

process started through the interaction of the stuff of all created objects (i.e. earthen soil or clay) and the source of all living/organic beings (i.e. water). And thus emerged the organic compounds leading to the first tiny living amoeba --- the starting point of the biological or living realm that evolved and passed through myriad stages. Indeed, this completes the third stage in the hierarchy of descents from the Supreme Creator, which in a way also marks the first stage of evolution. This very truth has been beautifully expressed in a Persian couplet of Baydil roughly translated into English thus:

“Two realms (of “*khalq*” and “*amr*”) have been consumed in the creation of a prototype of living being,
O spring flower of nothingness! Be mindful of your lofty status”

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(To be continued)

”اے لوگو! شرک سے بچو، کیونکہ یہ چوٹی کے چلنے کی آواز سے بھی زیادہ پوشیدہ ہے۔“
قرآن و سنت کی تعلیمات کے مطابق دنیا اور آخرت میں اللہ کی رضا حاصل کرنے کے لیے اس گناہِ عظیم سے اپنا دامن بچانا از بس ضروری ہے۔ زیر نظر کتاب ”فہم توحید“ اسی موضوع سے متعلق ہے اور شیخ عبداللہ بن احمد الحویل کی عربی کتاب ”التوحید المیسر“ کا اردو ترجمہ ہے۔ اس کتاب کی یہ خوبی ہے کہ فاضل مؤلف نے قرآن و سنت میں اس اہم ترین موضوع سے متعلق بکھرے ہوئے مواد کو حسن ترتیب، اختصار اور جامعیت کے ساتھ یکجا کر دیا ہے۔ گویا اس کتاب میں توحید سے متعلقہ اہم مباحث کو اختصار اور جامعیت کے ساتھ یکجا کر کے ”دریا کو کوزے میں بند کرنے“ کی مثال قائم کر دی ہے۔ اس کتاب میں توحید کی تعریف، اقسام، اہمیت و فضیلت اور توحید کی ضد یعنی شرک کی تعریف، اقسام، مثالیں، تاریخ اور سنگینی و سزا سے لے کر عقائد و عبادات کے ارکان اور جزئیات تک مختصر اُسب کچھ موجود ہے۔ مزید برآں اس کتاب میں توسل و وسیلہ، غیر اللہ کی نذر و نیاز، استعانت، استغاثہ، استعاذہ، شفاعت، زیارت، قبور، جاؤ، غیب دانی، علم، نجوم، بد فالی، بد شگون، غیر اللہ کی قسم کھانا، ریا کاری اور حصول دنیا کی خاطر عبادت کرنے جیسے اہم موضوعات کی شرعی حیثیت کا بھی جائزہ لیا گیا ہے۔

یہ کتاب اپنے موضوع اور حسن کے اعتبار سے واقعتاً اس لائق ہے کہ اس کا اردو ایڈیشن، اردو دان طبقے کے ہر گھر میں ہو اور گھر کا ہر فرد اس سے مستفید ہو۔

اس کے مترجم حافظ طاہر اسلام عسکری صاحب ہیں جو قرآن اکیڈمی لاہور میں بطور ریسرچ ایسوسی ایٹ بھی کام کر چکے ہیں۔ اس کتاب کی اہمیت و افادیت کے پیش نظر اس کا اردو میں ترجمہ کرنا واقعتاً ایک مستحسن امر ہے اور اس دینی خدمت پر وہ یقیناً مبارک باد کے مستحق ہیں۔ اللہ تعالیٰ موصوف کی اس وقیع دینی و علمی کاوش کو شرف قبولیت بخشے اور عوام الناس کو اس سے زیادہ سے زیادہ استفادہ کرنے کی توفیق عطا فرمائے۔ (آمین)

(تبرہ نگار: ذیشان دانش خان)

Since they are essentially created beings (and therefore belong to the realm of *khalq*), their movement is always in time, though they can travel and move at a tremendously fast speed on account of the subtle and non-dense source of their origination. Thus they can easily and speedily reach the farthest corners of the heavens for which we humans have to spend trillions of Dollars. And as a matter of fact human beings have not yet gone as far as the *jinn* have access to. Lastly, *jinn*, like angels, can assume various forms. For example angels can appear in the form of human beings as we read in Surah *Maryam*: ".....and he appeared to her in the semblance of a man." [*Maryam*, 19:17] Similarly, *jinn* in addition to human form can take the form of animals and reptiles etc, particularly snakes.

