

Timelessness and the Reality of Fate

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Historical review reveals that the philosophical basis of all anti-religionist figures and movements throughout history is rooted in materialist thought. Commonly, materialists deny the fact of creation. Instead, they assert that matter has existed since eternity and will remain absolute forever. In other words, they deify matter. In materialist sources, materialism is defined as follows: “Materialism holds that the world has neither a beginning nor an end, it is not created, and is infinite in time and space.”

The reason why materialism deifies matter so strongly is its steadfast refusal to accept the existence of a Creator. That matter is not absolute implies that it had a beginning: that it had a beginning means that it was brought into being from nothing; that is, it was created.

As the twentieth century drew to a close, the consensus reached by the scientific community verified the fact that matter is not absolute and confirmed that it had a beginning. The whole universe came into existence from nothing almost 15 billion years ago as a result of the explosion of a point with zero-volume and it expanded to take its final form of today. This event, called the Big Bang, has now been verified by concrete evidence, observations, and calculations made by theoretical physicists.

Today science concludes that “the universe was brought into being from nothingness,” as proclaimed by the Qur’an as well as all other divine revelations. In all domains, contemporary science refutes materialism and the ideologies based on materialism. At this stage, it only remains for the materialists to behold the collapse of the entire material world and their own defeat in the war they waged against the fact of creation.

In spite of contradicting scientific truth, materialists completely refute the fact that matter is not absolute but was

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created. This is because they know that once they admit this fact, they will also have to accept the existence of God, which in return will compel them to have faith in God and live by the religious precepts of Islam. The religion primarily demands full submission to God, which is greatly unacceptable to arrogant people. In the Qur'an, the situation of those who evade realities, though they are aware of them, is related as follows: "They repudiated them wrongly and haughtily, in spite of their own certainty about them. See the final fate of the corrupters" (27:14).

Apart from matter, materialists believe that time is also absolute. In other words, they hold that time comes from eternity and is also destined to eternity. Based on this misguided understanding, they strive to refute the existence of fate, the Day of Resurrection, Paradise and Hell. However, modern science has proven that, just like matter, time, too, was created from nothingness and thus had a beginning. By the same token, it was revealed in the twentieth century that time is a relative concept and a varying perception, changeable and unchangeable, as materialists have long believed. Einstein's Theory of Relativity, which laid the basis of modern physics, also proved the relativity of time and space.

In brief, time and space are not absolute. They are created by God from nothingness and definitely have a starting point. God, the Creator of time and space, is certainly not bound by them. God determined and created every moment of time in timelessness. This is actually the essence of "fate" that materialists fail to comprehend. All events experienced in the past by us as well as those which will happen in the future from our point of view are within the knowledge and control of God.

Facts proclaimed during the early years of the seventh century AC in the Qur'an, in which believers unequivocally believe, are confirmed by modern science, thereby certifying that the Qur'an is the Word of God. Materialist thinking rejected the existence of God and the fact of creation for centuries. Ironically, today,

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materialism, which took every opportunity to take refuge in science, is defeated by science in all domains. In this article, you will find concrete evidence confirming that the assertions of materialists have no scientific nor rational validity whatsoever and that in the light of scientific findings, materialism has utterly collapsed. The issues covered in this article provide significant evidence regarding the relativity of time and space, introducing to you some facts that you may have never thought of before. As you read these lines, you will comprehend that the world in which you live in is entirely different from what the materialistic standpoint suggests.

What we perceive as time is, in fact, a method by which with one moment is compared with another. We can explain this with an example. For instance, when we tap an object, we hear a particular sound. When we tap the same object five minutes later, we hear another sound. We perceive that there is an interval between the first and second sounds and we call this interval “time.” Yet at the time we hear the second sound, the first sound that we heard is no more than a picture remaining in our minds. It is merely a bit of information in our memories. We formulate the concept of “time” by comparing the moment in which we live with what we have in our memories. If this comparison is not made, there can be no concept of time.

Similarly, we make a comparison when, for example, we see a man entering a room through a door and sitting down in an armchair in the middle of the room. By the time the man is seated in the armchair, the images related to the moments when he opened the door, walked into the room, and made his way to the armchair are compiled as bits of information in the brain. The perception of time occurs when we compare the man sitting in the armchair with those bits of information.

