrahim, or how God created Jesus, by bringing dust in Mary's womb and told it, "Be", as opposed to a sperm fertilizing an egg. This is similar to how our ancestors will never comprehend how we invented the technologies we use in the 21st century, or similar to how a four-year-old child will never be able to comprehend how she was conceived by gushing fluid entering her mother's womb, only to later exit as a baby from between her mother's ribs and pelvis (86:5-7)[54]. Nevertheless, God did give us enough knowledge to become believers with certitude. And once you are a believer, you must follow all that is mentioned in the Quran. You cannot pick and choose what suits your desires or what matches with your preconceived knowledge. The Quran is not a restaurant menu: it is a divine message, with guidelines and commandments from God to mankind to follow, guiding them on how they should live. If I believe that the Quran holds the true words of our creator, then I must accept the claims in the following verses:

{Indeed, this (Quran) is spoken by a noble Messenger. It is not the prose of a poet (as you claim), (yet) you hardly have any faith. Nor is it the mumbling of a fortune-teller, (yet) you are hardly mindful. (It is)

[54] I find these verses to be misinterpreted by scholars. According to my interpretation, I reasoned that God is referring to the ribs and pelvic spine of the woman (not of the man), and to how a human being (not the seminal fluid) fits in the space between them, when he is developed and ready to come out.

a revelation from the Lord of all worlds. Had the Messenger made up something in Our Name, We would have certainly seized him by his right hand, then severed his aorta, and none of you could have shielded him (from Us)! Indeed, this (Quran) is a reminder to the pious. And We certainly know that some of you will persist in denial, and it will surely be a source of regret for the disbelievers. And indeed, this (Quran) is the absolute truth. So glorify the Name of your Lord, the Magnificent.} (69:40-52)

{Your fellow man (Muhammad) is neither misguided nor astray. Nor does he speak of his own whims. It is only a revelation revealed. He has been taught by one of mighty power.} (53:2-5)

{It is not (possible) for this Quran to have been produced by anyone other than Allah, but it is a confirmation of what came before it, and the detailed explanation of the Scripture there is no doubt about it, from the Lord of all worlds. Or do they say, "He invented it?" Say, "Then bring forth a chapter like it and call upon (for assistance) whomever you can besides Allah, if you should be truthful."} (10:37-38)

Prophet Muhammad did not author the miraculous Quran: if he did, he sold himself very short by claiming to be a prophet-messenger—he should have claimed to be a supreme being. These verses confirm that

anything that is said by prophet Muhammad, regarding the truth and religion, is based on what God taught him, through the Holy Spirit Gabriel—the same angel that supported prophet Isa. Religion is learned not only from scriptures, but also from prophets. The gathered Hadith—oral narratives—hold the recorded sayings and actions of prophet Muhammad. These narratives are extremely important, because they retain the Sunnah and they reveal many details about God and his story, which are not mentioned in the Quran. Oral narratives are always controversial, because you can question the authenticity of the narratives: did prophet Muhammad indeed say or do that? Let me share with you a couple of reasons why I accept with certitude oral narratives of strong authentication references, while I scrutinize with caution fair narratives, even weak and questionable ones, as long as they all do not conflict with the Quran:

1) Prophet Muhammad—peace be upon him—admonished his companions when he told them, “Whoever ascribes to me what I have not said then (surely) let him occupy his seat in Hell Fire.” Accordingly, fabricating narratives is a very serious matter that I don’t think the believers, at the very least prophet Muhammad’s close companions, would dare to do. And God mentioned in the

Quran (9:100) that he is well-pleased with prophet Muhammad's close companions.

2) Prophet Muhammad forbade people from documenting his sayings during his lifetime, so that God's words would not be mixed with his own, unless it was for a necessary private benefit. The documentation of the oral narratives began a few decades after the death of prophet Muhammad. This lag time can allow distortion of the narratives, but at the same time it can present a form of verification of the narratives. Let me explain. Prophet Muhammad's sayings and actions, let us call them "records", were first narrated by multiple reliable witnesses—"sources". The most important records were sourced from nine of prophet Muhammad's trustworthy and close companions, who had strong memories. These records were then relayed by intermediaries—individuals who memorized a record from a source or a previous intermediary and passed it on orally (and sometimes in writing), creating a "chain of narrators". Most chains have three narrators, and some up to ten. The record combined with the chain of narrators form the oral narrative. Most of us have played the Chinese whispers game. The game has ten people or more standing in line—a chain of narrators! The first person comes up

with a phrase and whispers it into the ear of the second person in line. The second person repeats the phrase to the third player, and so on until it reaches the last person in line. Most of the time, the phrase that gets to the last person in line is not the same as the original phrase. The game is a bit rigged because people playing it sometimes intentionally change the phrase for silly humor. The point I want to make here is that humans have the tendency to change—intentionally or unintentionally—the phrase they hear, when passing it on to someone else. Keeping this in mind, when a record is the same record coming from multiple sources or chains of narrators, in my opinion, this gives a rational assurance and authentication that the record is true. And when a record and the chain of narrators are authenticated to be true, the narrative gets classified as a "true/authentic" narrative. This is one classification, there are several more. For example, a narrative can be classified as "weak" if there is a certain flaw in the chain, such as a narrator in the chain who is flagged as questionable. Oral narratives were gathered, meticulously authenticated, and classified by multiple independent researchers, making it one of the most remarkable historical undertakings. Some researchers, such as the great Muhammad al-Bukhari, even authenticated the

work of others, and made sure to red-flag, isolate, and disregard narratives with discrepancies, or from unreliable sources and narrators, and to give an authentication classification to every narrative. I gained even greater appreciation for this cumulative work when I realized the discrepancies between the narratives given in the canonical gospels and the distortion of the "Oral Torah" by the Rabbinic Jews.

The religion of Islam is based on the knowledge of the Quran and the authenticated Hadith; therefore, both should be followed. Neglecting either will lead to a failure in practicing the religion correctly. This religion was finalized by God in the Arabian Peninsula, and all humans are required to follow it. I am sure many will ask, like I did, "Why would God finalize his religion and reveal his final scripture in the Arabian Peninsula, the same place where God ordered prophet Ibrahim to take his son and wife and leave them there?" I was not able to complete this small puzzle until I lived in Saudi Arabia for few years and observed their culture and behavior, and here is what I concluded:

1. God had plenty of information to reveal in his final scripture, and not to forget the repetition I noted earlier. Therefore, his words had to be very concise, yet articulate, or else the Quran would be

a collection of books and not just one book. The Arabic language served as the optimal vessel for God's final message to humanity. After reviewing linguistic expert opinions, I found support for the claim that Arabic is the richest of all languages. You change a syllable and the meaning of the word might change. With Arabic words you can express a wide range of thoughts and feelings, and you can have different words to name similar things of subtle differences. You would not appreciate this by reading the English translation of the Quran, which is a much-simplified version of the Arabic text. The Arabic text of the Quran contains many old words and expressions that Arabs today do not use, this is why we need linguistic scholars to tell us the meaning of those old words (however, many can be derived from context).

2. The Quran was revealed gradually to the public by prophet Muhammad through oral recitations. The Arabs of the 7th century (the first blockchain network) were predominantly an illiterate society that relied on oral communication and memorization. This is why they were excellent in memorizing poems, and why it was easy for them to memorize all the verses recited by prophet Muhammad. The method of revealing the final scripture to the public relied on human memory; hence, the words of the Quran

were preserved initially and "saved" through human memorization. To help you comprehend this method, here is another enlightening "tech" analogy. Think of the verses as data packets grouped in digital files (chapters). The files, in a folder, were downloaded from the cloud (Heaven) to Earth, through angel Gabriel. Angel Gabriel then transmitted the data packets from the folder and into prophet Muhammad's primary read-only memory (ROM), located in his heart. Prophet Muhammad then broadcasted the data packets to the public blockchain network, where it was preserved initially. The data packets were later transcribed/printed on paper and put in a binder folder, but in an order that is different from the order in which they were transmitted from the downloaded folder. The order change, as commanded by God, serves multiple purposes: I think data encryption is one of them.

3. The people of the desert are inherently very resistant to change. It took a divine intervention to change the Arabians from polytheist idolaters to monotheist Muslims. I believe that if the Quran was not in Arabic and the Messenger was not an Arabian, the Arabians would have not considered it: the wicked ones among them for sure not (26:198-201). Once the Islamic doctrine and laws

became part of their culture, it became difficult for Satan to make them change, this is why they were the best choice to be trusted in upholding and protecting Allah's religion for a very long time (although some of them held to their Bedouin ways that conflict with the religion). Their conservative mentality and way of life bought enough time for the world to learn about Islam before Satan could succeed in making them change. Saudi Arabia had been a closed society for centuries, mostly known for their Islamic history and sites. The Arabian Gulf countries only began to open up in the last century after oil and gas was discovered and the world took notice. That is when Satan finally found leverage to work with. The Arabians finally succumbed to the corruptive Western culture in the last few decades, when technology exposed the cultural differences and the young Arabians started to feel very outdated and left out. As soon as the Arabians fail to uphold the religion, I am certain that Allah will reassign the custodianship of the religion to another location or people who are more qualified and deserving to lead in upholding the religion. I am certain because Allah did this before, when the custodianship was reassigned from the Israelites to the Arabians, and there are prophecies that foretell that a reassignment is bound to happen

again (from Makkah to Aqsa), after three (men), each son of a caliph (i.e., ruler or king), fight over the treasure (Hadith).

4. The Arabian Peninsula in the 7th century was a lawless place. Makkah and Allah's oldest house of worship, Ka'bah, housed pagan idols. Since Allah does not accept the worship of idols in his mosques (9:17-18), the final appointed prophet had to purify the Ka'bah and its surroundings from idolatry and evil; therefore, he had to be from that land.
5. All messengers were Middle Eastern because of their ancestry, but I also believe because the Middle East has a central geographical location. Allah's messages can be taken east and west to reach all corners of the world, and the last message and messenger were no exception. Remember, this was before the era of print and technology.
6. To counter fierce opposition in spreading God's message through human mobility, warriors are needed—and the arduous Arabian desert was the crucible that forged them. The companions of prophet Muhammad were unparalleled warriors who paved the way for the spread of God's message. (Here is something to think about: If Jesus had been supported by warriors when faced with

opposition, would God have needed to raise him to the Heaven? Turning the other cheek has its limits.)

Indeed, Islam is the reason behind the constant conflict in the Middle East, not because Muslims or Middle Easterners love conflict, but because there is an overt enemy who wants to eradicate the religion and have the Muslims over there stray from the right path. Unfortunately, most Muslims eventually did, but there is still a small minority among them that are on the right path, striving against all of Satan's schemes. Today, a selected number of men among them are being forged in the fire of tribulations to lead the second global rise of Islam. They, and the few Muslims like them around the world, are the last remaining front on Earth to defend the truth and God's religion—the Straight Path!

Chapter 12

One Religion but Many Deviators

God sent scriptures and a very similar, yet distinct, Sharia for various nations, with the last and final scripture being supreme over all what came before it (5:48). Everything that God ordained through his scriptures and prophets is part of his religion (42:13). In the Quran, God called his religion “Islam” (5:3), and here is what he said about it:

{Allah witnesses that there is no deity except Him, and (so do) the angels and the people of knowledge—being the One who maintains equity. There is no deity except Him, the Almighty, All-Wise. **Indeed, the religion in the sight of Allah is Islam**. And those who were given the Scripture did not differ except after knowledge had come to them—out of animosity among themselves. And whoever disbelieves in the verses of Allah, then indeed, Allah is swift in (taking) account. **So if they argue with you, say, "I have submitted myself to Allah, and (so have) those who follow me." And say to those who were given**

the Scripture and (to) the unlearned, "Have you submitted yourselves?" And if they submit, they are rightly guided to the right path; but if they turn away—then you are only to convey the message. And Allah is watchful over (all His) servants.} (3:18-20)

{**And whoever desires other than Islam as a religion—never will it be accepted from him, and he, in the Hereafter, will be among the losers.**} (3:85)

As the verses clearly state, God chose only one religion called (in Arabic) “Islam”. In the Quran, God called the people that inherited any part of the Tawrat and the Injil “People of the Scripture”: this is the designation he has given them. After prophet Ibrahim, followers of prophets Moses and Jesus were the ones to invent the religions “Judaism” and “Christianity”, respectively. God did not choose nor authorize these religions. Also, we don’t find in the Quran the Arabic word “Masihiyeen” (Christians), designating the followers of the anointed one (Christ). We find instead the Arabic word “Nasara” (Nazarenes), designating what the early supporters of Jesus called themselves. As for the word “Jews”, we find it in two forms: “Yahud”, designating the predominant descendants of Judah in the kingdom of Judah, and “allathena hadu” (those guided back [toward Allah, among

the Israelites]). If people had to designate a name for the followers of prophet Muhammad, they would have named them the Arabic equivalent of "Muhammadians" or "Madinians", or some other creative name in Arabic. They would not have thought of "Muslims". It was prophet Ibrahim who called himself and the monotheists **"Muslims"—those who submit themselves to the authority, decree, and will of God**. This means that the word "Muslim" is an identity that defines a relationship, not between a human and his followers or descendants, but rather between the one deity (God) and his servants. **Today, if one wants to be in a state of servitude to the only true deity and follow his guidance, then one must follow Islam.** The word means "living in submission to the will of the one deity (God)". Islam is not a religion exclusive to the Arabs—as many wrongfully think—nor to any group of people. **Islam is a religion from God and for all the Children of Adam to follow. This religion was adapted over time until it was finalized by the revelation of the Quran.**

{And never will the Jews or the Nazarenes approve of you till you follow their creed. Say, "Indeed, the guidance of Allah is the (only) guidance." If you were to follow their desires after what has come to you of knowledge, in no way will you have from Allah either a protector or a helper.} (2:120)

{And they say, "None will enter Paradise except one who is a Jew or a Nazarene." That is their wishful thinking. Say, "Produce your proof, if you should be truthful."} (2:111)

{The Jews and the Nazarenes each say, "We are the children of God and His most beloved!" Say, "Why then does He punish you for your faults?" No! You are only mortals like others of His Own making. He forgives whoever He wills and punishes whoever He wills. To Allah (alone) belongs the kingdom of the Heavens and the Earth and everything in between. And to Him is the final return.} (5:18)

{They say, "Be Jews or Nazarenes (so) you will be guided." **Say, "But the creed of Ibrahim is Haniffan (i.e., the one inclining toward the truth), and he was not one of the polytheists**." Say (O Muslims), "We have believed in Allah and what has been revealed to us and what has been revealed to Ibrahim, Ishmael, Isaac, Jacob and his descendants, and what was given to Moses, Jesus, and what was given to the prophets from their Lord. **We make no distinction between any of them, and we are in submission to Him.**"} (2:135-136)

{Ibrahim was neither a Jew nor a Nazarene, he was **Haniffan** (i.e., the one inclining toward the truth), **a Muslim** (i.e., submissive to Allah), and he was not of the polytheists. Indeed, the most worthy of Ibrahim

among the people are those who followed him, and this prophet (i.e., Muhammad), and those who believed (with him), and Allah is the ally of the believers. A group of the People of the Scripture wish they could mislead you. But they do not mislead except themselves, and they perceive (it) not. O People of the Scripture, why do you disbelieve in the verses of Allah while you witness (to their truth)? O People of the Scripture, why do you mix the truth with falsehood and conceal the truth while you know (it)?} (3:67-71)

{You (Muslims) have been the best nation brought out to mankind. You enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong and believe in Allah. **If only the People of the Scripture had believed, it would have been better for them. Among them are believers, but most of them are defiantly disobedient.**} (3:110)

{Say (O Messenger), "O People of the Scripture! Let us come to common terms: that we will worship none but Allah, associate none with Him, nor take one another as lords instead of Allah." But if they turn away, then say, "Bear witness that we have submitted (to Allah alone)."} (3:64)

{And We did certainly give Moses the Torah and followed up after him with messengers. And We gave Jesus, the son of Mary, clear

proofs and supported him with the Holy Spirit. But is it (not) that every time a messenger came to you (O Children of Israel), with what your souls did not desire, you were arrogant? And a party (of prophets) you denied and another party you killed. And they said, "Our hearts are wrapped." But (in fact), Allah has casted damnation upon them for their disbelief, so little is it that they believe. And when there came to them a Scripture (i.e., Quran) from Allah confirming that which was with them—although before they used to pray for victory against those who disbelieved—but (then) when there came to them that which they recognized, they disbelieved in it; so the curse of Allah will be upon the disbelievers.} (2:87-89)

Without divine knowledge, one could easily be led astray by Satan's inventions, deluded compelling voices, the weight of blind tradition, or the hollow lures of human desires and whims. Divine knowledge has been revealed since the beginning of time, but only the last and final revelation—contained in the Quran and the authentic Hadith—remains a reliable source of the truth today. Muslims are supposed to be people of the Quran who observe the Sunnah of prophet Muhammad, but many of them, especially Arabs and Persians, have also gone astray because they abandoned the Quran and the Sunnah. A portion of them have become hypocrites, and another portion have

become polytheists, like the 7th century Arabian hypocrites and polytheists that Allah condemned in the Quran.

Before I share with you my thesis on how the people of the three scriptures have deviated from the straight path, allow me to briefly share with you my insights on how Satan operates, based on the Quran, historical events, and my life observations:

{They (i.e., the idolatrous Arabians) invoke nothing but female deities besides Him (Allah), and (what) they (actually) invoke none but a rebellious Satan—Whom Allah has cursed. And he (Satan) had said, **"I will surely take from among Your servants a specific portion. And I will lead them astray, and I will tempt them with false hopes, and I will command them so they will slit the ears of cattle, and I will command them so they will alter the creation of Allah."** And whoever takes Satan as an ally instead of Allah has certainly sustained a clear loss. **Satan promises them and arouses desire in them. But Satan does not promise them except delusion.** The refuge of those will be Hell, and they will not find from it an escape.} (4:117-121)

1) **Satan's Ultimate Goal:** His ultimate goal is to obstruct people from following the straight path and make them follow him instead to Hell (22:4). He aims to achieve this goal in four ways:

a. make people disbelieve in the Lord of the worlds—Allah

b. make people associate partners with The One, since God does not forgive anyone for associating partners with him (5:72), even if they believe in his existence and they are very righteous, unless they desist, repent, and exhibit the right faith and behavior before they die

c. make the believers either forget about Allah and their duty toward him, or fall short in obeying all of his commandments so that they finish with an overdraft account

d. make the disbelievers oppose Sharia and the Muslims

2) **Satan's Master Plan**: I suppose that Satan is not concerned with focusing on each of us individually; most likely, he delegates that to his army of demons. He tends to think big. He is always plotting how he can misguide in one scheme a whole nation or community away from the straight path: schemes that have a very long-lasting impact. Now, Satan is experienced, and he is not in a hurry. He has been around for a very long time, before Adam was even created. Therefore, his major schemes are often divided into steps, and each step is intended to create a deviation or deviance. This is why God said:

{O Mankind! Eat from what is lawful and good on the Earth and **do not follow the footsteps of Satan.** He is truly your overt enemy. He only bids you to lewd and forbidden acts and to claim against Allah what you do not know.} (2:168-169)

Accordingly, Satan seduces people one degree of deviation at a time. As time passes, his deviations add up to become substantial. For example, if you take the path of an invisible long straight line and apply a degree of deviation to the left or right, you are no longer on the straight path. If you continue to apply one degree after another, eventually you start taking a path in the shape of a curve, straying away from the straight path you originally started on. **This is Satan's plan—create deviances in all spheres of society, followed by normalization, then repeat until what is forbidden by Allah becomes permissible and what is permissible becomes forbidden.** And he often waits a generation or two to incite the next degree of deviation to create a major deviance—a generational shift toward the abyss (101:9). This is because the people that are brought up in the new generation will find the deviances to be normal (7:28-30). They become an easy target to fall for the next degree of deviation, often in the name of modernity, secularism, social progressivism, feminism, human

rights, etc. I acknowledge that there are many serious social and economic issues that need to be resolved, but these movements misguide people more than they guide them to real resolutions.

3) **Satan's Human Aide**: His human helpers are his allies and agents, and they are embedded in all spheres of society. Many of them are public figures, while a few are not well-known to the public. The elite among them are members of secret societies conspiring covertly (58:10). People in general are followers, and they often follow leaders and institutions, or in another word "influencers". If Satan and his closest supporters can get influencers to lead the deviations, then the masses will follow. Influencers are deluded mavericks who can change public perception and poison the well. They are the ones executing Satan's schemes and operation, whether they are conscious of it or not.

4) **Satan's Endeavor:** His endeavor relies on inventions, lies, deceptions, distractions, and temptations. Here are a few:

    a) He advocates for the invention of false deities, which are the embodiment of him and other jinn (34:41), and false lords, then deceives people to worship or invoke either. To seek

vengeance, Satan wants to play the role of God on Earth: he even built himself a throne on top of the water, somewhere (Hadith) (my guess: the farthest point from the Ka'bah). He attempts to mimic everything that God does, but with the intention of achieving the inverse of what God wants us to achieve, while confusing people in distinguishing truth from falsehood. God sends messengers to guide us to the straight path, while Satan sends his devils to stray people away from the right path. To make people worship him instead of God, Satan needs to control humans, and to gain control, he needs his allies and agents to be watchful over all mankind—hence, the increasing surveillance and tracking in this world.

b) He advocates for false religious claims and interpretations, so we practice Allah's religion incorrectly, from committing a wrongdoing without realizing it, to spinning off a whole new religion or denomination that Allah did not authorize. Any claim or belief that contradicts with God's words and with what is truly said by his prophets is considered heresy.