Going back to the scientists' and cosmologists' views about the creation of the universe, the acceptance of Big Bang Theory by them definitely repudiates the old belief based on the Newtonian Physics with regard to the eternity of material universe. Now researchers are almost unanimous in asserting that the physical universe came into being twenty billion years ago as a result of a Big Bang. If asked when and where exactly this Big Bang took place, the theoretical physicists simply reply that there was no time and space before the explosion and therefore, the question itself is meaningless. Similarly, they totally avoid and keep silent about the question as to who brought about this Big Bang explosion as this obviously demands a Necessary and self-existent Creator. Moreover, the scientific and naturalistic method is, by its very nature, unable to appreciate the realm of *amr* and its entities preceding the realm of *khalq*.

THE THIRD STAGE OF DESCENT

The third stage of descent began when, as stated above, planets with extremely high temperature cooled and so did the planet earth. The cooling off process produced two results. Firstly, just as a burning coal after a while gathers ash at the outer surface, similarly a layer of clay appeared on the outer surface of the earth. This "crust" of the earth in due course of time became the origin and source of all forms of earthly life --- vegetative and biological. Secondly, the exhaled steam or vapors emitted from the earth enveloped the planet and thus constituted its atmosphere. The combination of hydrogen and oxygen in the atmosphere led to the emergence of water which in turn became the source of all forms of life on earth, as the Quran asserts: ".....and that We made every living thing of water." [*Al-Ambia*, 21:30] Taking the form of clouds, it rained torrentially on earth for a long spell of time. At this stage of creation there was perhaps nothing on earth except water and probably this was referred to by the Quran in these words: ".....and His Throne was on water....." [*Hud*, 11:7] As a result of the cooling of the earth, its outer crust shrank making its surface at some points high (where we now see mountains and plateaus); while some other areas were turned into deep pits which were filled by rain water and eventually became oceans. And then with the passage of time, chemical fermentation and evolutionary

measured; cosmology may come to be ruled more by aesthetic preference or prejudice than by the traditional principles of science. In fact, some scientists claim that the new physics has freed itself from the old mechanistic world-view found within Newtonian physics and moved much closer to the world-view of religion. The two basic theories of modern physics --- quantum theory and the theory of relativity --- seem to contain certain features of the theological world-view, in particular the incredible interconnectedness of things and the fundamental unity that underlies the entire universe from the microcosm to the macrocosm.

The above paragraphs go a long way to vindicate that in a part of the realm of light (*noor*) --- through the Divine word of *Kun* --- an explosion of dense matter took place, which according to current cosmological theories marked the origin of the cosmos, the galaxies and planets including the solar system and our earth. For a believer of Quranic metaphysical world-view, it is very easy to imagine that the "Big Bang" was the effect of another word "*Kun*" of Allah (*SWT*) that took place in a part of the sphere of ethereal *noor*. Heat and fire are the main characteristics of this phase of creation. In the beginning a fireball of radiation at extremely high temperature and density, but occupying a tiny volume, is believed to have formed. According to Steven Weinberg (1933---), a leading astrophysicist, this fire consisted of tiny particles of electrons, positrons and neutrons with extremely high degree of temperature --- probably one hundred thousand million degrees centigrade. This expanded and cooled, extremely fast at first, but more slowly as sub-atomic particles condensed into matter that later accumulated to form galaxies and stars. The galaxies are currently still retreating from one another. What was left of the original radiation continued to cool and has been detected as a uniform background of weak microwave radiation. The important point to note is that at this stage *jinn*s were created by Allah. Both the Quran and the *hadith* describe the *jinn* as a definite species of living and personalized beings who enjoy a certain amount of free will and will thus be called to account on the day of judgement.

As the words *noor* and *naar* --- the essential originative substance of angels and *jinn* --- are phonetically close, similarly *jinn* have special affinity with angels. That is why Azazeel, on account of his immense piety and great devotional service, associated with angels of lower stature. Generally the *jinn*, however, cannot rise up to the lofty station of highly elevated angels. They nevertheless do try to steal away some information from the angels when they descend on earth for the execution of Allah's plan and orders. The following parts of two verses of the Quran describe these points:

".....except him who snatches away something....." [*As-Safaat*, 37:8]

".....but he who listens by stealth is pursued by a visible flame." [*Al-Hijr*, 15:10]

THE SECOND STAGE OF DESCENT: *KHALQ*

The second stage of descent (of the realm of *amr*) to the realm of *khalq* (i.e. physical creation) is the first station of primal material creation of which present-day cosmologists and astrophysicists have started to have some vague and quasi-speculative idea.