In brief, time comes to exist as a result of the comparison made between some pictures stored in the brain. If human beings

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did not have memory, then their brains could not make such interpretations and therefore would never have formed the concept of time. The only reason why someone determines himself to be thirty years old is because he has accumulated information pertaining to those thirty years in his mind. If his memory did not exist, then he would not think of the existence of the earlier period and he would experience only the single “moment” in which he lives.

Since the human brain is accustomed to a certain sequence of events, we assume that time always flows forward. However, this is a decision reached in the brain and is relative. In reality, we can never know how time flows or even whether it flows or not. This is an indication of the fact that time is not an absolute fact but just a sort of perception.

The relativity of time is a fact also verified by one of the most important physicists of the twentieth century, Albert Einstein. Lincoln Barnett writes in his book *The Universe and Dr. Einstein*:

Much of the obscurity that has surrounded the Theory of Relativity stems from man’s reluctance to recognise that sense of time, like sense of colour, is a form of perception.

The subjectivity of time is best explained in Einstein’s own words. “The experiences of an individual,” he says, “appear to us arranged in a series of events; in this series the single events which we remember appear to be ordered according to the criterion of ‘earlier’ and ‘later’. There exists, therefore, for the individual, an I-time, or subjective time. Accordingly, when this order changes, the understanding of time will also vary. According to the Theory of General Relativity: ‘Time has no independent existence apart from the order of events by which we measure it.’¹

¹ Lincoln Barnett, *The Universe and Dr. Einstein* (New York, W. Sloane Associates, 1957), pp. 12, 39-40.

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Since time consists of perception, it depends entirely on the perceiver and is therefore relative. The speed at which time flows differs according to the references we use to measure it because there is no natural clock in the human body to indicate precisely how fast time passes. The relativity of time is plainly experienced in dreams. Although what we see in our dreams seems to last for hours, in fact, it lasts for only a few minutes, and even a few seconds.

Let us think about an example to clarify the subject further. Let us assume that we were put in a room with a single window that was specifically designed and that we were kept there for a certain period. Let there be a clock in the room, from which we could see the amount of time that has passed. At the same time, let it be that we could see from the window of the room the sun rising and setting at certain intervals. A few days later, the answer that we would give to the question about the amount of time we spent in the room would be based both on the information that we had collected by looking at the clock from time to time and on the computation that we had made by referring to the number of times the sun had risen and set. For example, we might estimate that we spent three days in the room. However, if the person who put us in that room said that we had spent only two days in there and that the sun we had seen from the window was produced artificially by a simulation machine and that the clock in the room was regulated specially to work faster, then the calculation we had made would have no meaning.

This example confirms that the information we have about the rate of the passage of time is based on relative references. The relativity of time is a scientific fact proven by scientific methodology as well. Einstein's Theory of General Relativity maintains that the speed of time changes depending on the speed of the object and its position in the gravitational field. As speed

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increases, time is shortened and compressed: it slows down as if coming to the point of “stopping.”

Let us explain this with an example given by Einstein. Imagine twin brothers, one of whom stays on earth while the other goes travelling in space at a speed close to that of light. When the traveller comes back, he will see that his brother has grown much older than he has. The reason is that time flows much more slowly for the person who travels at a speed close to that of light.

This relativity of time is not caused by the deceleration or acceleration of clocks. It is rather the result of the differentiated operation periods of the entire system of material existence, which goes as deep as sub-atomic particles. In such a setting where time is shortened, one’s heartbeats, cell replication, and brain function, etc., all operate more slowly than those of the slower-moving person on earth. Nevertheless, one continues with one’s daily life and does not notice the shortening of time at all.

The conclusion to which we are led by the findings of modern science is that time is not an absolute fact as supposed by materialists, but only a relative perception.

It is possible to see in many verses of the Qur’an the scientifically proven fact that time is a psychological perception dependent on events, the setting, and conditions. For instance, the Qur’an informs us that a person’s entire life is a very short:

On the Day when He will call you, you will respond with His Praise and Obedience, and you will think that you have stayed [in this world] only a little while! (17:52)

And on the Day when He shall gather them together, [it will seem to them] as if they had not tarried [on earth] longer than an hour of a day: they will recognise each other. (10:45)

Some verses indicate that people perceive time differently and that sometimes people can perceive a very short period as a

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very lengthy one. The following conversation in the Qur'an of people held during their judgment in the Hereafter is a good example of this:

He will say: "How many years did you stay on earth?" They will say: "We stayed a day or part of a day, but ask those who keep an account." He will say: "You stayed only a little, if you had only known." (23:112-114)

In other verses God states that time may flow at a different pace in different settings:

Verily a day in the sight of your Lord is like a thousand years of your reckoning. (22:47)

The angels and the spirit ascend to Him in a day, the measure of which is [as] fifty thousand years. (70:4)

He rules [all] affairs from the heavens to the earth: in the end will [all affairs] ascend to Him in a day, the measure of which is a thousand years of what you count. (32:5)

These verses are clear expressions of the relativity of time. That this result, which was not understood by scientists until the twentieth century, was communicated to humankind 1,400 years ago in the Qur'an is an indication of the revelation of the Qur'an by God, Who encompasses the whole of time and space.

