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THE FINAL
COLLAPSE

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The Final Collapse

The article is a chapter of the Journey of the Universe by Shaykh Fadhlalla Haeri, available from Zahra Publications in the summer of 1985.

The Qur'an describes the end of this creation as a catastrophic event, a day of great noise or cacophony, when mountains will float away and everything will collapse upon itself. The physicality of creation will disintegrate and vanish into nothingness. The orbital courses of the sun, moon and stars will be disrupted so that they will all be brought together. The end of the physical expanding universe is the beginning of disintegration and collapse.

And the mountains shall be moved off so that they shall remain a mere semblance.

(an-Naba:20)

The verbal root of *sarab* (semblance, mirage) is to flow or leak, and in one form means to slink away, or to glide along. The closer you get to the mirage, the more it disappears. The more you try to find it, to unify with it, the farther it is from you. One great master says: *hadhihi-d-dunya sarab*, "(the whole of) this world is a mirage." It will never nourish you. You may think it is all about getting this situation fixed up, this house, that job, this freedom; but when you reach your goal you realize that it is not what you had expected it to be.

The mountains will, in time, revert to their original components. They will disintegrate from solid mass into dust, and the dust will become gas, and finally everything will disappear as if one were seeing a film of creation in reverse. The way that creation first occurred from the explosion of dense matter will be repeated in reverse at the end of time.

We experience an echo of that in our own lifetime, for after reaching maturity we begin to decline, as though back into childhood. After the cosmos matures, it will also decline; reverting in time, it will become a mirage and recede as it came forth.

When the sun is covered, And when the stars darken,

(at-Takwir:1-2)

The verbal root of the word *kuwwirat* (is covered) is to roll or wrap something up, to make it into a round bundle; from it is derived the word for ball, *kurah*. It indicates that the sun is no longer a spherical expanse, bubbling with explosions, but will collapse upon and consume itself.

Kadura, the root of *inkadarat* (darken) is to be gloomy, muddy or grimy. The word implies uncleanness, ill health and depression. The stars are depressed and darkened, that is to say, they no longer function as they used to.

And when the mountains are set in motion,

(at-Takwir:3)

Even the mountains are moved along. Although they appeared solid – though even now they are not solid for they are always moving – they will have their movement enhanced to the point of collapse, and therefore, will disappear.

And when the camels are left untended,

(at-Takwir:4)

Ishar are she-camels when ten months pregnant: they symbolize the main capital the Arabs had. *Uttilat* (left untended) means that these prized possessions of the Arabs will be neglected and left alone. When the earth comes to an end you will no longer tend to what was of value to you before. That former system of ecology will have ceased to function.

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And when the wild animals are herded together,

(at-Takwir:5)

Wuhush are wild animals, and wild animals do not normally want to be collected together. This indicates that the former patterns of life no longer hold. What were once roaming wild, scattering as wild beasts do, are now gathered. At this state another mechanism is at work. Mulla Sadra, may Allah have mercy upon him, said, in reference to the *ayah*, that it referred to human beings, for the beasts in us are shown clearly on that day.

Another great shaykh once said that if you looked inside most people, you would find either asses, dogs or wolves. Every one of us has predominating animal *nafs* (lower self). All the other animals are there too, but one of them predominates. Do not think these animals exist only outside of you. Great movements of the pre-Islamic period often based their teachings on overcoming the dog or the pig in oneself. You can still find pictures of chariots drawn by a dog and a pig – wallowing in one's filth and thriving on it are the characteristics of the lower *nafs*.

And when the seas are set on fire,

(at-Takwir:6)

Two opposites, fire and water, will be brought together. One can imagine the fire to be volcanoes erupting from the sea. This *ayah*, like many others, emphasizes the fact that our present natural ecosystems will cease to function according to the laws of creation as we have known them. Fire and water, once the enemies of each other, are brought together and unified in a blaze.

And when the souls are united,

(at-Takwir:7)

There are several interpretations of this *ayah*: You are neutralized by your opposite; your soul and *nafs* are united; your body and *ruh* (spirit, soul) are united; or you are paired accordingly with other souls. Whatever the interpretation, the implication is that after the dispersion and duality of this life, unification is brought about. Each soul is reunited with its source.

And when the female infant buried alive is asked for what sin she was killed, and when the books (of men's deeds) are spread, and when the heaven has its covering removed, and when the hell is fiercely kindled up, and when the garden is brought near, every soul shall (then) know what it has put forward.

(at-Takwir:8-14)

These *ayat* are about the majority of people who are in doubt. Most of us lack *'ilm al-yaqin*, the knowledge of certainty that everything is already done



and written in the book. On the micro level the book will unfold in our lives, and on the macro level, in the journey of the universe.

On that day of resurrection everything will be resurrected. The burying of female infants was a cultural habit of the Arabs and other peoples before the advent of Islam. This was done for various reasons, one being fear of provision, another was fear of dishonor by the female. By interfering with nature, with the highest of creation – which is man and his offspring – one is playing God. People who do such things do not see themselves in this life being judged by the Creator, so they take on the role of the Creator, the Giver and Taker of Life, into their own hands. If they accept that the purpose of creation is to single-pointedly go through trials and tribulations in a state of worship and acceptance of what is in front of them, doing their best, they will cease to act unjustly.

