

History of Truth

THE TRUTH ABOUT GOD AND RELIGIONS



ADEL M. ELSAIE, Ph.D.



About the book:

This book is aimed at those who are interested in seeking the Truth about God and Religions. It represents a step-by-step search of truth in an attempt to answer the most important questions of human mind:

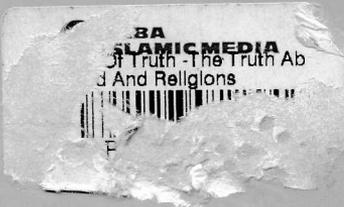
1. Does God exist?
2. Should there be a universal religion and what is that right religion?
3. How can one be constantly sure that his or her conclusion is accurate?

The Law of Repetition is introduced. This law simply states that because common guidelines exist, in all living organisms or physical objects, then the Designer or the Creator of all living and non-living objects is the same. The first question is answered by examining the known facts about the universe and life. The existing universe is explained as a sign of creation in an easy to read form. The theory of evolution that is been taught in every high school and university on earth is criticized and discredited. The author establishes criteria for accepting a religion, and then applies these criteria on the three monotheistic religions, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. The discrepancies in the Bible are exposed. The four phases theory of the evolution of Christianity in its first 800 years reveals how humans formulated the doctrines of Christianity. A short introduction of Islam is followed with emphases on the Divine Standard, authenticity and scientific miracles in the Quran.

About the author:

Adel Elsaie, B.Sc. 1962, M.Sc. 1965, Ph.D., 1970, Aerospace Engineering Department, Faculty of Engineering, Cairo University, Cairo, Egypt.

Dr. Adel Elsaie worked many years in different Engineering Industries: aerospace, nuclear, defense, offshore, communications and computer software. He was awarded post-doctorate scholarship in 1971 from the university of Grenoble, France. He was appointed as Part-Time Lecturer at Cairo University, Egypt, Visiting Assistant Professor at the University of Toronto, Toronto, Canada, Part-Time Associate Professor at McMaster University, Hamilton, Canada, and Adjunct Associate Professor at the University of Texas at Arlington, USA. He has over fifty scientific and engineering publications. He was selected as an Honored Member in the WHO'S WHO Registry of Global Business Leaders in 1993 / 94. He was in charge of Islamic education at the Islamic Association of Tarrant County, Fort Worth, Texas, from 1982 to 1992 providing weekly Islamic lectures.



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Preface

Throughout time immemorial, man has been in search of the truth. The truth, relative to physical phenomena and spiritual experiences, has lead mankind to a winding course. Sometimes, confusion and disorientation of the principles of life, unfortunately, can taint this course. Religion and philosophy are the historical vehicles for the search of truth. While religion presents the Divine aspect of the purpose of life, philosophy is a human attempt to gain a higher intellectual knowledge of oneself, morality, and the underlying meaning of life. The current tendency to separate science and religion imposes disgraceful restrictions on science to achieve even more prosperous horizon. This book incorporates theology, natural sciences, and philosophy in an attempt to satisfy the eternal quest for the search of the ultimate truth.

It is easy to go through life avoiding difficult questions about our origin and our destiny. It is easy not to talk about dying, or why people suffer. However, life would not be the same if there were no questions and answers. It is important to have an accurate understanding of our origin, and yes, its pursuit is worthwhile. Everyone needs a sense of identity, purpose, and personal goals. This is impossible without a sense of origin. What a person believes about human origin will condition that person's life style and affect one's ultimate destiny. Our origin goes back, perhaps, tens of thousands of years, and our destiny takes us from the present time to eternity. Although our life on this earth spans through, perhaps, 60 or 70 years, we are heavily involved with this short time while neglecting our origin and destiny.

Sometimes we have very interesting and yet vital questions that linger in our minds:

- Why do humans suffer and how can one be happy?

- What is the purpose of this life?
- What will happen to us after death?
- Does God exist?
- Were we created or did we evolve from apes?
- Why do we have this huge universe?

When one asks these questions to anyone, one gets different answers such as:

- I do not care, and I just want to enjoy my life.
- Leave me alone. I am trying to survive.
- I do not know. I never thought about that.
- I know that God exists, but I am confused with all those religions. I do not know which one is right. I will try to live a good moral life, and that is it.
- I know that God exists, but I am not really doing a good job in preparing myself to meet Him. Maybe I will do that when I retire and have more time.

Only a small percentage of people know why they exist, and they are living their lives the way it is supposed to be. Those are the people who understand their priorities in life and act accordingly. Those are the people who appreciate human knowledge and know its limitation. Those are the people who realize the difference between science and reality. Einstein said *“One thing I have learned in a long life - that all our science, measured against reality, is primitive and childlike... Science without religion is lame, religion without science is blind.”*

In the present time, it seems that science and technology have an answer for everything. Consequently, many people may tend to think that they know everything. If you ask one of those persons about life and how it started, the answer will be quick, and most likely will be: life started as an organic substance that came to earth through a comet that collided with earth billions of years ago. Life after that evolved according to Darwin. Ask him again about human behavior, and he will start referring to Freud. Then, most people tend to think that we know all the answers about everything. The reality is that we know very little about few things.

And if you don't believe this statement, just ask a pharmacist how aspirin works, a brain surgeon how the brain works, or a psychoanalyst how we dream.

One of the top priorities of anyone in this life, regardless of one's wealth or social status, is to make one's house comfortable. The English language provided the word "home" to emphasize a feeling of comfort, security, peace, and love in a house. Humans spend a lot of time and energy to change a house into a home. If someone plans to move to another house, he usually reserves his energy and money to the next house. However, everyone knows that all our homes are temporary, and sooner or later everyone will move to another house or home called "the grave." Should we not be wise and invest a little bit in making sure that this grave is a home? Should we not make sure that this home will have "light and heat"? Would we not like to have this grave as a piece of paradise? Ancient Egyptians dramatized this concept 5000 years ago. They did not just build graves; they built pyramids. The fourth dynasty pharaoh Khufu (also known as Cheops) built the great pyramid of Giza, one of the seven wonders of the ancient world, as his tomb. The pictures of this tomb do not do the pyramid any justice. This pyramid is much larger than anyone would think. It covers 13 acres and contains more than 2 million blocks of stone. This proves that what the ancient Egyptians experienced in their daily life was just as important as what awaited them beyond the death's gate. They firmly believed in an afterlife that was not all that different from the normal life. This concept of ensuring comfort in the afterlife, although practiced by polytheists, had its root in the original monotheist religion, perhaps by Enoch (Prophet Idris in Arabic). Some scholars believe that Prophet Idris was the same as the ancient Egyptian god Osiris.

The questions, that everyone should ask, are:

- Should I invest heavily in a home that I will live in, perhaps, for tens of years, or in the home that I will live there for, perhaps, thousands of years?
- How can I make this home for thousands of years extremely comfortable?

The Quran goes one step further than that by labeling life in the grave as only a visit, which indicates a short stay, compared to eternity.

Over thirty years ago after graduation from college, I found myself thinking about religion and God. I wanted to search for the ultimate truth. I wanted to know the true purpose of life. Taking answers for granted from someone was not good enough for me. I wanted to “*feel*” the answers, and not just “*know*” them. I wanted to have a strong faith based upon logic. A few times during prayer, I was wondering if I was just following a ritual. How do I make sure that God exists? How do I achieve strong belief? And, how do I know that I am following the right religion? My religion tells me that it is the true religion. This is also the same for Christianity, Judaism, Buddhism, and all the rest of the religions. I want to be sure that I am following the right religion. Humans have choices to select a religion, but they cannot control the consequences of their choices. Consequently, I started my search with an open mind and a total objectivity.

I started reading books that addressed the existence of God. To my delight, I found an Arabic book about God and the modern sciences written by Dr. Abdel-Razek Nofal. This book had a great effect on me throughout my life because it convinced me that God truly exists. This can be demonstrated by the numerous examples that show the perfect balance in the universe and the intricate design of the earth, its atmosphere, and its different life forms. Then I asked myself the next basic question; what is the right religion? I read about Moses, Jesus, Buddha, and Confucius. I excluded Judaism since it is not a universal religion and not just anyone can be Jewish. It is hard to believe that God, the Ultimate Just, has chosen only about 15 millions Jews as His people at the present time, and the 6 billion gentiles on Earth have no chance for salvation. A Muslim has to believe in Moses, his message, his miracles, as well as the Jewish and all other prophets. This makes the original Judaism included in Islam. I read the Bible and the Quran. I had so many troubles with the Bible. My first problem was the eternal confusion of the mystery of the trinity. Is God one, or two, or three? My Christian friends told me that God is one. But there is a statement in the Bible that says that Jesus ascended to heaven and sat on the

right hand side of God. This makes them two separate beings. I was told that they are two but they are one, and I just had to have faith. Every time I discuss this subject with my Christian friends, we found ourselves involved in a Byzantine argument where no conclusion could be reached. It is interesting to note that the term Byzantine argument was coined in the second century AD, when Christians argued about the nature of God as compared to the nature of Jesus.

Next, the last words of Jesus on the cross are very confusing. First, there are four different versions of the Gospels according to Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. This raises major questions about the accuracy of recording a Holy Book. These verses are part of a Christian doctrine of divine inspiration. If God had inspired these four gospel writers, why did God inspire them to record different words? These verses are not just different words, but totally different concepts. It seems that the closest statement should be the one that Jesus said in his own Aramaic language:

“Jesus cried with aloud voice saying Eli, Eli, lama sabachtani? That is to say, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” (Matthew 27:46, & Mark 15:34, though it is Eloi instead of Eli in Mark.) Which means God, God, why have you abandoned me?

It is hard to believe that Jesus said that God abandoned him. There are three possibilities:

- He said that. Then, why did the son of God think that his father abandoned him? Jesus told the disciples that he would die and rise from the dead in three days. He knew that he would die and be resurrected, so how can that be called abandonment? If he is the son of God that came to save humanity with his blood, so how can that be called abandonment? If he knew his mission in life, so how can that be called abandonment? This statement simply contradicts all the New Testament. Many Christian scholars have the same trouble justifying this statement.

- He did not say that. This means that Matthew and Mark were not accurate, and God did not inspire the Gospels, because God would not allow any inaccuracies.
- The man on the cross was not Jesus! This may seem at first sight as an unreasonable idea. But if we know that the same sentence, word for word, exists in the songs of David, Psalm 22.1, one may be tempted to suggest that the man on the Cross was a Jew asking God for help from his Old Testament.

It is interesting to note that Christian theologians introduced a branch called Apologetics to provide answers to criticisms against Christian beliefs. Apologetics started early in Christian history to resolve many contradictions in the New Testament. It is no secret that the word Apologetics came from the Latin word "apology", and the Greek origin "Logos." Some apologists suggest that Jesus said all the above versions. This is in spite of the fact that no single Gospel included all the four versions. Analyzing the Apologetics reasoning of the above four versions of Jesus' last word does not present a satisfactory argument. Also, recent Apologetics advocates that historical and archeological evidences support early Christian history. That is a fair statement. However, historical and archeological evidences support the historical Jesus only, and cannot be extended to support the Christian belief about the nature of Jesus. In the New Testament, Jesus always presented himself as the "son of man." He never said that he was the son of god. Forty years later, Paul made him the "Son of God," and in the first Ecumenical Council of Churches, 325 AD, Athanasius made Jesus of the same Divine "substance" as that of God.

The three monotheistic religions, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam originated in the Middle East. Islam and Christianity share many common beliefs and history that no other two religions may claim to share: Oneness of God, Day of Judgment, resurrection from the dead, eternal afterlife, and the moral values of peace, freedom and justice. While there are differences between Muslims and Christians about the nature of Jesus, (Pbuh i.e. Peace be upon him) there is no disagreement in the Middle East about the Name of God, or the status of many of the common prophets in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. Noah (Pbuh), Abraham (Pbuh), Moses

(Pbuh), and Jesus (Pbuh), are also prophets in Islam. The Quran declares Mary as the holiest woman ever (Chapter "Surah" 3. verse "Ayah" 42) - not Muhammad's (Pbuh) mother, daughter, or wife. One complete chapter in Quran is devoted to Mary with her name as the title of chapter 19. The Bible does not give Mary the same honor. The Quran mentions Jesus and Mary 34 times and Muhammad 4 times.

Arab-speaking Christians and Muslims recognize Allah as the only name of God. Any Arab-speaking Christian, when asked about the name of God, would answer Allah! The English Old Testament starts with: "*In the beginning, God created the heaven and earth.*" The Arabic Old Testament starts with: "*In the beginning, Allah created the heaven and earth.*" The name of God throughout the Arabic Old and New Testament is Allah.

It is ironic that the Western Christians are unaware of the name of God of their Arabic brothers. The differences in the stature of the prophets in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam involve only Jesus and Muhammad, Peace Be Upon Them. Jews do not recognize Jesus and claim that he was a false Messiah, and Christians do not recognize Muhammad and claim that he was a false prophet.

Moreover, some Christian may feel that the Quran has satanic origin, God forbid, because the Quran does not recognize the divine nature of Jesus (Pbuh). This is a false notion. Satan is rejected and accursed in many verses in the Quran. Also, Muslims have to seek the protection of God from Satan every time they recite the Quran.

After extensive readings and thinking, I became convinced that Islam is the righteous religion, and Islam has the answer to all our social, economic, and judicial troubles. That is when I decided to write this book with the only motive to make the truth known.

To try to reach answers about vital questions, assumptions and criteria have to be adopted. The guidelines followed in reaching conclusions in this book are as follows:

1. This book is for anyone, from any faith, who seeks the truth.
2. Not a single attempt was intended to offend any faith, or lack of, for that matter.
3. The search for knowledge should be approached with open

mind, heart, and soul, and that search should not decrease or stop.

4. Our logical approach is real and meaningful, with no deception or arrogant ideas.
5. Divine Creation is not subjected to any or all the laws of physics.

In the present time, there are serious challenges to monotheism:

1. High-powered scientists, armed with tremendous marketing tools, promoting atheistic concepts that a layman has no way of challenging.
2. Global education system that fails to stimulate a comprehensive thinking process, but rather introduces subjects such as history, physics, and life sciences in a fabricated form to exclude God from our lives. Again, students have no way of challenging their teachers.
3. Overwhelming western culture that promotes fake images of success. Again the layman anywhere on earth has no chance but to accept the western image for success.

Having watched all that, I feel compelled to agree with John Calvin, the Protestant theologian, who said:

"I would be a coward if I saw that God's truth is attacked and would remain silent, without giving any sound."

I tried to study the approaches taken by the true scientists, such as Newton and Einstein, along the history of humanity. I admired tremendously their reasoning and logic because their goal was knowledge for the sake of knowledge, and not for business, publicity, or marketing by twisting facts. Accordingly, this book represents a scientific attempt to answer the following questions:

1. **Does God exist?**
2. **Should there be a universal religion and what is that right religion?**

3. How can one be constantly sure that his or her conclusion is accurate?

The first question is the most difficult one if we do not know where to look. Therefore, I will answer the first question by examining the known facts about the universe and life. I will attempt to present these subjects in a simple context and not just as pure scientific abstracts. The divine Law of Repetition will be introduced. This law simply states that because common guidelines exist, in all living organisms or physical objects, then the Designer or the Creator of all living and non-living objects is the same. With humility and open mindedness, we should believe that God exists. He, then, has to make somehow this existence known to everyone. Some people adopt the arrogant idea of believing in god, but not in any organized religion or any messenger of god. Those people may think that god should communicate directly with them, and they have reached the level of the prophets. How else will they know what god wants from them. Examining the monotheistic religions that believe in One God will follow. Next, one conclusion should become obvious after that: because God is one, then there should be only one religion for this whole universe at any time and any place. This is the essence of monotheism. This is accomplished by establishing criteria for accepting a religion, and then apply these criteria on the three monotheistic religions, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam.

It is important to note that I am not writing this book as a biologist, cosmologist, physicist, or theologian. I am writing this book as a human being searching for the truth and purpose of life. In doing so, I am following two religious commands in Islam: first to seek knowledge, and second to spread knowledge. Also, I would ask you to consider the contents of this book with an open mind, because this information could prove to be of greater importance to you than you might yet realize.

In writing this book, technical information has to be introduced and could not be avoided. I tried to make the presented information simple and readable for the average reader. Also a glossary section is added to present definitions of technical or religious terms.

This book is an attempt of recording the Truth, which is one of the Names of God, and is mentioned in the Quran 226 times. It is not about faking lies about Moses, Jesus, or Muhammad (Peace be upon them), who are loved, honored and respected by all Muslims. Some Jewish and Christian "scholars" made it their business to spread unsubstantiated lies about the life of Muhammad, quoting obscure references or preaching half the truth. The main references in this book are the Bible and the Quran, thus it should be easy for the reader to check these references. Also, a good part of the information on Christianity in this book was obtained from Christian authors and friends. Allah addressed mankind to get to know each other. Surah 49, Ayah 13. Consequently, as a Muslim I had to form my ideas about Christianity from its sources. That is something that most of the critics of Islam never tried.