Many other verses of the Qur'an reveal that time is a perception. This is particularly evident in the stories. For instance, God kept the Companions of the Cave, a group of believers mentioned in the Qur'an, in a deep sleep for more than three centuries. When they awoke, these people thought that they had stayed in that state only a little while, and could not reckon how long they had slept:

Then We covered their ears for a number of years in the Cave, [so that they could not hear]. Then We roused them

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so that We might know which of the two parties would best calculate the time that they had tarried. (18:11-12)

Such [being their state], We woke them so that they might question each other. Said one of them, "How long have you stayed [here]?" They said, "We have stayed [perhaps] a day, or part of a day." [At length] they [all] said, "Allah [alone] knows best how long you have stayed here." (18:19)

The situation described in the Qur'anic verse below is also evidence that time is in truth a psychological perception.

Or [take] the similitude of one who passed by a hamlet, all in ruins to its roofs. He said, "How shall Allah bring it to life, after its death?" But Allah caused him to die for a hundred years, then raised him [again]. He said: "How long did you tarry [thus]?" He said: "[Perhaps] a day or part of a day." He said: "Nay, you have tarried thus a hundred years; but look at your food and your drink; they show no signs of age; and look at your donkey. And that We may make of you a sign unto the people, look further at the bones, how We bring them together and clothe them with flesh." When this was shown clearly to him, he said: "I know that Allah has power over all things." (2:259)

The above verse clearly emphasizes that God, Who created time, is unbound by it. Human beings, on the other hand, are bound by time, which is ordained by God. As in the verse, people are not even capable of knowing how long they slept. In such a state, to assert that time is absolute [just as materialists, in their distorted thinking, do) is very irrational.

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This relativity of time clears up a very important matter. Relativity is so variable that a period appearing to be of a duration of billions of years to us may last only a second from another perspective. Moreover, an enormous period of time extending from the world's beginning to its end may not even last a second but just an instant in another dimension.

This is the very essence of the concept of destiny--a concept that is not well understood by most people, especially materialists who deny it completely. Destiny is God's perfect knowledge of all events, past or future. Most people question how God can already know events that have not yet been experienced and this leads them to fail in understanding the authenticity of destiny. However, "events not yet experienced" are only so for us. God is not bound by time or space for He Himself has created them. For this reason, past, future, and present are all the same to God; for Him everything has already taken place and is finished.

It is also important to draw attention to the shallowness of the distorted understanding of destiny prevalent in our society. This distorted belief of fate is a superstition that God has determined a "destiny" for every man but that people can sometimes change these destinies. For instance, people make superficial statements about a patient who returns from death's door such as "he defeated his destiny." No one is able to change his destiny. The person who returned from death's door did not die precisely because he was destined not to die at that time. It is, ironically, the destiny of those people who deceive themselves by saying "I defeated my destiny" that they should say so and maintain such a mindset.

That they will say these words, the time they will say these words, as well as the conditions under which they will say these words, have been destined millions of years ago. Similarly, they say

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these words and make such an error on account of the fact that this is what has been destined for them.

God has created everyone with a certain lifetime and everyone's moment of death is determined as to its location, time, and form in the sight of God. If, in the years to come, the lifetime of a person is extended with timely interventions in the genes, this will not mean that this event defeated that person's destiny. Alternatively, if a recently developed treatment cures a person of a fatal disease, this, again, does not mean that this person has changed his destiny. It simply means that God has given this man a long life. The invention of new treatments and the discovery of the gene map, all are his destiny. A person can, by no means, change this moment. All has been determined in the sight of God a millions of years before this person's birth into the world. Owing to these scientific developments, if a person lives for 120 years, this is still the destiny God determined for him some billions of years ago. The mere reason why his life is so long is because he lives the life that God grants to him in his destiny.

That is because destiny is God's perfect knowledge. For God, Who knows all times simultaneously and Who keeps time and space under His control, everything is determined and finished in destiny.

