

## 15. The Mechanism of Divine Guidance

The mechanism of divine guidance is either not understood or misunderstood by many people. There are many verses in the Quran that inform us that Allah guides whom He wills and leaves astray whom He wills. Consider the following verses.

مَنْ يُضَلِّلِ اللَّهُ فَلَا هَادِيَ لَهُ وَيَذَرُهُمْ فِي طُغْيَانِهِمْ يَعْمَهُونَ

7:186 Whoever Allah leads astray, then there will be none to guide him. And He leaves them free to wander blindly in their trespasses.

وَلَوْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ مَا أَشْرَكُوا ۗ وَمَا جَعَلْنَاكَ عَلَيْهِمْ حَفِيظًا ۗ وَمَا أَنْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ بِوَكِيلٍ

6:107 If Allah had so willed, they would not have associated partners with Him. We have not made you (Prophet Muhammad) a guard over them and you are not entrusted with their responsibility.

وَلَوْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ لَجَعَلَكُمْ أُمَّةً وَاحِدَةً وَلَكِنْ يُضِلُّ مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَيَهْدِي مَنْ يَشَاءُ ۗ وَلَتُسْأَلُنَّ عَمَّا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ

16:93 If Allah had so willed, He would have made you all one community. But He leaves astray whom He pleases and He guides those whom He pleases. And you will certainly be questioned about all your actions.

وَلَوْ شَاءَ رَبُّكَ لَأَمَنَّ مِنَ فِي الْأَرْضِ كُلَّهُمْ جَمِيعًا ۖ أَفَأَنْتَ تُكْرِهُ النَّاسَ حَتَّىٰ يَكُونُوا مُؤْمِنِينَ ۗ وَمَا كَانَ لِنَفْسٍ أَنْ تُؤْمِنَ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ ۗ وَيَجْعَلُ الرُّجْسَ عَلَى الَّذِينَ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ

10:99-100 If your Lord had so wished, the entire humanity on the earth would have believed! Do you then compel people to believe? Nobody can believe without the consent of Allah and He makes filth on those who do not think (and understand).

Similarly Allah says He punishes whom He wills and shows mercy to whom He wishes.

يُعَذِّبُ مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَيَرْحَمُ مَنْ يَشَاءُ ۗ وَإِلَيْهِ تُقْلَبُونَ

29:21 He punishes whom He pleases and He grants mercy to whom He pleases. And you will be brought back to Him.

In the light of these messages, many people believe that we have no role to play in getting Allah's guidance. It is Allah's prerogative to guide or mislead an individual and man has nothing to do with it. Everything has already been decided by Allah. This is a very wrong impression they develop about Allah's guidance. If guidance and hence award of Heaven or Hell is a pre-determined thing, there is no need for testing human beings by Allah. The main reason why people are inclined to think that way is they look at the divine affairs from human perspective. When a human being says that he will deal with a case as he wishes, it means he will handle it in any way he wants. But when Allah says He will deal with the case as He wishes, it means only one thing – with full justice. Thus statements like “as Allah wishes”, “as Allah pleases”, “as Allah wills”, etc., mean Allah's decision or action with full justice.

Consider the following verses in which Allah indicates that the option to accept or not to accept His guidance is left to the individual. However at the end of the verses, it is stated that only if Allah wills, the individual will accept the guidance.

إِنَّ هَذِهِ تَذَكُّرَةٌ ۖ فَمَنْ شَاءَ اتَّخَذْ إِلَىٰ رَبِّهِ سَبِيلًا ۗ وَمَا تَشَاءُونَ إِلَّا أَنْ يَشَاءَ اللَّهُ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَلِيمًا حَكِيمًا يُدْخِلُ مَنْ يَشَاءُ فِي رَحْمَتِهِ ۗ وَالظَّالِمِينَ أَعَدَّ لَهُمْ عَذَابًا أَلِيمًا

76:29-31 Verily this (Quran) is a Reminder. Whoever wants let him accept the (straight) path to his Lord! But you will not desire unless Allah wills. Indeed Allah is Omniscient, Wise. He will admit to His mercy (i.e., His path) whom He pleases. And He has kept a grievous penalty for the wrongdoers.

