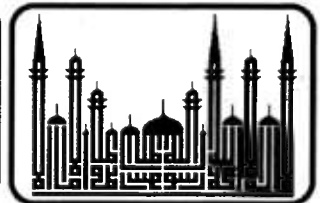


بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

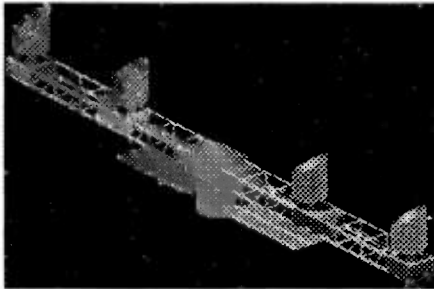
Perspectives



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Editorial

Last May scientists met at NASA Ames Research Center to discuss plans for searching for earth-like planets and extraterrestrial life. A massive new telescope, dubbed *the terrestrial planet finder* (see the figure below) will be



deployed for this purpose by 2010 . This is significant for us Muslims since we are taught in the Qur'an that life is not confined to humans, animals and plants on Earth. Other forms of life do exist in the vast and spacious universe. Reference to living creatures scattered throughout the universe is given in Qur'an 42:29 and 16:49. Specifically, the presence of earth-like planets is mentioned in the following verse:

اللَّهُ الَّذِي خَلَقَ سَبْعَ سَمَاوَاتٍ
وَمِنَ الْأَرْضِ مِثْلَهُنَّ .
(سورة الطلاق - من آية ١٢)

Allah is He who created seven firmaments and of the earth a similar number (Qur'an 65:12)

Whatever science will disclose in the future concerning extraterrestrial life and earth-like planets will only be

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Golden Encyclopedia for Science of *Hadith*

A comprehensive encyclopedia of *Hadith* containing 128 books (400 parts and volumes) covering 200,000 narrations of *Hadith* has been developed by **Al-Turath Center for Computer Research in Amman, Jordan**. The encyclopedia is in Arabic and is contained in one CD-ROM that works on windows 95. It also contains the Holy Qur'an with the Jalaleen interpretation, has an elaborate search facility and 80,000 rulings of Muslim scholars. It can be obtained from **The Islamic Foundation of America, 6606 Electronic Drive, Springfield, VA 22151, Tel. (703) 914-4982, FAX (703) 914-4984.** ☐



Reflections

Dr. Ahmed K. Noor

Repentance

التَّوْبَةُ

Allah created the human beings and provided them with the guidance to lead a meaningful and successful life in the present world and a blissful happy life in the hereafter. Human weaknesses lead some to disobey the commands of Allah, and to cause harm to themselves and others. But Allah in His mercy give them other opportunities through *tawbah* (repentance) توبة, which is the focus of the present article. *Tawbah* is one of the important principles in Islam, and is one of the prerequisites for success in the hereafter.

The Arabic word *Tawbah* (repentance)

The Arabic word *tawbah* means both "to turn back" and "to turn to". In the religious context it means "turn back from rebellion to submission". The word *tawbah* and its derivatives are repeated 105 times in the Qur'an. An entire Surah in the Qur'an is labeled *Al-tawbah*. Whereas the Arabic term *Al-Istighfar* الإستغفار (begging the forgiveness) refers to an admission of lapses and errors, and violating the commands of Allah; the word *tawbah* (repentance) includes a sincere commitment and a pledge not to make new violations or commit sins (see the definitions of *istighfar* and *tawbah* at the bottom of page 3). When a person makes *tawbah* (repentance) he/she is turning to Allah, begging His forgiveness for the lapses and errors he/she has been committing. The person is also pledging to reform his/her conduct in accordance with the Divine guidance of Allah and the traditions of the Prophet (PBUH).

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
قُلْ يَا عِبَادِيَ الَّذِينَ أَسْرَفُوا عَلَىٰ أَنفُسِهِمْ لَا تَقْنَطُوا مِن رَّحْمَةِ اللَّهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَغْفِرُ الذُّنُوبَ جَمِيعًا إِنَّهُ هُوَ الْغَفُورُ الرَّحِيمُ.
(سورة الزمر - آية ٥٣)

Say: "O my servants who have transgressed against their souls! Despair not of the Mercy of Allah: for Allah forgives all sins: for He is oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful."

(Qur'an 39:53)

Reason for disobedience

The human weaknesses were demonstrated to us in the story of Adam and his wife, during their brief stay in *Al-Jannah* (the Garden). Everything in the *Jannah* was lawful to them, except for one single tree. Satan, knowing human weaknesses, succeeded through deception, in making them disobey Allah. For many people, the temptation to follow their lusts and have immediate pleasure, is stronger than their ability to subdue these lower desires, and earn

combined together that corruption and disobedience can occur.

إِنَّ النَّفْسَ لَأَمَّارَةٌ بِالسُّوءِ .
(سورة يوسف - من آية ٥٣)

Verily the human nafs (soul) is inclined to evil. (Qur'an 12:53)

Tawbah provides a hope for the sinners. They need not despair because they have a chance for redemption, and for having their sins forgiven - see (Qur'an 39:53), quoted at the beginning of the article.



"And accept our repentance. Truly, You are the One Who accepts repentance, the Most Merciful."

(Qur'an 2:128)

rewards from Allah in the future. Enjoying what they can in the present is more important to them than their concern for the future.

وَكَانَ الْإِنْسَانُ عَجُولًا .

(سورة الإسراء - من آية ١١)

And the human being is ever hasty.

(Qur'an 17:11)

Note that each of the two components of the human *nafs* (the soul), viz. the *rooh* (spirit) and the *jassad* (body), by itself is pure and obedient. It is only when the two are

Importance of *Tawbah*

Previous Prophets instructed their people to make *istighfar* and *tawbah* (beg the forgiveness of Allah and repent to Him). The following three verses show what Prophets Hud, Salih and Shuaib, respectively, told their people:

وَيَا قَوْمِ اسْتَغْفِرُوا رَبَّكُمْ ثُمَّ تُوبُوا إِلَيْهِ . (سورة هود - من آية ٥٢)

And O my people! ask forgiveness of your Lord and then repent to Him.