This crystal-clear fact is proclaimed in the Qur'an. Some events not yet experienced for us are referred to in the Qur'an as past events. For instance, in the Qur'an, the account that people will give in the Hereafter is described as an event which already happened:

And the trumpet is blown, and all who are in the heavens and all who are in the earth pass away, save him whom

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Allah wills. Then it is blown a second time, and behold them standing waiting! And the earth shone with the light of her Lord, and the Book is set up, and the prophets and the witnesses are brought, and it is judged between them with truth, and they are not wronged... And those who disbelieve are driven into hell in troops... And those who feared their Lord are driven into Paradise in troops. (39:68-73).

There are several other examples in the Qur'an regarding this subject:

And every soul came, along with it a driver and a witness. (50:21)

And the sinful saw the fire and realized that they were to fall into it: they did not find any means of turning away from it. (18:53)

Occurrences that are going to take place after our death (from our point of view) are related in the Qur'an as past events already experienced. God is not bound by the relative time frame in which we are confined. God has willed these things in timelessness: people have already performed them and all these events have been lived through and are ended. The verse below describes how every event, big or small, is within the knowledge of God and recorded in a book:

In whatever business you may be, and whatever portions you may be reciting from the Qur'an, and whatever deed you [mankind] may be doing, We are witnesses thereof when you are deeply engrossed therein. Nor is hidden from your Lord [so much as] the weight of an atom on the earth or in heaven. And the least and the greatest of these things are recorded in a clear record. (10:61)

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God introduces Himself in His book through His attributes. One of them is al-Hafiz, He Who preserves all things in detail. Behind this attribute, there are very important hidden mysteries.

In the sight of God, everything related to the past, future, and the present has taken place and finished at a moment. Since the beginning of time, everything has taken place at this single moment. In the sight of God, all information pertaining to this moment is kept in a Book. This Main Book, or in the expression of the Qur'an, the Mother of the Book, holds every bit of information about everything.

This issue is explained as follows in the Qur'an:

Every aspect of the unseen, in heaven or earth, is [recorded] in a clear record. (27:75)

In other verses, too, God declares that all the events that people experience, all the thoughts that occur in their minds, and everything that befalls them are included in this Book:

Every misfortune that can happen on earth or in your souls is recorded in a decree before We bring it into existence: That is truly easy for Allah. (57:22)

Everything, animate or inanimate, that has existed and every event that has taken place since the creation of the universe has been created by God. He knows them all. This means that everything is hidden in "God's memory." The Mother of the Book is a manifestation of God's attribute of *al-Hafiz*.

At this point, we arrive at a striking fact: because the memory of God is infinite, nothing existent in Him becomes lost. In other words, no living being created by God vanishes, no flower fades, no drink finishes. God creates every moment and everything is created

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in eternity and is "destined to eternity." What, then, does this phrase
"destined to eternity" mean?

Eternity begins for a being or an event at the time it is created. For instance, when a flower is created, it is, in reality, destined not to disappear. The fact that this being goes out of one's memory actually does not mean that it vanishes. Its state in the sight of God is what actually matters. Furthermore, all states of this being, its creation, all moments throughout its lifetime and death, do exist in the memory of God.

By the time God creates human beings in the wombs of their mothers, eternity begins for them. Of course, people do not recall the stages of their own development in the womb. However, every moment of this progress is present in the sight of God and they never disappear. Similarly, the initial phases and development stages of human beings do not remain in their memory. Only some moments remain as memories. Yet, in the infinite memory of God, everything remains as it is.

Let's take Prophet Adam as an example: all details pertaining to Adam's creation in Paradise, the period before he was sent to earth, the way he was tested in Paradise are all present in the Main Book. Adam's initial creation from clay, the angels' prostration to him, as well as the moment he was expelled from Paradise and sent to earth, and all the events that he experienced are all vivid and existing right now. None of them has disappeared.

Similarly, the moment when Prophet Solomon caressed the legs of his horse remains forever. We may say the same about the disappearance of these horses behind a curtain, the letter that Prophet Solomon sent to Queen Saba, the moment this letter was read by the Queen and her soldiers, how the Queen was welcomed to the palace of Solomon, and the

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words of the Queen in the Qur'an: "I do [now] submit [in Islam], with Solomon, to the Lord of the Worlds " (27:44).