إِنَّ هُوَ إِلَّا ذِكْرٌ لِلْعَالَمِينَ لِمَنْ شَاءَ مِنْكُمْ أَنْ يَسْتَقِيمَ وَمَا تَشَاءُونَ إِلَّا أَنْ يَشَاءَ اللَّهُ رَبُّ الْعَالَمِينَ

81:27-29 Verily this (Quran) is nothing but a Reminder to the people of the world to those among you who like to be on the straight path. But you will not desire unless Allah, the Lord of the Worlds, wills.

اللَّهُ نَزَّلَ أَحْسَنَ الْحَدِيثِ كِتَابًا مُتَشَابِهًا مَثَابًا يَتَشَعَّرُ مِنْهُ جُلُودُ الَّذِينَ يَخْشَوْنَ رَبَّهُمْ ثُمَّ تَلِينُ جُلُودُهُمْ وَقُلُوبُهُمْ إِلَىٰ ذِكْرِ اللَّهِ ۗ ذَلِكَ هُدَىٰ اللَّهِ يَهْدِي بِهِ مَنْ يَشَاءُ ۗ وَمَنْ يُضَلِلِ اللَّهُ فَمَا لَهُ مِنْ هَادٍ

39:23 Allah has sent down the best message – a Book (the Quran) resembling each other and being repeated. Those who fear their Lord will get goose-skin by that (while reciting). Then their skins and their minds soften towards the remembrance of Allah. Such is the guidance of Allah. He guides with it (the Quran) whom He pleases. And whoever Allah leads astray, then he will have none to guide (him).

Through these and many other verses in the Quran, Allah makes it unambiguously clear that Allah’s guidance means the Quran. It is left to the individual to accept or reject Allah’s guidance – the Quran. An individual attains guidance if he accepts the Quran and live accordingly. If not, he gets misled. Both these happen however according to the wish of Allah. This may sound rather queerish at first thought but it is the reality.

The Quranic revelations relating to divine guidance do not mean that Allah is guiding or misguiding people directly from His abode. The messages only indicate there is foolproof mechanism that Allah has designed to lead a person either to His guidance or away from it depending on how his mind performs. This mechanism for guidance is operating in the human biosystem itself.

Allah’s guidance process can be understood as mechanism involving the operation of two special software – the guidance program and Satan virus. The guidance program will lead the human mind to the right path (the Quranic path) if it satisfies the criteria stipulated in the program. The reasons for guiding or leaving a person astray mentioned in some of the verses quoted above are in fact some of the criteria. There are several verses that clearly indicate that those who associate partners (polytheists or *mushrik*) with Allah will not get guidance. This forms another criterion.

وَيَعْبُدُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ مَا لَا يَضُرُّهُمْ وَلَا يَنْفَعُهُمْ وَيَقُولُونَ هَؤُلَاءِ شَفَعَاؤُنَا عِنْدَ اللَّهِ ۗ قُلْ أَنْتَبِتُونَ اللَّهَ بِمَا لَا يَعْلَمُ فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَلَا فِي الْأَرْضِ ۗ سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَىٰ عَمَّا يُشْرِكُونَ

10:18 They worship, besides Allah, things that will neither harm them nor benefit them, and they say: “These are our intercessors with Allah.” Say: “Are you informing Allah of something He does not know in the skies and on the earth?” Glory to Him! Far is He above the partners they ascribe (to Him)!

وَلَيْنِ سَأَلْتَهُمْ مَنْ خَلَقَ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ وَاسْحَرَ الشَّمْسَ وَالْقَمَرَ لَيَقُولَنَّ اللَّهُ فَنَأْيُ يُؤْفِكُونَ

29:61 If you ask them (polytheists), “Who created the skies and the earth and made the sun and the moon subservient”, they will certainly say, “Allah”. Then how are they misled (from the truth)!

فَإِذَا رَكِبُوا فِي الْفُلِكِ دَعَوْا اللَّهَ مُخْلِصِينَ لَهُ الدِّينَ فَلَمَّا نَجَّاهُمْ إِلَى الْبَرِّ إِذَا هُمْ يُشْرِكُونَ لِيَكْفُرُوا بِمَا آتَيْنَاهُمْ وَلِيَتَمَنَّوْا ۗ فَسَوْفَ يَعْلَمُونَ

29:65-66 When they (polytheists) board the ship, they call upon Allah with sincere devotion to Him. Then when He has brought them safely to the land, behold, they join partners with Him showing ingratitude with what We have given them. And let them enjoy the pleasures of the worldly life. But afterwards, they will know.

