

manipulate and modify the chance operations of nature. But the future of man does not depend alone on his capacity to control and modify environments to his own advantage, but also on his ability to use his freedom of choice in the right direction, and on the purpose for which he utilises his achievements. This is going to be the directive force for the future course of his evolution.

MAN A DISTINGUISHED CREATION (خَلَقَ آخَرَ)

The Holy Quran relates the story of evolution, beginning from inorganic matter up to man, in so many different ways and describes man as a distinguished creation.

Let us recollect verses (23:12-14) described earlier--“We created man from the extracts of inorganic elements of clay. Then We placed him as a sperm drop in its temporary abode, to be firmly fixed. From this fluid We created ‘a hanging mass’. Then We created from ‘the hanging mass’ an embryo. Then We created the bony framework inside the embryo. Then We covered the bony framework with muscles.” After the above description it is said:

ثُمَّ أَنشَأْنَاهُ خَلْقًا آخَرَ

“Then We brought him forward as entirely a new and distinguished creation.”

Let us see what are the points of distinction:-

Ruh. The first distinguishing feature is the possession of ‘Ruh’ or ‘Divine energy’:

الَّذِي أَحْسَنَ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ خَلَقَهُ وَبَدَأَ خَلْقَ الْإِنْسَانِ مِنْ طِينٍ ۚ ثُمَّ جَعَلَ نَسْلَهُ مِنْ سُلَالَةٍ مِنْ مَاءٍ مَهِينٍ ۚ ثُمَّ سَوَّاهُ وَنَفَخَ فِيهِ مِنْ رُوْحِهِ ۚ وَجَعَلَ لَكُمُ السَّمْعَ وَالْأَبْصَارَ وَالْأَفْئِدَةَ قَلِيلًا مَّا تَشْكُرُونَ
(32:7-9)

“It is He Who has made, all that is created, in due proportion. And He initiated the creation of man from the inorganic matter of the earth and made his progeny from an extract of the nature of a despicable fluid. Then He fashioned him in due proportion and breathed into him His Ruh and gave you the faculties of Hearing, Sight and Mind. But very few of you make the right use of these faculties.”

To find out the nature of ‘Divine energy’ and how it works actually, is not within the domain of perceptual knowledge.

وَيَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ الرُّوحِ قُلِ الرُّوحُ مِنْ أَمْرِ رَبِّي وَمَا
 أُوتِيتُمْ مِنَ الْعِلْمِ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا

(17:85)

“And they ask thee (O Muhammad) concerning the ‘Divine energy’.
 Say: The Divine energy comes from the command of thy Sustainer.
 Of its knowledge it is only a little that is communicated to you.”

However, the divine energy, according to the Holy Quran, manifests itself in various ways in the universe. In human individuals it appears in a specific form which is known as *Nafs* in the Quranic terminology. All human actions, dependent on freedom of choice and will, cast their image on ‘*Nafs*’ or ‘*Human Personality*’. The *Nafs* presents itself in man in an undeveloped form and has got immense potentialities. It has got the capacity to develop on the blueprints of divine attributes. The potentialities become actualised by such human actions which are in conformity with the Divine laws given to mankind through the messengers of Allah. He who gradually develops the *nafs*, draws closer to Allah, i.e., he realises and manifests Divine attributes within himself. The more the human self is developed, the more it is capable of survival and fit for passing on to its higher stage of evolution after physical death. On the other hand one whose actions are in the opposite direction, causes to produce the disintegration of *Nafs*, i.e., he recedes from the real and draws closer to the unreal.

The Holy Quran says:

وَنَفْسٍ وَمَا سَوَّاهَا ۖ فَأَلْهَمَهَا فُجُورَهَا وَتَقْوَاهَا ۗ قَدْ
 أَفْلَحَ مَنْ زَكَّاهَا ۗ وَقَدْ خَابَ مَنْ دَسَّاهَا ۗ

(91:7-10)

“By the *Nafs* and its perfection. He endowed it with the possibilities of both integration and disintegration. Truly he succeeds who nourishes it and he fails who stunteth it”

Thus human *Nafs* is progressive and to undergo evolution is in its nature. The Holy Quran explains the human actions and their recording on *Nafs* by calling it *ظئير* or a bird. You keep control over a bird as long as it is in your grip. Once the grip is loosened, it is out of your control. Every cause has got its effect and every human action, however slight, must leave its imprint on the screen of *Nafs*. It is not in one’s control to check it. Man is thus composed of two distinct entities, physical body and *Nafs* and both lie in close proximity to each other:

وَكُلَّ إِنْسَانٍ أَلْزَمْنَاهُ طَائِرًا فِي عُنُقِهِ ۖ وَنُخْرِجُ لَهُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ كِتَابًا يَلْقَاهُ
 مَنشُورًا ۗ اه ۗ اقراء ۗ كِتَابَكَ ۗ كَفَىٰ بِنَفْسِكَ الْيَوْمَ عَلِيلًا حَنِيبًا ۗ

(17:13-14)

“Every man’s ‘bird’ We have pasted to his own neck and We shall bring forth for him on the day of Judgement a book which he shall

find wide open. (It will be said to him:) Read your own record. Your *Nafs* is sufficient this day to make an account of yourself.”

