

Chapter 1

*Mun O Yazdaan*¹
(Man and God)

The fact that Religion is based upon belief in God can hardly be denied. Every religion demands acknowledgement of the existence of, and belief in, God under various names.² This begs some very important, difficult and sensitive questions that humankind has been asking since the dawn of consciousness: *What/Who is God? What is He like? Why must one believe in Him? What happens if one does not believe in Him? What is the relationship between Man and God?* And so on.

Since the Qur`an, too, bases its system on belief in God, a student of the Qur`an likewise comes up with the same questions and, in view of their importance, the Qur`an supplies elaborate answers to them. However, it is evident that comprehension of such abstract truths depends upon an individual's own capacity of discernment. Hence, I have attempted to present answers to questions such as mentioned above according to my own perception. I hope my readers will

¹As is well known, Urdu (the original language of the work translated) is heavily influenced by Arabic as well as Persian. The author appears to have used Persian for the title of this chapter for poetical reasons: *mun*, literally 'I', the pronoun used for the first person singular to denote an individual, has been used to represent 'man'; *Yazdaan* (pronounced with a nasal 'n') is the name of the 'god of Good' (as against *Abriman*, the 'god of Evil') in the ancient Zoroastrian tradition. Therefore, the title of this chapter should strictly be rendered 'I and God', the *O* being the Persian conjunction 'and'. (Tr.)

²It is true that some religious systems, such as Buddhism, do not believe in God. However, even Buddhists worship the Buddha as a divine entity; thus only the name changes but the concept stays the same.

accord me their undivided attention in an attempt to comprehend what I have to say. I hope it will open new vistas of research into the Qur`an.

A survey of human past all over the Earth reveals a common factor regardless of time and place. It is the concept of a super-human being – benevolent, fearsome, worthy of worship and to be invoked. Tourists in all ages as well as researchers, especially Western, have discovered the notion of such a being even in the most primitive, pre-civilization societies. The well-known Greek historian Plutarch (42-107 AD) writes:³

In wandering over the earth, you can find cities without walls, without science, without rulers, without palaces, without treasures, without money, without gymnasium or theatre, but a city without temples to gods, without prayer, oaths and prophecy, such a city no mortal has yet seen and will never see.

Equally true is the fact that the concept of such a superpower and its details differ from one group to another. Up to recently, a section of Western researchers believed (possibly, some still hold this view) that early man, observing that the causes of natural phenomena (changes in weather, storms, epidemic diseases, etc) were beyond his intellect, came to attribute them to some invisible great powers. That was the birth of the idea of 'God.' Over the years, this rudimentary notion, different in different groups according to their individual circumstances, developed into the concept of God presented by the great world religions today. Grant Allen and James Frazer have treated the theory of the evolution of the idea of God in detail in works such as *The Evolution of the Idea of God* and *The Golden Bough*, respectively. However, later researchers rejected this theory and proposed that the correct idea of God has remained unchanged

³The author does not provide the reference (title, page number, etc) of the book by Plutarch as he has taken the excerpt from *Humanity and Deity* (p. 15) by W M Urban, as given in his English work *Islam, A Challenge to Religion* (note 1, p.53), Tolu-e-Islam Trust, Lahore, Pakistan (May, 1996). The English excerpt given here is also from the same work (p.42). (Tr.)

throughout Man's history with no change whatsoever. A modern historian, Dr Arnold Toynbee writes in *An Historian's Approach to Religion*:

... [Professor] Schmidt's view of the concept of the worship of God by the great religions is nothing new discovered by him; he has based his theory on observations made by him of "common elements in the religions of the most primitive surviving peoples, now scattered in holes and corners at opposite extremities of the inhabited surface of the Earth."⁴

Many consider Professor Schmidt's work *The Origin and Growth of Religion*, the source of the quote presented by Dr Arnold, the best work on the subject in modern times. He states very clearly that 'the concept of a super being found in early human civilizations is the same as presented by monotheistic religions. Therefore, we can be certain that most ancient human groups held the same view. This renders the notion of evolutionary religion totally obsolete in anthropology.' Since the concept of God and its historical development is out of the scope of this work, we now turn to what the Qur`an has to say about this issue.

