

Why an Eternal Hell?

An Islamic Perspective

by Muhammad Sulaiman

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Introduction

For non-believers, their opinions, through which they reject Islaam, are arrived at without having the knowledge of everything relating directly to the topic under examination. *Further* analysis of that comprehensive knowledge of the issue, by placing it within the complete framework of Islamic beliefs, practices and timescales of existence, is usually missing, as it is not thought necessary. It's no surprise therefore that their opinions differ greatly in many instances from those of Allaah (a.w.j.).

Nay, they denied as false what they could not encompass of its (a Chapter's) knowledge, and its interpretation had not come to them. Thus denied those before them, then see how was the end of the wrongdoers. (10:39)

Until, when they come, He (Allaah) will say "Did you deny My Signs while you encompassed them not in knowledge, or what did you used to do?" (27:84)

One issue which causes them to deny Islaam, and which also causes unease and confusion in the minds of many Muslims, is the existence of an eternal Hell. The factors involved in their denials and confusions, and the answers to them, are similar in nature to the further issues of Islamic criminal and social laws, punishments and practices. For non-believers, these issues lead ultimately to denial of Allaah's existence, or of Islaam as being the religion of the God in which they believe.

The central issue of an eternal Hell will be examined in this publication, with the other issues being touched upon when relevant to the discussion.

Chapter 1 Accusations and Questions

1.1 Examples

1.1 The existence of an eternal Hell demonstrates cruelty, or at least a cold unconcern for the suffering of individuals, as knowledge of their suffering preceded their creation and their commitment of sins.

1.1.2 Why create a system whereby a supposed Creator knew that some of His Creation would be subject to His punishment, when there was no need to create them at all? If He knew such an outcome would result, He shouldn't have gone through with the set-up in which free will was given—to avoid the results of abuse of that free will.

1.1.3 Why bother at all? If such a god could create or not create, then why bother creating something when knowing even beforehand that some of that creation would “fail” in its set test and be condemned to unimaginable, endless torment? It seems callous, unfeeling, uncaring and heartless—the complete opposite of what this god is claimed to be—to cause such a situation to occur with absolutely no necessity at all for any of the other, positive outcomes that would supposedly occur in parallel.

1.1.4 Why does there need to be eternal suffering of anyone at all for the sole purpose of demonstrating such a supposed Creator's character and abilities? Would His Creation consider Him a liar if He gave them this knowledge of Himself directly, without having to learn it through experience?

1.1.5 Do the angels not know His character and abilities? If yes, it negates the test as being a means to this. If no, then believers in the Hereafter will know more about Allaah than the angels. How would this additional knowledge be worth the eternal suffering of others?

1.1.6 Is the price of His recognition through exercise of free will, and experience, worth it; and why should anyone be put in a system where they have a statistical chance of being that price? If He neither gains nor loses by being recognised or not recognised, why create a system that leads to eternal suffering, even if the individuals concerned *do* determine their own punishment through exercise of their free will?

1.1.7 To say that we *chose* this use-of-free-will test knowing the possible outcome of failure doesn't negate the fact that our “gamble” was known to have a failure rate. The individual would indeed be completely responsible for his or her sin, but why create such a system by which there has, by necessity (and design), to *be* a failure rate?

1.2 The Questioner's Position

Firstly, it needs to be established why the question is being asked.

1.2.1 Condemnation

Does the questioner ask in a purely condemnatory manner, with no possibility of any investigation or explanation to which they might be open; being so certain of their own opinion that the question is only an attempt to demonstrate the falsity of belief through highlighting of a supposedly obvious

flaw within that belief? These people have lines of reasoning such as: “Polygamy is wrong. Islaam permits polygamy, therefore it cannot be correct, therefore the Islamic concept of Allaah doesn’t exist.”

1.2.2 Internal Inconsistency

Is it questioning belief in an eternal Hell in an even partially exploratory way, due to a perceived inconsistency within that belief i.e. a claim of goodness for Allaah, but a perceived cruelty and injustice in His character and behaviour.

1.2.3 Conflict with Personal Values

Is it exploratory questioning due to a perceived incongruence between what Belief is saying is correct behaviour on Allaah’s part and what the questioner’s personal concept of right and wrong and justice is?

1.3 Reasons for Current Rejection

1.3.1 Atheism

They believe that Allaah doesn’t exist, and the question of an eternal Hell is an example of the logical and moral inconsistency within belief that demonstrates that fact. The moral foundation of the argument is so instinctive and universal that it is irrefutable. Any explanation for the existence of an eternal Hell is irrelevant, as the moral indefensibility for its supposed existence is so instinctive and obvious that justification is impossible. The further questioning of Allaah’s existing or not is, by extension, also irrelevant and unnecessary.

1.3.2 Conflict with Personal Values

They cannot believe in Allaah because His creation of an eternal Hell would mean that their instinctive, shared notions of right and wrong would be defined as incorrect. They know they are not incorrect, therefore Allaah cannot exist.

1.3.3 Conflict with their Concept of God

They believe in God, but their instinctive, shared notions of right and wrong mean that they cannot believe in God as someone who knowingly created some of us to remain in an eternal Hell, just to unnecessarily demonstrate Attributes of vengeance and anger. They therefore cannot accept the Islamic concept of their Creator, or, by extension, the supposed religion that Muslims claim their Creator wants them to follow.

Chapter 2 Approach

For those who do not believe, but are prepared to have their opinions examined, the first thing to establish is that they need to put themselves in the environment of a mental exercise; similar to that used in theoretical physics, for example. Setting scenarios and examining the implications of those scenarios and the factors within them leads to drawing conclusions such as “A is true, therefore B must also be true.” “A is true, therefore B must be false.” “If A occurs, one would expect evidence of B” etc.

2.1 Bounds

2.1.1 The premise needs to be established (and it is only a premise in a mental exercise) that if Allaah exists, and Islaam is true, anything disagreeing with Islaam is, by definition, false. Belief, therefore, doesn't require external contradictions to prove itself; it only needs internal consistency.

For example, a fundamentalist Christian will claim that God created the world a few thousand years ago, but with the appearance of it having existed for about four billion years. Any evidence showing the history of the world and the development of life over four billion years doesn't negate their belief therefore.

2.1.2 A conclusion from such a mental exercise would be; If Allaah exists, and Islaam is true, then we and everything else that exists apart from Allaah were created by Him.

2.1.3 If Allaah exists and He created everything that exists, and knew everything that would happen even before creating it, then our intellectual abilities and the conclusions and morals that we derive from them would also be created by and known by Allaah.

2.1.4 If our existence doesn't end at death, but is eternal, then our understanding of what our current life necessitates must reflect that. For example, our arrangements for an overnight visit somewhere are different to the arrangements we make for a two weeks' holiday away from home, or a six months' temporary transfer to a foreign work site, or permanent emigration to a different country. What we do with our families, money, home, car and other property are different for each scenario. No-one would sell their house and property before every holiday, or when working abroad temporarily for six months, then buy new ones each time after returning. Most people, however, would sell their house and property in one country when moving permanently to another. They wouldn't just take overnight bags and leave everything else permanently behind.

Similarly, the logical conclusions as to what is necessary for a limited life on Earth must necessarily be different to the logical conclusions as to what is necessary for a limited time on Earth, followed by a limited time before resurrection, followed by a Day of Judgement with justice, reward, compensation, forgiveness and retaliation being dispensed, followed by either: an eternal existence in Hell; Hell followed by Paradise; a period of waiting outside Paradise followed by entry into it, or direct entry into eternal Paradise.

2.1.5 If Islaam conflicts with the conclusions someone has reached within the context of their current belief as to the time frame of their existence—concerning what is right and wrong, and their understanding of what our current life necessitates—then it is not surprising.

2.1.6 If mistakes cannot be rectified after death; if absolute justice can never be meted out; if the guilty and the innocent can never be identified with absolute certainty; if satisfactory compensation cannot be paid to everyone who has suffered, or been falsely accused or punished in life, and if revenge (if desired) cannot be taken after death, then the means for achieving all these desirable outcomes must be achieved as best as possible in this life. The resultant legal system must necessarily be different from one which is based on an eternal existence, after all necessary evidences, judgements, forgiveness, retributions, vengeances and compensations have been completed.

For example, current, Western society has adopted the cultural norm of free mixing between the sexes, which provides opportunities for rapists, and has adopted sexual freedom, which provides an avenue for false claims of consent. The low conviction rates for rape do not provide a strong deterrent to any would-be rapist, and around fifty percent of convicted rapists in the U.K. carry out further rapes after being released from prison. In the current system there is no (or very little) protection from these convicted rapists for the general public. The only way to protect the certain, future, unknown victims within the current legal system would be to introduce whole-life sentences for rape. Those convicted wrongly, and who died in prison, would have no personal redress or compensation.

