

## **From Human Civilization to Divine Civilization**

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## Introduction

The longest *annular* solar eclipse of the millennium was witnessed on January 15, 2010. A solar eclipse occurs when the Moon passes between Earth and the Sun, thereby totally or partially obscuring Earth's view of the Sun. An annular solar eclipse occurs when the Moon's apparent diameter is smaller than the Sun, causing the sun to look like an annulus (ring), blocking most of the Sun's light. Magnificent and rare, such events have had several superstitions associated with them because during the pre-scientific age, people interpreted the eclipses irrationally. For example, an eclipse was said to occur when one god became angry and swallowed the other god or when a man of stature passed away etc. Most of these superstitions suffered an enormous setback as man gained access to devices that unveiled the secrets of the universe and his understanding of the science expanded.

With each advancement, more and more knowledge was garnered by man about the functioning of the universe. The Hubble Observatory opened new avenues of exploration and several secrets of the universe became known to man. Contrary to this was the time when Galileo was charged with heresy and tried because he had inferred that sun is the centre and that the earth revolves around it, an idea which was so contrary to the mindset of Greek philosophers.

## The undiscovered potential

The mind of man has enormous potential but till date, no one has been able to utilize it fully. In the previous ages, man's sphere of knowledge was abysmally small and he could use only a fraction of his mind. Unfortunately, the advancements in science have not changed the scenario. Even today, the maximum capacity of man remains grossly under-utilized and he dies. This is a strange contradiction.

Secondly, the universe of facts is so vast that man has been able to comprehend only a fringe of it. In other words, since more than 95% of the universe is dark matter, the knowledge of man pertains to barely 5% of this vastness. A scientist observed, "*We know more and more about less and less.*"

These are two strange contradictions. On one hand, the vast universe of facts remains undiscovered and the glory of God remains untold. On the other hand is man, whom God created with enormous potential but he too is unable to fully utilize it and dies.

## Rationale behind man's creation

The creation of man appears to be a paradox of sorts. Despite being a miraculous creation, man meets such a tragic end – without either harnessing his immense potential or uncovering the universe of facts, man dies. Why?

A Hadith about the Quran says:

**“The miracles of Quran will never come to an end.” (Mishkat)**

This Hadith indicates that the learnings from the Quran will never cease to astonish man. According to the Creation Plan of God, man was created as an eternal being and his lifespan was divided into two periods: pre-death period and post-death period. Quran states that the present ephemeral world cannot mark the end of man's lifespan because neither has he explored his own potential nor the rest of the universe.

For example, man saw oceans, mountains, galaxies and reached till the atom and its electron, only to realise that what he saw was actually invisible because the ultimate particles, electrons were mere waves of probability. This alluded to the probability of their being another world apart from the present one, where man will be able to overcome his limitations.

## The Glory of the Creator

The verses in the Quran depict the glory of God as such:

**“If all the trees on earth were pens, and the sea [were] ink, with seven [more] seas added to it, the words of God would not be exhausted: for truly, God is Almighty and Wise.” (31:27)**

**“Tell them, ‘If the ocean became ink for writing the words of my Lord, surely the ocean would be exhausted before the words of my Lord came to an end- even if We were to add another ocean to it.’” (18:109)**

It is illustrated in the above that the glory of God is unfathomably vast. A Russian scientist wrote that an individual mind carries as many particles as exist in the entire universe.

This gives the hint that this glory of God cannot remain undiscovered. There has to be someone to discover it. And this is what leads us to reflect upon the life hereafter.

## The Concept of Hereafter

Every religion has the concept of another world, which is depicted as an ideal world that would enable the fulfillment of man's desires. However, to think of the paradise as a luxurious abode alone is actually a gross underestimation of it. Man is a thinking animal and needs intellectual activities for sustaining his intellectual self. It is to satiate this desire in man that God instituted the method of discovery as a way of realization. Discovery provides unparalleled joy. Archimedes upon his discovery of buoyant force ran naked yelling 'Eureka! Eureka!'

The Quran describes the paradise that man must strive for as,

**“..a Paradise as vast as heaven and earth.” (57:21)**

It is critical to understand that our civilization has come into existence after a long process. Similarly, a long process would ensue in paradise. After the end of human civilization, a new one world would be brought into being. In the present world, man lives amidst strife as alluded to in the following verse of the Quran,

**“that We have created man into a life of toil and trial.” (90:4)**

This will not be the case in the life hereafter because life in paradise would be obstacle-free and every activity would therefore be joyful. The apparent limitations that man has in this world will no longer remain in the world hereafter.

## Human Civilisation

Human civilization can be broadly divided into two periods: pre-scientific and scientific. While the pre-scientific age was based on speculation, the scientific age subscribed to the importance of a scientific temper.

Alvin Toffler wrote in his book *Future Shock* that industrial age shall soon give way to the super-industrial age, which would be a perfect world. Contrary to his prediction, the world moved towards global warming. The consequent climate change caused immense problems and wrecked irreparable damage to the environment.

## The World of Paradise

The world of paradise will be free from all forms of pollution and imperfection. It will allow the utmost realization of man's potential and will be the ideal world that man seeks. In order to find the perfect inhabitants for the perfect paradise, God created man and put him to test in this world. Those who succeed in the divine test would be selected to become the fortunate inhabitants of paradise while those who will prove themselves unworthy will be cast into eternal damnation.

The selected individuals will be the ones who realized God in the present world and led a principled life. Living with these divine qualities, they would qualify to live in God's neighbourhood. The Quran says of paradise,

**“The people of paradise shall be happily occupied on that Day.” (36:55)**

The activities in the present world are marred by boredom, accident and many unfortunate occurrences. The instances like the Haiti/ Chile earthquake indicate that the earth has reached its saturation point and so the journey of human civilization must soon come to its end.

Paradise would be the world where man's desires shall seek fulfillment. By means of a gradual process, an entire new civilization would come into existence in paradise which would be free from all shortcomings and sufferings. In that world, one person would be able to realize his immense potential without jeopardizing the life of another. Explaining why the paradise would be a perfect world, the Bible says that after God decides between the good and the bad, those of evil character shall be cast into eternal damnation whereas the inhabitants of paradise would lead a joyful life forever.

The Quran therefore says:

**“It is for the like of this that all should strive.” (37:61)**

Man must strive to qualify for such a world where he would be able to fathom the universe of facts and convert his potential into actual unlike the present world where even the most brilliant minds could use only a fraction of their mind's capabilities.

## Conclusion

The present world provides a glimpse of the world of paradise and the magnificence of its Creator. For example, it is possible to calculate the occurrence of natural phenomena like an eclipse with precision. Such precision is indicative of super-planning. I was in fact overwhelmed to learn that solar eclipse is actually the phenomena of alignment of three bodies: the *earth* (of the size of a football), the *moon* (of the size of a mustard seed) and the *sun* (of the size of a Himalayan mountain). Encyclopedia Britannica describes this alignment as a remarkable coincidence; a fact all would agree with.

According to the Quran, upon seeing the blessings of paradise, its inhabitants would say:

**“‘This is what we were provided with before,’ because they were given similar things.” (2:25)**

This verse alludes to the fact that the world in hereafter will be much similar to the present world and so man must strive for it with utmost sincerity. The present world is only an imperfect introduction to the grand world that awaits man in the life hereafter.

May God guide man to wisdom and righteousness!