ذَلِكُمْ بِأَنَّهُ إِذَا دُعِيَ اللَّهُ وَحْدَهُ كَفَرْتُمْ ۖ وَإِنْ يُشْرَكَ بِهِ تُؤْمِنُوا ۗ فَالْحُكْمُ لِلَّهِ الْعَلِيِّ الْكَبِيرِ

40:12 (They will be told:) “That is because when Allah alone was invoked, you did not believe; but when partners were joined to Him, you believed. The power of judgment is with Allah, the Supreme, the Great.”

Similarly, hypocrisy is another criterion. A hypocrite is not a believer but a fraud who pretends to be a believer.

وَإِذَا قِيلَ لَهُمْ تَعَالَوْا إِلَىٰ مَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ وَإِلَى الرَّسُولِ رَأَيْتَ الْمُنَافِقِينَ يَصُدُّونَ عَنْكَ صُدُودًا فَكَيْفَ إِذَا أَصَابَتْهُمُ مُصِيبَةٌ بِمَا قَدَّمْت أَيْدِيهِمْ قَالُوا إِنَّا كَافِرُونَ بِاللَّهِ إِنْ أَرَدْنَا إِلَّا إِحْسَانًا وَتَوْفِيقًا ۗ أُولَٰئِكَ الَّذِينَ يَعْلَمُ اللَّهُ مَا فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ فَأَعْرِضْ عَنْهُمْ وَعِظْهُمْ وَقُلْ لَهُمْ فِي أَنفُسِهِمْ قَوْلًا بَلِيغًا

4:61-63 When it is said to them, “Come to what Allah has revealed and to the messenger”, you see the hypocrites turning away from you (in disgust). Then what will it be like when they are afflicted with some misfortune because of (the deeds) what their hands had done before, and then they come to you swearing by Allah, “We meant nothing but good and conciliation”? (Allah) knows what is in their minds. So you keep away from them and advise them and speak to them a word to reach their very souls.

فَمَا لَكُمْ فِي الْمُنَافِقِينَ فِتْنَةٍ وَاللَّهُ أَرَادَ سَبَّوهُمَا كَسَبُوا ۗ أَتُرِيدُونَ أَنْ تَهْدُوا مَنْ أَضَلَّ اللَّهُ ۗ وَمَنْ يُضِلِلِ اللَّهُ فَلَنْ تَجِدَ لَهُ سَبِيلًا ۗ وَدُوا لَوْ تَكْفُرُونَ كَمَا كَفَرُوا فَتَكُونُونَ سَوَاءً ۗ فَلَا تَتَّخِذُوا مِنْهُمْ أَوْلِيَاءَ حَتَّىٰ يَهَاجَرُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ ۗ فَإِنْ تَوَلَّوْا فَخُذُوهُمْ وَاقْتُلُوهُمْ حَيْثُ وَجَدْتُمُوهُمْ ۗ وَلَا تَتَّخِذُوا مِنْهُمْ وُلِيًّا وَلَا نَصِيرًا

4:88-89 What is it that you (remain) as two parties in the matter of the hypocrites? Allah had upset them for what they had earned (i.e., for their evil deeds). Do you want to guide those whom Allah has misguided? Whomsoever Allah misguides, you will not find for him a way. They wanted you to reject Faith as they did so that you become at par (with them). Therefore do not take friends from them until they leave their land in the cause of Allah. But if they turn away, seize them and kill them wherever you find them. And do not take a friend or a helper from them

