1084 - The Meaning of the Verse "And the Moon, We have measured for it mansions ..."

the question

I am very interested in Islam. I have since 1994 started to read the Quran and the Prophets Hadiths (pbuh)since early this year and I have found great spiritual fulfillment in Islam. I will (Insha Allah) soon be receiving Namaaz lessons as I plan on embracing Islam. I am not sure of the meaning of a particular verse in the Quran from Surah Ya-Sin and I hope that you can be of help. And the moon, We have measured for it mansions (to traverse) till it returns like the old dried curved date stalk (36:39)
I will appreciate your help. May Allah guide, protect and bless you for all the help you have given to so many people across the world by answering our questions and ending our dilemmas.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

First of all, let me congratulate you for reaching a conviction that Islam is true and that it is the only religion which meets the needs of mans soul and fills it with tranquillity and joy. From the way in which you phrased your question, it is clear that what you have read about Islam has had an effect on you, so much so that if you had not stated that you are Hindu, we would have thought you were Muslim.

The most important thing I want to say to you is to advise you to hasten to enter Islam, and do it sooner rather than later. Once a person is convinced of the truth, what reason is there to delay embracing Islam?

There is another point which also needs to made clear. Some of those who want to enter Islam delay doing so until they have learnt some practical aspects of this faith, such as how to pray and

so on, because they think that they are not fit to enter the religion until they have learnt some of its teachings. This is not correct; once the truth is clear to a person, it is his duty to follow it and enter Islam straight away. Then he can learn about the Quran and Sunnah and broaden his understanding of Islam. The Muslim is required to take learning and practice step by step, as much as he is able to, because no one knows when he or she will die. If a person meets Allah (dies) with a religion other than Islam, he will be one of the doomed. Furthermore, a person will not be rewarded and no hasanaat will be recorded for him until after he has entered Islam, so he will lose a lot of benefits if he delays his Islam; time wasted can never be recovered.

Now let us go back to your question, which has to do with the thirty-ninth aayah of Soorah Yaa-Seen.

In this aayah, Allah says (interpretation of the meaning): "And the moon, We have measured for it mansions (to traverse)" [Yaa-Seen 36:39], i.e., We have made it progress through stages by which the passing of months can be measured, just as night and day are known from the sun.

Allah says (interpretation of the meanings):
"They ask you about the new moons. Say: These are signs to mark fixed periods of time for mankind and for the pilgrimage . . ." [al-Baqarah 2:189]
"It is He Who made the sun a shining thing and the moon as a light , and measured out its (their) stages, that you might know the number of their years and the reckoning. . ." [Yoonus 10:5]

Allah has given the sun its own light and has given the moon a (reflection) of light, and has made their courses different, so that the sun rises every day and sets at the end of of the day with one unchanging kind of light, but the positions of its rising and setting vary from summer to winter, because of which the days may be long and the nights short, then the days become short and the nights long. The sun is dominant in the day, so it is the heavenly body of the daytime.

As for the moon, Allah has measured for it mansions or stages, so that on the first night of the month it rises as a faint crescent, giving little light, then its light increases in stages and its position gets higher each night. Every time its position is higher, it has more light, even though it

is a reflection of the suns light, until its light becomes complete, on the fourteenth of the month, when it is a full moon. Then it starts to decrease until, at the end of the month, it "returns like the old dried curved date stalk"

Ibn Abbas, may Allah be pleased with him, said: "This is the stalk of a bunch of dates." Mujaahid said: "It is a dried stalk." Ibn Abbas meant: the stalk of a bunch of dates when it becomes old, dry and bent. (Reference: Tafsir Ibn Katheer).

This likening of the moon at the end of the month to an old dried curved date stalk is a beautiful example of eloquence, by choosing a simile from the environment of the first listeners.

And Allah knows best.