

THE COW

A COMMENTARY ON CHAPTER 2
SURAT AL-BAQARAH



KEYS TO THE QUR'AN

VOLUME ONE

SHAYKH FADHLALLA HAERI



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Surat Al-Fatiha

The Cow – Surat Al-Baqarah

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BOOK DESCRIPTION

This eBook¹ combines Shaykh Fadhlalla Haeri's commentary on the first and the second chapters of the Qur'an.

Surat al-Fatiha is placed at the beginning of the Qur'an because it signifies the opening of knowledge and so the victory over ignorance. If, in the direction we are taking, there is no door, then we have reached our target – we have won. Fatiha means to open, reveal, imbue, and conquer. This surah (chapter) is so named because if you follow it in your heart, you will be victorious. You will conquer and an opening will come to you.

Surat al-Baqarah scans the history of humankind from Adam to the time of the Prophet Muhammad. It contains a blueprint of how a community can live, how its members should behave as individuals, within their families, and in economic and social terms. It also gives guidance and prescriptions regarding inner and outer struggle and development.

¹ The cover shows THE COW. This is because only Surat Al-Baqarah was ever published in this series. The commentary on Surat Al-Fatiha has been transcribed from an audio discourse given by Shaykh Fadhlalla Haeri.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Acknowledged as a master of self-knowledge and a spiritual philosopher, Shaykh Fadhlalla Haeri's role as a teacher grew naturally out of his own quest for self-fulfillment.

He travelled extensively on a spiritual quest which led to his eventual rediscovery of the pure and original Islamic heritage of his birth, and the discovery of the truth that reconciles the past with the present, the East with the West, the worldly with the spiritual – a link between the ancient wisdom teachings and our present time.

A descendant of five generations of well-known and revered spiritual leaders, Shaykh Fadhlalla Haeri has taught students throughout the world for over 30 years.

He is a gifted exponent of how the self relates to the soul, humankind's link with the Divine, and how consciousness can be groomed to reflect our higher nature.

The unifying scope of his perspective emphasizes practical, actionable knowledge that leads to self-transformation, and provides a natural bridge between seemingly different Eastern and Western approaches to spirituality, as well as offering a common ground of higher knowledge for various religions, sects and secular outlooks.

He is a prolific author of more than thirty books relating to the universal principles of Islam, the Qur'an, and its core purpose of enlightenment.

CHAPTER 1: SURAT AL-FATIHA: INTRODUCTION

This *surah*² (chapter) is placed at the beginning of the Qur'an because it signifies the opening of knowledge and so the victory over ignorance. If, in the direction we are taking, there is no door, then we have reached our target – we have won.

Fatiha means to open, reveal, imbue, and conquer. This *surah* is so named because if you follow it in your heart, you will be victorious. You will conquer and an opening will come to you.

² In this eBook, we provide English translation of the Qur'anic *ayat* (verses; signs).

CHAPTER 1: SURAT AL-FATIHA

1. In the Name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful

2. Praise be to Allah, Lord of the Worlds,

Hamd is praise. Praise comes if there is knowledge. You can only praise something if you have knowledge of it. Knowledge of something is an aspect of experience. You praise the *rabb*, the lord-sustainer. *Rabba* means to be master of, to have command over. It also means to raise and bring up. *Rabb* is the attribute of that entity which brings what is under its domain up to its full potential, towards the ultimate end which is *huwa*, He, because it has come from Him, from Allah.

We said that when you praise the Ultimate, you must have some knowledge of it. That knowledge could be that of avoiding the non-Ultimate, which is what we are trying to do now. The way to that knowledge is by avoiding that which is unreal, uncondusive, unfulfilling; that which does not permanently rehabilitate our hearts.

Up to a certain point, it is alright to praise an aspect of it since we do not have complete cognizance of *rabb*. If we are true to ourselves, we aim for the ultimate in everything. We only want to praise the Ultimate.