The system of Islaam, in contrast, minimises the opportunity for rapists by denying free mixing and sexual freedom, and imposes the death sentence as a sign of rape's abhorrent nature. This acts as a strong deterrent, and protects society from known rapists. Any miscarriages of justice are resolved and compensated for on the Day of Judgement; for the rape victim denied justice, for the false accuser and the falsely accused. Working backwards from the seriousness of both the offence itself and the punishment imposed, the system also provides protection against being a victim of false accusations. The loss of free mixing and sexual freedom for the infinitesimal fraction of one's existence that life on Earth comprises is considered worth the price for this and other protections for society. These include: maximising the opportunity for children to be born and raised in a stable, loving, married household; minimising marriage breakup and all the subsequent fallout from that caused by adultery; minimising prostitution; minimising the occurrence of STD's; reducing the number of abortions, for the benefit of all concerned; and minimising sexual harassment and sexual assaults of all kinds.

2.1.7 Reaching a certainty of conclusion concerning an eternal Hell, without resorting to anything claiming to be revelation, entails use of an individual's and others' personal intelligences, insights, knowledge, life experiences, senses of morality, and the cultural norms of the society and time in which they live. These constantly changing variables cannot lead to an absolute, singular, universal certainty.

2.1.8 In any field of knowledge, barring any fortuitous mistakes, a correct conclusion concerning any issue can only be reached when *all* of the knowledge and understanding necessary to draw such a

conclusion is available. In the matter of an eternal Hell, such complete knowledge is currently available to none of us, so a complete understanding of the issue is impossible. We would therefore be in a position of having to take our understanding partially on trust.

2.1.9 If the Knower of every relevant issue—the nature of the initial contract and promises made, the nature and actions of all involved, the final outcomes of all involved, His creation’s preconceived notions of right and wrong, and most importantly of all, His own Nature—had informed us that there is no injustice, tyranny or lack of love and concern for all involved, then as the One Who knows and understands all the factors involved in being able to reach such a conclusion, it would be only logical on our part to accept His conclusion on this issue. We would be in no intellectual position to do otherwise. How could someone lacking the necessary knowledge and understanding needed to come to a conclusion, and who would be incapable of ever having them, reject the conclusion of the One who had them?

To quote a contemporary scholar, who was answering a question put to him on this issue of understanding and accepting things for which we don’t have the requisite knowledge:

The main cause of your error and misguidance is the fact that you do not differentiate between what is rationally impossible and what is rationally incomprehensible.

That in which wisdom is hidden, or it is rationally impossible to comprehend that wisdom, comes under the heading of that which is rationally incomprehensible, which makes people wonder about the wisdom behind things. In religion you may see some matters that are beyond rational comprehension (and make people of reason wonder about them), as a test from Allaah to His slaves. But there is nothing in religion that is rationally impossible, and is false and incorrect according to reason. This is something that Allaah never included in His religion and is something that He never included in His creation and command, may He be glorified. The failure to differentiate between the two is the cause of many people being misguided.

Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyyah (may Allaah have mercy on him) said:

Undoubtedly the Messengers (blessings and peace of Allaah be upon them) may tell people of matters that their reason cannot comprehend, but they do not tell them of anything that people know on the basis of reason to be impossible. So the Messengers tell people of that which is rationally incomprehensible (that is, beyond the grasp of reason), but it is not impossible. So whoever would like to comprehend by his reason what the Messengers said, is akin to those concerning whom Allaah, may He be exalted, said:

And when there comes to them a sign (from Allaah) they say ‘We shall not believe until we receive the like of that which the Messengers of Allaah had received.’ Allaah knows best with whom to place His Message. (6:124)

Nay, everyone of them desires that he should be given pages spread out (coming from Allaah with a writing that Islaam is the right religion, and Muhammad (blessings and peace of Allaah be upon him) has come with the truth from Allaah the Lord of the heavens and earth). (74:52)

It is not possible for the Messengers to say something that is not possible on the basis of common sense and rational thinking. Rather it is not possible for them to say something that cannot be accepted on a rational basis. So they may say things that are incomprehensible according to reason, but they are not impossible. And there may be something that they say that is beyond the ability of some people to comprehend and imagine, because people vary in their powers of reasoning. In the glory, dominion, signs and creation of the Lord, may He be exalted, there are issues that people—many of them—cannot understand or imagine...

But many people think, on the basis of their reasoning, that there are things that are not possible, when they are not impossible, and they may think that there are things that are possible or necessary, when that is not the case.

These areas of belief fall within a statement from a classical treatise on Islamic beliefs 'Aqeedah at-Tahaawiyyah.

*The foundation of Islaam is not firm unless it is based on submitting and the state of self-surrender, so **whoever sought knowledge that his own knowledge was debarred from, and was not content with the submission of his intellect**, his seeking veiled him from pure belief in Allaah's Unity, clear cognisance and correct faith. So he wavers between disbelief and faith, confirmation and denial, and acknowledging and rejecting. He is subject to whisperings; lost; deviating; doubting—not an assenting believer nor a lying denier.*

This isn't a crude attempt to say "Shut up and just believe," but to say, logically, that an issue for which one cannot have access to all of the information required to come to a correct conclusion, cannot be one which is rejected as false, and cannot be one which is used to accept or reject belief in Allaah (a.w.j.).

Chapter 3 Allaah's Guidance on the Issue

There are four main aspects to an eternal Hell that need to be addressed.

3.1 External Validation

Firstly, how to provide evidence to prove the existence of something that can't be verified independently via the senses or any experimental means. This was done by providing evidence of the validity of the sources which claim that an eternal Hell exists: the Qur'aan and the Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h.). This is similar in nature to proving the mathematical basis from which various aspects of Quantum Physics are derived. For example, it is extremely unlikely that anyone will ever witness a ball being bounced against a wall only to see it pass through to the other side, but the mathematical basis on which this phenomenon was first proposed can be shown to be true.

An externally-checkable evidence from the Old Testament—for the Prophethood of Muhammad (p.b.u.h.)—is given in the Appendix. Below are some examples of evidence to prove the origin of the Qur'aan, which if not from Allaah (a.w.j.) came from an illiterate 7th Century Arab living in a culture having no history of knowledge on such issues, and neither were there any surrounding cultures having this type of knowledge. By what recognised, non-revelatory means did Muhammad (p.b.u.h.) attain such knowledge if revelation is discounted? We know the means by which scientists arrived at this knowledge, and know that such means weren't available at his time. A vague "*he got it from other cultures*" isn't evidence without proof of the claim, so the question still remains.

Soon We will show them Our Signs in the horizons and in themselves until it becomes clear to them, that it (the Qur'aan) is the truth. Is it not sufficient concerning your Lord that He is a Witness over all things? (41:53)

Do not those who disbelieved see that the heavens and the earth were a joined entity (lit. joined by stitching), then We rent them asunder and We made every living thing from water? ** Then will they not believe? And in the earth firmly set mountains, lest it shake with them, *** and We made therein broad passes; ways, so that they may be guided. (21:30-1)*
*Big Bang Theory. **Origin and basis of life. ***Mountains reduce the likelihood of earthquakes in an area.

And the heaven We constructed it with strength, and indeed, We are surely its Expanders. (51:47) Expanding Universe.

Say "Do you indeed really disbelieve in the One Who created the earth in two periods and you set up rivals with Him? That is the Lord of the worlds. And He placed therein firmly-set mountains above it and He blessed therein, and determined therein its sustenance in four periods; equal, for those who ask. And He directed Himself towards the heaven while it was smoke**, and He said to it and to the earth 'Come both of you willingly or unwillingly.' They both said "We come willingly."*** Then He completed them as seven heavens in two periods and He revealed in each heaven its affair. And We adorned the worldly heaven with lamps and a guard. That is the Decree of the All-Mighty, the All-Knower. (41:9-12) *Early Earth formed, then collided with Theia to form the Earth and the moon. **Physical state of the*

matter of the early universe. ***Both formed by gravitational attraction of early particulate and gaseous matter.

And He (is) the One Who created the night and the day, and the Sun and the moon; each in a floating orbit. (21:33). The Sun's orbit as part of the rotating galaxy.

*Do they not look at the camels: how they have been created? And at the heaven: how it is raised? And at the mountains: how they have been rooted and firmly fixed?** *And at the earth: how it has been spread out**?* (88:17-20) *Root-like shape in the crust. **Indicating a layer of solid material, rather than a solid earth.