The Qur`an tells us that God started sending His guidance to Man through Revelation to His prophets at the dawn of human civilization. The focal point of that guidance was the concept of God. It is a given that the concept has remained – and still is – the same throughout because it kept emanating from the same source (Revelation from God). But, as soon as a messenger of God departed from the scene, after having very clearly presented the concept of God, his audience would begin reverting to their old ways of the mundane, driven by their instinct of avoiding pain and seeking pleasure, resulting in re-adopting false, imaginary gods such as Indra, Agnee, the Sun, the Moon, the Ganges, the Yamuna, the snake, the cow, the bull, etc. At that, another messenger would arrive and refresh men's view of God, Man and the Universe: Man is to be bowed to by the Universe, not the other way round; Man has been bestowed with

⁴ *Islam, A Challenge to Religion*, p.47.

the potential of harnessing the forces of Nature; so, his station is to conquer and control the physical universe for his own good, not be frightened of them! The process of Revelation continued till Man's intellect reached maturity and the same concept of God was given to him in its pristine, unadulterated and complete form in the Qur'an and this divine book was made secure and safe from any tampering till eternity. Now, the correct concept of God (narrated by God himself) in its real and original form (untouched by human thought) exists in the Qur'an and nowhere else because no religion of today can claim that the message (book) revealed to their prophet exists in its original form (I have dealt with this subject in detail in my work *Mazaahib e Aalam ki Aasmaani Kitaabein* ['The Scriptures of the Religions of the World']). Therefore, if one is looking for the concept of God that has been presented by God himself, the only source available is the Qur'an. That, precisely, is the purpose of this book you are reading.

The reality of the person of God is not comprehensible by the human mind simply because a finite mind cannot conceive the infinite. God aside, modern scientists and philosophers hold that Time has no beginning and Space is limitless. However, we are incapable of imagining 'beginning-less' Time or 'limitless' Space even if we were to try really hard. Given that, it is impossible for Man to conceive God, the creator of Time and Space.⁵ That is why the Qur'an only discusses *attributes* of God and says nothing about His *person*.

Attributes of God

The unique beauty of the concept of God that the Qur'an

⁵ Time and Space are *abstract* concepts. The limitations of the human mind are not very different even when concerned with *concrete* concepts: we accept the existence of a point despite not being able to imagine something that has no dimensions and does not occupy space but is still visible, which is the geometrical definition of a point.

presents in the light of His attributes is that it is matchless in its pristine purity and totality. In fact, as I will explain later in this work, the very aim and purpose of human life is dependent upon the concept of God. The Western philosopher Kant probably said: 'I will tell you all about a group's civilization if you tell me about their God'. Therefore, if the Quran's concept of God is unique, the aim and purpose of human existence and the proposed means to achieve them (guidance by Revelation) must also be matchless.

Human Life

The point made above about the dependence of Man's individual and collective way of life upon his concept of God is very important and hence worthy of a thorough explanation. On one level, human life is animalistic, a purely material existence whose aim – common with all other animals – is PRESERVATION OF SELF and PROCREATION. This life is physical and ends when death comes to it; this is known as the MATERIALISTIC CONCEPT OF LIFE. However, the Qur`an maintains that human life is not merely physical existence; it also contains human PERSONALITY (also known as SELF or EGO). The Qur`an calls it DIVINE ENERGY (*...and breathed into him of His Spirit* – Qur`an 32:9)⁶ and terms it *nafs*. The human body constantly undergoes change whereas human personality remains unaffected by external changes and is capable of taking the person beyond physical death and attaining immortality if developed appropriately.⁷

⁶ The author translates the Arabic *rooh* as 'energy' in a departure from the more traditional 'spirit' or 'breath' (tr.)