(Qur'an 11:52)

فَاسْتَغْفِرُوهُ ثُمَّ تُوْبُوا إِلَيْهِ إِنَّ رَبِّي قَرِيبٌ مُّجِيبٌ .

(سورة هود - من آية ٦١)

Then ask forgiveness of Him (Allah) and turn to Him in repentance.

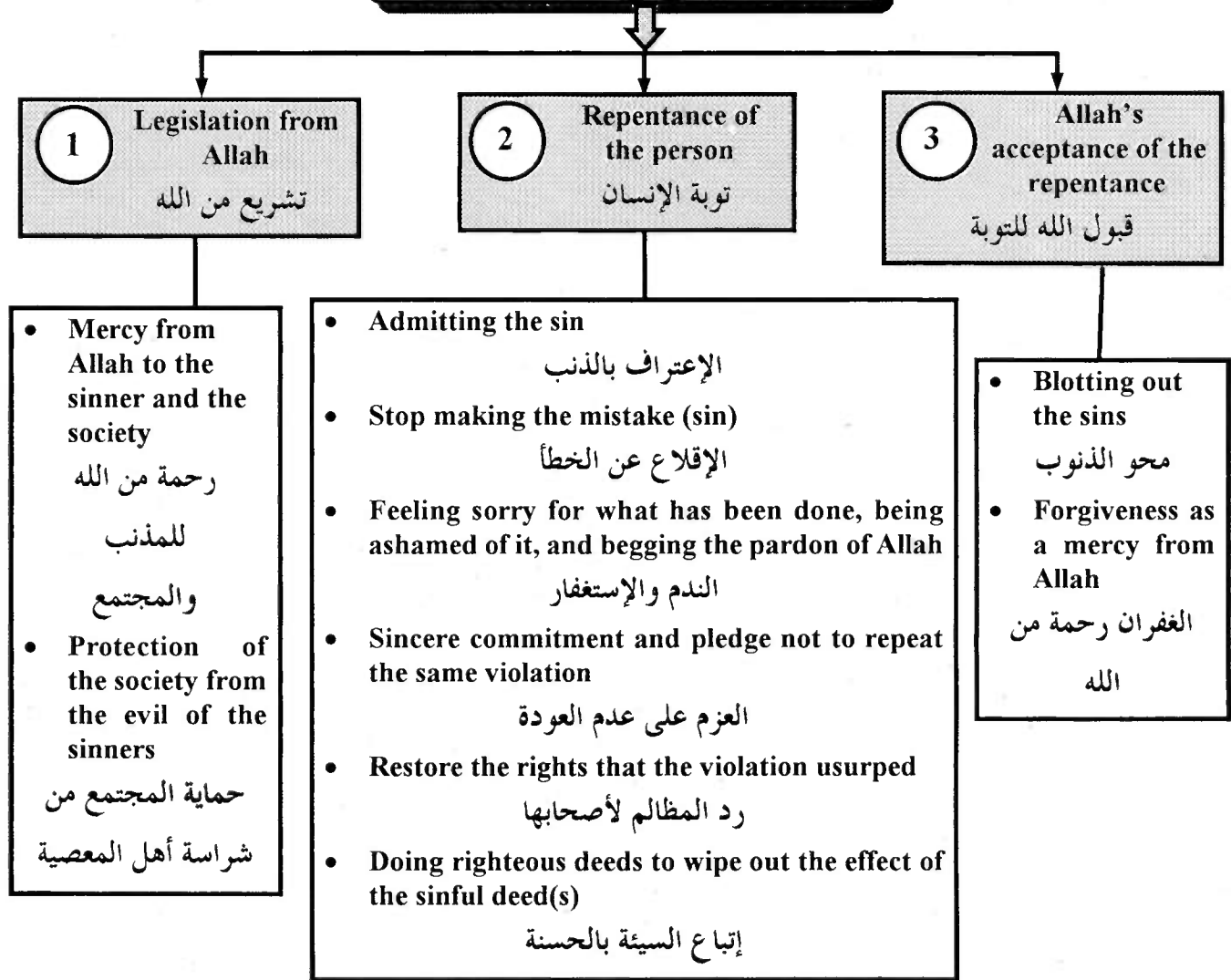
(Qur'an 11:61)

وَاسْتَغْفِرُوا رَبَّكُمْ ثُمَّ تُوْبُوا إِلَيْهِ إِنَّ رَبِّي رَحِيمٌ وَدُودٌ .

(سورة هود - من آية ٩٠)

Three Stages for Repentance

مراحل التوبة الثلاثة



Istighfar (Begging the forgiveness of Allah):

Acknowledging one's shortcomings and admitting the sin(s) committed in violation of the commands of Allah.

الإستغفار: إقرار بالتقصير وإرتكاب الذنوب مخالفة لمنهج الله

Tawbah (Repentance):

Returning back (from rebellion to submission) to Allah, and commitment not to repeat the violation(s).

التوبة: الرجوع إلى الله والعزم على عدم إنشاء ذنوب جديدة

And ask forgiveness of your Lord and turn unto Him in repentance. Verily, my Lord is Most Merciful, Most Loving. (Qur'an 11:90)

The Qur'an and Prophet Mohammad (PBUH) emphasized the importance of *tawbah*:

وَتُوبُوا إِلَى اللَّهِ جَمِيعًا أَيُّهَا
الْمُؤْمِنُونَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ .
(سورة النور - من آية ٣١)

And make repentance to Allah to forgive you all, O believers, that you may be successful. (Qur'an 24:31)

والله إني لأستغفر الله وأتوب إليه في
اليوم أكثر من سبعين مرة .
(حديث شريف)

By Allah, I beg the forgiveness of Allah and repent to Him more than seventy times every day. (Prophetic Wisdom)

To encourage us for making *tawbah*, and give us hope for receiving the forgiveness of Allah, the Prophet (PBUH) said:

كل بني آدم خطاء ، وخير الخطائين
التوابون .

All the descendants of Adam are wrong doers, and the best of the wrong doers are the ones who repent.

التائب من الذنب كمن لا ذنب له

The person who repents for the sins committed is like the one who has not sinned.