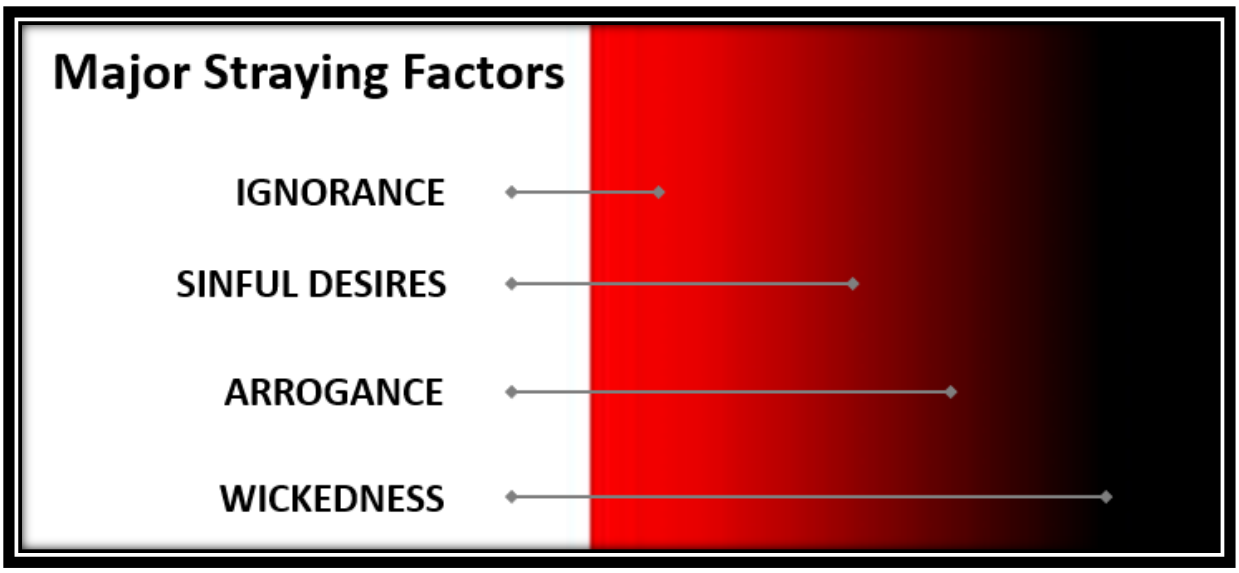
c) He deceives us to think that we are free and entitled to define our own rights, while in fact our rights are decreed by The Master, and only a rebel will defy his merciful master.

d) He tempts us to sin and do evil acts by focusing on what we desire the most. It is our desires that make us vulnerable.
e) He gets us consumed with anything that can distract us from remembering, worshiping, thanking, and trusting Allah.
f) He tempts us to focus on personal interests, without any care for others or for the greater good, resulting in divisions and conflicts among people, and he makes such behavior appear to us as justifiable or good. God's religion gives us a moral compass and establishes unity, but Satan does not want us to have either.
g) He works on redefining gender roles, brainwashing children, and breaking family ties, all in an effort to dismantle the domestic unit and, consequently, corrupt the whole society.
h) He makes false promises to deceive his allies that choose to follow him (4:120), only to betray and abandon them when he doesn't need them anymore (25:29). Satan believes in God and fears him (59:16). His issue is with mankind, and he cannot lose more than what he already lost.
i) He attempts to delude many believers into thinking that their duty toward their true lord—Allah—is limited to having faith in him and to being a "good person", but not necessarily

to abide by ALL of his commandments and laws. Those who succumb to such attempts prefer to practice their faith within the boundaries of their own desires, rather than the boundaries ordained by scripture and the messenger of Allah (33:36).

j) He deludes us to believe that the keys to our sustenance are in our hands and others, but not in the hands of Allah (29:60).
k) He advocates for the alteration of the creation of Allah, staying true to his rebellious promise—hence, the increasing application of genetic engineering.

To avoid any misunderstanding, let me be clear by stating that we are responsible for our own actions and choices. God gave us free choice. Satan and the devils are only a force working against us, but they do not have any direct authority over our own choices. God wants us to succeed against Satan and his party, which is why he intervenes by sending us his blessings (33:43), angels to guard us (13:11), messengers, scriptures, and inspirations for warning and protection against the evil forces. However, if we do not have God in our lives and on our minds, we will simply miss out on his guidance, providence, support, and mercy (9:67 | 25:77 | 47:11).



I will now share with you my thesis on who today are the deviators among the followers of prophets Moses, Jesus, and Muhammad, and the major satanic schemes that deviated them from the straight path. These deviations[55] are mainly due to false claims, ideologies, beliefs, and understandings. They are invented by Satan and his devils, promoted by deceiving wicked influencers, and followed by unlearned, undisciplined, foolish, sinful, rebellious, or arrogant people. These are the deviations that divided the world into several religious doctrines, sects, ideologies, parties, and are behind the evilness and falsehood we find in the world we live in today. I am not asking you to blindly accept my findings and thesis: I am asking you to seriously consider them and to investigate what I am highlighting.

[55] I will not be getting into deviations at the social and personal level, which are common across all faiths.

Deviators among the Jews

When I was younger, I used to think that people don't believe nor obey God for lack of knowledge—they are unlearned. Rationalization with limited or false knowledge yields false conclusions. That might be the case for some (this book is for you), but for most people, I have come to realize that they disbelieve or disobey due to their desires, pride, and arrogance (16:22 | 53:23). They do not want to be restricted in how they desire to live their lives. They do not want to be judged on what they do. They do not want to submit to a higher authority. They do not want to follow what the humble follows. Many who have Israelite blood fall in this category. Prophets Moses, David, and Jesus all denounced and condemned the disobedient among the Israelites (5:25,78). They disobeyed The Most Exalted, concealed many of his words (5:15 | 6:91) while distorting the meaning of others (2:75 | 4:46 | 5:13), and they attempted to kill prophets of which they did not approve. Some Israelite deviators went as far as inventing new religious laws, such as the ones in the Mishnah and Talmud, as well as mystical interpretations, such as the Kabbalah, and most of these inventions are deviant and evil.

God did a lot to help the Children of Israel, **to satisfy his side of the covenant**. God even favored them over all mankind (2:47), by providing more favors to them than anyone else that ever lived (5:20)—**I believe in response to prophet Ibrahim's supplications**. Instead of being humble and gracious they became arrogant, turning God's favors into a curse. This brings me to the question, "Why didn't God protect the Tawrat and Injil from corruption?" I reasoned that the prophets, Jesus and Moses, and their followers, were ready to receive God's words **all at once. And the revelation/message can only be sent all at once to the people in a physical scripture.** Once the people receive the physical scripture, it becomes their duty to protect it from corruption, not God's. Thus, God made a covenant with the Israelites and the Nazarenes—**The Old and New Testaments**—binding them to preserve the scripture and observe its precepts, in exchange for God's mercy, favors, and support. However, they failed to uphold the covenants. This implicit connection between the covenants and the preservation of the scriptures is hidden in these verses:

{**When Allah took a covenant from those who were given the Scripture: "You shall make it known to the people and not hide it."** Then they cast the Scripture behind their backs and sold it away for a trivial gain (of worldly matters) . Evil indeed is their bargain.} (3:187)

{And (O Children of Israel, remember) when **We took a covenant from you** and raised the mountain above you (saying), "**Hold firmly to that (Scripture) which We have given you** and remember that which therein so perhaps you may become pious."} (2:63)

{Indeed, We revealed the Torah, containing guidance and light, by which the prophets, who submitted themselves to Allah, judged by it for the Jews, as did the rabbis and scholars, **according to whatever they <u>were asked to preserve of the Scripture of Allah</u>, and were witnesses to**. So do not fear the people; fear Me! Nor trade my verses for a fleeting gain. And those who do not judge by what Allah has revealed are (truly) the disbelievers.} (5:44)

{And We divided them (Children of Israel) throughout the land into (sub) nations. Of them some were righteous, and of them some were otherwise. And We tested them with good (times) and bad that perhaps they would return (to obedience). Then they were succeeded by other generations who inherited the Scripture. They indulged in unlawful gains, claiming, "We will be forgiven (after all)." And if similar gain came their way, they would seize it. Was not the **<u>covenant of the Scripture</u>** taken from them that they would not say anything about Allah other than the truth? And they were already well-versed in its

teachings. But the (eternal) home of the Hereafter is far better for those mindful (of Allah). Will you not then understand?} (7:168-169)

{**And from those who say, "We are Nazarenes", We took their covenant, but they neglected a portion of what they had been commanded to uphold**. So We let enmity and abhorrence arise between them until the Day of Resurrection, and soon Allah will inform them of all they have done. **O People of the Scripture! Now Our messenger has come to you, revealing much of what you have concealed of the Scriptures and disregarding much.**} (5:14-15)

God had prophet Ibrahim plant two Muslim trees (communities) in two special lands, one in modern-day Palestine, and one in modern-day Saudi Arabia. Knowing that the Israelites will breach their covenants by failing to follow what is in the scriptures (2:83-85 | 4:115 | 62:5) and disclosing them in full to the people (3:187 | 6:91), without any distortions, The Knower of the Unseen had prophet Ibrahim grow prior a tree in a different land and among different people—the Arabians. The Arabians were naturally groomed by The Preserver to have the necessary prerequisites to **orally and naturally preserve Allah's revelation**, and to inform all mankind about it (22:78). Since they were not given a physical scripture, a covenant was not needed.

Today, it is difficult to convert to Judaism if you wish so, because the religion puts great emphasis on ethnic identity and bloodline. Jews claim they are God's chosen people and his only allies (62:6-7) for their Israelite bloodline, and for having an exclusive covenant with God. What is true is that the Israelites once had an exclusive covenant with God, and this covenant is conditional and had long been breached.

{Allah made a covenant with the Children of Israel and appointed twelve captains from among them and (then) said, "I am truly with you. If you establish Salat, pay Zakat, believe in My messengers, support them, and lend to Allah a good loan, I will certainly forgive your sins and admit you into Gardens under which rivers flow. And whoever among you disbelieves afterwards has truly strayed from the right path." **So for their breach of the covenant We cursed them and made their hearts hardened.** They distort words (of the Scripture) from their (proper) context and have forgotten a portion of that of which they were reminded. You (O Prophet) will always find betrayal on their part, except for a few. But pardon them and overlook (their betrayal). Indeed, Allah loves those who do good.} (5:12-13)

This false entitlement cultivated a mentality among most Jews that anyone who is not of Jewish descent—goy—is beneath them.

Nevertheless, between the 6th and 9th century, a miscegenation occurred between Jews and non-Jews (17:6). At the start of that period, Jews were Middle Eastern and displaced around the world, mostly tolerated by the Persians and the Arabians. Judea was no longer their homeland after they were expelled from it by the Roman army (17:5), seventy years after Jesus' presumed death. Significant Jewish communities lived in the Persia-Caucasus area, and north of them were the semi-nomadic Turkic Ashina tribes and the Khazar clans. Eventually, these tribes and clans merged to become a new state called "Khazaria" (modern-day East Ukraine and Southwest Russia). After the Persian land became part of the Islamic state, the Khazars were getting sandwiched between the expanding Islamic Caliphate and the Christian Byzantine Empire, while the Jews in the Persia-Caucasus area were seeking an escape from Islamic rule. We find that the Jews and the Khazars had a common interest: to establish unity and strength in the face of the Islamic and Christian expansions. These geopolitical and social circumstances prompted the Khazars' elite to embrace Judaism and the Jews to welcome it. Today, if you look at the Israelis that live in occupied Palestine, most of them are of European lineage: Ashkenazi or Sephardic Jews. Indigenous Jews are a very small minority. DNA tests have shown that most Ashkenazi Jews can be

traced back to the ancient Khazars. There are few things said about the Ashkenazi Jews: one of them is that they have superior genes, surpassing most of mankind in intellectual brilliance and academic achievements. Maybe some believe that because many famous and brilliant individuals, such as Albert Einstein, are Ashkenazi Jews. One claim says that a faction of the Ashkenazi Jews—the Zionists—plan to rule the world. Since it is difficult to find direct evidence to prove this claim, I will leave the truth seekers with the below narrative to investigate—which has an abundance of supporting indirect evidence—related to both ancient and relatively recent Jewish deviators:

1) **Source of Power:** In the Middle Ages, the majority of the Jews started as traders and merchants in Khazaria, and eventually scattered around Europe. As merchants, they accumulated capital, and eventually lent it out as loans with interest (usury). This old practice landed them at the helm of modern-day banking systems and financial institutions (e.g., The Rothschild Family) in Europe and U.S.A. (17:6). Usury is prohibited in the Quran (2:275), Gospel, and the Torah. However, modified Jewish law permits making loans with interest to non-Jews, and this is how banks came to power. Those who hold the money are in a position of

power, even if the money is not theirs. If you do not know this by now, you should. Politicians and world leaders are greatly influenced by elites who own or control big banks, wealth funds, or wealthy companies (however, I expect their establishments to collapse soon, returning back to gold and silver).

{We forbade the Jews certain foods that had been lawful to them (before), for their wrongdoing and for obstructing the way of Allah, very often, **taking usury despite its prohibition, and consuming people's wealth unjustly**. We have prepared for the disbelievers among them a painful punishment.} (4:160-161)

2) **Schemes:** Wherever the Jews lived in Europe (e.g., France, Spain, Russia, Germany), they got persecuted most of the time. Their persecution was in retaliation to the aftermath of the corruptive ideologies and capital lending schemes brought by the Jewish wrongdoers among them. And sometimes God does not afflict calamity on the wrongdoers alone, but on the community at large (8:25), as a form of a tribulation. The Jews saw no escape from persecution in Europe except through the creation of a Jewish state. This inspired the secular Jew Theodor Herzl, backed by the Rothschild family (whose roots can be traced back to Khazaria),

to ignite the Zionist movement and conspire to occupy Palestine. However, knowledgeable Jews were aware that the Jews will never have a permanent homeland after their exile from Judea (by the Romans). Jesus was God's last exclusive intervention to warn and aid the Israelites, and most Jews denied him. Many prophets were sent to the Israelites, thus inheriting from them many prophecies. Some prophecies foretold their exile and the coming of prophet Isa (Jesus) and prophet Muhammad. However, many Jews have pride and envy (2:109), which always propelled them to deny anyone that is not of their liking (2:87). The Jews are also aware of the savior of end times, and they believe he is their only true awaited "Mashiach" (Messiah). In anticipation of the Messiah's coming, the idea of establishing a homeland again became more compelling to the religious Jews. This is why they backed the secular Zionists in turning the Palestinian state into a Zionist state, under the pretext of, "We are entitled to the land of our ancestors."

Long story short, the Zionists, through their financial power and secret societies, dragged the U.K. and France into World War I. They then convinced the Europeans that they will manage to persuade the U.S.A. (via Louis Brandeis) in joining the Allies in

exchange for granting them the Palestinian land. Many Christian crusades were launched from Europe to take over the Holy Land, only to give it to the Jewish people in the end—how ironic! In the U.S.A., the Zionists managed to control the financial system (through the US Federal Reserve they established), control the government (through bribing, blackmailing, or promoting its officials), and propagate an immoral culture (through Hollywood and the media agencies they own), making them the clandestine "Deep State" that effectively rules America. This enabled them to brainwash and corrupt the people, be in control of the country's wealth and decision making, turn the country into a prostitute spreading its filth, and transform the government into a mighty tyrant wreaking havoc in the world in the name of defending democracy and human rights. When Palestine was occupied—but little they know why God allowed their ingathering from exile (17:104)—they influenced US foreign policy to aid and protect the Israelis from their neighboring Arab countries[56]. And today, the Israelis' ultimate goal is to take control of the Masjid Al-Aqsa, rebuild what they call "Temple of Solomon", or third temple, and

[56] The U.S.A. grants the Israelis billions in annual military aid, more than any other country, and bribes their Arab neighbors, Jordan and Egypt, with a few more billions of US tax money, to maintain peace with the Israelis.

have it ready for Mashiach's arrival. And to do so, they need to set the stage[57]. Here are some interesting questions to think about:

- At the time of prophet Solomon, were the masons in contact with the demons and Satan? And do the masonry roots go back to the enslaved Israelite deviators in Egypt at the time of Moses?
- Has Satan misled the Jewish people into believing that only the people of Zion—as opposed to all righteous believers from any ethnicity or bloodline—are God's chosen remnant to be delivered and restored in end times, and lured his Jewish allies into gaining global control and hastening end times events?
- Is it a coincidence that the Balfour Declaration was during World War I and the Israeli Declaration of Independence right after World War II?
- Will they ignite World War III to finalize this control, after they reach great haughtiness and corruption in the land (17:4)? Will their schemes backfire this third time around by Allah's will (59:2 | 86:15-17), resulting in the demise of the Zionist state? Will it be the Romans again who will destroy their state (17:7)?

[57] Recently (2019), the Israelis advocated for the Trump Middle East Peace Plan (aka "deal of the century")—aiming to "normalize relationships" with the rest of the Arab countries (at the expense of the Arabs abandoning the Palestinian cause), and to eliminate the Iranian threat, in effort to deter any foreseeable opposition to the potential takeover of the Masjid Al-Aqsa. The Zionists also believe that fomenting global chaos will hasten the coming of the Messiah.

- Do the demons, aided by the Masons and their subsequent branching cults (e.g., Jesuits, Illuminati, Freemasons, World Economic Forum, etc.), still carry a grudge against mankind for the humiliation they experienced with prophet Solomon? And are they seeking his powerful ring, gold-plated wood chest, and his temple to redeem themselves and enslave mankind?

Satan inveigled the Masonic camp and the Messianic camp into serving his plan, but knowledgeable Muslims believe that his plan will fail with the emergence of "imam Al-Mahdi"[58]. People who follow

[58] Imam ("leader" in English) Al-Mahdi is Allah's vicegerent (Hadith)—the ultimate elected deputy and appointed ruler of this Earth, and who will emerge in end times. He is the foretold final Chosen One—not a prophet, but a righteous man—who the knowledgeable devout believers are waiting for to lead the righteous in defeating the wicked ones and the tyrants, and to fill the world with justice and equity, leading up to Jesus' second coming. Similar to how they prophesied about the Antichrist, all the prophets also prophesied about the righteous man of end times, but they had different epithets for him. Some named him "Branch of the Lord" and others "Son of Man", while prophet Muhammad named him in Arabic "Al-Mahdi" (The Guided and Guiding One). Imam Al-Mahdi is a descendant of prophet Muhammad (Hadith), and based on what I have derived, his life story resembles that of the chosen ones depicted in the Quran. For example, he will establish and guide the "Ark" like prophet Noah, implement Allah's religion like prophet Muhammad, save the oppressed from the tyrants like prophet Moses, and rule similar to how Kings Joseph, Saul, David, and Solomon, did combined. Al-Mahdi will live his life not knowing he is the final chosen one until his time comes to rule the world as Allah's vicegerent. He will destroy all evil and guide people to the straight path, by the will of Allah. The Jews, Christians, Muslim-Sunnis, and Muslim-Shias are all waiting for this savior and ruler, but they have different expectations and desires. People that reject Islam and God's truth will not accept Al-Mahdi as their savior and ruler and will go as far as saying he is the Antichrist. Jesus will also be the savior and ruler, but Jesus and Al-Mahdi will rule at different times. From an Islamic perspective, most Jews and Christians have wrong interpretations of the characters and the events narrated in old scriptures. Al-Mahdi will save the believers from the Dark Tribulation and the wicked, while Jesus will save the believers from the Antichrist and Gog and Magog. Furthermore, I am convinced that the "Dabba" ("moving creature" in English) that will be brought forth "from the Earth" and talk to the people, as one of the prophesied major signs of end times, is Al-Mahdi. Muslim scholars interpreted that this creature is a beast. The word "Dabba" in the Quran covers humans and nonhumans (24:45 | 35:45), and "from the Earth" means from the Earth as opposed to "sent down from Heaven". It doesn't make any sense to me that the creature that will talk and reason with the people, so they have certitude in God's signs, is literally an animal, and I have inferred from the Quran and the Hadith that this creature is Al-Mahdi. Maybe God is hinting that Al-Mahid is like a lion in the kingdom of God? Allah knows best.

{And when the decree comes to pass against them (at when the Hour becomes near), We will bring forth for them a **moving creature** from the Earth, telling them that the people had no certitude in Our signs.} (27:82)

their false desires and wishes will rebuff Al-Mahdi, only to later be deceived—if they remain alive—by the true "Masih Ad-Dajjal" (Fraudulent Messiah, aka "Antichrist"). Muslims believe that Jesus will return to kill the Antichrist and confirm the truth. These two antipodal beliefs will split the world's population into two camps—Believers and Disbelievers (Hadith). Which side would you be on if I told you this prophecy might happen in our lifetime? Satan has flooded this world with falsehood so that people are more confused than ever in determining what is true and what is false. However, I believe that if you seek the truth with a pure heart and sincere intention, God will guide you to it. Once you examine it, it will be easy to understand and accept.