Real praise belongs only to the Lord-sustainer, and that which sustains the foundation of *Tawheed* (Unity). When you say, *Al hamdu lilla*, you are only stating the fact that praise is indeed for Allah. Furthermore, you are only able to praise in the first place because you mirror Allah and His Attributes, since you are the created being, having been created by the Creator, Allah. When you abuse the use of *hamd*, instead of *shukr*, you reveal your own shatteredness, for if you have truly witnessed that, *La ilaha il Allah*, you will understand that Allah's mercy comes not only in *bast*, expansion, but also in *qabd*, constriction, and you will recognize that above all else Allah is truly *ar Rahman ar Rahim*, so that every state reflects the mercy of Allah. This explains why it says: *Al hamdu lillahi rabb il 'alamin*. *'Alamin* encompasses all states, all worlds, in the seen and the unseen, in sleep and in wakefulness, here and in the hereafter.

The man of greater perception sees the *rabb*, Sustainer, even in times of constriction. To use *hamd* as an expression of a mood or feeling is *shirk*. Praise is for Allah at all times and under all circumstances. *Hamd* does not allow for the separation between you as a praise giver and the object of praise: you merely echo *hamd*.

3. The Beneficent, the Merciful.

The characteristics of the Lord whom we love and adore are *ar-Rahman ar-Rahim*, the all-beneficent, the all-compassionate. There is only mercy, but we do not see it because of our ignorance, expectations, and desires which only arise from the use of our intellect. Was the mercy not there when you were in your mother's womb? You stayed there for nine months and yet you were unequivocally content. It is the mercy of Creation that we are able to die, so that there may be breathing and standing space for others to come. It is only we who interfere. It is the ego, the *nafs*, the vanity of expectation which frustrates and sabotages our recognition of Allah's mercy. It is the evil "I" which we hear whispering in our ear. Shaytan is only a name. He too is from the Creator. If you know how to tackle Shaytan, then you would see nothing other than *ar-Rahman*. There is a cult in the Middle East of some two to three million people that worship Shaytan. They say that we know the Lord through Shaytan, and that at the *Yowm al Qiyama*, Shaytan will be forgiven because he has been testing all the good ones and the bad ones. They say he will be the first to be forgiven. If you see anything other than mercy, it is your own doing. It is your own expectations, desires and illusions. You yourself are the author.

4. Master of the Day of Judgment,

Malik means owner, master. We come from the Owner. We own nothing, but are all owned. *Yowm ad Deen*: the day of the *Deen*. *Yowm* is not only a day, but also a span of time. *Deen*, life-transaction, finds its root in *dana*, to owe, be indebted to. It is the debt of man to want to recognize reality. It is incumbent upon every one of us to know how to pay the debt upon us.

The *deen* with Allah is Islam. It is a life-transaction. Our way of behaving towards ourselves and towards others is *deen*. It is the way of correct transaction. But if you cannot discipline yourself, you cannot be of any use to anybody else. If interaction is not at least two-dimensional, nothing will work. You will only accumulate more wealth and cultivate more attachment. Eventually, you will be toppled over. Therefore, you have to exercise yourself in order to discipline yourself. The inner discipline begins with the outer discipline. This is the meaning of *deen*. The outer is easier because if you yourself do not stop from overshooting the limits, someone else will. It is the inner that is more difficult, so we start with the outer in order to gain the inner meaning. We go from the gross to the subtle.

5. You (alone) we worship; You (alone) we ask for help.

Once you recognize that you are in love and you are worshipping the *rabb*, you admit it openly, we worship You and we depend upon You. If you are worshipping and you are in love, then you are in adoration. *Abada* is to worship, adore, serve, and in its second form, it means to make accessible. You depend upon the Merciful. This is only meaningful if there is knowledge, for otherwise it can be considered a tyranny.

6. Show us the straight path,

Show us the direct way. A straight line is the shortest distance between two points. A straight line is also one point traveling in only one direction. Therefore, you ask to be shown the most direct route towards this knowledge.

7. The path of those whom You have favored; Not the (path) of those who earn Your anger nor of those who go astray.

Sirat al ladhina an'amta 'aleyhim, is the way of those upon whom delight has been bestowed, not those upon whom anger burns. *Na'ma* is delight, happiness. There is no anger in this life. If you do not see mercy, then you have brought darkness upon yourself. Your ignorance is not the fault of someone else. If you do something inane and as a consequence harm comes to you, then Reality is angry with you, angry in the sense that you are not in unification with it. Anger implies a high degree of discontent on the part of one entity with another, which leads to severing of the relationship between the two.