⁷ I have dealt with this subject in detail in several other works, such as *Iblees O Aadam* (Devil and Man), *Insaan ney Kiya Socha* (What Man Thought), *Islam Kiya hai* (What Islam is), *Jabaan e Fardaa* (The Hereafter), etc. In *Insaan ney Kiya Socha* in particular, I have shown with evidence that modern thinkers and scientists are gradually coming closer to the Qur`an's concept of human personality and accepting that death is not necessarily the end of human existence.

Human Personality

When the Qur`an refers to human personality as 'divine energy', it points to an important fact by saying:

1. God has personality as well as Man. However, the human personality is not a part of God's personality because personality is an indivisible unity. Hence, the belief (held by mysticism) that the human personality is destined to eventually merge with the Divine personality – just as a drop of water merges with an ocean – is anti-Qur`anic.
2. Personality always holds the same basic characteristics.
3. Since God's personality is the most complete and superior, so are its characteristics and attributes. The Qur`an terms them *al asmaa al husnaa* - the fairest names (Qur`an 7:180 and others); these are various facets of His personality.
4. Since the human personality is in a nascent state and is subject to limitations in comparison to God's personality, its attributes are also limited. Nonetheless, within those bounds, it possesses all the 'divine' attributes (*al asmaa al husnaa*) except those relating to limitlessness (more of that later in this book).
5. In God, His attributes are present in their ultimate developed form. However, in Man they are present as REALISABLE POSSIBILITIES in a dormant state. The purpose of human existence is to develop the personality in order to manifest that potential into an actualized state.
6. Obviously, a 'lower' personality needs a 'higher' model as standard if it is to develop itself so that it can monitor its progress realistically. Therefore, Man must clearly keep in view God's attributes as model for the development

of his personality. The reason why the Qur`an presents Divine attributes in so much detail and clarity is to ensure that Man unscrupulously adopts them as his model and thus gradually – in the Qur`an's words – gets 'closer' to God by 'adopting His colours.'⁸

7. The development of these attributes in the human personality is surely discernible by others. They are observable in one's behaviour and are known as one's 'character.' According to the Qur`an, good character is the apex of human existence and the only form of spiritualism. Even the Prophet has been referred to as the one possessing high moral character (68:4).
8. Having faith in (being convinced of) God is nothing but to aim at developing one's personality in the light of Divine attributes.
9. As mentioned above, God gives every human being the human personality in an undeveloped form. Every human action in accordance with the Qur`anic programme strengthens one's personality; otherwise, it is weakened (this is the Law of Retribution). Human actions bear results in the earthly life as well as in the Hereafter. Therefore, believing in the human personality means a 'belief' in God, His Law of Retribution, and the Hereafter.

That, then, shows the fundamental relationship between Man and God and that it is essential for one to have a clear concept of Divine attributes in their pristine form. Belief in God surely leads to belief in one's own personality, which raises Man high from his original animalistic level. That is the basic difference between the West's materialistic (mechanical) concept of life and that of the Qur`an.

⁸The Qur`an 2:138: '*Colour from Allah, and who is better than Allah at colouring?*'

The Basic Traits of Personality

Generally, every single attribute of a personality is very important. However, two may be taken as fundamental: freedom and independence. Independence is to be totally self-reliant (it is termed *samadiyya* (112:2) in the Qur'an; freedom (*hurriyya*) is to possess free will and choice. God, who is the most complete personality, has these attributes in the extreme: He is INDEPENDENT (2:267) as well as FREE (11:107). *Samadiyya* comes later, but as far as *hurriyya* is concerned, God possesses absolute and limitless power. However, He has some self-imposed limitations. For example, '[God] has prescribed for Himself provision of sustenance [to all in the Universe]' (6:12). A forced limitation is akin to slavery while a self-imposed restriction is to follow a principle.