These examples deserve deeper reflection and further details. Assume that in the time of the Prophet Noah, a man's shirt was unstitched and a tailor sewed it after a while. This shirt, the loom on which this shirt was initially woven, the state of the shirt before it was unstitched, and the state in which it was sewed, and even every second the tailor spent in using the needle to sew this shirt; in brief, every stage, every second, every moment in which the shirt was prepared are retained in the sight of God. Right at this moment, this shirt is still being woven, it is still being sewn, and its owner who lived in the time of prophet Noah is still wearing it.

God in the Qur'an draws attention to this great knowledge: "He knows what [appears to His creatures as] before or after or behind them: but they shall not compass it with their knowledge" (20:110). In another verse, God once again reminds us of the fact that everything is within His Knowledge: "From Allah, verily nothing is hidden on earth or in the heavens" (3:5).

In the sight of God, every incident takes place in a single moment. Assume that you have the picture of a big city spread out in front of you: streets, vehicles, and buildings lined up side by side and people are clearly seen in this picture. Let us further imagine that there is also a man trying to reach the other end of this city. From the point of view of this man, there is a certain distance to be covered from one end of this city to another in a definite time. It certainly takes some time for this man to reach his destination. It is unlikely that he can be present at two different places at the same time. Yet, this is not the case for a person like you who looks at this picture from outside. You can see all the details of the city at the first glance, in a single moment. Moreover, you even do not need a specific time to do this.

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This state related in the above example also holds true for people like us confined to a world of three dimensions. For us, reaching a destination becomes possible only by the passing of time and spending some energy. However, for Allah, the Creator of all dimensions, it takes only a single moment for all events to occur. The second important fact is the simultaneity of these events. As stated earlier, in the sight of God, it is not possible to talk about the notion of time; everything takes place and ends in a single instant.

Prophet Adam is being created from clay right at this moment, angels are prostrating to prophet Adam right now; likewise, he is now being removed from Paradise and sent to earth. Furthermore, the “moment” we are talking about is the moment in which you are reading these lines. The moment Mary became pregnant, the moment she gave birth to Jesus Christ under a date palm, the moment she returned to her people, the moment Jesus Christ talked to them while he was still in his cradle, as well as the moment he called people around him to be his apostles and was resurrected by God are all happening right at this moment. Indeed, not only the past events with which we are familiar, but also the ones about which we have no idea because they will happen in the future are, in reality, happening just at this moment. Every second Jesus Christ spent in this world, his communication of the message of God to his disciples, his return to the earth, every speech he delivered to call people to the path of God, his death, and his resurrection on the Day of Judgment as well as the moment when he will be greeted by angels upon his entrance to Heaven are actually happening at this moment.

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All these examples indicate, once again, an important fact: none of the moments, the events, and the living beings, which existed in the past, have ceased to exist and will ever disappear.

Nevertheless, it is essential that this point should be well grasped. None of these occurrences is similar to a memory, reminiscence, or an image. They are all vivid, just like the moment we experience right now. Everything is preserved as it is. We perceive them as incidents of the past simply because God does not present these perceptions to us. However, whenever He wills, it is possible for God to display these images to us, making us believe that we truly experience them.

In the sight of God, all the events which have occurred on earth so far take place at a single moment. What prophets Moses, Abraham, Noah, Solomon, and Muhammad, together with all the other prophets, underwent are experienced in the time in which we actually live. Likewise, experiences of our grandsons, the experiences of their grandsons as well as the experiences of all the people who will live until Judgment Day take place in one and the same moment. Among these people, those who believe are now in Heaven while the disbelievers are in Hell, suffering pain.

The same thing holds true for all events and people which happened and appeared on earth throughout history. Philosophers in ancient Greek, the Sumerian people who invented cuneiform writing, Cleopatra, the Egyptian queen, artists of the renaissance period, scientists of the nineteenth century, dictators of the twentieth century and all the others who went down in history as distinguished persons, even your grandfather, his great grandfather, and you, are in reality living at the same moment.

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None of these events disappears; they remain without changing. The Crusades, the great migration, First and Second World Wars, though seemingly distinct historical events, are actually events happening right at this moment and they will continue to be so for all eternity.