And you see the mountains, thinking them firmly fixed, while they pass along (as the) passing along of the clouds. The Work of Allaah Who perfected all things. Indeed, He is All-Aware of what you do. (27:88) Plate Tectonics. Mountains and clouds formed by rising matter (from earth's core/earth's surface); cooling on rising, and change of state (liquid to solid/vapour to liquid). Movement of both is caused by push of material flowing beneath them (magma convection currents/air currents).

Indeed, those who disbelieved in Our Signs, soon We will burn them (in) a Fire. Every time their skins are roasted, We will change their skins for other (than) that, so that they may taste the punishment. Indeed, Allaah is All-Mighty, All-Wise. (4:56) Nerve endings are in the skin.

There are websites dedicated to such evidences, and also to refuting the attempts by Christians in particular to discredit them. The techniques they use to try and do so are illuminating to anyone who is aware of Allaah's descriptions of the people who try to conceal or misrepresent His Message. For example:

...They disputed by (using) falsehood to (attempt to) invalidate thereby the truth, so I seized them, and how (terrible) was My Penalty. (40:5)

As an example, Muslims are often careless about translating Arabic into English as they believe implicitly that it is true—so 'just about' is good enough for them. The following verse is often translated incorrectly, and the mistranslation is used by Christians and others as evidence of a clear, provable error in the Qur'aan.

فَلْيَنْظُرِ الْإِنْسَانُ مِمَّ خُلِقَ خُلِقَ مِنْ مَّاءٍ دَافِقٍ يُخْرُجُ مِنْ بَيْنِ الصُّلْبِ وَالتَّرَائِبِ

So let man see from what he is created. He is created from an ejected (daafiq) liquid, coming forth (yakhruju) from between the backbone (sulb) and the ribs (taraa'ib). (86:5-7)

The word *sulb* does indeed mean backbone, but any Western dictionary will tell you that it also means *loins* (Wortabet Pocket Dictionary). The deceit in not stating this in their criticisms can be seen when Christians translate the Bible into Arabic; translating a phrase such as 'from the loins of David' using *sulb* for loins. *Daafiq* is an active participle, and also means surging, gushing, pouring out vehemently. The word *yakhruju* means it comes / passes out / emanates / departs from a place. That the place of exit is the penis is something known, so as is common in Arabic, and particularly

Quranic Arabic, it is not mentioned explicitly. The word *taraa'ib* is a rare word meaning *woman's ribs* (Arabic-English Lexicon by Edward William Lane), but is stated to be such in many readily-available, classical works of Quranic exposition. A more correct translation would therefore be:

So let man see from what he is created. He is created from a gushing liquid. It comes out (of the penis, at a point) from between the loins and the woman's ribs.

A statement that a liquid ejaculated in a place between the loins and the ribs of a woman (the vaginal/uterine area) is the source of what develops into a human being is not news for a modern, educated society, but there were in the past, societies that didn't associate sexual intercourse and semen ejaculation with pregnancy. The mechanics of sexual reproduction is not intended to be the central theme of the verses, however.

3.2 Accessible Arguments

The second aspect to address is that, given that Allaah (a.w.j.) knew that man, in this life, can never know all that is necessary to *independently* know that the creation of an eternal Hell is not wrong, how could He provide sufficient knowledge that man *could* understand, in order to avoid such disbelief? It is necessary that He did so, as He knew that the instinctive, moral sense of right and wrong which man would arrive at through his own intellect would lead him to question this issue, and would thus be a cause of the very disbelief that Allaah wishes to avoid.

3.2.1 Compulsion

Firstly, and most directly, He could inform us in such a way as to leave absolutely no room for disbelief.

Say "With Allaah is the conclusive evidence. And if He had willed, surely He would have guided you all." (6:149)

And if your Lord had willed, surely, whoever are in the earth would have believed; all of them together. Then will you compel mankind until they become believers? (10:99)

3.2.2 Reasons

Allaah (a.w.j.) gave what are and what are *not* the reasons for creating and establishing the trial that can lead to an eternal Hell.

And We created not the heaven and the earth and whatever is between them without purpose. That is the assumption of those who disbelieve. So woe from the Fire to those who disbelieve. (38:27)

Did you think that We had created you in play, and that you would not be brought back to Us? (23:115)

We created not the heavens and the earth and all that is between them for a (mere) play. (21:16)

If We intended that We take a pastime, surely We could have taken it from Us, if We were doers (of such a thing). (21:17)

And whoever strives then he only strives for himself. Indeed, Allaah is free from need of the worlds. (29:6)

And say "The truth is from your Lord, so whoever wills, let him believe, and whoever wills, let him disbelieve."... (18:29)

If you disbelieve, then verily, Allaah is not in need of you; He likes not disbelief for His slaves. And if you are grateful (by being believers), He is pleased therewith for you. (39:7)

And I (Allaah) created not the jinn and mankind except that they should worship Me. (51:56)

The One Who created death and life so that He may test you; which of you is best in deed. And He is the All-Mighty, the Oft-Forgiving. (67:2)

3.2.3 His Nature

He told us of His Nature by which He came to such a decision and conclusion as to its rightness.

Does not the One Who created know? And He is the Subtle, the All-Aware. (67:14)

He is *al Barr* (The Good), *al Quddoos* (The Most Holy), *al Hakeem* (The Wise), *al Majeed* (The Noble), *al 'Aleem* (The All-Knowing), *al Khabeer* (The Informed), *al Lateef* (The Gentle), *al Wadood* (The Loving), *al 'Adl* (The Just).

Ibn Taymiyyah (r.a.a.) said concerning the verse:

He will not be questioned about what He does, but they will be questioned. (21:23)

Allaah is not to be questioned about what He does because of His perfect wisdom, mercy and justice, not just because of His subjugation of creation and His might. Once you understand this, then you will realise that the rulings of Allaah, may He be exalted, all stem from knowledge, justice, wisdom and kindness. Allaah, may He be exalted, says:

And the Word of your Lord has been fulfilled in truth and in justice. None can change His Words. And He is the All-Hearer, the All-Knower. (6:115)

Ibn al Qayyim (r.a.a.) said of the verse containing the statement of Prophet Hood (a.s.):

I put my trust in Allaah, my Lord and your Lord! There is not a moving (living) creature but He has grasp of its forelock. Truly, my Lord is on the Straight Path (the truth). (11:56)

With regard to the verse in Soorah Hood, it clearly means, and cannot be interpreted in any other way, that Allaah, may He be glorified, is on a Straight Path, and He, may He be glorified, is more deserving of being on a Straight Path, for all His words are truth, fairness, guidance, justice and wisdom: "And the Word of your Lord has been fulfilled in truth and in justice" (6:115). And all His deeds are beneficial, wise, merciful, just and good. Evil cannot be part of the deeds or words of the One Who is on the Straight Path; rather evil can only be part of the words and deeds of one who drifts away from that Path.

3.2.4 Justness

He then told us that He is not unjust or oppressive to anyone.

And the Book will be placed, and you will see the criminals fearful of what is in it, and they will say "Oh, woe to us! What is this Book for? It leaves not a small nor great (matter) except it has enumerated it." And they will find what they did presented (to them). And your Lord deals not unjustly with anyone. (18:49)

Do they wait except that the Angels should come to them or the Command of your Lord should come? Thus did those who were before them. And Allaah wronged them not, but they were wronging themselves. Then the evil (results) of what they did struck them, and what they used (to) mock of it surrounded them. (16:33-4)

Aboo Hurayrah (r.a.) reported that the Messenger of Allaah (p.b.u.h.) said 'When Allaah created the creation, He wrote down in His Book, as it was with Him above the Throne "Truly, My mercy predominates My wrath."' (Muslim Book 37, Hadeeth 6626)

3.2.5 Angels' Response

He told us the response of the Angels. When they questioned the creation of man, they didn't question the concept or morality of the free will that he was given; they asked for clarification about the wisdom of putting man on Earth whilst knowing the evil that would ensue from it. The *jinn* had shown the effects of abuse of free will on Earth already.

And when your Lord said to the angels "Indeed, I am going to place a vicegerent in the earth, they said "Will You place in it one who will spread corruption in it and will shed blood, while we; we glorify (You) with Your praises and we sanctify You?" He said "Indeed, I know what you know not." (2:30)

3.2.6 Pre-Awareness

He told us that we went into this test—of recognising Allaah (a.w.j.) and worshipping Him—with its possible outcome of eternal failure, with our eyes fully open and of our own, true free will.