Religion is a serious business. In the present time, there is a statement that declares that all religions lead to One God. Well, I do not accept that. I cannot believe that worshiping a cow or a statue leads to one God. Humans make choices everyday in their lives, but they cannot control the consequences of those choices. It should be a matter of utmost wisdom for everyone to think and plan for the Day of Reckoning. Our faith will lead us to our destiny. Everyone in every faith should be prepared to face God, the Ultimate Judge. Humans will be asked about their faith, and will have to acknowledge the Truth, regardless of their faith. This Day of Judgment is like a court scene, where the Judge knows all, even more than people can tell. As such, this book is also my attempt to do my best to search for God and a religion. I started researching and writing this book in 1992. I believe this time is well spent since this book can be my defense on the Day of Judgment. I will beseech God:

"I did not ignore the important questions about my origin and my destiny. I tried, I thought, I researched, and this is the best within my capacity."

This is the reason I started the first chapter of this book with a question to the reader: "My defense, what is yours?"

Numbering System

During the course of this book, a simple convention of a numbering system will be adopted that allows us to use a very large and very small numbers to be written in a compact form. The very large numbers will be used to describe the universe, while the very small numbers will be used to describe atoms and cells. The system used is called the exponential system. Let us begin with everyday numbers: since $10,000 = 10 \times 10 \times 10 \times 10$, it is written as $1E4$, which means 1 multiplied by 10 four times, or 1 followed by four zeros. The letter E refers to the exponential system.

A million = 1,000,000 or $1E6$
A billion = 1,000,000,000 or $1E9$
A trillion = 1,000,000,000,000 or $1E12$

Very small numbers are written in an analogous way. One millionth (that is 1 divided by 1 million) will be written as $1E-6$, or 0.000001.

One billionth = 0.000000001 or $1E-9$
One trillionth = 0.000000000001 or $1E-12$

There is a price for such compactness. It is easy to forget the difference between $1E4$ and $1E8$, since both are large numbers, or the difference between the small numbers $1E-4$ and $1E-8$. Let us not forget that the difference between the above two sets is 10,000 or $1E4$, which is a big number.

If we accept that the size of the observable universe is $1E26$ Meters and the size of the smallest part of an atom is $1E-14$ Meters, then, the ratio of the largest to the smallest known sizes is $1E26/$

1E-14, or 1E40. This is 1 followed by 40 zeros, or 10 thousand trillion trillion trillion times!

The human brain cannot even come close to comprehending these huge or tiny numbers. But they exist. Similarly, one cannot attempt to grasp the concept of the eternal, limitless, omnipotent, omniscient and Mighty God. But He exists.



*“Say: “Truly, my prayer and my service
of sacrifice, my life and my death, are
(all) for Allah, the Cherisher of the
Worlds: No partner hath He: this am I
commanded, and I am the first of those
who submit to His Will.”*

(Quran 6: 162-163)



1

My Defense, What is Yours?

One day I had dinner with a friend. We were talking about career, life, present, past, and future, the usual chat. One question came up about plans for the future and what we hope to achieve. He told me that his plan for his life is to retire when he is 64. After that, he would work on his farm growing cattle and enjoying a peaceful life. At the age of 72, he will be sick, and die at 74. I laughed, and asked him how does he know that he is going to die at 74. He answered me with a: "Don't you know statistics? Statistics say that men live until they are 74." He was convinced that he was going to live until 74. A few days later, my daughter came to tell me that one of her colleagues from high school died in a car accident. He was 21. I remembered my friend, and I said statistics do not mean a thing if it is about life and death. Even if statistics shows that 99% of the men die at 74, that is not a guarantee for anyone that he will live that long. He simply could be among the remaining 1%.

How little we know. Scientists tell us that this whole universe started 8, 15, or 20 billion years ago, and these days, each person lives for 1, 20, 70, or 90 years. Life span is very small compared to that of our universe. We live our lives in constant trials to improve our way of living. However, we are not sure if we are going to succeed or fail in those trials. But, only one thing is certain and that is everyone is going to die. As a matter of fact, *we are born with a sentence of death*. Now imagine that our life started in a

courtroom when the judge announces that we are sentenced to death. Then our whole life is just like waiting for the judge to announce when, where, and how we are going to die. This is not an attempt to paint a gloomy picture on life. This is an honest attempt to put life in its real perspective, because this concept of living in a prison waiting the decision of the judge can actually improve life, set our priorities in order, and project a sense of humility in our life.

One time, I had problems with the air conditioning unit in my car during a hot summer. My priority at that time was to find an honest car mechanic to fix the car. I had so many troubles finding one. Few days later, I went to my physician to have a physical examination. He told me that he suspected cancer. Now, you can imagine what happened to my car problem! The cancer turned out to be a false alarm, and I am grateful to God for giving me more time.

How many times does a “healthy” person visit a doctor for a routine physical examination to be told that he is terminally ill and has few months to live? How many times does someone driving his car, get involved in a fatal car accident? How many times do people die in a natural catastrophe? The fact is we do not know when, where, and how we will die, and probably we do not want to think about death. However, the first step to understand many facts should start by believing the only shocking fact in our lives: death. To approach that, take the following priority test:

What would you do if you were told that?

- You have 20 years to live?
- You have 1 year to live?
- You have 6 months to live?
- You have one month to live?
- You may die at any moment?

These are not the kind of questions that you read in a book, only to continue reading the next sentence. Ask yourself these questions, and *stop here and think*. Try to write your answers. When it comes to the possibility of knowing that you have only one month to live, very many things will change in your life. Your priorities

will turn upside down. Things that used to bother you before will lose their significance. And other things that you used to ignore will become important.

The 15 Minutes Criterion

Now, try something else. Imagine yourself laying down in bed, and you are in your final moments. Actually, your final 15 minutes in this life. What are you going to be thinking of? How are you going to evaluate your life? Is there something that you wanted to do and kept postponing it? Did you actually live your life the way you wanted?

Remembering death could be a very positive experience in our lives. You can use "The 15 Minutes Criterion" to overcome many frustrations in life. When you face many of the disappointing situations in your life, you can judge the importance of that frustration by whether or not you will think about it during your last 15 minutes before death. Next time you have a frustrating experience, remember the 15 minutes criterion, and put that experience in its real magnitude.

People who encountered a near death situation tell us that their priorities changed drastically. They say that they started appreciating flowers, human relations, etc. Some even start thinking about God. The question is why should we have to wait for a near death experience to think or feel. And are we going to have a second chance of life or are we not going to have a chance at all.

One day I attended a very interesting speech by Dr. Nizam Peerrwani, the medical examiner of Fort Worth, Texas, about death from a scientific point of view. The following is an extract from his speech:

"Medically, death is only an abstract noun which is meaningful to laymen, lawyers, philosophers and the clergy but which is very inadequate as a biological description. It is, however, a useful and convenient term to describe death as a disintegrating biological process in which we may recognize a beginning and an end, with striking changes in

between. Although legally and religiously, there is a precise moment of death, there is really no moment in time at which it occurs. We die in bits and pieces, hence medically, we can only state with reasonable certainty that death occurs when it can be demonstrated that an irreversible disintegrating process has started.

We recognize that there are three independent systems necessary for the maintenance of life, namely respiratory, circulatory, and nervous systems. Failure of any one system leads to the failure of the other two, and thus death occurs. Since the precise moment of death is a legal definition, there had to be some legal criteria based upon medical understanding of the process of death. Death was defined by the simple criteria of the failure of either the cardiac or the respiratory system. No mention, thus far, was made of the nervous system. In the 1960s, the advent of human organ transplantation caused scrutiny to be directed towards the definition of death. Tissues such as heart valves, bone, skin, cornea, and tendon can be used from a non-heart-beating donor. Other organs such as hearts, kidneys, livers etc. can only be used from heart-beating donors. Committees were formed to examine the exact definition of death, tens of whom were physicians representing various medical specialties such as anesthesiology, neurology, pathology, psychiatry, neurosurgery, general surgery, and internal medicine, as well as lawyers, theologians, and historians of science. The purpose of these committees is to try to distinguish true brain death with irreversible termination of brain function from vegetative state in which a patient in a coma may exhibit spontaneous respiration upon removal of life support systems or may have brain stem reflexes. There is no complete agreement on the exact moment of death, and any existing criteria of death may be challenged in courts. The conclusion is that we do not understand fully the only common fact in our lives. And the irony is there are those who claim relentlessly that they know all the facts in the universe.”

How can anyone be arrogant after knowing what is going to happen after being pronounced dead. Medically, body changes become evident in the first and subsequent hours after death. These changes include four steps:

1. **Body cooling:** body begins to lose its temperature at approximately 1/2 - 1 degrees each hour until it reaches that of the environment, provided that the environment is colder than that of the body.
2. **Body stiffening:** shortly after death, within 3 - 4 hours, the body begins to stiffen. By the 12th hour after death, the entire body is stiff. Once the body begins to decompose, it then begins to lack firmness.
3. **Gravitation of blood:** with the termination of the heartbeat, blood begins to collect in the dependent portions of the body after death. Within 8 - 10 hours after death, blood is pooled in all these areas and cannot be displaced if the body is turned over.
4. **Decomposition:** decomposition involves different processes, which may occur singly or in combination. Decomposition of a body includes the following:
 - Breakdown of cells and organs caused by slow down of chemical processes by lack of heat.
 - Bacterial growth in the tissues generally arises from the large bowel where they reside in large numbers during life. Bacterial growth affects the tissues by changing their color, producing multiple different gases, and resulting in gradual softening of the tissues.
 - Mummification when bodies are buried in dry or warm soil due to dehydration.
 - Some of the fatty tissues are transformed into a soap-like substance.

Thus the human being decomposes to chemicals worth approximately 5 dollars buried in the ground, while some humans, throughout their lives, have pride worth a million dollars. *Death*

transforms the life of a human being from a state of action without knowledge to a state of knowledge without action. If we truly know that we are going to die, how can we be arrogant or stubborn? Arrogance is the main reason why we do not think straight. If you search for one human trait that produced so much pain and suffering, that took humanity in wrong directions, and that started wars: it is arrogance. Hitler started the Second World War because he believed in the supremacy of the German race. History tells us of pharaohs and kings who placed themselves above everyone else to the extent of making themselves gods. Arrogance is the one single character that destroys peace and security that everyone is trying to achieve. After all, it is the original sin of Satan.

Humans start life weak and helpless and end life the same way. But somehow in between, people acquire some power and knowledge and that is when most people acquire varied degrees of arrogance. In many cases, in different professions, you find people that think of themselves as the elite or the chiefs. They think that they know everything, and they have an answer to every problem. They have a complete vision of how this whole world should be run, and how people should think or live. Tyrants and dictators think the same way.

Somehow, humans tend to think that they are immortal and invulnerable. When we attend a funeral, and see a dead body laying in the ground, we feel sad for a while. But then life goes on, and we convince ourselves that it is the other person who died and not we. As a matter of fact, we may convince ourselves that we still have a long way to go. We may even blame the deceased for his death, because he did not know how to protect himself from diseases. But we are smart enough to defend ourselves against viruses and bacteria, and we will do a much better job in protecting ourselves. When someone is paralyzed for life or dies in an airplane or car accident, we may tend to blame the pilot or the car driver for not being careful enough. We do not think for a moment that a car accident may happen because the driver lost his concentration for a split second, as many of us often do. We simply believe that we are invulnerable. One of the effective ways of acquiring humility is to constantly remind ourselves that we are vulnerable, and

anything may happen to us on this very day. It is particularly helpful if you start your day by reminding yourself with your vulnerability to any kind of accident or catastrophe, without being paranoid.

I added the last disclaimer “without being paranoid” to avoid the casual use of the “Yes-But” rule of speech as a comment on the last paragraph. Someone may comment: “Yes I will remind myself with my vulnerability, *but I don't have to live in fear.*” Quite frequently when two persons are discussing a subject, and one presents a point of view, the other uses this rule by saying “Yes” you are right in your statement, “But” you are wrong because you failed to add so and so, or you ignored this or that fact! Watch this rule during conversation, and you will be amazed how much is revealed about the arrogance of the person using this rule!

During the Renaissance in Europe, the rise of science resulted in the healthy and much needed function of freeing Europeans from the stifling grip of the church's control. This intellectual movement produced great scientists like Isaac Newton who developed the gravitational theory that was very effective in explaining the dynamics of the universe. However, Newton understood his limitations and the limitations of one of the great scientific achievement in history. Newton acknowledged:

“To explain all nature is too difficult a task for any one man or even for any one age.”

He had special trouble trying to understand the actual nature of gravity. While his theory predicted the effects of gravity quite accurately, it said nothing about the mechanism by which gravity acts. Newton was a devout believer. In fact, he believed that gravity is a divine action; in effect, a stone fell because God's finger was pushing it down. It is interesting to know that hundreds of years later, scientists still do not understand the exact nature of gravity. All that we know about gravity that it exists and it works according to Newton's theory. But we do not know **why it works**. Newton was ranked number 2 in “*THE 100 a ranking of the most influential persons in history*” book by Michael Hart. Jesus was ranked number 3 in that book. I will keep you guessing of who ranked number one

in this book, but you will know him near the end of this book.

On the other hand, the French philosopher Auguste Comte (1798-1857) developed the sociology as a separate social science. He wanted to get rid of traditional deities. To satisfy the needs of the unsophisticated masses, Comte proposed a new church presided by scientists, not priests, as saints. Comte suggested that he would be willing to serve as Pope of the scientists. However, he became increasingly grandiose and died insane.

Newton and Comte represent scientists with two completely opposite approaches. The former knew his limitations and the limitations of his work, while the latter failed to realize his limitations and did not know when to stop. Throughout history, science has provided answers for questions that start with "how", but has never been able to answer who or why. Religion is the only logical way to provide answers to who and why. The answer is consistently: "God, and He wants it this way."

Humans should be grateful to God for having limited senses, because our lives would be really hell if we had unlimited vision and hearing. Can you imagine yourself having unlimited vision and your eyes having the power of electron microscope? How can you move if you want to avoid all the viruses and bacteria in the air, and they exist by the millions around you? How can you pick up a glass of water to drink if you see all the atoms in the glass and water is mixed with viruses and bacteria? How can you eat if you see every cell, alive or dead, in your favorite meal? Now suppose that your ears have the power of hearing every sound on earth with the same intensity. This would be like having millions of radios with each one tuned to one radio station on the planet earth. All of those radio stations are turned up at the same time. If someone has unlimited vision and hearing, one may not last for 10 minutes before going totally insane. It is therefore a mercy from God that humans have limited senses.

In our time, some scientists treat hypothesis as facts and realities. When some scientists and educators assert that evolution without God is undisputed fact, and imply that only the ignorant refuses to believe it, how many laymen are going to challenge them? When a scientist hosts a TV show explaining discovery of bits and

pieces of ancient bones and claims that as proof that we descended from apes, how can laymen argue with him? When a scientist describes the universe and its galaxies and implies that serious modern scientists do not see evidence of God, how many unbelievers or semi believers contradict him? And if one questions their scientific arguments, one would be accused of not being serious or modern or scientific. This sheer weight of authority is brought to the defense of evolution and atheism. Moreover, books, magazine articles, movies, and TV programs treat evolution as an established fact. Often times, we hear or read a sentence like "when man evolved from the lower animals" or "millions of years ago when life started in the oceans."

Some people are therefore programmed and brain washed to accept evolution as a fact, and the contrary evidence passes unnoticed. It is the arrogance of some scientists that prevents them from admitting that there is a possibility that they are wrong. Some scientists do not always base their conclusions on facts. They are also people and much is at stake, for there are decorated prizes in the form of fame, research grants, and publicity. Sometimes science is powered by individual ambitions and is very susceptible to preconceived ideas. The scientist, whose 1992 study linking high voltage power lines to cancer, stirred public fear. In 1999, he was found to have faked his data by using only 7% of his samples to substantiate his conclusion. This scientist received over three million dollars in federal grants for his research.

Some people reject the concept of God because they feel, as it has been said, "seeing is believing." However, in their daily life they acknowledge the existence of many things that cannot be seen, such as air, gravity, radio or television waves, electricity, magnetism, and the Big Bang. We have not seen the Big Bang, but there are evidences that it happened. We have not seen radio waves, but there are evidences that they exist. Similarly, there is no physical way to see or subject God to human analysis, but there are overwhelming evidences that He exists. The irony is that some people accept the existence of the unseen waves or electricity based upon evidences, but they refuse to apply the same standard to God. When it comes to the concept of God, some people prefer to see

Him as an old man smoking cigars as in the Hollywood movie "*Oh God.*"

Consider two living beings such as a tiny ant and a huge elephant, do you think that the ant can see or measure the size of the elephant. Does the ant have any way of knowing exactly what the elephant is doing all the time? Even if the ant knows what the elephant is doing at one time, does it know why? It is the arrogance of some people that prevents them from admitting that they are so tiny with limited senses and knowledge. The ant may realize that it is limited to comprehend the existence and size of the elephant, but some people think that they have unlimited senses that they have to see or measure God to believe. This example should be referred to when we are stuck with something that we cannot hope to understand.