{In fact, We hurl the truth against falsehood, leaving it crushed, and it quickly vanishes. And woe to you for what you falsely claim!} (21:18)

Deviators among the Nazarenes

{It is You (Allah) we worship and You we ask for help. Guide us to the Straight Path—the path of those on whom You have bestowed Your grace, not of those who have evoked Your wrath nor **of those who have gone astray**.} (1:5-7)

God made Muslims recite these verses every single day, in their five daily Salat (prayers). It is a plea to God for guidance to the straight path, while avoiding the path taken by those who have evoked his wrath, among them the Jews, and by those who have gone astray, among them are those who eventually became the Christians. Christianity is an invented "cocktail religion", where the truth got mixed with falsehood. I assume by now you understand why. Nevertheless, let me get into some specifics of how today's Christians are following falsehood, as indicated by God, and how they may have been misguided, according to those who have investigated this matter:

1) The Trinity—the notion that one God exists as three distinct, coeternal, and consubstantial persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit—is false. By merging Jesus with God, in any philosophical or divine manner, you are associating partners with God. The trinity concept is a satanic invention that bears resemblance to the satanic deity triad concept found in many ancient pagan faiths (e.g., Sumerian, Hindu, Egyptian, Greek, Slavic, Scandinavian, Arabian, etc.). The truth is that God is one and has no sons or partners. The truth is that Jesus is a prophet-messenger. The term "Holy Spirit" refers to angel Gabriel, who supported Jesus. The fact that Jesus resurrected the dead does not

make him God, and he is not the only prophet who was permitted to resurrect the dead (e.g., Ezekiel). The fact that Jesus was born without a father does not make him the son of God. Jesus was born the same way Adam was born, from dust, and with Allah's own spirit and the word "Be". Interestingly, I found "the Word" in the King James Version Bible, 1 John (5:7):

"For there are three that bear record in Heaven, the Father, ***the Word****, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one."*

This verse supports the trinity, but why would anyone who believes in the trinity refer to Jesus as "the Word"?! Isn't Jesus "the Son"?! This is a clear contradiction. Furthermore, it is very clear in the Bible that Jesus said, *"To my Father* ***and your Father****, and to my God* ***and your God****"* (John 20:17). So, how could "my Father[59] and your Father" be interpreted that Jesus is God's only

[59] The word "father" in Aramaic and Arabic is the same word "Ab" ("my father" is "Abaty"), since both languages have the same Semitic roots. However, this Semitic word could also mean forefather, grandfather, or father's brother, as indicated in verses (2:133) and (12:6), when prophet Jacob addressed his sons. Also in the Quran, prophet Ibrahim addressed Azar by "my father", but Azar doesn't have to be his father, as most Muslim scholars concluded; he could be his uncle or grandfather. Most probably Azar isn't his father, as explained by the great Muslim exegete Bassam Jarrar and indicated in other religions. I would add to Jarrar's thesis that the Semitic word "Ab" could also mean "Godfather", as in "spiritual/holy" father. IF Jesus indeed called God "Abaty", maybe he meant "my Godfather"? Maybe Jesus used the word figuratively, never literally, to say that our supreme creator and master is like a supreme holy father figure to his servants? This is exactly what the word "Lord" means. Furthermore, people have not only misinterpreted that God is Jesus' father, but they have gone further by making other humans as their "spiritual father" or "Godfather". This is a perfect example of how misinterpretation of words can dangerously lead to false understanding. Nevertheless, mistakenly interpreting prophet Ibrahim as the son of Azar has no severe and detrimental consequences, compared to interpreting Jesus as the son of God.

son?! And how could Jesus be God when he clearly addressed, in many verses, another entity by “My Lord” and “My God”?! Claiming Jesus is God or his son is blasphemy (5:17 | 19:88-92). There are two possible explanations to John (5:7): either someone made up the verse with the knowledge of “the Word”, or someone tampered with the verse. Even Isaac Newton disputed the trinity and this verse, claiming that the verse did not appear in the original Greek scriptures. The Lord (i.e., Holy Father Figure, Master) is Allah, his Word is Jesus, and the Holy Ghost is Gabriel (or maybe it’s Allah’s Spirit that covered Gabriel like a suit, if one wants to speculate that it is not exactly Gabriel).

{Indeed, the likeness of Jesus with Allah is as the likeness of Adam. He created Him from dust; then He said to him, "Be", and he was. **This truth is from your Lord, so do not be among the doubters.**} (3:59)

{**They have certainly disbelieved who say, "Allah is the third of three (i.e., God is a Trinity)."** And there is no deity except one God. And if they do not desist from what they are saying, a painful punishment shall certainly befall such disbelievers.} (5:73)

2) The crucifixion of Jesus and the concept of substitutionary atonement are false. Jesus is not God in the flesh who spent a day in torture to atone for the sins of mankind, nor did God sacrifice his own son for their sake. The Dignified Overpowering One can't be overpowered, and if he sacrificed his son, then how could Jesus be resurrected and then returned to Earth to save us from the Antichrist?! It does not make any sense to sacrifice something then use it again for another purpose!! This goes against the meaning of sacrifice. And how is it that Jesus denounced sinful acts so harshly, yet he granted salvation through faith alone without work? Do people not reason?!! Clearly, this is another deception advocated by Satan to make people less fearful of Hell and to lift the burden of sinning off the shoulders of Children of Adam. Little to no fear of judgment leads to disobedience—this is human nature. Jesus was raised to the Heavens, but before the person that resembled him was captured and crucified.

{**And (for) their saying, "We killed the Messiah, Jesus, son of Mary, the Messenger of Allah." But they neither killed nor crucified him—it was only made to appear so. Even those who argue for this (crucifixion) are in doubt. They have no knowledge whatsoever—only making assumptions.** They

certainly did not kill him. Rather, Allah raised him up to Himself. And Allah is Almighty, All-Wise.} (4:157-158)

3) Canonization—admission into Sainthood—is false. It is God who elects his chosen ones and decides who is the closest to him, not humans. Sainthood is another man-made invention not authorized by God (39:43). Also, no human being on this Earth is needed to intercede in prayer between you and God. People can pray for you but not pray on your behalf or deliver your prayers to God, and definitely not when they are dead (16:20-21 | 46:4-5). We have a direct connection with God, who is The All-Hearing, and we must not invoke anyone but God (13:14). By supplicating to what is believed by many to be a saint, one is simply taking human beings as lords and associating partners with God.

{**They have taken their rabbis and their monks as lords besides Allah, and also (they have taken) the Messiah, the son of Mary (as their lord).** And they were not commanded except to worship one God; there is no deity except Him. Pure is He from what they associate with Him. They wish to extinguish Allah's light with their mouths, but Allah will only allow His light to be perfected, even to the dismay of the disbelievers.} (9:31-32)

This does not take away the fact that there are many humble Christian priests, monks, and nuns that are virtuous and have done amazing righteous deeds in serving their communities.

{Certainly you will find the most violent of people in enmity toward the believers (to be) the Jews and those who associate others with Allah; and you will find **the nearest of them in affection to the believers those who say, "We are Nazarenes." That is because among them are priests and monks and because they are not arrogant**.} (5:82)

4) Sacraments of the Catholic Church are false. The Catholic Church is an invention to establish certain powers and authorities that God never granted. Unfortunately, many churches take advantage of people, by taking their money to fund their establishment rather than spending it in the way of God. For centuries, the Vatican has been plagued with political aspirations and evilness.

{O you who have believed, **indeed many of the rabbis and the monks devour the wealth of people by false means and obstruct the way of Allah. And those who hoard gold and silver and spend it not in the way of Allah**—give them tidings of a painful punishment.} (9:34)

I imagine Jesus would be sad and angry at what has been falsely said and done in his name. It deeply saddens my heart when I think of this. I have no doubt that Satan is behind all these inventions to drive people to Hell. I can accept how people, with no knowledge of the truth sent by God, can believe that Jesus was crucified—due to resemblance—but I cannot accept how someone can fall for the trinity or that Jesus died for our sins. These false claims are groundless, illogical, and refuted in the Quran. Furthermore, is it not Jesus who said, *"The truth will set you free"* (John 8:32)? We must always question everything and seek the truth. When I researched the Christian claims, I found a lot of contradictions and discrepancies between the gospels. I found the pieces of the Christian story not fitting together. I read more Shakespearian words quoting humans than words from God. It became clear to me that the Christians' excessive veneration of Jesus has allowed Satan to deceive them to believe that Jesus, by his own choosing, can be God, Son of God, Son of Man, the Holy Spirit—except what he truly is: a unique, highly-honored human being that God elected as his prophet-messenger. When people like me question the discrepancies and contradictions in the Christian claims, they are often told they just have to believe. I do not mind believing, but the pieces of the puzzle must fit together. I am willing to believe whatever

the inferred truth is, but it should be reasonable, substantiated, and not contain any contradictions. This has always been my issue with Christianity, irrespective of what is written in the Quran. I believe in Jesus and have high regard for him, like I believe and have high regard for all messengers of Allah, without any distinctions.

{And (beware the Day) when Allah will say, "O Jesus, Son of Mary, did you say to the people, 'Take me and my mother as deities besides Allah?'" He will say, "Glory be to you! It was not for me to say that to which I have no right. If I had said it, You would have known it. You know what is within myself, and I do not know what is within Yourself. Indeed, it is You who is Knower of the unseen. I said not to them except what You commanded me—**to worship Allah, my Lord and your Lord**. And I was a witness over them as long as I was among them; but when you lifted my soul, You were the Observer over them, and You are, over all things, Witness. If You should punish them—indeed they belong to You after all; but if You forgive them—indeed it is You who is the Almighty, All-Wise."} (5:116-118)

When I finally started to understand how Satan works covertly and became conscious of his wicked schemes, I went back to the time Christianity was founded, looking for people or institutions that Satan

might have used as his influencers. Here are my top two findings[60] with my thoughts:

Influencer 1: Paul the Apostle (Saint Paul)

Paul, or "Saul of Tarsus", was a Hellenistic Jewish Pharisee who terrorized the Nazarenes for their beliefs, before becoming an apostle of Jesus. I have no issue with people changing course in life for the better. If God is willing to forgive anyone who repents and corrects themselves, then why should we allow ourselves to judge people based on their history and not based on who they have become?! Even in Islam, there were few companions of prophet Muhammad that terrorized the early converts to Islam, before converting themselves and becoming great Islamic leaders. However, the companions of prophet Muhammad learned their religion directly from him, and he was pleased with them. In contrast, Paul never met Jesus, and most probably he did not know who Jesus was before the presumed crucifixion. I was shocked when I found that out because he is "Paul the Apostle"! It turns out he is a self-proclaimed apostle. He is not one of the early disciples of Jesus who supported him. More interesting, as indicated "in the narrative of Acts, Paul was traveling on the road from

[60] My two findings are not original. There are others who investigated this matter, but I do not know who was the first to write about it.

Jerusalem to Damascus on a mission to arrest them (the disciples) and bring them back to Jerusalem when the resurrected Jesus appeared to him in a great light. He was struck blind, but after three days his sight was restored by Ananias of Damascus and Paul began to preach that Jesus of Nazareth is the Jewish Messiah and the Son of God. Approximately half of the book of Acts deals with Paul's life and works. Fourteen of the twenty seven books in the New Testament have traditionally been attributed to Paul."[61] This is the man who was the first to promote the divinity of Jesus, who arguably has fifty percent of the New Testament attributed to him, who put the crucifixion and atonement for sin at the center of the Christian theology, and who is considered one of the most influential figures in Christianity. What if Paul was wrong, lying, or simply preaching his own philosophies and ideas??? Paul is not a prophet or a messenger chosen by God, so why should we follow his inventions and dubious claims?! I have many red flags raised about him. Here is a couple:

- He eschewed Torah observance. Jesus confirmed what is in the Torah and it was part of his teachings, but Paul seemed so eager to attract and convert "gentiles" to a new doctrine that he

[61] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paul_the_Apostle

downplayed the need to observe Torah Law, such as the need for circumcision (Galatians 5:2) and the prohibition against eating pork (Romans 14:20). How come Christians differ from Jews and Muslims, when it comes to circumcision and eating pork?!!

- He constantly disagreed with the true disciples, plus the incident at Antioch with Peter (Galatians 2:11–14).

What if it was Satan, not Jesus, who appeared[62] to Paul on his way to Damascus? If that was the case, did Satan deceive Paul in making him believe he was Jesus, or did Paul know that it was Satan and a deal was made between them to establish a new false doctrine led by Paul and advocated by Satan? Or what if Paul truly became a good man with good intentions, but he simply acted wrongfully and irresponsibly by embellishing the truth, in effort to give hope and encouragement to the Nazarenes, at a time of misery, fear, and doubt? Or is it that those who recorded his speech distorted his words? In all cases, a divine message should only be delivered to mankind by a messenger appointed by God, and God's laws by an appointed prophet, not by a man with only a vision. This is why messengers showed people extraordinary signs,

[62] The Hadith mentions that Satan, who is from the jinn, can appear to people in a human form, but he can't take on the image of prophet Muhammad (and maybe all other prophets?). He can also cast spells in our dreams. Prophet Muhammad taught Muslims certain prayers to recite before sleeping so they are protected from Satan and the demons.

to prove to them that they are truly appointed by God. God appointed Jesus, but Christians are the followers of Paul (and someone who founded a church), and I believe it's because they find Paul's teachings to be less restrictive than God's true laws and commandments.

Influencer 2: Constantine I (Constantine the Great)

In the early 4th century, Christianity was illegal in the Roman Empire. Christians were terrorized and fed to the animals in colosseums. Constantine I, the son of Caesar, was one of the emperors at that time. He found himself in a civil war against emperors Maxentius and Licinius, aiming to become the sole ruler of the Western Roman Empire. Constantine was a pagan monotheist, a devotee of the sun god "Sol Invictus". One night, something interesting happened to Constantine that would change the course of history. The night before the battle of Milvian Bridge against Maxentius, a divine vision of Jesus appeared to him in his sleep, commanding him to inscribe the cross on the shields of his soldiers. He followed his vision and was victorious the next day. He concluded that it was the cross that sealed his victory. This event turned Constantine into a Christian sympathizer, contributing his successes to the protection of the high deity alone. Consequently, he legalized Christianity and allowed its

practice without any restrictions. In a very short time, he became the guardian of the church and played a pivotal role in making Christianity the religion of the Roman Empire, and eventually the Western world.

A long time ago, I read somewhere that Constantine combined the Christian doctrine with a pagan doctrine that worshiped the sun, culminating into the Christian religion we know of today. This explains why Christians go to church on Sun-day, and how Christmas evolved from a pagan festival that celebrates the winter solstice. These claims stuck in my head for a long time, but I never investigated them until I came across a documentary titled "The Deception of Constantine". I am always skeptical of documentaries and their hidden agendas. Nonetheless, based on this documentary and other findings I came across, I found very alarming and interesting questions that truth seekers should investigate:

- Did Constantine lie about his "divine vision" to have the Christians support him in his military conquests?
- Did Constantine merge a secretive, sun-worshiping cult, called "Mithraism", with Christianity?
- To what extent was Constantine involved in the Council of Nicaea, which was commissioned to debate the nature of the

trinity, after a priest by the name of Alexandrian Arius claimed that God and Jesus are two different entities?

- Why was Constantine baptized before his death by Eusebius of Nicomedia, a prominent Arian leader and a staunch supporter of Arius?

You might be thinking, "If the trinity is false, and some of the early Nazarenes must have been aware that it is not true, then how come no one tried to expose the truth and dispute the trinity?" If there is anything you learn about history, most of the time, it is documented by the victors that live to write it. Many history books omit or distort the truth. Through my research, I learned about a group of Nazarenes that lived in the 4th century, who followed the straight path and adhered to the true teachings of Jesus. In other words, they were Muslims from the People of the Scripture. They disputed the trinity and rejected the Nicene Creed, only to be persecuted by those who defended it. **The 4th century was a decisive time in the history of Christianity in the Roman Empire that must be revisited.** This period covered a long battle between two opposing sides, as often is the case in the generations succeeding the prophets. On one side, we find the devout Muslims who wanted to follow the truth, and on the other side, the envious Christians who wanted to follow their own desires,

philosophies, aspirations, and political correctness. It took three centuries for this battle to happen, because Christians in the Roman Empire were busy running away from persecution and had to live in hiding until Constantine's vision. The battle was ultimately won by the proponents of the trinity, or the Homousians[63], who overpowered the Arians[64] with complete brutality and terrorism.

{And We gave Jesus, the Son of Mary, clear proofs, and We supported him with the Holy Spirit. If Allah had willed, those (generations) succeeding them would not have fought each other after the clear proofs had come to them. But they differed, and some of them believed and some of them disbelieved. And if Allah had willed, they would not have fought each other, but Allah does what He intends.} (2:253)

{If a wound should touch you, there has already touched the (opposing) people a wound similar to it. And these days (of victory and defeat) We alternate among the people so that Allah may know (the ones) who have believed and take to Himself from among you martyrs;

[63] The most prominent names were Athanasius of Alexandria, emperor Theodosius I, and Saint Nicholas of Myra (aka Santa Clause). They all have Greek backgrounds. Saul of Tarsus (Paul) was a Hellenistic Jew who grew up among the Greeks. The Seleucids, who influenced the Jews, were Greek. Among the first to corrupt the Gospel, through translations, were Greek. The Doctrine of the Trinity in Christianity was influenced by Greek mythology. Many corruptive Western ideologies are profoundly and fundamentally influenced by Greek ideologies. I have found that the ancient Greeks (and philosophers in general) have contributed greatly to the spread of falsehood in this world. This is what happens when we follow human inventions and conjectures instead of God's revelations (6:116).
[64] I suggest you look into Arius and the Arians, and Eusebius and the Ebionites. They were followers of Jesus who did not believe in the trinity, but believed instead in the oneness of God and that Jesus was a mere man elected by God.

and Allah does not like the wrongdoers. And that Allah may purify the believers and destroy the disbelievers.} (3:140-141)

In conclusion, Jesus is not God nor his son. He is a human being, the servant of God and his prophet-messenger, and I find those who are closest to observing his worship practices today live in Ethiopia.

{Say, "Those who fabricate lies against Allah shall not prosper." It will be a provisioned sojourn in this world; thereafter to Us they are bound to return; then We shall make them taste the severe punishment because they used to disbelieve.} (10:69-70)

{Indeed, those who say, "God is the Messiah, son of Mary," have fallen into disbelief. Say, "Who has the power to prevent Allah if He chose to destroy the Messiah, son of Mary, his mother, and everyone in the world all together?" To Allah (alone) belongs the kingdom of the Heavens and the Earth and everything in between. He creates whatever He wills. And Allah is Most Capable of everything.} (5:17)

Deviators among the followers of prophet Muhammad (also known as Muslims)

Let me go back to the verse that highlights how people react when the truth is sent to them:

{People used to be a single ummah (before their deviation). Then Allah sent prophets, delivering glad tidings and warnings, and sent down with them the Scripture in truth, to judge between people in matters of their dispute. And none differed over it (i.e., the Scripture) except the very people who received it after clear proofs had come to them, out of animosity among themselves. Then Allah, by His permission, has guided the believers to the truth regarding those disputes. And Allah guides whoever He wills to the Straight Path.} (2:213)

One of the things highlighted in this verse is that humans are always disputing one another, even after God has sent the holy scriptures with signs and knowledge of the truth. And most of the time, the disputes turn hostile out of envy. Satan must love it when humans are in dispute. Add fuel to the fire and before you know it there is hatred, bloodshed, and battles. Given that all humans are the same, Muslims, after Muhammad's prophethood, also fell victim to Satan's deceptions. They also got dragged into disputes that deviated Muslims from the straight path. If God were to send down today a new message to mankind, I reason that the first people he will address are the People of the Quran "to judge between people in matters of their dispute." You would think that People of the Quran would have learned from what happened to the People of the Tawrat and Injil, and from all the stories

of the prophets narrated in the Quran, but no. Still, Satan succeeded in misleading them because they chose to follow their own desires rather than seek guidance from the Quran. Without diving into details, let me share with you my view of the major Muslim deviators:

1) Religious Separatists

I am a big believer that with unity comes strength and with division comes weakness. If you look at Muslims today, you will find them divided into many sects, primarily branching out from two main branches: Sunni and Shia. If you examine these divisions closely, you will realize they are largely driven by political and ideological factors. A faction of the people gets into a political or social dispute, so it splits and creates its own sect or cult. To distinguish itself, it starts inventing its own jurisprudence based on its own religious interpretations. Human inventions, advocated by Satan, always lead to deviations from the straight path. After prophet Muhammad's death, a series of four caliphs (successors) governed the Islamic caliphate (state): Abu Bakr, Umar bin (son of) Al-Khattab, Uthman bin Affan, and Ali bin Abi Talib. Toward the end of Uthman bin Affan's reign and after his assassination, many disputes and revolts started to arise, mostly sparked by the dissemination of false or

inaccurate information by the deceitful Abdullah bin Saba' to create divisions among Muslims. Consequently, a faction of the Muslims disputed that the leaders of the Islamic state should only be from the lineage of prophet Muhammad. This and other disputes, fueled by events surrounding the extradition of the murderers of Uthman bin Affan, provoked a war between the disputing parties. The dissenting faction eventually separated from the majority, to later become Shia Islam ("Shia" means "Sect" in English), which constitutes today to 10-15% of the Muslims around the world. The history of the split is very controversial and long. I am not going to get into it, but here is my short opinion of the split:

- Both sides—the majority and minority—made few wrong leadership and political decisions, at different points in time, that led to disputes and revolts, and eventually to the split. However, the split should never have happened, and it is considered a transgression of God's limits (3:103 | 42:13 | 49:9).
- Prophet Muhammad did not elect a leader to succeed him after his death, nor did he have an heir, as per God's will. I find this to be an indication from God, implying that in the absence of an appointed leader by God, a leader should be appointed through a consultative council or assembly ("Shura" in Arabic) (42:38).