Elsewhere in the Qur'an it says: *Yawma tashhadu 'alayhim 'alsinatuhum wa aydihim wa arjuluhum bi-ma kanu ya'malun*; "On the day when their tongues and their hands and their feet shall bear witness against them as to what they did" (*an-Nur:28*). Man's every action and intention will leave its trace somewhere. They are the witnesses; witnesses are not in the form of people coming up to the witness stand to testify. In this existence energies can only manifest in a form. In the next experience it is the reverse. Nothing will escape, everything will be brought forth. Here we can say it is unimportant, but we cannot really tell because the value system behind the coming judgement is based on another system, on ultimate justice, truthfulness and honesty.

And when the trumpet is blown with a single blast, and the earth and the mountains are borne away and crushed with a single crushing. On that day shall the great event come to pass, and the heavens shall cleave asunder, so that on that day it shall be frail.

(al-Haqqah:13-16)

Just as the acceleration of creation was so fast and explosive to begin with, so too will the coming of the end be rapidly hastened on. The heavens will just crack. The mountains will explode and drift away like tufts of cotton. Everything as we know it will just collapse, as though reverting backward in time, returning to the eternal void.

This scenario is one with which we cannot be familiar. We cannot imagine it in its magnitude for it is a unique event. All the natural laws and forces we know of, seem to be ineffectual and out of order when the new phase of existence sets in.

So when the sight becomes dazed,

(al-Qiyamah:7)

Barq is lightning or flashes of light. *Al-Buraq* was the name of the horse on which the Prophet Muhammad made his ascension into the seven heavens. The name, *al-Buraq*, is from *barq*. It implies that the horse moved faster than light. The Prophet's journey was completed in an instant, and an instant is beyond time.

The end will likewise come in a flash because it is closer in nature to timelessness. Timelessness was the state that existed before creation; from it rose creation and the experience of time. When the end comes living beings will be dazed by the instantaneous transformation.

And the moon becomes dark, and the sun and the moon are brought together,

(al-Qiyamah:8-9)

As creation expanded outwardly, it will collapse on itself. *Khasafa* is to sink down, to disappear, to give way. *Khusuf* is a lunar eclipse. The moon collapsing means it is no longer what it was during the time in which it used to reflect the light of the sun. Its usual pattern of existence is destroyed.

Just as it was before creation when the sun and moon were in oneness, so they will once again reunite, because the end is the day of gathering – *yawm al-hashr*. What appears to be in dispersion now is, in reality, in gatheredness. In this existence there is an apparent dispersion which arises from the confusion of duality. When this experience of the cosmos comes to an end, creation will collapse back into its oneness.

Man shall say on that day: Whither to flee to? By no means! There shall be no place of refuge! With your Lord alone shall on that day be the place of rest.

(al-Qiyamah:10-12)

On that day each individual will be confronted with the truth of what he had thought to be his own separate existence. He had thought that there existed a me and a you, a him and Allah. But now, on this day, everything is in gatheredness; separation no longer exists. The bewilderment is so engulfing that every self will only be concerned with its own reality.

The final resting place is with your Lord, your Sustainer, Who has brought this creation to its fullness and now to its greater fullness in another guise. *Mustaqarr*, resting place, is derived from *qarra*, to settle, and also, to decide, to make a statement. There is no longer the possibility of confused questioning as to "why?" or as to the apparent duality of this existence.

Man shall on that day be informed of what he sent before and (what he) put off.

(al-Qiyamah:13)

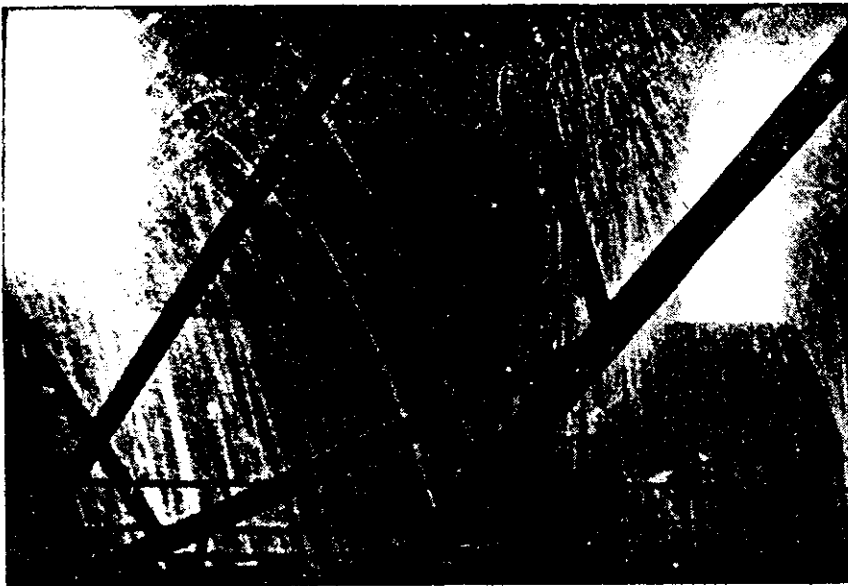
To inform, *naba'a*, is the job of the *nabiyy*, the one who gives the news, the Prophet. It is he who tells us now of what is going to happen, when each of us will know what he has put into his life and what he has postponed, when he will truly come to know himself. That is why we say he who knows himself now, knows his Lord.