والذى نفسى بيده لو لم تذبوا لذهب
الله بكم ولجاء بقوم يذنبون
فيستغفرون الله فيغفر لهم .

By the one in whose hands is my soul, if you did not commit sins, Allah would have replaced you by others who commit sins, beg His forgiveness, and then He would have forgiven them.

Stages of Tawbah

The Qur'an identifies the three

stages of *tawbah* in Islam as follows :
legislation from Allah, repentance of
the person, and Allah's acceptance of
the repentance (see the figure on page
3).

The first stage is referred to in the
following two verses:

وَاللَّهُ يُرِيدُ أَنْ يَتُوبَ عَلَيْكُمْ .
(سورة النساء - من آية ٢٧)

*Allah wishes to accept your
repentance.* (Qur'an 4:27)

ثُمَّ تَابَ عَلَيْهِمْ لِيَتُوبُوا .
(سورة التوبة - من آية ١١٨)

*Then, He (Allah) turned to them (and
legislated repentance), that they might
repent (unto Him).*

(Qur'an 9:118)



The *tawbah* attributed to Allah in
these verses means "Allah has turned
with compassion to the penitent person
and legislated *tawbah*".

The legislation of *tawbah* is not only
a mercy for the individual sinner, but it
is also a mercy for the entire society. If
the sinner knows that he/she has no
chance for redemption, he/she will go
far into excesses, and will cause a great
deal of harm to the society. The sincere
believers will suffer even more, because
they are instructed to respond to the evil
with good.

Aspects of the Tawbah

The human organs and the hearts
can make *tawbah*. The organs make
tawbah by stopping all the violations to
the commands of Allah and avoiding
them. The hearts make *tawbah* by
cleansing themselves of all forms of
hypocrisy, weaknesses of the faith, and
moral evils.

The repentance of a person should
include the following (see the figure on
page 3):

- 1 Admitting the sin الإعراف
without offering lame
excuses and giving false

explanations and interpretations of
his/her offense.

- 2 Stop making the mistake (sin)
الإقلاع عن الخطأ .

- 3 Feeling sorry, showing remorse for
the act of disobedience, and
begging the forgiveness of Allah
الندم والإستغفار .

The remorse
should be made only because the
act was a disobedience of Allah,
and not because of any other reason
(e.g., the act was harmful for
health, caused defamation or
financial loss).

وَالَّذِينَ إِذَا فَعَلُوا فَاحِشَةً أَوْ ظَلَمُوا
أَنْفُسَهُمْ ذَكَرُوا اللَّهَ فَاسْتَغْفَرُوا
لِذُنُوبِهِمْ وَمَنْ يَغْفِرِ الذُّنُوبَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ
وَلَمْ يُصِرُّوا عَلَىٰ مَا فَعَلُوا وَهُمْ
يَعْلَمُونَ .

(سورة آل عمران - آية ١٣٥)

*and those who, having done something
to be ashamed of, or wronged their
own souls, earnestly bring Allah to
mind, and ask forgiveness for their
sins, and who can forgive sins except
Allah? And are never obstinate in
persisting knowingly in (the wrong)
they have done.* (Qur'an 3:135)

وَمَنْ يَعْمَلْ سُوءًا أَوْ يَظْلِمْ نَفْسَهُ ثُمَّ
يَسْتَغْفِرِ اللَّهَ يَجِدِ اللَّهَ غَفُورًا
رَّحِيمًا .

(سورة النساء - آية ١١٠)

*If any one does evil or wrongs his/her
own soul but afterwards seeks Allah's
forgiveness, he/she will find Allah Oft-
forgiving, Most Merciful.*

(Qur'an 4:110)

- 4 Making a resolve not to repeat the
sin again العزم على عدم العودة .

- 5 Restore and compensate for,
without delay and in whatever form
possible, the rights that the
violation usurped رد المظالم

لأصحابها

- 6 Doing righteous deeds to wipe out
the effect of the sinful deed

إتباع السيئة بالحسنة

إِنَّ الْحَسَنَاتِ يُذْهِبْنَ السَّيِّئَاتِ .
(سورة هود - من آية ١١٤)

For those things that are good remove those that are evil. (Qur'an 11:114)
The Prophet said:

إتق الله حيثما كنت وأتبع السيئة الحسنة تمحها وخالق الناس بخلق حسن .
(حديث شريف)

"Have taqwa (consciousness of the presence) of Allah wherever you are, and follow the sinful deed with a good deed to wipe it out, and treat people well.

Tawbah of Adam and his wife

Adam and his wife felt ashamed and sorry for their guilt and wanted to repent and return to Allah, but they could not find appropriate words for asking Allah's pardon. Allah took pity upon them on account of their grief and helplessness and taught them the appropriate words.

رَبَّنَا ظَلَمْنَا أَنْفُسَنَا وَإِن لَّمْ تَغْفِرْ لَنَا وَتَرْحَمْنَا لَنَكُونَنَّ مِنَ الْخَاسِرِينَ .
(سورة الأعراف - من آية ٢٣)

Our Lord! we have wronged our own souls: if You do not forgive us and have mercy upon us, we shall be totally ruined. (Qur'an 7:23)

From whom tawbah is accepted and not accepted

The Qur'an and the Prophet (PBUH) identified categories of people from whom tawbah is accepted. These include:

- Those who revert to Islam. They will have the sins they committed before Islam forgiven. When Amr ibn Al-A'as asked for the forgiveness of his previous sins at the time of his reversion to Islam, the Prophet (PBUH) said:

يا عمرو أما علمت أن الإسلام يجب ما كان قبله من الذنوب .
(حديث شريف)

O Amr, do you not know that reverting to Islam results in wiping out all the previous sins, (which do not violate the rights of others).

- Those who commit unintentional sin through ignorance, and soon after turn to Allah and beg His forgiveness

إِنَّمَا التَّوْبَةُ عَلَى اللَّهِ لِلَّذِينَ يَعْمَلُونَ الشُّوْءَ بِجَهَالَةٍ ثُمَّ يَتُوبُونَ مِنْ قَرِيبٍ فَأُولَئِكَ يَتُوبُ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِمْ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ عَلِيمًا حَكِيمًا .