Significantly, God's self-imposed limitations mean that He does not behave like an absolute dictator but acts according to certain rules and regulations. In other words, God 'reacts' according to a given situation and action (God's 'reaction' is very different from a human reaction as the latter is mostly driven by emotions while the former is not because God is devoid of emotions). God's reactions to particular actions are 'Divine Laws', which are immutable because God's attributes are unchanging: 'There is no changing the Words of Allah' (10:64); 'Thou wilt not find for Allah's way of treatment any substitute, nor wilt thou find for Allah's way of treatment aught of power to change' (35:43). Thus, the Universe operates under permanent laws. The Qur'an emphasises study of Nature and observation of the Universe; it is termed 'coming face to face with God': '*the meeting with your Lord.*' (13:2). It means study of Nature reveals to Man the operative principles of the Universe. The Qur'an declares studying and observing Nature a means to belief in God (I have dealt with this point in detail in chapter 'Man and the Outer Universe' in my work *What is Islam*).

Man and Obedience To Law

The external universe follows divine laws willy-nilly and has no option but to 'bow in obedience to God's Law': '*And unto Allah falleth prostrate whosoever is in the heavens and the earth*' (13:15). On the other hand, Man is not forced to follow God's Law because he is endowed with a personality/self, the basic attribute of which is freedom of choice. He has the option of rejecting it: 'Then whosoever will, let him believe, and whosoever will, let him disbelieve' (18:29). Whoever follows the divine laws, his self will develop; otherwise, it will remain undeveloped: '*He is indeed successful who causeth it to grow, and he is indeed a failure who stunteth it*' (91:9, 10). This brings us to the following important conclusions:

1. Obedience to divine laws is not externally forced. It is self-imposed. That is why the Qur`an terms it *ita`a* which is to do something voluntarily without any duress. This causes the human faculty of freedom of choice to grow: '*God does not impose on self but to cause it to expand*' (2:286).
2. Since divine laws reflect God's attributes, obedience to them is to achieve the goal of the ultimate standard of the human personality. In other words, the desire and attempt to take on the divine hue is nothing more than developing one's own self.
3. On the one hand, obedience to these laws affirms the human self and Man realizes that he is best of all in the Universe. On the other hand, Man recognizes the limitations of his self as compared to the divine [in prayer, *qayaam* (the standing posture) is the practical expression of the affirmation of the human self, while *rukoo`* (bowing) and *sajda* (prostration) are that of the realization of the human self's limitations as compared to the divine self].
4. There is nothing comparable to Man in the Universe

because he is the only creature possessing a 'personality.' The Western materialistic mind sees Man just as a material product, while a Qur`anist finds himself unique in the Universe. His companion can only be someone possessing a 'self.' That is, on an equal footing, a man can be a colleague of another man. At a higher level, Man can be a colleague of God. That is why the Prophet (pbuh) termed God 'the superior colleague.'

God's Colleague

The notion of co-working with God leads us to another important aspect. In the outer universe (external to man), natural laws produce discernible results, some rapidly and some others slowly. For example, a seed eventually transforms itself into a full-grown tree within our lifetime. However, some natural processes, such as the evolution of the first life cell into a human being took billions of years. At the same time, we also notice that co-operation of Man and Nature not only greatly reduces the time taken for natural processes but also enhances their beauty and utility. For example, a plant that normally produces single-colour blossoms in about 6 months can bloom with multicoloured flowers in a day under controlled conditions in a European laboratory.

