Then  
I was Guided

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# Publisher’s Note

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# BISMILLA HIRRAHMANIR RAHIM

# INTRODUCTION

Hadith-e-Mufazzal as narrated from Hazrat Imam Ja'far-as-Sadiq (a.s.) Ibne Hazrat Imam Muhammad-e-Baqir (a.s.) Ibne Imam Ali Zainul A'abidin (a.s.) Ibne Hazrat Imam Husain (a.s.) Ibne Hazrat Ali (a.s.).

In the Name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Beneficent.

"Intend they to put out the light of Allah with their mouths. But Allah will perfect His light; though averse may be the disbelievers."[[1]](#footnote-1)

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There has always existed a tough tug-of-war between the devilish forces of darkness and igno­rance on the one hand tending to disrupt harmony on earth and the forces of peace and order flow­ing from the sources of light and knowledge on the other. The reason therefore is not far to seek. Man as he is constituted, is very loath to submit to the discipline of controlled behaviour unless rightly guided by enlightened personalities through precept and personal example, or forced by some external agency. The libidinal urges within the human psyche - necessary for human survival when allowed play within limits - work mostly to extreme limits causing friction within, the same human breast by the interplay of mutually contradictory emotions on the one hand and disorderly social conduct on the other because of the competitive rivalries of different individuals and groups yearn­ing to secure the same material goods. The Western philosopher Spinoza has very tersely sum­med up the human situation in his memorable words, "Human beings are like hedgehogs gath­ered together for warmth." They would shiver to death if they tried the aloofness of Robinson Crusoe. They would puncture each other's skins if they came too close together. Each individual's wants for shelter, food etc, must be met as essential to fulfill his purpose in life, which may be defined for want of a better terminology as "Co-­partnership in humanity's orderly progress to a life bliss on earth as well as in the Hereafter." Man alone is the stumbling block on the way of this achievement, because of his denial to be guided by the enlightened personages - the Prophets and those in their wake, and that because of his mad rush after satisfaction of his desires, which, however, as has been said, cannot be satisfied by satisfying them. If society is to be saved from their barbaric conflicts and consequent degenera­tion to the beastly life of the jungle, checks and limits have to be devised and imposed on the hellish play of the desires. The question arises as to who shall impose the checks.

Different answers have been given to this question and the one answer that has repeatedly worked to man's everlasting benefit is stressed by the truly enlightened Hazrat Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq (a.s.) from all angles.

The discreet reader will find in pages that follow a veritable mine of information on almost all aspects of human knowledge. He shall find that most of the information for which the West gets credit was transmitted thereto from the fountain-head of our great thinkers, most eminent among them being Hazrat Imam Ja'far Sadiq (a.s.) whose teachings are recorded in many collections of apostolic narration, particularly in Beharul Anwar, a vast Encyclopedia of learning in no less than twenty-seven volumes. Imam (a.s.) lectured in Medina to thousands of scholars who flocked to this centre of learning from all parts of the known world. They carried away to the far-flung provinces of the Muslim Empire the light of original thought and research. It was the torch lit ablaze by Hazrat Imam (a.s.) in Medina, which set his devout scholars on the path of inquiry and re­search. It was by this nucleus that the four corners of the known world received their awaken­ing to the resplendent vistas of the various bran­ches of acknowledge. Be it remembered that not all this was being achieved because of any en­couragement from the state but in the teeth of opposition characteristic of despotic regimes.

A very important aspect of this dissemination of learning, which runs as a soul stirring strain throughout the system of education that was in­augurated by Hazrat Imam (a.s.) is the insistence and emphasis on the Ideology of Islam and its fundamental tenet "Tawheed" (oneness of God). Imam (a.s.) himself, infused as he was with the crystalline purity of the Ideology, infused that same galvanizing spirit into his following. They in turn became the torchbearers of the light of learning in distant lands, notably the Southern gateway of Europe, Andalusia.

They were the people who "Wrote one of the brightest chapters in the intellectual history of Medieval Europe. They were the main bearers of the torch of the culture, Science and philosophy which made possible the Renaissance of learning in Western Europe". Cordova, Seville, Granada, Toledo, to name only a few of the centers of Muslim Spain, opened their gates to the teaming alumnis seeking admission to the Universities. (See Philip K.Hitti "History of the Arabs" pp. 557:605 for Muslim contribution in the cause of Intellectual upsurge). It is on this account that Stanley Lane Poole to his "History of the Moors in Spain" mourns the fall of the Muslim Empire of Spain in these words: "The fall of Granda happened within forty years of the conquest of Constantinople; but the gain to Islam in the East made no amends for the loss to Europe in the West. The Turks were incapable of founding a second Cordova". Dozi, by no means a friend of Islam, is nevertheless constrained to pay glowing tribute to the administrative, cultural and, in particular, intellectual calibre of the Muslims.

Such was the influence exerted by these vota­ries of the Medinite School of learning that des­pite the secularization of the state by the rulers; their zeal was transmitted to the coming genera­tions through the various centres that sprang up. Even Christian monarchs solicited their co-operation in their day-to-day administration. Thus, the Sicilian King Roger's administration both civil and military was mainly staffed by Muslim in­tellectuals, who gave the court an oriental com­plexion. The prosperity enjoyed by his realm is attributed by Philip K. Hitti to the intellectual calibre of the Muslim staff. They not only admi­nistered his Kingdom efficiently but also manipula­ted his susceptibilities as to imbue him with a Mus­lim view of Christianity. The chief gem of his court was Al-Idrisi - Geographer, Cartographer at Palermo.

It will thus be obvious to even a superficial observer that the torch lit ablaze by Hazrat Imam Ja'far Sadiq (a.s.) at Medina was the powerful lighthouse that illumined the intellectual firm­ament of not only his own age but also the ages that followed. His own powers of observation are marvelous in the extreme as will be seen from a perusal of his works on the varied branches of learning, which, of course, always converge to the central theme of "Tauheed"

To take only a few instances of his intuitive grasp of the nature of things, we may notice the ultra modern scientific description of the develop­ment of the human embryo through its various stages till its flowering into maturity, with special emphasis at each descriptive pause to focus the mind on the specific merit of ingenuity evinced therein. "The embryo in the world is adjusted, though it is confined within three distinct kinds of coverings—the outer wall, the womb and the placenta. This is a time when the embryo can neither manage his nutrition nor ward off any harm from itself. The menstrual flow is diverted to serve him as nutriment, just as water carries nutriment to the plants, so this process goes on till such time as his constitution is perfected, his skin over his body gets tough enough to stand the atmosphere and his eyes get the capacity to stand light. When all this gets accomplished, its mother gets labour pangs, which shake her severely, cul­minating in the birth of the infant. With the birth of the infant, the menstrual flow..........is diverted to its mother's breasts. Its taste is altered, so is its colour..........it becomes a nutriment of the first order...till such time as his body remains delicate, his organs and bowels soft and weak. As he begins to move about and requires tougher nutriment to build up a stronger constitu­tion, his molars appear to masticate food to faci­litate digestion. He carries on with such nutri­ment till puberty...Who then created man from nothingness and Who becomes the architect of his worth? Who is ever vigilant to supply his needs from time to time......If abiogenisis (Spon­taneous creation without specific design) can be admitted under such conditions of regularity, then purposeful generation and definitely balanced order in creation, will have to be ad­mitted to proceed from error and disorder".

These remarks of Hazrat Imam (a.s.) are re­peated by modern scientists in almost the same tenor. Let us quote the tenor of argument of some eminent present day Scientists who find their scientific theories inadequate explanations of natural phenomena without postulating the exis­tence of the Supreme Designer, The discreet reader will bear in mind that Hazrat Imam (a.s.) was born in the first century of the Hijrah, and as such. It will see he has anti­cipated these scientists by more than thir­teen hundred years. The editor of Pears Cyclopedia has the pregnant remarks, "This hypothesis (abiogenisis) was upset by the philosopher Spallanzani (1729-99) who is later to Hazrat Imam (a.s.) by some eleven centuries. Pas'teur, the great French Chemist (1822-95) yet another century later, founder of the Sciences of Bacteriology and immunology, gave a final death blow to this hypo­thesis of spontaneous generation".

J. C. Monsma in his remarkable anthology entitled "The Evidence of God in an Expanding Universe" has collected some forty essays from the pens of the most eminent scientists of the day in this behalf, all of whom echo the tenor of arguments marshalled by Hazrat Imam (a.s.). It is not possible to quote all relevant passages from this magnificent array, which will repay study munificently. (The book has been rendered into Urdu as an authorized translation, by Prof. Abdul Hamid Siddiqui, M.A. and published by the Shish Mahal Kitab Ghar, 42 The Mall, Lahore). A few quotations from the book are, however, quite in order.

Dr. Irving William Knobloch says, "As know­ledge advances, science ceases to frown on religion. The theory, which states dogmatically that all higher forms of life have evolved to their pre­sent state by chance mutations, recombinations, polyploidy or hybridization requires an act of faith for adherence to it, an act of unreasoned accep­tance. The wonders of the universe have con­verted many neutral Scientists to the belief that some One unknown and perhaps unknowable has been responsible for the vastness and order so apparent”. And it is this vastness and order, knowledge whereof is distilled in every statement that has escaped the lips of Hazrat Imam (a.s.) while explaining the mysteries of this grand pano­rama of life on earth. This strain runs as an un­broken galvanic current throughout the entire work and it is the one purpose of the descriptive observations to instill the spirit of inquiry and knowledge from this particular angle, to wit, the belief in his transcendent origin of the mysterious Universe, as the handiwork of the Supreme Sovereign Designer. Unless mankind is weaned from its puerile suicidal disbelief to the maturity of a full realization of Reality as propounded by the inspired geniuses of all ages, life on earth will continue to be hellishly torture some. This theme was nicely re-echoed by the Dean of the University of Hiedelberg in Germany at the reopening of the University after the war in 1945, when he stated, "We have seen in a shocking way what science is without a religious man in command. Medicine without God can destroy life and finds cruel prac­tice for concentration camps. Law without God teaches that right is what is of use and pronounces fearful judgments. Philosophy without God tea­ches erroneous ideas of man and invents most brutal weapons to destroy life instead of saving it."

"I believe in God because to me His Divine existence is the only logical explanation for things as they are", thus does Dr. Knobloch conclude his easay.

'' Dr. Walter Lundberg Ph.D., who also has contributed an essay to the said collection com­piled by J. C. Monsma, gives expression to his views thus, "A denial of the existence of God is some­times an arbitrarily established policy of influential Social groups or organizations, or of the state. Fear of social consequences or even physical consequences where despotism is the state creed, dis­courages any active espousal by the individual of the revelation of God found in Nature, the

Scientific method is founded on orderliness and predictability in natural phenomena. It is precisely the orderliness and predictability that constitute revelation of God in Nature. Order and predictability in the framework of non-existence of God, that is, absence of rationality, is a meaningless Contradiction, Man is but at the beginning of Knowledge, the basic units of matter and energy are incomprehensibly minute. His own life span is but an infinitesimal fraction of a second in the timelessness of the ongoing Universe. He conceives dimly of the possibility of new forms and dimensions of energy, space and time and of other such concepts as yet wholly unknown, Because man's understanding of God as revealed in natural phenomena is as yet very limited, it is in the nature of man that his belief in God should also have a spiritual basis, a basis in faith. Belief in God on the basis of faith is important to personal happiness in the lives of many men. But for the scientist who believes in God, there is an addedsatisfaction that comes with each new scientific discovery, for each discovery gives added mean­ing and significance to his concept of God".

Yet another eminent scientist Donald Henry Porter in his essay, "The answers to the Un­answered Questions", states his proposition in the following words, "Science is composed in the main of unproved laws or principles. This lack of proof does not prohibit one from using these laws as they might apply to various situations. It is not reasonable to expect proofs in the realms of the supernatural when proofs in the natural are lacking, whatever process of nature is considered or whatever question of origins is studied, as a Scientists, I derive satisfaction only by placing God in the leading role. God is the central figure in every picture. He alone is theanswer to the unanswered questions". The whole tenor of Hazrat Imam (a.s.)'s instructive exposi­tion of nature is expressed in the words, "the uni­verse stands before us with the leaves of its com­pendious volumes open for any man with a dis­cerning mind to study and glorify the Supreme Architect". He takes up organ after organ of the human body, points its physiological build, functions, and logically leads his listeners to the stupendous ingenuity that has gone into its consti­tution. "O Mufazzal! Don't you see that every­thing big or small is patterned on a flawless plan, \_\_\_\_Both hands are meant to handle business, feet are designed for locomotion, both eyes are to see with, the mouth is to take in food, the stomach is to digest it, the liver is to extract its nutrition for distribution to the various parts of the body in the form of blood, bile, lymph etc......On arrival in the stomach, the food is processed into chyme. A fine network of capillaries forms the liver, which is fed by the nutriment processed by the stomach; the liver then takes up the ex­tract of the nutriment and by an incomprehensible ingenuity changes it into blood for supply to the body by way of the heart pump through the blood ­vessels in the manner of irrigation channels. All waste products and toxic matters are carried off to the organs designed to eliminate them for example, the bladder, the intestines and the sweat glands, “Glory then to Him who has organized all organs as co-coordinating units." The descrip­tions of the constitution and functions of the hu­man body proceeds space, but always with a difference with the way of the secular physio­logist.

Hazrat Imam (a.s.)'s observations comprehend the whole of creation as witnesses to the Majesty of the Almighty Allah. The animal kingdom comprising the various species of the carnivorous the herbivorous animals, the bird life, beasts of the jungle and the domestic pets and draught cattle, water life and the insignificant insects all receive due attention, but only as specimens of consummate ingenuity and design as witness to the workmanship of the Almighty Designer.

The natural phenomena of the change of seasons, the alternation of day and night, the winds and rain, waxing and waning of the moon, the movements of the stars and so on are all dealt with but as emphasis on the same proposition, as expressed in the following Statement:

"If for a whole or a part of a year the situa­tion changed to the contrary, you can well imagine the plight of the human race. In fact, what chance would they have to survive at all? Does not man observe such magnificent planning, wherein his own schemes would go away. They function automatically without interruption, nor do they even lag behind the time regulated for the management of the world's organisation and maintenance."

The vegetable kingdom has its due share of notice. The grain, the fruit, the leaves etc, are all marshalled as glorious witnesses to the eternal skill of the Almighty Allah. A few sentences as expressive of the general tenor of Hazrat Imam (a.s.)'s way of elucidating natural facts, will be in place. Says Imam (a.s.);

"You will see intertwined in the texture of the leaf something comparable to the root system extending all along its length and breadth. Some of them are fine capillaries joined with thicker ones all very stout and fine. If they were to be prepared by hand, man would not have been able to do the job of a single plant in a year's time...In a few days of the spring season such abundance of foliage comes into being that the mountains and lowland regions of the earth get filled with it, without a word being spoken or a movement being made, just as the result of a fiat per­meating all things, a single inviolable Dispensation. The spring season clothes the trees with leaves and you get all kinds of fruit, just as you arrange different kinds of delicacies before you, which are cooked in turn, Who has planned all this? Surely, He Who is Omniscient Ordainer and what pur­pose is served thereby. Surely, that man may enjoy the fruits and flowers. How strange is it that instead of grateful­ness, for such precious boons, man is inclined to deny the Donor altogether!”

And what will the students of Botany think, of the observations made by Hazrat Imam (a.s.) in regard to the female and male organs of repro­duction among plants.

"There are female trees among them for whose fertilisation male plants are gene­rated, which fertilise without planned horticulture. The males, like those in animals, fertilise the females, but are themselves sterile."

We have not made a mention here of the beauty of the original which borders on poetry, though in translation and re-translation much or its beauty of style gets marred. Just consider such passages:

"The joy that is afforded by the scenic beauty and freshness of vegetation is incomparably superior to the pleasures and merriment of the whole world. (The green verdure of plants fascinates the eyes, delights the heart and refreshes the mind). A hundred or so grains spring from a single seed. A single grain from a single seed would have been a (logical) plan. Why then such multi­plication? Surely to amplify the production, so that the same may serve as food to last till the following crop be­sides making provision as seed for the farmers."

This brief review of the subjects dealt with in the pages that follow, will convince, the discern­ing reader of the incomparable worth of the matter, particularly the angle of vision pervading the whole text. The educationists of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan will do well to imbibe the spirit that should permeate the entire learning at all stages of instruction. Here is a work that deals with almost all sciences in a most rational way. The information imparted will, then, have the right Islamic bias and redound to the produc­tion of scholarship of the true Muslim calibre. The ever-increasing wave of criminality and indis­cipline in the land can be met with only if the specific outlook aimed at by Hazrat Imam (a.s.) in his discourses is nurtured sedulously. Our socio­economic problems cry out loudly for a profound change in our outlook. Not only we in Pakistan, but also the far-sighted among other nations are troubled with similar misgivings. They too are ardently advocating fundamental changes in indi­vidual and national outlooks, from the narrow parochial views to the broad basis of human and universal principles.

Let us, in passing, notice the trends in Western patterns of thought in this behalf. Dr. Pitram A. Sorokim, Chairman of Department of Sociology, Harward University, in his very commendable book "The Crisis of our Age, the social and Cul­tural Outlook," very profoundly analyses man's chief problems of life, He states the crisis thus tersely:

"Ever expanding misery spreads its gloomy shadow over larger and larger areas. The fortunes, happiness and comfort of untold millions have disappeared. Peace, security and safety have vanished. Pros­perity and well-being have become in many countries but a memory; freedom a mere myth. Western culture is covered by a blackout, A great tornado sweeps over the whole mankind. It is a crisis involving almost the whole way of life, thought and conduct of Western society. More precisely, it consists in a disintegration of a fundamental form of Western culture and society domi­nant for the last four centuries."

He goes on to dilate upon the vile offshoots of the Western outlook thus:

"Scientific theories based upon the truth of senses tend to become progressively ma­terialistic, mechanistic and quantitative even in their interpretation of man, cul­ture and mental phenomena. The So­cial and psychological sciences begin to imitate the natural sciences attempting to treat man in the same way as physics and chemistry treat inorganic phenomena. In the field of social sciences all mental and cultural phenomena come to be treated behavioristically, physiologi­cally, reflexologically, endocrinologically and psycho-analytically."

It was this materialistic banefulness that was trying to force its way into the Muslim society, which the great Imam (a.s.) fought to discounten­ance. It was due to these efforts that a great deal of the Islamic principles were salvaged from the political turmoils that agitated the body politic. The weapons they used, to wit, propagations of the eternal values of the Holy Quran by their discourses and practical conduct served to maintain the pic­ture of fundamental tenets of truth and justice. P. A. Sorokin is stressing a similar need for a reorientation of outlook when he says;

"There must he, a change of the whole mentality and attitudes in the direction of the norms prescribed in the sermon on the Mount - fundamental transformation of our system of values and the profoundest modification of our conduct towards other men, cultural values and the world at large......If neither reli­gion nor ethical nor juridical values control our conduct, what then remains, moral chaos and anarchy".[[2]](#footnote-2)

This English translation of the book is pre­sented to the discerning public to serve as a beacon light with the hope “that the grace of understanding may be vouchsafed to us and that we may choose, before it is too late, the right road the road that leads not to death but to the further realization of man's unique creative mission on this planet", in the parting words of the book re­ferred to above.

The translator feels himself highly honoured for the opportunity afforded to him to be associa­ted with this truly great work flowing from the truly great encyclopedic personality - Hazrat Imam Ja'far-as-Sadiq (a.s.).

Narowal, 12-10-66.

Muhammad Ibrahim.

# In The Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Compassionate

# Hadith-e-Mufazzal

Muhammad bin Sanan relates that Mufazzal bin Umar narrated to him thus "One day after the Asr prayers I sat between the pulpit and the sepulchre of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.), contemplating on the exalted excellences with which Allah (s.w.t.) had endowed our Lord Sayyed Muhammad Mustafa (s.a.w.a.) of which the generally of the Ummah had no apperception, nor that of his supreme eminence, perfect merit, and his outstanding grandeur. While I was absorbed in such thoughts, there arrived Ibn Abi al Auja an atheistic pagan. He took his seat within my hearing distance. A comrade of his followed him and sat attentive to him. Ibn Abi al Auja started the conversation with the remark, "The Occupant of this sepulchre has attained to unique eminence to the entirety of elevated honour in all his accomplishments." His comrade adding an affirmation said, "He Muhammad Mustafa (s.a.w.a.) was a philosopher. He made a mighty claim sup­ported by miracles that confounded common sense. The wiseapres dived deep in mind's depths to penetrate the mysteries thereof, but all in vain, when his mission got accepted by the cultured, the erudite and the learned, the people in general entered the fold of his Faith host upon host. The places of worship and the Mosques of all the places wherever the call to his prophethood reached, began to ring loud and clear with his name side by side with that of the Almighty Allah, without any distinction of sea and land, mountain or plain, not once but five times a day during the Azan and Eqamat. He got his name attached to that of Allah (s.w.t.) with the express object of perpetuating his memory and to keep his mission dynamic."

Ibn Ali al Auja remarked, "Leave aside the mention of Muhammad (s.a.w.a.) about whom, my rea­son is astounded and my thoughts are bewildered. Let us talk about the Reality at the basis of the people's acceptance of the Faith of Muhammad (s.a.w.a.) the Sustainer of the Universe. Is there such a Being or not?" Then he referred to the genesis and creation of the vast assortment of the Universe. He made the preposterous claim that no one had created them and there exists no Creator, nor Designer nor Renovator. The Universe has been by itself in existence and will continue to exist as such a infinitum."

Mufazzal says, "I was outraged to hear this and said to him "O disbeliever. Do you disbe­lieve in the Faith of Allah (s.w.t.) by totally denying the existence of Him, who created you in such come­liness transforming you from one state to another till you arrived at your present form (in other words, He led you through infancy to puberty and your present age. Had you just considered about your own self and had your own fine percipience helped you truthfully, you would have cognised in your own soul obvious proofs of the existence of the Almighty Allah, the signs of His All Comprehending sustenance and the evidence of His boundless workmanship". He said, "We would discuss the issue, if you can marshall well-founded cogent arguments, which we will admit, otherwise you have no right to interpolate without a ken for polemics. If you are of the company of Hazrat Ja'far bin Muhammad as Sadiq (a.s.), it does not behove you to talk in the strain you do, for his is not this mode of address, nor does he argue with us in such impropriety. He has heard more of our words than you have done, but he has never used any impropriety, nor has he ever re­torted aggressively. He is very forbearing, dignified reasonable and of mature intellect. He is never harsh nor touchy. He listens to our talk very attentively. He invites our arguments, so much so that when we have exhausted our armoury and we think to have silenced him, he withbrief resume stultifies all our reasoning and dumbfounds us, so that we are left without a plank to answer the arguments of the revered personage. If you are of his company, then talk to us in the same strain."

Mufazzal: At this, I came out dejected and thoughtful because of their disbelief in Allah (s.w.t.) and the consequent tribulation of Islam and its votaries because of this disbelief and a presump­tion of the meaninglessness of this universe. I betook myself to my Aqa (Master) (a.s.). On seeing me dejected, he asked me the reason thereof. I related to him the conversation of those atheists and the way I had tried to rebut their arguments.

He told me to come the next day when he would disclose to me the Immense ingenuity of the Almighty Artificer manifested in this entire uni­verse comprising the beasts, the animals, the birds, the insects, all living beings, whether of the animal or the vegetable kingdom, trees bearing fruits or trite and fruitless ones, the edible and non-edible vegetables-such description of ingenuity as would be an eye-opener for those who would wel­come instruction, a solace for the believers and confounding for the heretics.