We are informed that the way towards knowledge of the self is through recognition of the lower self. That recognition itself will adjust your turning more towards the higher self, and you will then begin to experience higher consciousness. You will have a clearer understanding of events that occur outside of you and of happenings that occur inside of you, as well as the relationship between the two. You will be closer to the knowledge of *tawhid*.

Nay! Man is evidence against himself, though he puts forth his excuses.

(al-Qiyamah:14-15)

At all times man is a witness of himself. He has the capacity of witnessing because he has within him the light of consciousness, even though he may constantly give excuses. If he could see why he does it, that perception will actually sharpen the light of his consciousness. If he could only admit that he is avoiding the truth because of his selfish habits – if he could just say, "I have to have my coffee, I'm used to it and I'm enslaved by the habit" – there is a chance of him being cured. Otherwise, he will constantly defend himself and continue with the excuses of the *nafs*.



Therefore keep watch for the day when the heaven shall bring forth an evident smoke that shall overtake men; this is a painful punishment.

(ad-Dukhan:10-11)

Dukhan in Arabic is vapor or smoke. For those who deny the truth that this existence is only a temporary one, the Qur'an says to wait until the day comes when smoke will be evident. The entire creation will go up in smoke and this existence will revert to its plasmic, primordial state. After the big collapse that solidity, that certainty, that physicality, will return in time to its most vaporous state.

On the day when the heaven shall be as molten copper, and the mountains shall be as tufts of wool; and friend shall not ask of friend.

(al-Ma'arij:8-10)

On that day the heaven and the mountains will regress from their solidity into fluidity and beyond – they will become mirages. That, in fact, is the reality of their present state, but by the faculty of *khayal* (imagination) we think they are solid. That is why the more we scientifically penetrate that solidity, the more we find that there are no building blocks as such, only dynamism. Dynamism is the trick of time.

Solidity is like *shari'ah* (Islamic code of outer behavior). From there we have to move towards its counterpart, *haqiqah* (inner truth). You cannot move inwardly unless you are polished outwardly. If you start purifying your

outermost, your clothes, your skin, your food and so on, you will finally come to your innermost. But in our mad culture we stop half-way. We only tend to the outer cosmetics, caring little about what is inside. Everything is based on appearance. As long as the house looks nice and there is a floodlight and a bit of fancy grass around it, it is acceptable. That is our reality. We have beautiful highways and picnic grounds, but if you could just peek into the hearts of those who are picnicking then you would see something else. You would find that the outer grooming does not continue towards the inner. It stops short. Had it continued, then it would have reached deep inside and would have unified – *tawhid*.

Start with the outer and end up with the inner. If you begin with *shari'ah* and move on rather than stop, you will arrive at *haqiqah*. And if you begin with *haqiqah*, rebelling against everything, you will end up in *shari'ah*. You will find that you have to constrict yourself, in order to be able to interact correctly and share what you thereby gain with others. If there is no outer containment how can a community grow? How can there be interaction? How can there be Madinah?

Hamim is an intimate friend, the root of which is *hama*, to heat or warm up. Friendship means being warm with each other. *Hamam*, bath, is from the same root; and the traditional baths of the east were always warm. The implication is that unification comes about when there is fusion, and you can fuse two things together only when you warm them. You cannot connect their different elements unless you put them in a pot and heat them up. This is about alchemy. Heat makes the molecules more mobile so they can intermingle – that is friendship.

Surely hell lies in wait, a place of return for the transgressors.

(an-Naba':21-22)

The next occurrence is the resurrection. With the resurrection there is *jannah* (gardens of paradise) and *jahannam* (hell), and between them there will be a clear division.

Jahannam, the bottomless pit, is the place of return for the *taghin*, the transgressors, which they themselves were already digging during this life. If you dig a grave for others – plotting against them and planning their downfall – it will become your grave, your own plot. Since everything is in *tawhid* (divine unity), you are the culmination of your actions, which, by inevitable extension, means that you are as good as your intentions. There is no separation.

Requital corresponding to their sins.

(an-Naba':26)

Wifaq (corresponding) is from *wafaqa*, to be suitable, appropriate or consistent. The word implies harmony, although in this world we may not see the harmonious reward of the transgressors. Throughout the ages, and also in the Qur'an, we find some prophets wondering why the transgressors live so well. The answer of Truth is that they are already in the fire, even though they may imagine it to be otherwise; and that is where they will be, both here and in the next life.

But this is not only about the next life. If you have wisdom and discrimination and you see someone overwhelming himself with luxuries and excess, you know what the result will be. He will become completely enslaved by what he is doing. Hundreds of people will come to him, like bees to honey, because he has the goods. Everybody wants him, everybody loves him. With the eyes of wisdom you can see at once that he is heading for trouble. Once there is the "I," arrogance rises, and you are with *shaytan*. Allah's mercy upon you is to show you the fire here and now. If you are close to nature, to Reality, you will begin to suffer from it now. The taste of the fire is Allah's mercy upon you so that you will turn away from bad action and question both your actions and intentions. In this manner you are returned to safety.