And when your Lord took from the Children of Adam—from their loins—their descendants, and made them bear witness about themselves "Am I not your Lord?" They said "Yes, we have testified." Lest you say on the Day of Resurrection "Indeed, we were unaware about this." (7:172)

The testing itself is not the purpose of creating, as much of the Creation—the angels for example—was never intended to be tested, and are living an eternal life free of hardship and suffering. Complete freedom of choice on the matter was given, and some Creation chose not to be tested.

Indeed, We; We offered the Trust to the heavens and the earth and the mountains, but they refused to bear it and they feared it; but man bore it. Indeed, he was unjust, ignorant. (33:72)

The testing is also not about populating the Earth with human beings.

And if it were Our Will, We would have (destroyed you all, and) made angels to replace you on the earth. (43:60) (Tafseer at-Tabaree, Vol. 25, Page 89)

A consequence of this test is that when we were offered the choice of free will, it implicitly meant that we could also be the object of someone else's abuse of their free will, i.e. we knew of the existence of evil in life. We knew that the Day of Recompense would compensate us for such abuse far in excess of any actual harm suffered, no matter how severe it might have seemed while in the life of the world.

To illustrate this aspect of life and its consequences: If we imagine the most disadvantaged person to have ever lived; with their social, financial and material deprivations, physical disabilities, medical problems, physical, mental, sexual and financial abuse by others, and any other negative aspects of life that we can imagine—then imagine that person living eternally in Paradise, and spending eons of time just to investigate and enjoy the material rewards for all that suffering.

And their recompense shall be Paradise, and silken garments, because they were patient. Reclining on raised thrones, they will see there neither the excessive heat of the sun, nor the excessive bitter cold. The shade will be close upon them, and bunches of fruit will hang low within their reach. Vessels of silver and cups of crystal will be passed around amongst them, crystal-clear, made of silver. They will determine the measure of them according to their wishes. They will be given a cup (of wine) mixed with Zanjabeel, and a fountain called Salsabeel. Around them will (serve) boys of perpetual youth. If you see them, you would think they are scattered pearls. When you look there (in Paradise) you will see a delight (that cannot be imagined), and a Great Dominion. Their garments will be of fine green silk and gold embroidery. They will be adorned with bracelets of silver, and their Lord will give them a pure drink. (76:12-21)

The description of Paradise which those who feared their Lord have been promised, is that in it are rivers of water, the taste and smell of which are never changed; rivers of milk the taste of which will remain unchanged; rivers of wine that will be delicious to those who drink from it and rivers of clear, pure honey. For them will be every kind of fruit, and forgiveness from their Lord. (47:15)

And those foremost (in piety in this life) will be foremost (in Paradise). They will be those nearest to Allaah in the Gardens of Delight. A multitude of those (the foremost) will be from the earlier (generations) and a few of those will be from the later (generations). They will be reclining, face to face, on thrones woven with gold and precious stones. They will be served by immortal boys, with cups and jugs, and a glass from flowing wine, from which they will have neither any headache, nor any intoxication. They will have fruit from which they may choose, and the flesh of fowls that they desire. There will be Houris with wide, lovely eyes (as wives for the pious), like preserved pearls, a reward for deeds that they used to do. They will hear no vain or sinful speech but only the saying of "Peace, Peace." And those on the Right Hand, who will be those on the Right Hand? They will be among thornless lote trees; among banana trees with fruits piled one above another, in long-extended shade, by constantly flowing water, and fruit in plenty, whose season is not limited, and their supply will not be cut

off. They will be on couches or thrones raised high. Truly, We have created for them (maidens) of equal age, loving. For those on the Right Hand. (56:10-38)

Aboo Hurayrah (r.a.) reported 'The Messenger of Allaah (p.b.u.h.) said "Allaah has said 'I have prepared for My righteous servants what no eye has seen, what no ear has heard, and what no heart has conceived.' So recite if you wish: "No person knows what is kept hidden for them of delights of the eye as a reward for what they used to do." (32:17). And in Paradise there is a tree under whose shade a rider can travel for one hundred years without stopping. Recite if you wish: "In shade extended." (56:30). And the space in Paradise occupied by a whip is better than the whole world and everything in it. Recite if you wish: "Whoever is removed from the Hellfire and entered into Paradise is indeed successful, for the life of this world is only the enjoyment of deception." (3:185)'" (Tirmithee Vol. 5, Book 44, Hadeeth 3292)

Could someone who achieved all this and more, for eternity, care less about what had happened to them in the short-lived past? This would have been the goal for which they were aiming when they signed up for the trial in the first place.

3.2.7 Our Own Reaction

Knowing the future as completely as He knows the present and the past, Allaah (a.w.j.) told us how we would react once the test period was over; that we ourselves would testify to the justness of it all, or try to lie. Our books will be given to us so we can take our own account and see that no injustice has been done. We will condemn our own selves and blame others, but not blame Allaah. Those who failed will ask to be sent back to try again.

...Every time a group is cast therein (into Hell), its keeper will ask "Did no warner come to you?" They will say "Yes indeed; a warner did come to us, but we belied him and said 'Allaah never sent down anything (of revelation), you are only in great error.'" And they will say "If we had listened or used our reasoning, we would not have been among the companions of the Blaze." (67:9-10)

And those who disbelieved will be driven to Hell in groups, till, when they reach it, the gates thereof will be opened and its keepers will say "Did not the Messengers come to you from yourselves, reciting to you the Verses of your Lord, and warning you of the Meeting of this Day of yours?" They will say "Yes, but the Word of torment has been justified against the disbelievers!" (39:71)

And the Day the wrongdoer will bite his hands, he will say "Oh, I wish I had taken a Path with the Messenger. Oh woe to me! I wish I had not taken so-and-so as a friend. Truly, he led me astray from the Reminder after it had come to me. And Satan is a deserter of man." (25:27-9)

And (for) every man, We have fastened to him his fate around his neck, and on the Day of Resurrection, We will bring forth for him a record which he will find wide open. "Read your record. Today, yourself is sufficient (as) accountant against you." (17:13-14)

Nay! Man will be a witness against himself. Even if he presents his excuses. (75:14-15)

But as for he who is given his record in his left hand, then he will say "Oh, I wish I had not been given my record, and I had not known what my account is. Oh, I wish it had been the end. My wealth has not availed me. My authority is gone from me." (69:25-9)

He will say "Oh, I wish I had sent (something) forth for my (future) life." (89:24)

(The) Day their faces will be turned about in the Fire, they will say "Oh, we wish we had obeyed Allaah and obeyed the Messenger!" And they will say "Our Lord! Indeed, we; we obeyed our chiefs and our great men, and they misled us from the Way. Our Lord! Give them double punishment and curse them (with) a great curse." (33:66-8)

Then on the Day of Resurrection, He will disgrace them and say "Where are My partners; those concerning whom you used to dispute?" Those who were given knowledge will say "Indeed, disgrace and evil are upon the disbelievers this Day." Those whom the Angels take in death (while) wronging themselves, then they will offer the submission "We were not doing any evil." Nay, indeed, Allaah is All-Knower of what you used to do. (16:27-8)

Then there will not be a plea for them, except that they say "By Allaah, our Lord, we were not those who associated others (with Allaah)." (6:23)

And the Day the Hour will be established, the criminals will swear they remained not but an hour. Thus they were deluded. But those who were given knowledge and faith will say "Truly you remained, by the Decree of Allaah, until the Day of Resurrection. And this is the Day of Resurrection, but you; you did not know." So that Day, their excuses will not profit those who wronged, and they will not be allowed to make amends. (30:55-7)

And if those who did wrong had all that is in the earth and the like of it with it, they would ransom (themselves) with it from the evil of the punishment on the Day of the Resurrection. And what they had not taken into account will appear to them from Allaah. And the evils of what they earned will become apparent to them, and what they used to mock about it will surround them. (39:47-8)

Respond to your Lord before there comes a Day from Allaah for which there is no averting. There is not any refuge for you on that Day, and not any denial for you. (42:47)

They will say while they are in it (Hell), disputing "By Allaah, indeed, we were surely in clear error when we equated you with the Lord of the worlds. And nothing misguided us except the criminals. So we do not have any intercessors, nor a close friend. Then, would that we had a return chance, then we could be (one) of the believers." (26:96-102)

Do they wait except for its fulfilment? (The) Day its fulfilment comes, those who had forgotten it before will say "Truly the Messengers of our Lord had come with the truth, so are there any intercessors for us, so that they intercede for us, or we are sent back so that we do (deeds) other than that which we used to do." Truly, they lost themselves, and what they used to invent has failed them. (7:53)

And if you could see when the criminals will hang their heads before their Lord (saying) "Our Lord we have seen and we have heard, so return us, we will do righteous deeds. Indeed, we are now certain." (32:12)

And those whose scales of good deeds are light, they ruined themselves and they will be in Hell eternally. The fire will burn their faces, and they will grin with disfigured lips. I will say to them "Were My Verses not recited to you, and you rejected them?" They will reply "Our Lord, our misery overcame us and we were a people astray. Our Lord, bring us out of this, and if we ever return we will truly be unjust." (23:104)

And they cry for help there, saying 'Our Lord! Release us; we will do right, not (the wrong) that we used to do.' "Did We not grant you a long enough life for him who reflected to reflect therein? And the warner came unto you. Now taste (the result of your deeds), for evil-doers have no helper." (35:37)

3.3 Avoiding Hell

Thirdly is the issue of avoiding Hell, both temporary and permanent.