Mufazzal: Hearing this I came back from the august presence in a mighty happy mood. The intervening night appeared interminable because of my anxiety to learn from the revered personage matters, he had promised to reveal on the morrow. At day-dawn, I presented myself after duly getting admittance and respectfully stood before his august presence. I took my seat on being offered. Then he moved to the closet whereto he often repaired in solitude. I also rose up and on being ordered followed him. He entered the closet and so did I. He took a seat and I got down before him. He said, "Mufazzal! I feel that you have had a lengthy night because of your anxiety for the morrow". I affirmed his remark respectfully. He began, "Mufazzal! Allah (s.w.t.) has existed before there was anything and He will exist eternally beyond eternity. May He be Glorified in that He has made His revelation to us? To Him is due our deep gratitude because of His gift to us. He gran­ted us eminence with exalted knowledge and dis­tinguished us with brilliant status as the progeny of Hazrat Ali (a.s.), to surpass all creations with His knowledge, as a sacred trust with us of the subtleties of the Universe."

Mufazzal: I requested permission to put; in black and white all that poured down from his lips, as I had the necessary writing material with me, to which he graciously assented.

Imam (a.s.): O Mufazzal! The Waverers failed to grasp the mysteries and causes under­lying the genesis of the creatures and their intellects remain unaware of the faultless ingenuity subsisting underneath the creation of the varied species of the sea and the land, level and rough. They became disbelievers and because of a defici­ency of their knowledge and puerility of intellect began quibbling inimically with Truth, so much so that they denied creativeness and claimed that all this Universe was meaningless and vain, with­out any ingenious design on the part of a Designer or Creator—a purposeless nonentity without balance or poise. Allah (s.w.t.) is far above what they attribute to Him. May they perish! How misguided they are! In their misguided blindness and bewilder­ment they are like the blind persons groping right and left in a well—furnished, well—built house with fine carpets, luscious articles of food and drink, various kinds of clothing and other necessities of essential use all adequately supplied in proper quantity and placed with perfect decorum and ingenious design. In their blindness, they fail to see the building and its furnishing, they move about aimlessly from one room to another, advancing and retreating. If by chance anyone of them finds anything in its place to supply a need therefore and not knowing the purpose for which it is set there and unaware of the underlying ingenuity he might begin to reprimand the archi­tect of the building in his offensive rage, whereas, as a matter of fact, the fault lies with his own inability to see. This analogy holds good in the case of the sect who deny the creative factor and the argument in favour of divine design. Failing to appreciate the merit of their provision, the perfection of creation and the beauty of design, they start wandering in the wide world, bewildered by their inability to grasp with their brains the underlying causes and principles. It so hap­pens sometimes that someone among them is aware of a thing but in his ignorance of its reality, purpose and need begins at once to find fault with it, saying, "It is untenably wrong." The followers of Mani (a man who founded Zoarastrian sect in the time of King Shapur son of Urdsher who believed in the prophethood of Jesus but denied that of Moses and who believed in the duality of divinity as the creators of all good and evil in the universe—one light as the creator of all good things, the other darkness as that of beasts and harmful creatures) who, as the heretical bigots of devilry, have begun openly to propound their heresies. Besides these, some misguided persons have also gone astray from the divine favours, by merely declaring as untenable or impossible certain facts.

It behoves the person, whom Allah (s.w.t.) has en­dowed with the gnosis of Reality and whom He has guided to his Faith and who has been gran­ted the insight to ponder over the beauty of design underlying creation and who is gifted with the expression of the merits of such things on the basis of cogent reasoning and fine, distinction, it behoves such a person to glorify the Almighty Allah consummately as his Lord for such celestial favour, and to pray to Him for an increase in gnosis and a steadfastness therein with lofty power of expression thereof.

He says, "I shall increase My favours, if you are grateful and My chastisement is severe if you are ungrateful."

"O Mufazzal! The structure of the Universe is the foremost directive and argument for the existence of the Almighty Allah — how the parts thereof have been set together and been possessed of elegant workmanship and design. An appro­priate mood of contemplation with reason focussed on individual parts will disclose that this universe is comparable to a house furnished with all articles necessary for human beings. The sky is like a canopy. The earth is spread like a car­pet, while the stars set in stratum upon stratum appear as lamps alight in their places. The gems are treasured as if the house has lots of collec­tions. Besides these, everything is readily avail­able to meet individual needs: Man in this world Is like the masterful owner of the house, having in his possession everything therein. And there exist the different plant species available for meeting individual needs—some as fodder for the animals, others as drugs for human beings, some merely for ornament, some to supply fragrance to man for his recreation, some as drugs for animals, some as nutriment for man, some for birds only and others for the quadrupeds alone and so on. Different species of animals have been allotted functions for particular exigencies and interests.

There is manifest proof in this beautiful com­position, cohesion, combination and admixture, that this world is the work of a Creator,' Who has produced it on a balanced plan, impregnated it with ingenuities and established order therein—all bearing proper connection and furnishing proof of the unique Creator, Who has combined them in such elegance as to compound them into a unity— Who is Exalted, Holy, Elevated, Gracious in Him­self, beside Whom there is no god, far above what the infidels attribute to Him.

## Genesis of Man

O Mufazzal! We now start with a description of the creation of Man before you to learn a lesson therefrom. (Behold) the first step in the creation of Man refers to the state when the embryo in the womb is adjusted, though it is confined within three distinct kinds of coverings and three kinds of darkness - firstly that of the outer wall, secondly of the womb and thirdly of the placenta. This is a time when the embryo can neither manage his nutrition nor ward off any harm from itself. The menstrual flow is diverted to serve him as nutriment, just as water carries nutriment to the plants, so this process goes on till such time as his constitution is perfected, his skin over the body gets tough enough to withstand the atmosphere— so that it does not receive any harm from the air—and his eyes get capacity to stand light. When all this is accomplished, its mother gets labour pangs, which severely shake her to uneasiness culminating in the birth of the infant. With the birth of the infant, the menstrual flow, which served for nutrition in the womb, is diver­ted to the mother's breasts. Its taste is altered, so is its colour altered and it becomes a nutriment of quite a different kind, which exactly suits the temperament of the infant, as and when it needs the same, compared with the flow of blood. Simultaneously with its birth, it starts moving and licking its lips with its tongue to indicate its desire for milk. It finds its mothers pair of breasts as luscious reservoirs hanging to provide nutrition to it. He gets its nutrition from milk in this way till such time as his body remains delicate, his organs and bowels soft and weak.

## Need of Teeth and Growth of Beard

As he begins to move about and needs harder food to build up a stronger body, his molars ap­pear to masticate food materials to facilitate diges­tion. He carries on with such nutriment till puberty. The male grows hair on the face as a sign of manliness to gain honour as man, thus over stepping the stage of adolescence and like­ness to females. A female keeps her face clean lovely and hairless, to preserve her freshness and homeliness, as an attraction for the males in the service of the survival of the race. O Mufazzal! Can you imagine that the manner in which man, through these different stages, is led and per­fected, can take place without a Designer and a Creator? Do you think that if the menstrual flow had not been diverted to it while an embryo in the womb, would it not have been dried up, just like the plants deprived of water, and had it not been motivated by labour pangs after it had been matured for birth, would it not have been buried in the womb just as living infants used to be buried in the earth, and had it not been supplied with the suitable kind of milk, would it not have starved to death, or if he had not been fed with nutriment suited to his temperament capable of perfecting his body, and if his teeth had not been cut at the proper time, would it not have been difficult for him to feed, masticate and digest his food, and if he had not passed through the milk infancy, would not his body have suffered in strength and been incapacitated for any kind of work, a permanent charge on his mother to keep her busy with only his nurture and upbringing without time to look to a second child.

Had not his face grown hair at the proper time would he not have stayed in the form of adolescents and the figure of females, without any dignity or prestige like the eunuchs who have a repulsive look in the absence of the beard.

Who else then is it, Who created man from nothingness and Who became the architect of his worth, Who is Ever vigilant to supply his needs from time to time.

## Absurdity of Atheism

If abiogenesis[[3]](#footnote-3) (spontaneous creation with­out specific design) can be admitted under such conditions of regularity, then purposeful genera­tion and definitely balanced creation can be the result of error and perplexity, since these two are opposed to abiogenesis. Such a statement is highly absurd that order and rectitude should come about without a creator and disorder and impropriety of design and fate should pre­suppose a Creator. He is an ignoramus who says this because anything produced without design will never be exact and proportioned, while dis­order and contrariness cannot coexist with orderly design. Allah (s.w.t.) is far above what the heretics say.

And in case an infant was born with mature intellect, he would have been bewildered in this world so strange to him in an un-recognisable environment abounding with animals and birds of varied forms all around which would be focussed to his vision every moment of the day.

O Mufazzal! Consider it in the manner of a man migrating to another country from the prison of one country. If he has a perfect intel­lect, you will see him perplexed and astounded. He can neither soon learn there the language, nor acquire the etiquette and decorum of the place. On the other hand one who is taken as prisoner to a strange land in his early days when his intellect is immature, he shall soon learn the language, etiquette and manners of the place. Similarly, if a child had been born with mature intellect, he would have been astounded on opening his eyes and seeing such varied assortment, different kinds of forms, and distinctive imagery of unity and disunity. For a long time he cannot understand as to whence he had come and where he has arrived and whether all that he was seeing was in a state of dream or waking.

Then if he had been born with mature intellect, he would have felt disgusted and degraded on finding himself being carried about in the lap, being fed with milk, being wrapped in bandages (after the manner of the Arabs and being laid in the cradle, all these proceedings being necessary for infants because of their soft and delicate bodies).

There would not have been, if they had been born with a mature intellect, that sweetness, nor that sweetness, nor that considerations for the infants in the minds of the adults which springs generally from fondling the untutored children because of their artlessness creating a particular at­traction for them. As such, he is born in this world without an understanding for anything, quite unaware of the world and what lies therein; He views all these things with his under­developed brain and inadequate understanding, and so does not feel perplexed.

His intellect and understandings by degrees, slowly from time to time, little by little develope, so as to introduce him gradually to the things around and to accustom his brain accordingly so as to habituate him thereto with­out further need for curiosity and wonderment, thus enabling him to seek his sustenance serenely with understanding and planning to bend his efforts thereto and to learn the lessons of obedi­ence, error and disobedience. And behold! There are other aspects of the matter. If the infant had been born mature in intellect with an understanding of his functions, there would have been little occasion for the sweetness felt in the nurture of the offspring, and the exigency, under which the parents find a whole time preoccupation with the affairs of their young ones, would not have arisen. Love and affection, felt for ordinary children, following the inconvenience undergone for their sake, would not subsist between the parents and their offspring. Because of their mature intellect, the children would not have needed parental care. A separa­tion would have taken place just after birth of the infant from its parents. Even a mother or a sister would have been strangers to him and as such within wedlock limits.

O Mufazzal! Don’t you see that everything big or small has been created on a flawless plan without fault or error.

O Mufazzal! Just see the advantage that accrues to the children from weeping. There is a fluid in the child's brain, which if not drained off may cause trouble or illness, even the loss of an eye. The discharge of the fluid from its brain leaves it healthy and the eyes brighter. The child is benefited by weeping, while its parents in their ignorance try to prevent his weeping by catering to his wishes, not knowing the benefits thereof. There are similar other advantages, which these atheists fail to grasp. If they could have grasped them, they would not have denied the existence of such benefits therein. The gnos­tics understand what is unintelligible to such deniers. It so happens oftentimes that the creatures know not the wisdom thereof, though it is within the knowledge of the Creator.

The saliva dripping from the mouths of children may cause serious derangements if not allowed to flow. This can be seen in the case of those with an excess of saliva, who sink down to the level of idiots, imbeciles and fools and succumb to other diseases like paralysis, general and facial. Almighty Allah has to ordain that this fluid should be discharged by way of the mouth to keep him healthy in later age. The Providence has granted this boon, of the pro­fundity whereof they are ignorant. They are allowed this respite to acquire knowledge of the wisdom underlying therein, so as to become gnostic. Had these people appreciated all these boons, they would not have stayed in sin so long. So all praise and Glory is due to Him. How grand is His Beneficence. His Blessings are for all whether deserving or undeserving. He is far exalted above what these misguided persons say.

O Mufazzal! Just consider the male and female organs of copulation. The male organ is capable of stimulation and increase so as to spawn the uterus with sperm, that being its function, being itself incapable of developing the foetus and as such requiring to transfer the sperm to the uterus of the female, a deep receptacle fit to preserve efficiently the two seminal fluids, to develop the foetus by expanding proportionately with the increase in its size, to prevent any pressure on it, to preserve it till it is strengthened and is toughened. Is it not designed by a Deep Seeing Designer? Have all these works of in­genuity or these elegant proportions come about by themselves? Allah Almighty is far exalted above the heresy of the polytheists.

O Mufazzal! Just consider the various organs of the body, the functions each one is required to perform and the perfection of de­sign that underlies each. Both hands are meant to handle business, both feet are meant for loco­motion, the eyes are to see with, the mouth is to take in food, the stomach is to digest it, the liver is to extract its nutrition for distribution to the various parts of the body after manufac­turing the same into blood, bile, lymph and phlegm, the orifices of the body are meant to eliminate waste products and you shall find that every organ, exactly fitted to perform its specific functions, is constituted with perfect design.

Mufazzal: Sir! Some people believe that all this is the outcome of the function of nature, each organ coming into existence as and when required by nature.

Imam (a.s.): Just ask them whether the nature, which functions in such a well-planned and well-ordered fashion, also possesses know­ledge and power or is it devoid of intelligence and reason, without power, without knowledge?

If they admit that it possesses knowledge and power, then what obstructs them from a belief in the Creator? What we say is that all things are created by One Who is Master of Knowledge and power. They say that there is no Creator and yet admit that nature has done this with ingenuity and plan. As such, nature is the cause of their creation, while they deny the Creator. If they say that nature produces such things without knowledge and power, not knowing what it is doing nor having the power to do it, in con­nection with the type of design and ingenuity that subsists in all phenomena, it is something inconceivable that something may be performed without corresponding power to do it and with­out a knowledge thereof. As such, it is obvious that the action emanates from an Omniscient Creator, Who has laid down as only a method among His creation through His Omniscience, which these people call nature. In other words, the Almighty Allah has ordained a method to produce everything according to its definite cause and principle. As for instance, a seed needs water to sprout, no rain no corn; a chad is born by the union of man and woman without this pro­cedure of union and insemination no child can be born; water evaporates to cause a cloud, the cloud is moved about by air to give rain; there can be no rain without such a process. These atheists took these causes and nature as the real Creator, denying the existence of the Crea­tor above all these. This is manifest error, seeing that water is lifeless and unless it is enlivened by the Life-Giver how can it produce corn? And how can the Sperm which is without intelligence, develop into an infant unless energized by the Omnipotent to create a head out of one part, hands and feet from other parts, bones from yet another part and heart and liver from another? Other forms of creation can be considered, accordingly.

O Mufazzal! Just consider the nutrition supplied to the body, and the ingenious plan underlying it.

Just note that on arrival in the stomach, the food is processed into chyme of the physicians and the extract is transferred to the liver by fine capillaries forming a network in that organ. The stomach is constituted as a rectifier for transfer of material to the liver in rectified form, to pre­vent injury to that delicate structure.

The liver then takes up the extract of the nutriment taken in, and by an inscrutable in­genuity changes it into blood to be pumped by the heart to all parts of the body by means of blood vessels in the manner of irrigation chan­nels seen in gardens and fields supplying water to, any place required to be irrigated. All waste products and toxic matters are carried off to or­gans designed to eliminate them, for example, the bladder, the intestines, sweat glands of the armpits and thighs etc.

The bile matter goes to the gall bladder; some matter goes to the spleen, and the moisture to the bladder.

O Mufazzal! Just consider the ingenuity that has gone into the building up of the body! How nicely are these organs coordinated! How the vessels, the intestines and the bladder etc are organised to collect the waste products of the body so as to prevent them from being scattered all over the body to cause disease and decrepi­tude.

Glory, then, is to Him, Who has created these organs according to a remarkable plan and a redoubtable design. All praise is due to Him, Who is worthy of it.

Mufazzal: Please Sir! Explain to me the gradual development of the body stage by stage till its perfection.

Imam (a.s.): The first stage of this develop­ment is the embryo in the womb—invisible to the eye, inaccessible to the hand. His develop­ment, proceeds apace, till he is perfected in body with all organs and parts complete in every detail, the heart, the liver, the intestines and all working parts, the bones, muscles, fat, the brain-tendons, blood-vessels, the cartilages all fully developed. He enters this world and you see how he develops on together with all his organs in proportion, preserving at the same time all his features without any addition or diminution. There is no disjunction of the part to accredit any insertion of flesh or elimination of any redundant matter. The body progresses on while retaining its well-knit form, till his maturation, whether his life span is lengthened of shortened -earlier.

Is not this profound planning and ingenuity elegantly designed by the Omniscient Designer?

O Mufazzal! Just consider the excellence and merit of man's creation over the animals. He stands erect and sits squarely to enable him to hold things in his hands, to acquire them with his organs, to work to plan. If man had been hunched like animals, he could not have per­formed the tasks he does now.

Just consider O Mufazzal! The five senses specifically superior to those of animals in point of constitution and efficiency so as to endow him special merit thereby.

The eyes are set in the head as if a lamp is set on a lamppost to enable him to see every­thing. They are not set in the lower parts of the feet to safeguard against injuries or acci­dents during work or movement, which would have ailed them and impaired their efficiency. Had they been set in the middle part of the body like the belly, the back or the breast etc., it would have been difficult to revolve them or to see things by sudden turning. The head is the cynosure, the best place for these senses in suitability compared with any other organ.

The senses are five in number to respond to all kinds of stimuli and to leave no stimulus undetected.

The eyes are so constituted as to distinguish between colours. The colours would have been meaningless without such ocular proficiency, since these colours exist as a means whereby things may be distinguished from one another or the eyes may get recreation therefrom.

The ears are set in the head to detect sounds, which would have been meaningless without such auricular proficiency. Similar is the case with other senses, without proficiency of the sense of taste, all tasteful foods would have been dull, without the sense of touch the sensations of heat, cold, softness, hard­ness would as well have been non-existent and without the sense of smell, all scents would have been inert.

And vice versa; if there be no colours, the eyes would be ineffective. Without sound, the ears may as well be non-existent. So just con­sider how it has been ordained that there is a definite correspondence between the sense organ and the sensation, stimulus inter-acting mutu­ally. We cannot hear with our eyes, nor distin­guish colours with our ears, nor smell except with our nose, and so on.

Then there are media interpolated between the sense organ and the sensation stimulus, with­out which the link cannot be established. As for example, in the absence of light to reflect colour, the eyes fail to cognise colour and without air to set up sound waves, the ear would not be able to detect any sound.

O Mufazzal! can it be, then, hidden from one who has been endowed with sound reason and who utilises his intellect correctly, after all the details I have given about the inter-connection between the sense organs, the sensation stimulus and the media linking them to complete the pro­cess, that all this has been planned and execu­ted by the Omniscient Almighty Allah. Can such propriety, such ingenuity come about spontane­ously? How can nature by itself perceive how the eye or the ear is to be constructed, and what, functions each is to perform and what medium is to suit each as a means for, correct apperception, in order to create each? Is it conceivable in the insensate nature, unless the Almighty Designer plans them on the basis of perfect Omniscience?

O Mufazzal! Just consider the case of a per­son who has lost his eyesight and the loss he suffers in his day-to-day working. He cannot perceive his foothold, whether his feet fall in a depression or on an elevation, nor can he see ahead, nor can cognise colours, nor appreciate neither a pleasing nor a forbidding face. He will not be able to know hollow ground, nor know an enemy with a drawn sword, nor can he undertake any of the handicrafts like writing, business or trinket making. His brain does suggest certain ways to enable him to move about or take his food without which he would be little better than a stone at rest.

Similar is the case of a man deficient in hearing. He suffers loss on many counts. He has neither relish for conversational talk nor a sense for pleasant or unpleasant sounds. People have difficulty in conversing with him, he gets annoyed with self. Though alive, yet he is like a dead man in respect of talking. Though present, yet he is like a man far away unaware of any news about.

The person devoid of intelligence is worse than cattle, for even the cattle do cognise many a phenomena unintelligible to him. Don't you perceive that these organs, systems, intellect and everything else required for his adjustment and without which he is at a serious disadvantage in point of perfection of his build, are duly pro­vided? Have all these been produced without balance, power and knowledge? Certainly not! They are necessarily the outcome of definite de­sign and planning of the Almighty Designer.

Mufazzal: Sir! How is it that some people are lacking in those organs and systems and undergo the losses that you have described?

Imam (a.s.): It is for the admonition of the person lacking them and other people as well. The monarch admonishes his subjects in such ways and such admonition is hardly resented, rather it is appreciated as a stratagem and eulogised.

The people who are thus afflicted will be recompensed after death, provided they are grateful to Allah (s.w.t.) and turn to Him, so munificently that all the troubles undergone by them due to lack of such organs, will appear trivial in com­parison, so much so that if after death they are allowed the choice to return to those troubles they would welcome the opportunity to earn higher recompense.

O Mufazzal!Just consider the ingenuity and balanced design underlying the production of organs and systems in pairs or as single units. Just consider the head, which is created a single unit and it, is but just appropriate not to have created it in more than one unit. A second head would have been only an additional weight; quite unnecessary, seeing that one piece comprises all the senses needed for man. Two heads would have meant two parts of men. So if he used only one for talk, the other would have been re­dundant. To use both simultaneously for the same talk would have been meaningless, in-as-much as no further purpose is served thereby.

A person would have been much handi­capped in his business he has to transact, if he had been created with one instead of a pair of hands. Don't you see that a carpenter or a mason would be unable to carry on his profes­sion if one of his hands gets paralysed? And in case he tries to do his work with a single hand, he cannot perform it as dexterously and efficiently as with the help of both hands.

O Mufazzal! Just consider a man's voice, conversation, and the constitution of the organs concerned therewith. The larynx, which pro­duces the sound, is like a tube while the tongue, the lips and the teeth mould the sound into letters, and words.

Don't you see that a person who loses his teeth cannot reproduce the sound of the letters; he who gets his lips cut cannot pronounce (f) while a thick tongue cannot give the sound of (r). A bagpipe resembles it a great deal. The larynx is comparable to the pipe and the bag into which air is blown, corresponds to the lungs containing air. The muscles controlling the lungs to produce sounds resemble the fingers pressing the air of the bag into the pipe. The lips and teeth, which mould the sounds into letters and words, correspond to the fingers on the orifices of the pipe-giving rise to music and song. The larynx here has been regarded as analogue to the bagpipe by way of explanation, whereas in re­ality the bagpipe is the instrument constructed on the pattern of the natural organ, the larynx.

O Mufazzal! The organs of speech here por­trayed, suffice for a correct reproduction of the letters. There are, however, other functions allotted to these. The larynx, for instance, is so fashioned as to admit fresh air into the lungs for supply to the blood and heart, which if it fails even for a moment causes death.

The tongue is forged as to distinguish between the varied tastes of foods one from the other, the sweet from the sour, the purely sour from the sweetish sour, the saltiest from the sweet. The tongue also helps to feel the pleasantness of water and food. The teeth masticate the food to make it soft enough for easy diges­tion. They also hinder the lips from being sucked into the mouth. A person who has lost his teeth is seen to have loosely moving lips. The lips help to suck in water, so as to allow only calculated quantity of water to enter the stomach as required, not gurgling down of its own accord and producing a suffocation in the throat, or leading to some sort of internal in­flammation by virtue of its forceful flow. More­over, the two lips serve, as a door to keep the mouth shut at will.

O Mufazzal! We have explained to you the multifarious functions performed by them and the benefits accruing from them, just as the same tool may serve different purposes, for. instance, the axe, which a carpenter can use and which may be used for digging the earth and for other purposes.

If you look at the brain, you will find it wrapped up in membranes one upon the other to protect it from injuries and movement. The skull protects it as a helmet against being shat­tered to pieces by a knock or percussion on the head. The skull is covered with hair like a fleecy covering, safeguarding it against heat and cold. Who, then, except Almighty Allah endowed the brain with such security and protection, and who made it the fountain head of sense perception and who made the arrangements for its extra ordinary protection in comparison with all other parts of the body because of its important status in body economy.

O Mufazzal! Just consider the eye-lid, how it is fashioned as a screen for the eye with the eyelashes like the strings for raising and lower­ing the screen. Just notice how the eyeball is set in a cavity shaded by the screen and hair.