In the new life the energy wavebands or entities that took on physical forms in this life will all manifest without their physical shells. Their manifestation will, however, be colored by their actions in this experience on earth. The Qur'an describes people as *suhufan munashsharah*, open books. The alphabet of man's character is no longer hidden; the purity or impurity of his heart will be evident. He will not be able to conceal it behind a smile or behind the facade of immaculate dress.

On the Day of Judgement everything will be just. At the end of each day in this life you are precisely the direct result of what you made of yourself. In the next life the reality behind the facade will be evident. People will recognize each other because they will still retain the form they had in this life, but what will dominate will be their inner reality. In this life what dominates is our physical reality; we can hide our inner reality. The mirror image will be in reverse. In the non-time zone every individual will continuously be the exact sum of what he made himself to be when he was in time. If he has evolved and brought himself up to his divine reality, the ultimate truthfulness to His Creator, then his eternal state will reflect that.

La yamutu fiha wa la yahya; "He shall not die therein, nor shall he live" (Ta Ha:74). In the fire there is no life nor is there the release of death. *Jahannam* (hell) is like a bottomless pit. It is like falling down an endless tunnel, like being in a state of alarm, fright and heartwrenching suspense. The fire is like that: as soon as you try to be healed you are burned again. The people of the garden, on the other hand, are in bliss, ever stable tranquility and peace. Any agitation or desire is instantly gratified. Perpetual and total peace reigns with conscious awareness — the purest form of life.

The Sounding Of The Trumpet

This article has been extracted from Penelope Johnston's English translation of *Irshad ul-Qulub*, a classical Arabic treatise by Abu Muhammad al-Hasan ad-Daylami. The translation is a forthcoming production of Zahra Publications.

The Most High said in his noble Book:

The trumpet will sound, and all those in the heavens and on earth will swoon, except such as Allah wills (to exempt). Then it will be blown a second time, and they will be standing and looking on. (39:68)

Reliable people have related on the authority of Zayn al-'Abidin:

Indeed the trumpet is a huge horn, with one head and two extremities. Between the lower extremity which reaches the earth and the upper extremity which reaches heaven, it is as far as the distance between the boundaries of the seventh earth to above the seventh heaven. It contains holes corresponding to the numbers of the souls of created beings; its mouth is as wide as the distance between heaven and earth. There will be three blasts of the trumpet: one for terror, one for death, and one for resurrection.

When the days of this world have passed away, Allah most Glorious orders Israfil to sound on it the blast of terror. The angels see Israfil, who has descended taking with him the trumpet, and say: Allah has permitted the

death of the people of heaven and earth. So Israfil descends to the House of Holiness, and faces the Ka'bah, and blows on the trumpet the blast of terror. Allah Most High has said:

The Trumpet will be sounded, and all those in heaven and on earth will be struck with terror, except whom Allah wills; and all will come into His presence, lowly. (27:87)

to where He says:

If any do good, then they will have good therefrom, and they will be secure from terror that day. (27:89)

The earth will tremble, and every woman giving suck will be distracted from the child she suckles; every woman who is pregnant will cast down her load. The people will all come to shake and tremble, and one will fall upon another, as if they are drunk, yet they are not, for this is from the great terror which holds them. The beards of young men will turn white from terror, and the satans will fly, escaping to the far regions of the earth. Were it not that Allah holds the spirits of humankind in their bodies, they would have departed, out of fear at that trumpet blast; so they remain in that state as long as Allah wills.

Then the Most High orders Israfil to blow upon the trumpet the blast of thunder. The sound goes forth from the extremity which lies near the earth. For there remains on the earth no human being, nor jinn, nor shaytan, nor anything else which has breath, but has been struck and has died. Then the sound goes forth from the extremity which reaches to heaven, and there remains in the heavens nothing which has breath, but it has died.

Then the Most High says: *Except such as Allah wills; that is, Jibril, Mika'il, Israfil and 'Izra'il; for those are they whom Allah wills. And He says: "O Angel of Death, who remains of My creation?" and he replies: "O Lord, You are the Living Who never dies! There remain Jibril and Mika'il and Israfil, and I too remain." So Allah orders their spirits to be taken, and he takes them. Then Allah says: "O Angel of Death, who remains?" And the Angel of Death replies: "Your humble servant remains, the wretched one, the Angel of Death." Allah then says: "Die, O Angel of Death! by My leave." So the Angel of Death dies, and as his spirit departs he cries out with a mighty shout, so great that if the sons of Adam could have heard it before they died, they would have perished then. And the Angel of Death says: "Had I known that in seizing the souls of the sons of Adam there was such bitterness, fierceness and ordeals, I would have been compassionate over taking the spirits of the believers."*

When there remains nothing of Allah's creation in heaven or on earth, the Mighty and Glorious One calls out: "O world! Where are the kings and the sons of kings? Where are the tyrants and their sons? Where are those who ruled the earth in its regions? Where are those who used to consume My

bounty, and did not give out what they owe Me of their wealth?" Then He asks: *To whom is the lordship today?* And no-one answers Him. So He replies for Himself: *It belongs to Allah, the One, the Almighty.*