There is only Allah. There is only Reality. Consequently, there is no place for superstition. It is you who decide whether Allah is angry with you. *Rahma* must encompass everything. Your loss is, in fact, within that *rahma*. The condition you are in is appropriate because you have brought it about by your heart. This is cosmos, not chaos. It is total ecology. As human beings, we are all occasionally at a loss and often unsure. It is for this reason that we have to keep healthy and correct companionship. Existentially, we need guidance.

Surat al Fatiha can be divided into three sections. The first section includes the opening line up to *Maliki yowm ad Deen*. It is an exposition of reality. You find yourself awakened suddenly and you say: I am in gratitude, praise to Allah, Who has these attributes. You are inspired after having been in wilderness and bewilderment, so you say, *Al hamdu lillahi rabb al 'alamin*, out of contentment and sanity. In the next section, (from *Iyyaka na'budu wa iyyaka nastain* to *Ihdina as-Sirat al-Mustaqim*), you are the adorer, the *'abd*. This now is transaction and demand. It is a request, it is action. In this section the heart cries out. The third part is like the echo of reality in order to confirm what you are saying and to answer your question.

Surat al Fatiha is the most important *Sura* in the Qur'an. If it is completely absorbed, and if every word comes from a pure heart, you will cease to talk about opening and you will recognize that the vastness of Allah's mercy is never-ending, so you can only strive to increase, for after the constriction of ignorance, there can only come the expansion of knowledge.

CHAPTER 2: SURAT AL-BAQARAH: FOREWORD

Say: Were the sea to be ink for the words of my Lord, the sea would be exhausted before the words of my Lord are exhausted, even if We brought the like of it to add [thereto]. (Qur'an 18:109)

The Qur'an is the transcendent Word of the Transcendent Lord, Creator and Sustainer of all things. With it, creation began when Allah took our covenant with the question: 'Am I not your Lord?'. With it, history began, when He announced to the angels: 'Behold, I am about to set a representative (*khalifah*) on earth!' In it, history will continue its cosmic journey from the multiplicity of things and names to the One, when 'the earth shall shine forth with the Light of its Lord', and the eternal voice of the Ever-Living and All-Sovereign Lord shall challenge all creation: 'To whom shall all dominion today belong?' The resounding answer will then echo: 'To Allah³, the One, the All-Conquering!' Yet, Allah in His infinite mercy willed that His timeless Word, the Qur'an, should enter into our finite history to shape and guide it to its fulfillment on a day when He alone shall be King and Master.

The Qur'an, which we write in our books (*masahif*), preserve in our hearts and recite with our tongues, was sent down onto the heart of Allah's beloved servant and Messenger, Muhammad, may Allah's blessing and mercy rest forever on him, his family and his righteous Companions.

The science of writing, understanding and interpreting the Qur'an has occupied the best minds of the Muslim *ummah* (community) throughout its long history. The fruits of these labors are contained in the vast literature of *tafsir* (interpretation). The Qur'an, in its inner and infinite dimensions, is known only to Allah. Yet, to the Prophet and the chosen few of his followers, the veils were removed, and they were able to touch the inner mysteries of the Qur'an with their purified hearts and minds, 'for none but the pure shall touch it.' The righteous friends of Allah

³ Allah in Arabic means Allah.

Keys to the Qur'an by Shaykh Fadhlalla Haeri
CHAPTER 2: SURAT AL-BAQARAH: FOREWORD

(*awliya' Allah al-salihin*), who purified their hearts in this ocean of knowledge, left for us allusions and glimpses to guide us in our journey (*suluk*) to Allah.

Shaykh Fadhlalla Haeri's commentaries are dedicated to the task of making the Qur'an available to the men and women of the present age, that they may contemplate, understand and be guided by it in their daily lives, and in their spiritual quest. He has undertaken to present the Qur'an in Arabic, its original language, and to study its inner and outer meanings. The present work, in addition, presents the Qur'an in both its exoteric and historical dimension and its inner dimension to the Western reader. In the task of *tafsir* (interpretation), standard works in this field will be used, but in ways that are relevant to the present age and its needs.