O Mufazzal! Who has concealed the heart within the breast and covered it with a screen, which you call the membrane? Who has arranged for its protection by means of the ribs, the muscles and flesh interwoven in such a way as to prevent anything getting to it to cause an abrasion? Who has shaped two holes in the throat, one for the production of the sound situated in proximity with the lungs and the other called the gullet leading to the stomach for entry of the food, and who has placed a flap, the epiglottis, over the hole leading to the larynx, to prevent food entering the lungs, which would cause death if not thus managed? Who has caused the lungs to fan air to the heart indefatigably without rest to remove the toxins that would destroy it otherwise?

Who has shaped the sphincters controlling the outlets of urine and stool, like the strings of a purse, to be opened or shut at will and not be dripping all the while automatically resulting in a persistent nuisance in life. Similarly there are matters which a computer may compute, but others which men have no knowledge of are beyond computation. Who has given such resilience to the muscles of the stomach that it has been commissioned to digest coarse foods? And who has made the liver soft and tender to accept nutriment in purified and rectified form and function more finely than the stomach? Can all these tasks be completed by anyone except the Omnipotent Almighty? Can you imagine that all this can be performed by inert nature? Cer­tainly not! All this is the planning of the Almighty Omniscient Designer, Who has the ful­lest knowledge and has the perfect Omnipotence in advance of creation. He is Allah, the All-knowing, Almighty.

O Muffazzal! Just consider why the tender marrow is kept protected inside bone tubes, just for the sake of protecting it against waste under the influence of the sun's heat which might melt it, or that of cold which might solidify it, which would blast life, the bone marrow being an essen­tial ingredient supplying the body's needs for energy.

And why is this circulation of blood con­fined in the blood vessels, except that it should function in the body and not flow off? Why are these nails fixed on fingers, except that they afford protection against damage and help in better efficiency, for without them the presence of flesh alone would hot have enabled man to pick up things with a pinch, to use a pen for writing or to thread a needle?

Why is the ear patterned intricately as a prison house, except that the sounds may be carried to the membrane for detection without damage thereto by the violence of air impact?

Why is this flesh woven over man's thighs and buttocks, except that he may not be in­convenienced by the hardness of the floor in sitting, as is the case of a person of thin, ema­ciated constitution unless something intervenes between him and the floor to tone down in hardness, like a cushion or a sofa?

Who has created the human race as man and woman? Surely, He Who ordained the race to flourish by the method of the union of the two sexes or at least to maintain its numerical strength, through the differentiation of the two sexes. And who made him the progenitor of a generation? Surely, He Who implanted hope in him. Man tries to reproduce to preserve his identity in posterity. Had not this desire surged in his breast, why should there have been an urge to mutual union. Look at the living beings, reproduction among whom are not conditioned by union and sexuality, but is affected by a certain stage of development of the female. They have no differentiations of male and female at all. Can anyone, for instance, tell between the female and male of a wasp?

And who gave him the organs for action? Surely, He Who made him a worker. And who made him a worker? Surely, He Who created him needy. Man would not have worked if he had no need to fulfill. If he did not need to satisfy his hunger, why should he have laboured, why should he have taken to business and industry? Had he no need to safeguard his body against heat and cold, why should he have learnt sewing, needle-manufacture, spinning, weaving, cotton-growing etc. And in the absence of all this, of what use would have been the organs of action and the fingers? And who created him needy? Surely, He Who created for him the factors of neediness. And who created for him the factors of neediness? Surely, He Who took upon Himself the responsibility for supplying the needs.

Who endowed him with intellect? Surely, He Who made reward and chastisement as essential for him. He would not need intellect if he were not responsible for reward and punish­ment. The Almighty Creator endowed him with intellect to distinguish between good and evil, having decided upon reward and punishment as essential for him, to get the reward for good­ness and chastisement for evil. The animate be­ings which are not subject to reward and punish­ment have no sense of good and evil, nor do they know the distinction between the forbidden and the lawful, the condemned and the approved types of action. They cognise, however, the fac­tors needed by them for the survival of their species or individuality. As for instance, the bird has the necessary recognition of an eagle as a bird of prey, and so at its very sight takes to speedy flight or a deer knows well that the lion would tear him up, so at its mere sight it flees for life.

Who has endowed him with strategy and percipience? Surely, He Who has bestowed energy upon him. And Who has gifted him with energy? Surely, He Who ordained justification of conduct on him, (If justification of conduct were not required what was the need for bestowing energy upon him? He can be asked, for instance, as to why he did not perform his prayers, or as to why he did not save another human being who had fallen, in view of the gift of energy). Who helps him in all those undertakings, in which his plans fail? Surely, He Who deserves our highest grati­tude. (Glory be to Allah? How beautifully are the words expressive of the nice ideas! Allah (s.w.t.) knows how to convey his message!)

O Mufazzal ! Just consider what I have explained to you. Can there be such orderliness and method in the absence of planning? Cer­tainly not! Almighty Allah is far exalted above what these people say.

O Mufazzal! Supposing you found one shutter of a door having a latch fixed to it, can you imagine it to have been fixed without any purpose? Surely, you will conclude that it is there to be joined to the other shutter for a defi­nite advantage. Similarly, you will find a male creature as one individual of a pair created for the female individual for union to preserve the race. (From this it crystallises that the Omniscient Designer has in His infinite Omniscience gifted man with male organs and the woman with female organs for the preservation of the race through their union. How else could inert matter itself have the percipience to create the disparate individualities of man and woman and bestow each with the appropriate organs?)

May Allah (s.w.t.) destroy those who claim to be philosophers but are so purblind in their ap­proach to such wonders of creation and consti­tution that they deny in the creation of the uni­verse the design of the Almighty Designer and the will of the Master Planner.

O Mufazzal! Just look with receptive eyes the great boon of Allah the Almighty, in the relief of trouble after taking in food and drink. Is it not an elegance of plan in the construction of a house that the lavatory should be in a secluded part thereof? In the same way, Allah the Almighty has made the orifice for the ex­creta of man in a secret place. It is not in the open nor has it prominence, but it is so situated as to be perfectly hidden by the junction of the thighs and the buttocks with their fleshly matter. When a man needs to answer the call of nature and assumes the requisite posture of sitting, the orifice allows the excreta to escape.

O Mufazzal! Just consider the teeth set in the mouth of man. Some are sharp, which in­cise and sunder the food. Others are flat, which chew and pulverize. Since both types, are re­quired he is supplied accordingly.

Just consider and appreciate the ingenuity underlying why it is proper to have the haircut and the nails pared. They grow, increase, and need to be clipped. As such they are devoid of sensation to avoid pain to man. In case the clipping thereof had resulted in pain, they would either have been left to grow inordinately and become burdensome or pain would have been inflicted in clipping.

Mufazzal: Sir! Why were they not so designed as not to thrive to an extent that their clipping would be necessary?

Imam (a.s.): There are, indeed, numberless boons of Allah the Almighty to his creatures un­known to them and which if they knew they would be grateful for.

Know that the troubles and ailments of the body are relieved through this hair coming out of the pores. (Vapours and sweat are excluded through these pores. These hairs too are the vapours confined under the skin.) The fingers get relief of their ailments through the nails. That is why a weekly clipping of nails, shaving of head and removing of redundant hair must be effected, so that the nails and hair should grow fast and relieve ailments and troubles. Ailments remain confined in the body otherwise with consequent pains and diseases.

No hair growth is allowed on parts of the body where they would harm man. If hair had grown inside the eyes, he would have been blinded. If they had grown inside the mouth, would not water and food have been hindered? If they had grown on the palms of hands, would not high sense of touch have been impaired and would not the same have interfered in the proper discharge of many a task, and the recognition by proper touch.

There is great ingenuity underlying keeping certain spots of the body hairless. (Can nature have the percipience of such subtleties or can such well-designed plans be attributed to it? Woe betides these atheists and their dullness. This affair of creation and see how error and harm of the beasts and other animals, whose procreation depends upon copulation; are similarly ins­tanced.

Yousee that their entire bodies are covered with hair, with the exception of the particular parts for the same reasons. So consider this affair of creation and see how error and harm of methods have been avoided while rectitude and benefit have been secured.

When these followers of Mani and those of their ilk tried to impugn the belief in purposeful creation (of the universe), they found fault with the growth of hair on the pubis and the armpits. They failed to grasp that such growth was due to the moisture flowing to those parts. The hair grows there just as grass grows at places where water collects. Don't you see how spots are prepared to collect waste products and hold them.

Yet another strategy underlying it is, that it affords one more discomfort a man has to undertake, relating to his body, and he is, so far as he is kept busy with the cleanliness of his body and the removal of his hair, prevented from perpetrating acts of greed, cruelty conceit and impudence, for which he may notget the opportunity.

O Mufazzal! Just consider the Saliva in the mouth and see the wisdom underlying it. It is so composed as to ensure constant flow to keep the throat and the palate moist, not to allow dryness therein that may lead to death. Without it, the food would not be chewed nor would it flow down. All this is obvious and supported by observation. In addition, know that this fluid is derived from food and getting down aids the action of the gall bladder.

Some ignorant debaters and half-witted claimants to philosophy, because of their deficient understanding and faulty knowledge, said, "It would have been better if the belly of man had been like a cloak to enable the physi­cian to open it at will, observe its contents and poke his hand inside for medical treatment, and not as it is walled in, mysteriously hidden from the reach of the eyes and the hands. The internal disorders can now only be gauged by delicate symptoms of the examination of urine, pulse etc., which are not above error and doubt to an extent that such error in pulse and urine examination may lead to death” Would, that these ignorant claimants to philosophy and pole­mics had known that it would have removed all apprehension of disease and death. (Any attack of disease would then have been met successfully by a reopening of the cloak-like belly, learning the exact cause and its removal.) Man would have been then infatuated with his vitality and healthfulness, which would have rendered him willful and conceited. The open belly would have allowed constant trickling of moisture, thus spoiling his seat, bed and nice dresses, in short, his whole living under the circumstances.

The stomach, the liver and the heart func­tion properly because of vital heat, which would have been disturbed by the influence of the out­side air acting through the belly under treat­ment, open to the reach of the eye and the hand. This would have resulted in death.

Don't you see (O Mufazzal!) that all hypotheses aside of the real nature of creation and constitution are far-fetched and prepos­terous.

Just consider O Mufazzal! The matters of feeding resting and sex, which are ordained for him and the expediencies underlying them.

Each one of them is propelled by an urge, which gives rise to a desire and an excitation therefore. Hunger demands food, which supplies life and energy to the body and its substance. Sleep demands rest for the recuperation of the body to remove the fatigue. If man were to take food just for the needs of his body without an urge from within forcing him to feed, it is pos­sible that he might have given way to indolence because of lassitude or pressure, his body would have been emaciated leading to death, just as a man puts off taking medicine which he only needs to improve his tone. (There is no force­ful urge for it from within). And this may have caused his death.

Similarly, he may put off sleep in indolence and thereby emaciate his body, if he aimed only thereby the rest for his body and the removal of fatigue of his organs.

If procreation were the sole aim of sexual union, (with no natural impulsive insistence), it would not have been improbable on his part to slacken with resulting decrease in population and final extinction, for there are people who have no desire for progeny nor any heed therefore. Behold, then, that every act concerning man's health and improvement has been reinforced by an insistent urge embedded in his nature prompting him thereto.

And know that the physical body has four facilities:—

1. The Affinitive faculty accepts the food and pushes it into the stomach.

2. The Retentive faculty retains it for the natural processes to act thereon.

3. The Assimilative faculty processes it to take out its extract for distribution to the body.

4. The Eliminative faculty, which eliminates the waste products after the Assimilative faculty, has completed its function. Just consider the ad­justment made in the body among these four facilities. They have been organised to meet the bodily needs as part of the Omniscient design. (Any deficiency in any one of the facul­ties would have disturbed the body economy with ultimate death). Without the Affinitive faculty, how would he have exerted after food, which is necessary for the upkeep and maintenance of his body? Without the Retentive faculty, how could the food have been retained in the stomach to be digested? Without the Assimilative faculty, how could the food have been processed to get the extract for supply to the body without disturbance? Moreover, without the Eliminative faculty how could the waste products, given off by the stomach, have been eliminated regularly?

Don't you see how the Glorious Almighty Allah has ordained and appointed the faculties for the functions conditioning the health of the body by His consummate skill and supreme will?

Let us illustrate it by an example. Just imagine the body to be a royal palace, with his servants and dependents residing therein.

There are employees engaged in its management. One of them is entrusted with the task of sup­plying the provisions to the dependents. The second is charged with the task of treasuring the same, so that it may be kept for conversion into nutrition. Third has to process it and dis­tribute it. The fourth sweeps the waste products left over.

The monarch of the palace is the Omniscient Creator Almighty, the Lord of the entire universe. The palace is the body; the dependents are the organs of the body, while the four facilities are employees.

O Mufazzal! You may, perhaps consi­der the explanation given by me concerning the four faculties and their functions as redundant and unnecessary. Yet my explanation does not follow the pattern of the books given by the phy­sicians, nor does the tenor of my talk follow theirs. Those people have made mention of the four faculties on the ground that it is needed in the medical art for healing. We men­tion it from the viewpoint of its need for in­vigorating the Faith and reformation of the recusant minds, just like my comprehensive ex­planation and exemplification illustrating the Omniscient design.

O Mufazzal! Reflect over the faculties embedded in the human psyche and the way they are organised, to wit, deliberation, superstition, reason, memory etc. What would be a man's plight if he were deprived of the faculty of memory, and how much his life's affairs would be disturbed, his economic affairs, and his business? He would not have remembered what other people owe him and what he owes to others, what bargains he made, what he heard and what he said. He would not have remem­bered who did him a good turn and who an evil one, what profited him and what harmed him.

He would not have remembered the path traversed by him numberless times (because of the absence of the faculty of memory). He would not have remembered anything even if he con­tinued to learn a science all his life, nor would have determined upon a belief or faith, nor could he have profited by experience, nor could he have compared one thing with another by analogy (not remembering his previous observation). In fact, he would have been outside the pale of humanity altogether.

O Muffazzal! Just see how profitable to man these faculties are. Leaving others, just deliberate on one and the place it occupies in our lives, (without this faculty of memory hundreds of shortcomings would result in his affairs, rendering him tired of life ultimately.)

Even a greater boon than memory is not forgetfulness, without which man would not have found solace in any affliction, nor would ever have got clear of frustration, nor could he have got rid of malice. (It is this forgetfulness, which makes man, loses the sting of his past affliction and frustration. He forgets malice and enters into camaraderie.) He would have failed to relish anything of the worlds' goods because of in­sistent memories of affliction. Nor could he ever have entertained any hope of the weaken­ing of his sovereign's attention or the envy of the envious. (The thought of his sovereign's hauling him up for some transgression ever and anon would have continued to embitter his. life. In the same way, the idea of the envy of the envious would have continued to pain him and embitter his life.)

Don't you see how the contrary facilities of memory and forgetfulness have been created in man, each ordained with a definite purpose, (can such ingenuities come into being without plan­ning by the Omniscient?)

And those people, for instance the followers of Mani, who believe in two opposite creators of all the universe cannot in any case be expec­ted to regard those two opposite entities as the creators of these two opposite faculties, for these two opposite faculties possess the benefits which you see accruing from them, (whereas the creator of evil cannot create but evil and vice according to them, while here both opposing facilities are leading to benefit. How can the creator of evil create any one of them?)

O Mufazzal! Just consider the quality with which man alone is endowed and no other creature shares it with him modesty. Without it, no one would have shown hospitality to a guest, nor anyone would have implemented his promise, nor any ones need would have been ful­filled, nor any goodness would have been achieved, there are many obligations, which are performed merely through modesty. He who gives up modesty does not concede the rights of his parents, or the obligations of consanguinity, nor honour his trust, nor avoid impudence. Don't you see how all these have been endowed in man so fully as to benefit him and accomplish his affairs?

O Mufazzal! Consider the blessing of speech, with which he is endowed by Allah the Almighty, which is the medium for the expres­sion of his inner thought and his cordial feeling springing from his cogitation and with which, he understands the inner points of others. Without this faculty he would have been like quadrupeds, neither able to convey his own in­ner thought to others, nor to understand the words of the speaker.

So is the case with the art of writing which is a means for knowing the histories of the bye-gone people and for transmitting those of the existing people for the generations to come. Through the same achievements of science and literature are preserved in books for ages. Through the same are preserved the discussions and account between one man and another. Without this art one adage would have been cut off completely from another; nor would any news have been received from those who are away from their native lands. Sciences too would have been extinct. Information on morality and etiquette would have been lost and a serious damage in the affairs of mankind would have ensued as also in the religious teachings and the traditions, which people need to know and the knowledge whereof would have been impossible (and yet essential for him).

You may, perhaps, think that this need has been fulfilled by man with the help of his own design and intelligence. It is not inherent in the nature of man. The same is the case of speech and language, for this too is a matter of terminology and resolution, determined by the people according to their mutual understanding of talk. That is why different groups have different languages and scripts, for instance, the Arabic, the Syriac, the Hebrew, the Roman etc., each of which is different one from the other, each having decided upon its own terminology of language and words.

He who makes such a claim (as to what has been the divine share in this purely human activity) the answer will be that though in both these matters man's planning and action have played a role, yet the means whereby his plan­ning and action achieve the goal, is a gift from the bounty of Almighty Allah, underlying therein, (for instance, the intellect or the tongue by means of which he attained the skill to establish the terminology). Supposing he had not been gifted with, the tonnage for speech, or the intel­lect had not been bestowed on him to guide him to such activity, he could never have been able to talk, and if he had not been blessed with the palm and the fingers, it would never have been possible for him to write.

You should learn a lesson from the animals in this behalf, who have neither the power to speak nor the power to write (being without the specific intellect or the instruments of writing.) As such, it is the principle laid down by the Almighty Creator for man's fundamental nature and a special boon, for which whoever is grate­ful shall get the heavenly reward, while who­ever denies will be ignored, for Almighty Allah is independent of the whole universe. (He does not need anybody's gratitude).

O Mufazzal! Consider the matters of which knowledge has been vouchsafed to man and those of which he has not been given the know­ledge. He has been vouchsafed the knowledge of all those matters that lead to his good in res­pect of Faith as well as his earthly life. The Gnosis of Almighty Allah Creator is attainable by means of the arguments and evidence available in the existence of the creation. So is the knowledge of matters obligatory on him, for instance, justice towards all human beings, kind­ness to parents, honouring trust, sympathy to­wards the down trodden etc. the knowledge and admission of which all nations possess naturally as a matter of fact, whether in agreement with us or against us. Similarly he has given the knowledge of those things which are beneficial to his worldly life, for example agriculture, horti­culture colonistaion, cattle farming, drawing water from the wells and the springs, herbal re­search for medical purposes, mining for different kinds of precious stones, diving in sea, the different kinds of planning for hunting animals and birds, fishing, industry, trade and business methods and many other things which need a long detail, wherein lies the fulfillment of the affairs of man's worldly life, the betterment of his religious and mundane affairs. Such know­ledge is made available to him as is best in his Interests. Matters, knowledge whereof is out of his reach, nor does his position demand it, are not made known to him, for example, the know­ledge of the unseen, of matters that have to happen in future or some of the affairs that happened in the past, those pertaining to what lies above the skies, within the globe, what lies in the oceans and in the vast expanse of the universe, or within the minds of people, the contents of the uterus etc. People who have claimed knowledge thereof had their claims stultified by the events following them contrari­wise. (The events that followed were contrary to what they had reported).

So just see Oh Mufazzal ! that the know­ledge of things given to man is essential for his worldly and religious affairs. He has been pre­vented from knowing unnecessary things to impress him with his worth and his deficiency (so that it may be known that man infact is an insignificant mote possessing a good deal of deficiency and weakness so that pride and conceit may not overtake him) in both these, lies his good (if a knowledge of these even mysterious matters were given, man would have exceeded all limits in conceit, seeing that even a little knowledge inflates him. If all existent and mysterious matters were disclosed to him he might have claimed divinity. So he is deprived of the knowledge of these things that he may know that, as man he is deficient. And there is a being transcending him who has full knowledge and he is Almighty Allah, may His Name be Glorified.)

Oh Mufazzal! Just consider why man has not been given the knowledge of his life span. If he knew the period of his life on earth to be short, his whole life would have been embittered, for knowing this he would have awaited the moment of his death. His condition would have been like a man whose assets have all been lost or are very soon to be lost and he might be feeling his poverty and neediness. How afraid would he be at the expectation of the destruction of his assets and the resultant indigence, the sorrow and chagrin he would feel at the pros­pect of death would be far greater than that at the prospect of destruction of his property, for he who loses his property ever entertains the hope that he might get more in return and that will provide solace to his mind. On the contrary, he who is convinced of the end of his life will much more be frustrated. In case he had a long, life span to live this confidence in his survival would have given him undue confidence. He might be overwhelmed by pleasures and debaucheries under the impression that he would offer penitence in the last days of life remain­ing for the present in his pleasure pursuits. This is a matter, which Almighty Allah does not want from nor likes in his creatures. (He wants that man must attend to Him and not be ab­sorbed in frivolities and novelties).

Supposing you have a servant who continues to offend you throughout the year and hopes to be pardoned against a day's or a month's services. Surely you would not like it and this servant will not rank with a righteous servant who is ever ready to do your bidding. (He will necessarily be dearer to you).

You may raise an objection to this by saying whether it does not happen that a man treads the path of disobedience, and then is penitent and his penitence is accepted. Our reply to this is that this happens only when a man is over powered by his libido to an irresistible extent, but all the time he is not determined on dis­obedience under the impression to express peni­tence later on while indulging in passions for the moment. Almighty Allah does forgive him out of his infinite mercy. However, in the case of one who is determined on disobedience as long as he will expect forgiveness at a later stage he is trying thereby to deceive Him Who can­not be deceived, thinking of getting the most of the pleasures of the moment while expecting to be forgiven because of his later penitence. There is this aspect of the matter, too, that because of a certain pattern of life of indulgence in pleasures which might not allow him even the occasion for penitence particularly in old age when the physical body has undergone a good deal of weakness preventing him from, working upto his expectations. And he who seeks pre­texts in submitting his penitence it may not be possible for him under a sudden onslaught death and so he may leave the world impenitent. He may be like a debtor who is competent to pay his debts but puts off from time to time till death overtakes him, his assets get destroyed and his debts will stand against him. As such, it is in the fitness of things that the knowledge of man's life span be kept a secret from him so that he may expect death to come at any moment and under that suspense to evade transgression and adopt righteous action.

You may raise another objection that now that his life span is a secret from him and he is ever in suspense about his death, he commits evil deeds and unlawful acts. Our reply to this is that the planning is in accordance with the situation prevailing now. If inspite of all this man does not refrain from evil, it is a sign of his temperamental perversion and his hard-heartedness. There is no error in the planning if a patient after being fully apprised of the benefits of certain medicines and the demerits of certain malevolent matters does not avail of this information by disregarding the physician's directions; the physician is not to be blamed but the patient who declined to follow the physician's direction.

If inspite of the suspense about death which he has because of his ignorance about his life span he does not desist from transgressions, he would be steeped in evil and heinous unreasonable sins, in case he gets a full knowledge of his life span and survival. As such the suspense about death in any case is better for him than his confidence in long life (He will have at least some fear in the mind of the Almighty to avoid heinous sins). If there is a category, of persons who despite their suspense about death are indolent and do not profit by advice, there is another category who profit by the advice, abstain from sinfulness and act righteously. They give the needy and the indigent in charity of their nice possessions. It would not have been justice to deprive this category from getting the benefit thereof (to prevent such people from having their share why should have the other category been deprived if another one is unable to profit by it. The state of death is therefore kept secret for any man to profit by it. Let the unfortunate be deprived).