The modern science of nature expressly limits itself to the corporeal domain alone, which it isolates from the total realm of being while considering things in their purely spatial and temporal phenomenality, as if suprasensible reality with its differing levels were nothing at all and as if that reality were not knowable by means of the intellect or suprasensible source. The second stage of descent of the creativity of Allah is the beginning of the realm of *khalq* with which modern scientific and cosmological theories are concerned. Researchers have mapped out physical reality, ranging from the micro realm of quarks and electrons to the macro realm of planets, stars and galaxies. Physicists have shown that all matter is ruled by a few basic forces of gravity, electromagnetism, and the strong and weak nuclear forces. The universe exploded into existence 15 billion years ago. Then 4.5 billion years ago, the disintegrating fragments of an exploding star, evolved into our solar system. Modern science seems unable to synthesize and summarize its body of knowledge into a comprehensive whole, possibly because it lacks elements of the sacred and the revealed guidance that are as real and truly experienced within man as they are manifested within the external world of Nature. Even in the realm of *khalq*, there is the creation of *jinn* who are non-physical and therefore invisible. *Jinns*, though incorporeal and invisible, are creatures of *alam-e-khalq* and the material out of which they were shaped is fire. In the Quranic ontosophy the stage of the creation of *jinns* is temporally prior to the creation of humans and is of utmost importance as the *jinn* (Azazeel by name) who refused to prostrate before Adam, was called Satan by Allah --- the archenemy of Adam and his progeny till the Doomsday.

Among a few of the cosmological beliefs that lasted for long was the belief in static universe. With the discovery of the general expansion of the universe, it seemed natural that if universe is expanding then as much as we move backward in time, the universe should be more condensed until we arrive at an infinitely dense and small point from which the universe began, which is substantially the same as the concept of Big Bang Theory. Although Hubble's discoveries supported this picture but they were not, in their own, sufficient to convince scientists to accept the Big Bang Theory. The Steady State Theory, for instance, while accepting the expansion of the universe, attempted to suggest an interpretation that nevertheless avoided any "beginning" or "end" of the cosmos. Hermann Bondi (1919-2005), Thomas Gold (1920-2004) and Fred Hoyle (1915-2001) were the originators of this theory in 1948, and for about two decades it was considered the leading competitor to the Big Bang Theory. According to the Steady State Theory, if the universe is expanding forever, there is no need for the initial Big Bang.

are related to this first stage in the process of devolution. And at this stage the two categories of beings created from this ethereal and simple light were not only conscious and personified individuals but also self-conscious beings. One of these categories consisted of all the highly honored angels whose number cannot be encompassed, including the Archangel Gibraeel --- the *rooh* of holiness/the-trustworthy *rooh*. The following *ayah* refers to the huge number of the angels:

“And no one knows the battalions of your Lord except Him
.....” [Al-Muddathir, 74:31]

It has already been noted that there is an authentic *hadith* narrated by Ayesha in which it is explicitly stated that the angels were created from light. The other category of self-conscious beings that was created from the primal *noor* consisted of the spiritual souls of all the human beings who were to ever appear on the surface of the earth, including those of Prophet Adam and Prophet Muhammad. It was from a collective assembly of these human fully self-conscious spiritual souls who were, according to a *hadith* narrated by Abu Hurairah and reported by Imam Muslim, in the form of “huge multitudes” that Allah took the Primordial Covenant of “Am I not your Lord?” The Quran narrates that Allah asked the collective assembly of the human souls the question: “Am I not your Lord?” and “.....they all said: Yea! Most certainly”. [Al-Aaraf, 7:172] After taking this Primordial Covenant the repose of the “first death” was imposed on these souls and they were carefully placed in a “storehouse of souls”. It is from this resting place that they are lifted when the time comes to “blow” them into the physical body of the human fetus who has been gestating in the mother’s womb. As already mentioned, there is an opinion among some of the scholars that the “storehouse of souls” is that archangel *al-rooh* that is mentioned three times in the Quran alongwith angels with the conjunctive “and” appearing between the two [Al-Maarij, 70:4; Al-Naba, 78:38; Al-Qadr, 97:4]

It must be emphasized that in this domain of “light” that came into existence at the first stage of descent, the dimension of serial time did not exist. Consequently, the beings that are blessed with existence at this stage are unbound by the limitations of time and space. In other words, it takes the angels and the human spiritual souls no “time” to travel from the heaven to the earth or from the earth to the heaven, to say nothing of traveling from the East to the West or vice versa. In other words, they can do this instantaneously.

In the above pages, I have explored the ethereal, spiritual and primeval ontological plane of existence --- the very first realm in the process of descent from the Creator. The created beings of this realm are prior to the creation of space and time and thus belong to the sphere of transcendent, primordial and purely spiritual realm.

distinction of being the first was the “*noor*” or spiritual soul of Prophet Muhammad.