وَقَدْ نَزَّلَ عَلَيْكُمْ فِي الْكِتَابِ أَنْ إِذَا سَمِعْتُمْ آيَاتَ اللَّهِ يُكْفَرُ بِهَا وَيَسْتَهْزَأُ بِهَا فَلَا تَعْفُوا لَهُمْ حَتَّىٰ يَخْرُجُوا فِي حَدِيثِ غَيْرِهِ ۗ إِنَّكُمْ إِذَا مَثَلْتُمْ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ جَامِعُ الْمُنَافِقِينَ وَالْكَافِرِينَ فِي جَهَنَّمَ جَمِيعًا ۗ الَّذِينَ يَتَرَبَّصُونَ بِكُمْ فَإِنْ كَانَ لَكُمْ فِتْحٌ مِنَ اللَّهِ قَالُوا أَلَمْ نَكُنْ مَعَكُمْ وَإِنْ كَانَ لِلْكَافِرِينَ نَصِيبٌ قَالُوا أَلَمْ نَسْتَحْذِ عَلَيْكُمْ وَنَمْنَعُكُم مِّنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ۗ فَاللَّهُ يَحْكُمُ بَيْنَكُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ ۗ وَلَنْ يَجْعَلَ اللَّهُ لِلْكَافِرِينَ عَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ سَبِيلًا ۗ إِنَّ الْمُنَافِقِينَ يُخَادِعُونَ اللَّهَ وَهُوَ خَادِعُهُمْ وَإِذَا قَامُوا إِلَى الصَّلَاةِ قَامُوا كَسَالَىٰ يُرَاءُونَ النَّاسَ وَلَا يَذْكُرُونَ اللَّهَ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا مُّذَبِّبِينَ ۗ بَيْنَ ذَلِكَ لَا إِلَىٰ هَٰؤُلَاءِ وَلَا إِلَىٰ هَٰؤُلَاءِ ۗ وَمَنْ يُضِلِلِ اللَّهُ فَلَنْ تَجِدَ لَهُ سَبِيلًا

4:140-143 He (Allah) had sent down (the message) to you in the book that when you hear the revelations of Allah being denied and ridiculed, you should not sit with them till they change to a different topic. (If you sit), then you are like them. Verily, Allah will gather the hypocrites and the rejecters of Faith together in Hell, who wait (for an opportunity) concerning you. If there is a victory for you from Allah, they will say: “Were we not with you?” But if there is any success to the unbelievers, they will tell (them): “Did we not gain an advantage over you and did we not guard you from the believers?” But Allah will

pass judgement between you on the Day of Judgment. And Allah will not make any way for the unbelievers (to triumph) over the believers. Indeed the hypocrites (think that they) deceive Allah, but He deceives them. When they stand for prayer, they stand lazily (just) to be seen by the people and they remember Allah only very little. (They are) neither with this group (believers) nor with that group (unbelievers) (but remain undecided) in between. Whomsoever Allah leaves astray, you (i.e., Prophet Muhammad) will never find a way for him.

The individual whose mind opts for Allah's guidance will get constantly guided that way by the program until he attains full guidance. In other words, the guidance program in his biosoftware (*rooh*) leads him to that and he becomes firm in his belief in Islam. He becomes true Muslim obeying Allah's instructions in letter and spirit. This is made further clear in another verse:

لَا تَجِدُ قَوْمًا يُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ يُوَادُّونَ مَنْ حَادَّ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ وَلَوْ كَانُوا آبَاءَهُمْ أَوْ أَبْنَاءَهُمْ أَوْ إِخْوَانَهُمْ أَوْ عَشِيرَتَهُمْ أُولَئِكَ كَتَبَ فِي قُلُوبِهِمُ الْإِيمَانَ وَأَيَّدَهُم بِرُوحٍ مِنْهُ وَيُدْخِلُهُمْ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ وَرَضُوا عَنْهُ أُولَئِكَ حِزْبُ اللَّهِ أَلَا إِنَّ حِزْبَ اللَّهِ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ

58:22 You will not find people who believe in Allah and the Last Day in close relationship with those who resist Allah and His messenger even if they are their fathers, their sons, their brothers or their kindred. For them (i.e., the believers) He has written belief in their minds and strengthened them with a *rooh* from Himself. And He will admit them to Gardens with rivers flowing beneath, to dwell therein (for ever). Allah is well pleased with them and they are well pleased with Him. They are the party of Allah. Truly it is the party of Allah who are successful.

Thus it is the divine guidance program (*rooh*) operating in our biosystem that guides and strengthens the belief in Islam – Allah's path. On the other hand, the individual whose mind opts for Satan's allurements gets continuously diverted from the path of Allah. Eventually, he becomes totally misled.

Thus depending on the action of mind, decision of the program as to whether an individual should be on the right path or on the wrong path comes into effect. This is a decision taken with full justice by the divine program. Since the program is designed by Allah for this purpose, the decision the program takes is the decision of Allah Himself; in other words, it is as Allah wills. The messages "Allah guides whom He pleases" and "Allah leaves astray whom He wills", etc. can be explained and understood that way. If verses about divine guidance are viewed in the light of this explanation, there will not be any confusion or ambiguity about their meaning and the process of Allah's guidance can be understood with clarity. For instance, consider the following verses.