Oh Mufazzal! Just consider the dreams (the dreams one sees in sleep) and the ingenuity underlying them. There are dreams that come true and dreams that do not come true all mixed up. If all dreams were true all men would have been Prophets, (the ingenuity underlying the creation of man that is the appraisement of his worth would have been lost). If all dreams were untrue, they would have been useless, rather redundant and meaningless. The dreams are some­times true which benefit a person in his life's busi­ness, under their guidance, or to avoid, the loss of which he has been informed thereby. They are mostly untrue lest man may come to depend on them. (If we were to do as we were guided in dreams there was no need of turning to Almighty Allah for prayer to distinguish between good and evil).

Oh Mufazzal! Just consider those things, which you see, present in the world supplied to meet human needs.

The earth to build houses, iron for industry, wood for building boats etc. stone for use as grindstone, copper for utensils gold and silver for business transaction, gems for treasure, corn for food, fragrant articles for pleasure, medicines to heal the sick, the quadrupeds as beasts of burden, dry wood as fuel, ashes for chemicals, sand for the benefit of the earth and can one count all these things which are numberless.

Oh Mufazzal! do you think that if a man enters a house and sees it supplied with all human needs, the whole house full of treasure and everything placed with a definite purpose, can he imagine that all those things have been arranged by themselves without anyone to plan it. Then how can any rational being suggest that this world and all its contents have come by themselves? (Without Creator).

Oh Mufazzal! Learn a lesson from the things that have been created to meet human needs and the great ingenuity underlying them. Corn has been produced for him but he has been entrusted with the duty of grinding, kneading and cooking. Wool has been produced for him, which he must gin, spin and weave. The tree is made for him but he must sow the seed, irrigate and supervise it. The herbs have been created as medicines for him but he must find them, mix them and compound them.

Similarly, you will find all things made by the Creator to meet human needs in a way that no plan of man could work efficiently the action and use thereof. The need and the situation for it has been left to him in his own interest. If Almighty Allah had got performed all these, items (necessary for man e.g. grinding cleaning, kneading, cooking) and had he nothing to do by way of his activity he would have begun to move on the earth on all fours and the earth would not have been able to bear his burden (such would have been the extent of his tem­peramental conceit. This would have led him to indulge in such activities as would have re­sulted in his death and destruction). Man would not have had a happy life if all his needs had been fulfilled without effort of hand, nor would he have enjoyed such a thing. (A thing that man comes by without effort is not valued, nor is it spiritually relished. If it is gained by effort and labour, the mind feels satisfied with the result of his effort before him.)

Oh Mufazzal! Don't you see that a guest staying for a time with all his needs being ful­filled by his host steadily without any effort on his part to secure eatables, drink, bed­ding or seating, gets tired of his idleness and inactivity. He seeks some engagement, what would have been his condition if his inactivity were lifelong? (He had got meals ever cooked ready for him, ready-made clothes, and plants giving him fruit without his gardening by themselves to his place). This then is ordained for man to occupy his limbs to transact his business in his own interest, lest idleness and inactivity cause him ennui. Moreover, he should be prevented from such undertakings as are outside his capacity, and which have no advantage for him even if completed. (Some well-to-do people be­cause of inactivity betake themselves to alchemy. They waste thousands of rupees in this pursuit; household goods even are thrown to the winds, but all in vain. Why did this situation arise? Because of inactivity, while nature demands activity. They turned in that direction with the loss of money without compensation as a consequence. One or two persons from among millions if successful do not profit. Experience corroborates it. The Almighty Allah, the Designer of the Universe has, as such, created occupations to keep him busy, and avoid useless undertakings likely to harm him).

Oh Mufazzal! Know that a man's basic need is for food and water. See the planning that has gone therein.

Man needs water more than bread, because he can bear hunger longer than thirst. He needs water for drinking, for ablutions, washing clothes, watering quadrupeds, irrigation of crops. Water, therefore, is provided in abundance with­out need to purchase it to save man the need for search. Bread must be obtained with effort and planning to keep man busy with his occupation and to hinder him from pride, conceit, and useless undertakings. Don't you see that a child in early age is sent to a teacher for instruc­tion to keep him away from playing away all his time, which may lead him or his kin to trouble. Similarly, if man were left unoccupied, he would have taken to pride and conceit and would have indulged in actions likely to harm him grievously.

That a man born and nurtured in the lap of luxury under conditions of opulence and plenty of his kinsfolk, is likely to fall into such con­duct, illustrates the point.

Know why one man does not resemble an­other, like the birds and animals etc. having liken­ing one with the other. You see a herd of deer and a swarm of partridges each resembling the other without much difference among them, whereas men, as you see, have distinctive features and constitutions, so much so, that no two men correspond to the same pattern.

The reason is the need each individual has to be recognised personally by his particular build and physiognomy, as they have to conduct business among themselves, which does not con­cern the animals. Don't you see that the mu­tual resemblance among animals and birds does them no harm? Not so in man, for if by chance a pair of twins become alike in shape, people feel a great deal of confusion in dealing with them. What must be given to one is handed to the other by mistake. One is held up in place of the other in retribution. It so happens in other matters as well through resemblance. (A chemist may dispense calendar seed in place of any seed or a croton pill in place of a fever pill through resemblance). Human resemblance can be even more harmful. Who then has provided such niceties and perfections, which stagger imagination? Surely, He Who created all these. Whose Grace extends to all things? (Glory be to the Best of Creators. Has instinct and nature the power to grasp such niceties and to create them at the appropriate occasions for the exact needs? Such conjecture is preposterous. No one but Allah (s.w.t.) has the whole Omnipotence.)

Oh Mufazzal! Will you believe a person who says that a picture on the wall, which you see, has come into being of itself without the aid of an artist? Certainly not! you will laugh at him. How then can you believe that a living man with faculties of speech and movement can come into being of himself, while you are not prepared to entertain such belief in regard to a lifeless picture?

Why does it so happen that the bodies of beyond a certain limit takes place in their living continue to feed but no further increase bodies? What is this due to if not to deep percipience?

The Almighty Allah has so ordained that each species of living beings should have a definite limit of growth neither bigger nor smaller. They continue to increase upto that limit and then stop growing, even though feeding conti­nues without. If it were not so ordained, they would have continued to grow till their bodies would have grown out of recognisable limits.

Why it is in the case of human beings in particular that movement and activity create fatigue in them and they avoid fine industries? Just because his needs like clothing etc., require more exertion. (He may acquire a worth for his labour, for anything achieved without effort is not valued and besides) if man did not suffer hardness and pain, how could he have evaded evil deeds, prostrated before Allah (s.w.t.) or sympathized with the people?

Don't you see that no sooner a man is in­flicted with pain, than be turns in perfect humility towards Allah (s.w.t.), supplicating for restoration of his health before his Creator and opens his hands in munificence? If man had felt no pain in being beaten how could the governments, have reformed the recusants? How could have children been taught sciences and arts? How could the slaves have been made to submit to their masters willingly?

Is there no admonition in all this for Ibne Abil Auja (the said atheist) and his companions who deny purpose and the followers of Mani who deny the ingenuity underlying labour and pain? (They say that there is no use for the pain felt by man. There is no remedy against irrational obduracy.) Supposing only males or only females had been created in living beings, would not their species have become extinct? It is thus to preserve their species that a mixture of males and females is brought into being in the right; proportion.

Why is it that when men and women reach puberty, the man alone grows a beard? Is it not in accordance with set design? This is be­cause the man is created as the lord and the woman as housekeeper. The woman is the supervisor of man’s interests and his sweet­heart. Man, as such, is bestowed with a beard to give him prestige and honourable lordly ap­pearance. The woman is allowed beauty and freshness instead as attractions for union. Don't you see the flawless merits that this creation acquires by the design of the Almighty Allah. Everything is according to a definite measure. Nothing is given which is not needed. (Man, for instance needed beard, he got it. Woman did not need it, she was not given it).

Mufazzal says, "It was now afternoon, my Master rose for prayers telling me to come to him the next day, Allah (s.w.t.), willing. Overjoyed with the information; received I returned with a grateful heart for Allah (s.w.t.) for the boon bestowed on me, I had a very pleasant night due to the valuable instructions bestowed on me by my Master."

# SECOND SESSION

Mufazzal says, "At day dawn I presented myself to my Master after obtaining admittance to the lodgings. I sat down at his behests." He began, "All praise is due to Him Who is the Creator of revolutions of the ages, Who brings one stage after another and one state after an­other of decades of time to reward the righteous and to chastise the evil-doers, because He is Just. All his Names are exalted. His Blessings are magnificent.. He does not do the least injustice to his creatures; rather man himself does injus­tice to himself. Allah (s.w.t.)'s own word bears testimony to this:

Then who hath done an atom-weight of good shall see it. And he who hath done an atom-weight of evil shall see it.[[4]](#footnote-4)

There are other verses in the Holy Book to this same effect giving detailed explanations of all matters. “Falsehood cannot come in front of nor behind it. It is a Book revealed by the Almighty Praiseworthy Allah”. It is on this account that the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) has said to the effect that your actions will be returned to you (that re­ward and chastisement are just the consequences of actions, which you will receive. They do not benefit Allah (s.w.t.). Rather you yourself will be the beneficiary) Imam (a.s.) bent down his head for a while and said "O Mufazzal; Mankind is perplexed and bewildered, blind, infatuated mov­ing intheir perverseness, following their devils andspecters. They have eyes but do not see, they have tongues but are dumb and do not understand. They have ears but do not hear. They are happy in their contemptible degrada­tion. They presume that they are well guided. They are diverted from the rank of rational beings. They feed on the vegetation of polluted dirty people. (They repeat what the irrational people say, denying the Almighty Allah, setting up nature or instinct as the creator of all things.) They deem themselves safe from a sudden visita­tion of death and the retribution of deeds. Alas! How ill fated are these people! (How frightfully prolonged is going to be their painful sorrow, and how dreadful their tribulation on the Day when no ally will avail anyone nor will he be succored, except those to whom Allah (s.w.t.) grants Mercy (on the Day of Resurrection).

Imam (a.s.) solaced Mufazzal who had been moved to tears at this by saying that he was saved because of having accepted the Faith and that because of his gnosis he was granted salvation.

He continued: I now wish to speak to you about the animal world that you may have as much information thereabout as you have get about the rest. Just consider the physical consti­tution and the pattern of construction underlying their build. They are not hard as stone, for had they been so, they could not have bent to perform actions, nor are they soft, for in that case they could not have reared up their heads or stood erect by themselves without prop. They are com­posed of such pliable muscles as bend and double up. They are supported by hard bones which are gripped by the muscles and which are tied together by tendons with the other. Covering these bones and muscles is the skin, which extends over the whole body. The wooden dolls with rags wound round them tied by strings and with a varnish of gum over the whole will illustrate the point. Let the wood stand for the bones, the rags for muscles, the strings for tendons and the varnish for the skin. If it is possible in the case of living and moving beings to come into existence of themselves (by the inter-relation of tendons, muscles and bones), it should be reasonably ex­pected to happen in the case of these lifeless figures (the varnishing, the stuffing’s, and the stringing should be accomplished automatically). And if it is impossible in the case of these toys, it is even more preposterous in the case of animals.

Then look minutely to their bodies, they are composed of muscles bones like the human be­ings, they are endowed with eyes and ears, so as to enable men to get work from them. They would not have served his purpose if they had been blind and deaf.

They are deprived of the faculties of intel­lect and reason, so that they may remain sub­servient to men and should not disobey even when subjected to intolerably heavy labour and burden.

An objection may be raised to the effect that human slaves possessing intellect and reason obey their masters abjectly despite hard laborious toil. (What was the harm if the animals were also granted intellect and reason? They would have served man as faithfully as slaves). The answer to this is that this kind of men (who continue obedient even under the stress of slavish toil) are few in number. Most of the slaves are unwilling toilers, while the quadrupeds are obedient even under heavy burdens and when turning grindstones etc. They cannot be affected by agitation as far as their particular duties to man are concerned. (Contrary to the quadrupeds, man is prone to such influence). If (animals were given intellect and declined to do man's bidding to undertake the toil, and to do the work now being accomplished by animals) men had to do, against a single camel or a mule several men would be required causing a deadlock in other undertakings. These simple tasks would have, absorbed all manpower, without leaving any hands spare for arts and professions. Besides men would have been hard put to it and their econo­my would have suffered a strain (Animals have been so constituted without intellect as not to disobey man).

O Mufazzal! Just consider the constitutions of the following three kinds of living beings, and the merits with which they are endowed.

(i) Man having been ordained to possess in­tellect and reason to undertake such pro­fessions as carpentry, masonry, smithy, sewing etc. has been endowed with broad palms with thick fingers to be enabled to grasp all types of tools necessary for these professions. (These could not have been managed without broad palms and fingers).

(ii) The carnivorous animals having been ordained to live on game have been gifted with soft palms with claws capable of being drawn in. They are suitable for hunting but unfit for professional arts.

(iii) Herbivorous animals having been ordained neither for professional arts nor for hunt­ing, have been gifted, some with slotted hoofs to save them from the hardness of the ground while grazing, while others have solid round hoofs to be able to squarely stand on the ground for better fitness as beasts of burden.

Carnivorous animals in their constitutional composition have sharp fangs, hard claws and wide mouths to serve them in their nutrition through animal food as ordained for them, and they are constituted accordingly. They have been armed with such tools and implements as befit them for hunting. On a similar analogy, you will find the beak and the claws befitting them for their particular tasks.

If such claws were given to animals (non-hunting), they would have been worse than use­less; for they neither hunt nor cat flesh. And if the carnivorous animals were given hoofs instead of claws, they would have failed to secure their necessities in the absence of suitable where with all.

Don't you see that both these kinds of ani­mals are gifted with exactly the things appro­priately in consonance with their need—nay there­in lies their survival.

Now look at the quadrupeds. How they follow their mothers of themselves. They neither need to be carried nor is to be nurtured as the case with the human babies. This is so because the mothers of those young ones do not possess the tools, which the mothers of human babies have. They possess kindness, love and the knowledge of the art of nurture with specialised hands and fingers to lift them. (The poor quadrupeds have nothing of the sort as such) they are so consti­tuted as to help themselves in all manner of work.

You will find the same in birds, for example, the young ones of hen, partridge and grouse begin to pick up corn and move about - as soon as hatched from eggs. Birds whose young ones are weak, without the strength to stand, for example those of the wild and domestic pigeon, have mothers with extra maternal instinct, so that they bring to their young one's mouths nourishment garnered by them in their crops. Such feedings continue till the chicks can fend for themselves. The pigeons don't have a large brood like the hens, to enable the females to rear them up ade­quately without starving them. Every one thus receives a due share from the bounty of the Almighty Omniscient Allah (s.w.t.).

Just see the legs of the animals are created in pairs to enable them to move easily, which would have been difficult, had they been created in odd numbers. The moving animal lifts up One foot while resting on the other ground. Bipeds lift one and get supported on the other. Quadrupeds lift one pair and rest on the other on the opposite sides. If the quadrupeds had lifted the pair of legs on the same side, grop on the other would have been difficult, just as a board cannot stand on two legs. The front leg of the right side and the hind leg of the left side are lifted together and vice versa for steady locomotion.

Don't you see that a donkey drives a grind­stone in addition to carrying burdens, seeing that the horse is allowed comparative rest and com­fort. And the camel does so much work which cannot be accomplished by a number of men. What would have been the case if it had declined to obey? It submits to even a child at present. How does the bullock submit to his master ploughing the fields with the yoke on its neck? The thoroughbred horses rush into sword-blades and spears like their masters, A single person is able to look after a flock of sheep. If the sheep were to go astray each one on itsown way, how could anyone have been able to find them. Simi­larly, the other species of animals are subservient to man, why? Just because the possess no intellect, no power to reason out matters. Had they possessed intellect they would have shirked to implement a good deal of man's requirements. The camel would have declined to submit, and the bullock would have mutinied against his master, the sheep would have got scattered and so on. If the beasts of prey possessed intellect and rea­son, they would have contested for materials of food with men; who then could have faced their combined advance against men?

Don't you see how they are prevented from doing so? They fear the habitats of men and flee from him, instead of man fearing them. They do not come out during daytime in search of food, but at night. They fear men with all their majestic awesomeness without having suffer­ed any harm or warning from him. If this had not been ordained so, they would have come jump­ing into human habitats and made his life miserable.

The dog, among the beasts, is endowed with a special trait loyalty to his master, his service and safeguard. It keeps watch during dark nights roaming about the premises safeguarding against burglars. It is prepared to lay down its life to save him and his flocks; such is its loyalty to its master. It can put up with hunger and pain for its master's sake. Why is the dog created on this pattern, except that it should serve to guard man, with his strong teeth, stout claws, a fright­ful back, why? To frighten the burglars and to prevent them approaching the goods entrusted to his care.

O Mufazzal! Look at the faces of the quad­rupeds, how they are shaped. You will see that they have their eyes accommodated in the front, lest they strike a wall or fall in a pit. You will find their mouths cleft under the snout... If they were like those of men, they would not have been able to pick up anything from the ground. Don't you see that man does not pick up his food with his mouth? He does so with his hands. This is a peculiar merit granted to man in com­parison with other feeders. Since the quadrupeds did not possess such hands to enable them to pick up grass, the under part of the snout was cleft to enable them to pick up grass and chew it. It is further helped with lengthened lips to reach out to farther as well as nearer things.

Consider the tail of animals and the benefit ordained therein. It is a sort of covering for their excretory privities. It also helps them keep off flies and mosquitoes that settle on the dirt on their bodies. Their tails are patterned after the fans with which to drive away flies and mos­quitoes. They also get relief by constantly wag­ging their tails (as a sort of bobby).

These animals stand on all fours legs, they have no occasion to move them about, and they therefore, feel relieved by wagging their tails. There are other benefits as well which human imagination is incapable of grasping which are known only when need arises, among those benefits the tail is the most handy weapon to extricate it when it is stuck in the mud. The tail hair may also be used to advantage by men.

The trunk of such animals is made flat lying on all four legs, to facilitate riding and copulation because of the situation of the relevant parts Consider the trunk of an elephant and the great ingenuity in its pattern. It serves the purpose of taking in food and water to the stomach, like the human hand. Without it, the elephant can­not lift anything from the ground, since its neck is not long enough, which it may stretch for­ward like other quadrupeds. In the absence of a long neck, it has been given in its place a long trunk; that it may extend it and meet its need. Who has given it an organ to compensate for the absence of a missing one (the hand)? Surely, He who is so very compassionate on His creatures. And how can this take place without set design as asserted by the perverse naturalists and atheists?

To the objection as to why it has not been endowed with a neck similar to that of other animals, the reply is that the head and the ears of the elephant being very heavy would have caused great strain, even rupture, so its head is joined directly to the body to protect it against that contingency and instead thereof the pro­boscis is constructed to serve all those purposes it needs, including those of feeding.

Just consider the constitution of the giraffe and the distinct nature of its organs resembling certain other animals. Its head resembles that of a horse, the neck that of a camel, the cleft-hoof that of a cow, its skin that of a leopard. Some ignorant people (not knowing the ingenuity of the Almighty Allah) have supposed that it results from the union of several kinds of animals. These ignoramuses say that different species of land animals come to the watering places; one species individual enters into sexual union with another species individual with the result of such an off­spring. As such, it is a composite model. To say this is to betray ignorance and lack of the gnosis of the Almighty Allah, glory be to Him. No animal enters into sexual union with animals of other species. No union takes place between a horse and a she-camel or a camel and a cow. Sexual, union can take place only between animals of similar constitutional shape, for example between a horse and a she-ass resulting in a mule or a wolf with a badger resulting in a hybrid. Moreover, it never happens that the offspring of such a union can borrow one organ from one or the other mate (that the head be like that of a badger while the legs say resemble a wolf's). A giraffe has one organ resembling that of a horse, another that of a camel, another hoof that of a cow. But you see that a mule has its head, ears, back, tail and hoof midway between those of a donkey and a horse, so is its cry midway between neighing and braying. This argument adequately shows that a giraffe is not the offspring of the union of desparate species, but is one wonder of the wonderful creations of the Almighty Allah, demonstrating His Omnipotence.

It should also be known that the Creator of the numberless species of animals creates the organs of whatsoever He likes of them similar to one another and those of others dissimilar. He adds in the composition whatever He wills and curtails therefrom whatever He wills. This is so that His Omnipotence may be demonstrated and that nothing can hinder Him in anything He wills.

Why is its neck long and what advantages do accrue to him therefrom? The advantage lies in enabling him to reach up to the leaves and fruits of the tall trees for its nourishment where it lives, dwells and it is born and has his grazing places, the dense forests.

Just consider the creation of the monkey and the similarity that subsists between its organs and those of man, to with, the head both should­ers, chest and the internal organs. Moreover, it is gifted with brain and intellect because of which it understands the signals and the directions of his master. It generally apes man's activities as he sees him. It is very close to man in its qualities, traits and constitutional build-up. It should serve as admonition to man that he should bear in mind that in his nature and material he is animal like resembling them so closely and if he were not gifted with brain, intellect and speech, he would have been just like animals.

There are certain additions in the constitution of a monkey differentiating him from man e.g. The mouth the long tail, the hair covering the whole body*.* These differences, however, would not have hindered him to become human if he had been gifted with reason, intellect and speech faculties like man. The real line of demarcation between it and man, as such, is due to only the facilities of reason, intellect and speech.

O Mufazzal! Just consider the mercifulness of Almighty Allah towards these animals in giving their bodies a covering with different kinds of hair to protect them against winter hardships. And they have been gifted with hoofs, cleft and uncleft (in place of shoes) or padded feet (like those of camels and elephants) to protect them. They have neither hands, nor palms nor fingers to spin and weave so their clothing is made part of their bodily build to serve them all through life without renovating and changing. Man, how­ever, possesses hands and skill to weave cloth and spin thread. He makes cloth and from time to time changes it with many advantages to him; among them, he is kept busy with manufacturing his clothing and is thereby saved from harmful activities and idleness. He puts off his clothing whenever he wants to be at home. He can make various kinds of dress for the pleasure he gets in their change by way of ostentation and so on. He prepares socks and shoes by way of fine indus­try to protect his feet. The labourers and the traders thereby get their livelihood and the liveli­hood of their families. These different kinds of hair serve the animals as clothing’s while their hoofs and padded feet by way of footwear.

O Mufazzal! Just consider the constitutional trait of the animals, namely, the concealment of the dead bodies when they die just as men bury their dead. Not a single dead body of the beasts and animals is seen. They are not so far as to beoverlooked. In fact, their population isgreater than that of men.

Look atthe flocks of the deer, the wild ox,the wild ass, the wild goats and the stags and also the different species of the animals and beasts like the lion, the badger's, the wolves, the leopards, etc, and the varieties of insects living inside the bowels of the earth and moving on its surface in the deserts and mountains and simi­larly the flight birds like Grows,the partridge, the ducks, the cranes, the pigeons, the birds of prey none of their corpses do wesee except the few that the hunter gets as game or those that are devoured bybeasts. As a matter of fact when these animals get a feeling of approaching death, they hide themselves insome secret place and lie there. (Had it not been so, the earth would have been infected bythe stench of decaying corpses causing epidemics and all kinds of diseases). Look to the arts that man has learnt from these animals its first exemplification (which has been mentioned bythe Almighty Allah in the narration when Cain (Kabil) had murdered Abel (Habil), (both sons of Adam). He saw two crows fighting, onekilling the other and then burying its dead body,whence Cain learnt to dig andconceal his brother's corpse. That was undertaken under the guidance ofthe Almighty Allah. These animals were given this instinct to save man from the affliction of those troubles and epidemics, which would have followed.

OMufazzal! consider the instincts with which they have been naturally gifted by the Almighty Allah through His Infinite Mercy so as not to leave any creature deprived of His com­passion though this is not under the rational thinking faculties (which has been negative already). The Gozan (deer) swallows up a snake but it does not drink water, however intense its thirst, for fear of the poison circulation in his body because of water, which may kill him. It roams about water tanks. It cries because of the intensity of thirst but does not touch water for fear of death. You see the great restraint that these animals possess in regard to intense thirst because of the fear of harm to an extent that a rational wise man is unable to undertake.