Another factor that helps keeping God away from our life is the school systems. In some countries, religion is forbidden from being taught in schools. Other countries, that allow teaching religion in schools, give religious classes the lowest priority after science, history, and languages. In some Islamic countries, religion is the last class when students are tired from school and they are ready to go home. Also, Physics teachers never mention the sentence "praise God" when, for example, they explain gravity. They never mention what Newton himself thought about gravity, or say that we really do not know how it works and ask the students to think about it as a miracle from God. Some biology teachers fail to mention that we do not fully understand the complex chemical processes in the cell or what exactly is the origin of energy required for life and how it works. Teaching in schools does not encourage intellectual or spiritual concepts. Some teachers have their subjects ready to be spilled out upon the students, and that is the end of it.

An additional reason leading to human's confusion is the failure of the men of religion to convince the masses that they are good examples to follow. The scandals and corruption of the TV Evangelists are a reason for people to think about the religious record of hypocrisy. When one religious leader is found to be a hypocrite, the unreasonable approach, of condemning all religions with hypocrisy, prevails. Moreover, people think that religious

institutions have turned into a big show business. They observe religious programs on TV, where the host sings, cries, screams, and dances in a way that competes with the best actor in Hollywood. People have observed clergy support for murderous dictators. They know that people of the same religion have killed one another by the millions in war, with the clergy backing each side. People after that tend to condemn the religion itself and every one that tries to talk about religion.

In the second century, the philosopher Praxeas promoted the idea that God, the father, and God, the son, were so completely unified that both the father and the son were crucified and died on the cross. "God is dead" became a slogan used by several theologians and philosophers. The strong wave of atheism started in the beginning of the nineteenth century using that slogan. The advances in science and technology created a strong drive of atheism and freedom from religion. This was a direct consequence of the doctrines and control of the western church. On one hand Christianity defines itself as a monotheistic religion. On the other hand it is based on the polytheistic concept of Trinity. Also, the crucifixion of Jesus helped fueling the notion that "God is dead."

The nineteenth century was the century in which controversial figures such as Charles Darwin, Karl Marx, Friedrich Nietzsche, and Sigmund Freud introduced atheistic ideas and philosophies. Their ideas affected most of the human aspects of life such as the origin of life, the economical and political systems, the philosophy, and the human behavior. In the present time, a group of so called scientists and philosophers, adopted the approach of promoting Darwinism more than Darwin, Marxism more than Marx, and Freudism more than Freud. This group considers themselves the elite of the society, and they are using every available means to promote their ideas of atheism.

Charles Darwin (1809-1882) was an English naturalist. He wrote his book *The Origin of Species* in 1856, where he formulated his theory of evolution. In this book he addressed the origin of life, a subject that sparks curiosity for all humans. Charles Darwin was the grandson of the eccentric evolutionist Erasmus Darwin (1731-1802). He was appointed as a naturalist on HM Beagle to survey

wildlife in South America. In 1871, he published *The Descent of Man*. In this book, he advocated that humans were the products of biological evolution, and that they descended from primitive animals. He believed that both humans and apes were descendants of a common primitive ancestor. Religious people from all religions considered the evolution a notion contrary to the basic belief of creation by an omnipotent God. The work of Darwin is regarded the most anti-religious and most materialistic propaganda in history. The third chapter of this book will analyze the evolution hypothesis, and will prove that it is a fraud.

Karl Marx (1818-1883) was a German political philosopher and economist. He founded the communism based upon a materialistic explanation of history. Marx considered the religion as "the opium of people" that produced humans incapable of efficient production. His theory of "historical materialism" advocated that social and political changes were heavily influenced by the class struggle between the proletariat and the bourgeois. God, religion, and spirituality were dismissed from his materialistic system. He suggested that God could not help the human suffering of the oppressed and the poor. He advocated that religion and God were tools in the hands of the Church and the bourgeois to control the masses. The ideas of Marx started the Soviet revolution, and established the Soviet empire that failed miserably in just 70 years. No other empire in history lasted such a short time. The effect of Darwin on Marx is interesting. When Marx read Darwin's book, *the Origin of Species*, he admired the materialistic and the atheistic concepts of the book. Marx found the material needed to dismantle all religious belief and promote his materialistic approach. The founders of the Soviet Union established a science museum in Moscow, which shows the fossils of ancient species, for the purpose of eliminating religion with the support of scientific data!

Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900) was a German philosopher. In 1882, he adopted the ideas of Praxeas when he proclaimed that God was dead. He wrote, "*Where has God gone? I tell you - we have killed him, you and I - we all are his murderers... God is dead. God will remain dead.*" He believed that eliminating God from the human life would improve the quality of life. He was also

plagued throughout his life by poor eyesight, and migraine headaches. He was driven to madness by the complete rejection of his contemporaries to his ideas. The more he was ignored, the more he combated Christianity and its moral claims. Nietzsche claimed that new values could be established to replace the traditional ones, and this led to his concept of the superman. He envisioned the superman to replace God, and to fight the moral values of the Church. Concentrating on the real world, rather than on the rewards of the afterlife promised by religion, the superman stresses the importance of this life, including the suffering and pain that accompany human existence. His superman is a creator of a "master morality" that reflects the strength and independence of someone who is liberated from all traditional values. He believed democracy to be fatal to society, and attributed most of its failure to Christianity. Nietzsche's ideas profoundly affected the official philosophy and propaganda of the Nazis, where the German race was considered a superior one. He died in Weimar on August 25, 1900, after a life of bitter disappointments.

Sigmund Freud (1856-1939) was an Austrian physician who established the framework of the psychoanalysis. He regarded belief in God as an illusion that requires psychological help. Human Being created the concept of God through the manipulation of the unconscious. Freud viewed God as a projection of human weaknesses and strong desire of mortality. Religion was a necessary step in the undeveloped societies, but now science can take its place. Freud was strongly articulate about his faith in science: "*No, our science is not an illusion! An illusion it would be to suppose that what science cannot give, we can get elsewhere.*" He suggested that people must outgrow God in their own pace: "*to force them into atheism or secularism before they were ready could lead to unhealthy denial and repression.*" Freud associated the origin of religion to his myth of the Oedipus complex. This myth describes how a group of sons, jealous of their father's control over their mother, united and killed the father. Then, as atonement for their act of murder, they worshipped the figure of the father as God the Father. It is interesting to suggest that Freud got this idea of God's projection as a father from the Christian doctrines of trinity. Freud

also regarded sexual desires and fears as existing in the unconscious of everyone's mind. This concept was shocking to the Victorians in the same manner as Darwin's claim of evolution. Now, a number of new books attacking Freud and his brainchild psychoanalysis for a generous array of errors, duplicities, fudged evidence and scientific howlers. The continuing success of drugs in the treatment or alleviation of mental disorders ranging from depression to schizophrenia undermines the Freudian foundations. In the present time some scientists question if Freud is finally dead!

Sometimes I wonder what were the above-mentioned four pioneers of atheism thinking of when they were dying. Were they envisioning that they are going to turn to dust and this is it? Now the new generations of Marx, Darwin, Nietzsche, and Freud are gaining power in the TV, magazines, books, and unfortunately in the schools. Sometimes it looks like we are living in a system totally committed to atheism or at least promoting the notion of keeping God in His place if he exists. Between schools, media, and modern serious science many people do not have chance to think about God.

1.1 The Law of Repetition

One Ayah in the Quran in Surah 55 is repeated 31 times. This Ayah states: *"Then which of the favors of your Lord will you deny?"* This Surah is 78 Ayat (or Ayahs, plural of Ayah, Arabic: Ayat) and lists many favors that Allah bestows upon us, and after citing each favor; the above Ayah is repeated as a continuous reminder to humanity to acknowledge His unlimited generosity. It is interesting to note that the Arabic word for "humanity" is derived from the same Arabic term that means "forgetfulness."

Another Ayah is repeated 4 times in Surah 54 starting in Ayah 17. The Ayah states *"And We have indeed made the Quran easy to understand and remember. Then is there any that will receive admonition?"* Moreover, a part of an Ayah is repeated 5 times in Surah 27 starting in Ayah 60 *"Can there be another god besides Allah?"*

The above repeated Ayat are just examples of the repetition

in the Quran. The repetition of a certain Ayah adds to the beauty and eloquence of the authentic Word of God. It touches the hearts and minds of the believers. This repetition may be thought of as part of the style of the Word of God.

It is possible to extend this style of repetition in the Quran to physical phenomena or events. Consequently I will introduce the *Law of repetition*. Generally the Divine *Law of repetition* examines the repetitive design or repetitive event in different branches of science. It then attempts to answer the question of who is the cause of this repetition. The Divine Law of Cause and Effect attributes one cause to one effect. This law is a strong proof for the existence of God. The more general *Law of Repetition* attributes repetitive effects in non-related fields to One God. This law simply states that because common guidelines exist, in all living organisms, physical objects or historical events, then the Designer or the Creator of all organisms, objects or events is the same. This law also states that because a phenomenon exists in different branches of science, then this phenomenon has to be attributed to only one Uncaused Cause. With humility and open mind, we should believe that God exists.

There are overwhelming evidences to believe that the unseen God does indeed exist, because one can observe the signs and the physical results of His creation. One can see these signs in the technical perfection and intricacy of the structure of atoms, solar systems, galaxies, and living cells. They all have a similar design of a nucleus and objects rotating around it. This similarity or repetition in their design reveals that the Designer or Creator of these physical objects is the same, regardless of their size or function.

Humans, animals, and birds have many repetitive features because they all share the Earth's common environment. On the outside they have symmetrical organs - two hands, two or four legs, two eyes, two ears - all arranged symmetrically. Hair, feathers, and scales are also arranged symmetrically. Even the colored designs on the wings of the butterfly are arranged symmetrically! The internal organs of humans and animals are arranged to use the space inside efficiently. The human left lung has fewer lobes so

that it can accommodate the heart, which nestles inside it. Nearly every species, from cow to chicken to human, has its heart on the left. No one really knows the exact mechanism that pushes the cells of the heart to the left during the embryonic stage. No one really knows the exact mechanism that pushes the cells of the ears to each side of the head during the embryonic stage. Etc.

Developing an embryo is more complex than building a skyscraper. In a skyscraper, a supervisor reviews the drawings and instructs workers where to go and which construction material to use. Bit by bit, from the foundation up, the building takes shape. In a living body, the workers *are* the construction materials, and both *are* living cells. Each cell has a copy of the master plan inserted into its nucleus in the form of the DNA. Just as the construction supervisor cannot send the roofers before the foundation is poured, cells have to appear at the right time in the right place. Depending on its function, each cell reads a different part of the genetic code from the DNA. Some cells become specialized as proteins, fat or muscle. Others act like conduits signals, carrying messages to other cells. Such signals play a big role in establishing the structure and location of any organ. This is not a simple process, but a very complex one that embryologists have no detailed answer as to why and how.

This whole universe follows certain laws. We know a few of them and may learn some more. One such universal law is "*the Law of Repetition.*" This law is seen in the examples provided by atoms, solar systems, and galaxies. An atom has a nucleus and electrons rotating around the nucleus. Solar system has a star and planets rotating around the star. Galaxies has a nucleus and stars rotating around the nucleus. Therefore, this law may be stated as follows:

The building block of basic objects has a nucleus and smaller things rotating around it.

A human being develops from a single cell, the zygote, which forms when a female egg is fertilized by a male sperm. Immediately after fertilization, the zygote also rotates about the center of the

egg. No one knows why! Is it possible that this *Law of Repetition* represents an act of worship or submission to the Will of God? How else can anyone explain this phenomenon that is valid for the tiny atom and zygote, the midsize solar system as well as the colossal galaxy?

The practice of pilgrimage in Islam follows the same above Law of Repetition. Two million Muslims perform pilgrimage in Mecca each year by circling the Kaabah (the house of Allah) and praising God. Thereby the Kaabah can be looked at as a nucleus and the Muslims are the smaller creatures that rotate around it. Similarly the Quran states in Surah (chapter) 39, Ayah (verse) 75, that the Angels surround the Throne of God, praising their Lord.

Humans are made of cells and cells are made of atoms. Because atoms surrender to the Will of God and are in a constant act of worship, it follows that humans are born into this world with a pure and innocent condition. This also means that the basic nature of humans is righteously created, with no original sin inherited from Adam or Eve.

To expand this *Law of Repetition* in different branches of science, one has to examine the basics, and then one will find that the basics of one branch of science can be applied to other branches. As an example, all physical systems are in a state of equilibrium or balance. This statement can be expressed by many equations in different branches of science. An example of this case is Newton's third law, which states "for every action, there is a reaction equal to the action and opposite in direction." The equation in this case can be written as:

$$\text{Action} = \text{Reaction}$$

The mathematical symbol of the equal sign, =, means the right hand side of the equal sign is balanced or in equilibrium with the left-hand side of the equal sign.

All studies in different branches of engineering schools consist of studying and solving equilibrium equations, studying the physical properties of matter, and then designing a system that satisfies equilibrium and the properties of material. This is all what a student learns in engineering school. When dealing with forces, the equilibrium equations can be stated as the applied forces equal to

the reactions. In the case of balancing energies, the equilibrium equations are stated simply as the input energy equals to the output energy.

Let us look at the different sciences in the school of engineering:

Structural engineering: Studying *equilibrium* of structures and the *physical properties* of steel and concrete.

Aerospace engineering / Aerodynamics: Studying *equilibrium* of air and the *physical properties* of air.

Civil Engineering / Hydraulics: Studying *equilibrium* of flowing fluids in pipes or channels and the *physical properties* of these fluids.

Electrical engineering: Studying *equilibrium* of flowing electric currents in circuits and the *physical properties* of electric and magnetic fields

Chemical engineering: studying of *equilibrium* of chemical processes and the *physical properties* of the elements involved in the chemical processes.

Mechanical engineering / Thermodynamics: studying the *equilibrium* of different kinds of energies such as heat and the *physical properties* of those energies.

Mechanical engineering / Vibration: studying *equilibrium* between potential and kinetic energies based upon the *physical properties* of the vibrating objects.

The entire school of engineering is based upon studying equilibrium and properties of matter. Equilibrium can be static for stationary systems such as buildings or bridges or dynamic for moving systems such as cars, aircraft, or planets.

The Law of Repetition is demonstrated in engineering as follows:

All systems are in a state of static or dynamic equilibrium.

This law of equilibrium did not just happen in nature by evolution or some other mechanism. There is no physical explanation as to why equilibrium is happening everywhere and at all time, unless we extend Newton's explanation of the nature of

gravity to include equilibrium as another divine action. Perhaps equilibrium is God's way of telling us that His creation is always balanced and perfect. In this case, studying science is just the human way of understanding some of God's laws for the purpose of appreciating His power and supremacy.

As an extension to the above law, chemical reactions happen all the time in a human body. Every chemical reaction is subject to chemical equilibrium. A disease can be defined as an imbalance in one of those reactions. Taking medication restores the balance. Pharmacology is a branch of medicine that studies the known chemical reactions in the human body and the effect of medication on diseases. Studying in the school of medicine involves the *equilibrium* of the chemical reaction inside the body as well as the *properties* of each organ and system in the human body. In that sense, the similarity of engineering and medicine becomes obvious.

A further demonstration of the Law of Repetition is that all systems are uniform on a large scale, but display irregularities on a small scale. If you look at the sky at night, you see the uniformity of the void, with a few scattered stars that represent the irregularities in that huge void. In this case, the stars represent the irregularities in the huge, otherwise uniform, void. Human beings are also uniform on a large scale. Taken as a whole, the population's height, weight, intelligence, behavior, health, etc. can be quantified with an average value for each trait. Many people are healthy while others suffer an irregularity such as disease. Trees also are uniform on a large scale. They all have roots, stems, branches, and leaves. But, the bearing of different kinds of fruit or no fruit at all, even the different shapes of leaves can be thought of as small scale irregularities. And the list can go on and on.

From a human standard, the irregularities can be beneficial or harmful. The irregularities exist for a reason that we cannot understand each one of them. The solar system is a huge void with the sun and the planets existing as tree leaves in a vast desert. Atoms have the same structure as the solar system with the nucleus and electrons separated by relatively large distance. And since the human body consists of atoms, it can be seen that it is mainly empty space with the nuclei and electrons as the exceptions to this huge

void. Why is that? Recall the above-mentioned example of the ant and the elephant! The ant does not know what is in the mind of the elephant, and we will never know what is in God's mind unless He reveals some of His Knowledge. This is simply the system that He chooses, and we do not know why. Hence, this Law of Repetition can be stated as follows:

All systems are so uniform on a large scale, with some irregularities on a small scale.

