

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of God, Most Gracious, Most Merciful

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Who Guards the Planet?

A recent article in Time magazine (June 9, 2014) was entitled “The Man Who Guards the Planet.” It was about an astronomer, Don Yeomans, who tracks asteroids, calculating how close they’ll come to earth and trying to devise methods to deflect those that are big enough and close enough to cause damage. They have very sophisticated equipment, constantly monitoring deep space. In 2013, they were all very proud of their knowledge of a huge asteroid, “about the size of a small office building,” that was coming close to earth, “below the altitude of some of our highest-flying satellites.” But because of their equipment, they knew it would miss, and they were bragging about their superiority over their universe.

As they were watching, and congratulating one another on their cleverness, a totally different meteorite, completely undetected, entered earth’s atmosphere at around 40,000 miles per hour (almost 60 times the speed of sound) and exploded in the air over Chelyabinsk, Russia. There was a blinding flash, a hot cloud of dust and gas, and a powerful shock wave. Thousands of buildings in six cities were damaged by the shock wave and about 1500 people were injured, mostly from de-

bris from the damaged buildings.

The shock wave wasn’t just felt in Russia. It reverberated through the scientific community. Here was all this modern equipment designed for only one purpose—to detect and possibly deflect any large piece of space debris that might damage earth. And yet this large asteroid snuck in behind the sun and blew up in their faces. “That was humbling,” Yeomans says, “and instructive.”

[22:65] Do you not see that GOD has committed in your service everything on earth? The ships run in the ocean by His command. He prevents the heavenly bodies from crashing onto the earth, except in accordance with His command. GOD is Most Kind towards the people, Most Merciful.

[57:4] He is the One who created the heavens and the earth in six days, then assumed all authority. He knows everything that enters into the earth, and everything that comes out of it, and everything that comes down from the sky, and everything that climbs into it. He is with you wherever you may be. GOD is Seer of everything you do.

[4:132] To GOD belongs everything in the heavens and the earth, and GOD is

the only Protector.

God is the only Protector. Yeomans and all of NASA may devote their lives to watching for asteroids. Millions of dollars may be spent on plans to deflect or destroy those that seem to be a threat. But God is the only Protector. In 1912 men built a huge ship that they boasted was unsinkable, yet on its maiden voyage Titanic went to the bottom of the sea. When we challenge God, He lets us know who’s in charge.

[10:66] Absolutely, to GOD belongs everyone in the heavens and everyone on earth. Those who set up idols beside GOD are really following nothing. They only think that they are following something. They only guess.

Beginning in 1961, the Russians and the Americans sent up hundreds of men in space, orbiting the earth, landing on the moon. And then beginning twenty years later, we sent up over 20 space shuttle missions, to run experiments in space, deploy satellites, make space walks, and then to return to earth, land safely and fly again. We felt invincible. We couldn’t be stopped. So in the most publicized of all the shuttle missions, with teacher Christa McAuliffe aboard, a small O-ring prob-

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lem caused the space shuttle Challenger to explode one minute into flight. Again, we got caught up in our egos, even naming the shuttle “Challenger.” Who were we challenging? God? He was fully aware of every single flight. [3:5] *Nothing is hidden from GOD, on earth, or in the heaven.* Each success was by His leave. And the crash was also by His leave. [34:2] *He knows everything that goes into the earth, and everything that comes out of it, and everything that comes down from the sky, and everything that climbs into it. He is the Most Merciful, the Forgiving.*

The Time article indicates that Yeomans and his colleagues believe that if an asteroid is on a collision course with earth, they can nudge it just enough to cause it to veer wide. The problem is that you have to hit the asteroid when it’s far out in space in order to deflect it enough and Yeomans estimates “we’d need a 10-year window between the discovery of a killer rock and deflection if we wanted to avoid disaster.”

We know that Yeomans and NASA are not the guardians of the planet. Only God is the Protector. He created all of this—the earth and all the universes, and He designed it to withstand the onslaught of space debris. [35:41] *GOD is the One who holds the heavens and the earth, lest they vanish. If anyone else is to hold them, they will most certainly vanish. He is Clement, Forgiving.*

Every moment there are billions of pieces of rock floating in space relatively close to earth, from the size of a baseball to the size of a large city. Every day at least one piece enters earth’s atmosphere, and by God’s design burns up before it can strike. And when, occasionally, one sneaks through, like the one 65 million years ago that killed off the dinosaurs, or the one in Arizona about 50,000 years ago that left a beautiful crater, or the one in Russia in 2013, God is full control of its entry, its speed and its landing.

[20:6] *To Him belongs everything in the heavens, and the earth, and everything between them, and everything beneath the ground.*

[27:75] *There is nothing in the heavens and the earth that is hidden (from God); everything is in a profound record.*

[48:7] *To GOD belongs all the forces in the heavens and the earth. GOD is Almighty, Most Wise.*

And if God should choose to have an asteroid strike the earth, which would certainly bring profound smoke (44:10-16), there is nothing that we can do to stop it. [16:77] *To GOD belongs the future of the heavens and the earth. As far as He is concerned, the end of the world (the Hour) is a blink of an eye away, or even closer. GOD is Omnipotent.*

All we can do is worship God alone, appreciate His awesome power and His immense mercy. And remember that He is the Creator and the Protector.