The Qur'an must speak to the condition of every age – this it can most effectively do through an inner and primary exposition of its revelations. Thus, through the reflection of Shaykh Fadhlalla Haeri, as Allah shall illuminate his heart, the inner dimension of the Qur'an will be touched.

Say: Work! For Allah shall see your work, His Messenger, and the people of faith. In Him alone do we trust, for with Him is right guidance, and to Him shall be our return. (Qur'an 9:105)

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CHAPTER 2: SURAT AL-BAQARAH: INTRODUCTION

Surat al-Baqarah contains a great deal of the original primal blueprint of how a community can live – how its members should behave among themselves as individuals, as families, and as social entities. It contains the laws that govern *jihad*, the struggle against inner and outer evil – when, where and against what.

Surat al-Baqarah begins with the devastatingly deep simplicity of the letters *Alif Lam Mim*. From Unity, everything in the cosmos descends to you as a wave of mercy in tiny portions, and each portion contains the meaning of that Oneness. One drop of the ocean contains the secret of the entire ocean.

This *surah* (chapter) contains the history of humankind from the creation of Adam to the time of Prophet Muhammad, may the peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, his family and his righteous Companions.⁴ A great portion deals specifically with *Bani Isra'il* (the Tribe of Israel). It illustrates how they were given the message of Unity (*Tawheed*), of the One-and-Only Reality, and how they rejected it time after time. In spite of their rejection, Allah, in His infinite mercy, repeatedly gave them repentance.

Although this chapter deals historically with the Tribe of Israel, it also describes the state of rebelliousness in all peoples and individuals who attempt to assert themselves over the will of Allah. On the level of *haqiqah* (essential Truth and Reality), the *Bani Isra'il* represent the ever-present, ongoing struggle of the *nafs* (ego-self), to establish itself in authority and power, which in turn brings to it misery, sadness and disappointment. The way to inner joy and bliss is through the submission of the *nafs* and the will of the individual, which has no existence on its own, for there is no power and no might except from Allah. This chapter gives us a road map of the course to follow to reach that stage of abandonment and knowledge of Allah.

⁴ It is customary invocation, whenever the name of the Prophet Muhammad is mentioned, to invoke the peace and blessings of Allah upon him, his family and his righteous Companions.

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CHAPTER 2: SURAT AL-BAQARAH: INTRODUCTION

Every chapter is a complete and contained unit, even though it may have been revealed in different places at different times. *Surat al-Baqarah*, except for the last few *ayat* (communications; verses), was revealed during the early years after the Hijrah (the Prophet's migration from Mecca to Medina in 622 AD). Historically, the 281st *ayah* is considered to be the last verse of the Qur'an to be revealed.

This commentary on *Surat al-Baqarah*, is the part of a series of commentaries on the Qur'an which are intended specifically for serious students and seekers of Qur'anic knowledge. Since the richness of meaning is contained in the Arabic words themselves which Allah has employed in His Book to transmit and confirm the absolute certainty of the clear revelation, much of our concern here is in elucidating the words and their roots. The commentary was made with special emphasis for its day-to-day use by the student of self-knowledge. Classical and traditional interpretations, which are readily available in English, have not been included here.

In this series of commentaries, the roots of the key Arabic words are examined and discussed, thus enabling the student to derive the full benefit of the original language of the Qur'an and its unparalleled ability to communicate what is most difficult to transmit by words. At their root level, Arabic words have many different meanings, and these meanings are sometimes the opposite of each other. This aspect of the Arabic language reflects a very important dimension of the ancient Arab culture, a dimension which enabled its people to be extremely sensitive to their fragile life and environment, and, therefore, susceptible to the message of *tawhid* (Divine Unity, or Unity). Although its people were worldly, the language and ecology were well suited to describing and communicating the subtle world of divine realities.