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ يَهْدِيهِمْ رَبُّهُمْ بِإِيمَانِهِمْ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهِمُ الْأَنْهَارُ فِي جَنَّاتِ النَّعِيمِ

10:9 Those who believe and do good deeds, their Lord will guide them because of their Faith. (They will be) in Gardens of bliss with rivers flowing beneath them.

إِنَّا أَنْزَلْنَا عَلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ بِالْحَقِّ فَمَنْ اهْتَدَىٰ فَلِنَفْسِهِ وَمَنْ ضَلَّ فَإِنَّمَا يَضِلُّ عَلَيْهَا وَمَا أَنْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ بِوَكِيلٍ

39:41 Verily We have sent down the Book (the Quran) to you (i.e., Prophet Muhammad) in truth for mankind. Then whoever accepts guidance benefits his own soul and whoever strays (from it) does so against it (i.e., his own soul). You (Prophet Muhammad) are not given the responsibility over them.

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ بِآيَاتِ اللَّهِ لَا يَهْدِيهِمُ اللَّهُ وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ

16:104 Those who do not believe in the verses of Allah (the Quran), Allah will not guide and they have a grievous penalty.

وَلِيَعْلَمَ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْعِلْمَ أَنَّهُ الْحَقُّ مِنْ رَبِّكَ فَيُؤْمِنُوا بِهِ فَتُخْبِتَ لَهُ قُلُوبُهُمْ وَإِنَّ اللَّهَ لَهَادِ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِلَى صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ  
22:54 And (that trial is also) for the possessors of knowledge to know that it (the Quran) is the truth from your Lord and thereby they believe in it and their minds become humble towards it. Verily Allah is the Guide of the believers to the straight path.

وَالَّذِينَ اهْتَدَوْا زَادَهُمْ هُدًى وَآتَاهُمْ تَقْوَاهُمْ

47:17 To those who accept the right path, He will increase the guidance and bestow God-consciousness on them.

وَيَقُولُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لَوْلَا نُزِّلَ عَلَيْهِ آيَةٌ مِنْ رَبِّهِ قُلْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُضِلُّ مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَيَهْدِي إِلَيْهِ مَنْ أُنَابَ

13:27 And the unbelievers say: "Why is a sign not sent to him from his Lord? Say: "Truly Allah leaves to stray whom He wills and He guides to Himself those who turn to Him in penitence, those who believe and pacify their minds with the remembrance of Allah. Does the remembrance of Allah not pacify minds? Those who believe and do good deeds, they have (every) blessing and excellent destination.

وَمَنْ أَرَادَ الْآخِرَةَ وَسَعَى لَهَا سَعْيَهَا وَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ فَأُولَئِكَ كَانَ سَعْيُهُمْ مَشْكُورًا

17:19 Whoever wishes for the Hereafter and strives for that as believer, they are the ones whose effort will be thanked (rewarded).

ذَٰلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ اسْتَحَبُّوا الْحَيَاةَ الدُّنْيَا عَلَى الْآخِرَةِ وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الْكَافِرِينَ أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ طَبَعَ اللَّهُ عَلَى قُلُوبِهِمْ وَسَمِعَهُمْ  
وَأَبْصَارِهِمْ وَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْعَافِلُونَ

16:107-108 That is because they love the life of this world more than the Hereafter and that Allah will not guide the disbelieving people. They are the ones whose minds, hearing and vision Allah has sealed up and they are the ones (who are) the unmindful.

وَالَّذِينَ كَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا صُمُّوا وَبُكْمٌ فِي الظُّلُمَاتِ مَنْ يَشَاءُ اللَّهُ يُضِلَّهُ وَمَنْ يَشَاءُ يُجْعَلْهُ عَلَى صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ

6:39 Those who reject our revelations (the Quran) are deaf and dumb in the darkness. Whom Allah wills, He leaves him to go astray and whom He wills, He places him on the straight way.

وَنَقَلْبٌ أَفْنَدْتَهُمْ وَأَبْصَارُهُمْ كَمَا لَمْ يُؤْمِنُوا بِهِ أُولَئِكَ مَرَّةً وَنَدَّرُهُمْ فِي طُعْيَانِهِمْ يَعْمَهُونَ

6:110 We will make their mental faculties and their sights waver as in the first instance when they refused to believe in it and We will leave them free to wander blindly in their trespasses.