Nothing is left forgotten; God creates all of them for many hidden reasons. Accordingly, nothing disappears, vanishes, or is wasted. The fact that people do not see, know, or experience these occurrences does not mean that they are not happening right now. In the sight of God, timelessness prevails and for Him, everything has already taken place and finished. However, being bound by time, the experiences of an individual appear to be arranged in a series of events which seem to be ordered according to the criterion of the past, the present, and the future. “Events not yet experienced” are not “yet experienced” for us. Past, future, and present are all the same to God. That is why God knows everything. This fact is also stated in the following Qur’anic verse:

“O my son!” [said Luqman], “If there be [only] the weight of a mustard-seed and it were [hidden] in a rock, or [anywhere] in the heavens or on earth, Allah will bring it forth: for Allah understands the finest mysteries, [and] is well acquainted [with them].” (31:16)

The same holds true for you, too. All your experiences and feelings remain just as they were; they are not kept in your memory alone. You are made to perceive the preserved events as a memory or the past.

Believing to be bound by a steady, unvarying time-flow, streaming from the past to the future, people assume that their lives are divided into distinct sections, namely, past, present, and future.

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This actually poses a major hindrance to their grasp of particular events like the existence of the Hereafter, Paradise, and Judgment Day. Simply deprived of comprehension, they cannot relate the concept of time in the sight of God to the concept of time by which people are bound. However, knowing that every created being, event, and all else are created infinitely and brought into being spontaneously frame by frame, just like the pictures making up the roll of a film, will help one to grasp this fact.

Some people hold the superstitious belief that God created the universe, granted human beings a certain lifetime, and left them all alone, not really intervening in their worldly affairs. According to the same distorted belief, while humans are being tested on earth, God awaits their trial, and He will wait until the end of the universe. Yet, this is surely impossible. Waiting is a weakness peculiar to humankind and God is certainly not bound by such weakness. God, the *al-Quddus*, is free from all error, forgetfulness, and incapability and from any kind of defect. God knows the past and future of all people as well as their experiences in detail. Nevertheless, humans suppose the life of this world, which is actually a place in which they are tested, to have a beginning and an end. Yet, the concepts of before and after, past and future are non-existent. Everything, all human beings, all living beings live simultaneously. All times, all ages, all histories, and even all days, hours, and moments take place in one and the same moment. Although human beings fail to grasp this because of their limitations, this fact is evident. God, is the *al-Hasib*, in other words, the One who knows in detail the account of things that people do throughout their lives.

This is why believers can appreciate the might of God, wholeheartedly put their trust in Him, and submit to Him. They are aware of how weak they are in comparison to His might, and they can understand how close God is to them and how they are in need of Him.

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Death is also one of the issues regarding which people have various misconceptions. The majority of people surmise that those who die simply perish. Owing to inadequate information pertaining to the Hereafter, eternal life, Paradise, and Hell, they do not believe that they will be resurrected after death. Most of them entertain vague beliefs regarding death. Accordingly, when they lose a relative, they think he has disappeared for eternity. This is, however, a distorted belief. By the moment one is born into this world, to put in another way, by the time he is brought into this world by God, he starts his endless life. Just like other moments of his life, death is also a moment. Yet, that person is actually alive. The moments preceding and following one's death and everything related to that person is preserved in the sight of God.

Following the death of someone, people mourn and say, "it is unfortunate that he died; he was so young." However, all the details of his life, memories of his childhood, birth, and family still exist. They do not fade or vanish. All that has been experienced is preserved. As a requirement of the test in this world, these memories are simply wiped from his memory; however, this certainly does not mean that they do not exist.

In the sight of God, the birth, life, and death of a man take place and finish simultaneously. The same reasoning applies to all human beings. All human beings are coming into existence and dying right at this moment... All are being resurrected and sent to Paradise or Hell. Thus, no one dies; they are alive for all eternity. Within eternity, people experience some time and, accordingly, everyone's destination is manifest. Right now, some people are in Hell while others are in Paradise. This fact is also stressed in the Qur'an. God draws our attention to the fact that everything takes place in only a single instant:

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Verily the Companions of the Garden that Day have joy in all that they do; they and their associates are in groves of [cool] shade, reclining on Thrones [of dignity]. (36:55-56)

In human life, another important mystery prevails. While mourning for someone who died, people do not consider the fact that they themselves have also died and been resurrected. The birth and death of a person occur simultaneously. All kinds of details about the lives, deaths, resurrections, and the eternal lives of all people are retained in the sight of God. In other words, everything is taking place right at this moment. Death and resurrection are truly not incidents occurring at distinct times.

People are born in timelessness. Likewise, they die in timelessness, they are resurrected in timelessness--just at this moment as a matter of fact--and they are alive. In the moment that God creates a man, he becomes an eternal being. To put it another way, he starts his endless life, to stay alive for all eternity. Meanwhile, he also witnesses his death. Just as he sees himself alive throughout his life, he witnesses his death, but only for once. For this reason, the concept of disappearance people associate with life is out of the question.