The source Book, the Qur'an, contains within it many levels of meanings, uses and remedies. We have taken an etymological route through this Garden, catching a glimpse of how the roots and sounds of words interconnect, pointing towards the Source of all letters, Allah. The fountainhead of many Arabic words spring from *tawhid*; therefore the primary aim has been to follow the vein of *tawhid* when exploring the root form of the words and their derivatives. Certain points have been repeated and often over-emphasized to encourage the beginner on this most blessed path which is surrounded by pitfalls and dangers. The single-minded, determined and disciplined student no doubt will succeed, discovering that the thorns on the path are only

stimuli delineating the boundary of the narrow passage. These afflictions only enhance his balance and sharpen his *'aql* (reasoning ability) and awareness.

Our present age is such that denial of the One Reality is the prevailing disease. To awaken the heart of the seeker, the teacher attempts to tap the remedy drawn from the unity and timelessness of the Truth in the all-encompassing Book of Reality, the Qur'an. The absolute Truth appears in the form of the Book, reflected through the purified heart of the *mu'min* (believer) and sparkles with every visible atom in creation.

The Qur'anic revelations offer support and help for the true seeker in his or her passage through life. To remember these chapters and verses in times of difficulty, uncertainty, weakness, or doubt, is to gain spiritual as well as temporal strength, because one is reminded of the Ever-Witnessing, the All-Seeing, the Ever-Present – the Creator, Allah.

From Allah we have all come by the grace and mercy and love of the One Creator and, by the eternal mercy, we are sustained and supported on a short lifeline through a flimsy and insecure existence, so that we seek refuge in the Ever-Sustaining, Ever-Living Reality Whose subtle Attributes and absolute Essence we shall come to know, *insha'allah* (if Allah wills).

CHAPTER 2: SURAT AL-BAQARAH: COMMENTARY

In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful

1. *Alif Lam Mim*

2. This Book, there is no doubt in it – a guide to those who safeguard themselves with fearful awareness.

The first 5 verses (*ayat*) describe and define the believer (*mu'min*) who trusts in the mercy and justice of Allah and who carefully channels and guards his awareness in order to apprehend Reality and its governing boundaries. The next 2 verses are about those who cover up reality (*kafirun*, from *kafara*, to cover, hide), and the following 13 verses deal with hypocrisy.

There are numerous interpretations of *Alif*, *Lam*, *Mim*, the three Arabic letters that open this chapter. One interpretation is that they symbolize the fundamental modules which are basic to understanding and communicating the meaning of creation. Letters are the building blocks of language, which, when strung together intelligently, are means of communicating information to all humankind. Another example of fundamental modules is the genetic alphabet which contains and explains the entire biological story of each creature.

'This book'; Allah says: there is only the Book. Whenever one looks it is unfolding. The Book in its most expanded meaning is the decree of Allah, the full creational reality. There is 'no doubt in it'. It is absolute and all-encompassing, for it covers the physical material world as well as the world of the Unseen.

The one who safeguards himself with watchful awareness (*muttaqi*) – for the way of Allah is uncompromising and decisive – avoids whatever is not conducive to positive development. He has been warned against it by experience. In a state of real awareness (*taqwa*), of Allah, one becomes aware of the presence of the One overall Reality beyond time and space.

3. Those who believe in the Unseen and establish the prayer, and spend from what We have provided them.

The mercy of Allah encompasses the entire creation, both the Seen and Unseen (*Ghayb*). The meaning of the book is rooted in the Unseen (what is not felt or measured by human senses), and its unfoldment is in the Seen. For example, within each individual is the hidden Book, the genetic imprint of the chromosomes that will unfold as the body grows, exploding from one cell by the guidance and direction of that genetically coded message. Every cell in that body contains the entire code of the body. The hidden, biological book will manifest itself in the physical body.

This verse describes the seekers of reality, the believers who unfold and awaken through self-knowledge. They trust in the Unseen, which exists but not perceptible within the limited range of human senses. These sensory limitations allow man to know the meaning of Unlimited, for nothing can be known without its opposite. Life is meaningless unless there is death. Each attribute is balanced by its opposite, and contains the doorway to the knowledge of its opposite. Another name for the Qur'an is *al-Mizan* 'the Balance'. This name reflects the understanding of opposites in creation. Islam is the middle path.

Those who believe in the Unseen establish prayer (*salat*), because *salat* is the spiritual action that brings about transformation. It is an act which enables the believer to move along the path of knowledge of the laws that govern existence and go beyond. *Ṣalat* represents the submission of all creation of Allah. It connects the seeker to the Truth (*haqq*). That connection brings about a certainty which dispels anxiety about future provision.