سَاءَ صَرَفُ عَنْ آيَاتِي الَّذِينَ يَكْتُمُونَ فِي الْأَرْضِ بِغَيْرِ الْحَقِّ وَإِنْ يَرَوْا كَلِمَةَ آيَةٍ لَا يُؤْمِنُوا بِهَا وَإِنْ يَرَوْا سَبِيلَ الرُّشْدِ لَا يَتَّخِذُوهُ سَبِيلًا وَإِنْ يَرَوْا سَبِيلَ الْعُغْيِ يَتَّخِذُوهُ سَبِيلًا ذَٰلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ كَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا وَكَانُوا عَنْهَا غَافِلِينَ

7:146 I (Allah) will divert from My revelations (the Quran) those who are unjustly arrogant (rejecters) on the earth. Even if they see all (Our) revelations (the Quran), they will not believe in them. And when they see the right path, they will not accept it as the (right) path. But if they see the path of error, they will accept it as the (right) path. That is because they have treated Our revelations (the Quran) as falsehood and they were heedless of them.

وَأَنْتَ عَلَيهِمْ نَبَأُ الَّذِي آتَيْنَاهُ آيَاتِنَا فَانْسَلَخْنَا مِنْهَا فَأَتْبَعَهُ الشَّيْطَانُ فَكَانَ مِنَ الْعَاوِينَ

7:175 Recite to them the story of the man to whom We gave Our revelations (the Quran), but he got out of them. So Satan made him its (Satan's) follower and he went astray.

اسْتَغْفِرَ لَهُمْ أَوْ لَا تَسْتَغْفِرَ لَهُمْ إِنْ تَسْتَغْفِرَ لَهُمْ سَبْعِينَ مَرَّةً فَلَنْ يَغْفِرَ اللَّهُ لَهُمْ ذَلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ كَفَرُوا بِاللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ وَاللَّهُ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الْفَاسِقِينَ

9:80 Whether you (O Muhammad!) ask for their forgiveness or not, (they will not be forgiven). If you ask seventy times for their forgiveness, Allah will not forgive them. That is because they did not believe in Allah and His messenger. And Allah does not guide the rebellious people.

إِنْ تَحَرَّصَ عَلَىٰ هُدَاهُمْ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَهْدِي مَنْ يُضِلُّ وَمَا لَهُمْ مِنْ نَاصِرِينَ

16:37 (Even) if you (O Muhammad!) crave for their guidance, (it will be of no avail). Verily, Allah will not guide the one who goes (himself) astray. And there is none to help them.

قُلْ مَنْ كَانَ فِي الضَّلَالَةِ فَلْيَمْدُدْ لَهُ الرَّحْمَنُ مَدًّا حَتَّىٰ إِذَا رَأَوْا مَا يُوعَدُونَ إِمَّا الْعَذَابَ وَإِمَّا السَّاعَةَ فَسَيَعْلَمُونَ مَنْ هُوَ شَرٌّ مَكَانًا وَأَضْعَفُ جُنْدًا وَيَرِيدُ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ اهْتَدَوْا هُدًى وَالْبَاقِيَاتُ الصَّالِحَاتُ خَيْرٌ عِنْدَ رَبِّكَ ثَوَابًا وَخَيْرٌ مَرَدًّا

19:75-76 Say: If anyone is on the wrong path, the Most Merciful (i.e., Allah) gives a long (rope) to them until they see the warning of Allah – either the punishment or the (Final) Hour. Then they will realize who is worse in position and weaker in army. And Allah enhances guidance to those who are on the right path. Lasting good deeds are the best as reward with your Lord and the best in respect of (their) eventual returns.

ذَلِكَ بِمَا قَدَّمْتُمْ أَيْدِيكُمْ وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ لَيْسَ بِظَلَّامٍ لِلْعَبِيدِ

8:51 That is because of (the deeds) your hands had done before and (because) Allah is never unfair to His servants.

ذَلِكَ بِأَنَّ اللَّهَ لَمْ يَكُ مُغَيِّرًا نِعْمَةً أَنْعَمَهَا عَلَىٰ قَوْمٍ حَتَّىٰ يُغَيِّرُوا مَا بِأَنْفُسِهِمْ وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ

8:53 That is because Allah will not change the mercy He bestowed on a people until they bring about change in themselves. And verily, Allah hears and knows (all things).