As stated above, the making and breaking up processes of *Nafs* or human personality are affected only by those actions which are performed wilfully and after making a choice. It is the '*Ruh*' or 'Divine energy' which confers on man the capacity to choose between right and wrong and thus provides man the unique distinction to act freely as he chooses. The freedom of Choice and Will., thus, become the directive force in human evolution which in fact is the evolution of '*Nafs*' or 'Human personality'.

Speech. The other feature that distinguishes man from lower animals is the faculty of speech. The Holy Quran says:

(55:3-4) خَلَقَ الْإِنْسَانَ لَا عِلْمَهُ الْبَيَانَ ه

“He created man. He taught him speech”.

(The following description of 'Speech' is based mainly on "Introduction to Clinical Neurology" by Gordon Holmes.):-

The term speech signifies the expression of thoughts by auditory and visual means for their conveyance to others and the comprehension of the ideas of others, by means of their written and spoken words.

The use of spoken and written words to express our thoughts and receive the thoughts of others is known as external speech but it depends on internal speech, that is the formulation in our minds of unlettered words. It includes in addition to the mental processes that are expressed in external speech, those concerned in the understanding of the speech of others. Our thoughts deal prominently in terms of speech; words and verbal symbols can be regarded as the coins of mental commerce. It is for instance a common experience that during preoccupation not only do we formulate our ideas in words but may even form or utter words subconsciously.

Speech is consequently a product of mind, a psychological as well as a physiological function, by which mind can be exteriorised for the purpose of communication with our fellows; but it is also an instrument of mind, for without speech our mental activities are restricted. A speechless man is not, however, necessarily thoughtless.

As stated earlier in this chapter, animals are also able to express themselves. The birds utter calls and songs to assemble gregarious species, to advertise nesting territory and attract mates, to give directions to their young and to warn in the event of danger. Similarly in other animals the calls carry different meanings, one call becomes a symbol of hurt, another a symbol of hunger or desire for food. In apes the

use of such symbols to express emotions, desires and even rudimentary thoughts is undoubtedly more highly developed, but in man only has the use of symbols in thinking and in expression of thoughts reached that stage where it can be referred to as speech.

Development of speech in man. The hominids probably first employed sounds as a vehicle for the expression of thought, like their ancestors to whom the utterance of a simple sound signified little more than an emotion, but they gradually learned to employ other sounds, at first perhaps applied to concrete objects only, and to recognise their significance when they were uttered by their fellows. Thus a simple sound like "ma" may have signified mother and some other elementary sound corresponded to food or desire for nourishment. In this way words for auditory symbols came into use. These sounds which became words were, however, and have remained conventional symbols but each one of them has been invested with an arbitrary, though definite connotation. As greater power of articulation was acquired they became more numerous and more differentiated. The vocabulary grew gradually, providing more names for concrete objects and for abstract qualities possessed by them. Later there was acquired the use of other sound-symbols, or words to connect or relate those first acquired to one another, to one's self or to some other object; and modification of words served to indicate number, time and conceptual relations. In this way sentences were acquired; this extended enormously the utility of speech.

This is the course of development in individual life too. The significance of names or sounds applied to objects, is first apprehended; then the child learns, after many attempts, to utter and apply the same sounds to these objects. Later, he succeeds in combining words into sentences, and becomes able by the use of verbs to say something about persons and things, by adjectives to qualify or add to the meaning of the words he uses, and to indicate relations between them by other elements of speech.

The auditory impressions early impressed and expressed remain throughout life the most stable, least vulnerable and the longest lasting of the methods of receiving and communicating ideas. Whereas we entirely rely on visual memories for our remembrance and intelligence in general matters, yet as regards speech we rely upon auditory memories to a very large extent, and of course those who have never learned to read, do so exclusively. The process of recall, both in silent thought and in speaking, is the revival of auditory patterns.

Speech is consequently the use of symbols, to express thoughts, and as stated above at first auditory symbols, or spoken words, only were employed. These word symbols are, however, conventional; they vary in different languages, but in each language they become fixed and standardised. The first essential step in the development of language is appreciation of the significance of these conventional symbols. If their significance is not learned, as in congenital deafness, speech is not

acquired naturally, and when speech is lost they can no longer serve as a vehicle for thought and its expression; words become only a medley of sounds like those of an unknown foreign language.

Written speech. Unlike insects and vertebrate societies, described in Chapter VIII, which are guided by instinct, the human society, based on freedom of choice and will, had much complex functions to perform. The human evolution thus required a much closer and broader link among men inhabiting different parts of the globe at one time and men living in different periods of time. Such a link became possible through the permanent records of speech, because the spoken words when uttered are gone for ever, like the breath which carries them. It is at this stage of human evolution that the Holy Quran said:

(96:4-5) **الَّذِي عَلَّمَ بِالْقَلَمِ ۗ عَلَّمَ الْإِنْسَانَ مَا لَمْ يَعْلَمْ ۗ**

“He Who taught (the use of) pen. Taught man what he knew not.”

As the Divine message was to spread far and wide, through time and space, and the message was not carried to individual human beings, written speech formed the nucleus for the spread of human knowledge.

In primitive men, human thoughts were first recorded in drawings and pictures. The pictorial system of writing was prevalent amongst the ancient

Egyptians. Such figures representing a word or sound or syllable are known as hieroglyphs (Fig. 111). A hieroglyph may be (A) a pictograph, standing for the object itself, or (B) an ideograph, standing for an idea associated with the object, or a (C) phonogram, standing for a sound or syllable or whole word, or (D) determinative. For example D1 in this figure represents heaven, D2 represents heaven and star or night, D3 a divine person, D4 prayer, worship or praise. Original Chinese scripts also represented things without words or names. But the hieroglyphs remained merely pictorial representations of objects, not records of their conventional names.