All that is needed by and beneficial to humankind, whether material or abstract, such as knowledge, is provision. When the spiritual seeker is fulfilled inwardly, and external worries are minimized, then both his gross and subtle provision flow easily to him. By spontaneous awareness, faith, prayer and correct action, the unfolding of self-knowledge will take place.

Essentially man is born without any outer wealth and leaves this world without taking anything with him. The Qur'anic teaching centers around giving: if one gives, one will also be replenished. So tap the reservoir of the Unseen and become an open conduit!

4. And those who believe in that which has been revealed to you, and that which was revealed before you, and they are sure of the Hereafter.

This refers to those who trust and follow what has come through the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) and the preceding messengers. They believe that they will be guided. They are certain of the Hereafter (*Akhira*), and that this physical realm of experience will come to an end, and that beyond death lies another realm of experience and consciousness. This certainty (*yaqin*) is a deep, unconscious and 'unprovable' (empirically) knowledge which is a higher aspect of belief (*iman*). It is innate and not connected to logic and deduction.

5. They are on a right course of guidance from their Lord, and they shall be successful.

With this we are cast back to the opening chapter, *Surat al-Fatihah*: 'Guide us to the straight path.' By avoiding what is harmful, one is able to follow the true life-transaction (*din*). Success (*falah*) comes as a result. The failures and pitfalls are numerous. The unleashed self-ego (lower *nafs*), arrogance (*kibriya'*), and self-elevation are amongst the veils which enable our *shaytan* or lower negative tendencies to act. *Shaytan* is translated into English as 'satan', but the meaning is different and so too, therefore, is the image conjured up by it. We will use the term *shaytan* rather than replace it with the English term because *shaytan* comes from the verbal root which means to be cast off the path, to be far away. This *shaytan* energy begets covetousness, jealousy, lust, love of power and other twisted traits. The way can be made straight only by removing these obstacles.

6. Surely those who disbelieve, it is the same to them whether you warn them or do not warn them, they will not believe.

7. Allah has sealed their hearts and their hearing, and over their eyes there is a covering. For them is a great punishment.

These verses concern the disbelievers (*kafirun*). Their hearts are hardened, set and sealed by covering up the truth and denying reality, which is inherent within them. Their denial of the One, the All-Encompassing and All-Merciful Reality, condemns them to flounder in isolation. This

condition is one of torment, agony, and great punishment. Our spirit emanates from an Essence which is limitless and most sublime; limitation is therefore a 'punishment'. Limitation is the result of man's perceived separation and isolation which arises out of a lack of true submission.

8. And among people are those who say: We believe in Allah and the Last Day while they are not believers.

Hypocrisy thrives on elusiveness. The Arabic word for hypocrisy, (*nifaaq*) is related to the word which means a tunnel or underground passageway (*nafaq*). If the lower aspect of the self is not contained and displaced by the higher aspect it will lurk in one tunnel after another in a desperate attempt to avoid purification. The lower self tries to preserve itself by avoiding being checked and uprooted by spontaneous awareness. The hypocrite (*munafiq*) always finds excuses and will never confront his vices and self-imposed shackles squarely. The main characteristic of the hypocrite is that he avoids facing the central issue of submission to Allah through faith and trust. To avoid this confrontation, he claims to believe in Allah and the Hereafter, but in truth does not, and mistakenly thinks that he has safely escaped the real confrontation.

9. They desire to deceive Allah and those who believe, and they deceive only themselves while they do not perceive.

They try – or think they are able – to deceive Allah, but are unaware that they deceive only themselves. They cannot perceive the reality of their situation, for their knowledge is based upon the premise of separation and not of unity (*tawhid*). They do not perceive that they are engulfed by the One Reality Whose laws govern every aspect of life, including self-deceit. Thus they conclude that they are safely hidden within themselves.

10. There is a disease in their hearts, so Allah added to their disease, and they shall have a painful punishment by their lying and deceit.