This Law may also help us understand some of the aspects of human suffering, such as some babies that are born with birth defects. These defects are the exceptions, and the uniformity is that the majorities are born healthy. We may be able to suggest that we know why that happens. People should be grateful to God that they do not have defected babies. But guess how many people on earth actually thank God when they have healthy babies? How many people thank God that they are not sick? How many people thank God that they can find food, water, and shelter? The great lesson of the few who suffer is that the majority should be grateful for all the favors that God bestowed on them. What about those people who suffer in this life? The answer is who knows what God prepared for them in heaven? May be they will be happier for a long time than those who appear to be fortunate on Earth. I do not claim to know the exact answer, but I have full confidence in God's Wisdom and Justice.

Years ago, as a student studying my Ph.D., I encountered a problem in my thesis that I could not find its solution right away. I felt extremely concerned and sad. Then I went for a walk to calm myself down. There, I saw a man without legs begging for few pennies to eat. I looked at him and thought here was a man whose ambition was to eat, and he was trying to get help for his hunger. And there I was, feeling sad for a luxury item that I could not get fast enough. That was about thirty years ago. I try to remember that scene when I face some problem in my life and compare my problems with that man's problem. This really forced me to say thank you God for what I have.

Another application of the Law of Repetition is the old cliché that states “history repeats itself.” Let us understand what this statement means. In one way it means that civilization and power in certain countries rises to a **peak**, and then citizens become blinded by success, then this civilization reaches its demise, and another civilization starts, and so on. Everyone knows that. But, did you also notice that the more ancient empires lasted more than the following ones. History books tell us about the following civilizations and empires:

- Sumerian civilization in Iraq (3500 - 800 BC)
- Egyptian civilization (3000 - 1070 BC)
- Minoan civilization in Crete (3000 -1000 BC)
- Creek civilization (2000 - 300 BC)
- Chinese civilization (1523 BC - 906 AD)
- Indian civilization (1500 -185 BC)
- Mexican civilization (1200 - 300 BC)
- Roman Empire (753 BC - 476 AD)
- Byzantine Empire (330 - 1453)
- Islamic Caliphate (632 - 1526)
- Ottoman Caliphate (1300 - 1923)
- British Empire (1558 -1982)
- French Empire (1804 -1962)
- Russian Empire (1689 -1917)
- Soviet Empire (1917 -1992)
- American civilization (1865 -)

History books show that the duration of civilizations used to be a few thousand years, then several hundreds. Now we live in an era where “superpowers” last a few hundred years, or even less than a hundred years as in the case of the Soviet Union. People who can be affected by preconceived ideas write history books, which can also be audited and adjusted by governments according to the political climate of that time. The Ottoman Caliphate is a case in point. Historians claim that it was an empire. History books in many Islamic countries consider that empire a case of colonization. Very few history books mention that it was an Islamic

Caliphate that united many Islamic countries. This is a fact that many governments choose to ignore. If we recognize the Ottoman Caliphate as an extension of the previous Islamic Caliphate, it would make its duration from 632-1923 or about 1300 years. Consequently, the next Law of Repetition states the following:

Duration of civilization decreases with time.

The only exception to this Law is the Islamic Caliphate. Since the Muslims lost the Ottoman Caliphate, Islamic revival is growing in all Islamic countries, and Islam is the fastest growing religion in non-Islamic countries.

If you want to let your mind wander about this Law of Repetition, you can find many other interesting examples about the Law of Repetition.

Now for those who want a proof that God exists, The Quran provides the answer in Surah (chapter) 41, Ayah (verse) 53:

“Soon will We show them Our Signs in the (furthest) regions (of the earth), and in their own souls, until it becomes manifest to them that this is the Truth. Is it not enough that thy Lord doth witness all things?”

Almost all Quranic interpretations agree that the above verse addresses the unbelievers, but I feel that this verse inspired many Muslims to look at the universe and their bodies to strengthen their faith. This verse identifies two groups of people:

1. Those who are looking for proof or a technique to become faithful can achieve that by looking at the skies and to the human bodies. The complexity of the design of the universe and the living cell leaves one's mind spinning. People need to contemplate and ponder to arrive at the highest conclusion in this universe.
2. Those who have faith, and accept God's Word that He is a witness of His Existence without a need for further proof. They know that He exists *by their hearts*. This is truly a blessed group.

The first group represents the non-Muslims and the Muslims who seek scientific and rational evidences for the divine creation. Those are, also, who base their faith on a logical approach and an analytical procedure. They usually become strong advocates to Islam, and in some cases they have stronger faith than most of the traditional Muslims. This group challenges the strong wave of materialism and atheism in favor of the clear moral values that Islam represents.

2

The Universe

Studying the universe can be an overwhelming spiritual experience. We see pictures of our solar system, distant stars, and galaxies, but the human minds fail to comprehend the size and complexity of this huge universe. In this chapter, you will encounter a host of theories and names. I attempted very hard to make the presented material simple, so you can get an appreciation of the splendor and grandeur of this universe. However, if you are temporarily stunned, you are sharing the astonishment of the scientists who lived through the development of their theories, and who at times saw nothing but increasing complexity with little hope of understanding. If you stick to it, you will share the excitement of the scientists, and the humility of the believers. If you keep asking questions: Who, Why, and How, you will have only one logical answer: God exists and He made it His Way."

From time immemorial, people have wondered at the starry heavens. On a clear night, the beautiful stars hang like shining jewels against the vast darkness of space. The parade of sunrise and sunset, the changing phases of the moon, and the silent convoy of the stars across the black dome of heaven have long proven a spectacle and a puzzle. The spectacle has inspired the artist, the musician, and the poet. The puzzle has intrigued philosophers and scientists. Just what is out there in the space? What is the meaning of it all? How did it start? Is there life out there? We don't know. But, who has any idea of what God can do?

The spectacle of the heaven above charges the believers with humility and faith. They realize that they are a grain of dust on a

grain of dust on a grain of dust. Yet, God gives us the intellect to contemplate all of this. The recent Hubble telescope discovery increased the estimates for the known galaxies from 10 billion to 100 billion, with each galaxy containing billions of stars, and perhaps planetary systems. When we discover new galaxies, stars and planets, this should make us aware of how great God is, and how little we know. God simply revealed some of his magnificence.

To ancient peoples the sky exhibited many repetitive behaviors. The bright sun, which divided daytime from nighttime, rose every morning from one direction, the east, moved steadily across the sky during the day, and set in a nearly opposite direction, the west. At night more than 1000 visible stars followed a similar course, appearing to rotate in permanent groupings, called constellations, around a fixed point in the sky, which was known as the north celestial pole.

Observation of the stars that appear in the west after sunset or in the east before sunrise showed that the relative position of the sun among the stars changed gradually. The Egyptians may have been the first to discover that the sun moves completely around the sphere of the fixed stars in approximately 365 days.

Several ancient peoples, notably the Egyptians, the Mayans, and the Chinese, developed interesting constellation maps and useful calendars but the Babylonians accomplished even greater achievements. To perfect their calendar, they studied the motions of the sun and moon. It was their custom to designate as the beginning of each month the day after the new moon, when the lunar crescent first appeared after sunset.

Due to limited knowledge, the earliest civilizations developed inaccurate model of the universe. At about 4000 BC, the Mesopotamians, believed that the Earth is the center of the universe and that the other heavenly bodies move around it. Later, in ancient Greece, the challenge was resumed, and a new view taken of the universe. The Greek Aristotle and the Alexandrian astronomer Ptolemy expanded the nightly motion of stars across the sky from a dome to a sphere. In doing so, the Greeks took the first step towards realizing that the universe is larger than it appears. They also developed an elaborate mathematical way of describing the

cyclic motion of the Moon and planets around the Earth, which, on what seemed good evidence, appeared fixed at the center of universe. The Greek astronomer Aristarchus of Samos maintained, about 270 BC, that the Earth revolved around the sun. However, because of Aristotle's authority, the Greeks regarded the colossal, heavy Earth as a motionless globe around which the universe revolved. This theory, known as the geocentric system, remained virtually unchallenged for about 2000 years due to the widely accepted model of the universe according to the famous Aristotle. Had humanity believed Aristarchus, our knowledge of astronomy would have been more advanced than our present case.

Greek astronomy was transmitted eastward to the Syrians, the Hindus, and the Arabs. The Arabic astronomers compiled new star catalogs in the 9th and 10th centuries and subsequently developed tables of planetary motion. Arab astronomers recognized the Great Nebula in Andromeda, the first galaxy other than our own, as a faint blur as early as 964 AD in the vast loneliness of the universe. Al-Battani (known also as Albatenius), leading Arab astronomer and mathematician of his time, made his astronomical observations in Syria for a period of more than 40 years. He published his work as "De Motu Stellarum" (Concerning the Motion of the Stars, 1537), and corrected errors of Ptolemy in regards to the length of the year.

In 1543, the Polish astronomer Nicholas Copernicus published his theories "On the Revolutions of the Celestial Spheres". The Sun, not the Earth, was put at the center of the universe, the planets were set in orbits about it, and the human beings were abdicated from their throne at the center of all creation.

2.1 Models and Mathematics

Discovery of the structure of the universe, the atom, or the DNA started by developing a model that describes the behavior of these structures. The modeling procedure is the same for different scientific disciplines, although the details of the modeling vary between different disciplines. Modeling of the same problem also changes with time as more knowledge is acquired.

In the above description of the relationship of the Earth to the sky, three different models were introduced, namely:

1. A model of the Earth at the center of the universe with the sky as a dome above Earth.
2. A model of the Earth at the center of the universe with the sky as a sphere above Earth.
3. A model of the Earth rotating around the sun.

Development of physical models will be illustrated by presenting a simple model of a vibrating pendulum or yo-yo. A basic property of the pendulum is frequency. There is nothing complex in this idea; if one watches a pendulum oscillating up and down, the number of oscillations in a second is called the frequency of vibration. This pendulum consists of a spring and a block attached to it. If the spring is held fixed, the block will be stationary at vertical equilibrium position. The spring provides the restoring force against gravity. If the block is to move from equilibrium position, the spring is stretched and it stores potential energy and a force is developed in the spring. When the block is released, the spring force pulls the block towards the equilibrium as the potential energy is converted to kinetic (motion) energy. This process of energy transfer between the potential and kinetic energy continues and causes the block to oscillate about the equilibrium position.

The frequency of the pendulum can be calculated by equating the potential and kinetic energy. This solution is subject to certain assumptions, which should only be made if the solution is easier to solve and the results are accurate enough for whatever use they are intended. Some of the logical assumptions for that spring-block system include ignoring the effects of earthquake and wind. One should not assume that the results would be correct if the pendulum is moving in a windy place or during an earthquake. If wind and earthquake are included in the solution of this system, the resulting equations are usually very complex.

Similarly, when dealing with the dynamics of the universe, one cannot include the effects of every phenomenon in the equations describing the motion of the universe. There are two reasons for

that: first there are still many unknowns in the universe; second, including some known phenomena could make these equations impossible to solve. Theories dealing with the dynamics of the universe have much observational studies to support them. Mathematical reasoning is the only way to understand the fundamentals that lie behind observations. This is so because mathematics is a language in which ideas can be formulated and followed in logical steps. Many times mathematics has provided insights available in no other way. Unfortunately, some people suffer mental blocks when they see a simple equation. However, our civilization would scarcely exist without the physical laws and intellectual techniques developed by mathematical research. No one could balance his checkbook without applying mathematical rules. Many of the world's great thinkers have decided that mathematics represents the absolute truth. "*God ever geometrizes,*" Plato said. "*God ever arithmetizes,*" echoed the 19th Century Prussian scientist Jacobi. In our time the British physicist Sir James Jeans declared, "*The Great Architect of the Universe now begins to appear as a pure mathematician.*"

Today, although mathematicians affirm the universality of their subject, some deny that it possesses any absolute qualities of truth. Bertrand Russell defines mathematics as "*the subject in which we never know what we are talking about nor whether what we are saying is true.*" He may be talking about some mathematicians who expect the universe to follow their theories, instead of searching of the actual laws that describe the behavior of the universe.

2.2 Creating the Universe

Understanding the universe that began from a primal void may be the greatest intellectual search ever. If the intellect of mere mortals seems too weak for the challenge, the imagination may be up to it. Cosmology and particle physics are both required to understand the evolution of the universe. Cosmology is the study of the birth and development of the universe, the largest entity known. Particle physics is the study of the basic building blocks of matter, the smallest entity known. The union of the two fields resulted in a

scientific revolution.

The universe started with an enormous explosion, in which space, time, energy, and matter were created. There is almost complete agreement of this among scientists. The evidence that makes them so certain that the Big Bang model is correct comes from discoveries in astronomy and subatomic physics as well as astronomical observations based upon the analysis of light emitted from distant stars. Light is usually described as consisting of light waves. When raindrops intercept the sunlight, rainbow is produced with the familiar band of colors. Colors of the rainbow range from red, with lower frequency and longer wavelength, to violet, with higher frequency and shorter wavelength. A prism has the same effect of separating white light into its component colors. Many dark lines cross the spectrum of visible light. These lines are very important because the number and position of the lines reveals much information. Two dark lines surround each color. Spectroscopy is a process that separates light captured from distant stars or galaxies into its component wavelengths - its colors. By measuring how much light of various wavelengths and intensities an object emits over time, astronomers can determine many things: the object's chemical composition; its temperature; its rotation; whether it is moving towards or away from Earth, and how fast; plus in many cases, its mass, its age and its distance from Earth.

The spectrum of waves extends from radio waves of one kilometer long (from crest to crest) to gamma rays with wavelength of a fraction of one-millionth of a millimeter. The visible light from the sun extends over a very small fraction of the spectrum of waves.

In 1912 the American astronomer Vesto M. Slipher (1875-1969), working at the Lowell Observatory in Arizona, discovered the "red shift," which paved the way to one of the greatest discovery in this century. All the dark lines in the visible part of the spectrum of all galaxies were shifted toward the red, and the lines in the red part of the spectrum are shifted into the infrared, and so on. This happens because the crests and troughs of the electromagnetic radiation are shifted towards the red, with the lower frequency, if the galaxy is moving away faster. This can be understood by a simple analogy. If you compress a coil spring, the number of coils

in one inch will increase. But if you expand the coil spring, the number of coils in one inch will decrease. The number of coils in one inch is similar to the number of wave. Thus compression increases the frequency and expansion reduces it. In wave physics the shift towards the red end of the spectrum always indicates velocity of recession, i.e. moving away or expanding.

Another example to understand this is related to sound. Sound is pressure waves that excite the ear, when compressed against the ear and give the sensation of hearing. Suppose you are standing in a railway station, an express train is approaching at a high speed, with its whistle blowing. As it passes you, the pitch of the whistle drops suddenly. This has nothing to do with the whistling or your ear; it is due to the speed of the train. This can be explained as follows:

Suppose the speed of sound is 344 meters per second and that the approaching whistle is 344 meters away. Half a second later it is 172 meters away. Treat these as two separate instants, and you will see that the second sound reaches you, the stationary listener, only half a second later than the first. The wavelengths are being compressed because of the movement of the train is toward the listener. This is similar to the compression of a coil when it hits a wall. So the wavelengths are shortened, and the frequencies increase to a higher pitch. As the train passes the stationary listener, the process reverses, and each successive sound wave has a greater distance to travel. The interval between the successive peaks, therefore, is longer than the interval between their emissions, and accordingly, the pitch of the sound will be lowered. This is what is known as the Doppler effect.

The same thing applies to light waves, but in this case the speed is not that of sound, 344 meters per second, but of light, 300,000,000 meters per second. The instrument in this case is not the human ear, but the spectroscope, spreading out radiation into their color frequencies. The visual equivalence can be stated as follows:

1. An increase in auditory pitch (increase in frequency and decrease in wavelength) is a shift of the spectral lines towards

the violet end of the spectrum, if the source is approaching the receiver.

2. A decrease in auditory pitch (decrease in frequency and increase in wavelength) is a shift of the spectral lines towards the red end of the spectrum, if the source is moving away from the receiver.

A red shift, therefore, indicate the velocity of recession of the source, such as a star. If the faintness of a galaxy is accepted as an indication of its distance, and the red shift of the spectra as the velocity of recession, then the velocity of recession is proportional to the distance of the object. The further the star from us, the faster its speed of recession.

The American astronomer Edwin Hubble (1889-1953) demonstrated that our galaxy is not the only one in the universe. In 1929 he announced the discovery of the linear relation between distant galaxies and their red shifts. This has been achieved by plotting the distance of some twenty-four relatively bright galaxies against their red shifts. He also gathered the first evidence that the universe is expanding. The red shifts of the much fainter and more distant galaxies are much higher. When he observed the distant galaxies moving away from Earth at a tremendous speed, they looked to him like they had been expelled in some primordial explosion. If their flight path could be run backward, they would unite into the original fireball. But the Big Bang got its enduring name when English astronomer Fred Hoyle, who believed the universe always had and always would exist in a "steady state," ridiculed the sudden birth notion. Hoyle suggested that the universe always looks the same from any viewpoint and at any time. Therefore, although galaxies are born, evolve and move away from each other, newly created matter, in the form of hydrogen gas continually replaces them, which evolve into galaxies and stars in due course. This means that the universe is in a state of constant creation of matter. The creation term is a misnomer, because as an atheist, Hoyle did not believe in God. His model suggested that the universe has no beginning and no end. He claimed the steady state theory explained the observed abundance of deuterium (a form of

hydrogen), hydrogen, and helium, which are so successfully explained by the Big Bang. The steady state theory has now been completely abandoned by cosmologists - even by Hoyle himself.