The fox (just consider it) when it does not get food in any other way, feigns death with its belly inflated to deceive birds into believing it to be dead. As soon as the birds come round it todevour the apparent dead body, it attacks them and makes a hearty meal.

Now say who has given this skill to the speech­less irrational fox. Surely, He Who has taken upon Himself the responsibility of feeding it. As the fox cannot undertake those activities which other beasts can, e.g., direct attack on the victim, it has been gifted with skill and fraud as means for livelihood. Dolphin (a water animal that is known to save drowning men) needs bird’s victims. It catches a fish, kills it that it may keep floating on the water while itself hiding underneath it, stirring the water all the time to keep its own body hidden. As soon as a bird pounces upon the fish, it pounces on it and takes hold of the bird. By this skill, it gets its victim.

Mufazzal says that he requested for an ac­count of a python and the cloud.

Imam (a.s.) replied that the cloud is a sort of an Angel to get hold of it python wherever it may find it just as the magnet stone gets hold of iron. It does not raise its head from the earth because of the fear of the cloud except in sum­mer when the sky is clear without a trace of cloud and then too only once.

Mufazzal: Why is the cloud made overlord of the pythom to get hold of it wherever it may find it.

Imam (a.s.) To save men from its harm.

Mufazzal: Sir, you have given an account of the animal world so fully as to serve an eye opener for everyone. Kindly give some account of the ants and the birds.

Imam (a.s.) Mufazzal: Look at the jaws of this little ant. Do you find any deficiency therein affecting its benefit? Where has this propriety and measure come from? Surely the same ingen­uity and design, which has gone into the build of all creation big or small (all things that were necessary for the ant have been created for it). Just see how these ants gather together to garner food for themselves. You will find that when several ants mean to carry a grain to their homes they resemble several men engaged in carrying home their corn. The ants in fact bring in effort and activity, which men cannot do. Do not you see how they help each other in carrying the grain like men? They break the grains into pieces lest they should sprout (when given moisture) and become useless for their purpose. In case the grains get moist, they spread them to get dry. The ants burrow their holes at elevated places away from the danger of flooding. All these acti­vities however are without the intervention of reason, purely instinctive with which their constitutions are endowed with by the kindness of the Almighty Allah.

Just look at the insect called 'Lais' generally called the lion of the flies. (It is a kind of a spider living on flies.) How great skill, ingenuity, and mildness it has been endowed with for its livelihood. You will see that when it has afeeling of the approach of a fly, it ignores him for a while (it does not interfere with it nor does it give any indication of its aim) as if it itself is a lifeless body. When it feels that the fly is put off the guard and is altogether unaware of its presence, it begins moving towards in slowing step by step till it gets near enough, to catch it, it pounces upon it and gets hold of it. Getting hold of it embraces it with its whole body to prevent its escape. It holds on until it feels the fly to have weakened and its limbs to have relaxed when it turns to it and devours it. This is the way it lives on (who has taught this skill to the spider to use this artifice to catch hold of the fly for its food? Did the matter constituting the spider teach this or its irrational instinct? Surely not, but the great Designer Allah (s.w.t.) who created it and gifted it with this skill and ingenuity).

The ordinary spider weaves its web and uses it as a trap for the catching of flies. It sits hid­den within it. As soon as a fly is trapped, it pounces upon it cutting it into piece. It lives on like this. So is the case with the dogs, the lion hunt and the trap snares for hunting (Just as a man hunts a lion or traps a bird these spiders without possessing any reason and intellect do the same under natural instinct). Just see how this weak insect has been gifted with the instinct to catch its prey which man cannot do without using artifice and implements. Do not find fault with anything, for everything has a lesson to teach just like the ants, etc. (do not look with contempt at them. It implies that even the ants and the smallest creatures should not be looked at with contempt. They too have wonderful skills gifted to them by the Almighty Creator, whence man can learn great lessons). A fine meaning often is expressed by an insignificant thing with­out depreciating its value just as gold is not depreciated if it is weighed against iron weights.

Mufazzal: Just consider the physical build of the bird as it was ordained that it would fly high in the air. It has been gifted with a tight body and a comparatively compact constitution. It has only two feet instead of four, four fingers instead of five, only one orifice for excretion ins­tead of two. It is gifted with a sharp chest to cut through the air just as a boat is built to cut through water. It has long stiff feathers on its sides and tail to help it fly high. The whole body is covered with feathers to get filled with air for *high*flights. Since it was ordained for it that, its nutrition will consist of grains and flesh which it will swallow without mastication, teeth have been missed from its build and a stiff beak to seek food has been given to it with which it can pick up food material. It is not injured in picking up nor broken by nibbling flesh. Since it has no teeth but takes in while grains and raw flesh a great deal of heat is created in its stomach, which serves to cook up its food without the need for mastication. It is just an example that the seeds of grapes pass out of man's stomach as such while they are completely cooked in birds' stomach. (This demonstrates that the birds possess heat enough in their stomachs to cook even hard seeds.) They have been so constituted as to lay eggs rather than give birth to young ones so that they may not have any burdens to bear in flight due tofoetus in the womb staying to be fully deve­loped. Everything in its build has been so created as tobe fully appropriate to its situation in life. It was also ordained that the birds that had to fly in the air (its very nature is constituted for flying) should sit for a week or two weeks or three weeks on the eggs to bring forth their chicks. They then turn to them with their entire attention. It has a crop large enough to bring up its young ones with food on which it can subsist. Who has entrusted it with tasks of first filling up its crop with grains picked up from the field and then replace the same into the crop of the young ones? Why does it take all that trouble although it has no faculty of reasoning nor has it any ex­pectations which man entertains about his young ones—honour, survival of name and inheritance, etc. This is an activity, which demonstrates that it is a special boon to its chick under a special dispensation of the Almighty Allah, which the bird itself cannot know nor reason out. And what is it? It is an arrangement for the survival of the race.

Just look at the hen. How anxious it is to lay the eggs and to bring forth the chicks al­though it has neither any particular nest nor the eggs from the same stock. It clucks, it ex­pands its feathers; it gives up its nourishment, unless it is given eggs to sit on and to bring forth the chicks why? It is to preserve the race (why should it have tried so hard otherwise). Had it not been instinctively ordained who could have obliged it for the preservation of the race, al­though it has no intellectual or reasoning faculty? (Whereby she should have grasped her responsi­bility for race preservation.)

Just look to the composition of the egg and the white and yellow matters inside it. One part is for the chick to be constituted while the other is to serve it as its nourishment till such time as it leaves the egg. (The yellow part gives rise to the chick while the white matter serves as its nourishment.) Just see the ingenuity underlying it as the composition of the chick was to be carried on safely within the shell without allow­ing any exterior disturbance, its nourishment was provided within it, which is sufficient until it gets out. A person who is imprisoned security with­out any approach to him is provided with enough food to suffice him till his release (in the same way the chick within the shell is provided with nourishment in the form of the white matter).

Just consider the bird's crop and the inge­nuity underlying it. The stomach is approached by a narrow tube to allow nourishment to reach it in small quantities. Without the crop, the grain would have taken time to reach the stomach. The bird in its far-sightedness fills up its crop hastily. Its crop is constructed on the pattern of the haversack suspended in front of it so that it may fill it up hastily with whatever it gets. Then slowly to transfer it to the stomach (particularly adapted for digestion).

There is another advantage in the crop. Certain birds have to transfer food material to their young ones. The crop helps them to trans­fer it easily (on the other hand if grains were collected deeper down in the stomach the transference of the same to the mouths of the young ones would have been difficult. It has there­fore been so ordained that birds fill in their crops first and then easily transfer the same to the young ones).

Mufazzal: Some people of the materialistic school claim that the variegated hues and the constitutions of the birds are merely due to the compounding of elements and humours in varied proportions. They are not due to any particular design. (That the bird should possess different hues and different physical bodies like the pea­cock, the turkeys, the partridges, etc., have at the basis of their difference only a difference in their material.)

Imam (a.s.): This ornamentation, which you see in the peacock or the partridge and the per­fect symmetry (if there is a two-inch red spot on one side it is the same on the other side as well. The feathers on one wing have the same quality and the same colour as on the other. The fading and depth on one Whig corresponds to the same on the other) as if some artist with a fine brush has accomplished the art of picturequeness. How can this irrational compounding (by the interaction of elements without reason and intellect) bring it forth without any flaw? If these artistic models came into being without the Almighty Artist, how could this symmetry and uniformity be maintained (and yet we see such bewitching beauty in the colourfulness of these birds. This shows that the Almighty Designer Allah (s.w.t.) has by His Special art and skill filled in these colours.) Just look closely at the feathers of a bird, you will find at like cloth woven with fine strings. One hair is interwoven with another just as one piece of thread is interwoven with another. Look at its composition. If you open it, it opens up without being split to allow air to be filled in and to allow the bird to fly when it likes. Within the feather, you will find a stout stick covered with hair like material so that because of its stoutness it holds them. The stick is hollow within so as not to be a burden to the bird and hinder its flight.

Have you ever seen the long legged bird and ever thought of the advantage it has of the long legs? It is often found at comparatively less deep water. You will find it as if keeping watch at the spot standing on its long legs. It keeps watching the movements in the water. When it finds anything edible, it slowly moves to it and catches hold of its victim. If its legs had been shorter, its belley would have touched water in its movements to­wards its victim and it might then have swelled and failed to catch its victim. He has therefore been gifted with two long props to fulfill its need without any obstacle.

Just consider other pieces of skill that have gone into the build of birds. You will find every long-legged ward possessed of a long neck as well toenable it to pick up its food from the ground. It sometimes happens that a long beak is made toserve the purpose ofa long neck leading to the required facilities. Donot you see that whatever creation you consider you will find it exact and full of ingenuity (it is really, so there is nothing in this creation wherein various types of ingenuity have not been at work, which are in perfect agree­ment with its needs). Look at those herbs, which these birds seek after during the day. It never happens that they don't find them nor do they find it collected at one place. They obtain them by searching and moving about. This same situa­tion prevails in the case of other creatures. Glory be to the Almighty Allah who has apportioned sustenance and arranged in different ways to sup­ply it. It is not so arranged as to be out of reach by the creatures who need it nor has it been arranged to ease of access as to be obtained with­out any efforts, for that would have been useless if food had been obtained in inexhaustible quan­tities at any one place the animals would have glutted, never leaving the place, leading to in­digestion and destruction. Men too because of plentifulness would have succumbed to conceit and pride with consequent mischief and evil doing. (It has therefore been so arranged that the ani­mals should obtain their food after searching it in different places, thus exercising themselves with constant motion and healthful digestion. By their attention to food supply, they would not have occasion for conceit any pride, nor would they suffer from indigestion by over-eating food col­lected at any single place.

Do you know the birds like the owl and the bat, which only come out at night and about their food material?

Mufazzal: I do not know.

Imam (a.s.): The food of these consists of those varied kinds of insects scattered in the atmosphere, e.g., the mosquitoes, the months, the locust-shaped insects and spiders, etc. They are always present in the atmosphere, no place is free from them. When you light up a lamp at night on the roof or in the compound, many of such kind of insects gather round it.

Where do they come from? Surely from near about they come. If anyone says that they come from the forests and fields, he will be an­swered with the query as to how they reach so soon and how can they see the lamp lit inside a building surrounded by many other buildings, while as a matter fact they take no time to come round the lamp. It is clear from this that all these are scattered everywhere in the atmosphere and the birds that come out at night catch hold of them and feed on them.

See how nourishment is arranged for the birds that come out at night by means of such in­sects, scattered in the atmosphere.

Try to understand the purpose of the creation of such living creatures, lest someone may consider that they are created in vain without any advantage.

The bat is astrange creature, mid-way between abird and aquadruped, in fact more akin to aquadruped, with two protruding ears, teeth and fine hair. It gives birth to its young ones, whom it feeds on its milk. It urinates and ex­cretes. It moves on all fours. All these traits are contrary to those of birds. It comes out only at night and feeds on insects scattered in the atmosphere. Some say it does not eat anything but lives only on cool air as nourishment. This is incorrect for two reasons, for it urinates and excretes, which presuppose solid food. Then it possesses teeth, if it did not have to eat, the teeth would be useless, whereas there is nothing in creation, which is useless. This creature (the bat) has well-known merits. Its excreta is mixed with other things. It’s strange constitution is in itself a wonder. It flits about as it wills for its own benefit—a sign of the great Omnipotence of the Almighty Allah.

The weaverbird builds its nest on the trees sometimes. If it sees a big snake aiming at its nest, it gets worried. It looks about for means of safety. As soon as it comes across a thorny seed, it picks it up and throws from above into the open mouth of the snake. The snake begins to writhe and convulses into death.

If I had not spoken to you of this, could you have imagined that a thorny seed could have such benefits, or could anyone think that a bird, big or small, could hit upon such a plan?

Learn a lesson from this. There are many other things with unknown benefits, which require the description of new events or news to be known.

Just consider the bee and the concerted efforts to produce honey and the hexagonal hive, and the subtleties of instinct that subsist therein. You will find it extremely wonderful and subtle, when you consider its working. You will find their manufacture to be magnificent and of fine use for men.

And when you look at the artisan (which prepared such a regular hive, the wax and the honey from the extract of the flowers, i.e., the bee) you will find it completely devoid of intelligence, incapable of knowing itself, what to say of others. There is thus a clear argument in this that the exactitude in skill and ingenuity is not due to the bee but due to the Omnipotence of Him, who has created it on such pattern and appointed it to the service of men (to prepare honey for the benefit of men as medicine and a relishable article).

Just look at this locust, how weak yet how strong. No one would be able to protect himself against a swarm of locusts, if they invade a town.

Don't you know that if any of the monarchs ofthe whole earth came out with his armies and dependants to fight the locusts, he would not succeed. Is not this an argument demonstrative of the Omnipotence of the Almighty Allah that the strongest of his creation would be unable to withstand the attack of the weakest of His creatures. Look at it how it covers the entire earth like a flood, spreading over the mountain, the desert, the plain and the town all in one, so that its swarm intercepts even the light of the sun.

Now calculate how many years would have been required to manufacture such a swarm with the hand. The Almighty Allah has given hereby another proof of his Omnipotence, which nothing can minimise and to which nothing can be redundant.

Just consider the fish and the proprieties that subsist under the circumstances it is ordained to continue to lead its life. It has no legs, since its residence is in water and it does not need to walk. It has no lungs, as it cannot breathe. (It would die because of filling its organs). It is kept under the surface of water. Instead of legs, it is endowed with stout fins with which it pierces water on both sides; just as a boatman cuts water on both sides of the boat with his oars. It has a covering of thick scales, interlocked with each other like the links of a coat of mail to pro­tect itself against the accidents. It has a pene­trating faculty of smell, as compensation for weak eyesight blurred by water. It smells its material from a distance and makes for it. How else could it have learnt the whereabouts and nature of the food material? And, know too, that it has orifices all along from the mouth to the ears, through which water passes and gives it the same recreative exuberation as is derived by other animals by breathing in fresh cool morning breeze.

Now consider its reproductive characteristics. The number of eggs inside the fish is beyond computation. The reason is to increase the food potentials of other living beings, for most others live on fish, so much so that even beasts lie in wait for fish at the edges of water pools, ambushed amidst the bushes. As soon a fish passes by it pounces upon it. Since the beasts prey on fish, the birds, the men and even other fish(the big­ger eat the smaller fry) prey upon fish, matters have been so planned as to keep up the numbers. Just consider the variegated kinds of animals, the shells, aquatic life and different species of fish to get an idea of the vast ingenuity of the Almighty Allah on the one hand and the puny nature of the knowledge thereof possessed by the creatures. They are limitless in number, nor can their merits be known, except that man may come by them one after other through opportu­nities that may arise. As an example the Co­chineal, the colour of it was learnt by men through, it is stated, a bitch roaming on the seashore, having found and eaten halzoon (an insect possessing colour and found in the grazing grounds of camels). Its mouth got coloured. The colour fascinated the people who began using the cochineal insect (used for dyeing silk) as a dye. There are several other things of which the characteristics become known from time to time to the people. (Several things are as yet unknown.)

Mufazzal, It became afternoon. My Lord rose for the prayers, telling me to come to him early next morning. I came back doubly pleased with the gift of instruction in knowledge I had received from him. In gratitude to the Almighty Allah, I spent the night very pleasantly.

# The Third Sitting

I presented myself early on the morning of the third day and on admittance I entered and being ordered to sit, I sat down.

He began O Mufazzal! I have explained to you in detail about the creation of man and the subtle design of the Almighty Allah that has gone into his perfection and the lessons to be learnt from the modifications of his circum­stances. I have also dealt with an account of the animal world. I now take up an account of the atmosphere (apparently the atmospheric expanse), the sun, the moon, the stars, the sky (the moving: heaven), day and night, summer and winter, the winds, the four fundamentals (the earth, water, air and fire), rain, the rocks, the mountains, the swamp, the stones, the minerals, the plant kingdom, the date-tree, and the common trees, pointing out the sign therein and the lessons to be learnt therefrom.

Look at the colour of the sky (the vast high expanse). How appropriate is the design! This particular colour is the most appropriate tonic, compared with all other colours. Even the phy­sicians direct a man to gaze on the green hue or on some other darker hue in case of some ail­ment of the eye. Efficient physicians direct a person with weakened eyesight to gaze on in abasin of green-colour filled with water.

Just see how the Almighty Allah has created the sky with a green colour inclined to be dark, so as not to cause by repeated looks some imper­fection.

This same characteristic which people have found out as a result of thinking and experi­mentation (that the person suffering from eye-ailments should gaze at green colours) is aself existent characteristic (which needs no theorising, being already established for the benefit of man by the perfect Divine Skill), so that those who would learn a lesson therefrom and so too the heretics, may Allah (s.w.t.) destroy them, whereto they going astray.

O Mufazzal: Consider the rising and the setting of the sun in the production of the day and night. Without sunrise, all business of the world would come to a stop. The world would be sunk in darkness with no possibility for work or livelihood. There would be no relish in life without the pleasant effects of sunlight.

The benefits of sunrise are obvious indeed and need not be expatiated. Just consider the sunset. If it did not set, men would have no comfort nor any rest. Men need inevitably rest and comfort to recuperate the faculties of diges­tion and assimilation and to soothe and relax the nerves of the body.

Without the sunset and the cloak of the night in perpetual daytime their greed, by persistent work, would have caused serious bodily disturbances, for many are so constituted that unless the night be-cloud them, they would enjoy no comfort and rest, in the pursuit of livelihood and the accumulation of wealth.

Perpetual sunshine would have heated the earth with repercussions on the lives of the ani­mals and plants (the animals and plants would have suffered heavily). The Almighty Allah has therefore, ordained that there shall be periods of sunshine and darkness, like the lamp which is lit up as the household needs and it is put out when not needed, to give them comfort and rest. Light and darkness are opposed to each other and yet both are made subservient to the interests of the world's betterment and amelioration. (Herein lies the repudiation of the Manichen creed, who say that darkness is sheer evil without any good in it, and yet darkness has its own advantages as enumerated above.)

Then consider the four seasons of the year (summer, winter. Autumn and Spring), because of the elevation and inclination of the sun and the benefit and planning thereof. (By eleva­tion of sun is meant its movement to the north of the equator and by inclination is meant its movement to the south of the equator which facts are brought out in the system of Polemy and the constellation of the stars, that the sun moves daily in the direction of the north or the south producing the autumnal and the vernal equi­noxes, and the summer and winter solstices. When the sun's motion is to the north, there is summer in the northern regions. When its mo­tion is in the direction of the south, the nor­thern regions have their winter and so on vice versa in the southern regions. Between these two periods of the sun's movement lie the sum­mer and the winter terms.)

The trees and plants get an upsurge of vital two periods of the sun's movement lie the sumrials for fruits (Cold closes the pores of everything, thus shutting in heat. This same heat prepares the materials for the fruit. To understand the confinement of heat in winter, consider the warm water of the wells in those days, because of the heat of the earth not having been allowed to escape due to the closures of the pores. On the other hand, well water is cool in summer, the open pores allowing the heat to escape).

The condensation of vapour in the air causes clouds and rain. The animals get their bodies re-invigorated in this season. There is an upsurge of vital heat in summer as well with the production of the material, which matures in winter. The plants get flowers and fruit in this season. The animals get an excitement to sexuality.

The air is heated in summer, which leads to the ripening of fruit. The waste products of the body get attenuated. The earth gets dried up and becomes fit for building and other performance.

Air is purified in winter, Ailments are negotia­ted. Physical bodies become healthful. Night gets longer and thus aids in the performance of certain tasks (with satisfaction) because of the longer periods.

The air in this season suits other perform­ance as well, which will take a lot of time to expatiate.

Now consider the motion of the sun through the twelve Zodiac belts to complete a year and the skill underlying it. This is the period that comprises the four seasons—winter, summer, autumn and Spring in their completeness. Grains and fruits ripen during this annual movement of the sun to meet human needs. This cycle of development goes on repeating.

Don't you know that the sweep of this sun across the heavenly belts from the Pieces belt back to it constitutes one year. The year, etc. (month and weeks), have continued as the calculating measures of time since the beginning of the world in all past ages. People calculate thereby the periods of life spans, loans, contracts and other business matters. It is with the move­ment of the sun that a year is complete and a correct estimate of time is established.

Just see how the sun sheds its light on the World and with what ingenuity has this been ordained for it. If it shone only at one spot of the Zodiac constantly, without changing its place, the benefit of its rays would not penetrate in all directions due to the interposition of mountains and walls. It has, therefore, been so patterned that it rises from the East in the forenoon, shed­ding its light on objects opposite in the West, to move on constantly extending its light from side to side till it goes to the West to shed its light on objects which failed to receive it in the fore-moon, so as not to allow any corner to remain without the benefit and purpose, it is meant to serve (which the motion the sun is to achieve.) If for a whole or a part of a year the situation changed to the contrary, you can imagine the plight of human beings. In fact, what chance would they have to survive at all?

Does not man observe such magnificent plan­ning, wherein his own schemes would utterly fail. They function automatically without negligence, nor do they lag behind the time regulated for the management of the world's organisation and maintenance. (The regularly appointed agencies go on functioning in the way best suited to the requirements of the world's management, for example, this same movement of the sun and the way in contributes to the world order. Is it conceivable that this order has been estab­lished by itself? Has the matter of the constitu­tion of the sun any such sense to bring it about? Has the sun any concern for objects on the earth to induce it to act in the interest of the plant and the animal world? Decidedly not! The Almighty Designer Allah, surely, Who created all things of the earth and related their interests to the light and motion effects of the sun, Created the sun as well and ordained its movement so as to keep up the organization of the vegetable, the animal and the inanimate objects. Glory be to the Almighty Allah, the best of Creators).

There is a (grand) sign revealed by the Almighty Allah in the creation of the moon a fine indication. People in general calculate months on its basis, but the year is not correctly estab­lished by it. Its motion does not comprehend the changes of season nor the times of the blossoming and the ripening of the crops. That is why lunar months and years differ from solar months and years. The lunar months change, so that sometimes the same month has reference to the summer and sometimes to winter (for example, the lunar month Rajab may sometimes correspond to the Solar month January and sometimes to March). So is the case with other months. For example, the month of Muharram many occupy a period in summer sometimes, in the rainy season at other times and in winter at yet another time. This shows that the lunar and solar months continue to change and do not cor­respond to each other.

Consider why it (the moon) shines at night and the ingenuity underlying it. The living beings need coolness born of darkness in order to get rest and comfort. Complete absence of light and pitch darkness would not have any merit, anyhow, without the possibility for work of any kind. Men need to undertake some work for want of leisure during the day. It may be that due to extremes of heat (or man be unable to complete his work assign­ment during the day,) he may work in the glimmer of the moon, for example, agriculture, milking, woodcutting, etc. The moonlight helps men to work for their livelihood whenever they are so dis­posed. The wayfarers find fascination in their tra­vels. Moon rise is ordained for different parts of the night (not for the whole night), which it is made less luminous than the sun at the same time, lest people start working in the same way as they do during the day without resting even unto death. (If the moon were as luminous and as constant as the sun, greedy men would not have taken to rest, but would have been engaged in business all the while as during the day. They would have suffered on that account, even destruc­tion. Since it was not in the interest of the organization of the world, the moon is made less lumi­nous and is ordained not to shine all the night through nor thereby cause any disorder in the universe.)