Here, it must be emphasized that just as the Quran has identified the human spiritual souls and the angels (both of whom are not only conscious but also self-conscious) as being related to the domain of *amr*, in exactly the same manner the Quran has also identified the speech and communication between the human spiritual souls and the angels as belonging to the domain of *amr*, the technical term for such communication being *wahi* or revelation. The speech and communication of Allah with the human spiritual souls and angels is also related to the domain of *amr* and referred to as *wahi*. The following two *ayaat* of Surah *Al-Shura* offer the most comprehensive and outstanding Quranic account of this matter --- so comprehensive and outstanding regarding the subject of *wahi* that there is no other parallel for them anywhere else in the Quran:

“And it is not given to any mortal that Allah should speak unto him other than through revelation (*wahi*), or from behind a veil, or by sending an (angel as an) apostle to reveal, by His leave, whatever He wills (to reveal); for, verily, He is Exalted, Wise. And thus, too, (O Muhammad) have We revealed unto thee a *rooh* from Our *amr*. (This revelation came to you) you did not know what revelation is, nor what faith is; but we have caused this (to be a *noor*, whereby We guide whom We will of Our servants, and verily (on the strength thereof), you too shall guide (people) unto the straight way.” [*Al-Shura*, 42:51-52]

In these two *ayaat*, the resplendence with which the terms *rooh*, *amr*, *wahi* and *noor* have been mutually associated with each other is not only magnificent, it is also eye-opening and immensely thought-provoking. In the context of the present discussion these *ayaat* are of utmost importance because the argument that has been presented above regarding the process of descent from the original Eternal and Necessary Being to the observable particulars of possibility and contingency, has revolved around the meaning and significance of these four terms and that is why, in my opinion, the above-mentioned two verses of Surah *Al-Shura* are topmost in shedding light on this subject.



In summary, the first stage in the long journey from genesis and “the event of creation” at the metaphysical level to the “process of creation” and “shaping” --- in other words, the first level or station of the series of descents --- relates to various Quranic locutions like *kalimah*, *kalimat*, *rooh*, *wahi*, *amr* and the command *Kun* (Be!). Probably the Divine Word “Be!” takes the form of a singularly subtle and simple “light”. This “light” did not emit any heat and was also free from any commotion or movement. The oft-used and extremely important Quranic terms *kalimah* and *kalimaat*, *rooh* and *wahi*, *amr* and *noor*

1. It is quite obvious that the Quran designates Divine Revelation as being *noor*. In Surah *Maidah* [5:44-45], the Torah and the Gospel are both referred to as being "..... guidance and light", and in Surah *Al-Anaam* [6:91] the words "..... light and guidance for humanity" are used to describe the Torah. In the same manner Allah used the term *noor* to refer to the Quran itself. In Surah *Al-Maidah* [5:15], the Quran is called ".....a light and a clear writ". In Surah *Al-Aaraf* [7:157], the Quran is called the ".....light that has been sent down with him (Muhammad)" In Surah *Al-Taghabun* [64:8], the words ".....the light that We have sent down" are used to describe the Quran.
2. In an authentic *hadith* narrated by *ummul momineen* Ayesha, it is explicitly stated about the angels that "Allah created them from light". This *hadith* has been reported by Imam Muslim.
3. In a famous *hadith* that however is not reliable according to the standards set by *hadith* scholars but which is nonetheless oft-quoted by mystical sages and by many commentators of the Quran, the term *noor* is used to describe the spiritual soul of Prophet Muhammad. In this *hadith*, the Prophet says: "The first thing that Allah created was my *noor*." Similarly, there is another *hadith* (the authenticity of which has not yet been ascertained by me) in which the Prophet gave the following reply to his companion Jabir's query as to what was the first item that was created in all of the created order: "the *noor* of your Prophet, O Jabir, the *noor* of your Prophet!" It was reported to me by reliable sources that Late Maulana Ghulam Murshid (1894-1979) --- a well-known Quranic scholar of Lahore --- used to quote this *hadith* in his discourses.
4. As far as the Being of Allah is concerned, the word "*noor*" is the best similitude that can be used, keeping in mind the finitude and limitations of the human mind. In Surah *Al-Noor* [24:25], we read the following words: "Allah is the light of the heavens and the earth." And in an authentic *hadith* narrated by Ayesha it has been stated that since Allah is *noor*, He cannot be seen.

In light of the evidence presented above, is it too far-fetched to conclude the following? In relation to the process of bringing into being the entirety of creation, the initial Divine Word "Be!" took the form of an heavenly, simple and indivisible light during the first stage of its devolution. By means of the ontological stuff of this light, Allah bestowed the honor of existence to the angels and the human spiritual souls, whose essence is light and each of whom possesses not only an individual personality and consciousness but is also endowed with the supreme blessing of self-consciousness.