[39:67] *They can never fathom the greatness of GOD. The whole earth is within His fist on the Day of Resurrection. In fact, the universes are folded within His right hand.* Be He glorified; He is much too high above needing any partners.*

footnote *39:67 *Our universe, with its billion galaxies, a billion trillion stars, uncountable decillions of heavenly bodies, spanning many billions of light-years, is the smallest and innermost of seven universes. This incomprehensible vastness of the seven universes is within God’s hand. Such is the greatness of God.*

Lydia

[7:54] *Your Lord is the one GOD; who created the heavens and the earth in six days, then assumed all authority. The night overtakes the day, as it pursues it persistently, and the sun, the moon, and the stars are committed to serve by His command. Absolutely, He controls all creation and all commands. Most Exalted is GOD, Lord of the universe.*

Jealousy, a disease...

Of all the emotions humans display, jealousy is one of the most common and unsettling. It tends to bring out the worst in people. Jealousy is most aptly described as the fear of losing something to someone else. It promotes “apprehension or seeking vengeance out of fear or insecurity.” As jealousy ties into the feeling of self-worth, a person who is insecure tends to feel that he’s not getting his “fair share” and that others always “get a break.” Jealousy is such a powerful emotion that it is capable of not only consuming the individual but can also spread to others and influence the way they think and act towards the object of jealousy, but most importantly the object of jealousy tends to become an obsession making it an idol besides God.

Effects of Jealousy: Jealousy causes grave damage as it leads us to tarnish the other person’s reputation because most of us are vulnerable and insecure. God warns us against Jealousy. [Bible James 3:14-16] *But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast and be false to the truth. This is not the wisdom that comes down from above, but is earthly, unspiritual, demonic. For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there will be disorder and every vile practice. [Quran 15:88] Do not be jealous of what we bestowed upon the other (messengers), and do not be saddened...*

Jealousy causes us to pine about what we don’t have or covet what someone else may have; in addition it causes us to break God’s commandment [57:23] *Thus, you should not grieve over anything you miss, nor be proud of anything He has bestowed upon you. GOD does not love those who are boastful, proud.*

Dealing with Jealousy: Dealing with jealousy is not too difficult. The first step is to acknowledge our shortcoming. While it may not always be possible to fight the bug within immediately, like any disease we are only able to take corrective measures on

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diagnosing the problem. Recognizing and acknowledging the problem sets us free and gives us the nerve to change. It helps us look inward rather than outward. Once we are aware of our failings we will then be ready to take corrective measures to rid ourselves of it. Meditation, I find, is a good way to invoke God's help with the problem, especially if the object of our jealousy is another submitter. This is a disaster in the making. In God's system no individual must lose anything in order for another person to gain. All are winners and each person is awarded individually. As individuals we have to strive hard to fight jealousy, as our feelings and self-esteem are exposed and challenged; we must be gentle with ourselves and with each other, lest we damage not only our own but also another person's character. Invoking God's help to remove all jealousy from our hearts not only brings peace, it helps us become content and happy with what we have rather than continuously obsessing about what we don't and may never have. God promises that if we seek His help in this matter: [7:43] *We will remove all jealousy from their hearts. Rivers will flow beneath them ...*" and we know that God's promise is the truth.

Psalm 34:13-19

¹³ *Keep your tongue from evil and your lips from speaking deceit.*

¹⁴ *Turn away from evil and do good; seek peace and pursue it.*

¹⁵ *The eyes of the Lord are toward the righteous and his ears toward their cry.*

¹⁶ *The face of the Lord is against those who do evil, to cut off the memory of them from the earth.*

¹⁷ *When the righteous cry for help, the Lord hears and delivers them out of all their troubles.*

¹⁸ *The Lord is near to the brokenhearted and saves the crushed in spirit.*

¹⁹ *Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the Lord delivers him out of them all.*

As believers we have this provision from God and must take full advantage of it, as it is our only hope of getting rid of a disease that can cause a lot of damage to the self and others.

GOD's Fairness

[42:12] *To Him belongs absolute control of the heavens and the earth. He is the One who increases the provision for whomever He wills, or reduces it. He is fully aware of all things.*

Why does God not enhance the prosperity of everyone and remove the disproportions of wealth? The answer is in [42:27] *If GOD increased the provision for His servants, they would transgress on earth. This is why He sends it precisely measured to whomever He wills. He is fully Cognizant and Seer of His servants.*

We know that the hallmark of God's design is consistency and equivalence. However, we see all around us in nature irregularity, discrepancy and unpredictability. Some places get enough rain to cause floods, others no rain – leading to drought. Our shape, form, size, capacities, faculties and abilities are different. God's grand design of construction is beyond question, and far beyond our comprehension.