In the different phases of the moon, its ap­pearance as crescent, its disappearance during the nights at the end, its waxing and waning and its eclipses, there are particular indications that all these changes are ordained for the benefit of the universe by the Almighty Creator, Allah (s.w.t.), which can serve as instruction for any man dis­posed to avail instruction. (The discerning among them would be led to conclude that the Almighty Designer has with His Omnipotence ordained all these phases of waning and waxing and eclipses; etc., of the moon.)

O Mufazzal! Just consider the stars and their distinctive velocities. There are some among them, which do not budge from the positions appointed for them. If they move together (like the fixed stars pinned to their centers, which seem to move due to the motion of other heavenly bodies). There are others, which move from zone to zone and have their distinctive velocities (some complete their revolution in a twelve-month, some in one month, yet others in eighteen months and so on). Each one of them has two velo­cities, one due to the cosmic motion in the direction of the west (which can be known from the daily dawning and setting), the other its in­trinsic velocity in the direction of the east. This is comparable to the two velocities of an ant on the upper piece of a grindstone. The grindstone moves to the right and the ant in the opposite direction. In such a case the ant will have two velocities, one its own in front direction and the other unintended along with the grindstone. (It is a very nice point of Astronomy and is here illustrated by an unique example. Astronomy has shown that the planets move in their origin to the east. This can be grasped by observation of the motion of the moon. How it appears on the first night. The next night it moves further east. On the third night, it moves still further east, till on the twelfth or thirteenth it is exactly in the east for all appearance. This is the case with the sun's movement from the west to the east, and so on the other planets, Mercury, Venus, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, and Neptune, have all their in­trinsic movements, but they are all amenable to the movements of the cosmos from the east to the west, which can be observed every twelve hours in a day in the rising and the setting of the sun, they move under their intrinsic velocities rather slowly from the west to the east, but because of the extraneous velocity they move from east to west. The illustration of the ant is very apt in­deed, which moves in opposition to the movement of the grindstone. It moves by its intrinsic velocity to the left, although the grindstone drives it in the opposite direction, yet it will com­plete its trek across the entire piece of grind­stone by its intrinsic to the left.)

Now just inquire from these people who claim that these stars have come into being by them­selves without the design of the Almighty De­signer, as to what was the hindrance in their all becoming stationary or moving bodies (why did some of them become stationary and some took up motion), creation without Creator presumes a single pattern (why any difference therein), why should there occur two different movements on adefinite pattern and quantum (why is there no increase or decrease in the uniformity of velocity, etc.). All this clearly demonstrates that the movement of the two categories of stars as it subsistsat present is the result of a definite purpose, design andingenuity, not something meaningless as these materialist atheists claim.

If an objection is raised why some stars are stationary while others possess motion, our answer shall be that in case all were stationary the distinctive signs that now are revealed by their movements from zone to zone would be out of place. Many a secret is known by know­ledge of the events connected with the sun and other stars because of their movements in their respective orbits (as described by astrologers in their books). The advantages now gained in the matter of crop season and even predictions, etc, through the movements of a few stars at present, would be out of reach. If all of them were to possess motion, their destination would have no outposts to be recognised. The movement of the moving planets in their appointed zones affords the necessary information, just as the rate of motion of a wayfarer is gauged by the measure of distances (whether he has covered one or more stages). In the absence of the measures of miles, Kmsor stage, an estimate of the rate of motion would be difficult. Similarly if all these stars were to possess motion and motions of different quantum’s at that an estimate of the rate of their mo­tion would have been impossible, because in the first place they are numberless beyond the com­putation of any computer or astronomer, and se­condly because of their location, some in the east, others in the west, still others in the north and yet others in the middle or on the extremi­ties or here, there and everywhere. Their zones would be equally impossible to fix, and thirdly, because of, the difficulty of all of them passing through the twelve belts. It would then have im­possible, to draw any distinctions, thereby the whole purpose of their motion and existence would have been nullified).

If they all moved with a uniform rate of motion, the objectives underlying would have been stultified by a confounding of their constel­lations.

An objection in that case from a critic would have been in place to the effect that a uniformity of motion on a single pattern indicates the ab­sence of a Designer, a Creator, as we have de­duced (through the fact of distinctive velocities) in proof of the Being of the Almighty Allah. It is thus quite obvious that their distinctive velocities, the changes and their movements being purpose­ful are the working of design and discrimination. (The Almighty Creator has regulated their move­ments and ordained distinctiveness for the bene­fit of men.)

Consider the stars that appear in certain parts of the year and disappear during the parts of a year, for example, the Pleides, the Orion, the pair of stars of the Sirius and the Canopus. If all of them appeared simultaneously, none could stand as a distinct symbol for men to recognise to know and receive guidance, just as men deduce, just as men deduce from the appearance and disappear­ance of the Orion and the Taurus.

The appearance and disappearance of each at appropriate occasions was ordained for the benefit of men.

Just as the Pleides were ordained to appear and disappear at different time for particular be­nefits of men, similarly the constellation of the Bear has been ordained for perpetual view: never to disappear, as it has another objective to serve, to with, to serve as sign-post for men to seek their way through the unknown paths amidst forest and oceans. As the stars of this constella­tion are ever in view, men look to them imme­diately when they need to know the path for any direction. Both these opposite phenomena serve human interests (none being useless or harmful). Besides therein is the indication of time, for agri­culture, horticulture, travel through land and sea. There is also intelligibility of other phenomena that have reference to different times, for ex­ample the rainfall, blowing of winds, the sum­mer and the winter seasons.

Moreover, men find their way with their aid in their travels through dreadful plains and fear­ful oceans during hours of dark nights. There are besides, a great many lessons to be learnt from these stars which now move forwards, some backward in the direction of the east or the west.

The heavenly bodies, the moon and the sun, move very fast and if they were nearer to us and their velocity was to be felt exactly as it is, do not you think the eyes would have been dazzled by their brilliance and radiation, just as they are dazzled by the radiation of the lightning when it begins scintillating continuously, kindling the space between the earth and the sky like fire. Another illustration of this is a house with its ceiling studded with many live candles revolving round the head with terrific speeds. The eyes will necessarily be putrefied throwing the be­holders prostorate on their faces. (If the stars were to move near us with their terrific speeds before our eyes, the eyes could not have been fixed on them and the people would have been dumbfounded.) Just see, how it has been or­dained that they would move with their existing speeds at huge distances from us to protect our eyesight against damage and disease, while re­taining their tremendous speed for the purpose they have to serve.

The stars are just bright enough to give light in the absence of the moon and to enable us to move about in their glimmer. Man sometimes needs to journey at night, in the absence of their glow; he would have found it difficult to budge on their way.

Just consider the kindness and ingenuity ordained in this creation. Darkness was also needed and a period is allocated therefore, with the addition of the glimmer to serve the objec­tives we have dealt with.

Consider the universe together with its sun, moon, stars and zodiac, which revolve perpetu­ally in accordance with a definite decree and judgment to bring about numerous benefits to the denizens of the earth, variegated animal and vegetable kingdoms through the changes in the four seasons, the days and nights, which have been expatiated to you: Can any man with a discerning mind think that such regulated plan and design on which depend the order and orga­nization of the universe, can come about without the Omniscient Designer.

If someone says that mere chance has brought this about (without the skill of the Creator), why does he not say the same thing in connection with the Persian-wheel (which draws water from the well and irrigating the gardens and fields) and which he sees revolving irrigating a garden planted with trees and vegetation. (Why does he not admit it to be working by itself with­out anyone having planned it.)He sees all its component parts manufactured according to a definite plan, each part coupled with the other on a pattern to serve the needs of the garden and its contents. And if he makes the same remarks about the Persian-wheel (that it has come into being by itself without a designer and how is to be shown to him that it has a designer) and what opinion about him will the people entertain on hearing his remarks? Surely, that he is a brainless stupid fellow with an assinine mind. Does he not see how the matter and the nature of the Persian-wheel, which is itself inert and devoid of intellect, would by itself come into being with perfect ap­propriateness to the requirements of the garden? Can any reasonable man admit it?

Will he deny it in the case of a wooden Persian-wheel comprising a little planning and ingenuity, that it is not a piece of workmanship planned and designed, and yet will he be able to say that this stupendous universe which is full of projects beyond human ken functioning for the entire earth's surface and its contents his come into being by mere chance without skill, design or measure. Has man the means to set right if anything goes wrong with the sky, just as the wooden parts of machinery get out of order? (La haula vala qoovata ilia billah) “There is no power nor sway except with the Almighty Allah”. It is mere obduracy on the part of the atheists, without any imaginable possibility. Can reason allow such an absurd proposition?).

O Mufazzal! Just consider the relative hours of the day and night. How they are adjusted for the benefit of the creation! The day or the night does not exceed fifteen hours (This statement re­lates to the cities and towns. Near the poles at latitudes, eighty or ninety the days and nights are longer up to almost six months. The state­ment of Imam (a.s.) refers to the habitable re­gions of the earth and not to the uninhabitable regions.)

Do you know that if days were extended to a hundred or two hundred hours, the animal and plant life would have perished (certainly been destroyed). Such a long interval without rest and comfort would have killed the animals, while quadrupeds would have continued erasingon (if they were allowed such a long period of sunshine) Men, too, would have continued to work on without stopping with consequent peril to life.

The plant life would have withered away under the prolonged effect of heat of the day­time.

Similarly if the night had been prolonged equally (to a hundred or two hundred hours), all species of living beings would have been prevented from moving about and finding nutri­ment with consequent starvation. The plants would have lost their vital heat, decayed and perished, just as you see those plants, which are so placed as to receive little sunshine.

Consider the heat and cold cycle of increase, decrease, equableness, and the resultant four seasons following one another in the world and functioning for our benefit.

Moreover, the physical bodies get improved and renovated thereby. (Apparently, the change of seasons brings about a change in the fine membranes of the skin) This leads to their health and longevity, for in the absence of the effects of heat and cold alternatively on the physical frames, they would have suffered decad­ence, disintegration and emaciation.

The two (heat and cold) replace each other gradually and slowly. You will notice that the decreases gradually giving place gradually to the corresponding increase of the other. If the one had suddenly irrupted on the other (there had been a sudden increase or decrease of either heat or cold,) it would lead to serious damage to an illness of the physical frames, just as a man may receive damage and illness, if he suddenly issues from a hot bath into a cold place. The Almighty Allah has ordained the gradual change of heat and cold to protect man from damage of suddenness of change. (This protection against suddenness of change in heat and cold, has come about simply through whose ingenious planning, except the Almighty Designer?).

If anyone claims that this gradualness and lag, in the advent of heat and cold results from the movement of the sun and its inclination affecting the duration of the day, he may be questioned as to the reason of the movement of the sun and its gradual inclination affecting the lag and gradualness. If he answers that it is due to the space of the East and the West, he may be queried as to why it is so disposed. The ques­tion on this line will continue to be repeated till he is obliged to admit the necessity of Omnipo­tence, purpose and design (against spontaneity).

Without heat, the hard bitter fruits would not have matured into succulent sweetness, used for relish fresh or dry. Without cold the stalks would not bear corn ears in such abundant produce to suffice for nutriment and seeding.

Don't you realise the benefits of heat and cold which with all their merits are sources of trouble to the bodies as well (yet this trouble too is not without merit)? There is instruction for those who would ponder over this, and a proof that all this procedure is for the good of the universe and the individuals thereof through the design of the Almighty Omniscient.

O Mufazzal! Let me inform you of the blessings of air. Don't you see when it stops blowing, there is distress bordering on strangu­lation. Healthy persons begin ailing, ailing get emaciated, the fruits get spoiled, vegetables get decayed, physical bodies get infected and corn gets tainted. This demonstrates that the blowing of air is for the good of creation by a plan of the Almighty Omniscient.

Another characteristic of the air is here mentioned. Sound is produced by the impact of two bodies, one upon the other. It is wafted to the ears by the air. (It is an admitted fact of science that there cannot be any perception of sound without vibrations in the air). All men continue to speak part of the night or day in connection with the needs of daily business. If this speech left its impression in the air as a writing leaves an impression on paper, the whole atmosphere would have been filled with the same, with consequent uneasiness and perplexity. They would have needed a change in atmospheric air (where new speeches would be recorded, the pre**­**vious atmosphere having been filled with words of speech with no room for fresh sound im­pression). The need for this greater than that for the change of paper, in as much as oral speech is much more indulged in than written expres­sion. The Almighty Creator, Glory be to Him, has created such a mysterious medium which retains the impression just for enough time to serve the needs of the people of the world and makes a clean state to get renovated for fresh impressions to be received by it, which may cause an impact thereon.

To get instruction from the blessings of the cool breeze called air is enough for you. This air is the foundation of the life of physical bodies. It supports life when we draw it in from without and allow it to contact the spirit within. (If through breathing, fresh air did not get into the lungs and the inner waste products were not thereby eliminated, man would not survive a few minutes.) This same air is the medium for the transmission of sound waves to distant places. This same air carries fragrance from place to place. Just see how the air wafts different kinds of scents to your nose. And so also the sounds. This same air is the carrier of heat and cold, which alternate regularly for the benefit of the world. (Heat and cold are retained because of air. Without air, there would be no sensation of heat or cold. A study of physics will prove interesting in this behalf). The air in motion is wind (felt by the physical bodies and the trees) which removes many a physical ailment. It transfers clouds from place to place for the general good by way of condensation and rain.

It then attenuates them and they fritter away; it causes the plants to bring forth blossoms and fruits. It makes the nutrients soft and succulent. It cools water. It inflames the fire. It dries up dampness. In short, it supports and enlivens all things of the earth. Without this blowing air vegetation would dry up (wither), animal life would become extinct and everything would perish.

O Mufazzal! Consider the four fundamental components created by the Almighty Allah to fulfill the purpose of their creation adequately. Among them are this earth and its expanse. How could it have sufficed for the human needs of housing, agriculture, meadows, forests, jungles, precious herbs and valuable minerals, if it were not so vast?

A person may dislike and condemn such treeless prairies and fearful desolateness and question their utility. (He will be replied.) This is the abode of the beasts, their dwelling and feeding field. Then, in addition, men have a vast ex­panse to migrate if they are so disposed. Many a desolate plain has been converted into blos­soming gardens and palatial buildings by per­manent human settlement. If the earth were not so vast, men would have found themselves as if walled in by narrow fortresses, for they would have been unable to leave their homes even if pressed by circumstances.

Next consider the disposition granted to the earth, in that it is so finely balanced as to serve as a fit habitat of all creation. Man is enabled thereby to move about, get rest and comfort, and engage in agriculture and business with perfect firmness. If it were to tilt and incline, it would have been impossible to rear up structures and to carry on trade and industry, etc. Under such cir­cumstances of constant quaking, their lives would have been far from pleasant (the constant quak­ing would have caused serious disturbance and often times toppled them over). Just realise this from the earthquakes, which last only a while and yet people affected by them fly from their homes. How could they, then, have got rest and comfort, in case the earth was to quake all the time?

If a critic questions as to why an earthquake occurs, he shall be replied that an earthquake and similar other calamities (for example, cyclones, eclipses, meteorite showers, fearful auroras in the skies, etc.) are in the nature of admonition and warnings for men to take heed against evil-doings. Similarly, the calamitous troubles that befall their physical bodies and their properties have the same purpose in view, to wit, their amelioration and betterment. If they (profiting by their lesson) become virtuous, the reward they would get in the Hereafter would exceed all earthly possessions in value. It sometimes happens that there is an immediate award in this world, if such award is in the interests of the generality of people (if it appears so to the Almighty Allah).

This earth in its essence is cool and dry, so are the stones (with the only difference that the stone is relatively drier than the earth). Can you visualise that if the earth had been given a little more dry nature to harden like a stone, could it have produced any vegetation on which depends animal life? Could any agriculture have been possible or any kind of building been feasible? Don't you see that it possesses less cohesion than a stone? Pliability and softness form its essence for the sake of reliability (so that the functions, which the earth has to serve, may be performed easily due to its pliability.)

Another feature of the earth's constitution, as ordained by the Almighty Allah; Glorious is His Omnipotence, is its gradual slope from the north to the south. Why has the Almighty Allah, Glory be to Him, Ordained it? Surely to allow the surplus water after irrigating the land, to flow to the sea, just as a roof is made slopping from one side to other to prevent water collecting and to allow its easy passage. The land is made to slope for that reason. If it were not, so the whole earth might have been swamped with stagnant water with resultant hindrance in business and road com­munications. (This is not affected by the curvature of the earth. The earth, though curved, is raised above the surface of water to allow certain species of living beings to flourish on its surface. Simi­larly, islands have been raised above the surface of water; otherwise, they would have been sub­merged under the surface, as may be grasped from a study of books on topography).

If this water (the third fundamental compo­nent) had not been in such abundance flowing through springs, valleys and canals, it would have caused a great deal of inconvenience to the men, who need it for themselves, the watering of their quadrupeds and animals, their agriculture, the plants and corn fields. At the same time the beasts, the birds and animals or the fishes and aquatic living creatures dwelling in water would suffer a great deal.

Besides it has other benefits which you are aware of, but of the immense value and merit whereof you are ignorant. See then, that besides the grand and valuable benefits underlying there­in, to wit, the whole animal and plant life of the entire earth's surface is subsistent on water, it is used in other forms of beverages to soften them (certain medicines and dried oatmeal) for a pleasant relish. It serves to clean the dirt from the body as well as clothing. Earth is moistened with it to make it fit for moulding utensils, etc. It is used in extinguishing fire in case it flares up to cause damage. Man gets refreshed after exhaus­tion and exertion. Similarly there are other ob­jectives served by water, the great worth and value where of can be known only in time of need.

If even with all this account you doubt the value of such abundance of water flowing in rivers and seas, know then that this same water is the abode of many species of aquatic animal life and fishes. This is treasure house of pearls, rubies, ambergris and various types of precious material, which are extracted from the rivers and seas, Round about the water stores are to be met with the fragrant aloes wood along with other variega­ted scents and herbs. (How could such things have been available in the absence of abundant water?). Furthermore it is a means of transport (allowing communication between one land and another). It is a means of trade exchange between lands distant from each other, for ex­ample, from Iraq to China and vice versa and within Iraq itself (from Busrah to Kufah and vice versa via the rivers Tigris and Euphrates). Trade would have suffered in the absence of such means besides conveyance on animal and human backs, commercial commodities would have re­mained in the producing countries in the hands of the local consumers. Their transport would have cost more than their production costs. No one would have ventured to transport them. This would have led to two handicaps. Many articles of necessity would not have been available. Sup­posing the ingredients of a medical prescription to require senna, aloes, plums, or some medical or nutrient drug from the cities of Asia or Europe, if they had to be transported on backs only without the means of boats through the intervening seas, how could they have reached India, and how could the Indians have availed of them. In the second place the people who now earn their livelihood by the profits gained through their transport, would have lost their economic support.

Similarly, if the air had not been provided in such abundance, men would have been suffocated because of the smoke and vapours congesting it. If the atmosphere had not been so vast, it could not have served as medium for light and heavy clouds, which now gradually gather up by absorp­tion of water. An account of the same has already been given, which should suffice.

So is the case of fire (created in proportion to the need under an ingenious plan). Had it been as abundant as water and air, it would have consumed everything in the world, without leav­ing any means for a controlled promotion of the same, for, it is of benefit in many an under­taking. As such, it is enshrined in wood; it can be used when the need arises. It is preserved by means of wood. (A little is allowed to smoulder under ashes for the times of need). It is not allowed to be extinguished altogether, but some of it is preserved. As such it is not required to be kept perpetually burning (for fear that it may not be available if it goes out), that would have been very inconvenient. (The fear of its non­-availability in case of being put out would have haunted all the time.) Nor it is so widespread as to consume all things in its vicinity. It is created in just the right measure, so as to avail of its merits and to avoid its demerits.

It has another characteristic, to will, it is meant only for the benefit of human beings. The animals have no need for it. Human economy would have suffered a lot in the absence of fire.

(It is used in manufacturing iron goods. Without it the tools for agriculture, architecture, commerce and industry would not have been made. It is needed by Goldsmith, potters and for making lime and bricks for building. Above all, it is needed in daily cooking. How miserable would have been human life without fire). As for the quadrupeds, they have no use for it.

As the Almighty Allah has ordained its use for human beings alone, man has been endowed with palms and fingers so as to be able to light it up and make use of it, while the animals are not gifted with the corresponding parts. They are however, enabled patiently to put up with the troublesome tyranny of the stomach to save them from the disadvantages which man has to suffer in the absence of the fire.

Let me tell you a minor merit of fire, which is very valuable and worthwhile, to wit, this lamp (which is lighted by fire) which people light up to meet certain needs of night, as they want. Without it (at night), human life would have been comparable to burial in grave. How could one read, write, weave, sew or stitch in the darkness of the night? What would have been the plight of a man suffering from a painful ailment with the need for applying an embrocation or a powder as a remedy relief? (What could he have done in the darkness of the night? As such, the Almighty Allah has taught men to meet their needs by such light.)

The other benefits in cooking, warming the body, drying the moist substances and dissolving hard materials, etc., are so number less that they cannot be recounted. They are so obvious that they need not be detailed.

O Mufazzal! Consider the sky when it is clear and when it rains (think over the states when the sky is clear and when it is overcast with clouds leading to rain). They alternate in the interests of the world. Persistence of any one state would have caused disorder. Don't you see hat when it starts raining continually the vegetables and plants begin to rot. The bodies of animals get convulsions. The atmosphere is surcharged with cold with consequent ailment. Roads and paths are disrupted, when the sky remains clear for a long time, the earth is dried up, the vegetation withers up. Man is affected deleteriously thereby. The air gets dryness, with consequent diseases.

When they alternate thus regularly, the clim­ate is equable. Each in turn compensates the demerit of the other. Everything goes right.

A critic may question as to why it was not or­dained that there were no deleterious effects. (There should have been no harm in either continual rains or persistent sunshine.) The answer will be that is so in order that man may be occasion­ally inconvenienced to keep him avoid evil doing. A sick person, for instance is administered bitter and unpalatable medicine to cure him. Similarly when man betakes himself to pride and conceit, he needs to be administered something that would inconvenience him to prevent him from mischief and to set him upon beneficence and amelioration. If a monarch bestows millions upon his people, will not his munificence impress their minds with his reverence and admiration? Whereas what com­parison have those millions with the rain which is the source of nourishment and the flourishing state of all parts of the globe through its irriga­tion of cornfields.

Don't you see what a grand blessing is this little rain for mankind. Yet the people are heedless thereof. Oftentimes when some little need of a man is frustrated (by rains or a persistently clear sky) he begins grumbling and blustering. He prefers his petty need to the worthwhile grand benefits possessing an excellent result. This is be­cause he is unable fully to appreciate the merits of this lofty boon. Consider the ingenuity under­lying the rain, pouring down from on high. It pours down from on high to irrigate the in­clement highland as well. If it were to come from a corner, it would have left the highlands unirrigated without provision for agriculure. The lands of artificial irrigation are less extensive. (Those that are irrigated arti­ficially cost a lot with a corresponding smaller margin of profit. As such it is so ordained that rain should pour from on high to be accessible to high and lowlands.)

Rainwater comprehends the whole of the earth. Often time’s agriculture can be carried on in the vastnesses of deserts and mountainous regions with consequent abundance of grain.

People are saved trouble of carrying water from one place to another. Many an aggressive feud springs from the possession by one over­bearing person of the sources of water; depriving a weaker party, such contingencies are also obviated.

Then since it was ordained (for the rain­water, that it would come down from on high, it is so disposed as to act a sprinkling on the earth to allow it to soak in and to irrigate it. If it had comewith sudden swiftness like a flood, it would not have soaked in. It would, in the form of a flood, have uprooted standing crops. It is, therefore, ordained to rain in mind showers, as to enable seed to sprout, the land to be irrigated and the standing crops to be refreshed.