And one cannot consider it at all impossible if, out of the angels and human spiritual souls that were created from light, the one who received the

- and the angels” is used: *Al-Naba* [78:38]. While there are various other opinions too, the majority position is that this phrase is a conjunction between the general and the specific (in the first two references) and between the specific and the general (in the last reference) where the specific (*al-rooh*) refers to Archangel Gibraeel. An oft-cited minority opinion, however, is that the reference here is to the human souls or to that most exalted angel who is the repository of human souls.
3. In Surah *Al-Mujadilah* [58:22] the phrase “.....He strengthened them with a *rooh* from Himself” is used to describe the invisible succor that Allah bestows upon the believers during their temporal existence. This succor refers to the support that comes to believers from the unseen (spiritual) realm of reality and in light of other references in the Quran (*Al-Anfal*, 8:112 and *Aal-e-Imran*, 3:124-125), it appears that this most likely means the succor which comes to the believers through the agency of angels.
 4. The term *rooh* has been used six times in the Quran by Allah as an additional referent in relation to His Exalted Being. Three times this term is used in the context of the process of the “creation”, “moulding” and “fashioning” of the human being. After the physical body of the human being was “created” and “shaped” out of clay, Allah blew from “.....My *rooh* (or “.....His *rooh*”)”. The three places in the Quran where the word *rooh* is used in relation to this process are: *Al-Hijr* [15:29], *Al-Sajdah* [32:9] and *Saad* [38:72]. And on three occasions this term is used in relation to the conception of Prophet Isa. Twice (*Al-Anbia*, 22:91 and *Al-Tahreem*, 66:12) it is mentioned that “.....We breathed of Our *rooh* into that” which was in the womb of Maryam. And at one place (*Maryam*, 9:17) the term “.....Our *rooh*” explicitly refers to the angel that was sent to Maryam to give her the glad tidings of the noble child she was to give birth to.
 5. Lastly, and in the context of the present discussion most importantly, in Surah *Al-Nisa* [4:171] where the term *kalimah* is used to refer to Prophet Isa, the phrase “.....a *rooh* from Him” is also used.

In light of the evidence that has been presented above, the following point is absolutely clear and beyond doubt: there is an intimate and intrinsic relationship between the *kalimah* (or word) “Be!” of Allah, His *amr* and the term *rooh*. And the angels, the souls of the human beings, and Divine Revelation belong more or less to the same spiritual reality.



The intimate and intrinsic relationship among the angels, human spiritual souls, and Divine Revelation --- and the close relation of all three of them to the Being of Allah --- is clearly demonstrated by another frequently used Quranic term, *noor*, meaning light. This can be substantiated thus:

- i. "And they ask you about the *rooh*. Tell them that the *rooh* is from the *amr* of my Lord....." [*Al-Isra*, 17:85]
- ii. "He causes the angels to descend with the *rooh* that is from His *amr* upon whomever He wills of His servants." [*Al-Nahl*, 16:2]
- iii. "He bestows the *rooh* that is from His *amr* upon whomever He wills of His servants. [*Al-Momin*, 40:15]
- iv. "And thus We have revealed unto you (Muhammad) a *rooh* that is from Our *amr*." [*Al-Shura*, 42:52]

Concerning the first *ayah* quoted above [*Al-Isra*, 17:85], some interpreters are of the opinion that the term *rooh* refers to Divine Revelation, but the majority opinion is that it refers to the human spiritual soul. In the second [*Al-Nahl*, 16:2] and third [*Al-Momin*, 40:15] *ayaat* quoted above, the term *rooh* definitely refers to Divine Revelation that came to the prophets. In the fourth *ayah* [*Al-Shura*, 42:52], the term *rooh* refers specifically to the Divine Revelation (the Quran) that was sent to Prophet Muhammad. But, generally speaking, according to the majority opinion it refers to the human spiritual soul. Whatever the case may be regarding the specific meaning of the term *rooh*, the point to note is that it has a close and intrinsic relationship with the term *amr*.



Now when we scrutinize the other uses of the term *rooh* in the Quran, the following picture emerges:

1. At four places the phrase *rooh-al-qudus* (the *rooh* of holiness) is used: *Al-Baqarah* [2:87], *Al-Baqarah* [2:253], *Al-Maidah* [5:110] and *Al-Nahl* [16:102]. And in one place the phrase *al-rooh-ul-ameen* (the trustworthy *rooh*) is used: *Al-Shura* [26:193]. Below are given the English translation of these verses:
 - i. "We gave Isa, the son of Maryam, veritable signs and strengthened him with the Holy Spirit." [2:87,253]
 - ii. "The Allah will say: Isa, the son of Maryam, remember the favor I have bestowed on you and on your mother; how I strengthened you with the Holy Spirit, so that you spoke to men in the cradle and of age." [5:110]
 - iii. "Say: The Holy Spirit brought it down from your Lord in truth to reassure the faithful, and to give guidance and good news to those who surrender themselves to Allah." [16:102]
 - iv. "The Trustworthy Spirit has come down with it." [26:193]

According to the overwhelming majority of scholars, the reference is to the Archangel Gibraeel (Gabriel) in all these places.