(سورة النساء - آية ١٧)

Allah accepts the repentance of those who do evil in ignorance and foolishness and repent soon afterwards, it is they to whom Allah will forgive and Allah is Ever All-Knower, All-Wise. (Qur'an 4:17)

- Those who do not delay their repentance till either the time of death, or the time when the sun rises from the west (one of the major signs of the hour - see page 11)

إن الله يقبل توبة العبد ما لم يغرغر .
(حديث شريف)

Indeed, Allah accepts the repentance of the servant of Allah, except at the moment of death (Prophetic wisdom)

من تاب قبل أن تطلع الشمس من مغربها تاب الله عليه .
(حديث شريف)

Allah accepts the repentance of a person till the sun rises from the west. (Prophetic wisdom)

The categories of people whose tawbah is not accepted include the following:

- Those who delay their repentance till the moment of death, and those who die as unbelievers.

وَلَيْسَتِ التَّوْبَةُ لِلَّذِينَ يَعْمَلُونَ السَّيِّئَاتِ حَتَّى إِذَا حَضَرَ أَحَدَهُمُ الْمَوْتُ قَالَ إِنِّي تُبْتُ الْآنَ وَلَا الَّذِينَ يَمُوتُونَ وَهُمْ كُفَّارًا أُولَئِكَ أَغْتَدْنَا لَهُمْ عَذَابًا أَلِيمًا .

(سورة النساء آية ١٨)

And of no effect is the repentance of those who continue to do evil deeds until death faces one of them and he/she says: "Now I repent", nor of those who die while they are disbelievers. For them We have prepared a painful torment.

(Qur'an 4:18)

The belief of the persons who persist in sin throughout their life, without the least fear of Allah, and when death confronts them offer repentance, or make a declaration of faith (like that of Pharaoh - Qur'an 10:90,91) is not accepted.

- Those who commit major shirk (associating partners with Allah in worship, or attributing divine qualities to any other besides Allah)

إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَغْفِرُ أَنْ يُشْرَكَ بِهِ وَيَغْفِرُ مَا دُونَ ذَلِكَ لِمَنْ يَشَاءُ وَمَنْ يُشْرِكْ بِاللَّهِ فَقَدْ افْتَرَىٰ إِثْمًا عَظِيمًا .

(سورة النساء - آية ٤٨)

Verily, Allah forgives not that partners should be set up with him in worship, but He forgives except that (anything else) to whom He pleases, and whoever sets up partners with Allah in worship he/she has indeed invented a tremendous sin. (Qur'an 4:48)

لا يقبل الله عز وجل توبة عبد أشرك بالله بعد إسلامه .

(حديث شريف)

Allah does not accept the repentance of a person who commits shirk after becoming a Muslim.

(Prophetic wisdom)

Shirk is much more serious than sin (which refers to discarding the guidance

of Allah).

Allah's acceptance of repentance, forgiveness and mercy

Allah loves and cares about His creations very much, particularly those who repent.

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ التَّوَّابِينَ وَيُحِبُّ الْمُتَطَهِّرِينَ .

(سورة البقرة - من آية ٢٢٢)

Truly, Allah loves those who turn unto Him in repentance and loves those who purify themselves. (Qur'an 2:222)

Allah derives no pleasure from the torture of His servants. He inflicts punishment on them only when they transgress all limits, and even that, is done for the good of the society. Three of the attributes of Allah that are mentioned in the Qur'an are: *Al-Tawwab* (The one who turns with compassion to the penitent person and accepts his/her repentance), *Al-Ghafour* (the Oft-Forgiving), and *Al-Rahim* (Most Merciful). The three attributes are repeated in the Qur'an 6, 11 and 34 times, respectively. Examples:

إِنَّهُ هُوَ التَّوَّابُ الرَّحِيمُ .

(سورة البقرة - من آية ٣٧)

Indeed, He is the One who accepts repentance, the Most Merciful (Qur'an 2:37)

وَأَنَا التَّوَّابُ الرَّحِيمُ .

(سورة البقرة - من آية ١٦٠)

And I am the one who accepts repentance, the Most Merciful. (Qur'an 2:160)

نَبِّئْ عِبَادِي أَنِّي أَنَا الْغَفُورُ الرَّحِيمُ .

(سورة الحجر - آية ٤٩)

Declare unto my servants, that truly I

am the Oft-Forgiving, the Most Merciful. (Qur'an 15:49)

وَرَبُّكَ الْغَفُورُ ذُو الرَّحْمَةِ .
(سورة الكهف - من آية ٥٨)

And your Lord is Most Forgiving, Owner of Mercy. (Qur'an 18:58)

More than that, the Qur'an tells us that repentance and sincere *Iman* (belief) which is demonstrated by righteous deeds can result in replacing the sins with rewards and blessings.

إِلَّا مَنْ تَابَ وَآمَنَ وَعَمِلَ عَمَلًا صَالِحًا فَأُولَئِكَ يُبَدِّلُ اللَّهُ سَيِّئَاتِهِمْ حَسَنَاتٍ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ غَفُورًا رَحِيمًا .

(سورة الفرقان - آية ٧٠)

Except those who repent and believe, and do righteous deeds, for those, Allah will change their sins into rewards, and Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful. (Qur'an 25:70)

The Prophet (PBUH) had many sayings concerning the extent of Allah's forgiveness, His acceptance of, and happiness with, the repentance, including the following Hadith Qudsi (sacred saying - relayed to us by the Prophet - PBUH - on behalf of Allah), and the saying of the Prophet (PBUH)

يا ابن آدم إنك ما دعوتني ورجوتني غفرت لك على ما كان فيك ولا أبالي.

يا ابن آدم لو بلغت ذنوبك عنان السماء ثم استغفرتني غفرت لك ولا أبالي.

يا ابن آدم إنك لو أتيتني بقراب الأرض خطايا ثم لقيتني لا تشرك بي شيئاً لأتيتك بقرابها مغفرة.

(حديث قدسي)

O child of Adam! Anytime you call upon Me and you appeal to Me, I will forgive you for whatever you have had, and I don't mind.

O child of Adam! If your mistakes reach

the peak of the sky, and then you ask My forgiveness, I do forgive you.