The same situation holds true in Man's social world. For instance, we find the following in the Qur`an: '*Nay, but We hurl the true against the false, and it doth break its head and lo! it vanisheth*' (21:18). The Universe is the battleground for an ongoing clash between Right and Wrong in which Right always comes out victorious. In other words, constructive forces eventually triumph over destructive ones in the process of the evolution of the Universe. This law of Nature, at its own pace, takes very long periods of time; as stated in the Qur`an, God's 'one day' equals a thousand (22:74) and/or 50,000 years (70:4) by our reckoning. However, with Man's help, this can be achieved in

days rather than in millennia. Only men who are convinced of the reality of divine laws, however, perform this co-working; they constantly strive to develop their personality under those laws [in Qur`anic terms, it is *eeman* (conviction) and *a`maal saaleh* (fruitful deeds). Such men are called *hizb Allah* [God's group, or *momeneen* (the Convinced)]. They create a society in which natural laws bear results in the shortest possible time and consequently the individuals therein keep developing.

The Individual and Society

The Qur`an clearly states that the development of 'self' can only be achieved within a collective existence of a Qur`anic society: '*Enter thou among My bondmen! Enter thou My Garden!*' (80: 29, 30). One must enter the companionship of 'the truthful': '*... be with the truthful*' (9:119). That is the reason the Qur`an declares monasticism an undesirable human invention (57:27); it is totally against God's suggested *deen* (Way of Life) which can be established only in a social set-up simply because it provides principles of a communal living. An individual, retreating into the wilderness away from fellow human beings, does not need any system of life. Hence, his personality/self cannot develop; in fact, such a person just cannot exist at human level. Therefore, *deen* demands collective existence because that is the only way to develop an individual's personality.

Nationhood

When two individuals agree on a common goal in life as well lifestyle, there experience harmony of thought and desires between them. The Qur`an considers this commonality of aim and methodology the basis of 'grouping.' That is, two individuals, who regardless of colour, ethnicity, language or birthplace, adopt divine attributes as the standard for the development of their personalities become members of the

same group/nation. That is the Qur`anic standard of nationhood. Unity of men resulting from ideology is more firm and permanent than one resulting from other common factors. If such unity spreads all over the world, humankind will become a global fraternity. In other words, God's oneness (adopting divine attributes as standard) invariably results in unity of Man. No other standard can achieve this goal. The Qur`an aims at uniting all mankind into one brotherhood by adopting the oneness of God practically in their lives so that it gets rid of all the disputes that have turned the world into a den of beasts.

Eemaan in God⁹

Deliberations above should make clear the concepts of God and having belief in Him according to the Qur`an. It should also be clear by now why the Qur`an insists that men believe in God in the way that it prescribes. Apart from some atheists, every individual, tribe or group believe in God in one way or another. However, according to the Qur`an, such belief is not believing in the 'real' God; rather, it is a belief in a fabricated concept of God. For instance, imagine that someone believes gold to be good, white, brittle, and corrodible metal that is used in making aeroplanes because it is the lightest metal in existence. They actually deny the existence of (real) gold. A genuine believer in gold is one who accepts its real, actual characteristics. Similarly, someone who 'believes' in God without the correct concept of His attributes, actually denies His existence. Therefore, a genuine belief in God is one that comes with His attributes

⁹The Arabic word *eemaan* is normally translated in English as 'faith' or 'belief.' However, according to the writer, these terms do not accurately reflect the Qur`anic concept of the original. The basic 3-letter root, of which *eemaan* is a derivative, is A-M-N (*alif-meem-noon*) that carries the basic meaning of 'peace, fearlessness, a feeling of security.' Hence, *eemaan* is a state that gives a feeling of being at peace resulting from surety and being certain. Therefore, the English word 'conviction' is the best representation of it. (tr.)

described in the Qur`an only and nowhere else.

