

Good News

And give good news to those who do good (to others)

-Holy Quran 22:37

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‘ALLAH is the LIGHT Of the Heavens and the Earth’

- Holy Quran (24:35)

Ebrahim Mohamed

‘Allah is the light of the heavens and the earth. A likeness of His light is as a pillar on which is a lamp – the lamp is in a glass, the glass is as it were a brightly shining star – lit from a blessed olive-tree, neither eastern nor western, the oil whereof gives light, though fire touches it not – light upon light. Allah guides to His light whom He pleases. And Allah sets forth parables for men, and Allah is Knower of all things.’ - Holy Quran 24:35

The Light of Allah is here described by way of a parable which means it should not be taken literally. What is meant by ‘Allah is the light of the heavens and the earth’ is that just like His Beneficence and Mercy (*Rahman*) encompass the entire

creation so does His Light. Therefore just like life on earth cannot survive without sunlight, so nothing in the entire cosmos, the physical and that which transcend the physical can survive without Divine Light.

The question is what in essence is Divine Light? It is no doubt that Supreme Source of all knowledge and intelligence - that incomprehensible Super Illuminating Consciousness that permeates and gives life to the entire creation big or small. Thus God Almighty is also referred to in the Holy Quran as the Great Evolver to perfection (*Rabb*) of *alameen* – i.e. of all the worlds (1:1). Interesting to note is that the Arabic word *alameen*, comes from the same root as the word *ilm* which means ‘knowledge.’ But *alameen* refers not only to such knowledge of what we know to exist but goes far beyond human knowledge of such things not yet known to man that still reside only in the mind of the Almighty, ‘the Knower of all things.’ Similar descriptions of our Creator appear in several places in the Holy Quran.

Thus it is this Divine Knowledge or Light that Almighty Allah guides whom He pleases to by way of divine revelation. This is part of His Beneficence, which He extends to all mankind regardless of race, religion, colour or creed. He communicates with all of His creation all the time and passes His light on to them in relative measures depending on the nature of their creation as appropriate and as it pleases Him through His messengers, the angels.

Thus we find that even on the very smallest, invisible, micro level the molecules that build the infinite number of cells that make up human bodies and all other living organisms so essential in the evolutionary processes we see taking place all around us, quantum physicists now confirm, consist of a micro consciousness by which it is guided on how to build specialized cells. This is the work of our *Rabb*, the Great Evolver, the Light of the Heavens and the Earth.

Darwin had a whiff of this but was misunderstood when he developed the theory of 'natural selection', giving the impression that he completely excluded the role of the Creator in the process of evolution. This led to him being severely criticized even ostracized. He set out to address several objections to evolution in the sixth edition of his famous *Origin of the Species* and he even added a Chapter

Seven titled *Miscellaneous Objections to the Theory of Natural Selection*. One of the best-known criticisms of 'natural selection' was that nothing as complicated as an eye could have evolved purely by chance. Darwin's response, ironically, was not a denial of a Creator but a confirmation of it. He argued that we can observe many examples of the evolution of light-sensitive cells in nature. (Note Darwin's use of light (*nur*) in describing the attributes of a cell). He answered that just because we don't understand how something can evolve does not mean that the Creator wasn't behind it. Here are his exact words contained in the sixth edition of *Origin of the Species*. 'Have we any right to assume that the Creator works by intellectual powers like those of man?' And then he continues: 'May we not believe that a living optical instrument (referring to micro and telescopes) might thus be formed as superior to that of glass, as the works of the Creator are to (the creation of) man?' So he is saying if we are convinced that man can produce a sophisticated telescope from ordinary glass, why is it difficult to understand that the Creator whose intellectual powers are superior to man, cannot produce a sophisticated being such as man? So even if Darwin might at first have had doubts about the Creator, Whom the Holy Quran refers to as *Rabbil Alameen*, the Great

Evolver and Light of all the worlds, he definitely was convinced of a Creator in his later years when he wrote the last edition of his *Origin of the Species*. A deeper study of Darwin which we do not have time to go into here also shows that he studied Arabic and thus must have had access to the rich literature of many of the early Muslim scientists.