2. At two places the phrase "the angels and the *rooh*" is used: *Al-Maarij* [70:4] and *Al-Qadr* [97:4]. In one place the phrase "the *rooh*

this reason that Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi has identified the sum total of all the realms of existence and all temporal creatures as being the "shadows" of the Names and Attributes of Allah.



At this stage in the discussion, reference to the opening verses of the Gospel of John is quite pertinent and interesting even though even though it is plainly clear that these verses are more the reflection of a sharpened theological intellect than the revealed words of Divine Speech.

"In (the) beginning the Word was, and the Word was with God, and the Word was a god. This one was in (the) beginning with God. All things came into existence through him, and apart from him not even one thing came into existence." [John, 1:1-3]



Just as the term *kalimah* is a significant and fundamental term of the Quran, the term *amr* is also a profound and oft-used Quranic locution. The term *amr* is sometimes used in the sense of "concern" or "affair", sometimes in the sense of "command" or "judgment", sometimes in the sense of "control" or "authority", and sometimes in the sense of any "talk" or "matter" (particularly in Urdu). In addition to this variety of meanings, the word *amr* carries a specific and special meaning in the Quran where it is used in contrariety to the word *khalq*, or at least in contrast to it. In Surah *Al-Araf* [7:54], the conjunctive "and" is placed between *khalq* and *amr* and both are collectively identified as being under the dominion and control of Allah. But, surely, at the same time it establishes and puts in bold relief distinct separation and contrariety between the two terms.

".....behold! The *khalq* and *amr* (belong) to Him. Hallowed is Allah, the Lord of all the worlds." [Al-Araf, 7:54]

Two points of great significance need to be understood regarding the term *amr*:

- a) Without any exception, all the Quranic *ayaat* that refer to the process initiated by the Divine *Kalimah* "Be!" whereby "it becomes instantaneously" use the term *amr* --- the term *khalq* is not used in any of these *ayaat*. In other words, nowhere in the Quran does it say something like ".....and when He wills a thing (*khalq*) to be, He but says unto it, "Be!" --- and it is." It is beyond the resplendence of the Quran that this exclusive use of the term *amr* in conjunction with the Divine Word "Be"--- to the exclusion of the term *khalq* --- is a mere accident without a real and significant reason.
- b) The term *amr* is intimately related to the term *rooh*. In the words of the Quran:

added to the aforementioned three elements to “determine” and “guide” the human being --- and beyond the domain of ratiocination or rationality there is nothing but “Divine Revelation”. The functioning of the entirety of creation depends on these laws and the specific realm to which a specific portion of creation belongs --- this normal functioning of the created order does not require any additional Divine Word “Be!” But wherever there is a need to alter the normal functioning of the created order --- to alter the normal chain of “cause and effect” in order that a special Divine Decree be enacted --- then there is the need for a new Divine Word “Be”. In common parlance, in the case of the breakage of the normal chain of cause and effect (usually called a non-natural or miraculous happening), a new Divine Word “Be!” is inserted, so to say, at the point where one of the links in the normal chain of causation is missing. The virgin birth of Jesus is an illustration of this very process where the Divine Word replaced a missing link in the chain of causation by virtue of which a woman would get pregnant under normal circumstances. According to the normal physical and biological laws the birth of an individual requires both the male and female contribution towards a fertilized ovum which then develops into a human child. But in case of the birth of Isa (Jesus), the contribution of the father is completely missing --- meaning that one of the links in the normal chain of the causal factors of human birth is not there --- and it is this missing link which is replaced by the Divine Word “Be!” Consequently, it is for this very reason that Isa (the son of Maryam) is referred to in the Quran as “.....a Word from Allah”, “.....a Word from Him”, “His Word”.



It is a matter of consensus among the noted theologians that the “speech” is an attribute of the “speaker”. It is on this basis that Allama Iqbal has referred to the Quran as being “like God” --- a Divine similitude. And regarding the attributes of Allah it is also a matter of consensus and an accepted axiomatic truth that like Being of Allah, His attributes also possess absolute degree. As regards the relationship between the “Being” of Allah and His “attributes”, the only acceptable solution to this seemingly intractable problem is that the attributes are “neither identical nor apart from” the Divine Being. This is the only possible resolution of the issue that must be accepted, irrespective of how contradictory it may appear.

Consequently, the Divine Word “Be!” that was uttered by Allah and that became the starting point of the process of creation, was in the beginning also necessarily “absolute” and “infinite”. By extension, this Divine Imperative was also beyond all the categories of quantity and quality. This word “Be!” began to devolve through stages, as a result of which the passage from “Necessity” to “possibility” and from “Eternity” to “contingency” began.