وَالَّذِينَ جَاهَدُوا فِينَا لَنَهْدِيَنَّهُمْ سُبُلَنَا وَإِنَّ اللَّهَ لَمَعَ الْمُحْسِنِينَ

29:69 And those who strive in Our (cause), We will certainly guide them to Our path. And verily Allah is with those who do good.

بَلِ اتَّبَعَ الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا أَهْوَاءَهُمْ بِغَيْرِ عِلْمٍ فَمَنْ يَهْدِي مَنْ أَضَلَّ اللَّهُ وَمَا لَهُمْ مِنْ نَاصِرِينَ

30:29 But the wrongdoers follow their own lusts without any knowledge. Then who can guide those whom Allah leaves astray? There is none to help them.

إِنَّ رَبَّكَ هُوَ أَعْلَمُ مَنْ يَضِلُّ عَن سَبِيلِهِ وَهُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِالْمُهْتَدِينَ

6:117 Verily, your Lord knows best who goes astray from His path and He also knows best who attains true guidance.

فَإِنْ لَمْ يَسْتَجِيبُوا لَكَ فَاعْلَمْ أَنَّمَا يَتَّبِعُونَ أَهْوَاءَهُمْ وَمَنْ أَضَلُّ مِمَّنِ اتَّبَعَ هَوَاهُ بِغَيْرِ هُدًى مِنَ اللَّهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الظَّالِمِينَ

28:50 But if they do not answer you (O Prophet Muhammad), then understand that they only follow their own lusts. And who is more misguided than the one who follows own lusts without an iota of guidance from Allah. Verily, Allah will not guide the wrongdoers.

وَمَا أَنْتَ بِهَادِي الْعُمَىٰ عَن ضَلَالَتِهِمْ إِنْ تُسْمِعُ إِلَّا مَنْ يُؤْمِنُ بِآيَاتِنَا فَهُمْ مُسْلِمُونَ

27:81 And you (Prophet Muhammad) cannot guide the blind out of their straying. You can make listen only those who believe in Our revelations (the Quran) submitting themselves (to Allah).

وَمَنْ يَهْدِ اللَّهُ فَمَا لَهُ مِنْ مُضِلٍّ ۗ أَلَيْسَ اللَّهُ بِعَزِيزٍ ذِي انْتِقَامٍ

39:37 And whoever Allah guides, none can mislead him either. Is not Allah mighty to mete out punishment?

Thus it is clear that Allah's program guides only those who take initiative to accept Allah's guidance (the Quran) and submit to Him voluntarily. Conversely, Allah's program does not guide the one who accepts the Satan and ignore Allah's revelations. And if a person gets Allah's guidance none can mislead him or if a person does not get Allah's guidance, none can guide him either.

In the overall guidance process, Satan virus acts against man. Allah describes it as the avowed enemy of man. One's success in getting divine guidance therefore rests on his preparedness to counter the action of Satan virus effectively. Allah warns against it.

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَتَّبِعُوا خُطُوَاتِ الشَّيْطَانِ ۚ وَمَنْ يَتَّبِعْ خُطُوَاتِ الشَّيْطَانِ فَإِنَّهُ يَأْمُرُ بِالْفَحْشَاءِ وَالْمُنْكَرِ ۗ وَلَوْلَا فَضْلُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ وَرَحْمَتُهُ مَا زَكَا مِنْكُمْ مِنْ أَحَدٍ أَبَدًا وَلَكِنَّ اللَّهَ يُزَكِّي مَنْ يَشَاءُ ۗ وَاللَّهُ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ

24:21 “O you who believe! Follow not the footsteps of Satan. If any will follow the footsteps of Satan, it will (but) command what is shameful and wrong....”

The Satan cannot influence Allah's obedient sincere servants (Q. 38:79-83). Only those who do not resist its temptations fall an easy prey to it and get themselves trapped and strayed.

قَالَ رَبِّ فَأَنْظِرْنِي إِلَى يَوْمِ يُبْعَثُونَ قَالَ فَإِنَّكَ مِنَ الْمُنظَرِينَ إِلَى يَوْمِ الْوَقْتِ الْمَعْلُومِ قَالَ فَبِعِزَّتِكَ لَا أُغْوِيَنَّهُمْ أَجْمَعِينَ إِلَّا عِبَادَكَ مِنْهُمُ الْمُخَلَّصِينَ

38:79-83 (*Iblis*) said: O my Lord! Give me then respite till the day of their resurrection. (Allah) said: Respite is indeed granted to you till the day of the appointed time. (*Iblis*) said: Then with Your power, I will put them all in the wrong except Your sincere servants among them.