So this concept of a consciousness on a molecular level which Darwin refers to as ‘light-sensitive’ cells, with its origin in Divine Light or Divine Consciousness, comes forward in the Holy Quran very succinctly in its description of the extraordinary works of that tiny insect, the bee :

‘And Thy Lord revealed to the bee, make hives in the mountains and the trees’ – (16:68).

This is a great truth revealed to the Holy Prophet (s) that still has the greatest minds of the human fraternity baffled! How is it possible, they say, for a tiny insect as the bee to produce such a perfect product that cannot be imitated despite all human attempts to do so? Could it be that a Super Intelligence taught it? - they wonder. For confirmation of this, they have to turn to the Holy Quran that says Our **Rabb** has revealed it to the bee. So if the Light of the Almighty can cause a tiny insect to perform such wonders imagine what it can do to that being known as

homo sapiens, ‘intelligent man’ whose consciousness excels the whole of creation?

The Holy Quran mentions that God speaks to man on three different levels in chapter 42 verse 51:

‘And it is not granted to a mortal that Allah should **speak** to him except by revelation (*wahy*)’

– this is the most common manner Divine communication with mortals, regardless of who they might be, takes place. It comes in the form of an inspiration that is brought by the angels to the hearts of man from where it is communicated to the brain and thus becomes a thought or idea that lights up the mind. In this way God Almighty, the Light of the heavens and the earth, shares His Divine knowledge with even ordinary human beings. Thus in the history of man there are many examples of inventions that came about through this means of Divine communication we call revelation or **wahy**.

The other, higher, form of Divine communication comes in the form of what the Holy Quran in the same verse describes as **wa raa hijabi** ‘from behind a veil.’ – this refers to true dreams and visions, a form of divine communication, accessible to all mankind. Thus in the narrative of the prophet Joseph in chapter 12 of the Holy Quran, we learn about the true dreams that the king and Joseph’s two

cell-mates experienced and which came out true as interpreted by Joseph. This, despite the fact that the king and the prisoners were not believers in the God of Abraham as Joseph was. Thus true dreams and visions are part of Almighty Allah's Universal Light that he shares with man as He pleases. It is part of His **Rahman**, Beneficence that like His rain and sunshine know neither distinctions nor boundaries.

However, there is a third and much higher form of revelation known as **wahy nubuwwat** or prophetic revelation that is exclusive to prophets as it comprises Divine Law. The revelation is brought by the Arch Angel Gabriel, himself – (42:51). This is how the Holy Quran and previous scriptures were revealed. This form of revelation ended with the Holy Prophet Muhammad (s) with the perfection of Divine Law – (5:3); except inspirations, true dreams and visions revealed to the hearts of man still continues.

To ensure that evil insinuations are not confused as being from divine origin, prophetic revelation such as the Holy Quran for example should be applied as the criterion and benchmark to determine between truth and falsehood. To give a simple example, to say God Almighty revealed to man the usefulness of nuclear energy might indeed be true for such is the known Mercy of God we see operating in

the universe; but to say that God inspired man to use it as a means to destroy lives, is absolutely false. Such would be an imputation from the devil. This principle applies to all aspects of life – a subject of its own perhaps for another time.

We are primarily concerned about the Light of the Heavens of the Earth by means of which Almighty God shares His knowledge with mortal man. It is Divine Light alone that comprises true knowledge, wisdom and guidance, free of human interpolations and errors. Thus if we refuse to open the windows of our hearts and minds to let this Divine Light shine in, we will remain in a dark world of ignorance, superstitions, suspicions, dogmatism, fanaticism, extremism, bigotry etc.