There is doubt about precisely when the Big Bang happened. It was somewhere between 15 and 20 billion years ago. Recently, the Hubble space telescope was used to estimate the age of the universe. The question of the age of the universe is not only fascinating in its own right but also bears directly on just about every other cosmic mystery from the universe's history to its eventual fate. The Hubble delivered its new verdict that suggested that the age of the universe is between 8 and 12 billion years. That may seem imprecise, but it was specific enough to throw astrophysicists into a state of high anxiety. The problem is that our own galaxy has stars believed to be 14 to 16 billion years old. And it makes astronomers uncomfortable to try to explain how stars could have been formed before the universe began. This uncertainty arises because it is unknown how tightly the universe is packed with matter. The gravity from high-density matter would have slowed the universe's expansion considerably by now, meaning that the age of the universe could be closer to 8 billion years old. Most theorists think the density of the matter is indeed high, although observers have not been able to calculate exactly how high. Therefore, scientists may have to modify the details of the Big Bang.

However, among the astronomical observations that support the Big Bang, four strong evidences are important:

1. The first is that galaxies are all moving away from each other at a tremendous speed. Galaxies are observed using electronic detector attached to a telescope. The further the galaxy from us, the faster its speed of recession. Astronomers have detected this by the red shift in the galaxy's spectrum. By measuring the red shifts, astronomers can determine the speed of recession of the galaxies. Since they know the further off they are the faster they move, they can calculate their distances. This is possible if we know exactly how the speed

increases with distance. At the moment there is uncertainty about this. That is why the age of the universe is estimated to be 15 to 20 or 8 to 12 billion years. The ratio of the speed to distance - called Hubble constant - ranges between 15 to 30 kilometers per second per million light years. The speed is then determined from the red shift and the distance is determined using Hubble's constant by simple calculation.

2. The second piece of evidence is the discovery in 1965 of radiation reaching us from every direction of the universe. These are similar to the electromagnetic radiation from light bulbs, from lightning flashes, and from any hot object. The discovery happened during the testing of a sensitive microwave receiver. This cosmic microwave background is of equal intensity from every part of the sky, and its maximum intensity occurs at a wavelength of 1.1 mm. What we are seeing is the glow of a primordial universe as it was at a very early date. Now, after about 15 billion years, this radiation has cooled to a few degrees above the absolute zero. This is the temperature to be expected today if the radiation had originated in an extremely hot Big Bang.
3. The third item of evidence of the Big Bang comes from nuclear physics. Studies of how the chemical elements would evolve after the Big Bang suggest that in the present day universe a ratio of deuterium and helium should be reached. Astrophysicists have verified that the existing ratio is what the theories predict.
4. The fourth evidence came in 1994, when NASA's Cosmic Background Explorer satellite - COBE - discovered landmark evidence that the universe did in fact begin with the primeval explosion. In order for gravity to make galaxies out of atoms, it needs some chunks in the space in which the atoms are closer together, regions with greater than average density so that they could draw surrounding matter. And if they are present, they should be visible to a sensitive probe such as COBE in the form of warm and cool spots staining a microwave background. Indeed that is what happened. The signals from COBE shows a map of the sky with spots of all

sizes indicating regions where the microwaves are minuscule 30 millionths of a degree warmer or cooler than the average. Scientist George Smoot, an astrophysicist at the university of California at Berkeley, when seeing the computer map, proclaimed:

"If you are religious, it is like looking at God"

The hypothesis of a primordial explosion is therefore extremely well founded. However, there are some variations of the theory. For now, there are not enough evidences for an alternative to the Big Bang, and the future may present another model of how the explosion started. Nevertheless, the Big Bang will remain one of the greatest constructs of the 20th century scientific thinking. It tells a story that spans for billions of years of the universe to an end that can only be assumed. One of those assumptions deals with whether or not the Big Bang is a cyclic phenomenon, with the universe alternately expanding and contracting like a spring forever, without a need for God! Even if the universe behaves like a spring, one should raise the perpetual question: **Who started it?**

At the birth of the universe, all matter and energy were compacted into an almost infinitely hot and infinitely dense point somewhere in a dark void. There was no space and no time. According to the theory of creation called inflation, the cosmos expanded at a furious rate in the first fractions of a second of existence. Then suddenly all the particles, energy, time, and space in the universe appeared. According to the Big Bang theory, a single point called a singularity, exploded spontaneously. This was not a burst of matter into space, but rather an explosion of the space itself. Mathematically speaking, singularity is defined as a point where no solution exists. A simple way to understand singularity is to try to divide a number, any number, by zero. The answer is infinity! But what is infinity? Infinity is a number that is larger than any number one can think of. If someone uses a calculator or a computer and tries to divide a number by zero, the result will be "error"!

The suggested steps for creating the universe can be described

as follows:

1. The earliest moment that can be spoken of with certainty came after a period called the Planck time - the incredibly short time of $1\text{E}-43$ second, a 1 preceded by 43 zeros or a ten millionth of a quadrillionth of a sextillionth second! At that time, the entire universe, which might have been only part of some unknown whole, was much smaller than an atomic nucleus. As suggested by calculation, $1\text{E}+20$ as many as the universe at that time could fit in an atomic nucleus! All the four fundamental forces - gravitational, the strong and weak nuclear forces, and the electromagnetism - were combined together in one super force. The present theories fail to predict what happens in that short time, but they can be cautiously applied after the Planck time.
2. The next major event occurs after $1\text{E}-35$ second, where the universe was propelled by the fragmented super force into the four basic forces. The universe inflated, not just expanded but doubling its size every $1\text{E}-35$ second. Its borders (the space) rushed out at a speed that is faster than the speed of light (Einstein's theories may not allow matter or energy to travel through space faster than light, but they place no such restriction on space itself). During this inflation period from $1\text{E}-35$ to $1\text{E}-33$ second, the universe increased to about the size of a grapefruit. At this time, there were no atoms, but only quarks which constitute the nucleus of atoms, appeared as separate entities. Alan Guth at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology proposed this inflation model in the 1980s. The most startling part of inflation is the notion, as Guth puts it, "*that the universe is a free lunch*" - something comes from nothing.
3. At $1\text{E}-20$ second after the Big Bang, cosmic strings, if they exist, would have formed and later served as seeds for galaxies. The laws of God observed today have emerged. Perhaps a small loop of strings attracted, with its gravity, enough matter to form a galaxy; a bigger loop might attract enough to form a galactic cluster. Cosmic strings seem to

- offer a good model for explaining the pattern of galaxies. Unfortunately, there is no evidence that strings exist.
4. At $1E-5$ (0.00001) second, the universe was a soup of quarks, leptons, and radiation. It was cool enough for quarks to bind together in triplets to form protons and neutrons, the building blocks of atomic nuclei.
 5. The Plasma period started three minutes later and simple atomic nuclei of heavy hydrogen, helium and lithium were formed. The name plasma is applied to a high temperature gas when the outer electrons became separated from their atoms. It is the plasma that glows inside a fluorescent tube or advertising sign. The universe was too hot for the atoms to hold together. They were ripped apart by the intense radiation as soon as they were created. The plasma period lasted for 300,000 years. The universe was like a dense smoke of free moving charged particles that light could not penetrate.
 6. After 300,000 years simple atoms were formed when electrons were finally able to orbit protons without being immediately knocked out of their orbits by photons, the radiation or wave particles. The light that emitted during these atom formations is now the microwave background radiation that was detected in 1965. The universe became transparent to light. Theoretically, some areas were denser than others and thus were warmer and emitted more light. These areas later formed gas clouds or smoke.
 7. From 300,000 to 2 billion years, under the influence of gravity, the colossal smokes gradually broke up into smaller galaxy-size structures.
 8. After that, stars were formed in galaxies, and the universe continued to expand at a rate of 5 to 10 % every billion years.

In trying to explain the development of the universe, we are left with many unanswered questions:

1. What was there before the explosion started?
2. Why did the universe start at a very hot point?

3. Why did the universe start at a critical temperature and critical rate of expansion that separate models from collapsing as soon as it starts from those that go on expanding forever? After billions of years the universe is still expanding at almost the same rate. If the rate of expansion one second after the explosion had been smaller by even a part in a thousand billion billion, the universe would have been collapsed before it ever reached its present size.
4. What is the origin of the density fluctuations of the early universe that started the stars and galaxies?

The existing laws of physics offer no answer to the above questions. Those questions represent a great test of human faith or arrogance. Marc Davis from the university of California at Berkeley said:

“ We all had to say that those were just God-given conditions ”

This is one scientist that appreciates the limitations of the human knowledge. Other scientists introduce arrogant ideas when they encounter problems that they cannot hope to understand. They may blame God Himself for not revealing all of His secrets and His full list of laws in a way that everyone should understand. Some are even frustrated that they do not know all the laws that apply to the universe before $1E-20$ second after the Big Bang. Steven Hawking, in his book *“A Brief History of Time”* writes in page 122:

“One possible answer is to say that God chose the initial configuration of the universe for reasons that we cannot hope to understand. This would certainly have been within the power of an omnipotent being, but if he had started it off in such an incomprehensible way, why did he choose to let it evolve according to laws that we could understand?”

Moreover, Hawking considers the Big Bang as a model that places limits on when and how God might have been carrying his

job! In page 9 of the above-mentioned book, Hawking wrote:

"An expanding universe does not preclude a creator, but it does place limits on when he might have carried out his job!"

The late Carl Sagan of Cornell University of New York wrote in the introduction of this book:

"Hawking is attempting, as he explicitly states, to understand the mind of God. And this makes all the more unexpected conclusion of the effort, at least so far: a universe with no edge in space, no beginning or no end in time, and nothing for a Creator to do."

The above statement is elaborated in the same book in page 141.

Sagan's idea is analogous to the creation story in Genesis, that God created the universe in six day, and then rested the seventh day. The suggestion here according to Hawking and Sagan that the seventh day is so long that it started right after the Big Bang and God is still resting and has nothing to do!

Now suppose, for the sake of argument, that two persons were brought together one from the seventh century and the other from the twentieth century. What may happen if the latter person were to explain the Big Bang and the theory of relativity to the former person? Could you visualize their discussion? The first person would appear extremely puzzled and incapable of understanding or believing the second person. Because we do not understand everything that God did or is doing, and because our existing knowledge fails to explain many of the mysteries of the universe, some of our present time scientists tend to think that the problem is not in our limitation, but in the limitation of God Himself.

The subject of evolution of the universe is a very complex one, and we do not know all the details of the Big Bang. With time, our knowledge will expand and we may improve on the existing model of the universe. Some Scientists may be disappointed that 90 to 99 percent of the universe is unknown to mankind. But, what

else is new? Nearly, the same percentage of the human brain is unknown. We cannot determine the weather precisely, nor can we predict the location and intensity of the next earthquake.

2.3 Understanding the Known Universe

Probably, you are reading this book in a room with four walls in your home, and you feel that you are not moving. Your place exists on a tiny planet called Earth. The Earth is one of nine planets orbiting around the Sun. The sun is a typical star of intermediate size and luminosity. The Sun is one of the 100 billion stars traveling together that makes up a spiral galaxy called the Milky Way. Galaxies are generally not isolated in space but are often members of small or moderate-sized groups, which in turn form large clusters of galaxies. The Milky Way is one of a small group of about 20 galaxies that astronomers call the Local Group. The spiral galaxy Andromeda is also a member of the Local Group. The Large, Small, and Mini Magellanic Clouds are nearby satellite galaxies, but each is small and faint, with about 100 million stars. Further work revealed a concentration of clusters of galaxies that are called superclusters. Ours is called the Local or Virgo supercluster. There seem to be no observations to lead astronomers to assume any structure larger than superclusters. This grouping from the solar system to the supercluster systems is based upon the observation that each system travels in concert or as a group.

Now, let us try to see how much your actual speed in the universe is. According to classical mechanics, persons in a uniformly moving train behave as they would be if the train were at rest. With the windows covered, it would be impossible to tell whether the train was moving. To an observer on the ground outside the train, the persons inside the train would seem to have the same speed as that of the train. However, if a person inside the train started running in the same direction as the train, the outside observer would see that person moving faster than the train. As an example, if the train is moving with a speed of 100 Km/hr, and the person is moving with a speed of 10 km/hr, then the observer would see that person moving with 110 km/hr ($100+10=110$). Therefore,

it can be concluded that the actual speed of the person inside a train can be found by adding his speed in the train to the speed of the train. In the same way, let's find your speed by adding the following:

Speed at the equator of Earth due to its rotation about its axis
= 0.44 km/sec

Orbital speed of Earth about the Sun = 29.8 Km/sec

Speed of the Sun relative to the center of the Milky Way
= 250 Km/sec

From that, we conclude that your speed relative to the center of the Milky Way is 280 km/sec or 174 mi/sec! That is an incredible speed. And, you don't even know it or feel it!

Superclusters and Clusters of Galaxies

An unknown process created the density differences in the universe. They become marked only after some two billion years. Where density was greater, Protogalaxies, the first celestial bodies, were formed. The process of expansion of the universe had made it possible for galaxies to form in considerable numbers. The resulting galaxies would have an immense range of sizes - from one hundred times the size of our galaxy down to a hundred-thousandth of it. According the existing model of the Big Bang, the largest structure appeared first. Protogalaxies are assumed to be formed first after 2 billion years from the Big Bang. Protogalaxies shrank to become galaxies.

Overall, the distribution of clusters and superclusters in the universe is not uniform. Instead, superclusters of tens of thousands of galaxies are arranged in long, stringy filaments, around large voids. The Great Wall, a galactic filament discovered in 1989, stretches across more than 500 million light-years of space. Clusters of Galaxies include from two to thousands galaxies. Superclusters or clusters of Galaxies are detected by groups of galaxies that travel together.

Galaxies

A Galaxy is a massive group of hundreds of millions of stars, all gravitationally interacting, and orbiting about a common center. All the stars visible to the unaided eye from Earth belong to the Earth's galaxy, the Milky Way. The sun with its associated planets is just one star in this galaxy.

The most distant galaxies known, near the edge of the observable universe, are faint blue objects called "blue fuzzies" because of their appearance on photographic plates. The images were obtained by aiming a telescope at apparently blank regions of the sky and using a solid-state charge-coupled detector to gather the very faint light, then processing the images by means of a computer. The galaxies, moving away from Earth at about 88 percent of the speed of light, may have been formed about 2 billion years after the origin of the universe.

A Muslim Persian astronomer, Al-Sufi (903-36), is credited with first describing the spiral galaxy seen in the constellation Andromeda. By the middle of the 18th century, only three galaxies had been identified. In 1780, the French astronomer Charles Messier (1730-1817) published a list that included 32 galaxies. These galaxies are now identified by their Messier (M) numbers; the Andromeda galaxy, for example, is known among astronomers as M31.

In the early years of the twentieth century, it was already known from the work of the English astronomer William Huggins that nebulae (Latin for "clouds") were of two kinds: hazy patches of gases with spiral or elliptical shapes. Since 1900 galaxies have been discovered in large numbers by photographic searches. Galaxies at enormous distances from Earth appear so tiny on a photograph that they can hardly be distinguished from stars. The largest known galaxy has about 13 times as many stars as the Milky Way.

When viewed or photographed with a large telescope, only the nearest galaxies exhibit individual stars. For most galaxies, only the combined light of all the stars is detected. Galaxies exhibit a variety of forms. Some have an overall globular shape, with a

bright nucleus surrounded by a luminous structureless disk. Such galaxies, called ellipticals, contain a population of old stars, usually with little apparent gas or dust, and few newly formed stars. Elliptical galaxies come in a large range of sizes, from giant to dwarf. In contrast, spiral galaxies are flattened disk systems containing not only some old stars but also large populations of young stars, much gas and dust, and molecular clouds that are the birthplace of stars. Often the regions containing bright young stars and gas clouds are arranged in long spiral arms that can be observed to wind around the galaxy. Generally a halo of faint older stars surrounds the disk; a smaller nuclear bulge often exists, emitting two jets of energetic matter in opposite directions.

Other disklike galaxies, with no overall spiral form, are classified as irregulars. These galaxies also have large amounts of gas, dust, and young stars, but no arrangement of a spiral form. They are usually located near larger galaxies, and their appearance is probably the result of a tidal encounter with the more massive galaxy. Some extremely peculiar galaxies are located in close groups of two or three, and their tidal interactions have caused distortions of spiral arms, producing warped disks and long streamer tails.

