

RAMADAN

IMMERSION



Dr. Nazir Khan

Introduction

- In today's society, it is more common for people to have doubts about their faith and begin to question their beliefs.
- The Quran addresses the roots from which atheism arises which is skepticism.
- Often times people may find themselves stuck on one small verse or hadith which causes them doubt.
 - However, when trying to address this doubt, we often find ourselves searching for answers about the person's specific question and we forget to address the overall mindset which has caused them to have the doubt.
- Two people can read the same hadith and for one person it may increase their faith while for another it may increase their doubt.
- Allah SWT said:

...يُضِلُّ بِهِ كَثِيرًا وَيَهْدِي بِهِ كَثِيرًا وَمَا يُضِلُّ بِهِ إِلَّا الْفَاسِقِينَ

...By it He causes many to stray, and many He leads into the right path; but He causes not to stray, except those who forsake (the path), (2:26)

- The Quran must be approached with the correct mentality or it may misguide people.

- Ibn Qayyim said that the best advice he received regarding doubt was this: “Don’t allow your heart to become a sponge for every doubt and allegation so that it drinks it up and is moistened with nothing else. Instead make your heart like solid glass. Doubts pass over its surface but do not settle on the inside, thus the doubts are seen through the clearness of the glass but are repelled by its firmness. Otherwise if you allow your heart to be like that sponge that soaks up the doubts then it will end up affirming every doubt it encounters”
- It is critical to focus on the mindset and whether a person has a mindset which will lead to doubt or one which will lead to certainty.
- Epistemology is the theory of knowledge, and knowing what is and isn’t true; what are the criteria we use to determine if something is true or false.
 - The Quran directs us to focus on this concept.
 - It shows us that many people hear Ayaat but the reason they don't accept them is because they don't have the right understanding of what constitutes as proof, not because the Ayah is unconvincing.
- What does it take to convince someone of the truth?
 - Allah says in the Quran:

وَمِنْهُمْ مَنْ يَسْتَمِعُ إِلَيْكَ ۗ وَجَعَلْنَا عَلَىٰ قُلُوبِهِمْ أَكِنَّةً أَنْ يَفْقَهُوهُ وَفِي آذَانِهِمْ وَقْرًا ۖ وَإِنْ يَرَوْا كَلًّا آيَةً لَا يُؤْمِنُوا بِهَا ۚ حَتَّىٰ إِذَا جَاءُوكَ يُجَادِلُونَكَ يَقُولُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا إِنْ هَذَا إِلَّا أَسَاطِيرُ الْأَوَّلِينَ

Among them are those who listen to you; but We place covers over their hearts, to prevent them from understanding it, and heaviness in their ears. Even if they see every sign, they will not believe in it. Until, when they come to you, to argue with you, those who disbelieve will say, “These are nothing but myths of the ancients.” (Al-Anaam, 25)

- There are some people that even if they saw the greatest signs, even if they directly saw God, they still wouldn't have faith.

- Allah also says in the Quran:

وَلَوْ فَتَحْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ بَابًا مِّنَ السَّمَاءِ فَظَلُّوا فِيهِ يَعْرُجُونَ (14)
لَقَالُوا إِنَّمَا سُكَّرَتْ أَبْصَارُنَا بَلْ نَحْنُ قَوْمٌ مَّسْحُورُونَ (15)

Even if We opened out to them a gate from heaven, and they were to continue (all day) ascending therein (15:14)

They would only say: "Our eyes have been intoxicated: Nay, we have been bewitched by sorcery." (15:14)

- Allah also says:

سَأَصْرِفُ عَن آيَاتِي الَّذِينَ يَتَكَبَّرُونَ فِي الْأَرْضِ بِغَيْرِ الْحَقِّ وَإِن يَرَوْا كُلَّ آيَةٍ لَا يُؤْمِنُوا بِهَا وَإِن يَرَوْا سَبِيلَ الرُّشْدِ لَا يَتَّخِذُوهُ سَبِيلًا وَإِن يَرَوْا سَبِيلَ الغَيِّ يَتَّخِذُوهُ سَبِيلًا ذَلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ كَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا وَكَانُوا عَنْهَا غَافِلِينَ

I will turn away from My revelations those who behave proudly on earth without justification. Even if they see every sign, they will not believe in it; and if they see the path of rectitude, they will not adopt it for a path; and if they see the path of error, they will adopt it for a path. That is because they denied Our revelations, and paid no attention to them. (Al-Araf, 146)

- What are the circumstances that lead one to affirm the truth and another to constantly deny?
 - It fundamentally comes down to a person's attitude regarding the Ayaat.
 - It's a question of radical skepticism.
 - People have already convinced themselves that they don't want to have someone they must obey, and that idea stems from arrogance.
 - Many people don't want to humble themselves by becoming subservient to a greater being.
 - They automatically find something to deny in every truth that they are presented with.
- If you go down this path of demanding proofs and arguments, then you will start to question and doubt the existence of the world around you.
 - If you don't know that God is real, how do you know that you are real?