Characteristics of Qur`anic Eemaan

Not only that the genuine concept of God is available only in the Qur`an, but also the relationship between Man and God that it presents is exclusive to it. We read in the Qur`an that:

1. God dominates and controls the entire Universe according to immutable laws formulated by Him. In other words, the Universe operates under fixed and permanent laws. Those laws are also in operation in the human world. It means that every human action invariably produces an unchanging result. While very individual is free to choose an action, one cannot expect a result other than the predetermined outcome of that particular action.
2. Apart from the attributes of God regarding His Infinite Divinity (for instance, nobody bore Him nor did he come into existence out of non-existence), Man's personality possesses all the attributes of God save in limited and un-developed form. They can be developed only if Man keeps in view God's attributes as standard. That is the basic Man-God relationship. Obeying God's laws is not slavishly following a tyrannical dictator's edicts but it is acting on the directives that cause the development of human personality.

That is why the Qur`n says: '*Now We have revealed unto you a Scripture wherein is **your** Reminder*' (21:10 - emphasis added).

3. As the human personality develops, Man becomes a partner in God's creative plans, making them colleagues of one another with God being the senior party. Such a Man-God relationship exists only in the Qur`an. Oriental religions claim that Man is under divine

obligation to worship God, incurring His wrath if he does not; to please God, Man must make offerings to Him or try to have a recommendation made on his behalf by someone 'close' to Him; pleasure of God brings prosperity, His displeasure invites problems.

On the contrary, the Occidental view is that God is concerned only with the extra-human universe that operates according to laws of Nature. Man should study and apply those laws to harness Nature to his benefit. In the social world, Man must rely on his own intellect to deal with life since no permanent principles or laws exist there.

Another concept of Man-God relationship comes from those who believe in 'spiritualism.' They claim to have a direct link with God wherein they converse and meet with Him to get people's supplications answered obtain news of 'the hidden.'

This concept, too, is contrary to Qur`anic teachings. God comprehensively gave all the information to Man that He wanted to through His last book (the Qur`an); now, the only link of Man with God is through following His Book.

It should be clear now why the Qur`an has this to say even about 'worshippers of God':

'And if they believe in the like of that which ye believe, then are they rightly guided...' (2:137). That is, as long as they nurse their own brand of belief, they are not deemed 'believers' in the Qur`anic sense. It is important to note that 'believing' in God practically manifests in following His laws. Those who profess belief in God but practically follow someone else are not classed as 'believers': *'If any do fail to judge by (the light of) what Allah hath revealed, they are (no better than) Unbelievers'* (5:44).

Beautiful Names (exquisite attributes – *asmaa`al-busna*)

The Qur`an not only mentions attributes of God in general but also points to a significant fact by using for them the term *asmaa`al-busna* (literally, 'the beautiful names'). *Husna* is a derivative of *busn* – the right proportion – that is of prime importance for beauty. Some historians have rightly observed: 'History would have been different if Cleopatra had a slightly flattened nose.' Thus, *asmaa`al-busna* means that Divine Attributes are not only most complete and prime but also exist in optimum proportion. Really, characteristics produce positive and constructive results only if they exist in their right proportion. No medical prescription will be effective if its constituent ingredients are out of their proportions. For instance, water in its right amount is a life-giving resource but can kill otherwise (such as drowning). Similarly, arsenic is a killer but saves and fortifies lives if administered in the right amount. The physical universe apart, the same situation holds in morality. Civility is a noble characteristic that, if grows out of its right proportion, can become spineless complacency. Forgiveness is commendable but too much of it can be classed as timidity. Spending money – an essential activity – becomes extravagance or miserliness if it is too much or too little, respectively. Therefore, characteristics/attributes yield pleasant outcome only when they are in the right proportion. In other words, *asmaa`al-busna* are essential for obtaining the desired results.

Apparently Contradictory Characteristics

Just as the person of God contains *asmaa`al-busna*, the human personality must develop a balance in its characteristics. The Qur`an focuses on this point and explains it at length: God is said to be the giver of life as well as death (23:80); He '*will strongly enforce the Punishment*' (2:165), but is also '*Of-Returning Most*

Merciful (2:160). The apparent contradictions are removed when one remembers that water can be a life-giver as well as a killer. Christianity could not see this point and declared that God is Mercy and hence salvation depends only on God's grace not on human acts. On the other hand, Hinduism came up with the *karmyog* philosophy that says a misdeed, however small, can never escape punishment (this notion is the basis of the theory of Reincarnation). The Qur`an, refuting both the above notions, declares that (for instance):

1. Arsenic is beneficial if taken in the right amount.
2. It becomes harmful when it is out of proportion even in the slightest.
3. It becomes a killer if it is out of proportion beyond a certain limit.