Then Allah orders the heaven, and it revolves, that is to say it turns, with its spheres and stars, like a millstone. He commands the mountains and they move just as the clouds move. Then He exchanges the earth for another earth, one on which no sins have been committed and whereon no blood has been shed. There are no mountains on it nor plants, just as He spread it out at the beginning. Likewise, He exchanges the heavens, as He said:

The day when the earth will be changed for a different earth, and so will be the heavens, and they will come forth before Allah, the One, the Mighty. (14:48)

He sets His Throne again upon the water, as it was before the creation of the heavens and earth; for He is independent in His might and power. Then Allah commands the heaven to rain upon the earth until the water covers everything, twelve cubits deep, and the bodies of creatures grow up just as the green plants spring up. Their separate parts all come together, which have become dust, by the power of the Glorious, the Praised One. Even if a thousand dead were buried in one grave, and their flesh, bodies and rotted bones had turned to dust all mixed up together, the dust of one dead person would not be mixed with the dust of another. For in that grave there is one who is wretched and one happy, one body to be granted Paradise and one to be punished in the fire. From this we ask refuge with Allah!

Then Allah the Most High says: "Let us revive Jibril and Mika'il and Israfil and 'Izra'il and those who bear the Throne." So they are revived, by Allah's permission. Then He commands Israfil to take the trumpet in his hand, and He orders the spirits of created beings who come and enter the trumpet. Then Allah commands Israfil to blow on it for life. Between the two blasts there are forty years. Then the spirits make their way out through the holes in the trumpet, as if they were locusts scattered forth. They fill the space between heaven and earth. Then the spirits enter the bodies on the earth, while they are asleep in their graves like the dead. Each spirit enters its own body, entering through the nostrils, and they are raised alive by Allah's leave, and the earth is intoxicated with them. It is just as He said:

The Day when they will come forth from their sepulchres, in haste, as if they were rushing to a goal (fixed), their eyes lowered in dejection, ignominy covering them. Such is the Day, which they are promised! (70:43-44)

And He said:

Then the trumpet will be blown a second time, and behold, they will all be standing, looking on. (39:68)

Then He summons to the Courtyard of Gathering, and He orders the sun

to descend from the fourth heaven to the lowest heaven; its heat is near to the heads of humankind, and they are afflicted greatly by its heat, until they know its distress from the fierceness of its heat, until they are plunged in their own sweat. Then they are sent forth in that state, barefoot, naked, thirsty, everyone's tongue hanging out of his mouth. He said: "So they will weep at that, until their tears are dried up, then after tears they will weep blood."



The narrator – he being Hasan b. Mahbub, taking it back to Yunus b. Abi Fakhita – said: I saw Zayn al-'Abidin when he reached this place, wail and weep, as a bereaved woman might weep, saying "Ah!" and again, "Ah! Upon my life; how could I waste it in other things, not in the service of Allah and in obedience to Him, that I may be among those who escape and are victorious." I said: And that was in the commentary on His words at the end of Surat al-Mu'minin: *Until when death comes to one of them he says: O Lord,*

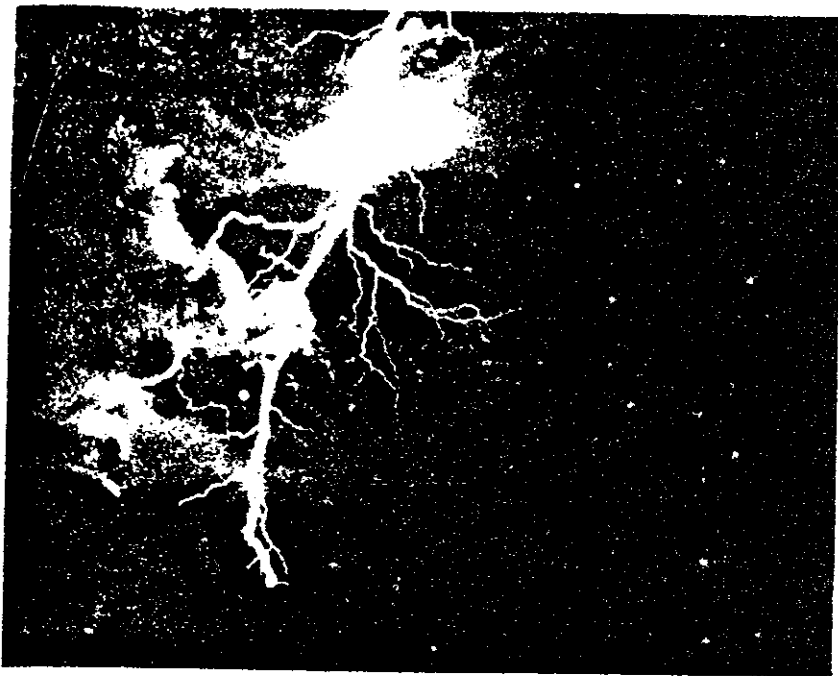
send me back, that I may work righteousness in the things I neglected (23:99-100) – which means, in what I have left behind me for my heirs – "That I may give alms with it, and may be among the righteous." But the Angel of Death replies: "Nay indeed! This is just a word he utters. Nay indeed! There is no return for you to the abode of the lower life." The phrase "this is just a word he utters" means that he spoke this because of the harshness he had witnessed of the agonies of death, and the terrors he had observed of the punishment of the grave, and the terror of the place of departure and the terror of the questioning of Munkar and Nakir. The Most High has said: *But if they were returned, they would certainly relapse to the things they were forbidden, for they are indeed liars* (6:28). This means that if they were sent back to the present world, and given a longer span of life, they would return to their former ways of miserliness with their wealth, and would not give alms nor feed the hungry nor clothe the naked, nor assist their neighbors. Rather, they would follow shaytan in miserliness and neglect of obedience.