There are other blessings in its downpour. It tempers the bodies, purifies the atmosphere to clear it of taint produced by stagnation. Garden plants are cured of the disease of jaundice and so on.

If a critic says, whether this rain does not sometimes cause heavy damage by its intensity or in the form of hail-stones, causing the crops to perish and the atmosphere to get unwhole some vapour with resultant diseases and troubles.

The answer will be that this damage too is sometimes intended for the betterment of man to prevent him from indulging in transgressions. The benefit that shall accrue to him in the ame­lioration of his Faith will outweigh the loss suffered in his worldly possessions. (The inten­sity of rain might cause damage to his material goods causing him physical pain, yet the warn­ing administered to the effect that we have over us a powerful Sovereign who can force loss upon us, might frighten him into giving up sinfulness to the unrestricted eternal benefit of his Faith.)

O' Mufazzal! Look at these mountains form­ed of earth and stone, which the ignorant con­sider as useless and unnecessary. They embody remarkable advantages. Among them the snow that falls and stays on their heights. Anyone can avail of it, when it melts and gives rise to springs of gushing water and marvelous canals. They produce herbs and plants, which cannot grow in plains and lowlands: They have dens and caves for the horrible beasts of prey. They serve for the superstructure of fortresses as defense posts. They can be hewn into dwellings. They are chiselled into grindstones. They contain mines of precious stones of variegated types*.* Besides these they have other merits, which alone He, who created them in definite measure, knows by his pristine knowledge of all eternity.

O’ Mufazzal! Consider the different kinds of animals which are obtained from the mines, for example, mortar, lime, gypsum, (a kind of stone used as mortar), sulphurate of arsenicum, lead oxide, mercury, copper, tin, silver, gold, beryl, ruby, garnet and various kinds of rocks and so on giving rise to tar, vaseline, sulphur, kero­sene (oil), etc., which are used by the people.

Is it then any mystery for a rational being that all these treasures have been laid for use by man, which he may mine as and when he needs them?

Men, however, are greedy and want to transmute base metals into gold and silver. They spent efforts in that direction but mostly in vain. Their plans did not fructify. If these people had succeeded in their search of knowledge, it would have become general knowledge. Gold and silver would have been produced in such abundance that they would have lost their worth in men's eyes. The advantages gained through them in business and commerce would have been lost, either the monarchs or any­one else would have set any store by wealth.

Nevertheless, men were given the knowledge to change copper (alloyed with zinc) into brass, and into glass, tin into silver and silver into gold, which does not do much harm. (Persons possessing this knowledge and experi­menting on this are few. So the harm is rest­ricted and the order of the world is not disturbed thereby. On the contrary if every man could have transmuted baser into nobler metals gold and silver, they would have become worthless in the first place, secondly they would not have serv­ed, as media of exchange and thirdly no one would have treasured them, being within the reach of everybody to prepare and hence not worth trea­suring, thus leading to people's disadvantage).

Just see, that knowledge was given where there was not much harm, whereas that which was harmful has been withheld (not everyone can be an alchemist).

And when a man enters a mine he may find inside it unfathomable streams of flowing water and silvery rocks.

Consider the underlying design in this of the Almighty Omniscient. He wants to give men an idea of the vastness of his treasures and Omni­potence, so that they may know that if H will, He can bestow on us silver in the amounts equal to mountains. He can do it. Herein, however, there would be little gain because the abundance of gems would reduce the worth, as stated before. Few would avail of it.

To illustrate it, suppose a man invents some­thing new, for example, utensils or other commo­dities. They are worthwhile, grand and precious, so long as the same are in short supply and rare. And when the same exceeds the demand and reaches every pocket, it is lowered in value and becomes worthless. Everything is considered fine so long as it is rare.

O Mufazzal! Consider the plants and the varied needs they fulfill. Fruit is used in nutri­tion, dried hay is foddeh for the animals, wood as fuel, and the boards are used for carpentry of every kind. There are varied benefits accruing from their bark, leaves, large and small roots and gum.

Consider the fruits we use for our nutrition. If they were to be found in one place instead of being suspended by branches, which bear them, what a disruption would have been caused in our lives! Nutrition would have been available no doubt, but what about the valuable benefits we derive from wooden boards, dried hay and other parts we have mentioned. (Whence could they have got to hands if the fruits had been made available at a spot on the earth)

Moreover, the joy that is afforded by the scenic beauty and freshness of vegetation is in­comparably superior to the pleasures and merri­ment of the whole world (The green verdure of plants fascinates the eyes, delights the heart and refreshes the mind, etc.).

O Mufazzal! Consider how agriculture is ordained to thrive. A hundred or so grains spring from a single seed. A single grain from a single seed would have been a (logical plan). Why then such multiplication? Surely to amplify the grain so that the same may serve as food to last till the next crop besides provision as seed for the farmers.

Consider a monarch intending to populate a town. He plans to provide such quantities of grain as would suffice the residents to serve as food until the next crop besides provision for seed. See how this plan is adumbrated in the scheme of the Almighty Allah, Glory be to Him, that agri­culture should lead to such multiplication as to serve both the need for nutrition as well as that for seeding. Similar is the case with the trees, vegetation and the date-tree. They generate abundant fruit. You see that there is a single root, but there are many offshoots (branches). Why? Surely for the purpose of propagating the progeny from the seeds, after people have put them to their use. , If there had been a single root without the branches shooting off in such abundance, it would not have been feasible to take off anything from it for sowing or any other business. In the case of a sudden calamity, the original would have perished with no chance for another plant to replace it. (It has been so ordain­ed that then their seeds and offshoots should serve the produce like plants. They are endowed with the capacity to propagate their progeny, so that the principle of like replacement may be conti­nued as a safeguard against the extinction of species.)

O Mufazzal! Consider the grains of pulses and beans. They all grow in pods as a protec­tion against harm, till they mature to hardness, just at the placent a (membrane wrapping the embryo, serves the same purpose of protecting it against all kinds of shock). The grains of wheat and other similar grains are arranged layer by layer in hard shells, pointed sharply at their ends like spears to keep off the birds and to increase the yield to the farmers. (Without these sharply pointed spikes of corn, the birds would have made away with the grains leaving the farmers dis­appointed.)

If a critic asks whether the birds do not get at the grains of wheat, etc., the reply to him will be that they do get the grains no doubt and it is so ordained for them, since the birds are also the creation of the Almighty Allah. He has ordained for them a portion of the produce of the earth. These grains are protected in these coverings, lest the birds should get complete possession of them leading to evident loss through wanton waste. In the absence of such protection, the birds would have pounced upon the grains and made short work of them all. They would have suffered indigestion in consequence, to their evi­dent detriment. The farmers, too, would have been losers, these protective coverings have, therefore, been provided to the grain, that the birds may have just enough for their needs of subsistence, leaving the major portion for the use of mankind. They have a greater right thereto because of the labour put in by them, and their need is greater for the grain than that of the birds. (Their interests are therefore given preference.)

Consider the propagation of plants and various species of vegetation. They need nutrition as much as the animals. They have, however, no mouths to food themselves, nor can they move about to work for acquiring their food. They have, therefore, been gifted with about under the earth, to receive their nutriment for transmission to their branches, leaves and fruit. The earth serves to them as mother from which they suck their nutriment through their roots, which serve them as mouths to obtain their food, just as the young ones of animals, fed on the milk from their mother's breasts.

Don't you see the pegs propping up straight without fear of fall or bending the tents and shouldaries, by means of ropes tied tightly? Similarly, you will find every plant reared in the earth by the roots spreading in all directions to support it. How could the massive trees and all date palms stand steady against the storms?

Behold that the ingenuity of creation has pre­ceded the skill of industry (of tent erection). The skill employed in setting up tents and shouldaries by artisans, has before gone into the designing plan of rearing up trees which precedes (certainly) the propping up of tents with pegs and poles all acquired from trees. It is obvious that this skill has been copied from the ingenuity employed in propping up trees (and vice versa).

O Mufazzal! Consider the production of the leaves of the plants carefully. You will see inter­twined in its, texture something comparable to the root system extending all along its length and breadth. Some of them are fine capillaries joined with thicker ones, all very stout and fine. If they were to be prepared by hand, man would not have been able to do the job on a single tree in a year's time. He would have needed implements, motion, design and instruction into the bargain. (One may have solicited guid­ance from another in the process as to how to prepare a leaf, the other instructing him.)

In a few days of the spring season such abundant foliage comes into being that the mountains and low-land regions of the earth get filled with them without a word being spoken or a movement being made, just as the result of fiat permeating all things—a single inviolable dispensation.

Know, by the way, the principle underlying these fine capillaries. They are interwoven in the texture of the leaves to irrigate them, just as the net work of the capillaries in the body carries nutriment to all parts.

There is yet ingenuity in the thick veins of the leaves. Because of their resilience and strength, they hold fast the leaf texture to prevent them from being torn. These leaves are similar to the artificial foliage manufactured from cloth (by cutting) and which are suppor­ted lengthwise and breadth wise and held fast against crumbling. As such the artificial manufacturing by hand) follows the natural (divine pattern), though it can never imbibe the true spirit. (Human hands embriader endless types of rosette tufts and ornamental trappings on cloth and paper, but what comparison is there between the live, real trees and the artificial lace-work. No imitation can match the real in the first place and secondly the natural verdure, which is the essence of real plants, can never be blended therein).

Consider the seed-stone embodded inside the fruit, that it may serve to propagative a substi­tute in case a tree perishes due to some cala­mity. (They can produce similar trees when sown in the earth), just as a nice commodity, of constant utility, is preserved at odd places, to be available at some other place if the same suffers an accident at one place. (These seed-stones are generated in thousands within the fruits, so that if one fails another may sprout and so on.) Then because of their resilience and hardness, they hinder the fruit getting too soft and succulent. But for these ‘seed-stone, the fruits would have split-up and given way to instability.

Some seed-stones are edible and oil is extrac­ted from others for use in different jobs. And since you have learnt the purpose served by the seed-stone, you should consider the pulp enclos­ing the date-seed and that enclosing the grape-stone, the merits thereof and the wherefore of its shape, whereas it was possible to produce a substitute which may not have been edible, just like the cypress and the poplar trees. Surely it is so that man may come by palatable nutriment to enjoy.

Consider the other merits of plants. You will notice that they are affected by the autumn season, so that their vital heat gets enshrined in their twigs and material for fruit production is engendered. The spring season clothes them with leaves and you get all kinds of fruit, just as you arrange different kinds of delicacies before you, which have been cooked in turn. (Similar are the different kinds of fruit.) Just behold the twigs presenting their fruit to you with their own hands.

And you gloat on the flowers, which come before you on their twigs as if they present them­selves to you. Who has planned all this? Surely, He Who is the Omniscient Ordainer. And what purpose is served thereby? Surely, that man may enjoy the fruits, and the flowers. How strange that instead of gratefulness for such boons, men would deny the Donor altogether?

Just consider the pomegranate and the skill and ingenuity that have gone into its production. You will notice inside it all round elaborate (yellowish partitions like screens) with grains laid layer upon layer, as if arranged by hand. The grains are divided into different parts and each part is wrapped up in a strap, fabricated in a uni­quely exquisite manner. All these are enclosed in an outer rind.

The artistic ingenuity therein is that since the grains cannot help each other's growth of pulp, a (fibrous) membrane has been provided inside the pomegranate as a nutritive medium, in which, you see, are embedded both the grain and the pulp. These membranes help to keep them im­movably fixed. Over all these, a stout covering is laid to keep them safe from external harm.

These are a few points concerning the po­megranate, to which anyone who wants a lengthy account, can add a lot more. The ac­count given here is, however, sufficient for the purpose of argument and instruction.

O Mufazzal! Just behold this weak creeper (without a stout trunk). These creepers bring forth such massive gourds, cucumbers and me­lons. What ingenuity has gone into its design! Since it was ordained that it will bear such large products, the plant is designed to spread on the earth. Had it been like other plants straight standing, it would not have borne imposing yield. It would have broken down before they ripened. See how it sprawls on the ground to put the burden of its products on the earth. You might have noticed that the roots of the gourd and the melon creepers spread in the earth with the pro­ducts lying on the earth all round, just like a cat lying down lactating its young ones—the pro­ducts. (This illustrates the example of the gourd and its fruit.)

Consider the fact that these creepers grow only in set seasons suited to them in the fiery heat of summer, for example, when people wel­come them joyfully flourished in winter, men would not like to bear their sight. In addition, they may cause ailments in winter.

It sometimes happens that cucumbers are produced in winter. The people avoid them generally, except the gluttons within a sense for harm and illness.

O Mufazzal! Consider the date palms. There are female trees among them, for whose fertilisa­tion male plants are also generated, which fer­tilise without planned horticulture. The males, like those animals, fertilise and are themselves sterile. (There are two categories of the date palms—the male and the female. The female does not bear good fruit without the process called pollination—the sprinkling of, male pollen on the female flowers. The Indians have no knowledge of pollination and so the date palms in India do not bear bumper harvests.)

Consider carefully the trunk of the date palm. You will find that it is woven like a web, though there are no long threads. It is as if a piece of cloth is woven with the hand to keep it stout and straight capable of withstanding strong winds and of carrying massive bunches of fruit, on maturity, and then subsequently of being used for roofing and bridging. You will find therein threads interwoven lengthwise and breadth wise. It is strong enough to be used in tool making. If it had been hard as stone, it could not have been used in buildings as wood, for example, doors, latticework, wooden boards and boxes, etc.

There is one great merit in wood. It floats on water. Everyone knows this but does not re­alise its full worth (the benefits that accrue there­from). In the absence of this characteristic, how could boats have been built, which carry moun­tains of merchandise from city to city with much labour? What hardships would have had to be borne in transporting merchandise? Many articles of use would have disappeared from the market or would have been available at great cost.

Consider these herbs and the characteristics each has been endowed with as drugs. They penetrate down into the joints, eliminate waste products and toxic matters therefrom, for exam­ple, Shahtara, some others relieve hypo-chondria for example atsemoon, some others remove flatulance, for example, vinegar, some others absorb inflammation, for example, wild grapes and so on their efficiency.

Who then has endowed them with such energies? Surely, He Who created them with a purpose. Who gave men the Knowledge thereof? Surely, He Who endowed these drugs with such pro­perties. How could these matters have come to men's ken through mere chance and spontaneity, as the believers of chance (atheists) aver.

Well, let usadmit man learnt all this through his intellect and reason, contemplation and ex­perimentation. But who taught the animals? (Seeing that they don't possess intellect and reason.) Some beasts, when they get injured, make use of herbs to get well, and some birds when suffering from constipation get well by pur­gation with seawater and so on.

You may perhaps doubt the utility of plant life of the wastelands and plains, where no human life exists, and think it altogether mean­ingless and useless. It is not so. The wild ani­mals feed thereon and the birds use their grain as food. Men use their twigs and wood as fuel.

There are other points as well worth noting. They serve as medicinal drugs. Hides are tanned therewith. Cloth is dyed and so on, they possess other merits as well.

Don't you know that the most lowly and despised plant is the Khairyah Baradi? They too, possess varied merits. Paper is manufactured therefrom for use by the kings and the populace. They are manufactured into mats for use by all and sundry. They are used in making lids to cover utensils...Utensils made of glass, etc., are stuffed with them to prevent breakages. They have many other merits in addition.

Then learn a lesson from the varied and be­nefits, which are derived from beings small and big as from those things, which have no worth, and those that are valuable. The most worth, less of all these are the cow dung and ex­creta which are worthless pollution and consi­der the benefits which accrue from them to agri­culture and vegetables. They are such benefits, which have no parallel. No vegetable can be worthwhile unless it is provided with manure, which is so obnoxious that one abhors going near it.

Know this too that the worth of a commodity does not depend upon its money value alone. It possesses two different values in two different markets. It sometimes happens thata commodity is worthless in the economic market and yet the same is valuable in the market of knowledge. (The leaf of a scientific work has no value with a carpenter while the same may be a most pre­cious commodity to a scholar).

It may be that you may consider a thing as worthless because of its low money value. (Every commodity has a different market and different types of clientele). Just notice what high value of human excreta would have been if its properties unknown to the alchemist. It is a fact that cer­tain experiments of alchemy cannot be conducted without human excreta.

Mufazzal says, it was now time for the after­noon prayers when Imam (a.s.) told me to come the next day, Insha’Allah. I returned quite happy because of the information I had obtained from Imam (a.s.). I thanked Allah (s.w.t.) for it for the valuable information received I spent the night in perfect peace.

# Fourth Sitting

After the usual prayers and address of the Almighty Allah, Imam (a.s.) and "O Muffazzal! I have given you in detail the arguments and ob­servations about the exact planning and design (the creation of everything in its exact situation and the purpose underlying its creation against the theory of spontaneity). As regards human beings, the animal and the vegetable king­doms, they should suffice by way of instruction for all who desire instruction.

I now give you a detailed account of the calamities and catastrophes which occur at times and which these ignorant people marshal as argument for their denial of creation and pur­poseful design ofthe Creator (they say that ifthe Creator has created this universe by His pur­poseful design, why does He not prevent occur­rence ofthese calamities and catastrophes which befall His creatures?)

I shall also give in detail the rationale of the troubles and miseries which the atheistic and Manichean Sect deny and shall make mention ofdeath and destruction which these sects have called in question and what the naturalists of old have said. (The atheists and philosophers of old). Those people have said that the universe has come into being by sheer chance (spontaneously), so that this account may serve to repudiate their arguments. May Allah (s.w.t.) destroy them how they are being led astray. Some ignorant people have construed these events, which occur from time to time, for example epidemics, jaundice (yellow fever), or the absence of chlorophyl of the trees, hailstorms, locusts as an argument for the denial of purposeful creation of the Creator. (They say that such events take place by them­selves without any underlying ingenuity therein.)

The answer to this is that if there is no Designer of the universe why are there not more severe catastrophes as for example the complete disorder in the universe, the rending of the earth, the cessation of sunrise, the drying up of river beds so as to leave no drop of water to moisten the lips, the air becoming stationary leading to the disorganisation of all matter, the advance of oceanic water to the earth submerging it. Who guards against all these events? Whose planning is behind the scenes? When you say that if there had been the Designer and Creator, such swarms of locusts would not have visited us to cause such heavy damage, such virulent epidemics would not have taken toll of millions of lives, hailstorms would not have been so severe as to destroy our cornfields. If all these are real, facts why does not this universe get disorganised leading to the destruction of the whole world, why does not the ocean submerge the earth with gushing water. Why does not the air become stationary to stifle all living beings, why does not all this occur? This shows that the De­signer is there who prevents such occurrence in order that the universe may not be disorganised nor the species become extinct, nor total annihiliation take place. What takes place is by way of the natural consequences of men's action as a warning and a preventive taking place now and then in the form of epidemics, locusts ravages of crops and gardens, hail storms, etc.. This is a negation of the argument against purposeful creation. I ask of them why these epidemics and locust swarms do not continue forever so as to destroy the universe. They visit occasionally and after a stay they leave, (if it were not for the Almighty Designer Who wills that this universe should not be destroyed who could prevent these locusts from their ravages every years?)

Do not you see that the world is protected against these horrible calamities and catastrophes (the universe does not get disorganised, nor does the earth get rendered nor the ocean gushes out, etc.), if any of these events occurred in this world, it would completely be annihilated. These calamities befall occasionally in diluted severity just to warn men and to ameliorate their con­duct. They do not perpetuate but are removed as and when men get dismayed in regard to their safety. These calamities befall as warning and they get removed through divine grace. Just as the Manichean sect has questioned the suitability ofthese calamities and troubles, which befall men, in the same way the atheists have failed to realize their true nature, and dubbed themas meaningless. Both say that if this universe were governed by a Compassionate and Merciful Crea­tor, these obnoxious occurrences would not have taken place. He who marshals this argument tries to conclude that it would have been appropriate if man's life in this world had been trouble free.

Had it been so man's conceit and selfishness would have led him to the conduct, which would not have been in consonance with religion or his religious life? Just as you find persons nurtured in luxury and comfort who mostly (in their intoxication) forget their manhood and their state of having been brought up by somebody. (In their extreme conceit, they begin considering them­selves as objects of adoration, just as you might have seen some senseless, wealthy persons. Some even go to the extent of looking upon themselves as gods. Do not you have examples of such people?) They forget that they can receive some injury or sorrow or that some calamity may befall them. They even forget whether they have to sympathize with some weak person or to pity some needy person. They are not ame­nable to feeling sorrow at another person's trouble or feeling compassion on the weakling or showing kindness towards troubled souls. When however trouble befalls them, they feel its pinch and are then open to reason. They are awakened more than in proportion to their ig­norance and folly. They begin to act in a way, which was incumbent on them all along. Ifthis trouble had not befallen them, they would have continued to look upon themselves as gods, to spend their lives in conceit, to have no pity or sympathy with anybody else. Would such con­duct have been in the interests of their religion and this world? Certainly not. Along with de­fective religion, they would have suffered worldly harm. People would have hated them and con­demned them. Such selfish persons would have created disorder in this universe in all affairs, industry, commerce, knowledge and mutual con­duct, etc.

People who deny these matters, looking upon them as meaningless are like (clearly) those children who condemn bitter and unpalatable medicine and get offended at the precautions against harmful foods. They dislike work, they like only to play freely, indulge in absurdities, to eat and drink without let or hindrance. They do not know that such license and idleness would deteriorate their mental, moral and physical growth that these palatable but harmful edibles would lead to different ailments and diseases. Their betterment lies in acquiring know­ledge and medicines hold many benefits for them, despite a little unpalatableness.

They (atheists) say as to why men have not been given sinless conduct so that the Almighty Allah may not have needed to pinch them with troubles. The answer to them will be that in that case man would not have been worthy of any credit for goodness nor entitled to reward therefore. (A man is entitled to credit and re­ward only when he desists from evil conduct to please the Almighty Allah notwithstanding his capacity to transgress. If there had been no liberty for him to sin, there could have been no credit for sinlessness). If they further say that being allowed every sort of pleasure and com­fort, where did any harm lie if he did not win credit or reward by virtue of his goodness? The answer will be present this proposition to a rational and healthy person telling him to sit on idly, assuring him of the fulfillment of all his needs without any efforts. Then see if his mind agrees to it (or not, he will never agree). You will find him far better pleased and satisfied with the little he gets by his own effort rather than a great lot, which comes to him unearned without effort. Similarly, the blessings of the Hereafter will be congenial to them only when they are earned through effort.

Man is therefore allowed two-fold boon. Firstly, he gets a great reward for his effort in this world. Secondly, he has been shown the way to seek it by his own effort so as to get the maximum satisfaction for achievement. It is quite natural for a man to allow no worth to anything obtained without effort or title. On the contrary, whatever he gets as a result of effort and little, he sets great store by it. As such, the blessings of the Almighty Allah, which will be bestowed on him by virtue of his self-control within prescribed limits, will be far more worth­while to him in comparison with a state of mind where he did not have to control his lusts and every unlawful thing had ceased to have any attraction for him. In that case, the blessings of the Hereafter allowed by the Almighty would not have been so precious to him. The reward that he will get as a result of his intense effort and earning will be very much valuable to him. If they now say whether it does not so happen that some persons are very much pleased to get a boon without any right therefore, (in the absence of goodness), what argument is to be advanced on the same lines for people who will feel gratified at getting the blessings of the Here­after (without any effort).

The answer to them will be that this is a subject (reward in the absence of goodness) if people get convinced thereof that they will get the blessings of the Hereafter without effort (obedience to divine laws), it will lead to all sorts of mischief, sinfulness and moral degradation and turpitude. Who would then have held him­self back from moral turpitude or put in efforts for virtuous conduct when he had known himself as a sure recipient of the blessings of the Hereafter (leading virtuous or mischievous life)? Who could have been sure of the safety of life, honour and property of himself and of his family about the harm, people would do in case there was no fear of punishment and retribution? (It is obvious that if people were assured of getting to paradise in any case of good or evil conduct, how they could resist harming the life, honour and property of other people. How could anyone be sure that he would not be molested by others?) The damage thereof would have been caused in this very life to the people before the Doom's Day (what a serious trouble it would be to be ever diffident about one's safety. What greater misery there can be in the interests of the order of the world?)