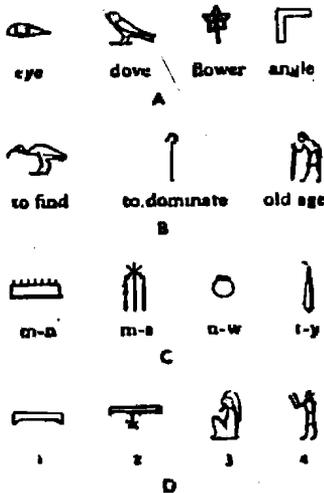


Fig. 111.—HIEROGLYPHS.

- A = Pictographs.
- B = Ideographs.
- C = Phonograms.
- D = Determinatives.

Writing on the other hand is the recording of auditory symbols by graphic symbols. A separate symbol might be selected for each word and modification of a word, but this would be a cumbersome

and inflexible method. The first stage in the development of writing, as we understand it, was the breaking up or analysis of the complex sounds of words into a number of simple elements, which when rearranged and combined are capable of representing all the sound symbols or words of the language. These elements are the letters of the alphabet. The next stage was to adopt conventional visual symbols for the letters which when properly arranged would represent words. In writing and reading, therefore, we employ symbols of symbols, for writing is built up of visual symbols of auditory symbols. Writing and reading are consequently largely dependent on auditory speech. They are also more artificial faculties than articulate speech; they are learned by each individual later in life, and may not be acquired in the absence of education; in fact, many races, some of which possess highly developed languages, as the Cree Indians of North America, have never learnt to record their words by visual symbols.

It is however, propositions or a series of words in which something is stated, affirmed or denied, not words themselves, which are the units of speech. Single words are meaningless unless related to other words; even 'Yes' has a meaning only when it signifies "I will do it", or "I have done it," or "I agree with what you say," or any other affirmation.

Speech, consequently, consists in the formulation of propositions in mind, their expression by written or spoken words, and the comprehension of such propositions when presented by others by sounds or in writing.

The formulation of propositions is a psychological function, and the comprehension of speech when heard or read in print is psychological too, but as all psychological functions, they must have a physiological basis. The expression of propositions in spoken words or in writing is, however, a physiological process; the organisation, grading and the coordination, as well as the execution, of the movements of the larynx, palate, tongue and lips and of those of the fingers which guide the pen, are dependent on the integrity of localised anatomical structures.

It is therefore obvious that speech is essentially a mental process by which formulae or patterns, in which our ideas can be communicated to others by means of auditory (words) or visual (writing) symbols, are determined, and by which we are enabled to understand the significance or import of such symbols when made use of by others (*Gordon Holmes*).

The role of motor functions in speech -- It is essential to bear in mind, that all motor processes have been evolved from reflex actions, and that all living motion is sensory-originated, sense-guided and sense-governed; and that a motor process of itself has no proven conscious concomitant; our consciousness of motor processes being the consciousness of the sensations which accompany the movement or which result from the movement. Thus in speaking we gain the knowledge that we have spoken, what we wished, correctly by the immediate backward lash of our voices,

sounding in our ears, and also by the sensation of correct articulation which reaches the sensorium from the executive organs. The knowledge of correct execution so gained fortifies and increases the functional stability of the speech area of the brain and is of immense importance in speech function (*James Collier*).

We may infer from the above description that when the Holy Quran says *علمه البيان* it refers to the evolutionary stages through which the Internal and External speech gradually developed, as a distinguishing feature of man.

THE STAGES OF HUMAN LIFE

According to the verse given below and which has already been quoted in the last chapter, the life initially made its appearance in the inorganic matter of the earth. Then it gradually evolved, and passed through the stage of sexual reproduction to the stage of internal fertilisation and intra-uterine growth. After birth man passes through stages of childhood, full strength and decline. At old age comes degeneration, an irreversible process known as Biomorphosis, the rate of which is characteristic of the species and also differs to a certain extent in different individuals. At the end of this process comes death:

هُوَ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ مِنْ تُرَابٍ ثُمَّ مِنْ نُطْفَةٍ ثُمَّ مِنْ عَلَقَةٍ ثُمَّ يُخْرِجُكُمْ طِفْلًا
ثُمَّ لِتَبْلُغُوا أَشَدَّكُمْ ثُمَّ لَتَكُونُوا شُيُوخًا وَمِنْكُمْ مَنْ يَتُوفَىٰ مِنْ قَبْلِ وَ
وَلِتَبْلُغُوا أَجَلًا مُّسَمًّى وَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَعْقِلُونَ

(40:67)

“It is He Who created you from dust, then from a sperm drop, then from an “Alaqa”. Then He brings you forth as a child, then He lets you reach the age of full strength, then He lets you become old. Then some among you die earlier and others reach an appointed term, perhaps you may under-stand.”

Life After Death. But according to the Holy Quran, the human personality does not end with the physical death, it is only the physical body that ends. The making and breaking up processes go on side by side in the human body as well as in the human personality. The human body gets nourishment from various kinds of foods and the waste products get eliminated in the form of carbon dioxide, urine, faeces and perspiration. The process continues throughout life. After physical death the entire human body undergoes decay and disintegration. The human personality, on the other hand, is nourished by those human actions which are in conformity with the Divine laws, given to mankind through the messengers of Allah; and disintegrates by those actions which are repugnant to the Divine laws. The human personality is not affected by the physical death. If its potentialities are actualised, it is fit to survive and pass on to the evolutionary stages that lie ahead.