Then the Most High has said: *Behind them is a partition (barzakh) until the Day when they are raised up* (23:100). Barzakh, in the commentary, is explained as the grave. Then the Most High said:

When the Trumpet is blown there will be no more relationships between them at that day, nor will one ask after another. Then those whose balance is heavy will be those who are successful, and those whose balance is light will be the losers; they will remain in hell eternally, and the fire will burn their faces. (23:101-104)

In the true hadith, from the Prophet, (we read) that when created beings observe the Resurrection and the precision of the reckoning and the pain of the punishment, then on that day a father will approach his son and say: "O my son, I was yours in the abode of the former life, and did I not nurture you and nourish you, and feed you from my own efforts, and clothed you, and taught you right judgement and manners, and instructed you in the verses of Scripture, and wed you to a gracious wife of my own people. I spent for you and for your wife, during my lifetime, and preferred you to myself with my property, after my decease." He will reply: "You have spoken truly, O my father, So what is your need?" He will say: "O my son, indeed my scales have been light and my evil deeds weigh more than my good deeds. And the Angels have told me: 'The scale of your good deeds is in need of just one good action so that you may claim it.' So I am asking you to give me one good action with which I may weigh down my scales on this day whose peril is so great." And the son replies: "No, by Allah, O my dear father, I fear what you fear, and I am not able to give you anything from my good deeds." So the father leaves him, weeping, in regret over what he had rendered to him in the lower life.

Likewise it is said a mother will meet her son on that day, and say: "O my son! Did not my womb carry and shelter you!" He replies: "Yes, O



mother." She asks: "Did my breasts not give you to drink?" He replies: "Yes, O mother!" Then she says to him: "Indeed my sins have weighed heavily against me, and I wish you to take from me just one sin." He replies: "O mother, away from me! For I am troubled with my own soul." She goes away from him, weeping. This is the interpretation of the Almighty's saying: *There is no relationship between them on that day and one will not ask after another.*

Then the husband approaches his wife and says: "O woman, who was your husband in the world?" Then she praises him for his good, and says: "How fine a husband you were to me." He asks her: "I ask from you one good deed, by which perchance I may escape from what you see of the precision of the Reckoning and from lightness of the scales, and traversing the Path." She replies: "No, by Allah! I cannot do that, for I fear just what you fear." So he leaves her with a sad and troubled heart. This is found in the interpretation of the Most High's words: *If one heavily laden should call another to bear his load, nothing of it can be carried (by another), even though this be a near relative (35:18).* This means, the soul weighted down with sins asks its own family and relatives to carry something of its burden and sins; but they do not carry it, but their (concern) on the Day of Resurrection will be: *My soul, my soul! This is as the Most High has said: That Day will a man flee from his brother, his mother, his father, his wife and his sons. Each one of them, that day, will have enough concern of his own (80:34-37).*



The Messenger of Allah said: "Jibril told me that while creation are standing in the court of the Resurrection, behold, Allah orders the angels of the fire to light hell, and seventy thousand angels light it with seventy thousand ropes, and creation finds its fire and its blazing like (the pains of) a month's journey for the one riding hard. Its sparks fly about and its whistling and moaning rise up, and when it comes near the court of the Resurrection it begins to throw out sparks, crackling as firewood does. There remains on that day not one of all creation who does not fall upon his face. They all cry out: O Lord! My soul, my soul! But you, O Prophet of Allah! For you are standing upright. You say: "O Lord, save me and my descendants, and my party and whoever loves my descendants." Then the Prophet asks that hell may be postponed from them. So the Most High orders the guards of hell to return it to where it had come from. All this occurs in the commentary on the Most High's words in Surat al-Fajr: *And hell on that day is brought close; then man will remember, but how will that remembrance profit him? (89:23).* On that day means the Day of Resurrection, and will remember means the son of Adam will remember his sins and acts of disobedience and will regret them. However he gained his wealth, so will it be presented on the Day of Resurrection. His words *how will that remembrance profit him?* mean: on the Day of Resurrection when all remembrance is left behind in the abode of actions, and nothing is remembered save in the abode of requital, remembrance can

no longer be of use to him. Then He speaks of the son of Adam: *He will say, Ah! would that I had sent forth (good deeds) for my (future) life* (89:24); meaning, that I had sent forth before me and had given alms for the sake of my Lord and had increased my good actions, worship and service, praises and remembrance of Allah the Most High; then would I have acquired thereby, on this Day, a higher position in the hereafter, and lasting bliss in the highest part of Paradise, with the martyrs and holy men.