O child of Adam! If you come to Me full of sins as large as the earth, then you meet Me without associating with Me anyone, then I will give you forgiveness equal to your sins. (Hadith Qudsi)

إن الله عز وجل يبسط يده بالليل ليتوب مسيء النهار ويبسط يده بالنهار ليتوب مسيء الليل حتى تطلع الشمس من مغربها. (حديث شريف)

Allah extends His hand during the night, so that the day sinner asks forgiveness, and He extends His hand during the day so that the night sinner asks forgiveness.

Epilogue

Sincere believers make the bargain of submission, obedience and service to Allah, and in return they are promised the bliss of paradise.

إِنَّ اللَّهَ اشْتَرَى مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ أَنْفُسَهُمْ وَأَمْوَالَهُمْ بِأَنْ لَهُمُ الْجَنَّةَ (سورة التوبة - من آية ١١١)

Verily Allah has purchased of the believers their lives and their properties; for the price that theirs shall be the Paradise.

(Qur'an 9:111)

But, because of the inherent human weakness, it is not possible to observe strictly the terms of the bargain, without ever falling a prey to negligence and error. As soon as they become conscious of this transitory lapse and realize that they have violated the terms of the agreement, they feel sorry and ashamed of their conduct, turn to Allah, beg His pardon, renew the terms of the bargain with Him, and pledge their allegiance to Him after every slip. Those believers possess repentance as a permanent characteristic, and as such, are guaranteed to come back to the straight path, after every violation.

Our Lord overlook and forgive whatever weaknesses we might have

See Repentance /page 10

The Signs of the Hour

علامات الساعة

The belief in the final day is one of the articles of faith in Islam. The occurrence of the final hour is emphasized in many places in the Qur'an, for example.

إِنَّ السَّاعَةَ آتِيَةٌ .
(سورة طه - من آية ١٥)

Verily the hour is coming.

(Qur'an 20:15)

The knowledge of the hour is one of the five hidden facts (المغيبات الخمسة) (absolute unseen (الغيب المطلق) which no creation, on earth or in heaven, can know except in so far as Allah reveals it to them

يَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ السَّاعَةِ أَيَّانَ مُرْسَاهَا قُلْ إِنَّمَا عِلْمُهَا عِنْدَ رَبِّي لَا يُجَلِّيهَا لِوَقْتِهَا إِلَّا هُوَ ثَقُلَتْ فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ لَا تَأْتِيكُمْ إِلَّا بَغْتَةً يَسْأَلُونَكَ كَأَنَّكَ حَفِيٌّ عَنْهَا قُلْ إِنَّمَا عِلْمُهَا عِنْدَ اللَّهِ وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ .
(سورة الأعراف - آية ١٨٧)

They ask you about the Hour (Day of Resurrection): "When will be its appointed time?" Say: "The knowledge thereof is with my Lord (Alone). None can reveal its time but He. Heavy is its burden through the heavens and the earth. It shall not come upon you except all of a sudden." They ask you as if you have a good knowledge of it. Say: "The knowledge thereof is with Allah (Alone) but most of mankind know not."

(Qur'an 7:187)

The Qur'an and the Prophet (PBUH)

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
إِنَّ اللَّهَ عِنْدَهُ عِلْمُ السَّاعَةِ .
(سورة لقمان - من آية ٣٤)

Verily, Allah! With Him (alone) is the knowledge of the hour. (Qur'an 31:34)

have enumerated the signs of the final hour. The signs of the final hour are divided into the minor signs (العلامات

العلامات الصغرى and the major signs (العلامات

الكبرى (see the figure on page 11).

When the minor signs appear, evil will be wide spread, and the human beings will experience a great deal of suffering. The major signs of the hour, as identified by Muslim scholars, are ten, and will follow each other so closely that there is almost no interruption between them. The minor signs are divided into four categories (see the figure on page 11):

- Signs that have already occurred in the past, and will never happen again.
- Signs that occurred, and either are continuing to occur or might occur again in the future.
- Signs that have not occurred yet.
- Other extraordinary events that will take place either through normal phenomena or by unusual means.

Qur'anic verses describing some of the major signs

- Reference to the signs of the final hour.

هَلْ يَنْظُرُونَ إِلَّا أَنْ تَأْتِيَهُمُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ أَوْ يَأْتِيَ رَبُّكَ أَوْ يَأْتِيَ بَعْضُ آيَاتِ رَبِّكَ يَوْمَ يَأْتِي بَعْضُ آيَاتِ رَبِّكَ لَا يَنْفَعُ نَفْسًا إِيْمَانُهَا لَمْ تَكُنْ ءَامَنَتْ مِنْ قَبْلُ .
(سورة الأنعام - من آية ١٥٨)

Do they then wait for anything other than that the angels should come to them, or that your Lord should come, or that some of the Signs of your Lord should come (i.e. Portents of the Hour e.g., rising of the sun from the west)!

The day that some of the Signs of your Lord do come, no good will it do to a person to believe then, if he/she believed not before.

(Qur'an 6:158)

- The smoke

فَارْتَقِبْ يَوْمَ تَأْتِي السَّمَاءُ بِدُخَانٍ مُبِينٍ . يَغْشَى النَّاسَ هَذَا عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ .
(سورة الدخان - آيات ١٠ ، ١١)

Then wait you for the Day when the sky will bring forth a visible smoke. Covering the people, this is a Painful Torment.

(Qur'an 44:10,11)

- The descent of *Isa* (Jesus, the Messiah)

وَإِنَّهُ لَعِلْمٌ لِّلَّسَّاعَةِ فَلَا تَمْتَرْنَ بِهَا وَاتَّبِعُونِ هَذَا صِرَاطٌ مُسْتَقِيمٌ .
(سورة الزخرف - آية ٦١)

And he (Jesus, son of Mary) shall be a known Sign for (the coming of) the Hour (Day of Resurrection)(i.e. Jesus, descent on the earth). Therefore have no doubt concerning it (the Day of Resurrection). And follow Me (Allah) (i.e. be obedient to Allah and do what He orders you to do, O human beings)! This is the straight path (of Islamic Monotheism, leading to Allah and to His Paradise).