3.3.1 Avoid Behaviours

History shows that people are usually stubborn. When they are told about what is right and correct, they do not accept and follow it, or even research the matter, despite the fact that at the very least it should have created some doubt that would prompt them to do so. For most people, they insist on remaining part of the community and belief system (or none) into which they were born. They give many justifications for this, and once they have set their minds to rejection of anything else—no matter what the evidence or logic—there is no benefit to further discussion or evidences. They are left to stray on the path they have chosen; misguided and misleading others. The following verses give examples of such people, their attitudes, and how they are treated—as guidelines for what to avoid.

Indeed, those who disbelieve (by denying what they know to be true), it is the same to them whether you warn them or you don't warn them, they will not believe. (2:6)

And they say "Our life is not but of the world; we die and we live, and nothing destroys us except time." And they have no knowledge of that; they do nothing but guess. And when Our clear Verses are recited to them, their argument is nothing but that they say "Bring our forefathers if you are truthful." Say "Allaah gives you life, then causes you to die; then He will gather you to the Day of the Resurrection, no doubt about it." But most of the people do not know. (45:24-26)

And if you obey most of those in the earth they will mislead you from the Path of Allaah. They follow nothing but assumption, and they do nothing but guess. (6:116)

And of the people is he who disputes about Allaah without knowledge and follows every rebellious devil. It has been decreed for every devil that whoever turns to him, he will misguide him and will lead him to the punishment of the Blaze. (22:3-4)

And of the people is he who disputes about Allaah without knowledge or guidance or an enlightening book, twisting his neck (in arrogance) to mislead (people) from the Path of Allaah. For him in the world is disgrace, and on the Day of Resurrection We will make him taste the punishment of the Burning Fire. (22:8-9)

Indeed, those who dispute concerning the Signs of Allaah without any authority having come to them, there is not within their breasts except pride, (the extent of) which they cannot reach. So seek refuge in Allaah. Indeed, it is He who is The All-Hearing, The All-Seeing. (40:56)

...They disputed by (using) falsehood to (attempt to) invalidate the truth thereby, so I seized them, and how (terrible) was My Penalty. (40:5)

And they said (to Moses) "Whatever you bring us therewith of a sign, so that you bewitch us with it, even then we will not be believers in you." (7:132)

And they swear their strongest oaths by Allaah that if a sign came to them, they would surely believe in it. Say "Signs belong only to Allaah." And what will make you (believers) realise that when it comes, they will not believe? (6:109)

And they denied (the Signs) wrongfully and arrogantly, though within themselves they were convinced of them." (27:14)

And those who don't expect a meeting with Us say "Why are angels not sent down to us, and why do we not see our Lord?" Assuredly they think too highly of themselves and are scornful with great pride. (25:21)

And even if We had sent a written Scripture down to you in a parchment, and they had touched it with their hands, surely those who disbelieved would have said "This is not but clear magic." (6:7)

And even if We opened to them a gate from heaven, and they were to continue to ascend therein, they would surely say "It is only that our eyes have been dazzled. Nay, we are a people bewitched." (15:14-15)

When Allaah will say "Oh Jesus, son of Mary! Remember My Favour upon you and upon your mother when I strengthened you with the Holy Spirit; you spoke to the people in the cradle and in maturity; and when I taught you the Book and the wisdom and the Torah and the Gospel. And when you made from clay a shape like that of a bird by My permission, then you breathed into it and it became a bird by My permission; and you healed the one born blind and the leper by My permission; and when you brought forth the dead by My permission. And when I restrained the Children of Israel from you when you came to them with the clear proofs, then those who disbelieved among them said "This is nothing except clear magic." (5:110)

Nay, they say "Indeed we; we found our forefathers upon a religion and indeed, we are guided on their footsteps." And thus We sent not before you in a town any warner except the wealthy ones of it said "Indeed we; we found our forefathers on a religion, and indeed, we are following in their footsteps." He said "Even if I brought you better guidance than what

you found your forefathers on?" They said "Indeed, we are disbelievers in what you are sent with." (43:22-4)

The worshippers of false gods say "If Allaah had so willed, we would not have worshipped anything but Him—neither we nor our fathers. Nor would we have prescribed prohibitions other than His." So did those who went before them. Then is there (any responsibility) on the Messengers except the clear conveyance (of the message)? (16:35)

And He it is Who has created the heavens and the earth in six Days and His Throne was on the water, that He might try you, which of you is the best in deeds. But if you were to say to them "You shall indeed be raised up after death" those who disbelieve would be sure to say "This is nothing but obvious magic." (11:7)

But as for those who disbelieved (it will be said) "Then were My Verses not recited to you, but you were proud and you became a criminal people?" And when it was said "Indeed the Promise of Allaah is true and the Hour; there is no doubt about it." You said "We know not what the Hour is. We think it is not but an assumption, and we are not convinced." And the evil of what they did will appear to them, and what they used to mock about it will envelop them. (45:31-3)

And as for (the community of) Thamood, We guided them, but they preferred blindness over guidance, so a thunderbolt of humiliating punishment seized them, because of what they used to earn. (41:17)

And certainly, We sent into every nation a Messenger, in order that (he proclaim) "Worship Allah, and avoid the false deities." Then among them (were some) whom Allah guided, and among them (were some) on whom deviation (by Allaah from the right Path) was justified. So travel in the earth and see how was the end of those who gave the lie (to the truth). (16:36)

And We will leave some of them on that Day to surge against others, and the trumpet will be blown into, then We will gather them all together. And We will present Hell on that Day to the disbelievers, on display; those whose eyes had been veiled from My remembrance, and were not able to hear. (18:99-101)

And among them (are those) who listen to you, but We have placed over their hearts coverings lest they understand it, and in their ears deafness. And if they see every sign they will not believe in it. Until, when they come to you and argue with you, those who disbelieved say "This is not but the tales of the ancients." (6:25)

And surely, We have created many of the jinn and mankind for Hell. They have hearts wherewith they understand not, and they have eyes wherewith they see not, and they have ears wherewith they hear not (the truth). They are like cattle, nay even more astray. Those; they are the heedless ones. (7:179)

And the example of those who disbelieved is like the example of the one (a shepherd) who shouts at what does not hear (anything) except calls and cries. Deaf, dumb and blind, so they do not use their reason. (2:171)

Deaf, dumb, blind, so they; they will not return (to the right Path). (2:18)

(The) Day some faces would become white and some faces would become black. As for those whose faces turn black (it will be said to them) "Did you disbelieve after your belief? Then taste the punishment for what you used to disbelieve." (3:106)

And whoever seeks a religion other than Islaam, it will never be accepted of him, and in the Hereafter he will be one of the losers. (3:85)

3.3.2 Forgiveness

Surely Allaah does not forgive that partners be associated with Him, but He forgives other than that to whomever He wishes..." (4:116)

Say 'Oh my Servants who have transgressed against their souls! Despair not of the Mercy of Allaah. Indeed Allaah forgives all sins. Indeed He is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful. (39:53)

...Why do you not ask forgiveness from Allaah so that you may receive mercy? (27:46)

And to Allaah belongs whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth, that He may recompense those who do evil with what they have done, and recompense those who do good with the best. Those who avoid great sins and the immoralities except the small faults; indeed, your Lord is vast in forgiveness. He is most knowing about you when He produced you from the earth and when you were foetuses in the wombs of your mothers. So do not ascribe purity to yourselves. He knows best he who fears. (53:32)

And if you avoid the major sins that you are forbidden from, We will conceal from you your evil deeds and enter you to a noble entrance. (4:31)

And those who avoid the greater sins and the immoralities, and when they are angry, they forgive. (42:37)

Sinning is not the determining factor for failure.