Accordingly, I find the Hereditary Rule, which started among Sunni Muslims with the Umayyad Caliphate[65], and which is at the essence of the Shia "Twelver"[66] claim, to be unfounded in Islam. Shura is an endeavor to achieve sound judgment, equity, and success, while the Hereditary Rule undermines such endeavor. Also, no human is infallible, so what if the succeeding heir is incompetent or unjust? Is it fair and wise to have them in charge of people's affairs? Due to the absence of proper Shura in electing rulers in the so-called "Islamic countries", today we find justice and equity also absent—among both Shias and Sunnis.

- Ali bin Abi Talib, the fourth caliph, and the cousin and son-in-law of prophet Muhammad, did not oppose the three caliphs before him, nor they opposed him. They were all brothers in faith, and even brothers by intermarriage, and they all called for Muslim unity, not division. However, over time, Satan managed to find Muslim influencers that would preach otherwise to delude their followers.

Although the Shia-Sunni split started violently, Shias and Sunnis lived peacefully together for a long time. Nevertheless, whenever

[65] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Umayyad_dynasty
[66] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Twelver_Shiism

politicians need to move the masses in their favor, they revive the disputes of the past and instigate violence again. These are the religion dividers (23:53 | 30:32) that strayed people from the straight path, by inventing lies and fueling animosity among people. Islam should be one ummah (23:52), with no such thing as Sunni and Shia. Satan and his devils have been working for centuries, internally and externally, on weakening the Islamic world. Post-WWI, they finally managed to divide it up into more sects and countries, and subsequently empower totalitarian regimes to rule. The corrupt ruling regimes impoverished or abused the citizens, stymying their educational and industrial development. This is the reason why the Islamic ummah is very fragmented and weak today—on its deathbed—lost and profoundly distant from its true beautiful identity—the best righteous community among mankind. Such conditions have allowed enemies of Islam to exploit this weakness and taint the image of Islam as the religion of terror, resulting in Islamophobia.

{**For those who have divided their religion and split into sects, you (O Messenger) are not to be associated with them.** Their judgment rests with Allah. And He will inform them of what they used to do.} (6:159)

2) The so-called “Hussein Followers” and the Alawites

On October 10 680 CE, Hussein, the grandson of prophet Muhammad and the son of Ali bin Abi Talib, was betrayed and massacred with his followers and family members by the governor of Al-Kufa, Ubayd Allah bin Ziyad. Ubayd Allah had orders from the ruler of the Umayyad Caliphate, Yazid bin Mu'awiya, to prevent Hussein and his companions from entering Al-Kufa at all costs, escalating the situation that led to their massacre in the battle of Karbala. The massacre plays a pivotal role in the Sunni-Shia split, although it is very naive to think Sunnis support Yazid’s heinous crimes because they do not accept the Shia heresies. Until this day, Shias around the world commemorate Hussein’s death in the religious festival of Ashura. Without a doubt, imam Hussein is a martyr and a great Islamic figure, and ALL Muslims, Sunnis and Shias, think highly of him. The massacre committed was an unjustifiable and unforgivable crime. However, this massacre is long behind us to be attached to it in any respect—but the Persians made sure to be ideologically attached to it, because imam Hussein was the husband of Shahrabanu, the daughter of the last Persian emperor. Similar to the presumed crucifixion of Jesus, the massacre has been romanticized and sanctified to levels that deviate one from

the straight path. Today, a large portion of the Shias idolize imams Hussein and Ali. They supplicate to them and have made for them holy shrines in Iraq. They invented a pilgrimage to these shrines, as an annual religious ritual, and some dared to say that they have god-like authorities. These are all disturbing satanic inventions to deviate more believers away from the straight path. You cannot be a Muslim and invoke anyone other than Allah: this is ascribing partners with Allah ("Shirk" in Arabic)!! Most Shias of today are behaving more like Christians and Jews than like Muslims (2:165 | 6:159 | 46:5)!

3) Aggressive Radical Islamists

Aggressive radical Islamists, also known as Islamic extremists, are Muslims who practice a hostile and unjust methodology in how they implement the Islamic doctrine. By the way, at a macro level, most Muslim deviators are associated with inequity. It is difficult for Satan to have Muslims deviate in faith and worship, because many Muslims learned in the Quran what the Jews and Christians have done (although this is no longer the case in the 21st century, as many Muslims abandoned the Quran), so instead, Satan focused on getting them to deviate from other commandments. I group aggressive radical Islamists into two categories:

- The Deluded Avengers

The deluded avengers vary from insecure, harassed individuals to vulnerable, oppressed people. The hostility inflicted upon them caused them so much pain, hatred, and rage that their desire for revenge occupied their hearts. The issue has to do with how they retaliate and in how they interpret God's laws to find a legal justification for their actions. God is very clear that a Muslim has the right of retribution, but the punishment should only be directed against the assaulter, causing him the same injury that he caused to the victim (2:178 | 2:194).

{O you who have believed, be constantly upright for Allah, bearers of witness with equity, and let not antagonism of a people provoke you to not do justice. Do justice; that is nearer to piety. And be pious to Allah, surely Allah is All-Aware of whatever you do.} (5:8)

God says to fight the criminals and the antagonists, but let there be no unjustifiable transgression: do not kill an innocent person and always be just and equitable in your actions. The best way for me to explain this deviation is to compare it to a school mass

shooting, where the culprit should not be the only one to be blamed, yet they always are. Let me break down this example:

a. The shooter: A school student who is severely bullied by other students. He feels like an outcast, powerless to fight back or stop the bullying. After a long buildup of hate and rage, he finally decides to retaliate by shooting everyone at school (or some might choose instead to commit suicide), because he thinks they are all the same and they all deserve to die. He finds it to be the only way to stop the constant assault and to expel the internal hate and rage that is causing him excruciating pain and mental illness.

b. The shooter's caretakers: They are absent. They have not provided the shooter with any emotional and social support and guidance to deal with such tough situations. Even worse, they might also be abusing the shooter.

c. The school and teacher: They are either oblivious or they do not care to intervene and stop the bullying.

d. The bullies: They are predators who believe they have impunity and can do whatever they want and get away with it. They enjoy transgressing upon the weak and vulnerable.

I trust you are capable of matching these characters with any real-life scenario that involves aggressive radical Islamists. They are often vulnerable Muslims who get assaulted, and maybe terrorized, in harsh socioeconomic environments, or sometimes they are deluded sympathizers. However, the way they all retaliate is wrong. If someone transgresses and punches you in the face, you have the right to punch them back. One should retaliate in the same manner as they were assaulted, as long as it's within God's limits. God did not ordain to go on shooting sprees and suicide missions—quite the opposite (2:194-195 | 17:33). God also said, if you can endure patiently and forgive (16:126 | 45:14), demonstrating great resolve, God will reward you for your resolve and patience (42:40-43). Now, if one cannot claim back their rights nor forgive, then they should seek help from other true believers (9:71) and should never stop invoking God for support. One can even emigrate, as a last resort, if possible (4:97-98). What happened to the part of relying on God and staying patient against whatever harms you?! (14:12) What is worse in this whole situation is that aggressive radical Islamists are often exploited and directed by evil special interest groups that use religion as a cover-up to

delude foolish or naive people (turning them into field agents that they can activate whenever it is needed for false flags operations).

- The "Religious" Zealots

There are different types of zealots. One type includes the few fanatics who want to punish people for their disbelief. I read the Quran and the Hadith and I did not find any text where God asked Muslims to fight infidels, **UNLESS they obstruct the way of Allah**, by preventing Muslims from observing their religious duties and rites, or by conspiring, betraying, harming, transgressing, or committing injustice against Muslims and the oppressed believers who seek their help.

{Allah does not forbid you from those who do not fight you on account of religion, and have not driven you out of your homes, that you should be benign to them and be equitable toward them; surely Allah loves the equitable. Allah only forbids you from those who fight you on account of religion, and driven you out of your homes, and backed (others) in driving you out, that you make allies of them. And whoever makes allies of them, then it is those who are the wrongdoers.} (60:8-9)

I ask Islamic zealots and hardliners, “Do you think you can do a better job than prophet Muhammad and all the prophets? If the prophets themselves were never aggressive when inviting people to the truth and following Allah’s religion, then what makes you think you can do a better job with aggression? Did you not read these words???!”

{**Invite to the Way of your Lord with wisdom and good advice, and only debate with them in the best manner.** Surely your Lord knows best who has strayed from His Way and who are the guided ones.} (16:125)

{**Kind speech and forgiveness** are better than charity followed by injury. Allah is All-Independent, Forbearing.} (2:263)

{**There shall be no compulsion in (acceptance of) the religion**. The right course has become clear from the wrong. So whoever disbelieves in Taghut (i.e., false god) and believes in Allah has grasped the most trustworthy handhold with no break in it. And Allah is All-Hearing, All-Knowing.} (2:256)

{And say, **"The truth is from your Lord, so whoever wills, let him believe, and whoever wills, let him disbelieve."** Indeed, We

have prepared for the wrongdoers a fire whose walls will surround them…} (18:29)

Nevertheless, it is worth noting that Islam has zero tolerance for polytheism. Under an Islamic rule, you have the freedom of faith, but no right will be granted to you to display idols nor practice polytheism in open or public places.

Another type of Islamic fanaticism involves the ultraorthodox Muslims that favor a strict, literal interpretation of the Sunnah and Sharia, while disregarding their intended spirit. Essentially, they lack the "Furqan" (Criterion) and wisdom to implement them properly. Moreover, some of them believe that to properly follow Islam, we need to live as if we were in the 7th century. While simplification of our human affairs is direly needed, Islam can and does accommodate societal advancements. Today, our living conditions, tools, and knowledge base have all fundamentally evolved. Sunnah and Sharia should be implemented as per the conditions of our time. Not to forget that Satan has been working on diverting people away from Islamic principles for fourteen centuries, more vigorously in the last decades (what I believe is part of "Satan's Era"). You can't expect people to change in a few

days. This goes back to radical versus gradual reform. Radical Islamists want radical change, while The Most Forbearing has given us many examples, when his final scripture was revealed, on how in certain areas gradual change is the best approach, **as long as corruption and lewdness in the land is avoided**. Aggressive radical Islamists apply aggression and intolerance in the wrong places. No wonder the word "Sharia" alone terrifies people, while in fact Sharia—although rightfully rigorous in a few areas for deterrence—is the most balanced and fair legal system for humans to follow. Today, no one is applying the full Sharia correctly. You know who else hates Sharia? Satan!—because Sharia is designed to protect us from him. Observe carefully all the injustice, corruption, poverty, diseases, violence, and lewdness that have filled this world today, and you will realize all of it could have been avoided if we were to correctly apply Sharia.

Furthermore, it is important not to confuse aggressive radical Islamists with those who fight in the way of Allah—Jihadists—as mainstream media and deluded people love to do. Jihad is to strive in defending the straight path so that the word of Allah is supreme, towering over the transgressions of Man and the deceptions of Satan. This means fighting in an upright and noble manner against

all those who want to transgress against God's religion and the people that choose to follow it, without crossing God's limits. Enemies of Islam deliberately label Jihad and Sharia as "extremism" to justify their fight against the religion. How wicked or ignorant they are! Islam is God's religion and it will never be eradicated!!!

As you can see, Satan managed to even misguide the followers of messengers appointed by God, but at different magnitudes and through different methods. Atheists, Buddhists, Hindus, followers of other man-made religions, and "money-worshipers" are also misguided at even greater magnitudes. This is because most people pursue what they lust for, or adhere to ancestral traditions, without taking the time to question the path they are on or to seek the truth. Satan has been straying humans from the straight path for thousands of years, especially those that fail to consider God's latest message and follow God's reminders and warnings. As I previously mentioned, the deluded followers are going to complain in Hell about the leaders or influencers that mislead them, but by then it will be too late. God sent them the truth and the right guidance to follow in the worldly life, but they chose instead to follow the influencers that satisfied their desires. {On the Day their faces are flipped in the Fire, they will cry, "Oh! If only we had obeyed Allah and obeyed the Messenger!" And they will

say, "Our Lord! We obeyed our leaders and elite, but they led us astray from the (right) Path. Our Lord, bring them torment twofold, and curse them with a great curse!"} (33:67-68)

Fourteen centuries had passed since Allah's last major intervention, and Satan has successfully filled this world with godlessness, injustice, violence, mental disorders, falsehood, covetousness, indecency, pettiness, etc. In Satan's Era[67], human beings have disrupted the balance (55:8) and have succumbed to Satan's temptations and machinations—now trapped in his Matrix[68] (7:145)! Today, the world is in a mess because most people do not believe in Allah, or at least do

[67] This term is taken from a Hadith. I have come to the conclusion that in this era, Satan will unleash all his evil schemes and deceptions upon humanity, and this will happen right before end times.

[68] I am borrowing this term from the Matrix trilogy films to help you conceptualize how one can be trapped in falsehood and delusion, and to bring to your attention that the sides were switched in the movies. These movies, like many other Hollywood movies, have many hidden depictions and symbols of what the evil "enlightened" forces have been plotting in this world. They will portray themselves as the good side that is revolting against the evil side. In the Matrix trilogy, you learn about "Neo", who is portrayed as the messiah—as in the chosen one to save mankind—but if you discern carefully, you will realize he is the false messiah, who loves "Trinity" (the Christian trinity?). The "Oracle" (Satan?) and all who follow her false promise want you to believe that the "Architect" (God?) is harmfully controlling mankind through a simulated loveless world, called the Matrix. I find them mirroring the same narrative as Allah's narrative with his chosen ones, but they are advocating instead their own ideology and beliefs. For example, in the trilogy, we learn about the "people of Zion", who are fighting to liberate themselves from the Matrix, led by their messiah. However, I find them advocating for a path conflicting with Allah's straight path: notice how many times Morpheus mentions "path". There is nothing innocent about the Wachowskis brothers, or sisters I should say? If you analyze the storyline and characters of the Matrix trilogy, and then consider what I shared with you in this chapter, you will understand how Satan tries to deceive us (look carefully at "Sati" and "Seraph", what do you see?? Interestingly, why is the new futuristic city being built in Saudi Arabia called **NEO**M? Why exactly there??). It is becoming more and more difficult to tell what is true and what is false. Spreading falsehood, via the media in our times, is equivalent to sorcery in ancient times. We are living now in the prophesied Dark Tribulation and the beginning of Ad-Dajjal Tribulation, and it is only going to get worse in the subsequent months and foreseeable future. The key to solving the predicament of figuring out who is really truthful is "the straight path". The side that calls for observing anything but Allah's commandments and laws, even if it is in the name of love and tolerance, is falsehood. I am the first to call for love and tolerance, but not at the expense of corrupting our societies and crossing Allah's limits. We need a society (environment) that enables us to live on the straight path, and God has well defined the limits of this path that we should not cross. Dare to cross those limits and you are playing with blazing fire!!!

not comply with his commandments and laws. Allah did not put strict rules for the purpose of limiting our liberties, but rather to discipline us and deter us from destroying our societies and falling into Satan's control. "Liberals", and the extremists who advocate for unrestricted human rights, are simply following their own human desires, and many have taken their desires as gods (25:43). They lack wisdom and understanding of the fact that establishing governing systems and laws based on human desires inevitably leads to societal disorder and self-destruction. Many of today's societies across the world are living examples. The surrounding environment (culture) can influence our mentality and dictate our human behavior, and by failing to abide by Allah's laws (Sharia) we fail to establish the ideal balanced environment—the fortress—that protects us from our own unrestricted desires, ignorance, and the devils. Aside from intelligence, what makes us significantly different from animals is the fact that we follow rules that constrain our desires. Remove those constraints and there is nothing left to stop us from behaving like animals (7:179).

{But if the truth had followed their desires, the Heavens and the Earth and whoever is in them would have fallen into total disorder. Rather, We have brought to them their advice, but it is their advice that they are averse to.} (23:71)

{Allah wants to accept your repentance, but those who follow (their) desires want you to deviate (from the straight path) a huge deviation. Allah intends to make things easy on you. And Man has been created weak.} (4:27-28)

While most people are oblivious to their machinations, I—and like-minded truth seekers—believe Satan and Ad-Dajjal (the Antichrist)—who I strongly believe is currently alive in hiding—are very close to solidifying their control over this world, through a new world order (NWO) that steers people on a path that opposes Allah's straight path. Clearly, they are instigating global mayhem[69], to make people very desperate and fearful, and to reduce the world's population, allowing them to gain full control. As for those who believe in the God of Abraham, they will be offered an alternative religion, which is currently being promoted under the name "Abrahamic Faiths Initiative (AFI)". This initiative uses the slogan "peace and coexistence" to validate its existence. But, despite all their evil schemes, I am hopeful

[69] This will kick off "The Great Tribulation", prophesied by Jesus (Mathew 24:21), and which I reasoned is the final stage of the "Dark Tribulation", prophesied by prophet Muhammad. I believe that the Muslims entered the Dark Tribulation phase when Palestine got occupied. The Great Tribulation stage is a last chance for the non-believers to believe and repent, and for the tyrants and criminals to desist from their wickedness. This tribulation will last less than a decade and will conclude with "Al-Malhama Al-Kubra" (The Great Battle). Some Christians might think that this is "The Battle of Armageddon", in reference to "Har (Mount) Megiddo" in Palestine, mentioned only once in the New Testament. If indeed there is a battle to occur there, it is not The Great Battle, for many reasons. The Great Battle will occur in Dabiq, Syria (Hadith), and it will be the greatest battle to ever occur in the history of mankind (44:16). The Great Tribulation will then conclude with the emergence of Ad-Dajjal (the Antichrist).

that The Helper will intervene again to make the force of good (Party of Allah[70]) triumphant over the force of evil (Party of Satan[71]), for three reasons: first, there are still God-fearing, righteous servants who are supplicating for Allah's intervention and they will not despair; second, The Most Truthful promised in the Quran (24:55) that the end-result always favors the God-fearing (7:128) and the oppressed, who ultimately become the leaders and successors in the land after great patience and perseverance; and third, there are prophecies that point to this. In the past, and by his favor and mercy, God had rescued the Children of Israel from the oppression of the Pharaoh (28:4-6), and today's righteous, God-fearing believers are patiently waiting for their salvation from the wicked ones of our time (43:55-56).

{Shall We make those who believe and do righteous deeds equal to those who commit mischief throughout the land?! Or shall We make the God-fearing ones equal to the wicked ones?!} (38:28)

Our world has become one global village. By examining today's communities and realizing how similar their behavior is to that of the ancient people mentioned in God's scriptures, I recently concluded that

[70] The Iranian militia "Hezbollah", which means "Party of Allah", hijacked the name. It doesn't mean they belong to the force of good. In fact, their creed and wrongdoings indicate that they belong to the Party of Satan.
[71] Many members of Satan's party might not even realize they are following Satan's deceptions and falsehood, and some probably don't believe Satan exists. They forgot about God and chased after what they desired; thus, they forgot their innate knowledge (59:19) and became members of Satan's party, consciously or unconsciously.

the stories narrated in the Quran are mini depictions of the events of end times. God had many prophets and messengers sent, each having stories of their own, but it has become clear to me that God chose only the narrated stories specifically for a purpose. I believe that these stories will happen again, in terms of plot, but at a global stage, since our world has become very closely interconnected. The narrated stories are warning to those who follow falsehood and their desires and glad tidings to those who follow the divine truth.

{We have already destroyed people like you; so, will any (of you) be mindful?} (54:51)

Comparing current world events with what has been prophesied, I believe that **we are living in end times**—a time when God will fulfill his promise (24:55 | 17:104) with the final global reset[72] before the Hour, and when Man achieves his ultimate purpose. As I wrote before, God repeatedly admonished mankind that at any given moment he can abolish the impious from the Earth and rescue the pious (Survival of the Pious!). I believe that the divine global reset of end times will commence with the emergence of At-Tariq in the sky (26:4 | 86:1-3),

[72] Mimicking God in reverse—in effort to mislead people—Satan will promote his version of "The Global Reset", through his new world order. How many people did you hear this year (2020) say, "COVID-19 pandemic is a great opportunity for a global reset?" This is Satan's world order versus Allah's world order. This is not a clash of civilizations: this is a clash between truth and falsehood. The decade we are now in is going to be EPIC! May Allah have mercy on the righteous ones. One will only be rescued by God's mercy and the prayer of the drowning believer.

followed by a catastrophic event that will cover the entire atmosphere with smoke (44:9-15)—one of the major signs. This event will be like a mini doomsday and as destructive as Noah's flooding. The safest place will be in the newly established Islamic state—The Ark! The reset is nigh (53:57-62). Will it all begin in 2021/2? For me, 2020 is a wake-up call and a precursor to apocalyptic times (6:65). I believe that we are at the advanced stage of Allah distinguishing the vile people from the virtuous people, before his final major intervention starts, which, in my view, will include most of the prophesied ten major signs of end times. Only Allah knows the true sequence and timing of events, I can only connect the dots and estimate.