The hypocrite is sick, and the sickness is of the heart, (*qalb*; from *qalaba*, to turn, return, free). A healthy heart is one which is unattached and free of desires, expectations and disappointments. The desire of the hypocrite's sick heart is based on self-deception. Allah's generosity, which is

vast and promises experiential increase, will only serve to increase this desire. The outcome, therefore, of this situation is nothing but confusion and suffering.

11. And when it is said to them: Do not act corruptly in the land, they say: Most surely we are only those who put things in order and conciliate.

12. Surely, they are those who act corruptly, but they do not perceive.

13. And when it is said to them: Believe as the people believe, they say: Shall we believe as the foolish believe? Surely, they themselves are the fools, but they do not know.

All created beings reflect the Creator's Attribute of eternity and ongoingness and therefore always resist accepting any discontinuity in life, and any separation or duality. Even the sick at heart, when shown their denial of unity, react by denying the information in order to perpetuate their confused system of belief and resultant habits. Another symptom of this disease is self-elevation and arrogance, for it serves to perpetuate their false concepts and beliefs by making them elevate themselves above others. The would-be deceiver looks down upon other systems and denounces their adherents as foolish, insolent and impudent (*sufaha*). In reality, however, the hypocrites are the foolish ones, because if they allowed themselves access to their innate, natural disposition (*fitrah*), they would know better. They have, however, lost the way to that basic (*fitri*, inborn) primal self-knowledge.

Fitrah is the 'natural and basic disposition' of humankind and is derived from *fatara*, to split or take apart. *Fatara* also means to create. Non-existence cracked and split open to reveal its opposite, creation. True knowledge – transformational knowledge – is accessed through the pre-creational crack by dividing deep into the well to reach the timeless source of the spring. The foolish, ignorant one clutters his life and fills his heart with the debris of illusions, desires, attachments and covetousness, blocking the access to that original crack, that inherent disposition of spontaneous beingness.

14. And when they meet those who believe, they say: We believe! And when they are alone with their *shaytans*, they say: Surely we are with you, we were only mocking!

Shaytan is from the Arabic verbal root *shatana*, which means to rebel, to be distant or cast off the path of light and mercy. *Shaytan* opposes *Rahman*, the Merciful. Mockery is ultimately harmful only to the self, because it is a negative attitude. Man always seeks security, and therefore one who has not gained the security of belief (*iman*) is bound to exhibit his illusions and false concepts when he is back in his familiar environment and up to his old habits.

15. Allah mocks them and they are prolonged and reinforced in their inordinacy so that they blindly wander on.

Reality reflects the intentions and actions of man. Thus those who wish to mock are allowed to, through the mercy of Allah. Every creational system perpetuates and feeds upon itself. The path of belief, if it is truly followed, will only bring increase, and the path of hypocrisy will likewise bring about increase so that those within it fall deeper into the abyss of its dark tunnels.

Life is dynamism and growth. Creation began from infinite non-existence and is expanding. Eventually, the entire cosmos and all the expanding sub-systems within it will contract back to the spaceless, timeless zone at the end of the creational cycle back to the eternal void within the divine grip.

16. These are the ones who purchase error for guidance. Their exchange will bring no profit, and they are not among those who are on a right course.

Guidance to the Truth (*huda*) is man's birthright, the capital with which he sets out for the next realm of consciousness. Like an inheritance, however, it must be reclaimed here and now. Some people ignorantly exchange it for misguidance, encouraged by the dominant characteristics of the lower self (*nafs*), its habits, insecurities, and fears of the unknown.

17. Their parable is exemplified by one who kindles a fire, and when it had illuminated all around him, Allah took away their light, and left them in utter darkness – they do not see.

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Imam Ja'far Al-Sadiq (Translated By Shaykh Fadhlalla Haeri)

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Shaykh Fadhlalla Haeri

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Shaykh Abd al-Qadir al-Jilani

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Shaykh Fadhlalla Haeri

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Collected Papers By: Sami K. Hamarneh

Edited By: Munawar A. Anees

Foreword By: Shaykh Fadhlalla Haeri

Health Sciences in Early Islam is a pioneering study of Islamic medicine that opens up new chapters of knowledge in the history of the healing sciences. This two volume work covers the development of Islamic medicine between the 6th and 12th centuries A.D.