Abou Hurayrah (r.a.) reported the Messenger of Allaah (p.b.u.h.) having said "By Him in Whose Hand is my life, if you were not to commit sin, Allaah would sweep you out of existence and He would replace you by those people who would commit sin and seek forgiveness from Allaah, and He would have pardoned them." (Muslim Book 37, Hadeeth 6622)

Abou Hurayrah (r.a.) narrates that 'I heard the Prophet (p.b.u.h.) say "Any slave of Allaah who committed a sin and said 'Oh my Lord! I have sinned, so forgive me.' His Lord says "Does My slave know that he has a Lord, Who forgives sins, and also punishes? I have forgiven My slave." After refraining (from sins) so long as Allaah Willed, he sinned again and said 'Oh my Lord! I have committed another sin, so forgive me.' Allaah says "Does My slave know that he has a Lord, Who forgives sins, and punishes? I have forgiven My slave." After refraining (from sins) as long as Allaah Willed, he committed a sin again, and said 'Oh my Lord! I have committed another sin, so forgive me.' Then Allaah says "Does My slave know that he has a

Lord, Who forgives sins, and punishes? I have forgiven My slave a third time, so let him do what he likes.”” (Bukhaaree Vol. 9, Book 93, Hadeeth 598)

3.3.3 Personalised Guidance

He told us that we will receive personal instances of guidance throughout our lives.

Truly, it is Our responsibility to guide. (92:12)

Indeed, in the creation of the heavens and the earth and in the alternation of the night and the day are surely Signs for men of understanding. Those who remember Allaah standing, and sitting and on their sides and they reflect on the creation of the heavens and the earth (saying) “Our Lord, You have not created this in vain. Glory be to You, so save us from the punishment of the Fire.” (3:190-1)

Do they not see that they are tried once or twice in every year? Yet they turn not (in repentance), and they do not pay heed. (9:126)

Lo! We have shown him the Way, whether he be grateful or disbelieving. (76:3)

Indeed, We; We created man from a mixed drop (of fluids). We test him, so We made him hearing and seeing. Indeed, We guided him to the Way, whether (he be) grateful and whether (he be) ungrateful. (76:2-3)

3.3.4 Benchmark

Allaah (a.w.j.) told us how low the benchmark is to avoid eternal Hell.

Ibn ‘Umar (r.a.) narrated that the Prophet (p.b.u.h.) said “Indeed Allaah accepts the repentance of a slave as long as his soul does not reach his throat.” (Tirmithee Vol. 6, Book 45, Hadeeth 3537)

Anas (r.a.) narrated that the Prophet (p.b.u.h.) said ‘Whoever said “There is no god except Allaah” and has in his heart goodness equal to the weight of a barley grain will be taken out of Hell. And whoever said “There is no god except Allaah” and has in his heart goodness equal to the weight of a wheat grain will be taken out of Hell. And whoever said “There is no god except Allaah” and has in his heart goodness equal to the weight of an atom will be taken out of Hell.’ This hadeeth is also related with “faith” in place of “goodness.” (Bukhaaree Vol. 1, Book 2, Hadeeth 43)

Narrated Aboo Sa’eed al Khudree (r.a.) ‘The Prophet (p.b.u.h.) said “When the people of Paradise will enter Paradise and the people of Hell will go to Hell, Allaah will order those who have had faith equal to the weight of a grain of mustard seed to be taken out from Hell. So they will be taken out, but they will be blackened (charred). Then they will be put in the river of Haya’ (rain) or Hayaat (life) (the narrator is in doubt as to which is the right term), and they will revive like a grain that grows near the bank of a flood channel. Don’t you see that it comes out yellow and twisted?”” (Bukhaaree Vol. 1, Book 2, Hadeeth 22)

3.4 Those Without Guidance

Fourthly, what happens to those who didn't receive the reminder of their purpose of being here on Earth?

3.4.1 Minimum Level

Whilst they may not have received the message of Islaam, they will have received signs throughout their lives to at least point to the existence of their Creator. They also had their inherent perception of Him imprinted on their soul (...*Lest you say on the Day of Resurrection "Indeed, we were unaware about this."* (7:172)), so any conflicts between this and any incorrect beliefs they had would have also surfaced at various times throughout their lives. They then chose whether to address them or bury them.

Do they not see that they are tried once or twice in every year? Yet they turn not (in repentance), and they do not pay heed. (9:126)

...Did We not grant you a long enough life for him who reflected to reflect therein?... (35:37)

3.4.2 Test in Hereafter

A person who has never heard of Islaam or the Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h.), and who has never heard the message in its correct and true form, will not be punished by Allaah if he dies in a state of *kufr* (disbelief). Allaah (a.w.j.) will test them on the Day of Resurrection: if they obey, they will enter Paradise and if they disobey, they will enter Hell. The Prophet of Allaah (p.b.u.h.) said:

*There are four (who will protest) to Allaah on the Day of Resurrection: the deaf man who never heard anything, the insane man, the very old man, and the man who died during the fatrah (the interval between the time of Jesus (a.s.) and the time of Muhammad (p.b.u.h.)). The deaf man will say 'Oh Lord, Islaam came but I never heard anything.' The insane man will say 'Oh Lord, Islaam came but the children ran after me and threw stones at me.' The very old man will say 'Oh Lord, Islaam came but I did not understand anything.' The man who died during the fatrah will say '**Oh Lord, no Messenger from You came to me.**' **He will accept their promises of obedience, then word will be sent to them to enter the Fire.** By the One in Whose hand is the soul of Muhammad, if they enter it, it will be cool and safe for them.*

According to another report, he said:

Whoever enters it, it will be cool and safe for him, and whoever does not enter it will be dragged to it. (Reported by Ahmad and Ibn Hibbaan)

The disbelief that leads to Hell is only attributable to someone who knowingly rejects as true what has been shown to be true by clear, unambiguous evidence, for which they have the intellectual capacity to understand. This includes understanding why their previous beliefs (or none) were false, and understanding why the basis and evidences for their beliefs were incorrect. There has to be no doubt, confusion or misunderstanding remaining in the mind of the person. To reject in this state of mind is a higher level of *kufr* (disbelief)—part of the definition of this word being "to cover over." These are the people referred to in such sayings as:

Abou Hurayrah (r.a.) narrated that the Prophet (p.b.u.h.) said "By the One in Whose hand is the soul of Muhammad, no-one among this nation, Jew or Christian, hears of me then dies not believing in that with which I was sent, but he will be one of the people of the Fire." (Muslim)

Evidence for the prior necessity of unambiguous guidance is contained in many verses of the Qur'aan:

And whoever contradicts and opposes the Messenger after the right Path has been shown clearly to him, and follows other than the believers' way, We shall keep him in the path he has chosen, and burn him in Hell—what an evil destination. (4:115)

And We never punish until We have sent a Messenger (to give warning). (17:15)

And your Lord will never destroy the towns (populations) until He sends to their mother town a Messenger reciting to them Our Verses. And We would never destroy the towns unless the people thereof are tyrants. (28:59)

Messengers as bearers of good news as well as of warning, in order that mankind should have no plea against Allaah after the Messengers. (4:165)

And We sent not a Messenger except with the language of his people, in order that he might make (the Message) clear for them. Then Allaah misleads whom He Wills and guides whom He Wills. (14:4)

And Allaah will never lead a people astray after He has guided them until He makes clear to them as to what they should avoid. (9:115)

3.4.3 Children

The Messenger of Allaah (p.b.u.h.) was asked about the children of the idolaters. He said:

Allaah knows best what they would have done. (Bukhaaree Vol. 2, Book 23, Hadeeth 466)

3.4.4 Previous Nations

With regard to the previous nations, everyone who believed in his Prophet and Messenger will enter Paradise; they were the Muslims of their time.

The Prophet (p.b.u.h.) said "...No one will enter Paradise except a Muslim..." (Bukhaaree Vol. 4, Book 52, Hadeeth 296)

Allaah (a.w.j.) says:

Truly, those who believed and those who were Jews and Christians, and Sabians; whoever believed in Allaah and the Last Day and did righteous deeds shall have their reward with their Lord. On them shall be no fear, nor shall they grieve. (2:62)

Chapter 4 Making the Choice

Examining the claim that there has been no compulsion for anyone to involve themselves in being tested:

To question why *anyone* would choose such a test and such a life containing so many negatives, try to imagine *being* in that situation of being offered a choice—being told the outcomes; the requirements and benchmarks (just an atom's weight of faith to get to eternal Paradise *eventually*); the signs and guidance, both background and individual, that would be provided etc., and ask yourself if *you* would have made that choice. In life, we constantly choose short-term difficulties and sacrifices for longer-term gains—in education, work, business and sport, for example—even *without* guarantees of success and payback. It's part of our nature as human beings.