{Allah would not leave the believers in the condition you were in **until He distinguished the vile from the virtuous (among you).** Nor would Allah reveal to you the unseen, but He chooses whoever He wills as a messenger. So believe in Allah and His messengers. And if you believe and fear (Allah), you will receive a great reward.} (3:179)

{So do not weaken and do not grieve, and you will be superior if you are (true) believers. If a wound should touch you, there has already touched the (opposing) people a wound similar to it. And these days (of victory and defeat) We alternate among the people so that Allah

may know (the ones) who have believed and take to Himself from among you martyrs; and Allah does not like the wrongdoers. And that Allah may purify the believers and destroy the disbelievers.} (3:139-141)

One of the main reasons we cannot all live in peace is Satan and his party: they will never leave us alone. They must be obliterated for good. People who do not believe that Satan exists can never understand this. They probably think I am a crazy, delusional person writing about a boogeyman and fairytale prophecies, or that I am using a fictional character to justify people's evil behavior and all the falsehood I have pointed out throughout this book. Let me repeat myself and be very loud and clear: Satan exists, and he is part of the picture. Satan is our enemy and the patriarch of falsehood and deception (35:5), and this can NEVER…EVER…BE IGNORED!!!

{Surely Satan is an enemy for you. So take him as an enemy. He only invites his party so that they become inmates of the blazing fire.} (35:6)

{Satan has prevailed upon them; so he has made them forget the remembrance of Allah. They are the Party of Satan. Unquestionably, it is the Party of Satan that are the losers.} (58:19)

{They (Satan and his party) are plotting (evil) plots, and I (Allah) am plotting (vengeful) plots. So allow time for the disbelievers. Leave them awhile.} (86:15-17)

{Believers fight in the way of Allah, whereas disbelievers fight in the way of false gods. So fight against the allies of Satan. Indeed, Satan's schemes are ever weak.} (4:76)

{So, do they feel secure from the plan of Allah? But no one feels secure from the plan of Allah except the losers.} (7:99)

{But those who deny Our signs, **We will gradually lure them (to their destruction) from where they do not know**. And I reprieve them; surely My plotting is firm.} (7:182-183)

{Whoever allies themselves with Allah and His Messenger and those who believe (must know that) it is the Party of Allah that are triumphant.} (5:56)

{Whoever seeks honor and power, then (let them know that) all honor and power belong to Allah. To Him (alone) good words ascend, and righteous deeds are raised up by Him. **As for those who plan evil, they will suffer a severe punishment. And the planning of such (people) is doomed (to fail).**} (35:10)

Chapter 13

The Full Picture Revealed

{Do you then think that We had created you in vain, and that you will never be returned to Us?!} (23:115)

{We have not created the Heavens and Earth and everything in between without purpose—as the disbelievers think. So woe to the disbelievers because of the Fire (they have to face)!} (38:27)

The Quran and science have helped me understand the purpose of many of God's creations, but what is the purpose of our own existence? What is the true meaning of this life we live? If I were to give you an answer a few years ago, when the picture was still incomplete, I would have told you that this life is only an examination (exam) laid out by Allah to test us (67:2) on the following main **Evaluation Criteria**:

1. our belief and trust in the unseen one God
2. our belief in the Last Day, the hereafter, and the unseen world
3. our obedience and submission to God's authority and decree

Atheists argue that God does not exist because they haven't seen him, and seeing is believing. Yet, many of them believe in things no one has ever seen. Have they seen aliens, for example? How about the soul? It must be more than "seeing is believing". Some will say that they had no knowledge of the indirect evidence I shared in this book. Okay, but why didn't they search for it like I did? I'll tell you why: the notion of God not existing satisfies them. They do not want to submit to a higher authority who commands them to worship him and forbids them from doing things they desire. This is the ill desire in their hearts that is preventing them from seeking and accepting the truth.

{Those who have no knowledge say, "If only Allah would speak to us or a sign would come to us!" The same was said by those who came before. **Their hearts are all alike.** Indeed, We have made the signs clear for people of sure faith.} (2:118)

Indeed, Allah has made his signs clear through his creation, messengers, and messages, so that people may reason and be reminded of his existence, their duty toward him and their fellow mankind, and the severe consequences of not following his guidance. He also made it clear that life in this seen world is extremely short relative to the life after it and that it will cease to exist; thus, people should not get

emotionally attached to it. When it ends, an eternal life—what is to them the unseen world—will commence with an evaluation session on how they did on the exam.

{Blessed is the One who has the Kingdom in His Hand. And He is Most Capable of everything. (He is the One) **Who created death and life in order to test which of you is best in deeds.** And He is the Almighty, The Forgiver.} (67:1-2)

{We have created Man from a bit of mixtures that We may put him to a test; and We made him hearing and seeing. Indeed, We guided him to the way, be he grateful or be he ungrateful.} (76:2-3)

{Do people think that they will be left (alone) saying, "We believe", without being put to any test?! **Indeed, We have tested those who were before them, so Allah will surely know the ones who are truthful, and He will surely know the liars.**} (29:3-4)

{Every soul will taste death. And We will test you through bad and good (situations) with a trial; and to Us you will be returned.} (21:35)

{And We will surely test you with something of fear and hunger and a loss of wealth and lives and crops, but give glad tidings to those who patiently endure—who, when calamity strikes them, say, "Indeed we

belong to Allah, and indeed to Him we will return." Those are the ones who will receive special care from their Lord and mercy. And it is those who are the guided ones.} (2:155-157)

Have you ever heard of an exam (or contest) that is so easy with a reward so magnificent? Have you ever heard of a serious exam that does not have a passing minimum requirement? Our worldly life is no different. God will put us through difficult trials (2:214)—to establish, strengthen, revive, or test our faith and our obedience. The King designed various rules, systems, and trials to examine if we are truthful in fulfilling our part of the covenant we made with him in the first brief life, and to examine our virtue and piety and where we stand with every one of his commandments. Every situation and position we are put in is a trial. Even when we experience good days, Allah is testing us (21:35). The Observer is examining what we are doing with what he bestowed upon us (6:165), especially our body, knowledge, life opportunities, and wealth (Hadith). Are we thanking him for his graces and favors or denying they are from him? Each of us will go through various trials, depending on the levels of difficulty and the number of trials one can endure. The stronger the faith, or the greater the value of what we are given, the harder the trials get *(think of how adaptive testing works)*. And after every difficulty there is relief (65:7).

{Indeed We have created Man (to live) in hard struggle.} (90:4)

{O Man, you have to work hard constantly to reach your Lord, and then you have to meet Him.} (84:6)

{And we do not task any soul except to its capacity…} (23:62)

Alongside the various trials, Allah predestined that mankind shall have an adversary named Satan, who will strive in making them fail the exam. Why is that? Why did The Delayer accept Satan's appeal to delay his punishment, and allowed him to mislead mankind? Why did God allow evil and tribulations in this worldly life? To answer these questions, we need to start by looking at two things:

1) The exam's evaluation criteria *(previously listed)*
2) The exam's scoring system: weighing good and bad deeds

Any good deed we earn is based on our actions, and God told us that he will convert an unexecuted good intention into a good deed. As for bad deeds, they are also based on our actions, but God will not convert any bad intention to a bad deed. I believe that the esoteric reason why bad deeds can only be based on actions has to do with God's justice system. On the Last Day, The Judge will call upon the angels and our body parts to testify, in the event we deny committing the recorded bad

deeds, and they can only testify against what they witness. However, there is a problem. How is God going to judge humans on what lies in their hearts, such as their lack of belief in him and the hereafter, and their concealed sin (envy, pride, grudge, greed, arrogance, ill desires, etc.) (47:29)? What if you act like you believe, but you are insincere? God said he will hold us accountable for what is concealed in our hearts (2:284), but he did not specify any formula for converting concealed disbelief, ill will, and sinful desires into bad deeds. Clearly stated in the Quran numerous times, The Judge, The All-Knowing knows what is in our hearts, but because he is The Equitable who does not wrong anyone, he chooses not to add any bad deeds to the weighing scale, or convict anyone of disbelief, without the testimony of other witnesses. This is where Satan and the devils come into the picture. Their role is to expose the disbelief and the sinful desires that are concealed in people's hearts, by seducing them to act upon those desires, getting all the inward sin out of their chest. Consequently, sinful desires get materialized and converted into evil speech and action (outward sin), allowing the angels (and our body parts) to witness what we say and do (41:22), and to record everything in our book of deeds. The problem is now solved. The disbelievers are the most susceptible to the invitations, temptations, and instigations of the devils (19:83), because

they are not armed with faith and the means of protection provided by The Source of Goodness. As for the believers, if they do get drawn into following Satan's footsteps, or their hearts get stirred with sinful desires, Allah, by his grace and mercy, may intervene by putting them through a difficult situation or tribulation that will awaken them from their heedlessness and purify their hearts (24:21).

{And so We have made for every prophet enemies—devilish humans and jinn—whispering to one another with elegant words of deception. Had it been your Lord's will, they would not have done such a thing. So leave them and their deceit, **so that the hearts of those who disbelieve in the Hereafter may be receptive to it, be pleased with it, and be persistent in their evil pursuits**.} (6:112-113)

With such a system in place, The All-Enumerating can account for everything. Tribulations are Allah's multipurpose smelting fire, which:

1) **tests** people's obedience and sincerity (2:177) **and exposes** what lies in their hearts, especially the hardened and ill hearts (22:53)
2) **distinguishes and separates** the virtuous people from the vile people that are living together within a community (3:179 | 8:25)
3) **reminds** people of God's existence and authority (6:17-18) and the value of the truth (many people are not mindful of God nor

are they conscious of how much in need they are for a greater power to support them (6:40-42) until they face calamities)

4) **awakens, purifies** (3:140-142), **and guides** the believers, at times of heedlessness or ill-discipline in obeying God's orders
5) **rewards** those who patiently endure pain without losing faith (3:195), especially those that strive against the evil forces (i.e., Jihadists) with their own wealth and lives[73] (3:140-142 | 61:11)
6) **exterminates** the ungrateful, obstinate disbelievers (3:141), or at least **misguides and burdens** them with enough sin to secure a severe humiliating punishment (3:178 | 9:115 | 13:32 | 19:75-84)

If we go back to Adam and Eve, I assume that their concealed greed—or envy of the angels—might not have been exposed if Satan had not interfered. Even the angels and Satan were put through a test to expose what they concealed. The angels concealed their uncertainty

[73] Remember, death is not the ending: death is only the end of the exam—the end of the second life. Believers who die fighting in Allah's cause are called "martyrs". They are upright believers who made a pledge to God that they will fight in his way, sacrificing their lives and wealth, in exchange for high rankings in Paradise, as God promised them in his divine scriptures (9:111-112). This is similar to how humans honor soldiers with high rank for their courage and sacrifice. And if martyrs have no pending rights and scores with other human beings, they are most likely to bypass the trials on Judgment Day. Even better, Martyrs get to experience Paradise before anyone else can enter it through its gates on the Last Day. God said, {Never say that those martyred in the way of Allah are dead—in fact, they are alive! But you do not perceive it.} (2:154) As I established before, the soul is in Al-Barzakh station when it's in the state of death. Since Allah is saying they are alive and not dead, I inferred that martyrs' souls are not sent to Al-Barzakh after their worldly life ends. The Hadith says that God makes their souls occupy the bodies of green birds (they get to drive an airplane instead of a car!!) who nest in chandeliers, hung from God's Throne, and they are allowed to fly to Paradise and eat from its fruits until the first trumpet blast on Judgment Day. There is great joy in that (2:169-172), but as the verse says, "But you do not perceive it", because our perception is limited to our worldly reality. (Side note: There are other types of deaths that also make a believer a martyr [Hadith], but the extent of reward for each type could vary.)

of the unseen that got exposed through their questioning, while Satan concealed his pride, envy, and arrogance that got exposed through his disobedience. Maybe Satan's pride and arrogance were never exposed until this incident. This is why he is so determined to make the Children of Adam fail in the same manner as he did (15:39).

The more we take the exam seriously and study by seeking the truth, the more likely we are going to pass the exam. Allah will guide the believers with his light to the straight path and to passing the exam. Those who do not want to believe that they are taking an exam in this seen world, or do not want to study while taking the open-book exam, are the biggest losers. They will live blind in darkness under the false pretense: "You only live once!" They are like the kids that go to school only to have fun and not to learn and pass the exams. So, the question becomes: Are you working for the rewards of this life, for the rewards of the life after, or both?

{And they (the disbelievers) say, "There is no life but our worldly life; we die and live, and nothing destroys us except time." They have no knowledge about that; they are only assuming.} (45:24)

{No soul can ever die without Allah's will at the destined time. Those who desire worldly rewards, We will let them have it, and those who

desire the rewards of the Hereafter, We will grant it to them. And We will reward those who are grateful.} (3:145)

Today, there are various kinds of people: a preponderance kind consumed in working only to earn the rewards of this life, a miniscule kind focused on earning the rewards of the life after, and everyone else is somewhere in between. From my life observations, people on both extremes tend to despise one another. They do not understand each other, and they see the other side as strangers who are completely ignorant about the rewards they are pursuing. We are all entitled to our own beliefs and choices (18:29). One of the choices is to work for the rewards of the herein and the hereafter. However, I would give some words of caution about living for this life's rewards: beware of favoring this fleeting life over the life after and getting drawn into this life's deceiving enjoyment at the cost of losing out on the eternal bliss of the hereafter. It is fine to enjoy this life, but do not let the enjoyment distract you, delude you, or make you sin. Do not let it give you a false purpose of why you are living on this Earth. Do not let it divert you from remembering, thanking, and trusting Allah, for he is indeed the sole bestower of all provisions. Do not be fooled by naive, deluded people that tell you the purpose of this worldly life is to pursue happiness, or it is whatever you want it to be—it is NOT!!!

{Whoever desires the fleeting (worldly life), We hasten for him from it whatever We will, to whomsoever we please; then later, We have appointed for him Hell, he will burn therein disgraced and rejected. And whoever desires the Hereafter (life) and strives for it, with the necessary effort due for it, while he is a believer, then such are the ones whose endeavor shall be thanked (by Allah). To each (kind of people) We extend—to these and to those—from the bounties of your Lord. And never has the bounties of your Lord been restricted.} (17:18-20)

{Every soul will taste death, and you will only be given your (full) compensation on the Day of Resurrection. So he who is drawn away from the Fire and admitted to Paradise has really succeeded. **And what is this worldly life except a delusive sojourn.** You will surely be tested in your possessions and in yourselves, and you will certainly hear (many hurtful words) from those who were given the Scripture before you and (from) the polytheists. But if you are patient and fear Allah, then this (observance) is among the matters of firm resolve.} (3:185-186)

{And avoid those who have taken their faith as fun and games. The worldly life (enjoyment) has deluded them…} (6:70)

My advice to you is to live this worldly life with two mindsets:

1) **Mindset of the Servant:** A servant is an obedient person who submits/surrenders to the authority of their master and relies on their master for support. And when they acknowledge that their master is Allah, they become a "Muslim". Sadly today, people, including many believers and so-called "Muslims", neither perceive nor treat God as their master. And at times when they deem themselves free of need of a supreme authority, they even forget about God. True Muslims should strive to be righteous believers who place their full trust in Allah and remain in a state of devoted servitude, fulfilling their duty toward him at all times, whether good or bad.
2) **Mindset of the Expatriate (Expat):** Expats are those who live away from their home country. Most expats live abroad to earn a better living than what they can earn at home. The general, sound mindset of an expat is to work hard and save money, with the goal of eventually returning home with enough savings to retire happily. This world is our transient home, and Heaven or Hell is our permanent home. Have faith in Allah, be patient, and work hard to earn and save righteous deeds to retire in Paradise instead of Hell. Also, similar to how an employee is expected to serve their employer and follow their code of conduct, you are also

expected to serve and obey your Lord in accordance with his code of conduct (i.e., Sharia).

As your brother in humanity, I warn you that without living this life with such mindsets or convictions, you will struggle with doing well on the exam. The lowest degree of faith is accepting to be a Muslim for fear of punishment in Hell, and the highest degree of faith is delightfully wanting to be the servant of Allah to seek his pleasure.

Exam results will be revealed on the Day of Reckoning, and everyone then, except for a few, will officially know if they are among the winners or among the losers. The winners are not the famous and the affluent, the ones with the most accolades and social media followers, nor the powerful and the most fit. The winners are those who purified themselves (87:14 | 91:9) and followed the straight path, achieving outstanding merits. Those winners can be from all walks of life and any bloodline or ethnicity. The most noble among the winners in the sight of Allah are those that are most pious.

{O mankind, indeed We have created you from male and female and made you peoples and tribes that you may know one another. Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most pious of you. Indeed, Allah is All-Knowing, All-Aware.} (49:13)

After the WINNERS merit the great reward of immortality in Paradise, it will be said to them by The Most Loving:

{"This is what you were promised—for every returner (to Allah) and **keeper (of His covenant). The one who feared the Most Gracious, without seeing Him, and came with a heart oriented toward Him.** Enter it (Paradise) in peace. That is the Day of Eternity."}(50:32-34)

{"Peace be upon you for what you patiently endured. And excellent is the final home."} (13:24)

{"This is a reward for you, and your effort was appreciated."} (76:22)

As for the LOSERS, The Punisher will say to them:

{"Step away (from the winners) today, O wicked ones! Did I not command you, O Children of Adam, not to follow Satan, for he is truly your sworn enemy, but to worship Me (alone)?! **This is the Straight Path.** Yet he already misled great multitudes of you. Did you not have any sense? This is the Hell you were warned of. Burn in it today for your disbelief."} (36:59-64)

Then, after they settle in paradise, the WINNERS will blissfully say:

{…"Praise be to Allah, who has guided us to this; and we would never have been guided if Allah had not guided us. Certainly, the messengers

of our Lord had come with the truth." And they will be called (by Allah), "This is Paradise, which you have been made to inherit for what you used to do." And the people of Paradise will call out to the people of the Fire, "We have already found what our Lord promised us to be true. Have you found what your Lord promised to be true?" They (people of fire) will say, "Yes." Then an announcer will announce among them, "The curse of Allah shall be upon the wrongdoers. Who averted (people) from the way of Allah and sought to make it (seem) deviant while they were the deniers of the Hereafter."} (7:43-45)

One will certainly wonder: why do we need to take this exam? I believe that the answer has many depths, as deep as the preexistence of time, but let me start from FREE WILL! Every single creation was created to worship (51:56) and glorify[74] (24:41 | 48:9) The Praiseworthy, The Glorious, and it cannot be otherwise when all creations are infinitely inferior to The Most High. We are all slaves belonging to God, whether we accept it or not (19:93). At various

[74] This is why Muslims keep glorifying Allah by saying these phrases: "Sub-han-nallah" (Glory be to Allah), "Al-ham-dul-lillah" (Praise be to Allah), "La-Hawla-wala-Quwata-illa-billah" (There is no might nor power except in Allah), and "Allah-Hoo-Akbar" (Allah is Greater). Chanting these phrases to remember Allah is called "Thikr". Unfortunately, and with the help of the deceiving media, deluded Muslims chanted "Allah-Hoo-Akbar" in wrong situations, making it sound evil to non-Muslims. Allah is greater than anything you can witness or imagine. And surrendering to Allah's will should be greater and take precedence over anything else one may need or desire. From my life experiences, I learned that one of the greatest personal trials God will put the believers in is what I call "The Allah-Hoo-Akbar Surrender and Sacrifice" (2:124), like a lamb accepting his fate (37:102-107). Side note: The greatest and hardest tribulation mankind will face is the Ad-Dajjal (Antichrist) Tribulation (Hadith), and I find divine wisdom that explains why God left it to the very end before Jesus' second coming. (Hints: the Exception, the Balance, the Test.)

points in time, the angels, mankind, and jinn were loaned a valuable favor called “Free Will” and offered the options of submitting to God’s authority either “willing” or “unwillingly” (3:83). Only if they choose “willingly” they get to keep their free will, but with a caveat—they must be examined if they are truthful. If they pass the exam, they get to keep it forever and receive a great reward; otherwise, they bear a severe consequence of their failure. The jinn and mankind dared to choose “willingly”, while the angels chose “unwillingly”. I inferred that God offered us the options in the first life, when he asked us, “Am I not your Lord?” and we said, “Yes, we have testified.” (7:172) We also said, “We have listened and obeyed.” (5:7) **This means mankind testified that Allah is their Lord and pledged that they will listen and obey him by their own free will. Allah then held their pledge as a covenant with him and had to decease them then revive them so that they take the worldly exam and bear the consequences of their choice and exam results. And before God deceased them, he also told them, {"Now you have no right to say on the Day of Resurrection, 'We were not aware of this.' Nor say, 'It was our forefathers who had associated others (with you) and we, as their descendants, followed in their footsteps. Will you then destroy us for the falsehood they invented?'"} (7:173) Also, most likely God**

then sent them to Paradise, to see for themselves the great reward they will be returning to, if they pass the exam (37:58-59 | 44:56 | 47:6?). It is as if God asked us if we were sure he can trust us with submitting to his authority by our own free will—**The Trust** (33:72)—and we said yes. Then God commanded us to bear witness to our choice, leaving us without excuse; if we fail to be truthful in keeping our pledge, we should not return to him pleading for a way out of Hell. In truth from Allah, the disbelievers who rejected his oneness will plead desperately for forgiveness on the Last Day, and none of them will think Allah is unjust for sentencing them to Hell (69:25-37).