(Qur'an 43:61)

According to Prophet Mohammad (PBUH), Prophet *Isa* will descend at the end of time, will kill the *Dajjal* (Antichrist) and will rule among the people with justice and equity, by applying the Islamic *Shari'ah* (sacred law). He will abolish all practices that do not conform to the *Shari'ah*. Wealth will be in such abundance that no one will care about it.

- *Ya'joj and Ma'juh* (Gog and Magog)

حَتَّىٰ إِذَا فُتِحَتْ يَأْجُوجَ وَمَأْجُوجَ
وَهُم مِّنْ كُلِّ حَدَبٍ يَنْسِلُونَ .
(سورة الأنبياء - آية ٩٦)

Until, When Gog and Magog! are let loose (from their barrier), and they swiftly swarm from every mound.

(Qur'an 21:96)

- The emergence of the beast

وَإِذَا وَقَعَ الْقَوْلُ عَلَيْهِمْ أَخْرَجْنَا
لَهُمْ دَابَّةً مِّنَ الْأَرْضِ تُكَلِّمُهُمْ
أَنَّ النَّاسَ كَانُوا بِآيَاتِنَا لَا
يُوقِنُونَ .

(سورة النمل - آية ٨٢)

And when the Word (of Torment) is fulfilled against them, We shall bring out from the earth a Beast to them, which will speak to them because mankind believed not with certainty in Our Ayat (signs, verses of the Qur'an, and the Prophet Mohammad).

(Qur'an 27:82)

The beast that will emerge at the end of time, will be unlike any animal that we know, and it will talk to people. The sight of it will be terrifying.

Qur'anic verses describing two of the minor signs

- The advent of Prophet Mohammad (PBUH)

فَهَلْ يَنْظُرُونَ إِلَّا السَّاعَةَ أَنْ
تَأْتِيَهُمْ بَغْتَةً فَقَدْ جَاءَ أَشْرَاطُهَا
فَأَنَّى لَهُمْ إِذَا جَاءَتْهُمْ ذِكْرَاهُمْ .
(سورة محمد - آية ١٨)

Do they then await (anything) other than the Hour, that it should come upon them suddenly? But some of its portents (indications and signs) have

already come, and when it (actually) is on them, how can they benefit then by their reminder? (Qur'an 47:18)

- The splitting of the moon

اِقْتَرَبَتِ السَّاعَةُ وَانْشَقَّ الْقَمَرُ .
(سورة القمر - آية ١)

The Hour has drawn near, and the moon has been cleft asunder (the people of Mecca requested Prophet Mohammad (PBUH) to show them a Miracle so he showed them the splitting of the moon). (Qur'an 54:1)

Prophetic Sayings concerning the major signs

- The ten major signs

إنها (الساعة) لن تقوم حتى ترون
قبلها عشر آيات : الدخان والدجال
والدابة وطلوع الشمس من مغربها
ونزول عيسى ابن مريم صلى الله عليه
وسلم وبأجوج ومأجوج وثلاثة خسوف
خسف بالمشرق وخسف بالمغرب
وخسف بجزيرة العرب وآخر ذلك نار
تخرج من اليمن تطرد الناس إلى
محشرهم .

It (the final hour) will not come until you see ten signs before it. The smoke, Al-Dajjal (the false Messiah), the beast, the rising of the sun from the west, the descent of Prophet Isa (Jesus-PBUH), Ya'juh and Ma'juh (Gog and Magog), three eclipses, and the fire that will drive people to their last gathering place.

- The Dajjal, rising of the sun from the west, and the beast.

ثلاث إذا خرجن لم ينفع نفسا إيمانها لم
تكن ءامنن من قبل أو كسبت في
إيمانها خيرا : طلوع الشمس من مغربها
والدجال ودابة الأرض .

Belief, after the occurrence of three events, will not benefit the one who did not believe before. The three events

are: the rising of the sun from the west, the dajjal and the beast.

- The lifting of the Qur'an to heaven, and the decline of Islam.

يَدْرُسُ الْإِسْلَامَ كَمَا يَدْرُسُ وَشَى الثُّوبِ
حَتَّى لَا يَدْرِي مَا صِيَامٌ وَلَا صَلَاةٌ وَلَا
نَسْكٌ وَلَا صَدَقَةٌ وَلَا يَسْرَى عَلَى كِتَابِ
اللَّهِ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ فِي لَيْلَةٍ فَلَا يَبْقَى فِي
الْأَرْضِ مِنْهُ آيَةٌ وَتَبْقَى طَوَائِفٌ مِنْ
النَّاسِ الشَّيْخِ الْكَبِيرِ وَالْعَجُوزِ يَقُولُونَ
أَدْرَكْنَا آبَاءَنَا عَلَى هَذِهِ الْكَلِمَةِ لَا إِلَهَ
إِلَّا اللَّهُ فَنَحْنُ نَقُولُهَا .

Islam will be faded like the embroidery of a worn out cloth, until nobody knows what is fasting or prayer or rituals or charity. The book of Allah will be taken up to heaven one night and not a single verse from it will remain on earth. There will be some groups of the old and aged people who will say: we remember our parents saying: "La ilaha ila Allah", and so we are saying it.

لَا تَقُومُ السَّاعَةُ حَتَّى لَا يُقَالَ فِي
الْأَرْضِ اللَّهُ اللَّهُ .

The hour will not come until nobody on earth says Allah! Allah!

- Return of humanity to idolatry

لَا تَقُومُ السَّاعَةُ حَتَّى تَلْحَقَ قِبَائِلُ
أُمَّتِي بِالْمُشْرِكِينَ وَحَتَّى يَعْبُدُوا الْأَوْثَانَ
وَإِنَّهُ سَيَكُونُ فِي أُمَّتِي ثَلَاثُونَ كَذَابُونَ
كُلُّهُمْ يَزْعُمُ أَنَّهُ نَبِيٌّ وَأَنَا خَاتَمُ النَّبِيِّينَ لَا
نَبِيَّ بَعْدِي .

The hour will not come until people from my Ummah join the Mushriks (polytheists) and worship idols, and there will be thirty people claiming falsely to be prophets, and I am the seal of Prophets. There is no prophet after me.