The Almighty has called the hereafter "life" because the blessing of Paradise is eternally lasting, never to be exhausted; it is permanent with the permanence of the Most High Himself, as opposed to this world, where life will be cut off, and moreover it is mixed with cares and troubles, illness, fear, weakness and old age, loss and much else.

So awake, O brother, from your sleep, leave aside your negligence, take account of yourself before the Day of Reckoning. Leave the responsibilities of the servants (of Allah), and make peace with those from whom you have taken interest, ask pardon of the one whom you have accused of adultery, or have slandered, or have taken away his reputation. For as long as the servant is in this world, his repentance is accepted when he repents of his sins; when he asks pardon of his adversaries, they have mercy on him, forgive him and let fall their rights over him. However, in the hereafter, no right is granted nor excuse accepted nor sin forgiven, nor is weeping of any avail.

The Commander of the Faithful said: (Anyone who is) afraid of any terror will regret his terror on the Day of Resurrection. For man was not created to play. So consider the words of the Most High: *Does man think that he will be left uncontrolled?* (75:36). And He said: *Did you then think that We had created you in jest?* (23:115). Know then, O brothers, that one's life span is in every way most pleasant, and every breath in it is a jewel. How should it not be so, for the Messenger of Allah has said: "There is no God but Allah, One, with no partner, One God, One alone, eternal; He has taken no companion nor child," Allah has written into his account, for the sake of these words, forty-five thousand thousand good deeds, and has effaced from it forty thousand thousand evil deeds; He raises him by forty-five thousand degrees in the heights.

Jibril said to him: O Messenger of Allah, everything can be reckoned and counted, except a man's saying: "There is no God but Allah, One, with no partner." The only one who reckons his reward is the Most High. He has stored up treasure for you and for your Community saying: *Remember Me, I shall remember you* (2:152). Indeed, Allah, praised be He, said: "The people of My remembrance are as My guests, and those who obey Me are in My grace, the people who thank Me are my close friends. As for those who disobey Me, I do not make them despair of My mercy. If they repent, I answer them, and if they are sick I am their physician. I treat them with tests and trials, so as to purify them from sins and faults."

SIGNS

Ibrahim Abdul Malik Stokes

In the creation of the heavens and the earth and in the difference of night and day and the ships which pass through the sea with what is useful to man, and the water which Allah sends down from the sky, thereby reviving the earth after its death, and dispersing all kinds of beasts therein, and in the ordinance of the winds, and the obedient clouds between heaven and earth, are signs for people who have sense.

(Al-Baqarah: 164)

In the beginning there was only Allah. With *kun fa yakun* the Creator (al-Khaliq) brought the Cosmos into being. We cannot possibly conceive of this pre-creative eternal state. We can see only the Cosmos because we are a part of it; in a sense it is contained in us and we are in it because there is only Unity. If we regard the Universe, we are looking with the eyes of duality for this is the nature of the creation. Everything within the creation is one aspect of two.

An attribute of Allah is the Evolver (al-Baari), the One who creates all things in proportion. After the effulgent explosion of *kun fa yakun* all that follows is replication, a continuation of the momentum of duality into time. We can imagine that at the moment of creation there was a tremendous influx of energy from the other side of time. That energy we call light. All we know as solid matter is nothing but immense energy in close restriction and under control. What we call gravitational mass, or inertial mass and energy, are names for one and the same thing. In the beginning there was light and from it came all that we know, tangible and intangible.

Allah is the Light of the heavens and the earth.

(An-Nur:35)



So when we look upward and outward at the creation of the lower heaven, all of our knowledge of the Universe is beamed to us in the form of energy. This energy that the eye receives from the stars and the sun is restricted to a very narrow wave-band in the vast spectrum of energies that comes to us from space.

The sun represents a perfect example of the unity of mass and energy. All solar energy evolves from the deep interior of the sun where the primal and simplest atom from the creation, hydrogen, is converted to the next more condensed atom, helium. One thousand parts of hydrogen yields 993 parts of helium; the missing weight appears as radiation in the form of powerful gamma and X-rays. This lethal radiation is mercifully converted to photons of light as the radiation works its way slowly over 50,000 years toward the surface of the sun and appears as light. The light that sustains everything on earth originates from the release of energy that was locked in gatheredness from the beginning of creation.

Moving our view now from the heavens to the earth we see again the Mercy in creation. The solar radiation impinges on the outermost layer of the earth's atmosphere where the ultra-violet light is filtered to a tolerable level and most of the charged particles are trapped in the magnetosphere. We sometimes see a trace of this action in the spectacular displays of the aurora borealis, or Northern Lights. Light released from the 'frozen' moment of creation descends to the level of the earth. Only when sunlight strikes the earth is the world heated and then the air around us warmed and set into motion. As the

earth turns beneath the sun, giving rise to night and day, the alternating cycle of heat and cold adds further energy to the forces that drive the winds and stir the oceans of the world.

In the creation of the heavens and the earth and in the difference of night and day . . . are signs for people who have sense.