It's also clearly the case that the vast majority of atheists choose life with its difficulties, pain, suffering and evil, rather than suicide, and even make that decision on behalf of their as-yet-unborn children. There is no absolute necessity for either *their* lives or the lives of their unborn children, and there isn't even a concluding, eternal payback as part of their decision-making process, yet they make that choice nevertheless. Does that make them callous, unfeeling, uncaring and heartless? Does it make them selfish, self-centred or tyrannical to impose guaranteed suffering and hardship on people who have *no choice* in the matter—their own children—just for the sake of what *they themselves* feel they and possibly others will benefit from their parenthood, and from the lives of their children and any partners and offspring that *they* might have?

Chapter 5 Summary

From all that's been said it can be seen that the claim that a loving, unselfish, all-knowing God gave us a choice of being tested, along with all that this entails, and that we *chose* to come into a life and afterlife containing suffering and evil, is not an unrealistic or illogical proposition.

Within the bounds of the set mental exercise, it can be seen that the necessary knowledge and understanding to derive our own conclusions, even within the proposed framework, will never be made available to us in this life, so we will never be in a position to do a meaningful critique of Allaah's decisions. A position of "*My opinion, which is correct, is such-and-such, and Muslims say their supposed Allaah's opinion is such-and-such, which in my opinion is incorrect, therefore Allaah cannot exist and Islaam cannot be true*" is therefore logically untenable; not just for the issue of eternal Hell, but also for all other issues where our knowledge of all the factors involved is incomplete.

If Allaah exists and Islaam is true, a non-believer's current opinions are based on the knowledge and understanding that they have available to them, which are incomplete. They may well be intellectually and morally correct within the framework in which they are working, but within the framework of the proposed reality, they must necessarily be incorrect. Partial information, analysed outside its contextual framework, has little chance of yielding correct conclusions. To quote one of the classical scholars of Islaam—Ibn al Qayyim—on this topic:

Allaah, may He be glorified, stated that every ruling that is contrary to His ruling that He revealed to His Messenger is a ruling that is based on whims and desires, not a ruling that is based on wisdom, and it is the ruling of ignorance, not a ruling of knowledge and guidance. Allaah, may He be exalted, says:

And so judge among them (Oh Muhammad) by what Allaah has revealed and follow not their vain desires, but beware of them lest they turn you far away from some of that which Allaah has sent down to you. And if they turn away, then know that Allaah's Will is to punish them for some sins of theirs. And truly, most men are evildoers. Do they then seek the judgement of (the days of) Ignorance? And who is better in judgement than Allaah for a people who have firm Faith. (5:49-50)

Thus Allaah, may He be glorified and exalted, tells us that there is nothing else beyond what He has revealed except the following of whims and desires which divert people from His Path, and there is nothing beyond His rulings except the rulings of ignorance. All of these views and ideas that are contrary to what the Messenger brought are based on whims and desires and the rulings of ignorance, even if those who propagate them describe them as rationally-proven facts and certain proof, which is akin to the polytheists describing their idols and statues as gods, and the hypocrites describing their endeavour to spread mischief on earth, and turn people away from faith, as an effort to spread righteousness and do what is right.

Conclusions drawn within a framework outside faith, and which are known to be incorrect within the framework of faith, cannot form the basis for rejection of faith. Faith can only be rejected when its own evidences can be shown to be false within its own framework.

Until, when they come, He (Allaah) will say "Did you deny My Signs while you encompassed them not in knowledge, or what did you used to do?" (27:84)

Allaah (a.w.j.) has provided sufficient, accessible evidences, rationales and personal experiences to prove His existence; the Prophethood of His Messenger Muhammad (p.b.u.h.); that Islaam is the religion He wishes us to follow, and that there is a life after this life, when accountability, recompense, reward and punishment will be meted out—the severest of which is reserved for those who rejected truth despite clearly receiving it.

Then do not they ponder (over) the Qur'aan, or are there locks upon (their) hearts? (47:24)

Then do they not ponder over the Qur'aan? And if it had been from other than Allaah, surely they would have found in it much contradiction. (4:82)

Appendix

Prophecy of Daniel 7

King James Version of Daniel 7 taken from <http://www.kingjamesbibleonline.org/>

¹ In the first year of Belshazzar king of Babylon Daniel had a dream and visions of his head upon his bed: then he wrote the dream, [and] told the sum of the matters.

² Daniel spake and said, I saw in my vision by night, and, behold, the four winds of the heaven strove upon the great sea.

³ And four great beasts came up from the sea, diverse one from another.

⁴ The first [was] like a lion, and had eagle's wings: I beheld till the wings thereof were plucked, and it was lifted up from the earth, and made stand upon the feet as a man, and a man's heart was given to it.

⁵ And behold another beast, a second, like to a bear, and it raised up itself on one side, and [it had] three ribs in the mouth of it between the teeth of it: and they said thus unto it, Arise, devour much flesh.

⁶ After this I beheld, and lo another, like a leopard, which had upon the back of it four wings of a fowl; the beast had also four heads; and dominion was given to it.

⁷ After this I saw in the night visions, and behold a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, and strong exceedingly; and it had great iron teeth: it devoured and brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with the feet of it: and it [was] diverse from all the beasts that [were] before it; and it had ten horns.

⁸ I considered the horns, and, behold, there came up among them another little horn, before whom there were three of the first horns plucked up by the roots: and, behold, in this horn [were] eyes like the eyes of man, and a mouth speaking great things.

⁹ I beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of days did sit, whose garment [was] white as snow, and the hair of his head like the pure wool: his throne [was like] the fiery flame, [and] his wheels [as] burning fire.

¹⁰ A fiery stream issued and came forth from before him: thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him: the judgment was set, and the books were opened.

¹¹ I beheld then because of the voice of the great words which the horn spake: I beheld [even] till the beast was slain, and his body destroyed, and given to the burning flame.

¹² As concerning the rest of the beasts, they had their dominion taken away: yet their lives were prolonged for a season and time.

¹³ I saw in the night visions, and, behold, [one] like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him.

¹⁴ And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion [is] an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom [that] which shall not be destroyed.

¹⁵ I Daniel was grieved in my spirit in the midst of [my] body, and the visions of my head troubled me.

¹⁶ I came near unto one of them that stood by, and asked him the truth of all this. So he told me, and made me know the interpretation of the things.

¹⁷ These great beasts, which are four, [are] four kings, [which] shall arise out of the earth.

¹⁸ But the saints of the most High shall take the kingdom, and possess the kingdom for ever, even for ever and ever.

¹⁹ Then I would know the truth of the fourth beast, which was diverse from all the others, exceeding dreadful, whose teeth [were of] iron, and his nails [of] brass; [which] devoured, brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with his feet;

²⁰ And of the ten horns that [were] in his head, and [of] the other which came up, and before whom three fell; even [of] that horn that had eyes, and a mouth that spake very great things, whose look [was] more stout than his fellows.

²¹ I beheld, and the same horn made war with the saints, and prevailed against them;

²² Until the Ancient of days came, and judgment was given to the saints of the most High; and the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom.

²³ Thus he said, The fourth beast shall be the fourth kingdom upon earth, which shall be diverse from all kingdoms, and shall devour the whole earth, and shall tread it down, and break it in pieces.

²⁴ And the ten horns out of this kingdom [are] ten kings [that] shall arise: and another shall rise after them; and he shall be diverse from the first, and he shall subdue three kings.

²⁵ And he shall speak [great] words against the most High, and shall wear out the saints of the most High, and think to change times and laws: and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time.

²⁶ But the judgment shall sit, and they shall take away his dominion, to consume and to destroy [it] unto the end.

²⁷ And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the most High, whose kingdom [is] an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him.

²⁸ Hitherto [is] the end of the matter. As for me Daniel, my cogitations much troubled me, and my countenance changed in me: but I kept the matter in my heart.

The first three beasts to attack the Muslims (The Children of Israel at that time) are generally accepted as being the Babylonian, Medo-Persian and Greek Empires.

When trying to explain the fourth beast of the dream, most commentators identify the next empire to take over the land of the People of Allaah—the Romans—but fail to recognise the description of Roman Emperors as the horns of the beast.