{They will plead, "Our Lord! You made us lifeless twice and revived us twice. Now we confess our sins. So is there any way out?" (They will be told,) "(No!) This is because when Allah alone was invoked, you (staunchly) disbelieved. But when others were associated with Him, you (readily) believed. So (today) judgment belongs to Allah (alone)—the Most High, the Greatest."} (40:11-12)

To aid the Children of Adam in upholding their covenant and the Trust granted to them, thus passing the exam (90:11), God established the straight path—the only path to reach success (16:9)—and granted them guidance to this path (76:3) in two ways (An-Najdayn) (90:10):

1) **Human Genesis (Fitrah):** God formed human beings with a body, a soul, and knowledge that they must preserve in their original purity. While innate knowledge does not include the memory of the covenant and the first life[75], it does come with a deep and subtle awareness of God's existence and oneness, along with a sense of what is right, good, and true (30:30)—an internal compass! To make humans lose their internal guidance and purity (91:7-10)—their core humanity—Satan is keen on corrupting the environment that surrounds them with falsehood, lewdness, uncleanliness, and injustice. For this reason, humans also need external guidance.
2) **Allah's Religion (Deen):** I believe that Adam, Eve, and their first children witnessed the covenant made with mankind and were kept alive to continue their lives. It is fair to assume that they informed their children about the covenant, and each generation did their part until Satan made people forget about the covenant and their

[75] By concealing from humans the absolute truth, in regards to the purpose of the second life, God can test our sincerity in fulfilling our covenant. This is why we will never be contacted directly by God or by his angels, except for the chosen ones. Also, some non-believers foolishly say, "Is your god weak that he needs humans to defend him when we mock him?!" These people are ignorant of God and what he had decreed. Although we will always condemn blasphemy and false criticism, I do agree that The Almighty doesn't need us to defend him (3:176-178 | 47:32). What Allah asked us to do is to defend the truth, by defending his religion and his Way—the straight return path to him—supporting his messengers, and fighting anyone who prevents people from following his path and religion. And this is not for his sake, but for the sake of humanity. If someone dares to insult Allah, Allah will curse and take care of him/her in the herein and/or hereafter with a humiliating punishment (33:57), unless they repent and are forgiven beforehand. According to my interpretation of the Quran and the Hadith, it is not ordained by God to punish blasphemers for their ill speech (6:68-69 | 28:55), UNLESS the blasphemer sows discord (33:60-61) or becomes an overt enemy of Allah, his messengers, and those who follow them (2:217 | 5:33).

purpose of existence. And every time humanity transgressed, Allah intervened to remind them of the truth and to guide them back to the right way. Allah's religion—Islam—is the sent guidance on how humans can fulfill their covenant and duties, and all the ordinances revealed to the prophets (2:136 | 4:165) fall under Allah's religion—an external compass!

Those who will follow Allah's religion correctly are the obedient winners, and those who will fail are the rebellious, disobedient losers. The event of death is a tragedy for the losers, but a great relief for the winners. The losers will be sent to a penitentiary called Hell. Among the losers there will be believers: some of them will experience Hell for a very short time, while the rest will carry out their sentence in torment, unless they are released early by a pardon. Those losers failed to take the shortest path to Paradise. As for the non-believers among the losers, Hell is their final destination. They will be tortured there for ages, some of them forever.

By his favor and mercy, God could ensure everyone is guided to the straight path, but he will not because of a proclamation he made at the beginning of the story; when God proclaims a matter, he never reneges on his proclamation (50:29). Do you remember what he proclaimed?

{He (Iblis) said, "Reprieve me until the Day they are resurrected." He (Allah) said, "Indeed, you are of those reprieved." He (Iblis) said, "For allowing me to stray, I will surely sit for them (in ambush) on Your Straight Path. Then I will approach them from their front, their back, their right, their left, and then You will find most of them ungrateful (to You)." **He (Allah) said, "Get out of it, reproached and expelled. Whoever follows you among them—I will surely fill Hell with you and them, all together."**} (7:14-18)

The Most Truthful proclaimed that he will fill Hell with whomever Satan succeeds in misguiding (22:4 | 32:13). I reasoned that God made this proclamation so that his mercy is restricted from saving those who proved their unworthy of it, by favoring Satan's misguidance over God's guidance. Nevertheless, because Allah is never unjust to his creation (8:51), he first made the right faith and righteousness part of our instinct. Then God sent us his messengers with messages to remind us of him, to guide us to the right path, to warn us about Satan and Hell, and to correct any falsehood we might inherit from our forefathers (7:173). While we are on Earth, Hell is also a deterrent and a blessing in disguise that God frightens people with (39:16), so that they take the exam seriously. Sadly, many have treated his signs and what they were warned of as a jest (18:56). **If Satan can deceive you**

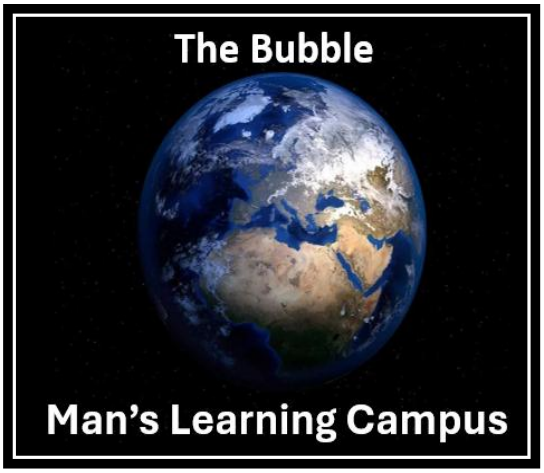
into following him, it means you are a rebel like him. All impious souls will pitifully confess on the Last Day that no one should be blamed but themselves and the evil influencers they followed.

Furthermore, Muslims, who chose to submit to Allah alone, are granted an immense favor of being absolved from all past sin, essentially becoming "born-again Muslims". This favor is granted during Hajj at Arafah, highly likely the same place where they came into existence in the first life (90:1-4). On the Day of Arafah, God asked his pilgrims to spend the day repenting and glorifying him, and in return he would absolve[76] them of all their previously recorded evil deeds (Hadith). The angels on this day will get to witness Adam's descendants—the obedient God-fearing ones—who traveled from all over the world, praising and sanctifying their Lord (Hadith). They are among the ones who are on the path of keeping their covenant, even though they never met their Lord in the second life. I also perceive this rite as a form of a worldly rehearsal for the gathering on the Last Day.

This was the picture that I had unfolded not too long ago, but it was still not the full picture. As I was writing this book, I asked myself,

[76] There are some stipulations that must be met. Also, Muslims who are not performing Hajj have the opportunity to benefit from this important day. And speaking of absolving someone from past sins, non-Muslims who convert to Islam are also absolved from all past sins (8:38), but as long as the Gate of Repentance is still open. Moreover, God guaranteed the Muslims that he will accept the best of their deeds, overlook their misdeeds, and admit them in Paradise, if they manage to reach a high level of righteousness and gratitude by the age of forty (46:15-16).

"Allah must have known that humans would want to keep their free will and that they have the capacity to fulfill their pledge and covenant, when guided, so is there more meaning to this life on Earth?" That is when I realized that the worldly exam is an integral part of a greater purpose. **What people do not know is that our worldly life is a learning academy <u>to achieve an esoteric divine objective</u>, and that Earth is our learning campus—The Bubble! I believe that this is the untold esoteric purpose of this worldly life that nearly all humans do not know.** This is not something we must know; therefore, this is not part of the told truth, but a deeply hidden part of the untold I uncovered when I entered the cave of the Quran. I find the Exam to be an evaluation of our Learning Performance in the bubble. The two designated Angels watching us are the Exam Observers (50:18), who are tasked to record our performance in the Book of Deeds (78:29). The Holy Scriptures are the Learning Guidebooks (34:44), and the Chosen Ones are the Teachers and Role Models (33:21 | 60:4 | 62:2). To survive in the bubble, The Provider of Sustenance gave us all what we need (15:19-22), from water to oxygen, sunlight, vegetation, cattle, medical cure, etc. This is why



Earth is different from all other planets, yet humans are ignorantly blind! Only blind, ignorant people that do not know why God created planet Earth have an interest in colonizing other planets.

{It is Allah Who created the Heavens and the Earth and sends down rain from the Sky, causing fruits to grow as a provision for you. He has subjected the ships for your service, sailing through the sea by His command, and has subjected the rivers for you. He has (also) subjected for you the sun and the moon, both constantly orbiting, and has subjected the day and night for you. And He has granted you all that you asked Him for. If you tried to count Allah's grace, you would never be able to enumerate them. Indeed, humankind is truly unfair, (totally) ungrateful.} (14:32-34)

With time and wisdom, people realize that the Earth is a school, but they are oblivious to its true purpose. To understand what we need to learn inside the bubble, we need to go back, once again, to where it started—back to Paradise. You see, Adam and Eve were easily deluded by Satan's false promise. He promised them immortality or angel wings, but in reality it was just a TREE (ha!). He misled them into disobedience, because of their desire of what could only be earned through obedience. God warned them about Satan, but because they

had no resolve and were forgetful (20:15), they broke their pledge and **failed at the first test of obedience and following good advice—a timeless lesson that humanity struggles with**. Also, did they know what it means to disobey The Supreme? Did they appreciate God as their Lord? Were they grateful for all the blessings God had bestowed upon them in Paradise? Did they understand why Free Will is a great privilege? Did they even strive patiently to merit immortality (21:37)? I do not think so. Accordingly, I believe that God gave Adam's descendants the same choices, but since God knew that they also would fail to remember to obey him at all times, **God had to send them first to school—to learn and get disciplined!!!** I believe that we are here on Earth, explicitly as a consequence of Adam and Eve's disobedience, but implicitly because humans have a lot to learn and exhibit before they earn the right to live in Paradise as free immortals. I believe that The Initiator knew that all along, from the moment he told the angels he was going to create Man and make him his deputy upon the Earth.

To make it to Paradise, the first and most vital lesson that one must pass in the bubble is the lesson of servitude, and servitude requires discipline. You must learn to submit to Allah's authority and will, by obeying his commandments and exhibiting firm resolve in doing so, and how can you do such a thing if you first don't believe in Allah's

existence, the hereafter, and that Allah is your only Lord?! This is why the exam's evaluation criteria, which I shared at the beginning of this chapter, is very crucial. Now, there are several other important lessons we need to learn, among them the lessons of gratitude and appreciation. They include: to appreciate Allah by contemplating his attributes and creation; to be grateful for all his graces that he has bestowed upon us; and to appreciate Paradise, after we have earned the right to dwell in it as free immortals by overcoming disciplinary and enlightening trials.

Learning the truth from the Quran and the Hadith, as well as my fear of Allah's severe punishment, was sufficient to bring me into servitude to Allah; however, what turned me into a devout servant of Allah today is the immense reverence I have for him. With greater knowledge and experience, I have come to understand Allah more deeply, leading to a profound sense of admiration and connection. I admire his magnificence that I find in his dominion. I admire his patience and love, his mercy and kindness, and his countless graces I find in our life affairs. I admire his wisdom, balance, and justice. I wholeheartedly appreciate and love everything I have come to know of him. **He is The Hidden One, but now that I have come to know of him, by discerning his names, his creation, and his last divine message—sent to me and you—he became to me The Manifest.**

Furthermore, I believe that I would not have been able to understand and appreciate God's attributes if God did not extend those attributes to mankind. Does this mean we have been made in the image of God, as the book of Genesis claims? Absolutely not! An image of something is the exact reflection or representation of it. It is foolish to believe we are a representation of a deity in flesh. We are not The Maker of all things, but we are makers of few material things, nor The All-Knowing, but God gave us knowledge of some things, nor The All-Wise, but God gave us some level of wisdom, nor The Most Loving, but we fall in love, nor The Most Merciful, The Forgiver, but we can show mercy and forgiveness toward others, and so on. It is God who extended some of his attributes to us, at limited capacity, never comparable to God's limitless capacity, not to live in his image, but to experience these attributes ourselves in the bubble and learn and understand firsthand what they mean. I do not think God extended all those attributes to the angels, for example.

What also distinguishes humans from other creations is their intelligence. Man, the last to be created, is superior to most creations (17:90) due to his high intelligence. The accumulative knowledge, which is passed on from one generation to another, is intended to allow humans to reach their full intellectual capacity and understanding. This

intellectual capacity, combined with the extended attributes, is intended to allow humans to appraise Allah and accord him his true measure and worth; **hence, becoming his pious servants, who revere him, surrender to his authority, wholeheartedly and willingly, and fear his exalted standing and disapproval (79:40).** This is what the angels did not know about the new creation that will become Allah's vicegerent on Earth.

{When your Lord said to the angels, "Indeed, I will make upon the Earth a vicegerent!" They said, "Will You make upon it one who causes corruption therein and sheds blood, while we declare Your praise and sanctify You?" **He (Allah) said, "Indeed, I know that which you do not know."**} (2:30)

We were not created to cause corruption and shed blood, but it is Satan who has been working relentlessly to make us behave like the creation that the angels were referencing in the above verse. He seeks to dehumanize people and make them believe that life is nothing more than survival of the fittest, thereby inciting aggression, immorality, and the spilling of blood. He is determined to prove to Allah that the creation Allah made from clay, and to last inhabit the Earth, is no better than the preceding creations, and that he is the one who should have

been elected as “Vicegerent of Allah”. However, what Satan did not know at first is that Man is much more than a weak material body that originated from dust. **Man is his soul!!!** A human soul is innately weak due to its desires—strong feelings—but if it can learn to control its desires and discipline itself, it can become a very strong, resolute soul, and much stronger if it has a spiritual connection with God. **We were created weak to strive for perfection, not as we perceive it, but as per Allah’s measure—a perfectly balanced human being on the narrow straight path!** As for the angels, what they did not know at first is that among the Children of Adam there will be righteous, pious servants who—like them—will learn to praise and sanctify their Lord, but—unlike them—to the extent of love and without seeing him, and thereby excel in the bubble. And for mankind to pass the program’s exam, they need to study and gain knowledge. We need intelligence and knowledge to infer that the Islamic told story is indeed the truth. I believe that this is why Allah first taught Adam the names of things, the building blocks of knowledge, and why the first words he revealed to his last and final prophet, an illiterate man of excellent character, started with “Iqra'” (“Read” in English).

People often want miracles to believe. They want to witness with their own eyes a supernatural spectacle. However, while miracles

might be enough to make one a believer, they are not enough to make one understand the truth about God and why they are here on Earth. This is why God told prophet Muhammad, and all the generations to come after him, "Read!" If you want to understand this life we are living, then you must read God's last message sent to Earth—the Quran. The Quran contains evidence of God's existence and explanations of all important matters. This is why the Quran was revealed, and why God made sure to preserve it until end times. Also, reading the Quran gives "Basira" (inner vision for insight). You see, the brain projects three inner visions in the "Fouad" (the mind and third eye [located in the pineal gland?]) for the soul to perceive. The first vision comes from our eyesight, the second comes from dreams, and the third comes from what we call "insight". The full picture I am sharing with you is what I see through my insight. This picture is the Islamic told story plus my inferences of the untold. Insight requires knowledge and wisdom, and those who seek the truth about God and the meaning of life get their insight nurtured by God (2:269 | 6:104 | 11:120). Without the knowledge of the truth, or what God calls **"knowledge of certitude"** (78:4 | 102:3,5), one is blind. Truth is light, and falsehood is its absence. Moreover, certitude is necessary to build conviction and trust in God. Today, most Muslims say they trust Allah

but in practice they fail to show it. Some Muslims even fell victim to Satan's deceptions and resigned from Islam. Without the knowledge of certitude, people, including believers, are vulnerable to Satan's deceptions. Satan has been working for ages to hide this knowledge of certitude from us and to suppress our innate knowledge with falsehood. He succeeded in convincing modern-day humans that knowledge is limited to scientific discoveries and the knowledge of what humans invent (53:30). He doesn't want us to know the knowledge in the Quran that makes us believe and trust Allah, unlike The Guide, who will guide to the truth anyone who is mindful of him and seeks him (42:13).

Many educated people did a great job in observing God's creation and in reading many books to gain finite knowledge and insight of how the universe is driven, but they failed terribly to learn about The Preserver who is driving and preserving it. They do not have the insight to realize that it is Allah who inspired us to achieve scientific discoveries so that we can appreciate him by discerning his work (41:53). They can't have such insight without gaining the knowledge found in the holy scriptures, more so in the last scripture than any other. Consequently, they failed to accord Allah the reverence he deserves (22:74) and were oblivious to the hereafter (30:7). Yes, their failure is due to Satan's deceptions; however, they didn't try hard enough, if at

all, to seek the truth and give God the benefit of the doubt. Even worse, they started championing scientific theories as the absolute truth to support their position that there is no such thing as The Originator. They became blind and trapped in Satan's matrix of delusion. **Satan's matrix of delusion is the forbidden tree—The Tree of Delusion!!!** Without the knowledge of certitude, they cannot see the true reality. Disbelievers' insight is filled with delusion—walls of delusion (i.e., false indisputable convictions)—making them think it is the believers who are delusional. They cannot free themselves from their delusion, and without faith in God's existence they are not granted any external help, unless The Guide chooses by his own will to make an exception.

Before anything was created, The Ever-Living brilliantly wrote everything that will exist and happen before the Last Day, to achieve an objective—hence, destiny. Everything is predestined to happen as per what Allah wrote in the Preserved Tablet, and he makes changes as he wishes (13:39). In other words, the story, stage, learning program, trials, characters, plots, roles, positions, rules, etc., were predestined (54:49 | 57:22), and Allah does not wrong anyone (4:40). I visualize our life's construct as a recorded (6:59 | 50:4) interactive movie—serving a purpose and not for God's entertainment—which is simulated (in a simulation?) and is now playing in extreme slow

motion relative to God's measure of time (22:47). This could explain how God knows the future and shares news of future events with whom he chooses (e.g., claims in holy scriptures, prophecies, visions in dreams). And no matter how hard physicists try, they will never figure out this construct (6:59). **We are only here on Earth as actors in this movie to perform in every position we are placed in, and our effort/performance in every position will determine the roles and paths assigned to us. We have control over our choices, through free will, but not over outcomes and what is decreed (57:22-23).** Life opportunities and circumstances, which route us into different positions, roles, and paths, are all regulated by God (32:5). They are correlated with our performance in fulfilling our true purpose in life, and the freedom we have been given, in principle, is to fulfill this purpose. Nevertheless, if we have a need or a request, The Responder told us to invoke him, and he will respond (40:60 | 42:25-26) as he sees best. Never underestimate the power of prayer—it is so powerful that it can even change your own fate (Hadith)—but you need to invoke the correct lord and demonstrate perseverance and resilient patience to earn what you request, if Allah wills.

Because Allah is equitable, all actors in this movie will get recompensed in full for their performance (53:39-41), after it ends. The

best performers are his sincere and devout servants, and the performers amongst them with the highest honors (exam scores) are the Prophets and “Allies of Allah” ('Awliy'a Allah) (10:62). Allah tends to have a new role for a lot of them, after they reach their peak maturity level in their fortieth year. By then, one should have had plenty of time to seek the truth and to strive in facing many trials and tribulations in life, demonstrating to The Observer their sincerity, unwavering trust, rectitude, certitude, and servitude. And for those of them who find it difficult to restrain their desires, forty years should be enough time to learn how to do so and become well-disciplined. This is why the fortieth year is a very pivotal year in one's life. To be chosen in your forties for an important new role with a special assignment is like successfully finishing life’s lessons by midterm and earning Allah’s trust to become a Teacher, guiding others on how to pass those lessons.

Intertwined with our visible world are invisible systems and agents. I will never be able to uncover all the learning lessons and enigmatic systems The Absolutely Pure has put in place for us in this worldly life, but I trust that they are all balanced, wise, fair, and pure from any fault. In my late teenage years, I vaguely reasoned that life is a school, but God and religion were not a factor in my reasoning. Now, however, I have become fully conscious of what this school is about, and how

all crucial life lessons revolve around knowing and revering Allah, like how planets revolve around the sun, and pilgrims around the Ka'bah. Every lesson, or lawful action, starts with "In the name of Allah" (96:1-5). As a devout servant of Allah, my goals in life are: to nurture and strengthen my (spiritual) bond with my Lord and not neglect its existence; to obey my Master and be grateful to all what he has bestowed upon me; to periodically glorify my Creator; and to be the best righteous performer of deeds (67:2) that I can be. I do not want to disappoint my beloved Lord nor disappoint all the beloved chosen teachers that were sent to us in the past, peace be upon them all. If there is anyone I want to disappoint, it is my overt enemy, who wants me and you to fail. Are we going to let him succeed?! Over my dead body!!