Considering these facts, mourning for someone who dies and feeling sorry for his death sounds simply irrational. A young man, a child, or a healthy person who dies, after all, does not perish; they all exist in their best state. In the sight of God, they are alive. This is a clear indication of God's might and knowledge.

That everything is kept in the memory of God reveals another important mystery: by the will of God, tracing an event backwards and reaching its initial moment is possible. Being bound by time,

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people consider “travelling in time” to be a remote possibility. However, in the sight of God, there is no time. As mentioned earlier, the past and future are one and the same moment. Just as it is possible to rewind and re-watch a film, it is also possible to see the past events of one’s life once again, provided that God makes one feel the perceptions related to those events at that moment again.

What has been related so far is definitely not any sort of a philosophy or school of thought, but a scientific outcome that is impossible to deny. In addition to its being a technical reality, the evidence also admits of no other rational and logical alternative on this issue: the universe is an illusory entity with all matter composing it and all creatures living in it. It is a collection of perceptions.

Materialists have a hard time understanding this issue. The subliminal reason is their fear of what they will face when they comprehend it. Lincoln Barnett tells us that some scientists “discerned” this subject. Along with philosophers’ reduction of all objective reality to a shadow-world of perceptions, scientists have become aware of the alarming limitations of human senses.

While the fact that matter and time are perceptions alarms materialists, the opposite holds true for believers. All through one’s life, every speech one makes, every attitude one assumes, every thought occurring in one’s mind at every moment are previously known by God and preserved in the sight of God. The following words of Prophet Jesus as related in the Qur’an reveals that believers are aware of this fact:

And when Allah says, “Isa son of Maryam! Did you say to people, ‘Take me and my mother as gods besides Allah’? He will say, “Glory be to You! It is not for me to say what I have

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no right to say! If I had said it, then You would have known it. You know what is in my self but I do not know what is in Your Self. You are the Knower of all unseen things.” ‘ (5:116)

In addition, a person who behaves in a manner which will displease God or a person who does not observe His limits will not be able to deny any of these misdeeds in the Hereafter. Furthermore, he will see the misdeeds that he had committed. Since nothing disappears or is lost, so are all misdeeds and wrongs kept preserved. That is why disbelievers who transgress the limits of God engage in deeds displeasing to God, or say evil words under the assumption that nobody sees or hears them, will be greatly astonished in the Hereafter. They will themselves see that God is witness over everything. In the Qur’an, God proclaims the following:

He is Allah in the heavens and in the earth. He knows what you keep secret and what you make public and He knows what you earn. (6:3)

In another verse, God informs us that the misdeeds people forget or disregard will surround them all in the Hereafter:

What will confront them from Allah will be something they did not reckon with. What will confront them will be the evil actions, which they earned, and what they used to mock at will engulf them. (39:47-48)

On the Day of Judgment, disbelievers, those displaying hypocrisy about religion, and those revolting against the commandments of God without any hesitation will experience what they had never thought of before. Once God resurrects them, all their secret activities will appear before the very eyes of everyone. Just as stated in the verse, what unbelievers have ridiculed all through their lives will completely surround them in the Hereafter.

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During the time God grants to unbelievers in this world, they have ridiculed the faith believers have in God and the Hereafter, and, being unable to comprehend it, assessed the beliefs of believers as “misconceptions.” To their dismay, however, what they have claimed to be “misconceptions” and thus ridiculed have now caught up with them unexpectedly. This is because they are actually the ones who have gone astray. All the images pertaining to the wicked deeds that they have committed throughout their lives are in the memory of God and, on the Day of Judgment, they will face each one of them. Every time they deny these, however, they will vividly see these events, which are destined to be eternal. This way, they will recognize that God completely surrounds them. God describes the situation of disbelievers as follows: “But Allah is mocking them, and drawing them on, as they wander blindly in their excessive insolence” (2:15).