Our Milky Way Galaxy

Earth is a planet orbiting one of 100 billion stars that constitute a large spiral galaxy. William Herschel, a pioneer of the study of the skies, first introduced the concept of these islands of stars in the 1780s using large telescopes. On the basis of counting the stars visible in different directions, he concluded that the sun lay at the center of a star system that was flat and elongated in shape. Astronomers have known this system as the Galaxy - from "galaxias" - which is what the Milky Way was called in ancient Greece.

The observations of radio telescopes have confirmed that this system is fully disklike with four spiral arms. They are the Centaurus, Sagittarius, Perseus, and the Orion arms. The Sun lies in the Orion arm of the Galaxy.

At the center of the Galaxy, as of all spirals, there is a

concentrated core of stars. These form a bulge at least 20,000 light-years in diameter and some 3,000 light-years thick. The Sun is 30,000 light-years from the center of the Galaxy. The Sun, about halfway out towards the edge moves at a speed of 250 Km/sec and takes no less than 200 million years to complete each rotation, a period sometimes called the cosmic year. Since its formation, the Sun has managed only twenty round trips. If we assume that the cosmic year is divided into 365 cosmic days, and the cosmic day is divided into 24 cosmic hours, then humans were created on Earth, perhaps, only 2 cosmic hours ago!

Our Solar System

The first astronomers, long ago, noticed that there were five special "stars" that gradually moved through the sky. They became known as the "wanderers" or planets. Planets shine with a steady light, but real stars often twinkle. All the planets visible in the night sky are members of the Sun's family, or the solar system. The five planets that can be seen without a telescope are Mercury, Venus, Mars, Jupiter, and Saturn. After the invention of the telescope, astronomers found three more distant planets. Uranus was discovered in 1781, Neptune in 1846, and Pluto in 1930. All nine planets travel in orbits around the sun.

Johannes Kepler studied the motion of the planets. In 1609 he discovered that the orbits of the planets are slightly stretched circles, called ellipses. A circle has one focal point called the center, while an ellipse has two focal points. For each planetary orbit, the sun is at one of the focal points. Thus the distances of the planets from the sun change by small amounts as they travel in their orbits. Kepler discovered how the planets moved, but it was Newton who realized that the force of gravity holds the planets in their orbits. If the Sun's gravity did not constantly keep pulling at the planets, they would fly away into the depths of space.

Now we know that our solar system consists of the sun; the nine planets and their satellites; the asteroids, comets, and meteoroids; and interplanetary dust and gas. The planets are commonly divided into two groups: the inner planets (Mercury,

Venus, Earth, and Mars) and the outer planets (Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, Neptune, and Pluto). The inner planets are small and are composed primarily of rock and iron. The outer planets (except Pluto) are much larger and consist mainly of hydrogen, and helium. The sun consists of 73.5% hydrogen, and 25% helium.

The dimensions of this system are specified in terms of the mean distance from the Earth to the sun, called the astronomical unit (AU). One AU is 150 million km (about 93 million mi). The most distant known planet, Pluto, has an orbit at 39.44 AU from the sun. Comets achieve the greatest distance from the sun; they have highly eccentric orbits ranging out to 50,000 AU or more. This solar system is the only planetary system known to exist, although in the 1980s a number of relatively nearby stars were found to be encircled by swarms of orbiting material of indeterminate size or to be accompanied by suspected brown dwarfs. Many astronomers think it is likely that solar systems of some sort are numerous throughout the universe.

If one could look down on the solar system from far above the North Pole of Earth, the planets would appear to move around the sun in a counterclockwise direction. All of the planets except Venus and Uranus rotate on their axes in this same direction. The entire system is remarkably flat—only Mercury and Pluto have obviously inclined orbits. Pluto's orbit is so elliptical that it is sometimes closer to the sun than Neptune is.

Current theories connect the formation of the solar system with the formation of the sun itself, about 4.7 billion years ago. The fragmentation and gravitational collapse of an interstellar cloud of gas and dust, triggered perhaps by nearby supernova explosions, may have led to the formation of a primordial solar nebula. The sun would then form in the densest, central region. At larger distances from the center of the solar nebula, gases condense into solids such as are found today from Jupiter outward. The association of planet formation with star formation suggests that billions of other stars in our galaxy may also have planets. The high frequency of binary and multiple stars, as well as the large satellite systems around Jupiter and Saturn, attest to the tendency of collapsing gas clouds to fragment into multibody systems.

The satellite systems mimic the behavior of their parent planets, but many more exceptions are found. Jupiter, Saturn, and Neptune each have one or more satellites that move around the planets in retrograde orbits (clockwise instead of counterclockwise), and several satellite orbits are highly elliptical. Jupiter, moreover, has trapped two clusters of asteroids (the so-called Trojan asteroids).

Asteroids are small rocky bodies that move in orbits primarily between the orbits of Mars and Jupiter. Numbering in the thousands, asteroids range in size from Ceres, which has a diameter of 1000 km (620 mi), to microscopic grains. Some asteroids are perturbed into eccentric orbits that can bring them closer to the sun. If the orbits of such bodies intersect that of the Earth, they are called meteoroids. When they appear in the night sky as streaks of light, they are known as meteors, and recovered fragments are termed meteorites. Laboratory studies of meteorites have revealed much information about primitive conditions in our solar system. The surfaces of Mercury, Mars, and several satellites of the planets (including Earth's moon) show the effects of an intense bombardment by asteroidal objects early in the history of the solar system. On Earth this record has eroded away, except for a few recent impact craters.

Some meteors and interplanetary dust may also come from comets, which are basically collections of dust and frozen gases about 5 to 10 km (about 3 to 6 mi) in diameter. Comets orbit the sun at distances so great that they can be perturbed by stars into orbits that bring them into the inner solar system. As comets approach the sun, they release their dust and gases to form a spectacular coma and tail. Under the influence of Jupiter's strong gravitational field, comets can sometimes adopt much smaller orbits. The most famous of these is Halley's comet, which returns to the inner solar system at 75-year periods. Its most recent return was in 1986.

The Sun: Our Daytime star

The Sun lies on the spiral Orion arm of our Milky Way galaxy, which is marked by dark and bright nebulae from which new stars

are constantly born. The sun is a typical star of intermediate size and luminosity. Yet if the Sun is indistinguishable among its celestial neighbors, it is immense by terrestrial standards. Its diameter is 1,392,000 Km, more than 109 times the equatorial diameter of the Earth. Its volume is 1,303,600 times that of our planet. In light-years, the Sun's average distance to the Earth is 8.3 light-minutes (which means that light from the Sun reaches the Earth in 8.3 minutes), whereas the distance to the nearest star, Proxima Centauri, is 4.28 light-years, 250,000 times greater than the distance from the Sun to the Earth.

Sunlight and other radiation are produced by the conversion of hydrogen into helium in the sun's hot, dense interior. The temperature of the Sun's core is about 15 million degrees in the Kelvin scale. Although this nuclear fusion is destroying 600 million metric tons of hydrogen each second, the sun is so massive (2 E+30 kg, or 4.4 E+30 lb.) that it can continue to shine at its present brightness for 6 billion years. This stability has allowed life to develop and survive on Earth.

Mercury: The Closest to The Sun

Mercury can be observed either before dawn or after sunset as a bright, silvery, starlike object. Since its orbit lies within the Earth's, Mercury presents phases similar to our moon. Mercury is seen only when it is furthest away on the opposite side from the Sun. Mercury is never further from the Sun than 69.7 million km, and with its elliptical orbit, it gets as close as 45.9 million km.

Because it is close to the sun, it gets 4.7 times more heat, light and other radiation per unit area than the Earth. Its surface temperature can reach 467 deg. C. At night the temperature plunges down to -200 deg. C because there is no blanket of atmosphere to trap the heat. Mercury resembles the Earth in its internal structure. It is surprisingly dense because it has an unusually large iron core, twice as much as the Earth's. With only a transient atmosphere, Mercury has a surface that is covered with craters caused by heavy bombardment by asteroids early in its history. The spacecraft Mariner 10 detected a very weak magnetism around Mercury.

The table below shows the dimensions and properties of the solar planets:

| | | | | | | | | | |
|-----------------------------------|---------|-------|-------|------|---------|--------|--------|---------|-------|
| | Mercury | Venus | Earth | Mars | Jupiter | Saturn | Uranus | Neptune | Pluto |
| Distance from Sun (million km) | 57.8 | 108 | 149.6 | 228 | 778 | 1430 | 2871 | 4500 | 5900 |
| Diameter (1000 Km) | 4.88 | 12.1 | 12.8 | 6.79 | 143 | 120 | 51.8 | 49.5 | 2.3 |
| Mass * | 0.055 | 0.815 | 1.00 | 0.11 | 318 | 95.2 | 14.5 | 17.2 | 0.002 |
| Gravity * | 0.28 | 0.88 | 1.00 | 0.38 | 2.34 | 0.93 | 0.79 | 1.12 | 0.04 |
| Year * | 0.241 | 0.615 | 1.00 | 1.88 | 11.86 | 29.46 | 84.03 | 164.8 | 248 |
| Orbital speed km/sec | 47.9 | 35.0 | 29.8 | 24.1 | 13.1 | 9.64 | 6.81 | 5.43 | 4.74 |
| Density ** | 5.60 | 5.20 | 5.52 | 3.95 | 1.31 | 0.704 | 1.21 | 1.67 | 2.03 |
| Inclination of orbit in degrees * | 7.00 | 3.39 | 1.00 | 1.85 | 1.30 | 2.49 | 0.77 | 1.77 | 17.2 |

* (Earth = 1), ** (Water = 1)

Venus: The Hot Planet

Venus is one of the easiest planets to pick out in the sky, and is sometimes called the evening star. If you observe Venus with even a small telescope, you will see that it has phases like the Moon. When Galileo discovered this behavior he realized that Venus must orbit the Sun at a closer distance than the Earth. Venus is the twin-planet of the Earth. It is close in size, weight, and internal composition of the Earth. Like the Earth, it has similarly sized, dense nickel-iron core and a rocky mantle. However, their atmospheres are very different. Venus has a carbon dioxide atmosphere 90 times thicker than that of Earth, causing an efficient greenhouse effect by which its atmosphere is heated. The resulting surface temperature is the hottest of any planet - about 477 deg. C (about 890 deg. F). When the Earth first formed, it may have been rather like Venus is today. Life on Earth has broken down the dense carbon dioxide atmosphere that once existed here as well.

Earth: Our Unique Planet

Earth is the third in distance from the sun and the fifth largest of the planets in diameter. It is the only planet known to support life, although some of the other planets have atmospheres and contain water. Earth prospers with life, sustained by very complex systems that provide light, air, heat, water, and food all in exquisite balance. It shows evidence of having been created specially to accommodate living things. The mean distance of the Earth from the sun is 149,503,000 km (92,897,000 mi.). This is exactly the right distance. If the Earth were much closer to the Sun or farther away from it, the temperatures would be too hot or too cold for life.

The Earth and its satellite, the moon, move together in an elliptical orbit about the sun. The eccentricity of the orbit is slight, so that the orbit is virtually a circle. The approximate length of the Earth's orbit is 938,900,000 km (583,400,000 mi), and the Earth travels along it at a velocity of about 106,000 km/hr (about 66,000 mph). This speed is precise enough to offset the gravitational pull of the Sun and keep the Earth at the proper distance. If the speed

were decreased, the Earth would be pulled towards the sun, and could become a wasteland like Mercury. If the Earth's orbital speed were increased, it would move farther away from the sun, and could become an icy waste like Pluto. The Earth rotates on its axis once every 23 hr 56 min. 4.1 sec (based on the solar year). A point on the equator therefore rotates at a rate of a little more than 1600 km/hr (about 1000 mph). This provides regular periods of light and darkness. But what if the Earth rotated on its axis once every year, it would mean that the same side of the Earth would be facing the sun all year long. That side would become like a furnace desert, while the side away from the Sun becomes an icy wasteland. Few, if any, living creatures could survive in those extreme temperatures.

Man has been able to study the surface of his own planet for as long as the Earth has been inhabited. Yet, it is strange to think that before orbiting the spacecraft had actually returned colored pictures of the Earth, no one had predicted accurately what it would look like from space. Now we know the Earth as a beautiful blue and white planet. From beneath the spiraling patterns of brilliant white clouds, the familiar shapes of the continents loom into view.

Many factors make the Earth unique in the solar system. It is the only planet with substantial amounts of water. The oceans cover more than three quarters of the surface. This huge amount of water coupled with the presence of oxygen in the atmosphere is a powerful force of erosion. Shifting weather behavior and long term changes in climate rapidly wear down the continental rocks. Glacier, wind and rain smooth mountains. Mighty rivers engrave channels through the rocks and the lowland plains, carrying sand from one place and laying it down in another.

Volcanoes and earthquakes are mechanisms that permit the Earth to release pressure that builds up internally as the rocks beneath our feet slowly slide. Earthquakes are sudden, unpredictable, and fatal in many parts of the globe, but they teach geologists about the inner structure of the Earth. Vibrations spreading out from an earthquake are measured all over the Earth. The manner in which these vibrations travel shows that the Earth is made of five parts:

1. The atmosphere is the gaseous envelope that surrounds the solid body of the planet. Although it has a thickness of more than 1100 km (more than 700 mi.), about half its mass is concentrated in the lower 5.6 km (3.5 mi.). The atmosphere contains the right proportions of the gases that are essential for life. Some of those gases, by themselves, are deadly, but because air contains safe proportions of these gases, we can breathe them without harm. One such gas is oxygen, making up 21 % of the air we breathe. Without it all life would vanish in minutes. But too much oxygen would endanger our existence. Pure Oxygen becomes toxic if breathed too long. In addition, the more oxygen there is, the more easily things burn, also, combustible materials would become highly flammable, and there would be fires everywhere. Thank God, oxygen is diluted with other gases, mainly nitrogen, which makes up 78 % of the atmosphere. But nitrogen is much more than just a dilutant. During thunderstorms, millions of lightening bolts occur on Earth every day. This lightening causes the oxygen to combine with nitrogen. The compounds produced are carried to the Earth, by rain, and plants make use of them as fertilizer. Carbon dioxide makes up less than 1% of the atmosphere. This percentage is just the right amount for the plants to survive, giving off oxygen in return. Humans and animals breathe in oxygen and exhale carbon dioxide. An increase in the percentage of the carbon dioxide is harmful to humans and animals. A decreasing percentage could not support plant life. What a marvelous, precise, self-sustaining cycle has been arranged for plant, animal, and human life! The atmosphere does more than sustain life. It serves as a protective shell too. About 15 miles above ground, a thin layer of ozone gas filters out harmful radiation from the Sun. Without this layer, such radiation could destroy life on Earth. Also the atmosphere shields the Earth from bombardment by meteors. Most meteors never reach the ground because they burn up in their descent through the atmosphere, appearing to us as falling stars. Otherwise, millions of meteors would strike all parts of the Earth, resulting in extensive damage in life and property.

2. The hydrosphere is the layer of water that, in the form of the

oceans, covers approximately 70.8% of the surface of the Earth. The hydrosphere consists mainly of the oceans, but technically includes all water surfaces in the world, including inland seas, lakes, rivers, and underground waters. The average depth of the oceans is 3794 meter (12,447 ft), more than five times the average height of the continents. The mass of the oceans is approximately 1,350,000,000,000,000,000 (1.35 E+18) metric tons, or about 1/4400 of the total mass of the Earth.

3. The lithosphere consisting mainly of the cold, rigid, rocky crust of the Earth extends to depths of 100 km (60 mi.). The rocks of the lithosphere have an average density of 2.7 and are almost entirely made up of 11 elements, which together account for about 99.5% of its mass. The most abundant is oxygen (about 46.60% of the total), followed by silicon (about 27.72%), aluminum (8.13%), iron (5.0%), calcium (3.63%), sodium (2.83%), potassium (2.59%), magnesium (2.09%) and titanium, hydrogen, and phosphorus (totaling less than 1%). In addition, 11 other elements are present in trace amounts of from 0.1 to 0.02%. These elements, in order of abundance, are carbon, manganese, sulfur, barium, chlorine, chromium, fluorine, zirconium, nickel, strontium, and vanadium. The elements are present in the lithosphere almost entirely in the form of compounds rather than in their free state. These compounds exist almost entirely in the crystalline state, so they are, by definition, minerals. The lithosphere comprises two shells—the crust and upper mantle—that are divided into a dozen or so rigid tectonic plates. The crust itself is divided in two. The upper crust, of which the continents consist, is made up of rocks whose average chemical composition is similar to that of granite. The lower crust, which forms the floors of the ocean basins, is made of darker, heavier rocks.

4. The mantle: The mantle and core are the heavy interior of the Earth, making up most of the Earth's mass. The dense, heavy interior of the Earth is divided into a thick shell, the mantle, surrounding an innermost sphere, the core. The mantle extends from the base of the crust to a depth of about 2900 km (1800 mi.). Except for the

zone known as the asthenosphere, it is solid, and its density, increasing with depth. The upper mantle is composed of iron and magnesium silicates, as typified by the mineral olivine. The lower part may consist of a mixture of oxides of magnesium, silicon, and iron.