Stage 3 in the above corresponds to 'strong enforcer of Punishment', i.e. destructive, in the scheme of the Law of retribution. However, stage 2 above shows that harmfulness of arsenic can be alleviated through appropriate action. The Qur`an terms it *tawwabiyyat* (Returning); in 11:114, it says: '...for those things that are good remove those that are evil...' Good deeds remove the harm done by bad ones; in Qur`anic terms, it is known as *afv*.

Later on in this work, I shall discuss Divine Attributes in detail. Here, I have summarised them to emphasise

- a. The true concept of Divine Attributes that appear contradictory to each other
- b. The importance of *asmaa* (attributes) being *busna* (in the best proportion)
- c. The human personality that reflects these attributes in their best proportion is 'balanced'
- d. The logical conclusion that individuals with *balanced* personalities will constitute a society that provides an ideal environment of peace and tranquillity.

I will also show how such details – not available anywhere

outside the Qur`an – can determine Ethical Values that can easily remove the constant tussle between Good and Evil that has so confused human thought up to the present age (more of it a little later).

Infinite Attributes of God

It is important to know, however, that the true concept of certain Divine Attributes is beyond human comprehension (for instance, the reality of the person of God). For example, '*He is the First and the Last...*' (57:3). As mentioned earlier, our (human) brains simply cannot conceive a Time that has no beginning or end; we just have to accept the idea in a simpler form – 'God existed when there was nothing and will still exist when there will be nothing' – which is all the Qur`an demands.

Permanent Values

Apart from a few such exceptions, the rest of the Divine Attributes can be termed ETHICAL ATTRIBUTES such as providence, sustenance, compassion, etc. Another term for these attributes is PERMANENT VALUES. These are immensely important in the Qur`anic code of life; in fact, they form the very basis of the Qur`anic System, *ad-Deen*.

However, it raises a question. Why does Man need permanent values at all? Should he not resolve matters according to his own intellect? Granted that human intellect distinguishes Man from the rest of the animal world and the Qur`an attaches great importance to it: people who do not employ their intellect are ... '*the worst of beasts...*' (8:22) and ... '*urged unto hell...*' (7:179). By applying his intellect, Man can study Nature, harness its forces and become worthy of 'worship by angels.'

Battle of Wits

However, while human intellect can be so beneficial to men in the realm of the 'external' Universe, it behaves very oddly when it comes to the social arena. Here, the human intellect causes mutual conflicts and tension. For instance, scientists carry on their research work on nuclear energy very cooperatively, but politicians start bickering over its use, culminating in war and thus the harnessed forces of Nature become the tool of destruction instead of being used for universal human benefit. The simple explanation for such anomalies is that human intellect is intrinsically selfish. Thus, when there is a clash of interests between various human groups, a battle of wits ensues. In other words, pursuit of gain and avoidance of loss are basic human instincts of Man at the animalistic level. Human intellect serves human emotions. For instance, when we see a beautiful painting at somebody's place, we like to take it for ourselves (our emotions are at work) but the owner does not wish to part with it (*his* emotions are at work, too). Our respective emotions create a clash of interests that our respective intellects endeavour to turn into their owner's favour. A battle of wits begins and the sharper intellect comes out the winner. This is chaos. It means that human intellect follows human emotions just as a dog follows its nose.¹⁰

Decisions According To Laws

Human society formulates certain rules and regulation (laws) to deal with clashes of interests that are applicable to all members equally. Practically, that means that the individuals in a society agree to resolve conflicts according to those laws instead of their personal desires and intellect; someone disregarding

¹⁰ I have discussed these points in detail in some of my other works such as *Iblees O Aadam* (Devil and Man), *Insaan ney Kiya Socha* (What Man Thought), *Islam Kiya hai* (What Islam is).

such social laws is forced to accept them. Obviously, such laws are of tremendous importance for Man's civic existence. It is desirable that i) such laws must be formulated in utter disregard of emotions of a particular individual, group or nation and ii) they must be immutable.