- Destruction of the Ka'abah.

يخرب الكعبة ذو السويقتين من
الحبشة .

Zul-Suwayqatayn (the man with weak legs) from Abyssinia will destroy the Ka'abah.

Prophetic sayings concerning some of the minor signs and extraordinary events

- The fire in *Al-Hijaz* (now the western region of Saudi Arabia, where Mecca and Medina are located).

لا تقوم الساعة حتى تخرج نار من
أرض الحجاز تضيء أعناق الإبل
ببصرى .

The Hour will not come until a fire will appear in the land of Al-Hijaz that will illuminate the necks of camels in Basra (Iraq).

- Interruption of two of the taxes imposed by Islam. These are: the *Jizyah* (poll-tax) imposed on the People of the Book who live under the protection of an Islamic State, and the *Kharaj* which is a land tax paid by those who exploit the lands that have been liberated by an Islamic State. Both taxes have now been stopped, as predicted by the Prophet (PBUH).

منعت العراق درهمها وقفيزها ومنعت
الشام مديها ودينارها ومنعت مصر
إردبها ودينارها وعدتم من حيث
بدأتم وعدتم من حيث بدأتم .

Iraq held back its Dirham and its Qafiz, and Al-Sham (area now occupied by Syria, Palestine, Lebanon and Jordan), held back its Bushel and its Dinar, Egypt held back its Ardeb and its Dinar, and you came back to where you started (repeated the last sentence three times).

- Appearance of impostors pretending to be prophets.

لا تقوم الساعة حتى يبعث دجالون
كذابون قريبا من ثلاثين كلهم يزعم
أنه رسول الله .

The hour will not come until liars and impostors appear, their number nearing thirty, everyone of them claiming to be the Messenger of Allah.

- Increase in tribulations (*fitan*) and turmoil.

إن من أشراط الساعة أن يرفع العلم
ويكثر الجهل ويكثر الزنا ويكثر شرب
الخمر ويقل الرجال ويكثر النساء
حتى يكون لخمسین امرأة القيم
الواحد .

Among the signs of the hour will be the disappearance of knowledge and the spread of ignorance. Adultery will be prevalent, and the drinking of wine will be common. The number of women will increase until there will be fifty women to be looked after by one man.

الرسالة الواجبة

- Entrusting the affairs of Muslims to undeserving persons, and the general corruption of Muslims.

إذا أسند الأمر إلى غير أهله فإنظر
الساعة .

When the affairs are entrusted to undeserving people, then wait for the Hour.

إذا رأيت الأمة ولدت ربها ،
ورأيت أصحاب الشاء تناولوا بالبنیان
ورأيت الحفاة الجياع العالة كانوا
رؤوس الناس ، فذلك من معالم
الساعة وأشراتها .

When you see the slave woman giving birth to her master, and you see the shepherds competing in erecting tall buildings, and the bare-footed and hungry becoming the leaders, then this is one of the signs of the hour.

- Unification of non-Muslim nations against the Muslim Ummah

يوشك الأمم أن تداعى عليكم كما
تداعى الأكلة إلى قصعتها فقال قائل
ومن قلة نحن يومئذ قال بل أنتم
يومئذ كثير ولكنكم غثاء كغثاء السيل
ولينزعن الله من صدور عدوكم المهابة
منكم وليقذفن الله في قلوبكم الوهن
فقال قائل يا رسول الله وما الوهن
قال حب الدنيا وكراهية الموت .

"The nations will summon each other against you as those eating summon each other to their dish". A man asked: "Is it because we will be few?" The Prophet (PBUH) replied: "You will rather be many, but you will be like the foam of the stream, and Allah will take out from the hearts of your enemy fear of you, and He will put weakness in your hearts." A man asked: "O messenger of Allah, and what is the weakness?" The Prophet (PBUH) replied: "Love of this world, and hatred of death".

- Different kinds of evil befalling the Muslim Ummah

لا تقوم الساعة حتى يقبض العلم ،
وتكثر الزلازل ، ويتقارب الزمان ،
وتظهر الفتن ، ويكثر الهرج وهو القتل
القتل حتى يكثر فيكم المال فيفيض .

*The Hour will not come until knowledge disappears, many earthquakes occur, the time becomes shorter, tribulations (*fitan*) appear, and there will be much killing.*

- The enlargement of the crescents and shortening of time

من اقتراب الساعة انتفاخ الأهلة .

A sign of the approach of the hour is the enlargement of the crescents.

لا تقوم الساعة حتى يتقارب الزمان ،
فتكون السنة كالشهر والشهر كالجمعة
وتكون الجمعة كالיום ويكون اليوم
كالساعة وتكون الساعة كالضربة
بالنار .

The Hour will not come until the time is shortened, the year will be like a month, the month like a week, the week like a day, the day like an hour, and the hour like the igniter of the fire.

- Beasts and inanimate speaking to humans

والذى نفسى بيده لا تقوم الساعة حتى تكلم السباع الإنس وحتى تكلم الرجل عذبة سوطه وشراك نعله وتخيره فخذة بما أحدث أهله من بعده.

By Him in whose Hand my soul is, the last Hour will not come before the beasts of prey speak to man, and the end of a man's whip speaks to him, and his shoestrings speak to him, and his thigh informs him what his family have done after him.

This might happen by either extraordinary phenomena (such as what will happen on the day of judgment), or it might happen by technological advances, through which people will be able to understand the language of animals, and make objects talk (like robots), and Allah knows best.

- The Euphrates river uncovering a mountain of gold
- لا تقوم الساعة حتى يحسر الفرات عن جبل من ذهب يقتتل الناس عليه فيقتل من كل مائة تسعة وتسعون ويقول كل رجل منهم لعلى أكون أنا الذى أنجو .

The Hour will not come until the Euphrates river uncovers a mountain of gold, for which people will kill each other, so that out of one hundred men, ninety nine will be killed, while one of them will say may be I am the one who will be saved.

- The appearance of the Mahdi

لو لم يبق من الدهر إلا يوم لبعث الله رجلا من أهل بيتي يملؤها عدلا كما ملئت جورا .