5. The core: Seismological research has shown that the core has an outer shell about 2225 Km. (1380 mi.) thick. This shell is probably rigid, and studies show that its outer surface has depressions and peaks, the latter forming where warm material rises. In contrast, the inner core, which has a radius of about 1275 Km. (795 mi.), is solid. Both core layers are thought to consist largely of iron, with a small percentage of nickel and other elements. Temperatures in the inner core may be as high as 6650 deg. C (12,000 deg. F).

Mars: The Red Planet

Viewed through a telescope, Mars looks like a rusty-red disk. Its surface has various light and dark parts, as well as white ice caps at the north and south poles. Like our Earth, Mars experiences a cycle of seasons - while one half of the planet has summer, the other half has winter. The markings on Mars and their changes led astronomers to speculate for many years that Mars might have simple plant life. Spacecrafts Viking I and Viking II both landed on Mars in 1976. They have taken thousands of photographs from space so that a very great deal is now known about what Mars is really like. Mars has a core of iron and iron compounds with a diameter of 3,000 Km. It also has a mantle of silicate materials. The whole planet is a great desert. The red color is typical of desert rocks that are found in many places on Earth and comes from the rusting or oxidation of iron. Even the sky looks red on Mars, due to red dust in the air. Sometimes great dust storms develop, and about every ten years there is such a huge hurricane that the whole planet becomes engulfed in choking dust. Meteorites that crashed onto the surface from space created many craters. Volcanic activity too has contributed to the scenery on Mars. Mars is an inhospitable place.

This cold and dry world has an atmosphere that is very thin compared to our Earth. The Martian air consists mainly of carbon dioxide, so people or animals could not breathe it. There is almost no oxygen. We know now that there are no plants on Mars.

Jupiter: King of the Planets

Jupiter is one of the giant planets that include Saturn, Uranus, and Neptune. They have the major share of all the planets' mass. The giant planets have over a hundred times as much material as the tiny planets circling the inner solar system. The outer planets are mainly made of light gases such as hydrogen and helium, whereas the inner planets are made of rocks and iron. These giant planets are considerably larger than the inner planets. Jupiter, for example, is eleven times the diameter of the Earth and it has a volume over one thousand times as large. These giants are not so dense as the Earth either, for their densities are closer to that of the water than of rock.

All of the giants spin rapidly on their rotation axes. Jupiter takes less than ten hours to make a single spin. This high speed twirling makes the planets bulge out at their equators. A further interesting feature of the outer planets is the many moons, over thirty in all. Jupiter and Saturn each have a moon that is slightly bigger than the planet Mercury. And Saturn, of course, has intrigued us for centuries with its splendid system of rings.

At times Jupiter outshines all the stars in the night sky - only Venus gets brighter. Jupiter shows a variety of features, some of which can be seen by small telescope. The dark and light colored bands of clouds are well known. The Great Red Spot (GRS) is the dominant feature of the Southern Hemisphere of Jupiter, which has been observed through telescopes ever since the 1650s. Pictures from the spacecraft Voyager I show the circulating nature of the GRS and show small puffy features within the spot itself. It rotates counterclockwise with a period of 6 days and is currently about 26,200 km long by 13,800 km wide.

Jupiter emits radio waves and has a large and strong magnetic field. Like that of the Earth, this field is a dipole, similar to a bar

magnet. Because of this magnetic field, Jupiter possesses a magnetosphere, which extends into the space around the planet. Jupiter's magnetosphere is very different from that of the Earth. First, Jupiter's magnetic field is about 100 times larger than that of the Earth and, second, the effect on it of the solar wind is some 25 times less because Jupiter is much further from the sun.

Another odd fact about Jupiter is that it sends out more heat than it receives from the Sun! This is because Jupiter is still shrinking, by about one centimeter each year. This shrinking releases heat energy.

In the year 1610 Galileo discovered Jupiter's four main moons. They are named Io, Europa, Ganymede and Callisto. All four are easily spotted even with binoculars.

Saturn: The Ringed Giant

Saturn is similar to Jupiter in many ways, except that it has a magnificent series of rings. Saturn has ten satellites. One of them, Titan, is nearly 6000 Km across, which makes it the largest moon in the solar system. Titan has its own atmosphere, made up of methane and ammonia. Saturn is not even as dense as water - a lump of Saturn matter would float on the sea.

Galileo first saw Saturn's ring system in July 1610 with his newly developed telescope. His instrument was not good enough to show the rings clearly, and all Galileo could report was that Saturn appeared to be a triple planet. When he was observing it some seven years later, it was near its edge and the rings were invisible to him. Saturn, he said, seemed to have swallowed its own children. The Dutch astronomer Huygens, who managed to observe that there was, indeed, a ring around Saturn, finally cleared the mystery in 1655. But the true nature of the rings was not discovered until two centuries later, in 1856, when James Clerk Maxwell analyzed the evidence and showed that the gravitational field of Saturn would tear any solid ring to pieces. Maxwell concluded, therefore, that the rings could be composed of tiny particles in orbit around the planet. Subsequent studies, including results obtained from the Voyager probes, confirm

Maxwell's conclusion.

The rings are a magnificent spectacle with no more than 1,000 meter thick. They extend outwards from 7,000 km above the cloudy surface of Saturn to more than 74,000 km. The most accurate counts to date show that there are at least 10,000 rings.

How the rings were formed is something of a mystery. There are two competing theories. The first is that they are the debris left behind after a satellite was torn apart by the gravitational forces of Saturn. The second is that they consist of material that failed to combine into a satellite at the time the planet was forming. The second theory is now thought to be the more likely.

Uranus: The Tilted Giant

The astronomer William Herschel discovered Uranus on the 13th of March 1781. Although Herschel had intended to work as a musician, he found astronomy fascinating. He taught himself about the skies and in 1773 he made his own reflecting telescope. With this he started to look at the stars. As his enthusiasm and knowledge grew, he built larger and larger telescopes

Herschel decided to make a map of the stars and to record their positions and brightness. During one of these careful searches, he found an entirely new planet. This greatly surprised scientists who had not suspected that there were any more planets. Herschel wanted to name his new planet after King George III who then reigned England. Eventually, however, it was agreed to call the planet Uranus. The choice of Uranus was made because in mythology Uranus was the father of Saturn, and Saturn was the father of Jupiter.

Uranus has a diameter four times larger than the Earth and it takes 84 years to orbit the Sun. Occasionally, one can just about catch a glimpse of Uranus with the naked eye on a very dark night if one knows where to look. With an up-to-date chart of planet positions, one can find it with a small telescope. One odd feature about Uranus is that it is a planet lying on its side. The rotational axis is tipped over at an angle of 98 Degree. This means that the seasons on Uranus must be very strange indeed. For several Earth

years, the Sun does not shine at all in one hemisphere, while the other is continuously bathed in sunlight.

Neptune: The Last Giant

Astronomers located Neptune in 1846 after a remarkable piece of detective work by mathematicians. After many years of careful observation, Uranus puzzled observers. It did not keep to the path around the Sun that astronomers predicted on the basis of Newton's law of gravity. Something kept knocking it off course. English and French mathematicians realized that another planet might be tugging Uranus to one side. These wizards computed where the unseen planet must be. An observatory in Berlin worked on these calculations, and they found a new dot of light: planet Neptune had been found.

Pluto: The last Planet

Soon Neptune started to go off course after its discovery. Could there be yet another planet further out that was pulling Neptune to one side, astronomers wondered? In 1915 Percival Lowell worked out where it must be but nothing could be seen. Then, in 1930 Clyde Tombaugh found the ninth planet, almost by accident, after a long search. He named it Pluto.

Pluto seems similar to the larger, icy satellites of Jupiter or Saturn. Pluto is so distant from the sun and so cold that methane freezes on its surface.

Every so often, newspapers report that someone has predicted the existence of a tenth planet out beyond Pluto, and even calculated its location. All these sensational claims eventually turn out to be based on wrong calculations. Planetary scientists now think that there cannot possibly be a large unknown planet in our solar system. If it really existed we should by now be well aware of its gravitational pull on other planets.

2.4 Searching the Missing Universe

At the Carnegie Institution of Washington, astronomers have been measuring the speed of distant galaxies for years. They do that by measuring the amount of red shifts of bright stars at various distances from the galactic center. Their conclusion, based upon many measurements, was a tremendous surprise. In spiral galaxies, the stars move in circular orbits, with velocities that increase with increasing distances from the center. At the edges of spiral disks, velocities of 300 km/sec (about 185 mi/sec) have been measured at distances as great as 150,000 light-years. This increase in velocity with increase in distance is unlike planetary velocities in the solar system, where the orbital velocities of planets decrease with increasing distance from the sun. This difference tells astronomers that the mass of a galaxy is not as centrally concentrated as is the mass in the solar system. A significant portion of galaxy mass is located at large distances from the center of the galaxy, but this mass has so little luminosity. Although scientists have seen its gravitational effects, no one has identified this "dark matter." But apparently there is a phantom universe out there, consisting of 90 to even 99 percent of the mass of the cosmos, and we have little knowledge of it!

Besides the ultimate question of how really the universe started, there are many other questions still hanging in the minds of cosmologists:

- What is the age of the universe?
- Where and what is the missing 90 - 99 % of the mass of the universe?

Since Hubble's heyday in the 1920's, astronomers have known that the universe is expanding. Scientists use the Hubble constant to deduce the age of the universe. As mentioned before, Hubble constant is the ratio of the speed of recession of the galaxies and their distances. There are these two loopholes though, what is the right distance and what is the right speed? It is extremely hard to measure how far away galaxies are. If they came in standard

brightness, like 100-watt light bulbs, the astronomers could just figure that a dimmer galaxy was more distant than a bright one. Unfortunately, they don't. Edwin Hubble himself did not realize this and triggered an earlier "age crisis" in the 1940's, when he announced that the universe is 2 billion years old. Geologists already knew that the Earth was over 4 billion years old!

To make this puzzle more complex, Hubble Constant may not be constant after all. It is hard to imagine that distances, speeds, and distribution of the galaxies do not affect Hubble constant. Hubble constant is a simple ratio of speed and distance. But what if Hubble constant is called Hubble variable, and the latter is in the form of much more complicated formula.

Moreover, astronomy's most reliable light bulb is a type of star called the Cepheid variable, whose inherent brightness can be easily calculated. But Cepheid variable can be spotted only in the neighboring few galaxies. But nearby galaxies are virtually useless in filling the other half of the equation - the expansion rate. The reason is that: in a universe that is expanding everywhere, neighboring galaxies are flying apart at a much slower speed than distant galaxies. Nearby galaxies are also subject to their neighbor's gravity. The Andromeda galaxy, for example, is being pulled closer to our Milky Way, despite the overall cosmic expansion.

Therefore, since accurate distances can be measured only nearby, while useful speed of galaxies are found only deep in space, astronomers do the best they can to bridge the gap. They use the close galaxies to estimate the distances to the far away galaxies. But the method is inexact, which is why astronomers have not been able to agree on what the age actually is. The current estimate of the age of the universe ranges from 8 to 25 billion years, which indicates that "something" is very wrong!

Over the past few years, astronomers have uncovered the existence of the Great Wall, a huge conglomeration of galaxies stretching across 500 million light years of space; the Great Attractor, a mysterious concentration of mass pulling much of the local universe in the direction of the constellation Hydra and Centaurus; the Great Void, where few galaxies can be found; and galaxies caught in the agony of formation a mere billion years after

the Big Bang, when they should not exist.

The existence of the Great Wall, the Great Attractor, the Great Void, superclusters, and clusters of galaxies indicate that the universe is full of extremely massive matters with heavy gravity pulling those structures together. These mysterious matters account for 90 to 99 % of the mass of the universe! Lately scientists have revived an old idea called the cosmological constant. This is a kind of powerful "antigravity" force that forces the galaxies to fly apart even as ordinary gravity tries to draw them together. It was first conceived by Einstein himself, who then rejected it as "*the greatest blunder of my life.*" Einstein in 1915 thought that he needed it in his general relativity to balance the influence of the gravity. He was sure that the universe had to be static that he modified his theory to make this possible by introducing this cosmological constant. The relativity equations showed that without a cosmological constant, the universe would have to be either contracting or expanding. If he had stuck to his guns, he might have won another Noble prize. Recent research work suggests that the cosmological constant may be responsible for 65% of the expansion of the universe!

The universe makes a lot of sense if one can assume that just after it was born, all of the space went into overdrive, exploding outward for the briefest fraction of a second. This inflation theory explains, among other things, such mysteries as why the universe looks pretty much the same in all directions, and how a smooth distribution of matter evolved into today's lumpy distribution, with clusters of galaxies surrounded by empty space. The inflation theory does not just explain cosmic phenomena; it makes predictions. It suggests that the blackness of space is *only* seemingly empty. In fact, it probably is abundant with vast amount of matter and energy that cannot be directly detected because they do not shine.

Dark matter is more than merely theoretical. The first hint that the cosmos contains more than what meets the eye came back in the 1930's, when astronomer Fritz Zwicky pointed his telescope at the Coma cluster of galaxies and realized that it should not exist. Individual galaxies in the cluster were orbiting each other so fast that they should long since have flown out into deep space - unless

gravity from unseen matter was keeping them together. No one took Zwicky too seriously; the idea was crazy, first of all, and besides, the measurements of orbital speed were difficult to make and prone to errors. In the 1970's astronomers discovered that some galaxies are rotating too fast on their own axis indicating an extra gravity from unseen matter.

Not until a decade ago was the dark matter finally accepted as a huge problem rather than a nagging anomaly. Observation after observation showed that galaxies moved as if they were embedded in cloud of an invisible matter containing 10 times as much mass as was accounted for by visible gas and stars. Clusters of galaxies behaved as if there was 30 times as much dark matter as visible matter exerting its gravitational pull. To satisfy inflation theory, the ratio would have to be even greater: 100 times as much dark matter as visible.

The challenge of identifying and understanding the dark matter that forms 90 to 99 % of the mass of the universe has become one of the most irresistible and frustrating quests in science. For about a decade, the search of the missing universe has proceeded on two fronts:

- Attempts to directly observe the missing matter.
- Attempts to identify it using computer models. This is based upon the assumption that dark matter is made of a given particle or substance. Then the behavior of the universe is simulated to see if the result will look like the present universe.

The missing universe could be composed of any, some or none of the following dark matters:

Neutrinos: These are ghostly subatomic particle that have no electrical charge and interact only weakly with ordinary matter. They are also known as hot dark matter because they fly through the space at nearly the speed of light. They are known to exist in great numbers that they may account for some 20 % of the dark matter.

Wolfgang Pauli first suggested neutrinos in 1930 as a factor

to permit an understanding of the energy distribution of electrons. They have been detected in 1953 in a high-power nuclear reactor. The sun emits plenty of neutrinos from the nuclear furnace at its core and, at night, these particles from the sun come up from below, the Earth being almost transparent to them. In 1987, light from an exploding star in the galaxy of the Large Magellanic Cloud reached Earth after traveling for 170,000 years. Enormous numbers of neutrinos were generated in this explosion and a sensitive neutrino detector in Japan picked up about 10 of them.

Neutrinos, left over from the Big Bang, are the most abundant particles of physics. In the time it takes to read this sentence, billions and billions of them pass through the body of every human being on Earth, leaving no trace! They pass through ordinary matter as though it was not there at all. Unless a neutrino scores a direct hit on an atomic nucleus, it leaves no hint of its passage. And such hits are so unlikely that the average neutrino can easily penetrate a slab of thick lead a trillion miles thick without impacting a single atom.

Recently, physicists from Canada and Japan have found the most convincing evidence yet that neutrinos have a tiny mass after all. The neutrino's mass cannot be much, around one billionth of a proton's. This finding means that scientists will have to adjust their theories of the universe.

WIMPs: (Weakly Interacting Massive Particles). These are also known as cold dark matter because they are slow moving. However, they are purely hypothetical particles derived from speculative theories. They perform somewhat better in computer models, but cold dark matter cannot account for the newly discovered features of the cosmos as Great Wall, Great Void, and Great attractor.

MACHOs: (Massive Compact Halo Objects). They are assumed to be large planets similar to the size of Jupiter or very dim stars made of ordinary matter. This is the simplest theory, but so many would be required that it seems unlikely that all the dark matter could be made of them.

Recently, scientists found a planet orbiting a star known as

47 Ursae Majoris, 200 trillion miles from Earth in the Big Dipper. This planet is twice the size of Jupiter (the size of Jupiter is 1300 times that of Earth). A second planet, circling the star 70 Virginis, in the constellation Virgo, has six times the mass of Jupiter. These planets, like Jupiter, probably consist of gases such as hydrogen, ammonia and methane.

Picking out a planet by a telescope against the glare of a star is like trying to spot a 100-watt bulb next to the sun. Astronomers find it much easier to look for the subtle influence of a planet on its parent star, such as the effect of gravity of planets on the motion of an orbiting star.

Black holes: These are objects with gravitational pulls so intense that light cannot escape from them. They are strongly predicted by the general theory of relativity, but their presence in such abundance should have been detected already.