The violence resorted to by unbelievers in the time of prophet Muhammad and the misdeeds performed by unbelievers in the period of prophets Noah and Abraham are all kept in the sight of God. That prophet Yusuf was thrown to the bottom of the well or that the people of Israel mistreated Moses is by no means forgotten; they all exist in the sight of God. Everything, most probably with all the details that no one has ever witnessed before, are completely preserved. This fact is stressed in the following verse:

They can conceal [their crimes] from people, but they cannot conceal [them] from Allah. He is with them when they plot by night, saying things which are not pleasing to Him. Allah encompasses everything they do. (4:108)

The same thing holds true for those unbelievers living in our day. They assume that the plots they hatch against believers or against religion will remain hidden and they will never face them on the Day of Judgment. The slightest wicked deed and every slander that they utter against believers is in the memory of God. The fact that these images are removed from their memory should not

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deceive them. It may be that they themselves forgot a slander they spread about believers a decade ago. However, all these misdeeds exist in the memory of God. By the Will of God, these incidents might at any time reappear in their memories. Yet, unaware of this fact, by the expression of the Qur'anic verse (5:58): "because they are a people without understanding," unbelievers cannot comprehend the might of God.

Nevertheless, on the Day of Judgment, they will see reality and be afflicted by great shame and regret. The response of prophet Shu`ayb against such an attitude of the leaders of his people draws our attention to the same point; that they are people without understanding:

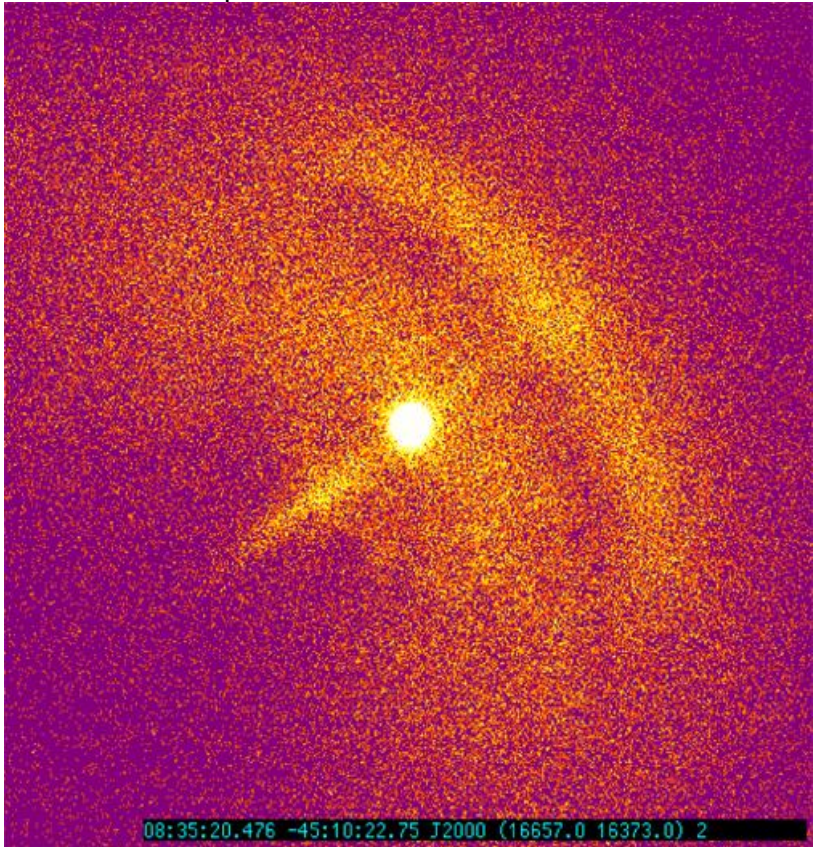
They said, "Shu`ayb, We do not understand much of what you say and we see you are weak among us. Were it not for your clan, we would have stoned you. We do not hold you in high esteem!" He said, "My people! Do you esteem my clan more than you do Allah? You have made Him into something to cast disdainfully behind your backs! But my Lord encompasses everything that you do." (11:91-92)

On the Day of Judgment, all people will be called to give an account of their deeds in this world. This process of judgment will indeed be carried out very quickly. When one comprehends the facts related here fully, it is surely not difficult to conceive that all people will be judged at a single moment. Meanwhile, it is essential that one should not expect this to happen in the future; they are actually happening just at this moment. In other words, right now all the people are giving an account of their misdeeds which they have committed in this world. Unbelievers deem what they do will not be seen or heard. According to them, everything will be forgotten. However, the truth is otherwise: on the Day of Judgment they will be greatly disappointed:

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You thought that Allah would never know much of what you did. It is that thought you had about your Lord that has destroyed you so now you find yourselves among the lost.
(41:22-23)

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<http://www.msfc.nasa.gov/news/photos/photogallery/chandra/chandra5.htm>