Justice and ingenuity would both be repudia­ted. (The evildoers as well as the righteous per­sons being placed on a par in regard to the bles­sings of the Hereafter is surely not just). It would have been questionable, if such irregularity and disorder had entered the design. (It would have been questioned as to what philosophy it was that the transgressor and its object, the sinful and the obedient, the virtuous and the evil­doer are all placed on the same footing in regard to the divine blessings. What a design it is! Man has, therefore been created with the capacity to commit sin or to desist from, to obey divine commandments or disobey them. The good and evil in everything has been made manifest through reason and revelation so that now notwithstand­ing the capacity to sin and the freedom to trans­gress divine laws, he who holds himself back to please the Almighty Allah purely through looking upon sinfulness as evil and obedience as virtue will earn the reward for his virtuous conduct and that if he transgresses, he will deserve punish­ment. Both these modes of conduct have been brought within his discretion and reason so that he may earn reward or punishment, merit or demerit as a result of his personal conduct).

They (the atheists) also speak of the troubles and inconveniences, which sometimes have a general application affecting the righteous and the mischievous or affecting only the righteous and leaving the mischievous unharmed. They say how can it be an appropriate design of the Om­niscient (when you say that the universe is the handiwork of the great Designer) what grounds do you advance? The answer to this will be that such troubles do befall the righteous and the mischievous all and there are benefits for both Categories ordained by the Almighty Allah. The righteous suffer troubles, inconveniences, and a restitution of the blessings to them causes gratitude and perseverance in them. As for the mischievous, the trouble breaks their conceit and egotism and keeps them back from evil conduct. There is a benefit of the betterment for all those who are spared from the impact of these troubles. Besides the two categories, for the righteous the state of goodness is a source of happiness and a further inducement and dis­cernment for still better conduct (when they see how they have been protected against troubles). For the evildoers also the protection against harm is a special boon from the Almighty Allah's grace shown to them without deserving. This in­duces them to act kindly and to forgive those whom do them harm.

A critic may say that such troubles befall their properties yet sometimes their physical bo­dies suffer even to destruction, like being burnt, being drowned, being washed off by floods or being buried alive. The answer to them will be that the Almighty Allah has ordained therein the good of both categories, for the virtuous because of the departure from this world and its troubles and miseries and for the mischievous in that their capacity to sin is thereby cut off. To sum up the Almighty Allah diverts the con­sequences of all such actions by His Omniscience and Omnipotence towards betterment just as when a tree is broken down by wind, a good carpen­ter, turns it to beneficial uses; similarly the Almighty Designer diverts the consequences of these calamities which befall their properties and their physical bodies to their benefit and betterment. If someone asks, as to why these calami­ties befall men. The answer will be, lest they become inclined to sinfulness because of a long lease of safety, lest the mischievous indulge in sinfulness altogether while the virtuous men be­come slack in doing good. Both these modes of conduct (indulgence in sinfulness of the mis­chievous because of case and of slackness on the part of the virtuous in doing good), overpower men when they are allowed a long lease of ease and comfort. Such occurrences keep them warned and deter them from such conduct; and therein lies their good. If they were altogether relieved of trouble, they would transgress the limits of sinfulness just as the people of bygone ages did, so that they had to be destroyed by deluges to clear the earth of them.

There is one point fixed in the mind of these deniers of design and purpose, to wit, death and annihilation. They think that it would have been proper if men had been given everlasting lives without any trouble or harm (to them death is antipurposive. If there had been the De­signer of this universe designing to discernment, why should have men died?)

It is necessary to carry the argument to its logical conclusion to see the consequences it leads to, just see that if all men had lived everlasting lives, this earth would have become too narrow for them; they would not have had room enough for their dwellings, their agriculture and the provision of requirements for leading their lives. Notwithstanding the constant axe of death working all the while there are quarrels in regard to the dwellings and the cropping fields; even wars are fought with bloodshed on this account. What would have been their condition if none had died while reproduction of new individuals continued (would there have been an inch of earth left, where would their dwellings had been built, or their agriculture carried on? What would have been their plight?)

Now even when deaths continue we have such difficulties. What would have been the stakes if none had ever died? People would have been overpowered by greed, lust and hard heartedness (in the absence of the fear of death without an idea of being called to account, greed, lust and hard heartedness would have been over­powering). If they had been assured of ever­lasting lives, no one would have been contented with his possessions (more and still more to get, would have been the insistent desire). No one would have liked to part with anything to the needy. Nor would there have been any solace after a misfortune (under the existing dispensa­tion the thought of death does not allow the effect of a misfortune to be such as to be beyond consolation). They would have been tired of life and of all mundane matters. The man with a long life gets tired of it, yearns for death to supervene and provide relief.

They (the atheists) say that it should have been so ordained (in such a case) that all troubles and ailments should have been removed from among them, so that they should not have longed for death nor should have been desirous of it. (They desire death now because of aged decrepi­tude.) The reply to this is that they would have fallen into evil ways and disobedience (as we have stated). If they (the atheists) say that to obviate the perplexity due to shortage of housing and living conditions their reproduction could have been stopped, the reply will be that in that case untold numbers of creatures would have been denied entry into the world and thus deprived of the blessings of the Almighty Allah in this life and the Hereafter, in case but one generation were allowed admittance without the capacity for further reproduction. (Such a dispensation is altogether against the canon of justice, even against the canon of Omnipotent Authority and supremacy of the Almighty Allah to have become contented with the creation of only a single generation and to prevent the later possible genera­tions from the enjoyment of His munificent boons (study the philosophy of the origin of creation— a profoundly subtle problem).

Then they may say He should have created all men, those born and those to be born in the future in one lot. (The difficulty stated as to the deprivation of numberless creatures from Allah (s.w.t.)'s bounty would have been overcome.)

The answer to them will be, as stated already, that the contingency will arise as to the shortage of housing and husbanding facilities. Where could room enough have been found for houses to be built, agriculture to be carried on, and communica­tions to be established, in that case (when all men had come into being in one lot) in the absence of sex relationship, there would be no community interests among the kith and kin, no mutual help in times of hardship and distress. Whence could have been obtained the enjoy­ments of parentage in rearing up the offspring? (If sex relationships with reproduction had con­tinued, where could the coming generations have migrated to find room for life's business, seeing that the earth hardly accommodates the existing generation.)

This shows clearly that whatever direction the fancy moves away from the purposive design, it proves to be untenable, absurd and preposterous.

A critic may, perhaps, raise an objection from another point of view and say as to how can it be ascertained that there is a Creator and De­signer, when we see in life the strong man usurping everything (might being right), the strong oppressing the weak, usurping others' rights, while the weak is oppressed and is insulted. The virtuous is a prey to adversity and troubles while a reprobate is healthy and wealthy. He who dishonours principles is not punished speedily. As such, it is concluded that if there had been a design permeating the universe (of a Designer, whose planning and design worked in the uni­verse) all business would have been conducted regularly. The virtuous would have been well fed. The scoundrels would have suffered deprivation. The strong would have been prevented from oppressing the weak. The evildoer would have received speedy retribution.

The answer to this will be that in that case virtue, the special merit of man would have lost its value. The rest of the Creation does not possess the merit of conviction in the promises of rewards of the Almighty Allah and there under submitting the libido to the discipline of righteous conduct. (If the Almighty Allah had forced men to abstain from oppressing the weak, if He had provided subsistence only to the virtuous and deprived the evildoers altogether, how could eternal reward have been apportioned for vir­tuous conduct and on what basis could man have aimed it?) Men in that case had been like the quadrupeds who are kept under control by the rod and the appeal to stomach, to whom constantly either a dagger is shown or fodder is offered to keep them in order. (If the Almighty Allah had ordained a similar dis­pensation, what would have been the distinction between them and the animals? The very pur­pose of the creation of man would have been stultified, together with the nullification of the problem of eternal reward and chastisement at one stroke.) No one would have acted in ac­cordance with a conviction for eternal bliss or perdition. They would have been degraded from the level of humanity to that of animalism. No one would have cared for the spiritual blessings (of the Hereafter). He would have laboured for the immediately of the moment (Seeing that he would be punished the moment he did wrong and that he would be rewarded if he acted righteously. All reward and punishment would have been administrated in this world. No one would have thought of the everlasting boons.) A righteous person would have acted for mere pittance and worldly possessions, while a re­probate would have abstained from oppression and tyranny just for the fear of sudden chastisement, so that all action of men would have centered round the immediacy of the moment (this world's rewards and punishments.) There would have been no remotest thought for the rewards and punishments ordained by the Almighty Allah, nor would they have been en­titled to the eternal blessings of the Hereafter. All this would have led to a serious situation.

Despite all this, the penury and opulence mentioned by the critic is not altogether wide of the mark. It is a fact that, as people cognise, the righteous, do get of this world's resources of wealth, so as not to let people imagine that only the non-believers are favoured with while the virtuous are denied the amenities of this life, lest men in general might take to villainous con­duct. You also see that the villains are chas­tised in this world also, when their villainies exceed all bounds and they harm people ex­cessively, as the Pharaoh was drowned, Nebuchednazar was disfigured and Bilbis was murdered.

If because of some profound purpose, be­yond the ken of men, some evildoers are al­lowed a respite or some virtuous people have their guerdon postponed to a later day, it does not falsify the design. (It cannot be concluded that the universe has no Creator and Designer.) Such affairs take place even in the rulers of the world. (Some are punished close upon heels, some are left in the lurch. Some receive speedy re­ward for their loyalty while others are put off under some exigency.) This, however, does not vitiate the policy. In fact, the affairs wherein they procrastinate are found to be more in consonance with statemanship and farsightedness. Moreover, when overwhelming evidence and the con­clusions (rational inference) thereof force to the belief that there must be the Creator and De­signer of the assortment of the universe, what can hider Him from planning the good of His creatures? No human reason can imagine that the Creator would leave His creation at large, except that it be through incapacity, ignorance or willfulness all of which are foreign to the Almighty Allah's design. Allah (s.w.t.) is neither in capacitated for the betterment of His creation, nor is He unaware of their situation nor, Allah (s.w.t.) forbid, He is willfully inclined.)

The failure to ameliotate because of incapa­city, ignorance and willfulness, is understandable in as much as the incapable is unable to create such wonderfully magnificent creatures, the ig­norant has no percipience of the methods of rectitude and genuity while the willful cannot turn to the creation of such magnificent handi­work.

And things being as they are, (as stated, that to the Creator of the universe all incapa­city is foreign) it follows that the Creator of the universe, shall, as a matter of course, look to the betterment of His creation, though the profundity of the design may not be appa­rent to the people in general, as even the policies of the worldly sovereigns are inscrutable, which on scrutiny may be found quite sound when put to the test. (Try and scrutinise. Brightness of the sun is its own evidence).

In case you are in doubt about the essence of a drug or nutriment and after experimenta­tion twice or thrice, its properties become crys­tal clear, will you not cast off all doubts about its essence from your mind? Why do you not, then, subject this matter to experience? Why do you not realise that whatever the Almighty Allah ordains is in the best interests of His creatures?

What about these ignorance’s (the atheists) then, who in the face of such overwhelming evidence, which cannot even be calculated, can­not by convinced of the Creator and Designer of the universe? (I say that) even if half the universe and what it contains were found to be disordered and disorganised it would have ill become reason and knowledge to regard it as without purpose and design, (whereas this uni­verse has everything replete with order and ingenuity and yet these people deny the Creator and admit lack of purpose,) since the second half is in a state of perfection and order, which obviates at once such a postulate (creation without the Creator.) How can such a postulate be admitted seeing that everything in the universe is found on scrutiny and observation to be in the most organised orderliness, so much so that nothing can be imagined which has not a superior counterpart among the actual divine creation. (You may test it. Think of anything as missing from the world's assortment. On scrutiny, you will find it even in a superior form. Just consider carefully the properties, occurrence and quality of form of the animal, the vegetable and the inanimate Kingdom to get an idea of the factual position.)

O Mufazzal! Know that the universe is called by the name of ‘Cosmos’, which means embellishment in the Greek language by the philosophers and the claimants to wisdom. It is named because of the perfection (exactitude) of organisation. Why did they not then call it divine ordinance? The name Cosmos (embellish­ment) shows that the orderly dispensation is based on exquisite gracefulness.

O Mufazzal! I wonder (pitifully) at those people who overlook the errors in medical know­ledge, which is so faulty, but call in question the universal order, which is flawless.

I wonder at the conduct of the claimants of philosophy, who have no knowledge of the sublimity of creation and yet question the grandeur of the Almighty Allah. I particularly wonder at the wretch Mani, who claims an understanding of the mysteries of knowledge while he is quite ignorant of the argument of this profundity of creation, and he thus calls in question the Omniscience of the Almighty Allah in the matter of creation.

Above all of them are the atheists to be pitied, who demand to see (the Almighty Allah) with their physical eyes, Who is inscrutable even to the intellect. This being impossible, they took to absolute denial of His Existence. They demanded why He cannot be encompassed within the intellect.

(The answer to it is that) He transcends intellect (and so He cannot be encompassed within the intellect), just as things beyond the visual field cannot be perceived by the eyes. (The intellect too can have no percipience of beings beyond its field of percipience. The essence of the Almighty Allah is beyond human ken, while the whole of the wonderful living universe is a standing testimony to His Existence.) As an example if you see a piece of stone flying up in the air, the logical conclusion you draw is that someone has hurled it above. The eye may not have seen it and yet the intellect realises it because of its discerning capacity, in that the piece of stone cannot go up by itself. You see that the eye stopped at a point and could not advance further (while the intellect realised that there must have been someone to throw it. The eye simply cognised it goingup.) Similarly, the intellect stops short at its prescribed limit in the matter of the Divine Immanence. It can­not advance further. We say, however, that the intellect, which perceives that man, possesses mind and soul, notwithstanding the fact that no one has seen the mind with the physical sense, the same intellect, should be able to realise and admit the Existence of the Creator, without being able to perceive His Essence. (Just as no one can perceive the essence of his own soul and mind and yet believes in their existence). And if they now ask why He laid the obligation on the puny man to acquire cognizance of Him by his intellect seeing that he cannot cognise Him fully, the answer will be that the demand to cognise Him is conditioned by the extent to which human intellect can possibly do by the powers it possesses. It is to believe in His Existence and to obey His commandments and prohibitions. They are not required to encom­pass His Immanence and His Attributes. No ruler requires of his subjects to know the sovereign's stature or completion. All that is required is loyalty and obedience to the laws of the land. Supposing a man approaches the door of the royal palace to demand the ruler to pre­sent himself to him so that he may know him fully, else he would not obey him, he lays him­self open to accusation (and he may merit un­toward consequences). Similarly, he who condi­tions his belief in the Almighty Creator with a full knowledge of His Immanence offends the Almighty Allah.

And if they ask as to why are they inade­quate, the answer will be that the imagination cannot soar to the heights of His Magnificence and yet it tries to attain that height which is beyond its capacity, in fact, even the cognition of inferior entities is beyond its compass.

The sun affords an illustration thereof. You see it shedding its light on the whole world and yet no one knows the reality behind it. (When an insignificant form of creation like the sum defies scrutiny as to its essence, how can the Essence of the Almighty Creator be gauged). There are a number of postulates about it on that account and as such, differences of opinion among the scholars prevail about it. Some say it is a hollow heavenly body full of fire radiat­ing its rays from a particular orifice. Some say that it is a sort of nebula. Some say that it is like glass in form, capable of concentrating heat and then radiating is to the world. Some say that it is a fine clear body of congealed water. Others say that various sources of heat have come together. Yet others postulate that it is an additional element to the four elements.

These people have differed among themselves as to its form (and shape). Some say it is like a flat page. Others regard it as a rolling ball. Similarly, there is difference as to its volume. Some regard it as equal in size to the earth. Others consider it as smaller than the earth. Some say it is bigger than this great island (the earth). The geometricians say that it is one hundred and seventy times the size of the earth.

It is shown by opposing statements of these people that they are ignorant of its essence. Intellect has been incapable of realising the essence of the sun, which the eyes can see, and the senses can cognise, how can then His Essence be comprehended Who is beyond the pale of senses and hidden from the imagination.

If they, then, say why He is hidden from the imagination, the answer will be that He is not hidden by an artifice as one may behind the doors and curtains from the sight of other men. When we say that the Almighty Allah is invisible to the eyes we mean that His Immanence is too fine for the imagination and physical sense to comprehended, just as the soul is so fine (that the eye cannot perceive it) although it too is one among the creation and yet is beyond the compass of the imagination.

If they now say as to why He is so fine being superior to everything, the question would be untenable, in-as-much as the Creator of every­thing has to be superior to everything and dis­tinct therefrom.

# Glory be to Him the Almighty Allah.

If they ask as to how it has been known that He is superior to everything and distinct there­from, the answer will be that there are four criteria of knowledge in this behalf, (i) To see if the existence of a thing is established, (ii) The real nature and essence thereof, (iii) What attri­butes are possessed by it, (iv) The why and how of its existence. No creature can know to apply these criteria in regard to Creator, except to know that He Exists. (No one can know beyond this about the Almighty Allah.) No one can know about His Essence. To ask the why and wherefore about Him is altogether untenable, seeing that He is the Creator of everything, and nothing can stand as the cause of His Existence. (How can the how and why questions stand in regard to Him?)

As men have learnt that He (The Almighty Allah) exists, it is not necessary that they should know His Essence as well, just as the awareness of the soul does not entail knowledge of its essence. (Everyone is aware of his mind and soul and yet does not know their essence.) Similar is the case of the other spiritual entities. (They exist and yet no one has cognised their essence up to date. The Almighty Allah's exis­tence is an established fact but His Immanence cannot be cognised in-as much-as no senses can discern Him.)

If they say that you speak of Him as above cognition (because of faulty knowledge) as He is an unknown Being, the answer will be that from one point of view it is so in fact, if the intellect seeks to attain the knowledge of His Essence, from the other point of view, however. He is nearer than anything is, seeing that effective argu­ments serve to prove His Existence (His Being is proved to be as if He is just before us as a matter of fact.)

From one point of view, therefore, He is Manifest and hidden from none (through the knowledge of His existence), from the other point of view He is hidden out of the reach of human senses (in His Immanence). It is the same with intellect. It is known by argument and evidence but its essence is a mystery.

The naturalists (who depend upon the natural sciences) say that nature does nothing meaning­less nor leaves anything undone which leads to the perfection of something, bears testimony to this (that in fact nature is the creator and activiser of everything and that it itself leads to perfection). The answer to them will be who has taught nature this ingenuity and knowledge of the limits of everything not to transgress the perfect mean and to go beyond its capacity (and to do only that which is right and regular) whereas this is a matter which intellect does not learn even after repeating experiments (that nature which is irrational should act in a most planned and well-thought-out design without trial and experiment is altogether wide of the mark). If they say that nature possesses omniscience and omnipotence they thereby admit what they have denied for these are the attributes of the Creator that He is Omniscient and Omnipotent. They name Him ‘nature’ we call Him Allah, Almighty, Omniscient Omnipotent etc. If they deny it that (nature possesses Omniscience and Omnipotence) then this whole ingenious creation is calling aloud that this universe is necessarily the handiwork of the Creator who possesses great Omniscience (since of nature does not possess omniscience and omnipotence, this universe as it is full of inge­nuity and design must be the handiwork of the Omniscient Creator.)

Among the ancients there were some who denied purpose and design, they believed that the universe had come into being spontaneously by sheer chance (just as some one finds a treasure on digging the earth without having aimed at getting it). Their argument was that sometimes of ants are born contrary to the usual form just as they may be disfigured by the addition of a finger or by unusual ugliness. They argued that, the universe came into being without purpose and plan (for a planner would not have created six instead of five fingers, two heads instead of one, one hand instead of two or sometimes four hands); that they have come into being spontaneously and through sheer chance. Aristotle repudiated their argument (at that very time). His answer was that if anything occurs apparently by chance, it too has definite causes which deviate it from its regular activity (for instance the generating power may be weakened and fail to create a regular pat­tern or an increase of vital heat may disorder activity to give rise to freaks of nature) that chance is never on the level of natural activity which may continue forever.

Oh Mufazzal! You see different species of animals following a regular pattern and possessing identical forms. For instance, a human infant when born possesses two hands, two feet with five fingers or toes each as is found generally among people. Sometimes, however, things take place contrary-wise due to some cause affecting the generating material which gives rise to the foetus in the womb just as it happens that due to some flaw in the tools, with which he is working an article which is manufactured does not square with the design of the artisan (the flaw stays in the industrial product).. Similarly certain causes creep in (which have been mentioned) in the young ones of the animals which lead to disfigurement, increase or decrease in limitsbut generally they are of the regularly right pattern without any flaw;

Just as flaws creep into certain affairs because of definite causes without contradicting plan and without affording evidence that they are not the artifices of craftsmen; similarly certain affairs are affected by certain obstacles in the re­gular activity of nature cannot serve as a reason in favour of spontaneity and chance. Any one therefore who on the basis of a fact contrary to nature (and the apparent natural laws) says that everything has come into being through sheer chance is making an untenable and irrational statement.

If they say as to why certain things have a perfect form while others have an imperfect one the answer will be that it is to show that assort­ment of the universe is not due to the compulsion of nature nor is it possible that if it were due to nature all should have the same pattern just as these objectors say: All this takes place under the will and the purpose of the Almighty Creator, that he laid down a certain pattern and regula­tion for the majority while allowing a deviation from the law on some account to show that nature too is under the control of a superior plan and ingenuity, that It, too, is dependent upon the will of the Creator for its activity and perfection Glory be to the Almighty Allah, the Sustainer of the universes.

Oh Mufazzal! The knowledge that I have bestowed upon you should be learnt by heart. You should be grateful to the Almighty Allah and praise Him for His blessings. You should obey His devotees.

I have given a little of the sum total of knowledge and evidence of the perfect planning and purpose as arguments for the creation of this universe. Consider and ponder over this and learn lessons therefrom.

Mufazzal says: that he promised with the help of Imam (a.s.) to discern the profound mean­ings of all this. Imam (a.s.) placed his hand on my chest and said, "Remember all this and you will not forget it, God willing". Mufazzal says, "I fell swooning (scholars of psychology will under­stand it well). When I came to my senses Imam (a.s.) said, "Oh Mufazzal, how do you find your­self now". He said, "with the help of my Lord, I am independent of referring to this book which I have penned. Everything is in my memory as if I can make it all out from the palms of my hand. Glory is to my Almighty Allah to Whom is due all gratitude and praise as are deserved."

Imam (a.s.) said: "Oh Mufazzal! Be per­fectly at case in your mind, brain and reason. I shall, God willing, give you an account of the heavens and the earth and all things created by the Almighty Allah as His wonderful creation and the categories and hordes of angels right upon the highest zenith and their ranks together with all the creatures including the genie and human to the lowest point of the nadir, so that you may know that what you have learnt by now is only an insignificant part of the whole. You may go now, you have an honourable place near us and such respect in the hearts of the Believers as is felt for water when one is thirsty. Do not ask me about what I have promised to you unless I myself feel inclined to speak to you thereof.''

Mufazzal says that he returned from Imam (a.s.) with a gift as no one else had ever received (praise be to Almighty Allah the First and the Last and the Manifest and the Hidden and He has Omnipotence over everything).

1. Al-Quran 8:61. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. "The Crisis of Our Age", 1951 Ed. pp. 319, 158, 112 [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. This hypothesis of spontaneous generation, was upset by the philosopher Spallan Zani (1729-99) who existed after Imam (a.s.) by some eleven centuries. Pasteur, "the great French Chemist (1822-95), the founder of the Sciences of Eateriology and Immonology, who is still .another century later, gave a final death blow to this hypothesis. The great Scientist. L-eibig says, "I .would 'more readily believe that a book on chemistry would result from a jumble of letters, than believe that a leaf or flower could result from chemical forces alone. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Al-Zilzal 99:718 [↑](#footnote-ref-4)