The non-believers do not agree with the presence of a 'human personality'. It has been scientifically established that the atoms of a human body are continuously being replaced by new ones and the entire human body gets changed after a few years. According to the recent findings every single atom of a human femur, the largest bone of the human body, gets replaced after six months or so. The question arises, as to how the contracts between two individuals persist, after a period of, say, ten or fifteen years, as for instance the marriage contract between a husband and a wife; because physically these two individuals are not the same as a decade earlier. Even a person is not entitled to his bank balance after the lapse of a few years because physically the depositor no more exists. In this respect the Holy Quran says:

ءَاِذَا مِتْنَا وَكُنَّا تُرَابًا ۖ ذٰلِكَ رَجْعٌ بَعِيْدٌ ۗ قَدْ عَلِمْنَا مَا تَنْقُصُ
الْاَرْضُ مِنْهُمْ ۗ وَعِنْدَنَا كِتٰبٌ حٰفِيْظٌ ۗ

(50:3-4)

“(Those who lack true knowledge) say ‘when we die and become dust, (shall we come to life again?). That return is far from comprehension’. Allah says, ‘We know what the earth takes away from them (the human beings)’. (Their personality remains, and human actions are intimately connected with human personality) so its safe record is kept with Us.”

The above applied to human individuals. According to holy Quran the life of human species is also a life of probation:

هُوَ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ مِنْ طِيْنٍ ثُمَّ قَضٰى اَجَلًا ۗ

(6:2)

“He it is Who created you (human species) from clay, and then decreed a stated term (for you).”

THE HOLY QURAN ON SIX ERAS OF EVOLUTION

As stated earlier in this chapter, the Holy Quran divides the evolutionary period before life began on the Earth into two eras (يومين), and the period after the appearance of life into four eras (اربعة ايام). Thus the entire period since the beginning of the universe is divided into six eras and these have been beautifully described in the Quran in various contexts.

We also noted that according to the Holy Quran, there is a period of Divine Planning before a creation appears in its manifest form and that the planning is a part of the creation itself. The Holy Quran explains it further:

اِنَّ رَبَّكُمْ اللّٰهُ الَّذِي خَلَقَ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضَ فِيْ سِتَّةِ اَيَّامٍ
ثُمَّ اسْتَوٰى عَلَى الْعَرْشِ يُدَبِّرُ الْاَمْرَ ۗ

(10:3)

“Verily your ‘رب’ is Allah Who created the heavenly bodies and the earth in Six Eras. And He established Himself on the throne of authority, planning His Schemes.”

At yet another place, the Holy Quran describes the creation of the universe in Six Eras, in support of the truth of the laws given to mankind through revelation; and impresses upon the human beings that just as the process of creation of the universe progresses smoothly in compliance with the Divine laws, so shall the humanity reach the goal set for her, by following the laws given to her through revelation. No law other than the one given by the Creator and no outside help can achieve the objective. This is because the whole process of creation is according to plan and when a plan is intended to be executed, its starting point is made at the lowest level and then it is raised up step by step to its highest level; and the whole scheme is executed all along within a specified pattern:

اللَّهُ الَّذِي خَلَقَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا فِي سِتَّةِ أَيَّامٍ ثُمَّ اسْتَوَىٰ
عَلَى الْعَرْشِ مُلْكُكُمْ مِنْ دُونِهِ مِنْ وَلِيِّ وَلَا سَفِيحٍ أَفَلَا تَتَذَكَّرُونَ هَ يَدِيرُ
الْأَمْرَ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ إِلَى الْأَرْضِ ثُمَّ يَعْرُجُ إِلَيْهِ فِي يَوْمٍ كَانَ مِقْدَارُهُ
أَلْفَ سَنَةٍ مِمَّا تَعُدُّونَ ه ذَلِكَ عَالِمُ
الْغَيْبِ وَالشَّهَادَةِ الْعَزِيزُ الرَّحِيمُ ۝

(32:4-6)

“It is Allah Who created the heavenly bodies and the earth and all between them in Six Eras and is firmly established on the throne of authority. Nothing except His law can protect you and no intercession can be of any help to you. Then, will you not obey His law? There are Divine plans. When a plan is intended to be executed its starting point is made at the lowest level. Then it is raised up step by step to its highest level. It rises up from one stage to another in a certain period which may be a thousand years of your reckoning. Such is the One Whose knowledge covers all that is beyond your conception and all that is manifest before you. He is exalted in power and He provides nourishment within a specified pattern.”