God knows there is an inequality and we should not misconstrue and believe that His distribution is unfair. [17:20] *For each one of them we provide; we provide those and these from your Lord's bounties. Your Lord's bounties are inexhaustible.* Just because someone is more financially secure than another it should not be thought to be God's special grace on that person. [13:26] *GOD is the One who increases the provision for whomever He wills, or withholds it. They have become pre-occupied with this life, and this life, compared to the Hereafter, is nil.* We have to trust and believe that behind this outward and apparent disproportion rests unseen some important lesson. [30:37] *Do they not realize that GOD increases the provision for whomever He wills, or reduces it? These should be lessons for people who believe.*

God has foreseen even the enquiries which may crop up as He has made us reasoning beings. The Quran communicates to us giving logical responses to answer such questions. So we can know that God is not an erratic or

whimsical Being. [21:16-17] *We did not create the heavens and the earth, and everything between them just for amusement. If we needed amusement, we have initiated it without any of this, if that is what we wanted to do.*

As God is Infinitely Wise, there is no past, present and future for Him – He knows every little or large event in our lifetime. [36:12] *We will certainly revive the dead, and we have recorded everything they have done in this life, as well as the consequences that continue after their death. Everything we have counted in a profound record.*

God's will is beyond question (21:23) and no one can choose his time and place of birth or death.

[31:34] *With GOD is the knowledge regarding the Hour (end of the world). He is the One who sends down the rain, and He knows the contents of the womb. No soul knows what will happen to it tomorrow, and no one knows in which land he or she will die. GOD is Omniscient, Cognizant.*

We are all answerable to God on the completion of the full gamut of life on earth. This loop too is pre-destined for us, kept secret and known only to God. What we should realize is that regardless of what path we undertake in this life, whether we redeem our soul or neglect it, God's provisions continue to flow unhindered.

[17:18-20] *Anyone who chooses this fleeting life as his priority, we will rush to him what we decide to give him, then we commit him to Gehenna, where he suffers forever, despised and defeated. As for those who choose the Hereafter as their priority, and work righteousness, while believing, their efforts will be appreciated. For each one of them we provide; we provide those and these from your Lord's bounties. Your Lord's bounties are inexhaustible.*

Provisions Guaranteed [11:6] There is not a creature on earth whose provision is not guaranteed by GOD. And He knows its course and its final destiny. All are recorded in a profound record.

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FAITH-WORTHY

What is faith? Is faith trust in only what we can understand? Is that faith?

Faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see.

Is that just blind faith and wishful thinking? Well that depends. It depends what our faith is in. Are you putting your faith in something that is not worthy of your faith?

There are many in the world who put their faith in only what they can see. But I would argue that their faith is not really in what they can see, but in themselves and in their ability to interpret what they see correctly. The problem with that is that we don't see everything and we do not even interpret everything we see correctly. Having faith in that is really only having faith in ourselves, and I would argue that having faith in ourselves is really only wishful thinking.

So, how can we determine where we put our faith?

Should we have our faith in God? Should we have our faith in Him not only when we can't see everything, but also when the things we do see don't make sense to us? It is easy to "live by faith" when we can understand and see how things are working. It is much harder to live by faith when we do not understand what God is doing.

Faith in Someone Faith-Worthy
This is why it is imperative that we

know that what or who we place our faith in is Faith-worthy. When you know that your faith is in something or someone who is worthy of your faith, then you do not need to know all the details. How do we determine if someone is worthy of our faith? By their character.

When I know a person's character, I can know if I can trust them without knowing the details of a particular circumstance.

So let's ask the question ...Is God Faith-worthy?

Is God's character such that we should have faith in Him, even when the life we see is not making sense to us? I believe the answer is yes. It is yes because God has shown Himself to be Faithful, the MOST Faithful.

When He has said that He is going to do something, He has done it.

We live in a time when we have the privilege to see how God has been faithful to His word. Consider prophet Abraham. God told Abraham that he would have a child. Even when he and Sarah were past childbearing age, He reaffirmed the promise (11:71-3, 15:51-5). And He was faithful to deliver, when it seemed impossible. We have many other examples where God says BE and it is.

But God is not only faithful, being true to his word, but God has also shown Himself to be Loving. This is important. Do we want to put our faith in someone who is honest and does as he says but is a tyrant? Prob-

bly not. But God is not a tyrant. He has shown His great love for us. He is the most Kind, the most Forgiving, the most understanding. And that love has been demonstrated through His mercy and His grace.

Every one of us knows we have sinned and done wrong things, yet God has not wiped us out nor condemned us to hell for eternity. He had mercy on us and has been patient with mankind, not wanting anyone to perish, but for us to come back to Him and to repent to Him.

So how do we truly live by faith?

In those times when we are struggling to live by faith and wondering about God's plan, when we see many problems and things we don't understand, we need to stop focusing on what we don't know (or understand) and start focusing on what we do know. God is Faith-worthy. That is a powerful faith. A faith that not only does not see or understand everything, but rejoices in the God in whom he has faith. That, in spite of his not understanding, he knows that God is good and able, is Faith-worthy, and will accomplish His good purposes.

Iqbal

[59:23] He is the One GOD; there is no other god besides Him. The King, the Most Sacred, the Peace, the Most Faithful, the Supreme, the Almighty, the Most Powerful, the Most Dignified. GOD be glorified; far above having partners