Immutable Laws

The Qur`an claims that human intellect is simply incapable of formulating such laws because it just cannot detach itself from emotions in social matters. Therefore, these laws must come from a source that rises above human emotions and considers *all* men equal. The only such source is God.

Permanent Values are the immutable rules and regulations that God has provided for humanity so that they can resolve their issues accordingly. Human societies of various eras can make changes in sub-laws of these eternal principles according to their respective changing circumstances but will not have the authority to change or amend those basic, permanent laws and principles.

Understanding Qur`anic Laws

The fact that human intellect is incapable of formulating such immutable laws (permanent values) does not mean that Man is also incapable of understanding and intellectually appreciating their reality and truth. He certainly can. However, to realize and appreciate their truthfulness Man must study them *objectively* just as a scientist studies Nature regardless of their own emotions and inclinations. The Qur`an has suggested the test to ascertain the truthfulness of its claims thus:

'Nay, but they denied that, the knowledge whereof they could not compass, and whereof the interpretation (in events) hath not yet come unto them. Even so did those before them deny. Then see what was the consequence for the wrong-doers!' (10:39)

The verse is making three important points. Firstly, people who refute Qur`anic claims do so without trying to comprehend its stance based on knowledge: '*Did ye deny My revelations when ye could not compass them in knowledge*' (27:84). That means, in order to comprehend the Qur`an, one must ponder upon it in the background of human knowledge of the time. Secondly, a reader of the Qur`an must also be familiar with history (human past) to draw principles of human actions and their consequences. Thirdly, there is the pragmatic test; that is, human society be organised based on the Qur`anic philosophy to see if it works. However, as mentioned earlier, there is one condition if the Qur`anic truth is to be accessed: one must ponder over the Qur`an completely detached from human emotions and sentiments: '*And who goeth farther astray than he who followeth his lust without guidance from Allah?*' (28:50).

The Problem of Good and Evil

The discussion above also brings us to the fact that permanent values (immutable laws), that should become the foundation of human societies, are actually based upon Divine Attributes. As stated earlier, the true concept of Divine Attributes and their Qur`anic concept of being *asmaa`al-busna* automatically resolves the most complicated problem of Good and Evil. Briefly stated, an act that causes the growth, strength and integration of human personality is good. Obviously, such acts have to be in accordance with permanent values (Divine Attributes). On the other hand, an act that causes weakness and disintegration of human personality is evil. That is the standard of Good and Evil in this life.

Comprehensiveness of Divine Attributes

Our discussion thus far should establish that no facet of the Outer (external to Man) as well as the Inner (the human world)

that is disconnected with Divine Attributes. Individual, as well as collective human existence, is only truly formulated on the pattern of Divine Attributes. These attributes are the yardstick for the growth of an individual's personality. They also help formulate the permanent principles that can create paradisiacal human societies. They guarantee present and future human prosperity. They alone can lift Man from animalistic level to the human.

How important is the true concept of Divine Attributes to human life is obvious. That is why the Qur`an has so strongly emphasised *eemaan b Allah* [Faith (Trust) in God] which is pivotal to human existence and tenure on Earth. No wonder that the Qur`an deals in great detail with Divine Attributes and since this is unique to the Qur`an (exclusive of all other belief systems), there is now no need for another divine book or messenger.

What follows in this work is the Qur`anic concept of Divine Attributes.