The Holy Quran relates yet another important point, that before these six eras of evolution started, there was nothing in this universe except Allah Himself; and that life and death are controlled by His law which prevails all over the universe:

سَبَّحَ لِلَّهِ مَا فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ ۝ لَهُ مُلْكُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَ
 الْأَرْضِ يُحْيِي وَيُمِيتُ وَهُوَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ ۝ هُوَ الْأَوَّلُ وَالْآخِرُ وَالظَّاهِرُ
 وَالْبَاطِنُ ۝ وَهُوَ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ ۝ هُوَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ فِي سِتَّةِ
 أَيَّامٍ ثُمَّ اسْتَوَى عَلَى الْعَرْشِ يُعَلِّمُ مَا يَلِيهِ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَمَا يَخْرُجُ مِنْهَا وَمَا يَنْزِلُ
 مِنَ السَّمَاءِ وَمَا يَرْجِعُ فِيهَا وَهُوَ مَعَكُمْ أَيْنَ مَا كُنْتُمْ وَاللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ بَصِيرٌ
 لَهُ مُلْكُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَإِلَى اللَّهِ تُرْجَعُ الْأُمُورُ ۝

(57:1-5)

'All that exists in this universe fervently follows the Divine programme. He is exalted in might and full of wisdom. His law prevails in the universe. Life and death are controlled by His law. He has set standards over which He has perfect control. He is the First and the Last (He has no beginning and no end. He is above and beyond the realm of time and space). The working of His law is imperceptible but the resultant creation is manifest. He has complete knowledge of all things. It is He Who created the heavenly bodies and the Earth in Six Eras and is firmly established on the throne of authority. He knows what enters the earth and what comes out of it, what comes down from heaven and what mounts up to it. And He is with you wherever you may be. All that you do is within His sight. He is the Sovereign power over the heavens and the earth and all affairs are settled by His laws.'

The history of evolution reveals that life is intimately connected with water. Where-ever there is life, there is water; and where-ever there is water, the life there exists, either in actual or in potential form. It is now believed by the scientists that water has played a tremendous role in forming the terrene of planets, as well as of the earth; that even today the interior of a number of planets, including those close to the Earth, contains water which exerts a certain influence on their relief and there is likelihood of primary forms of life appearing there. Thus where-ever there is water, we presume that it is a preparation for the appearance of life, though it may appear millions of years later. We have seen in the verse (57.2) above that life and death are controlled by the Divine laws. One of these laws is that water appears as a preliminary to the appearance of life.

The Holy Quran says:

وَهُوَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ فِي سِتَّةِ أَيَّامٍ وَكَانَ عَرْشُهُ عَلَى الْمَاءِ ... (11:7)

"It is He Who created the heavenly bodies and the earth in Six Eras.; He made water the basis of life, over which He kept His control."

Ignorance is the basis of unbelief in Allah. The more the human knowledge increases about the phenomena of nature and the laws operating them, the more we get convinced that the controlling authority of the universe is One and that the process of creation takes shape within a specified pattern:

الَّذِي خَلَقَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا فِي سِتَّةِ
أَيَّامٍ ثُمَّ اسْتَوَى عَلَى الْعَرْشِ الرَّحْمَنُ فَسَأَلْ بِهِ خَبِيرًا

(25:59)

“It is He Who created the heavenly bodies and the Earth and (all) that is in between, in Six Eras and is firmly established on the throne of authority. It is He Who provides nourishment within a specified pattern. So you ask about Him, from one who is acquainted.”

The phenomena of nature are so attractive, methodical, constructive and instructive, yet a great majority of human beings are unmindful of them. The Holy Quran says:

وَكَأَيِّن مِّنْ آيَةٍ فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ يَمُرُّونَ
عَلَيْهَا وَهُمْ عَنْهَا مُعْرِضُونَ

(12:105)

“And how many clear signs in the heavens and the earth do they pass by! Yet they turn away (their faces) from them.”

THE CREATION BY ALLAH IS CONSTRUCTIVE

The more we explore nature, the more we find the coordination in the functioning of the component parts of the universe. It indicates that the Divine plan is constructive and that there is a purpose behind the creation of the universe. The Holy Quran points out this fact at various places:

هُوَ الَّذِي جَعَلَ الشَّمْسَ ضِيَاءً وَالْقَمَرَ نُورًا وَقَدَرَهُ مَنَازِلَ
لِتَعْلَمُوا عَدَدَ السِّنِينَ وَالْحِسَابَ مَا خَلَقَ اللَّهُ ذَلِكَ إِلَّا
بِالْحَقِّ يُفَصِّلُ الْآيَاتِ لِقَوْمٍ يَعْلَمُونَ

(10:5)

“It is He Who made the sun, the source of light and the moon a reflected light and measured out stages for her that you may know the number of years and the count (of time). This is nothing but a part of His constructive design. He explains His signs in detail, to those who understand.”

أَوَلَمْ يَتَفَكَّرُوا فِي أَنفُسِهِمْ مَا خَلَقَ اللَّهُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا
الْأَبَالِحِ وَأَجَلٍ مُّسَمًّى وَإِنَّ كَثِيرًا مِّنَ النَّاسِ بِلِقَائِ رَبِّهِمْ لَكِفْرُونَ ۝

(30:8)

“Do they not contemplate in their own minds that Allah has created, the heavenly bodies and the earth and all between them, for a just and constructive purpose and for an appointed term and yet there are many a people who deny facing the Divine law (in their own sphere of life).”

وَهُوَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ بِالْحَقِّ ۝

(6:73)

“It is He Who created the heavenly bodies and the Earth, concrete, constructive and purposeful.”

خَلَقَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ بِالْحَقِّ تَعَالَىٰ عَمَّا يُشْرِكُونَ ۝

(16:3)

“He has created the heavens and the Earth, constructive and full of purpose. He is exalted above all that they associate with Him!”