When Adam and Eve were sent down to the bubble, their first descendants were one ummah (nation) united by faith, but Satan has been working since then to misguide and divide mankind. The Witness allowed this to happen to carry out his learning program and to test us. Nevertheless, I strongly believe that The Dominant ultimately wants Satan to be subdued, and for the Earth's inhabitants to be once again a nation united by faith. This means, in end times, Allah will only protect his remaining righteous servants from his torment (6:65) and "purge", so that they inherit and rule the Earth as one sovereignty, one ummah

(like prophet Noah's time). I reasoned that this is bound to happen around the time Satan and his party get finally defeated for good with the coming of the two long-awaited men, Al-Mahdi and prophet Isa (Jesus). This will be Allah's final major intervention, achieving his ultimate objective and the promise of end times—the movie climax and final reset. Al-Mahdi[77] will be the one to expose the truth ("The Great Awakening"), destroy Satan's matrix and all evil forces, and establish law and order on Earth and the true Islamic state. This will anger Ad-Dajjal and eventually force him to come out of his hiding, by Allah's permission. He will attempt to kill Al-Mahdi and his companions and salvage whatever he can, by deceiving people in person—**becoming himself the forbidden tree!!!** After a short span of time, God will then intervene by sending down Jesus to have his (delayed) victory (37:171-173), by killing Ad-Dajjal and his Jewish

[77] I have come to realize that there might be a secret that involves Al-Mahdi, which God has left to the end times to reveal to everyone. The existence of a secret was brought to my attention by the 9th century Persian Muslim scholar, Al-Hakim At-Tirmidhi, and by the 12th century Andalusian Muslim scholar, Muhyiddin ibn Arabi, through their cryptic writings. I think I figured out this secret. This secret has several aspects and is at the essence of the story Allah predestined. I found several verses in the Quran that support one aspect of this secret. If I am right, this one aspect will shock everyone, especially the Muslim world. I am not comfortable sharing in full what I have derived from this secret. Nevertheless, here is what I am comfortable sharing: I have concluded that Al-Mahdi is to Man as what Iblis is to Jan, this is why some prophets called him the Son of Man. Both Satan and Al-Mahdi finished first among their kind, but Satan failed to meet God's ultimate objective, while Al-Mahdi succeeded, this is why Al-Mahdi is the one to be crowned Allah's ultimate deputy/vicegerent, with the reward of appointing him as the ruler of the whole Earth. I believe that there is also an esoteric reason why God gave Satan a reprieve from going to Hell. The esoteric reason is to allow Satan to see for himself that he was wrong when {He said, "I am better than him. You created me from fire and created him from clay."} (38:76), and that God made the right choice, even with all of Satan's devilish efforts to make mankind fail during the Era of Satan. Son of Man versus Son of Jan, Son of Man will win. **HUMANITY WINS!!!** Again, Allah knows best.

supporters (17:8 | Hadith), and to confirm the divine truth. Jesus will settle all remaining disputes and uncertainties among the living, and rule in peace for forty years until his first true death (Hadith).

{Every one of the People of the Scripture will definitely believe in him before his death (i.e., after his second coming). And on the Day of Resurrection Jesus will be a witness against them.} (4:159)

I concluded that right before Jesus descends to Earth, God's Gate of Repentance will be shut, since the inferred truth is about to be confirmed, through a witnessed miracle (major sign). Witnessing the miracle of Jesus' return and the truth he will confirm is equivalent to an official answer sheet (43:61) to this life's exam, and I reasoned God will close the Gate of Repentance before then[78]. If I am correct, and considering end times prophecies, this means the sun will rise from the west before the second coming. I reasoned that this extraordinary sign will occur during the time of Ad-Dajjal, and he will use this sign to falsely claim that it is he who made the sun rise from the west[79];

[78] The people who will witness the second coming, and all future generations, will inherit this answer sheet, and once you have the official right answers, you have no excuse for answering incorrectly on the exam. Since misdeeds and disbelief are equivalent to wrong answers, and acceptance of repentance is equivalent to accepting changes to wrong answers, I reasoned that God will close the Gate of Repentance before the revelation of the right answers.

[79] One possible scientific explanation for the sun rising from the west is related to the change in the direction of the Earth's rotation. Initially, the days or nights will be very long (28:71-73), then they will gradually shorten as the reversed rotation gradually picks up speed, until everything is back to normal. This could explain a Hadith in which prophet Muhammad said that Ad-Dajjal will remain on Earth for forty days: a day like a year, a day like a month, a day like a week, and the rest of the days like the normal days we are familiar with. Allah knows best.

therefore, a major sign that he is a deity, in reference to prophet Ibrahim's argument (2:258). I am connecting dots here, based on what I derived from the Quran and the narrated prophecies. Only Allah knows the absolute truth of when the major signs will occur, in what order, and what exactly will happen in the future. Now I wait for the events I foresee to happen soon.

{Are they awaiting the coming of the angels, or your Lord (Himself), or some of your Lord's (major) signs? **On the day your Lord's signs arrive, belief will not benefit those who did not believe earlier or those who did no good through their faith. Say, "Keep waiting! We too are waiting**."} (6:158)

We will always be curious about what will happen in the future and about the past. We want to know everything (important)—at least I do—almost as if it is by design. For example, why did God offer free will in the first place? Is it because Allah wants some of his creations to appreciate, revere, and obey him by their own free will and without seeing him? If so, but why? For every answer to every "why?" one could ask, "But why?" Human curiosity is endless, isn't it?! However, no matter how much knowledge we seek, we will never know beyond what Allah wants us to know (2:255); therefore, we cannot keep asking

like young kids, “But why?” There is still more depth to the full picture, but I will stop here by sharing something to ponder on:

Fulfillment of God’s glory, as per the decreed.

To recap mankind’s journey on Earth, let me help you visualize this journey in a simple abstract, using the car and driver analogy that I used before. The journey of a human soul inside the bubble starts with a body and an environment. The body is the car, while the environment (social, economic, political, cultural, spiritual, natural, etc.) forms the surrounding conditions the car has to drive in. We don’t get to pick the car and the conditions we receive early on in our journey: they are picked by God, as a consequence of our parents’ virtues and as per God’s wisdom and choosing (3:6). In the bubble, there is a main road that all traveling drivers need to reach and drive on. However, since it takes time to learn how to drive correctly, the environment plays a vital role in determining our actual starting point in the bubble. This is why parenting and the environment we grow up in—both vital contributors to how we are nurtured—are extremely important. You are blessed if you start your journey within proximity to the main road, thanks to your God-fearing parents (or ancestors) who supplicated to Allah for a righteous offspring (46:15) and who have put in the effort to raise you

up in a healthy environment. The least blessed are those who start their journey far from the main road. Nevertheless, as we learned from the stories of the prophets, there are no guarantees that people will stay on the same path they were brought up on. We all get to make our own life choices.

Each car comes with electric power, internet wireless connectivity connected to the cloud, a black box (similar to the one that records all plane activities), and an odometer. The odometer's counter is actually invisible, and it works a bit differently than what we are used to. At any given time, the counter can count up (increase) or count down (decrease), depending on the path and direction we are driving. If you are driving on the main road, you can rest assured your counter is only counting up. The car's electric power will determine what hidden features of the car should be turned on or off. The car also has a radio with many channels. The unlawful and evil channels will tempt you to

make detours from the main road, if you are on it or heading toward it, and to take different paths, because nothing is more boring than driving in a straight line (not quite true!). They will find whatever enticing pretexts to get you on many straying paths—anywhere but the main road. It is best to stay disciplined and not tune in to those channels.

If you started your journey far off the main road, most likely you are unaware it exists. There is also a good chance that you do not have a navigation system and a virtual personal assistant to guide you on your journey. If you do have them, there is a chance you might have the fake versions, the rigged versions, the inadequate versions, the old versions, or maybe the right version but you are not using it. Whatever the case may be, in this day and age, at some time in your life journey you will hear about these navigation systems and virtual personal assistants. It will be up to you to decide if you want to learn more about them, use them, or simply turn a deaf ear (81:26-29). One thing is certain: you will not be guided to the main road without the right navigation system, unless you are destined to meet other drivers who can guide you (and you are willing to follow them). The right navigation system, with its virtual personal assistant, has the best guidance to get you to the main road. It will provide you with the right driving requirements to ensure you get and stay on that road.

Driving in the bubble could have been easy were it not for the difficult challenges and hurdles along the journey. Some challenges are there to develop and test your driving skills, and some challenges are there to punish you for your bad driving. And if you are a bad driver that does not want to learn and be disciplined to drive properly, some hurdles are there to prevent you from getting on the main road (9:115). If you rely on the right virtual personal assistant and navigation system, then you are in good shape. What matters in the end is your location and the reading of the odometer counter when the car suddenly and completely stalls.

YOUR TIME IN THE BUBBLE IS UP.
PASS OR FAIL?

For genuinely seeking God and the truth (Haniffan), God did not respond to me through a direct revelation, nor from behind a partition, nor through his archangel Gabriel, but rather through a message, conveyed by his final prophet and which I have received. By examining this message, I found my purpose in life and my creator. I found signs of my Lord in his message and in many of my life experiences and observations. The more I knew of him, the more I fell

in love with him and got drawn to his greatness. And when I eventually held firmly to my faith, he guided me to the straight path—the path that will get me back to him in paradise. All I have to do is follow his path to pass his learning program and fulfil my covenant. First give The Most High the benefit of the doubt by surrendering yourself to him, then study the Quran (with the commentary from various exegetes to understand context—I already did most of the hard work for you). I am certain that your soul will be reminded of the truth, if you have no malady in your heart. This truth will grant you the certitude in faith you need to hold fast to Allah and trust him, and consequently earn the guidance to **The Straight Path**, InSha'Allah. Then follow the guidance and do not follow Satan and your desires if you wish to be among the winners. People that want to follow the truth tend to embrace Islam, and people that want to follow their desires tend to renounce Islam. If there is any desire one should follow, it should be the desire to seek Allah's pleasure and closeness.

O Children of Adam! It comes down to this: either the forbidden tree and Hell, or Allah and Paradise! O Children of Adam! The forbidden tree is decorated with vanities, false promises, and illusions! For your own salvation, do not be losers! For your own salvation, stay away from the forbidden!!!

قُلْ يَٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلنَّاسُ قَدْ جَآءَكُمُ ٱلْحَقُّ مِن رَّبِّكُمْ ۖ فَمَنِ ٱهْتَدَىٰ فَإِنَّمَا يَهْتَدِى لِنَفْسِهِۦ ۖ
وَمَن ضَلَّ فَإِنَّمَا يَضِلُّ عَلَيْهَا ۖ وَمَآ أَنَا۠ عَلَيْكُم بِوَكِيلٍ

{Say, "O Mankind! The truth has come to you from your Lord.
So whoever chooses to be guided, it is only for their own good.
And whoever chooses to stray, it is only to their own loss.
And I am not a keeper over you."} (10:108)

وَٱلَّذِينَ ٱهْتَدَوْا۟ زَادَهُمْ هُدًى وَءَاتَىٰهُمْ تَقْوَىٰهُمْ

{And as for those who are guided, He (Allah) increases them
in guidance and gives them their piety.} (47:17)

قُلْ إِنَّمَا يُوحَىٰٓ إِلَىَّ أَنَّمَآ إِلَٰهُكُمْ إِلَٰهٌ وَٰحِدٌ ۖ فَهَلْ أَنتُم مُّسْلِمُونَ

{Say, "What has been revealed to me is this:
'Your deity is only one God.' Will you then submit?"} (21:108)

يَٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُواْ ٱدۡخُلُواْ فِي ٱلسِّلۡمِ كَآفَّةٗ
وَلَا تَتَّبِعُواْ خُطُوَٰتِ ٱلشَّيۡطَٰنِۚ إِنَّهُۥ لَكُمۡ عَدُوّٞ مُّبِينٞ

{O believers! Enter in the peace (of the Straight Path),
all together, and do not follow Satan's footsteps.
Surely he is your overt enemy.} (2:208)

هَٰذَا بَلَٰغٞ لِّلنَّاسِ وَلِيُنذَرُواْ بِهِۦ وَلِيَعۡلَمُوٓاْ أَنَّمَا هُوَ إِلَٰهٞ وَٰحِدٞ وَلِيَذَّكَّرَ أُوْلُواْ ٱلۡأَلۡبَٰبِ

{This (Quran) is a message conveyed to the people,
so that they may be warned, and so that they may know that
He is one God and so that the people of reason be reminded.} (14:52)

فَإِنَّمَا يَسَّرۡنَٰهُ بِلِسَانِكَ لَعَلَّهُمۡ يَتَذَكَّرُونَ

{Indeed, We have made it (i.e., this Quran) easier in your tongue
so perhaps they may be reminded.} (44:58)

وَلَقَدْ يَسَّرْنَا ٱلْقُرْءَانَ لِلذِّكْرِ فَهَلْ مِن مُّدَّكِرٍ

{And we have made the Quran easier to understand and remember; so, will any (of you) be mindful?} (54:17)

وَلَقَدْ كَتَبْنَا فِى ٱلزَّبُورِ مِنۢ بَعْدِ ٱلذِّكْرِ أَنَّ ٱلْأَرْضَ يَرِثُهَا عِبَادِىَ ٱلصَّٰلِحُونَ

إِنَّ فِى هَٰذَا لَبَلَٰغًا لِّقَوْمٍ عَٰبِدِينَ

{And we have written in Az-Zabur after the Reminder that the Earth will be inherited by My righteous servants. Surely, in this there is a message conveyed to those devoted in worshiping (Allah).} (21:105-106)

وَفَوْقَ كُلِّ ذِى عِلْمٍ عَلِيمٌ

{...and over every possessor of knowledge is one (more) knowing.} (12:76)

Epilogue

He is Allah !

O Children of Adam!

Know your Lord by contemplating his best names[80]*!*

HE WAS FIRST ALONE, UNKNOWN

1. He is The Deity (Al-E•lah) (الإله) because he is worthy to be obeyed and worshiped.

Comment: And nothing is worthy of worship except Allah.

[80] Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said, "Allah has ninety nine names, i.e., one hundred minus one, and whoever accounts them will go to Paradise." This does not necessarily mean that Allah has only ninety nine names, for indeed his immutable attributes are vast. I find the ninety nine names to be the best names that can help humans understand who Allah is. Accordingly, this is my attempt to account for these names (i.e., to research, discover, evaluate, comprehend, and list) and briefly explain their meaning. A good portion of these names are stated in the Quran, while the rest are deduced from the context of some verses and what was mentioned in the Hadith. Please also note that the names are in Arabic, and some names are impossible to translate to English with absolute precision. Nevertheless, my interpretation should compensate for any inaccuracies. I started my effort by first examining the accounting of other scholars and individuals that came before me, and I am very grateful for their efforts. The objective here is not to compete over who has the most accurate accounting, but rather to know our Lord well and accord him the proper reverence he is entitled to. May Allah guide us all to achieving this objective.

2. He is The Magnificent (Al-'Atheem) (العظيم) because his attributes and signs exhibit unmatched excellence.

   Comment: You find signs of Allah's magnificence everywhere you look: in the human body, the Earth, the universe, the Quran, and so on. And it is really awful to see how most people do not accord him the reverence he deserves.

3. He is The Absolute Truth (Al-Haqq) (الحق) because he is real and the source of all reality.

   Comment: Allah is not an imaginary character. Just because we haven't seen him yet, it doesn't mean he is not real.

4. He is The One (Al-Wa•hid) (الواحد) because he is the only deity that exists, with no partners, nor rivals, and he is indivisible.

   Comment: All other worshiped deities are false gods, and Allah is not a triad nor a pantheon.

5. He is The Unique (Al-Ahad) (الأحد) because none is comparable to him.

   Comment: No vision can comprehend Allah; therefore, it is impossible to imagine his complete true form and identity.

6. He is The First (Al-Aw•wal) (الأول) because there was no deity or supreme power before him.

   Comment: Allah was not begotten.

7. He is The Last (Al-Akher) (الآخر) because there will be no deity or supreme power after him.

   Comment: And Allah begets not.

8. He is The Ever-Living (Al-Hayy) (الحي) because he is constantly and endlessly alive and conscious.

   Comment: Allah does not die and relive, nor does he sleep.

9. He is The Free of Living Necessities (As-Sa•mad) (الصمد) because he has no necessities to be satisfied.

   Comment: For example, Allah does not need to eat and drink, nor does he need a companion.

10. He is The Absolutely Pure (Al-Qud•doos) (القدوس) because he is sacred, free of any impurity and fault.

Comment: Impurities and faults may arise from any being, but never from Allah, the most sacred.

11. He is The Majestic One (Aj-Ja•leel) (الجليل) because his beauty and perfection is supreme and looking at him causes awe.

Comment: The next time Allah will appear to humans, revealing his face to them, will be in Paradise. This will be the greatest reward.

12. He is The Most Honorable (Al-Ka•reem) (الكريم) because he deserves the utmost veneration and addressing him causes awe.

Comment: Allah cannot be addressed like any other. One must be incredibly careful and respectful when addressing him.

13. He is The Dignified Overpowering One (Almighty) (Al-A•zeez) (العزيز) because he has self-respect and does not accept anyone to dishonor him nor overpower him.

Comment: For example, humans can have children, and one day the children may dishonor their parents and overpower them, or engineers can create robots, and one day the robots can overpower their inventors, but what Allah creates can never overpower him.

14. He is The Most Strong (Al-Qa•wee) (القوي) because he possesses unlimited powers.

Comment: Allah doesn't need any assistance, nor does he face any weaknesses in his effort, and when he punishes minuscule powers, he punishes them with great might.

15. He is The Believer (Al-Mo'•min) (المؤمن) because he believed in his own attributes and in all what will happen before it happens.

Comment: Before he wrote all what will happen, Allah believed in himself, in his creations, and in achieving his ultimate objective.

THEN HE CREATED

16. He is The Creator (Al-Kha•liq) (الخالق) because he is the one who created the Heavens and the Earth, and everything they contain.

Comment: Even when humans create new things, they are doing it by Allah's permission.

17. He is The Most Gracious (Ar-Rah•man) (الرحمن) because his mercy and grace encompass all things.

Comment: For example, Allah could have made the Sky appear red, resulting in an unpleasant physiological effect on humans, but out of his mercy and grace he made it appear blue, where blue has a calming and relaxing physiological effect. Another example is physical pain. Pain alerts us to an abnormality in the body. Furthermore, the word "Rah•man" has the same roots as the word "Ra•him", which means "womb". As if Allah is comparing his mercy, which encompasses all his creations, to a womb that encompasses a baby with care and protection. Allah knows best.

18. He is The Architect (Al-Fa•tir) (الفاطر) because he masterfully architected all his creations with great skill and attention to detail.

Comment: Allah created all his creations to serve a defined role and purpose. And with a great level of detail, he determined their measures and proportions, and how they interact with each other, if required.

19. He is The Maker (Al-Ba•riI) (البارئ) because he made many things, by evolving them from one form to another form.

Comment: After the so-called "Big Bang", elements started to form, and elements evolved into other elements, and with all these elements, Allah made things, and with few things he made other

things. There is no "natural selection" in evolution, and there is no evolution without Allah.

20. He is The Originator (Al-Ba•dee') (البديع) because his creations are original.

Comment: Allah didn't need to imitate nor be inspired by the work of others. All his creations are his own original inventions.

21. He is The Designer (Al-Mu•souw•wer) (المصور) because he is the one who designs the form and look of his original creations and their subsequent variations.

Comment: Quantum physics, math, and sacred geometry probably hold the fundamental elements of Allah's design.

22. He is The Subtle One (Al-La•teef) (اللطيف) because he is very delicate in his creation and treatment, with certain subtleness and precision that is oblivious to most, if not all, living creatures.

Comment: For example, I reasoned that Allah created a subtle system that allows him to know what is hidden in the chests of mankind. Also, given how powerful Allah is and how weak and infinitesimal his slaves are, Allah is very delicate in how he treats them.

23. He is The Giver of Life (Al-Moh•yi) (المحيي) because only he can give life to his creations.

Comment: Even when his chosen ones bring the dead to life, they are doing it with Allah's permission and supervision.

24. He is The Initiator (Al-Mub•diI) (المبدئ) because he is the one who initiates everything.

Comment: For example, he is the one who initiated the universe, theorized today as the "Big Bang". He is the one who initiates storms and the emergence of new civilizations, then he repeats. Therefore, there is no such thing as randomness.

25. He is The Repeater (Al-Mu-'eed) (المعيد) because he is the one who recreates, reproduces, restores, and revives.

Comment: For example, Allah will restore our bodies on the Day of Resurrection and can restore a barren land back to vegetation. He also built a reproduction system for living organisms.

THEN HE SETTLED ON HIS THRONE, THEN RULED

26. He is The King (Al-Ma•lik) (الملك) because he owns and rules his entire kingdom.

Comment: The Heavens, the Earth, and all what is beyond is Allah's kingdom, and his entire kingdom is under his authority. Nothing can happen in the kingdom without the King's permission.