It logically follows that the referent attribution of the process of devolution and descent is not the Being of Allah but to the Divine Word “Be!” It is for

“limitless” in the following two *ayaat* refers to things and matters in the created order. Just as the Knowledge and Wisdom of Allah is limitless, it is entirely possible that this “inexhaustibility” is partially reflected in the domain of created order. If this interpretation is accepted then every single created being would represent the manifestation of a Divine Imperative “Be”! The two *ayaat* are as follows:

“Say: If all the sea were ink for my Lord’s words, the sea would indeed be exhausted before the words of my Lord are exhausted! And (thus it would be) if we were to add to it sea upon sea.” [Al-Kahf, 17:109]

“And if all the trees on earth were pens, and the sea (were) ink, with seven (more) seas yet added to it, the words of Allah would not be exhausted, for verily Allah is Mighty, Wise.” [Luqman, 31:27]

Notwithstanding the general rule outlined in the above two *ayaat*, out of the innumerable and limitless creations that Allah has brought into being, the Quran explicitly refers to only Prophet Isa (Jesus Christ) as being the “Word of Allah”. In Surah *Aal-e-Imran* [3:39], the Quran describes Prophet Yahya (John) as being one who would “.....confirm the truth of a Word from Allah”. And a little later in the same Surah [3:45], the Quran uses the following words to describe Prophet Isa in the context of the glad tidings that the angel came to give to Maryam regarding the virgin birth of a noble child: “O Maryam! Allah sends you glad tiding of a Word from Him.” And Surah *Al-Nisa* [4:171] offers even greater details regarding the relation of the “Word” of Allah and Prophet Isa: “.....Verily, the Messiah --- Isa the son of Maryam (Mary) --- is the messenger of Allah and His word that He bestowed upon Maryam.....”

The reason for this appears to be the fact that along with the “creation” and “shaping” of everything, Allah also has an established procedure regarding the “apportioning” and “guiding” of everything:

“Extol the limitless glory of the Lord’s name, the glory of the All-Highest who creates (everything), and thereupon forms and shapes it in accordance with what it is meant to be, and who determines (and apportions) the nature (of all that exists), and thereupon guides it (towards its fulfillment).” [Al-Aala, 87:1-3]

It is this very “apportioning” and “guiding” that manifest in the realm of inanimate matter in the form of the “laws of nature” or “physical laws”. Beyond the realm of inanimate matter, in the realm of plants “biological laws” are added to the “physical laws” to “determine” and “guide” this realm of Allah’s creation. Further still, in the animal world, the element of “natural instincts” is added to the aforementioned physical and biological laws to govern the growth and development of the animal kingdom. Further yet in the human realm, the dimension of ratiocination or the “rules of logic” is

the threshold of gaining mastery over the very forces of nature that once threatened the existence of this fragile creature.

It is not without reason that, in the words of the poet-philosopher Allama Iqbal, "even the stars are apprehensive at the ascent (i.e. progress in scientific knowledge and technology) of man". Having gained mastery over the earthly forces of nature through the progressive development of knowledge given to him potentially at the primordial stage of its existence, man's gaze has turned towards the heavens and the stars --- the "final frontier" --- and the explanation of the event of creation. In this booklet, we will try to unravel the cosmogenesis unfolded by a deeper reflection on the highly subtle and profoundly significant Quranic verses and its convergence with certain points of modern cosmological, astrophysical and biological thought.

THE FIRST STAGE IN THE PROCESS OF DESCENT AND THE RELEVANT QURANIC TERMINOLOGY

The Quran identifies the verbal imperative of Allah i.e. "*Kun*" or "Be!" --- the *kalimah* of Allah --- as being the basis and catalyst through which initiated the process of Genesis or the Event of Creation. In the Words of the Quran:

".....and when He wills a thing (*amr*) to be, He but says unto it, "Be" --- and it is." [*Al-Baqarah*, 2:117]

".....when He wills a thing (*amr*) to be, He but says unto it, "Be" --- and it is." [*Aal-e-Imran*, 3:47]

".....Glory be to Him; when He wills a thing (*amr*) to be, He but says unto it, "Be" --- and it is." [*Maryam*, 19:35]

".....and when He wills a thing (*amr*) to be, He but says unto it, "Be" --- and it is." [*Al-Momin*, 40:68]

These four *ayaat* are practically of identical meaning, and the conclusion to be derived from them is that, whenever Allah decides on a matter, it is sufficient for Him to utter the verbal imperative "*Kun*" (i.e. Be!) and the matter is done --- the "Word of Allah" is all that is needed in order to bring a thing or event into being. But there are two more *ayaat* that discuss this matter in somewhat greater detail:

"Whenever We Will anything to be, We but (have to) say unto it Our word "Be" --- and it is." [*Al-Nahl*, 16:40]

"The (nature) of His *amr* is such that when He Wills a thing to be, He but says unto it, "Be" --- and it is." [*Yaseen*, 36:82]

The relationship between the "*kalimah* of Allah" and bringing of a thing or event into being has a direct bearing on the issue of interpreting the meaning of "*kalimah*". The Quran repeatedly refers to the legal injunctions, individual and social moral decrees, juridical decisions, and ordained laws set by Allah as the *kalimaat* or "Words" of Allah, as all of these matters are indeed the outcome of the "Word of Allah". However, it is entirely possible that the reference to the "Words of my Lord" and the "Words of Allah" as being

Necessity/Eternity to the probability/contingency? Or has there been a process of ascent and evolution involved in all this too?