خَلَقَ اللَّهُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ بِالْحَقِّ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَةً لِّلْمُؤْمِنِينَ ۝

(29:44)

“Allah created the heavens and the Earth concrete, constructive and purposeful. Verily in that is a clear sign for those who believe.”

وَلِلَّهِ مُلْكُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَاللَّهُ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ ۝ إِنَّ فِي خَلْقِ
السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَاخْتِلَافِ اللَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ لَآيَاتٍ لِّأُولِي الْأَلْبَابِ ۝ الَّذِينَ
يَذْكُرُونَ اللَّهَ قِيَامًا وَقُعُودًا وَعَلَىٰ جُنُوبِهِمْ وَيَتَفَكَّرُونَ فِي خَلْقِ السَّمَوَاتِ
وَالْأَرْضِ رَبَّنَا مَا خَلَقْتَ هَذَا بَاطِلًا قَدْ عَلِمْتَ أَنَّ تَعَالَىٰ عَمَّا يُشْرِكُونَ ۝

(3:188-190)

“To Allah belongs the sovereignty of the heavens and the Earth and He has specific standards for every thing. Behold! in the creation of the heavens and the Earth and the alternation of day and night, there are indeed signs for men who think over it : men who keep before themselves the Divine law, standing, sitting, and lying down on their sides and contemplate (wonders of) creation in the heavens and the Earth (with the thought): Our Rabb, Thou hast not created all this without a purpose. Praise be to Thou. Give us knowledge to discover the laws of nature to save ourselves from destruction.”

وَمَا خَلَقْنَا السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا لِجِبِينٍ ۚ
خَلَقْنَاهُمَا إِلَّا بِالْحَقِّ وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَهُمْ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ ۝

(44:38-39)

“We did not create the heavens and the Earth and all between them useless or without purpose. We did not create them except for a reality that cannot be challenged but most of them do not know it.”

The Purpose. The question arises, what is the purpose of all that has been created? As far as we can understand from the words of the Holy Quran the present is only a preparation of a future stage of evolution. What is the exact nature of the next stage is beyond our perception. The spectacular animals of the mesozoic era could never perceive the shape of the modern world. So it is not even possible for a human fetus to know what he is going to be after birth. But one thing is certain. The next higher stage for the human beings is not going to evolve on the basis of physical characteristics but on the basis of development of human personality, at its present stage. According to the Holy Quran at the termination of the six Eras of evolution already described, the process of creation still continues and it is now to be seen which one of you is capable of survival for the next stage on the basis of a balanced personality, developed through constructive efforts.

وَهُوَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ فِي سِتَّةِ أَيَّامٍ وَكَانَ
عَرْشُهُ عَلَى الْمَاءِ لِيَبْلُوَكُمْ أَيُّكُمْ أَحْسَنُ عَمَلًا...

(11:7)

“It is He Who created the heavenly bodies and the Earth in Six Eras. He made water the basis of life, over which He kept His control. (This lengthy process of evolution was carried out) so that He might provide you the opportunity and see which one of you has made the balanced efforts (and has thus proved himself capable of survival for the next stage.)”

Again it is said:

الَّذِي خَلَقَ الْمَوْتَ وَالْحَيَاةَ لِيَبْلُوَكُمْ أَيُّكُمْ أَحْسَنُ عَمَلًا...

(67:2)

“He Who created death and life, that He may try whose deeds are proportionate and balanced.”

Life is the result of positive and constructive, in other words, of balanced, united and integrated acts: and death is the result of negative and destructive, in other words, of unbalanced, disunited and disintegrated acts. This applies to all forms of life, including human, at every evolutionary stage. The balanced acts mean survival and the unbalanced acts mean extinction. The present stage of human life is a testing ground where unfit are sorted out from the fit, i.e., those who are capable of passing on to the higher scale of evolution.

Another important aspect that the Holy Quran points out, is the accuracy of the evaluation of human acts. All affairs in the universe are controlled by One Sovereign Authority. The human species being the latest and the distinguished creation, is the end product of the past evolution. Thus the entire performance in the universe is meant to produce accurate results of human activities, so that not a single act, however insignificant it may appear, may remain unaccounted and unrewarded.

Thus it is said:

وَخَلَقَ اللَّهُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ بِالْحَقِّ وَبِجَزَىٰ
كُلِّ نَفْسٍ بِمَا كَسَبَتْ وَهُمْ لَا يُظْلَمُونَ ۝

(45:22)

“Allah created the heavens and the earth for constructive purposes, so that every act of every human being may produce an accurate result and that none of them be wronged.”

CHAPTER XVI

Man and the Phenomena of Nature

وَسَخَّرَكُم مَّا فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ جَمِيعًا مِّنْهُ
 إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِّقَوْمٍ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ

(45:13)

"And He has made subjected to you (O mankind!) all that is in the heavens and all that is in the earth : behold, herein verily are signs for those who reflect."

One of the factors, that control the rise and fall of nations in particular, and the psychological growth as well as retardation of individuals in general, is the way they think about and react to the forces of nature,. Man in his primitive stage was afraid of these forces. He considered any thing mightier than himself a deity and bowed down before it. He bowed down before the sun, the stars, the lightning, the wind, the fire, the trees, the animals and even the infectious diseases. He adopted various measures to please the deities. In short he lived in a world of superstitions.