The Holy Quran makes use of an analogy of a brightly shining star (see above - 24:35) to vividly describe this Divine Light by likening it to a light placed on a very high pillar, guarded in glass so that wind cannot put it out and so that it illuminates the whole world like a brilliant star. Note, it neither belongs to the East nor West which means it is not of this earth. It is not based in Arabian, Pakistani, Indian, Israelite, European or any other human cultures or traditions. It is the Divine Light of Islam which means Peace, the origin of all faiths that will light up the four corners of the world. It is guarded, not able to be blown out, meaning it will never

be corrupted. No foreign philosophies, man-made whims and fancies will dim it. It will last forever and never be subject to deterioration. It will forever remain a fresh source of guidance for all mankind for all times. Of special note is the fact that the metaphor used for the fuel that produces such Providential Light is that which produces a pure calm soothing light from the blessed olive-tree with its nurturing and healing powers. It is not from a heat generating fire created by fossil fuel that pollutes the air.

Usually religion has a considerable amount of heat associated with it, examples of which are: fiery speeches, and often heated 'inter and intra faith' debates and arguments. The Holy Quran contains Divine Light that do not need heat to spread it in the world. It shines by itself. Give a person a Quran and the Quran will do the work by itself MM Ali the famous translator of the Holy Quran into English, used to say. It is indeed 'light upon light' because its wisdom consists of endless layers that will be a source of guidance and knowledge for all generations to come.

Just as all plants are instinctively drawn to sunlight so our very innate natures are drawn to this Light; but, because we are endowed with the powers of discretion, we can equally go against our nature and turn away from it and thus we are told: 'Allah guides to His light

whom He pleases' By whom he pleases are meant those who proactively open the windows of their hearts and minds to let the Divine Light in. Just as a house that is devoid of sunlight for years eventually becomes musty and damp and potentially starts breeding unhealthy bacteria, so houses that shun Divine Light becomes breeding grounds for dark thoughts that ultimately leads to all kinds of evil.

Thus the Holy Quran continues and says:

'(It is) in houses which Allah has permitted to be exalted and His name to be remembered therein. Therein do glorify Him in the mornings and evenings; Men whom neither merchandise nor selling diverts from the remembrance of Allah.' - 24:36-37

It is because of the sincerity and steadfastness of the righteous inmates of a house wherein Almighty God's name is exalted and much remembered and glorified and given priority above all worldly attractions, and not the fancy brick and mortar of the house that attracts the Light of the Almighty. The house thus symbolically represents the heart of a man for it is those hearts that have been purified with the remembrance of Almighty God, pure thoughts and righteous deeds that Divine Light enters. Muslims believe that

the Holy Quran is that unspoilt guarded Divine Lamp that shines and brings light and life to every dark corner of the earth that it reaches. Thus the rhetorical question:

‘Is he who was dead, then We raised him to life and made for him a light by which he walks among the people, like him whose likeness is that of one in darkness whence he cannot come forth?’ – 6:122

Here the ‘dead’ refers to the spiritually dead who received life by way of the light of the Holy Quran and not the physically dead that cannot return to this life.

Jesus Christ (on whom be peace) also makes this distinction between the physical and spiritually dead. Thus we find in Luke and Matthew he tells a man, about to join a funeral procession, to join him:

‘Then he said to another, follow me. But he said, Lord let me first go and bury my father.

Jesus said to him; Let the dead bury their own dead. But you go and preach the kingdom of God.’ – Luke 9:59, 60 - See also see Matthew 8:22

It would be silly to even imagine that what Jesus meant here is that dead corpses must bury the dead. Indeed not. Nay! He is referring to the spiritually dead from among the Children of Israel that he was commissioned from on high to raise to life

with the Divine Light that was revealed to him and that is the unadulterated pure version of the *Injeel* or the Gospel as it is commonly known; much like the Holy Prophet Muhammad (s)¹ was commissioned from on high to raise the spiritually dead to life with the Light of the Holy Quran.

May the Light of Almighty God always shine upon us and serves as our Guide and Protect us against the darkness of this world.



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¹ *Salalaa hu alay Wassalaam – Peace and Blessings of God be upon him*