27. He is The Owner of Kingship (Ma•lik Al-Mulk) (مالك الملك) because the kingship of his kingdom, and any part of it, always belongs to him.

Comment: Allah may grant kingship of the Earth to any of his slaves, like Kings David and Solomon, as examples; however, Allah still owns the kingship. He gives it to whom he wishes and takes it back whenever he wishes.

28. He is The Hidden One (Al-Ba•tin) (الباطن) because he concealed himself from view until he decides to reveal himself.

Comments: Humans will only get to see Allah in Paradise. Is this not a great privilege and reward to strive for?!

29. He is The Sustainer (Al-Qay•yoom) (القيوم) because he is sustaining all his creations with precise measures, at all times.

Comment: Allah does not sleep nor rest. He is constantly sustaining and supervising all what is going on in his kingdom.

30. He is The Most High (Al-Ali) (العلي) because he is higher than all things in position and status.

Comment: Allah positioned his Throne above all his creations, and all creations prostrate to the Most High, each in their own physical method that Allah determined.

31. He is The Master (Al-Maw•la) (المولى) because he is the sole master of his slaves, commanding them and forbidding them.

Comment: We are slaves of Allah that must surrender to him and obey him. There is no joy, honor, or power in being a slave, except when being the slave of Allah. Only a rebel will reject being the slave of Allah.

32. He is The Dominant (Al-Mu•hayy•min) (المهيمن) because he has total control over all what exists.

Comment: Whatever privileges, favors, powers, control, etc., Allah may grant his creations, he remains in control over them, and he has full control over his rebellious slaves.

33. He is The Most Praiseworthy (Al-Ha•meed) (الحميد) because all praise belongs to him.

Comment: When you are so magnificent, and your creations are infinitely inferior to you, you deserve nothing less than constant praise.

34. He is The Glorious (Al-Ma•jeed) (المجيد) because all his creations glorify him.

Comment: We only know how humans glorify Allah, but Allah says all his creations glorify him (17:44). We simply do not comprehend how.

35. He is The Great (Al-Ka•beer) (الكبير) because he is above all considerations and matters.

Comment: You are too busy to pray on time? Allah is greater than what is keeping you busy. You find pork to be delicious? Obeying Allah is greater than pursuing what you desire. He knows best, while you do not.

36. He is The Supreme (Al-Muta•kab•ber) (المتكبر) because his status and rights will always be superior to the status and rights of his creation.

Comment: Many humans want to define their own rights, yet Allah already defined our rights, and we have no right to defy Allah.

37. He is The Compeller (Aj-Jab•bar) (الجبار) because his will is forced upon all other wills.

Comment: If Allah decreed for you to be poor, for a wise reason he only knows, you will be poor, even if you hate it and wish otherwise. It is not what I want, or what you want, but what Allah wants, and Allah is never unjust and cruel.

38. He is The Most Exalted (Al-Muta•'al) (المتعال) because he is exalted above all wrongful claims attributed to him.

Comment: Many denied his existence. Many denied he is the creator of all things. Many said he has a son. Many doubted his justice and mercy. They all said many wrongful things about him, but Allah is indeed exalted above all what they said.

39. He is The Light (An-Noor) (النور) because without Allah there is no reality, clarity, or peace of mind in what is perceived.

Comment: Allah is the source of truth, and without the truth there is darkness and delusion.

40. He is The Guide (Al-Hadi) (الهادي) because he guides whom he wills to the truth and to the straight path.

Comment: Only by Allah's will one is guided to the straight path. As for those who reject the truth, after they have received it with complete clarity, Allah may guide them away from the straight path.

41. He is The Source of Goodness (Al-Bar•ru) (البر) because he is virtuous, and his commandments and laws promote goodness.

Comment: Allah wants goodness for people, yet most people are ignorant and blind.

42. He is The All-Hearing (As-Sa•mee') (السميع) because there is no audible in his kingdom that misses him.

Comment: Allah hears our conversations and whispers, in open or secret.

43. He is The All-Seeing (Al-Ba•seer) (البصير) because there is no movement in his kingdom that misses him.
Comment: In darkness or in hiding, in the land or in the seas, Allah sees.

44. He is The All-Knowing (Al-Aleem) (العليم) because his knowledge encompasses all of what happens in his kingdom.

Comment: Allah has knowledge of the seen and the unseen worlds, in all of their branches, and I believe that he built systems so that nothing happens without his knowledge and permission.

45. He is The All-Aware (Al-Kha•beer) (الخبير) because he is aware of how his living creatures think and behave and of all what they do in his kingdom, openly or covertly.

Comment: Anyone who thinks he can fool Allah is himself a fool.

46. He is The All-Wise (Al-Ha•keem) (الحكيم) because there is great wisdom in his decrees and laws.

Comment: Whether it is the laws of creation or the laws of governance, or any matter that involves Allah, you will find beautiful wisdom that very few people attempt to understand.

47. He is The Lord (Ar-Rabb) (الرب) because when the slave accepts him as their Lord, he will take full responsibility of their affairs.

Comment: If you take Allah as your Lord, he will be the one to feed you, cure you, protect you, teach you, discipline you, etc., like a holy father figure. Put your full trust in Allah and you will never be disappointed.

48. He is The Preserver (Al-Ha•feez) (الحفيظ) because he is the one preserving everything until an appointed time.

Comment: Allah is recording every sound and movement on Earth. He is also preserving the universe until the Last Day, and preserving the Quran until end times, and he preserves anyone of his choosing from destruction or harm.

49. He is The Provider of Sustenance (Ar-Raz•zaq) (الرزاق) because he is the sole provider of sustenance for all living creatures on Earth.

Comment: Allah created us to survive on Earth; therefore, he made it his duty to provide sustenance to us. The keys to our sustenance are in Allah's hands and not in ours or others, but we still have to work to collect it and feed the hungry.

50. He is The Apportioner (Al-Mu•qeet) (المقيت) because he determines the portions and shares of what his slaves receive.

Comment: Allah determines how many good and bad deeds should be apportioned for each kind of action one is involved in, and he apportions the amount of sustenance his living creatures receive. Imagine Allah's systems like a hidden software system that is measuring and calculating, based on rules and decrees. Also, how

much food and money we receive each year is determined by Allah, and any other understanding of this is a delusion.

51. He is The Withholder (Al-Qa•bid) (القابض) because whenever he wants he can restrict what his slaves receive in the herein.

Comment: For example, Allah might withhold some provisions from his slave, because she never thanks him for his grace, or she never spends/consumes it wisely and righteously. He can also withhold a certain number of good deeds (in his slave's account) from being exchanged for worldly gains, not out of miserliness, but to ensure there is enough left for his slave to enter Paradise. There is great wisdom in Allah's judgment, but many people do not know.

52. He is The Extender (Al-Baset) (الباسط) because whenever he wants he can extend to his slaves beyond what they earned or need.

Comment: Allah can extend the amount of sustenance allocated to his slave, and he can extend the number of bonus good deeds he grants his slave. For example, Allah may extend to you way more provisions than what you need, for some good deed you have done, or because he knows that you will spend it righteously on others.

53. He is The Benefactor (An-Naa•fi') (النافع) because he grants benefits to his slaves.

Comments: Allah grants benefits that can simplify or improve one's life, either for a worldly gain or a gain in the hereafter. Most of what humans invented have been inspired by Allah to benefit humanity, yet many people are ignorant and ungrateful.

54. He is The Distressor (Ad-Darr) (الضار) because he permits his slaves to be touched by distress.

Comment: For example, Allah may permit his believing slaves to fall into distress, to test their faith level in exchange for rewards, or to awaken them from heedlessness, or to discipline them with the sins they earned so that they can reach the Last Day with no bad deeds in their account. There is great mercy and wisdom in distress, but most people do not know.

55. He is The Observer (Ar-Ra•qeeb) (الرقيب) because he observes how his slaves will react and behave to every test and situation they are put in.

Comment: Will you do what is right, to be among the righteous, or will you do what is wrong, to be among the wrongdoers?

56. He is The All-Enumerating (Al-Moh•see) (المحصي) because he records every movement and sound, including the deeds of every human being.

Comment: Everything is recorded and accounted for. For example, if you picked up a tissue paper off the pavement and threw it in the trash bin, your deed was accounted for in your record.

57. He is The Witness (Ash-Sha•heed) (الشهيد) because he stands witness to the deeds of his slaves.

Comment: However, given that Allah is also the Judge, he appointed the angels to also stand witness to the deeds of his slaves.

58. He is The Reckoner (Al-Ha•seeb) (الحسيب) because he holds his slaves accountable for all their recorded deeds, and they will be recompensed in full for what they did.

Comment: Some reckoning happens in our worldly life, but the complete reckoning will happen on the Day of Reckoning.

59. He is The Delayer (Al-Mu•'akher) (المؤخر) because he delays his judgment until the Last Day.

Comment: For example, Allah may delay the torment of a ruthless tyrant or the reward of a righteous slave until the hereafter.

60. He is The Expeditor (Al-Mu•qad•dim) (المقدم) because he may choose to expedite his judgment in this worldly life.

Comment: For example, some believers may have committed some bad deeds, so Allah makes them pay the price of those deeds in the worldly life, to spare them the torment of the grave and Hell Fire.

61. He is The Most Merciful (Ar-Ra•heem) (الرحيم) because he is very merciful in his rule and treatment.

Comment: Humans are nothing compared to Allah, and therefore they have no right to disobey him, yet they do so, and he continues to bestow his mercy upon them by forgiving their sins whenever he wills.

62. He is The Forgiver (Al-Gha•foor) (الغفور) because he forgives the sins of his slaves, whether major or minor.

Comment: For every kind of committed sin there is a punishment, whether Allah executes it in the herein or the hereafter, and when Allah forgives, he absolves the punishment. Sometimes, especially for major sin, Allah forgives after he starts the punishment, for disciplinary reasons. It's like your son does something very bad. You punish him for a few days then you forgive him by ending the punishment. As for the people of Hell, there is a chance that Allah

ends their torment after a short or long time, except for those Allah stated in the Quran that he will never allow them to leave Hell.

63. He is The Acceptor of Repentance (At-Taw•wab) (التواب) because he accepts repentance from his slaves.

Comment: No matter how sinful or wrongful we have been in the past, if we sincerely repent and correct our wrongful ways, Allah will accept our repentance, before the gate closes.

64. He is The Forgiver of the Unforgivable (Al-Ghaf•far) (الغفار) because he is willing to forgive beyond what is forgivable.

Comment: Antagonistic disbelief, murder, invoking anyone other than Allah (Shirk), etc., are examples of unforgivable acts that provoke Allah's anger. Nevertheless, out of his mercy, Allah is willing to forgive the people who commit such acts, if they repent, believe, and follow the straight path before they die.

65. He is The Pardoner (Al-Afou) (العفو) because he pardons the wrongdoings of whom he wills.

Comment: A pardon is greater than forgiveness. Forgiveness absolves the punishment of a sin, but a pardon absolves the

punishment and erases the sin recorded in the account, as if it never happened.

66. He is The Most Forbearing (Al-Ha•leem) (الحليم) because he is patient and tolerant with those who demonstrate disbelief or disobedience, granting them time to repent and correct their ways.

Comment: If Allah was to immediately judge us for every wrongdoing we commit, no person would stay alive on Earth.

67. He is The Bestower of Favors (Al-Fa•deel) (الفضيل) because he bestows his favors upon whom he wills.

Comment: Anything granted beyond what we require to survive, and is not paid for with our good deeds, is a favor from Allah. Also, Allah preferring certain people over others (e.g., in receiving the divine truth first) is a favor.

68. He is The Protecting Ally (Al-Wa•liy) (الولي) because he takes his pious slaves, who seek his closeness, as allies, and grants them special protection from evil.

Comment: Such slaves are called "Allies of Allah" (Awli'ya' Allah), and they are exhibitors of great righteousness and piety; otherwise, anyone can claim to be the ally of Allah. While some

allies of Allah may experience "kashf" (unveiling of the unseen or unknown), they do not possess any special powers and authorities, and they should not be treated like Christian saints. Beware of Satan's schemes.

69. He is The Sufficient Satisfier of Needs (Al-Mugh•ni) (المغني) because he is sufficient to satisfy the worldly needs of his slaves.

Comment: Until you rely solely on Allah to satisfy your needs, you can never be independent of any other person or entity.

70. He is The Most Compassionate (Ar-Ra•ouf) (الرؤوف) because he sympathizes with those who suffer.

Comment: Sometimes, the suffering is prolonged, and people wonder why Allah has not shown his compassion toward them. Allah's delay in ending the suffering has a hidden test or a wise objective. This is why Allah always asks of his slaves to be patient and steadfast, and everyone will be rewarded fairly for their strive and patience.

71. He is The Responder (Al-Mu•jeeb) (المجيب) because he responds to those who invoke him.

Comment: Responding to invocations does not mean Allah will grant immediately what his slaves ask for. His responses could be verbal, but we do not hear them. However, rest assured that his responses are in the best interest of his slaves.

72. He is The Bestower of Gifts (Al-Wah•hab) (الوهاب) because he bestows upon his slaves what they request.

Comment: When Allah responds to invocations, by granting them what they request, he is granting them a gift from him. Allah's gifts come after great patience and perseverance.

73. He is The Most Capable (Al-Qa•dir) (القادر) because he is capable of creating the causations to achieve any outcome he wills.

Comment: Allah is capable of anything, and he is the one governing the laws of cause and effect (verse [6:65] explains this). It is a delusion to believe that we are in control over outcomes, or that Allah has nothing to do with climate change.

74. He is The Subduer (Al-Qah•har) (القهار) because he subdues any transgressor, at any time he wills.

Comment: Transgressors could be tyrants, criminals, or even disobedient believers. As per Allah's wisdom and mercy, Allah

gives them time to repent and correct their ways (and this delay might delude them to think that they got away with their transgressions and wrongdoings). Nevertheless, every delay will come to an end, and Allah will subdue those who fail to correct themselves.

75. He is The Master Planner (Al-Ma•ker) (الماكر) because he has a plan for every individual, community, and the entire human race.

Comment: I love Allah's plans. He is always planning and plotting against the plans of Satan and his party, and there is a plan for every situation he puts his slaves in, and the whole story Allah wrote in the Preserved Tablet is built around an extraordinary plan. Most people do not have the insight (Basira) to see them until after completion, if at all, but rest assured they are brilliant.

76. He is The Helper (An-Na•seer) (النصير) because he grants help and victory to whom he wills.

Comment: Victory only comes from Allah, and he mostly grants it to the Muslims who are on the straight path. However, if they demonstrate certain weaknesses or faults in their performance, they might be granted defeat instead. And in the event there are two battling sides that are disbelievers, victory is granted to the

side that will achieve the outcome Allah wants, as per his knowledge and wisdom.

77. He is The Supreme Resolver (The Opener of Deadlocks) (Al-Fet•tah) (الفتاح) because only he can resolve conflict between opposing sides, especially when they reach a deadlock.

Comment: When the evil forces clash with the good forces, and falsehood with the truth, the righteous believers might find themselves in difficult times and outnumbered, failing to make any progress. No one can resolve the situation and open the deadlock except Allah.

78. He is The Thrower (Ar-Ra•mi) (الرامي) because he throws the truth against falsehood to vanquish it, and he throws good against evil to vanquish it.

Comment: When Allah decides it is time to intervene and vanquish the evil forces and falsehood, he throws his soldiers (e.g., forces of nature, angels, messengers, sincere Jihadists) against them.

79. He is The Avenger (Al-Mun•ta•qim) (المنتقم) because he takes revenge on the oppressors and those who obstruct the straight path.

Comment: Allah avenges his oppressed slaves and annihilates those who exalted themselves in the land and dared to obstruct the straight path. Comic characters and movies are nothing but a manifestation of human aspiration to achieve justice in the land. However, do you know what they are missing from their storylines? Allah!! There is no Superman and no superheroes without Allah's support!

80. He is The Abaser (Al-Kha•fed) (الخافض) because he degrades in status and rank whom he wills.

Comment: Often, it's the disbelievers and the wicked ones that Allah degrades in status and rank, whether in the herein or hereafter.

81. He is The Exalter (Ar-Ra•fi') (الرافع) because he raises in status and rank whom he wills.

Comment: Often, Allah raises his pious, righteous slaves in status and rank, after great strive and patience.

82. He is The Bestower of Honor and Power (Al-Mu•'izz) (المعز) because he grants honor and power to whom he wills.

Comment: Sometimes, Allah gives wicked slaves honor and power so they can rule communities Allah wants to put through a tribulation, but what awaits these wicked slaves at the end is nothing but humiliation and disgrace.

83. He is The Humiliator (Al-Muz•zil) (المذل) because he humiliates or humbles whom he wills.

Comment: Often, Allah humiliates the boastful, arrogant, and proud, and the ultimate humiliation will be in Hell.

84. He is The Bringer of Death (Al-Mu•meet) (المميت) because only he can bring death.

Comment: One person can kill another person, but this can never happen without Allah's will and decree.

85. He is The Everlasting (Al-Ba•qi) (الباقي) because he is always present, outlasting all creations.

Comment: All will come and go, but Allah will always remain present in his kingdom.

86. He is The Ultimate Inheritor (Al-Wa•rith) (الوارث) because he ultimately inherits back what his slaves once possessed or occupied.

Comment: For example, a heritage might be passed on from one inheritor to another, but Allah is the ultimate inheritor.

87. He is The Self-Sufficient (Al-Gha•niy) (الغني) because he does not need any of his creations and he is free of any dependence.

Comment: He created, and he ruled, but Allah does not need any of his creations. It is us who direly need him.

THEN HE REGATHERED, THEN JUDGED

88. He is The Dispatcher (Al-Ba•'th) (الباعث) because he dispatches his messengers, prophets, and angels for duties, and he dispatches the souls from one place to another.

Comment: We are resurrected on the Last Day when Allah dispatches our souls from Al-Barzakh to our bodies in the graves.

89. He is The Gatherer (Aj-Ja•me') (الجامع) because he will gather back to him all the slaves he created and tested.

Comment: This name is an indication that no one will escape Allah. People can turn their backs to Allah and be defiant, at any point in the history of the Earth, but on the Last Day, he will gather everyone back to him for reckoning.

90. He is The Most Truthful (As-Sa•diq) (الصادق) because all what he said about the seen and the unseen is true, and he is true to the promises he conveyed through his messengers and messages.

Comment: On Earth, our level of certainty in the divine told truth could vary between zero and ninety nine percent, but on the Last Day, everyone will reach a hundred percent. This could be why Allah chose ninety nine names—to help us reach ninety nine percent certitude in him. Allah knows best.

91. He is The Judge (Al-Ha•kam) (الحكم) because he will judge between his slaves on matters they used to dispute and do.

Comment: All earthly disputes will be addressed by Allah on Judgment Day.

92. He is The Ultimate Decider (Al-Fa•sil) (الفاصل) because final verdicts are his.

Comment: On the Last Day, everything will be decided. God will decide who fulfilled the covenant and who failed, who will be granted an intercession and who will not, who will be rewarded and who will be tormented, and at what levels.

93. He is The Executioner (Al-Qadi) (القاضي) because he executes all his decrees and verdicts.

Comment: Once a decree is issued, or a verdict is reached, there is no one to stop Allah from executing it. When Allah says, "Be", it will be.

94. He is The Utterly Just (Al-Adil) (العادل) because there is absolute accuracy and equality in his judgment.

Comment: All those who were treated unjustly on Earth will receive their justice on the Day of Judgment, if they did not receive it on Earth.

95. He is The Equitable (Al-Muq•sit) (المقسط) because there is equity in how he treats his creations.

Comment: While these two similar words imply fairness and balance, I derived from the Quran that the word "Adl" (translated to "Justice") has more to do with equality, and the word "Qist"

(translated to "Equity") has more to do with accuracy of measure when giving others their fair due. Allah knows best.

THEN HE APPEARED IN THE ABODE OF PEACE

96. He is The Thankful One (Ash-Sha•koor) (الشكور) because he appreciates the efforts of his slaves who have never seen him, and he is thankful for their faith in him and obedience.

Comment: Allah does not need to be thankful to anyone, but out of his mercy and kindness, he appreciates the effort of his slaves that made it to Paradise.

97. He is The Most Loving (Al-Wa•dood) (الودود) because he bestows his precious love upon those who deserve it.

Comments: Allah bestows his love upon those who believe and do righteous deeds. These are the people of Paradise.

98. He is The Source of Peace (As-Salam) (السلام) because he is the one who gives peace, and takes peace, and when you remember him or see him, you feel great peace.

Comment: You can live in the most peaceful and delightful place on Earth, and yet Allah can put you in distress, taking away your

peace. Peace be upon who follows Allah's guidance and reaches Paradise—only then one has truly "made it"!

99. He is The Manifest (Ath-Tha•her) (الظاهر) because he manifests within the minds of his servants, through the contemplation of his signs and names, until they see him in Paradise.

Comment: In this second life we are living, we clearly cannot see nor imagine Allah in true form, but we can know of him by examining his signs and names. I hope you now know more of him than you used to.

{And to Allah (belong) the best names, so invoke Him by them, and leave behind the ones who blaspheme His names; they will soon be recompensed (for) whatever they were doing.} (7:180)

He is Allah!!!

All glory and praise to Allah the Magnificent!!!