With the increase in human intellect the reaction to forces of nature took a different turn. Plato introduced the theory that the world we see around us is not real, it is only a reflection of the world of reality: consequently the perceptual knowledge gained through the agency of human senses has no value. The theory had its effect all over the world. It had such a profound influence on human imagination that it affected the religious thought and gradually infiltrated and subsequently replaced the Divine message revealed through Allah's messengers in different ages. Thus the world came to be considered an object of hate and a hindrance in the achievement of salvation.

This was the state of human mind before the Quran was revealed. The story of Adam (man) is allegorically related at various places in the Quran. It affirms the human status by the revolutionary proclamation that all the forces of nature are subservient to man :

وَإِذْ قُلْنَا لِلْمَلَائِكَةِ اسْجُدُوا لِآدَمَ فَسَجَدُوا ...

(2:34)

"Then We said to the forces of nature: 'bow down to Adam' : and they bowed down."

It has already been stated that the biological definition of the status of 'man' has been, till recently, that stage of evolution at which the hominid started making tools.* Gradually the forces of nature bowed down before man one by one till it reached the stage of 'atom' and the conquest of outer space.

The Holy Quran says:

(14:32) ... وَسَخَّرَ لَكُمُ الْأَنْهَارَ

"And the rivers and seas are subjected to you."

(14:33) وَسَخَّرَ لَكُمُ الشَّمْسَ وَالْقَمَرَ دَائِبَيْنِ ...

"And He has made subjected to you the sun and the moon, both diligently pursuing their courses."

(14:33) ... وَسَخَّرَ لَكُمُ اللَّيْلَ وَالنَّهَارَ

"And the night and the day He has made subjected to you."

(45:13) ... وَسَخَّرَ لَكُم مَّا فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ جَمِيعًا مِّنْهُ

"And He has made subjected to you all that is in the heavens and all that is in the earth."

As described earlier, all the phenomena of nature are bound down by certain laws. Man is required to gain knowledge of these laws and make use of the forces of nature. The Holy Quran lays great stress on gaining knowledge:

وَلَا تَقْفُ مَا لَيْسَ لَكَ بِهِ عِلْمٌ إِنَّ السَّمْعَ وَالْبَصَرَ
وَالْفُؤَادَ كُلُّ أُولَٰئِكَ كَانَ عِنْدَهُ مُسْتَوْلًا

(17:36)

"Do not go after things of which you have no knowledge; for the ears and the eyes and the mind shall be questioned (if they made certain that so and so a thing was correct)."

Thus, according to the Holy Quran, knowledge is one that is gained by means of eyes, ears and intellect.

*This definition no more stands good, as it has been found that chimpanzees also make tools, although of perishable material.

About those people who do not use their senses and do not apply their intellect, the Holy Quran says that they live in a hell, irrespective of the fact that they belong to a civilised or uncivilised population:

وَلَقَدْ ذَرَأْنَا لِجَهَنَّمَ كَثِيرًا مِّنَ الْجِنِّ وَالإِنسِ لَهُمْ قُلُوبٌ لَا يَفْقَهُونَ
بِهَا وَلَهُمْ أَعْيُنٌ لَا يُبْصِرُونَ بِهَا وَلَهُمْ أَذَانٌ لَا يَسْمَعُونَ بِهَا أُولَئِكَ
كَأَنفَعَامٍ بَلْ هُمْ أَضَلُّ أُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْغَافِلُونَ ه

(7:179)

“Many are (amongst) the people (both) uncivilised and civilised, We have made for hell. They have minds where-with they understand not, eyes where-with they see not and ears where-with they hear not. They are like cattle,-nay more confused; for they are heedless (of warning).”

Then there is another set of people who make use of their intellect. About them the Holy Quran says:

إِن فِي خَلْقِ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَاخْتِلَافِ اللَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ لآيَاتٍ لِّأُولِي الْأَلْبَابِ
الَّذِينَ يَذْكُرُونَ اللَّهَ قِيَمًا وَقَعُودًا أَوْ عَلَى جُنُوبِهِمْ وَيَتَفَكَّرُونَ فِي خَلْقِ
السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ رَبَّنَا مَا خَلَقْتَ هَذَا بَاطِلًا سُجُنُوكَ فَغَنَّاءَ عَبَابِ النَّارِ ه

(3:190-191)

“In the creation of the heavens and the earth and the alternation of day and night, there are indeed signs for men who think over it, men who keep before themselves the Divine law, standing, sitting and lying down on their sides and contemplate the (wonders of) creation in the heavens and the earth, (with the thought) our Lord: Thou hast not created all this without purpose. Praise be to Thee. Give us knowledge to discover the laws of nature to save ourselves from destruction.”

The Holy Quran lays stress on the following two factors as they promote confirmation of belief in God:-

(a) To contemplate on the laws governing the phenomena of nature, with which you reach the conclusion that a supreme power with constructive designs is behind them.

(b) To contemplate on Quran which directed the humanity to explore nature and gain control over the forces of nature, at a time when man either bowed down before the natural forces or shunned the world, thinking it unreal.

Further, the Holy Quran describes certain categories of human beings. There are people who believe that, like all other animals, man consists of physical body only, which ends with the physical death. They do not believe in the application of Divine laws in human affairs. There are others who believe in the Quranic ideology and in the existence of human personality. According to them, the human body ends, but the human personality, when its potentialities are actualised, continues after physical death; and that this development of human personality is brought about by the application of Divine laws to the human affairs. Those belonging to the first category, after they gain knowledge of the natural laws, use this knowledge for their personal ends. On the other hand those belonging to the later category, use the knowledge gained about the laws of nature, for the benefit of humanity. Still there is another set of people who never pay attention to all that is going on in nature. They are bound to live in a life of hell.