This massive movement of the atmosphere we refer to as weather systems is driven daily by the subtlest force in creation, Light! The energy of the sunlight is transported over great distances when water in rivers and seas is changed to vapor and carried in the hot moist air of the tropics. When the heaped up clouds are cooled again releasing the energy they contain, the wind and rain are driven across land and sea alike.

And in the ordinance of the winds and the obedient clouds between heaven and earth are signs for people who have sense.

Water is surely the most remarkable substance on earth. Transmutation of the primeval hydrogen in the swirling gases of the condensing Cosmos eventually produced oxygen that after many other transformations was released into the atmosphere of planet earth. Oxygen combined with hydrogen to produce a new creation, water! Water has a great affinity for everything it connects with and is the nearly universal solvent. Water is in every form of life and in every diverse form in the animal, plant and mineral kingdoms. Falling on the dead earth, water softens the protective outer husk of the seed and catalyzes the release of energy that drives the date-stone into the soaring palm that bends before the driving wind. The water falling today as rain or snow has recycled through countless other paths and by-ways and will travel on long after we are gone, if Allah wills.

As invisible water vapor in the air condenses into billowing clouds that pile high one upon another, we see the making of the thunderstorm. As the thunder head builds high into the upper atmosphere the total energy carried in the water is released to create enormous turbulence sufficient to support solid hail stones in the rushing updraft. So great is the turbulence that the very molecules are torn apart, releasing free electrons to accumulate in the top of the thunder cloud while the base of the cloud is left with an equal positive charge. The storm cloud is a system in separation under tremendous electrical tension. So great is this tension that the earth itself below the cloud becomes polarized into action, producing a counter charge to neutralize the imbalance. The resulting strain on the intervening air, between earth and cloud, breaks down the natural insulation and an electric current flows from ground to cloud. This is the leader stroke flowing from earth to cloud above and providing a pathway to sudden equilibrium. In one thunderous crash the systems are restored to gatheredness, tension is released and relative peace prevails as



The sun

the sound of that rending crash echoes from cloud to cloud and slowly dies away.

And of mankind are some who say, we believe in Allah and the Last Day, when they believe not.

(Al-Baqarah:2)

They are like a rainstorm from the sky wherein is darkness, thunder and the flash of lightening. . . .

(Al-Baqarah:19)

Those who say they believe in Allah and the Last Day when they do not believe create in themselves a strong polarization; they put themselves in separation and in turmoil. The consequences for those who put themselves in separation are as inevitable as the progression of events in the thunder storm. As the tension of separation in the storm is released as swift as the lightning bolt, so must the Light of the heavens and the earth restore those in whose hearts there is a disease.

The origin of the universe and its ultimate end are obscure to scientist and layman alike. In one sense it does not concern us, lying far outside our brief flicker of light we like to call our life. On the other hand, we recognize Man as a reflection of the Cosmos with common origin and destiny, and so the end of one must spell the end of the other. The scientist looks out and surveys the whole realm of creation, not realizing that the perception he re-

ceives is made possible by the will of Allah.

The lightning almost snatches away their sight from them. As often as it flashes upon them they walk (in light), and when darkness falls again upon them they stand still. If Allah willed He could destroy their hearing and their sight, for Allah is able to do all things.

(Al-Baqarah:20)

This description fits the present state of the scientist, or anyone else seeking knowledge. After long hours of hard work in the darkness of ignorance, inspiration may come suddenly to the seeker. A flash of inspiration illuminates for a moment the whole field of endeavor and the separate parts of the puzzle fall into place to reveal a whole picture. Later more questions will arise; sometimes illumination raises more questions than it answers. Then, the scientist, artist or philosopher must press on again into the storm, pressing always against the cloud of unknowing. Few indeed acknowledge the source of their inspiration; most will attribute success to luck or intuition without ever understanding their situation. Some of the best men of science have freely acknowledged the relative insignificance of discoveries they made while they were playing on the shores of the vast ocean of knowledge that lay open before them.

There is presently a movement in the physical sciences, particularly in atomic physics and astronomy, to find the Unity that underlies the whole of creation. The physicist is uncovering knowledge of the smallest and subtlest energies or "particles" that constitute matter while the astronomer is peering ever further into space and coming in sight of the origin of the Universe. These two extremes of the physical world, the microcosm and the macrocosm, are one! They were indissolubly linked from the moment of *kun fa yakun*. We watch the demise of whole galaxies swirling into the black hole of gravitational collapse but we fail to grasp its significance. For the ultimate collapse of matter in upon itself involves a gravitational force so strong that even light cannot leave this swirling grave of stars. It is totally contained, completely in gatheredness. It points the way we too must take. Scientific knowledge is still in separation awaiting the one who can illuminate the separate disciplines and weave a garment of Unity.

For the past 700 years there has been no true understanding of science among Muslims. A few have pursued the western scientific model while others have insisted that scientific knowledge is not Islamic! "Who knows himself knows his Lord." Who knows his Lord has all knowledge from the Knower (al-'Aleem). If only scientific knowledge of the world is sought, then men must stumble onwards in the darkness illuminated by the lightning flash, as Allah wills. Meanwhile the whole of creation moves toward gatheredness while the one who denies the Reality blindly seeks light in darkness, stumbling on until the veil over his understanding is at last rent by fire. And then it is too late.