²³ *Thus he said, The fourth beast shall be the fourth kingdom upon earth, which shall be diverse from all kingdoms, and shall devour the whole earth, and shall tread it down, and break it in pieces.*

²⁴ *And the ten horns out of this kingdom [are] ten kings [that] shall arise: and another shall rise after them; and he shall be diverse from the first, and he shall subdue three kings.*

Any study of early Christianity will show that there were many sects—some of whom were still monotheists, as Jesus (peace be upon Him) had been. These monotheistic followers of Jesus, along with many others, were caught up in what has become widely known as The 10 Persecutions of the early Christians.

²⁴ *And the ten horns out of this kingdom [are] ten kings [that] shall arise...*

The 10 persecutions were instigated by ten Roman Emperors; Nero, A.D. 67, Domitian, A.D. 81, Trajan, A.D. 108, Marcus Aurelius Antoninus, A.D. 162, Severus, A.D. 192, Maximus, A.D. 235, Decius, A.D. 249, Valerian, A.D. 257, Aurelian, A.D. 274, and Diocletian, A.D. 303. (Taken from Foxe's Book Of Martyrs)

When a new king (represented by a small horn) arose, it uprooted three others (which were also new, as the previous kings had already died)—giving a total number of contemporary rulers of **four**.

and another shall rise after them...and he shall subdue three kings

Under Diocletian, a system of Tetrarchy was instituted in 293—**rule by four people**. Firstly by designating Maximian (c.250 – 310) as co-emperor—as Caesar in 285, followed by his promotion to Augustus in 286. Diocletian ruled the Eastern regions of the Empire while Maximian ruled the Western ones. Diocletian expanded the leadership in 293 by appointing two Caesars (one responsible to each Augustus)—Galerius (c.260 – 311) and Constantius Chlorus (c.250 – 306).

Constantius and Galerius rose to be Augusti in 305, and appointed two new Caesars—Severus II in the east under Constantius, and Maximinus in the west under Galerius.

The **four** Tetrarchs based themselves in centres known as the “Tetrarchic capitals”: Nicomedia in northwestern Asia Minor (modern Izmit in Turkey); Sirmium (modern Sremska Mitrovica) in the Vojvodina region of modern Serbia; Mediolanum (modern Milan, in Italy), and Augusta Treverorum (modern Trier, in Germany)

The institution of Tetrarchy collapsed due to internal fighting, and was ended by **Constantine**, son of Constantius Chlorus (c.272 – 337; Reigned 306 – 337)—by having the remaining claimants to Roman rule—Licinius (c. 263 – 325) and Sextus Marcius Martinianus (died 325) arrested and hanged for plotting against him. He is then thought to have arranged for the execution of Licinius's son Valerius Licinianus (approx. 315–326). All **three** of them had been **rulers** of the Roman Empire.

²⁴ *And the ten horns out of this kingdom [are] ten kings [that] shall arise: and another (Constantine) shall rise after them; and he shall be diverse from the first, and he shall subdue three kings (Licinius, Sextus Marcius Martinianus and Valerius Licinianus).*

Constantine then became the sole emperor of the Roman Empire. He was ‘diverse’ by becoming Christian.

in this horn [were] eyes like the eyes of man, and a mouth speaking great things.

²⁵ *And he shall speak [great] words against the most High, and shall wear out the saints of the most High, and think to change times and laws: and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time.*

“Speaking great things” or “great words against the Most High” is usually interpreted to mean speaking blasphemously.

(Modified from Wikipedia):

Constantine convened the First Council of Nicea in 325; a council of Christian bishops convened in Nicaea in Bithynia (present-day İznik in Turkey). This first ecumenical council was the first effort to attain consensus in the church through an assembly representing all of Christendom.

Its main accomplishments were settlement of the Christological issue of the relationship of Jesus to God the Father, the construction of the first part of the Nicene Creed, settling the calculation of the date of Easter, and promulgation of early canon law.

The Nicene Creed of Trinity is blasphemy of the highest order for both Muslims and Jews. Setting pagan dates for Easter (leaving the Judaic lunar calendar system of dates) and official promulgation of canon law are fulfilment of:

*And he **shall speak [great] words against the most High**, and shall wear out the saints of the most High, and think to **change times and laws**:*

Once the doctrine of trinity was established for Christianity through the backing of the Emperor, Unitarian Christian sects were persecuted even more, and were virtually eliminated from mainstream church activity.

²¹ *I beheld, and the same horn made war with the saints, and prevailed against them;*

²³ *Thus he said, The fourth beast shall be the fourth kingdom upon earth, which shall be diverse from all kingdoms, and shall devour the whole earth, and shall tread it down, and break it in pieces.*

The Christian world, built on the foundations of the Roman Empire, has done just this—it has become vastly different from previous Empires due to technological advancement and Neo-colonialism, and is destroying the Earth, its peoples and its atmosphere, through wars, and exploitation and pollution of the environment.

⁹ *I beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of days* did sit, whose garment [was] white as snow, and the hair of his head like the pure wool: his throne [was like] the fiery flame, [and] his wheels [as] burning fire. *Literally ‘a very old man.’*

Neither Muslims, Jews nor most Christians would accept a description of our Creator as a woolly-haired Being in a robe—He is infinite, without boundaries and absolutely One and indivisible—so why He is described in such anthropomorphic terms in this passage is not known. Christian commentators point out that such instances (of which there are several) occur in passages relating to dreams and visions, so don't contradict Biblical statements that no-one has ever seen God—in reality.

¹³ *I saw in the night visions, and, behold, [one] like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him.*

¹⁴ *And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion [is] an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom [that] which shall not be destroyed.*

The word which has been translated as “Son of Man”, in an attempt to link it to the term used in the New Testament for Jesus (peace be upon Him), actually means just “human being”, as pointed out in other translations available on-line.

¹⁸ *But the saints of the most High shall take the kingdom, and possess the kingdom for ever, even for ever and ever.*

²⁶ *But the judgment shall sit, and they shall take away his dominion, to consume and to destroy [it] unto the end.*

²⁷ *And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the most High, whose kingdom [is] an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him.*

The next and final Prophet sent after Jesus—the only Prophet in the line of Abraham's eldest son Ishmael (peace be upon them both)—was Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) (c. 26 April 570 – 8 June 632) who reiterated the Unity of our Creator and the Laws under which believers had lived since the time of Moses (peace be upon Him); the fundamentals of Mosaic Law and Islamic Law are more or less the same. The Islamic calendar is also lunar.

The blasphemy and corruption of the Laws by Constantine and later Christian leaders were corrected through revelation, and the Roman Empire was partially defeated militarily in the next few centuries by His followers (may Allaah be pleased with them), who continued His mission after His death. This military defeat was only partial and temporary though. The prophecy; ²¹ *I beheld, and the same horn made war with the saints, and prevailed against them;* continued, and the Islamic Empire was defeated in the early 20th Century, and its institutions of leadership and Laws dismantled from within.

There will come a time, after the return of Jesus (peace be upon Him), when Islaam will enter into every household on Earth.

¹⁴ *And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion [is] an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom [that] which shall not be destroyed.*

¹⁸ *But the saints of the most High shall take the kingdom, and possess the kingdom for ever, even for ever and ever.*

The followers of Muhammad will not be destroyed completely at any time, but will continue to inhabit the Earth until the Day of Judgment.

In the short term though, concerning Constantine:

...and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time.

This is usually interpreted as one plus two plus a half years. If taken as three and a half centuries of rule rather than three and a half years, a possible explanation may be that Constantine's rule started on 25 July 306, and the next conquerors of the land containing Jerusalem (as previous instances of new beasts had related to) were the Muslims. The second Caliph of the Muslims, 'Umar ibn al Khattab (may Allaah be pleased with him), had to go himself to accept the surrender of Jerusalem in April 637 AD, thus returning the land to the People of Allaah.

Using the Islamic, lunar calendar, we get dates of 25th Rabi ath Thaanee 325 before Hijrah, and 11th Rabi al Awwal 16 after Hijrah, which gives us a time span of 341 Islamic years—not far from 350.

Conversions were done at <http://www.fourmilab.ch/documents/calendar/>

¹¹ *I beheld then because of the voice of the great words which the horn spake: I beheld [even] till the beast was slain, and his body destroyed, and given to the burning flame.*

¹² *As concerning the rest of the beasts, they had their dominion taken away: yet their lives were prolonged for a season and time.*

The peoples of the previous empires, and often their cultures and beliefs, lived on through being incorporated into later empires. As such, only the last one needs to be finally destroyed to allow the establishment of Allaah's true religion on the whole Earth. Destroying this Empire doesn't mean the killing of its people, just the eradication of its false beliefs and laws.