The following verses make it clear:

إِنَّ فِي اخْتِلَافِ اللَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ وَمَا خَلَقَ اللَّهُ فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ لآيَاتٍ لِّقَوْمٍ
يَتَّقُونَ ۚ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ لَا يَرْجُونَ لِقَاءَنَا وَرَضُوا بِالْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَاطْمَأَنَّنُوا بِهَا
وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ عَنْ آيَاتِنَا غٰفِلُونَ ۚ أُولَٰئِكَ مَا لَهُمْ النَّارُ إِلَّا مَا كَانُوا يَكْسِبُونَ ۚ (10:6-8)

“In the alternation of night and day, and all that Allah created in the heavens and the earth, there are signs for those who save themselves from the consequences of going against the Divine laws.

There are those who do not hope to face the Divine laws and are satisfied with their present life.

And there are those who do not care for Our signs, their abode is fire, because of what they earned.”

‘Momin’ and ‘Muttaqi’. Those who believe that the source of law, governing the physical world and that governing the human affairs is the same, are described as ‘Muttaqi’ in the verse described above. (Muttaqi is one who saves himself from the consequences of going the wrong way). These persons are also described as ‘Momin’.

إِنَّ فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ لآيَاتٍ لِّلْمُؤْمِنِينَ ۚ وَ فِي
خَلْقِكُمْ وَمَا يَبُثُّ مِنْ دَابَّةٍ آيَاتٍ لِّقَوْمٍ يُوقِنُونَ ۚ (45:3-4)

“Verily in the creation of heavens and the earth are signs for those who believe. And in the creation of yourselves and in the fact that the walking animals are scattered (over the earth) are signs for those of assured belief.”

Wise Men. The category of people described above are also referred to as wise men, because they are capable of making deductions from what they observe.

وَإِخْتِلَافِ اللَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ وَمَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مِنْ رِزْقٍ فَأَحْيَا
بِهِ الْأَرْضَ بَعْدَ مَوْتِهَا وَتَصْرِيفِ الرِّيحِ آيَاتٍ لِقَوْمٍ يَعْقِلُونَ ه
(45:5)

“And in the alternation of night and day, and the fact that Allah sends down sustenance from above and thus gives life to earth after death, and in the circulation of winds, are signs for those who are wise.”

Learned Men. As noted in the previous chapters, the Holy Quran refers to different phenomena of nature, in one context or the other, related to various branches of natural sciences physics, chemistry, astronomy, geology, botany and zoology etc. The Quran uses the words ‘Learned Men’ for those who have a knowledge of these sciences.

The verses already quoted in the chapter on ‘pigments’ are hereby reproduced:

الْمُتَرَانِ اللَّهُ أَنْزَلَ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً فَأَخْرَجْنَا بِهِ ثَمَرَاتٍ مُخْتَلِفًا أَلْوَانُهَا
وَمِنَ الْجِبَالِ جُدَدٌ بَيْضٌ وَحُمْرٌ مُخْتَلِفٌ أَلْوَانُهَا وَعَرَبِيٌّ سُودَةٌ وَمِنَ النَّاسِ
وَالدَّوَابِّ وَالْأَنْعَامِ مُخْتَلِفٌ أَلْوَانُهُ كَذَلِكَ إِنَّمَا يَخْشَى اللَّهَ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ الْعُلَمَاءُ
(35:27-28) إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَزِيزٌ عَلِيمٌ ه

“Seest thou not that Allah sends down rains from the sky? With it We then bring out fruits of various colours, and in the mountains are tracts white and red of various shades of colour, and others intense black. And so amongst men and moving creatures and cattle, are they of various colours. Those of His servants who possess knowledge of these sciences, really appreciate the mighty powers of the laws of Allah. They know that the laws of Allah are omnipotent and provide protection for those who abide by it.”

Fourteen hundred years ago the Holy Quran pointed towards certain regions which even now remain unexplored by the scientists. For example, there is a reference in the Holy Quran, to the existence of life on other heavenly bodies; and it has been pointed out that the living creatures living on different heavenly bodies shall come together in due course of time.

وَمِنْ آيَاتِهِ خَلْقَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا
مِنْ دَابَّةٍ وَهُوَ عَلَىٰ جَمْعِهِمْ إِذَا يَشَاءُ قَدِيرٌ ه
(42:29)

“And among His significant signs are the creations of heavens and the earth and the moving creatures that He has scattered through

them and He has measures to bring them together according to His plan”.

We may summarise the impact of man’s reaction to the forces of nature, on the rise and fall of nations, as follows:

1. Those people who gain knowledge of the natural phenomena by using their eyes, ears, and intellect and at the same time make use of the knowledge so gained for the benefit of humanity, belong to the class of ‘Mominis’ and ‘Muttaqis’. They have a bright present and a brighter future in this world and in the life hereafter.

2. Those people who explore nature and gain knowledge of the natural sciences but do not make use of it in the light of Divine guidance and do not apply it for the benefit of humanity, they do reach the stage of being a man, they do gain the pomp and glory of the present but they have no future before them.

3. Those who never attempt to explore nature at all, do not even reach the stage of being a man or *Adam* before whom the forces of nature bow down. They have a dark present and a dark future.