If only one day of this world is left,

Allah will (lengthen it until He) send(s) a man of my progeny, to fill the land with fairness and justice, after it was filled with injustice and tyranny.

Muslim scholars believe, based on several sayings of the Prophet (PBUH), that *Al-Mahdi* will rule. He will be of the progeny of the Prophet (PBUH), from the lineage of his daughter Fatimah (may Allah be pleased with her); he is not born yet. Some scholars, such as Ibn Kathir, classify the appearance of *Al-Mahdi* among the major signs of the Hour.

Epilogue

As surely as every person is bound to experience death, this world as we know it, will come to an end. As we are deeply involved in our daily pursuits, the signs of the Hour are unfolding before our very eyes and yet only a few of us are taking notice of it. We should follow the instructions of the Prophet (PBUH) and prepare for it by strengthening our faith, and increasing our good deeds. □

Continued from page 1

Editorial

realizing the scientific miracle of the Qur'an, and providing a clear proof that it is coming from Allah.

سَنُرِيهِمْ آيَاتِنَا فِي الْأَفَاقِ وَفِي أَنفُسِهِمْ حَتَّىٰ يَتَبَيَّنَ لَهُمْ أَنَّهُ الْحَقُّ .

(سورة فصلت - من آية ٥٣)

Soon will We show them our signs in the (furthest) regions, and in their own souls, until it becomes manifest to them that this is the truth.

(Qur'an 41:53)

I pray to Almighty Allah to make us benefit from His signs in the Qur'an, and help us in performing *da'awa* to others. □

Continued from page 6

Repentance

shown in rendering Your right, and accept the little service that we have been able to perform. O Allah, we bow humbly before You, praise and glorify You, repent and beg for Your forgiveness. Ameen □

Prophetic Supplications

Two of the supplications recommended by the Prophet (PBUH) are:

- At the end of the prayer (Before salutation)

اللهم إني ظلمت نفسي ظلما كثيرا ، ولا يغفر الذنوب إلا أنت ، فاعفري مغفرة من عندك وارحمني إنك أنت الغفور الرحيم .

Our Lord! I have committed lots of injustices against my own soul, and no one forgives the sins except You. Grant me forgiveness and have mercy on me. You are Oft-Forgiving, Most-Merciful.

- Master of forgiveness supplication.

من قال حين يصبح أو يمسي : اللهم أنت ربى لا إله إلا أنت خلقتنى ، وأنا عبدك ، وأنا على عهدك ووعدك ما استطعت ، أعوذ بك من شر ما صنعت ، أبوء بنعمتك على ، وأبوء بذنبي ، فإغفر لي ، فإنه لا يغفر الذنوب إلا أنت ، فمات من يومه ، أو من ليلته دخل الجنة .

Anyone who says this supplication in the morning, or in the evening:

O Allah! You are my Lord, none has the right to be worshipped except You. You created me and I am your servant and I abide to Your covenant and promise as best as I can, I take refuge in You from the evil of which I have committed. I acknowledge Your favor upon me and I acknowledge my sin, so forgive me, for verily none can forgive sins except You.

And dies on that day or night, he/she will enter paradise.

The Signs of the Hour

علامات الساعة

Minor Signs العلامات الصغرى

Major Signs العلامات الكبرى

Signs that have occurred in the past

1. The advent of Prophet Mohammad
بعثة الرسول
2. The splitting of the moon (miracle of Prophet Mohammad - Qur'an 54:1)
إنشقاق القمر في عهد الرسول
3. The fire in *Al-Hijaz* (western region of Saudi Arabia) have illuminated the necks of camels in Basrah (Iraq)
نار الحجاز
4. The interruption of the *Jizyah* (poll tax), and the *Kharaj* (tax paid by those who exploit the land of the Islamic State)
توقف الجزية والخراج

Signs that have occurred and are continuing to occur, or might occur again in the future

1. Wars that Muslims will win
الفتوحات والحروب
2. Appearance of impostors pretending to be prophets.
إدعاء النبوة
3. Increase in tribulation (*fitan*) and turmoil
ظهور الفتن
4. Entrusting the affairs of Muslims to undeserving persons and the general corruption of Muslims
توسيد الأمر إلى غير أهله وفساد المسلمين
5. Unification of Non-Muslim nations against the Muslim *Ummah*
كثرة التآمر على الإسلام
6. Different kinds of evil befalling the Muslim *Ummah*
كثرة الكوارث بأنواعها

Signs that have not occurred yet

1. The Arabian Peninsula will become once again a land of gardens and rivers
عودة جزيرة العرب جنات وأنهار
2. The enlargement of the crescent, and shortening of time
إنتفاخ الأهلة وتقارب الزمان

Other extraordinary events

1. The appearance of the *Mahdi* - a just ruler who will restore peace, justice and prosperity in the Muslim land
ظهور المهدي
2. Beasts of every prey and inanimate (e.g. end of whip and shoestrings) speaking to humans
تكليم السباع والجماد
3. The Euphrates river uncovering a mountain of gold
إنحسار الفرات عن جبل من ذهب

Follow each other so closely that there is almost no interruption between them like a pearl necklace that has been broken - its first pearl falls, followed by the others with no interruption

1. The smoke الدخان

(Qur'an 44:10,11)

2. The *Dajjal* (false Messiah, or Antichrist) الدجال

3. The descent of *Isa* (Jesus - the Messiah)
نزول عيسى ابن مريم
(Qur'an 43:61)

4. The appearance of *Ya'juj* and *Ma'juj* (Gog and Magog)
ياجوج و ماجوج
(Qur'an 18:93 to 99)

5. The lifting of the Qur'an to Heaven and the decline of Islam
ذهاب الإيمان ورفع القرآن من الأرض

6. The return of humanity to idolatry and ignorance (Qur'an 44:10,11) عودة الجاهلية

7. The destruction of the *Ka'abah*
هدم الكعبة

8. The rising of the sun from the West
طلوع الشمس من مغربها

9. The emergence of the beast from the earth
الدابة
(Qur'an 27:82)

10. The fire that will drive people to their last gathering place
نار تخرج من اليمن تطرد الناس إلى محشرهم