Allah further reminds us to remember Him and seek refuge in Him in order to foil Satan's attempt when its action is detected.

وَإِمَّا يَنْزَغَنَّكَ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ نَزْغٌ فَاسْتَعِذْ بِاللَّهِ ۚ إِنَّهُ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ ۚ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ اتَّقَوْا إِذَا مَسَّهُمْ طَائِفٌ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ تَذَكَّرُوا فَإِذَا هُمْ مُبْصِرُونَ

7:200-201 If a suggestion from Satan assails your (mind), seek refuge with God; for He hears and knows (all things). Those who fear God, when an evil thought from Satan assaults them, bring God to remembrance when lo! They see alright.

How to detect Satan's interference on our minds is an important question in this context. Since the Satan's aim is to divert man from Allah's path, it is imperative that that we should have full knowledge of Allah's directives in the Quran to identify whether a suggestion or information that pops up on mind is in conformity or at variance with the Quran. If it is at variance with the Quran, it can be adjudged as from Satan virus. Then seek refuge with Allah. That will effectively counter the satanic influence. We should be always on guard against Satan to stay on the path of Allah. This will indeed be impossible for a person who does not have sufficient knowledge of Allah's

commandments in the Quran. Expansion or shrinking of one's memory (meaning increased or reduced size of one's Islamic knowledgebase) mentioned in some verses is suggestive of this. Therefore study of the Quran to have a thorough understanding of Allah's directives is a must to keep ourselves from the clutches of Satan and on the right track.

A Muslim is not just a believer (*mu'min*). He is one who voluntarily submits to Allah in all humility by leading his life as per Allah's directives. Accordingly all the components (excluding man) of the universe (both nonliving and living systems) are considered Muslims as they all obediently and compulsorily submit to Him. Islam is therefore the natural religion. Their's is a compulsory submission as they function as per Allah's instructions (software) immanent in them. They are all totally programmed systems like man-made robots. But the case of human being is different. Man can either obey or disobey Allah as he is bestowed with freewill. An individual attains guidance through voluntary acceptance of Allah's instructions and living accordingly. What does the voluntary transformation into Muslim mean? A human individual can become Muslim if he performs his conscious activities (i.e., those decided by mind) as per Allah's directives. To the nation of Prophet Muhammad, the divine instructions conveyed in the Quran constitute the religious software. One should therefore study and comprehend all the instructions in the Quran. That in fact forms the first and foremost duty of an individual. Learning Allah's commandments means, to use the computer jargon, to store the divine directives in one's memory. This is like installing a software in his biosystem. Now the mind should follow these directives in all its functions. The person will then be leading his life in accordance with Allah's directives. That will make the individual a Muslim. He is now comparable to any of Allah's creations.

The voluntary submission can be made clearer with an example. We come across situations in our daily life wherein human mind does not exercise its freewill but accepts certain things as such. A typical example is the citizens of a country accept the rules and laws prescribed by the government. For instance, while driving car one obeys traffic rules. If the red light is on, he stops the vehicle. No one violates this rule. This is equivalent to forgoing one's freewill and acting as per the installed instructions; in this case, the traffic rules. Similarly voluntary acceptance of Allah's directives by an individual will make him a totally programmed robot of Allah despite having freewill. The individual who accepts the Quranic directives and lives accordingly in effect forgoes his freewill and transforms himself into a totally programmed robot of Allah. In other words, not only the biological activities (that go on inside his biosystem as per the biosoftware) but also the conscious activities commanded by mind (*qalb*) will also be now governed by the divine directions. He will no longer be living according to his likes and dislikes but only according to the will of his Creator. He will have no intention or interest of his own in this life other than living to the best satisfaction of Allah. He becomes a dedicated robot of Allah – the true Muslim. Allah's interests will become his interests, Allah's desires will become his desires, Allah's dislikes will become his dislikes, and so on. Every action of his will be as directed by Allah. Allah's free-willed robot is now a totally programmed dedicated robot. Functionally he becomes a robot without freewill. It is such people whom Allah refers to as "*muttaqeen*" – the God-fearing or God-conscious robots. They are the true Muslims.