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- 2:17. Their likeness is that of a man who kindled a fire; when it illuminated all around him, Allah took away their light and left them in utter darkness, unable to see.
- 2:18. Deaf, dumb, and blind, they will not return [to the right path].
- 2:19. Or [another likeness] is that of a heavy downpour from the sky, accompanied by darkness, thunder and lightning. They put their fingers in their ears to keep out the stunning thunder-clap, for fear of death. But Allah encompasses the disbelievers.
- 2:20. The lightning almost snatches away their sight; every time it flashes, they walk [a few steps] therein, but when the darkness overtakes them again, they stand still. And if Allah willed, He could take away their hearing and their sight; for Allah has power over all things.
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The exact likeness that describes the situation they are in is that of a man who kindled fire; when it was very dark and his need for a fire was great, he lit it from someone else's fire, as he had no fire of his own and needed to bring it from someone else. Then when the fire illuminated the area around him and he could see his surroundings and any potential dangers, and thus he felt safe and benefitted from the fire and was pleased with it, thinking that he was in control of it – whilst he was like that, Allah took away its light, so that he lost the light and any pleasure that he had felt because of it, and he remained in deep darkness with the fire still burning, as its illumination has disappeared but its burning effect still remained. Thus he was left in many layers of darkness: the darkness of the night, the darkness of the cloud, the darkness of the rain and the darkness that comes after the light disappears. How will the one who is in such a situation be? That is how these hypocrites are. They took the fire of faith from the believers, but having faith was not characteristic of them; rather they took the fire of faith in order to protect their lives and keep their wealth safe, so they had a kind of security in this world. Then whilst they