Classical philosophy and Neo-Platonism offer one possible set of answers to these exceedingly difficult issues. These answers are centered around the hypothesis that “ten intellects” (culminating in the active intellect) and “nine spheres” bridge the gap between the Necessity/Eternity and probability/contingency. In the final analysis, however, any set of answers centering around this hypothesis must be discarded because this hypothesis is neither supported by any evidence from the sources of acquired knowledge (the domain of empirical science and logic) nor by any evidence from the sources of revealed knowledge (the domain of revealed scriptures). In the same vein, some of the mystic sages have hypothesized that six stages of emanation separate the primordial state of Divine Inclusive-Oneness and Exclusive-Unity from the present observable reality of the ephemeral multiplicity of existence. But as is the case with the hypothesis of the philosophers, this position of the sages is neither supported by any evidence from the sources of acquired knowledge nor any evidence from the sources of revealed and traditional knowledge.

This particular issue of great philosophical and academic import (being among the most intractable of such issues) does not receive any direct or detailed treatment in the Quran. As with other such questions that are of pressing concern to only a specific (and tiny) portion of humanity, the Quran relies on subtle pointers in its treatment of this particular issue. The reason for the indirect and allegorical treatment of this and other such issues is the fact that the primary function and intent of the Revealed Word is the detailed discussion of practical matters related to Guidance and the Straight Path. These matters are of immediate and common concern for every human being so that he or she may attain salvation on the Day of Judgment. Consequently, the Quran keeps the needs of ordinary populace in focus and takes into account their intellectual capacities. As a result, the Quran relies upon only general pointers to address issues related to specialized philosophical or academic interest, higher gnosis, and subtle spiritual realities. For those with sharpened intellects and heightened spiritual sensibilities these “general pointers” should be more than enough to shed light on such matters --- as the saying in Persian goes: “For the intelligent, pointers suffice”.

At the present stage in the human intellectual odyssey, however, human knowledge has reached a point where it has become capable of going beyond merely investigating matters related to the organization of the *created order*; it has now begun to investigate issues related to the event of *creation* itself. That knowledge which was given to Adam at the very beginning in the form of “Knowledge of the Names” symbolized a latent potentiality or capacity in the human being. After having passed through numerous stages of manifestation and exfoliation, the “knowledge of the Names” now stands at

THE PROCESS OF CREATION

A QURANIC PERSPECTIVE

By

Dr. Israr Ahmad

The following is based on the ideas expounded and discussed by Dr. Israr Ahmad in his Urdu booklet titled "*Ejad-o-Ibdu-e-Alam say Aalami Nizam-e-Khilafat tak --- Tanuzzul aur Irtiqa kay Marahil*". Adding some points here and there, e.g. names of scholars and scientists, and a few explanatory lines, I have tried to keep the translated contents of the subject very close and faithful to the Urdu booklet. The argument and subject will be developed further in the next issue of Hikmat-e-Quran.

(Dr. Absar Ahmad)

(1)

INTRODUCTION

Given the specific juncture in human intellectual history at which we stand, we are in a unique position today to revisit the vexed philosophical issues of yesterday. The tremendous progress in the physical and social sciences today has put tools at our disposal that can be used to critically evaluate the hypotheses offered by the great minds of yesterday and to confirm, reject, or otherwise modify these hypotheses. At the same time, this progressive stride of human knowledge has provided fresh insights into the Revealed Word itself, just as it has been illuminated by the very same Revealed Word. The end result of this reflexive process is a more sharpened intellect and more precise analytical tools that can be brought to bear in the study of most acute and intractable issues that have dogged the human imagination since times immemorial. It is with this background in mind that we begin our exploration of the issues related to the process by which "possibility" emerged out of "Necessity" and "Contingency" emerged out of "Eternity".

PASSAGE FROM "NECESSITY BEING" TO THE CONTINGENT

According to Islamic theistic belief, only Allah is the "Necessary Being" and the "Eternal Being". In stark contrast, the vast expanse of space and time and the sum total of creation and existence (including human beings) are only "potentialities", "possibilities" and "contingencies". While there can be no dispute regarding these two beliefs the process by which "probability" emerged from "Necessity" and "contingency" from "Eternity" remains a topic of debate and contestation among the theologians. What stages did this process pass through? Is there only descent and devolution from the