- Following this line of thinking, there is no way to prove that any of us actually exist. However this is something we aren't in doubt of.
- The point then is that if you aren't in doubt about any of that, why can you doubt God? What exactly is your criteria to determine what is true and what is false?
- Doubt is a tricky path that takes you almost anywhere.
 - Richard Garner, the Atheist philosopher, said that Atheists should abolish the concept of good and bad because there is no proof they exist past an idea in our heads.
- Skepticism is only a result of one's own desires because people are inconsistent in the things they choose to doubt.
- Allah informs us in Surah Al-Najm:

إِنْ يَتَّبِعُونَ إِلَّا الظَّنَّ وَمَا تَهْوَى الْأَنْفُسُ ۗ وَلَقَدْ جَاءَهُمْ مِنْ رَبِّهِمُ الْهُدَىٰ

They follow nothing but assumptions, and what the ego desires, even though guidance has come to them from their Lord. (53:23)

- There are many instances in the Quran where Allah highlights skepticism by talking about people asking for miracles, and those who lack this critical foundation of belief in our life having a greater purpose are the people asking for these miracles.
- These claims come from the fact that this person is not ready to recognize, accept, and live by the truth.

وَإِذْ قُلْتُمْ يَا مُوسَىٰ لَنْ نُؤْمِنَ لَكَ حَتَّىٰ نَرَى اللَّهَ جَهْرَةً فَأَخَذَتْكُمُ الصَّاعِقَةُ وَأَنْتُمْ تَنْظُرُونَ

And remember ye said: "O Moses! We shall never believe in thee until we see Allah manifestly," but ye were dazed with thunder and lighting even as ye looked on (2:55)

وَقَالَ الَّذِينَ لَا يَرْجُونَ لِقَاءَنَا لَوْلَا أُنزِلَ عَلَيْنَا الْمَلَائِكَةُ أَوْ نَرَى رَبَّنَا لَقَدِ اسْتَكْبَرُوا فِي أَنْفُسِهِمْ وَعَتَوْا عُتُوًّا كَبِيرًا

Such as fear not the meeting with Us (for Judgment) say: "Why are not the angels sent down to us, or (why) do we not see our Lord?" Indeed they have an aThose who do not expect to meet Us say, "If only the angels were sent down to us, or we could see our Lord." They have grown arrogant within themselves, and have become excessively defiant. (25:21)

وَقَالُوا لَوْلَا أُنزِلَ عَلَيْهِ آيَاتٌ مِنْ رَبِّهِ قُلْ إِنَّمَا الْآيَاتُ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ وَإِنَّمَا أَنَا نَذِيرٌ مُبِينٌ

And they said, "If only a miracle from his Lord was sent down to him." Say, "Miracles are only with God, and I am only a clear warner." (29:50)

وَقَالُوا لَوْلَا أُنزِلَ عَلَيْهِ مَلَكٌ وَلَوْ أَنْزَلْنَا مَلَكَاً لَقُضِيَ الْأَمْرُ ثُمَّ لَا يُنظَرُونَ

And they say, "Why was an angel not sent down to him." Had We sent down an angel, the matter would have been settled, and they would not have been reprieved. (6:8)

فَهَلْ يَنْتَظِرُونَ إِلَّا مِثْلَ أَيَّامِ الَّذِينَ خَلَوْا مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ قُلْ فَانْتَظِرُوا إِنِّي مَعَكُمْ مِنَ الْمُنتَظِرِينَ

Do they expect anything but the likes of the days of those who passed away before them? Say, "Then wait, I will be waiting with you." (10:102)

فَلَعَلَّكَ تَارِكٌ بَعْضَ مَا يُوحَىٰ إِلَيْكَ وَضَائِقٌ بِهِ صَدْرُكَ أَنْ يَقُولُوا لَوْلَا أُنزِلَ عَلَيْهِ كَنْزٌ أَوْ جَاءَ مَعَهُ مَلَكٌ إِنَّمَا أَنْتَ نَذِيرٌ وَاللَّهُ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ وَكِيلٌ

Perhaps you wish to disregard some of what is revealed to you, and you may be stressed because of it, since they say, "If only a treasure was sent down to him, or an angel came with him." You are only a warner, and God is Responsible for all things. (11:12)

- The real problem is the internal state of the human being.
 - The person has not made themselves ready to accept the truth.
- Your life either has meaning or it does not.
 - If you believe that your life has a purpose, then you need to find a message that bring that purpose to you.
- If you come across a single verse or hadith that you don't understand, you won't get caught up in that single doubt because you belief firmly in the entire religion.
 - You will be able to understand that you just don't have the intellectual capacities to understand that one thing in that one moment.
- Ibn Qayyim and Ibn Taymiyyah mention that the example of light upon light given in Surah Noor refers to the light of the Fitrah that is already in our hearts and the light of revelation added to that, and that is how we perceive life as having meaning.

- The Quran addresses the roots of atheism and radical skepticism in the story of Musa and Firawn:

قَالَ فِرْعَوْنُ وَمَا رَبُّ الْعَالَمِينَ (23) قَالَ رَبُّ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَمَا
بَيْنَهُمَا إِن كُنْتُمْ مُوقِنِينَ (24)

Pharaoh said, "And what is the Lord of the Worlds?" (26:23) He said, "The Lord of the heavens and the earth, and everything between them, if you have certainty (in anything)." (26:24)

- Without that belief and conviction in Allah, no other concepts of god can hold up.
 - You have no way of trusting your logic and rationale without certainty.
- Once we get to a position where we realize that Islam is the only thing that gives meaning in life, there is no reason to feel doubt in Islam when we come across something we don't understand.
- When the fundamentals are strong, we know that there is always going to be answers for the details.