Astronomers had evidence that some galaxies were strong emitters of X-rays, the source of which was not known. Donald Lynden-Bell at Cambridge University suggested that super dense bodies could provide the answer. Such a body would attract matter, accelerating it to a huge speed as it fell in. The falling matter would move at an immense speed, emitting X-rays in huge quantities. The extreme density of such a body would create an intense gravitational field. This would mean that space-time around the body would be so strongly curved as to cause the interior to be closed off from the outside universe. Nothing could escape from them. This is why such objects are now called black holes.

The British cosmologist Stephen Hawking and his colleagues have established that such black holes can be described by the equations discovered first by Roy Kerr of New Zealand. Hawking believes that minute black holes could have been formed from very dense matter crushed together at an early stage of the Big Bang. But black holes of larger masses probably exist in the central region of spiral and elliptical galaxies. They also form after the collapse of very massive stars.

Physicists and astronomers, hoping to observe dark matter

directly, have searched for objects both large and subatomic. On the theory that the dark “thing” is made of some as yet undiscovered particles, they have built every conceivable sensitive detector. They have looked for all the above and more, but results have been inconclusive. Neutrinos with mass might help solve the problem of the missing universe and thus provide support for the inflation theory. But in some ways that would just make the crisis in cosmology worse. The more dark matter in the universe, the harder it is to explain the new findings about the younger universe of 8 to 12 billion years.

If the universe has a lot of dark matter, as the inflation theory predicts, its gravity would be slowing down the expansion of the universe, making the universe younger than it looks. If, on the other hand, there is relatively little matter, the expansion would be slow, and the older universe would be the more accepted theory.

We live on a planet in a universe with no concrete evidence of its age and with over 90 % of its mass is missing. And only God knows the best.

2.5 Applications of the Law of Repetition

The Law of Repetition may be used to predict behavior in different branches of science. If one branch of science is developed fully, while a second branch is not yet fully developed, and if the two branches agree in their basic laws up to a certain point, then we may be able to extend the second branch based upon our knowledge of the first branch. This concept will be applied to include repetitive phenomena in aerodynamics and relativity. Aerodynamics is fully developed below and above the speed of sound, while the relativity is developed only below speed of light. The aerodynamic model may be applied on the relativity model, leading to a very interesting conclusion. The analogy of aerodynamics and relativity can be shown as follows:

1. In aerodynamics, Mach number (M) is defined as the speed of an object divided by the speed of sound. And in relativity,

the speed parameter (R) is defined as the speed of an object divided by the speed of light.

2. In aerodynamics, Prandtl-Glauert factor is defined as $1/\sqrt{1-M^2}$. And in relativity, Lorentz factor is defined as $1/\sqrt{1-R^2}$.
3. Both factors are used to predict quantities at different speeds, and both factors reach infinity if $M=1$, $R=1$.

The theory of relativity advocates that the maximum speed of any object is the speed of light. This is based upon the fact that Lorentz factor reaches infinity at the speed of light and there should not be an infinite value in the physical laws. But, as it was mentioned before that at the Big Bang the speed of the universe rushed out at a speed that is faster than the speed of light. It was suggested that speed of light is a limitation on objects in space, but not on space itself. This statement negates the notion that the ultimate speed is that of the speed of light in all conditions.

In aerodynamics, before approaching the speed of sound, it was thought that aircrafts would never reach the speed of sound. The air resistance of aircrafts increases dramatically as the speed of sound is approached. Theoretically, this air resistance should become infinite at the speed of sound, hence the term "sonic barrier." However, wind tunnel testing of aircraft models showed that the air resistance increases when approaching the speed of sound, but it does not reach infinite value at the speed of sound. The coefficient of air resistance reaches a finite high value at the speed of sound, then starts decreasing at speeds higher than the speed of sound. Actually, Prandtl-Glauert factor is changed from $(1/\sqrt{1-M^2})$ at subsonic speeds to $(1/\sqrt{M^2 - 1})$ at supersonic speeds.

In 1964 Bertozzi conducted an experiment of accelerating electrons to various measured speeds and – by an independent method – also measured their kinetic energies. He found that as the force that acts on a very fast electron is increased, the electron's measured kinetic energy increases to very large values but its speed does not increase appreciably. He concluded that no matter how much energy an electron is subjected to, its speed should not exceed the "light barrier."

From the above, the similarity of the aerodynamic and

relativity models is quite obvious below the speeds of sound and light.

So the following questions arise:

Is it possible that two models are similar at speeds higher than the speeds sound and light?

Is it possible that Lorentz factor behaves like that of Prandtl-Glauert factor at speeds higher than the speeds sound and light?

Is it possible that Lorentz factor becomes $(1/\sqrt{R^2 - 1})$ at speed larger than the speed of light?

If the answers of the above questions are affirmative, then the Law of Repetition is much more powerful than we ever imagined!

3

Life

Life is as complex as the universe, and if the last chapter provided you with a dose of spiritual experience, this chapter will supply you with another dose. The factories, inside your 100 trillion cells, will bewilder you. The length of the DNA in your body, which exceeds the distance between the Earth and the Sun, is incomprehensible. The optimal structural design of the birds' bones attests to an Omnipotent Creator. Yet the evolutionists want to convince everyone that we have gone from hydrogen to human! In doing that, they are introducing the following definition of the hydrogen gas:

“Hydrogen as an odorless, tasteless, flammable, invisible gas which, if given enough time (say 10 billion years), becomes people!”

Again, as you read this chapter, keep asking questions: Who, Why, and How, you will have only one logical answer: “God is the Mighty Creator and He made it His Way.”

What exactly is life, and how and where did it begin. Scientists' answers to these questions are changing as discussions and theories pour in from fields as diversified as oceanography and molecular biology, geochemistry and astronomy. Did life start as organic soup in a warm pond, or under the hellish skies of a planet, unknown to us, racked by volcanic eruption and threatened by comets and asteroids. Then the intruders from outer space may have delivered the raw material necessary for life. The basic concept

of evolution is that life started spontaneously, here on Earth or on an unknown planet, and took a very slow process to evolve from atoms to amino acids to proteins, to cells, to fish, to amphibian, to reptile, to mammal, and finally to human. This idea is very similar to some monster like Frankenstein, pieced together from different dead elements and jolted into life by lightening bolts.

Proteins are the building blocks of living organisms. They make up much of the structure of all life forms. At the atomic level, a protein molecule consists almost entirely of a handful of elements - hydrogen, nitrogen, oxygen, phosphorus, sulfur, and most importantly carbon. Because carbon easily forms multiple bonds with as many as four other atoms at once, it acts as a kind of glue cementing together the pieces of life's complex molecules. The reason that carbon bonds so easily is that it has relatively few electrons. In a carbon atom, electrons orbit a nucleus in what may be thought as concentric shells. In all atoms, each shell may hold certain number of electrons. The inner shell accommodates as many as two, while the next one can hold eight electrons. But a carbon atom has only six electrons; two electrons in the inner shell and four in the next, leaving four vacancies in the outer shell.

Proteins are large complex organic compounds, made up of twenty different kinds of smaller compounds called amino acids. Large protein molecule consists of hundreds of thousands of amino acids. One protein differs from another in its number, sequence, kind, and arrangement of amino acids. A peptide is a two or more amino acids kept together by a chemical bond called the peptide bond. Hair and fingernails are proteins that differ because of amino acids. Hemoglobin is a blood protein made of 4 chains of amino acids. The twenty different kinds of the amino acids can form an almost endless number of proteins, $2.5E18$ or 2.5 billion billion. It is estimated that the number of kinds of proteins in a human body ranges from 10,000 to 50,000.

It is hard to imagine that a human being starts as one single fertilized egg. It grows and develops inside its mother until birth. At birth, a baby is made up of over 60 trillion cells. As early as 1900, scientists knew that chromosomes were located inside the nucleus of a cell. They also knew that chromosomes carried

hereditary information in complex molecule called DNA, short for deoxyribonucleic acid. DNA is named for the sugar deoxyribose, which it contains. However, the structure of the DNA was not known until 1953, when scientists suggested a model for DNA. That model looks like a twisted ladder with rungs, made up of four nitrogen bases. One molecule of DNA may contain 20,000 pairs of these bases.

When a cell is divided and replicates itself, by a process called mitosis, the DNA molecule must also make exact copies of them. First, the DNA molecule comes apart like a zipper being unzipped. The two halves of the DNA separate between the base pairs. Then new bases, from the contents of the nucleus, attach to each half like puzzle pieces. Thus two identical DNA molecules are formed. Like a biological librarian, DNA preserves the information needed to fashion the protein molecules. A similar compound called RNA, short for ribonucleic acid, helps turn these instructions into reality. No evolutionist can be sure how or when DNA and RNA first emerged on Earth. The key to the DNA-RNA partnership is a shared language, spelled out along the DNA strands in three-letter "words" called codons. A codon is made up of the bases of three successive DNA nucleotides. The most common codons simply specify a particular amino acid.

If codons are words, genes are the sentences they form, beginning with a special initiator codon and ending with a terminator. A gene's message consists of a list of required amino acids, arranged in an order needed to make a particular protein. DNA's genetic messages are readily duplicated by messenger RNA, a molecule that effectively assembles itself during the copying process. Incorporating DNA's instructions in its own structure, the messenger RNA then travels out to the machinery of the outer cell, where it begins the manufacturing of a specific protein molecule by following the recipe it carries.

To translate genetic information into proteins, living organisms follow a complex manufacturing process. Work begins as a strand of messenger RNA enters the cell's protein assembly area, carrying a genetic code for a particular protein. The messenger RNA goes on its way through the watery interior of the cell in

search of a structure called the ribosome. Typically a millionth of an inch across, these sophisticated protein assembly machines are equipped both to read the messenger RNA's orders and to carry them out.

Once the messenger RNA docks at a given ribosome, the ribosome looks for the beginning of the RNA message, then attaches there. Messenger RNA proceeds to wiggle through the ribosome, allowing it to read the RNA codons in sequence. For each codon, the ribosome chemically signals to the transfer RNA, a type of RNA, whose job is to deliver a single amino acid. When the transfer RNA arrives, carrying the required amino acid, it touches down just long enough to unload its amino acid. Then, the ribosome links the incoming amino acid to a growing peptide chain. This process is remarkably efficient even in a bacterium; one ribosome can attach twenty separate amino acids to a peptide chain every second!

After the final codon has been read and its message obeyed, the ribosome releases a finished peptide chain into the cell. The peptide's electrochemical properties will quickly wrap it and other peptides into the folded arrangement that forms a particular protein molecule. The molecule's work will depend on its identity: the protein known as collagen provides structural support in bone and ligaments, for example, while proteins called antibodies fight disease.

Assuming that all of the above was self-developed without the Hand of a Mighty Creator is analogous to believing that a *monkey randomly throwing pieces of brick, iron, wood, and glass over a long span of time to make a magnificent high-rise building!*

It is extremely hard to believe that a biology teacher explaining the above process without getting excited. This is *not* a simple process. Yet, this is a simple proof that God exists, and He is the Only One that *can* design this process.

Would you do yourself a favor? Read the above process again, and ask yourself who directed this step? It is inconceivable that nature could organize this process with such detail and efficiency.

3.1 Facts and Assumptions

To approach this chapter that describes life, its complexity, and its models of existence, it may be useful to tell the following story of “Who has done it!”

One time, a police detective received an emergency phone call that there was a murder case in a house. He rushed to the murder scene to find a man in bed, with blood spread over his chest as well as the bed. The detective found a gun on the bed near the hand of the deceased.

“Based upon these evidences, the detective concluded that the man committed suicide.”

After further investigations, the detective found out that the window of the bedroom was opened. Searching the house, the detective found that it looked like a robbery.

“Based upon these evidences, the detective concluded that the man was murdered in an armed robbery.”

After further investigations, the police found the robber, who swore that he had found the window opened, and the man was laying in bed, and all what he did was to rob the house. He insisted that he did not kill the man. The murder weapon was determined to belong to the victim. Further investigations revealed that the man was married and he had life insurance with his wife as beneficiary. A few days later, the detective found out that the wife tried to collect the insurance money, and made preparations to leave the country. When the wife was questioned, she confessed that she killed her husband for his insurance money.

“Based upon these evidences, the detective concluded that the man was murdered by his wife.”

In the above simplistic murder case, evidences were showing a suicide case, then a homicide case by a robber, and finally by the

wife. Assumptions based upon incomplete and inconclusive evidences at certain times may not be correct and may never reach the status of facts. If someone is on a mission to prove an assumption and if he becomes obsessed to reach a certain conclusion, facts and evidences may be twisted or even fabricated to present one's point of view.

I remember this story every time the news come on to support or discredit the evolutionary theory. A small fossil discovery somewhere in Africa or Siberia sometimes is hailed as the final evidence that will prove the evolution model. A few months later, a Big Bang of complex life existence on Earth is confirmed in the Namibian desert. This Big Bang of life presents another proof that the evolution theory is a Big Bust.

In considering the questions related to the origin of life, popular opinion or emotion sways many times. To avoid this and to reach logical conclusions, we need to consider the evidence with an open mind. It is interesting to note that evolution's best advocate, Charles Darwin, indicated an awareness of his theory's limitations. In his conclusion to "*The origin of Species*," he wrote of the grandeur of the "*view of life, with its several powers, having been originally breathed by the Creator into few forms or into one*," thus making it evident that the subject of the origins was open to further investigations. But the present day evolutionary theory generally eliminates any mention of a Creator.

Before proceeding further, a clarification may be in order: Scientific achievement is not the issue here. Every informed person is aware of the amazing accomplishments of scientists in many fields. Scientific study has dramatically increased our knowledge of the universe, the Earth and of living creatures. Studies of the human body have opened up improved ways of treating illness and injuries. Therefore, it is only right to respect the skills and the achievements that have added so greatly to our knowledge. Now let us introduce the following two models:

- **Evolution Model**, as used in this book, refers to organic evolution - the theory that the first living organism developed from non-living matter. Then as it reproduced, it is said to

have changed into different kinds of life forms, producing ultimately all forms of life that have ever existed on Earth, including humans. And all of this is accomplished without divine intervention.

Creation Model, on the other hand, is the conclusion that the appearance of all life forms can only be explained by the existence of the Almighty God, who designed and made the universe and all the basic life forms on this Earth.

3.2 History of Evolution

It is hard to say at what time before the nineteenth century that the idea of evolution in the animal kingdom was first raised. Several Greek philosophers thought that the living world was subject to transformations. Their conclusions were based on philosophical ideas and speculations.

In 1801, the French naturalist Lamarck became the first to introduce the concept of evolution. He published his work in a book called *Zoological Philosophy*. Cuvier, another French naturalist published *History of Fossilized Bones* in 1812, in which he compared present day animals with fossils showing the existence of extinct species.

Charles Darwin (1809-1882), British naturalist, laid the foundation of the evolutionary theory with his concept of the development of all forms of life through the slow-working process of natural selection. After graduating from Cambridge in 1831, the 22-year-old Darwin was taken aboard the English survey ship H.M.S. Beagle. He noted, for example, that certain fossils of supposedly extinct species closely resembled living species in the same geographical area. In the Galapagos Islands in Ecuador, west of South America at the equator, he studied some forms of life such as huge turtles and swimming lizards not found anywhere else in the world. Darwin saw that these animals were similar to more common forms. The similarities convinced him that the Galapagos animals were related to more common turtles and lizards. In Galapagos, Darwin saw finches that shared so many features, but differed mainly in their beak structures, eating habits, and their

sizes. He thought they must have had a common ancestor. Each of the 13 famous finches of Galapagos was identified as a distinct species.

After returning to England in 1836, Darwin began recording his ideas about changeability of species in his *Notebooks on the Transmutation of Species*. Darwin's explanation for how organisms evolved was brought into sharp focus after he read *An Essay on the Principle of Population* (1798), by the British economist Thomas Robert Malthus, who explained how human populations remain in balance. Malthus argued that any increase in the availability of food for basic human survival could not match the large rate of population growth. The latter, therefore, had to be checked by natural limitations such as famine and disease, or by social actions such as war. Malthus introduced the term "Natural Selection" that Darwin popularized. Darwin immediately applied Malthus's argument to animals and plants, and by 1838 he had arrived at a sketch of a theory of evolution through natural selection. For the next two decades he worked on his theory and other natural history projects.

Darwin's theory was first announced in 1858. In a paper presented at the same time by Alfred Russell Wallace, a young naturalist had come independently to the theory of natural selection. Darwin's complete theory was published in 1859, in *The Origin of Species*. Often referred to as the "*book that shook the world*," the book was sold out on the first day of publication and subsequently went through six editions.

Darwin's theory of evolution by natural selection is essentially that, because of the food-supply problem described by Malthus, the young born to any species intensely compete for survival. Those young that survive to produce the next generation tend to embody favorable natural variations (however slight the advantage may be) and these variations are passed on by heredity. Therefore, each generation will improve adaptively over the preceding generations and this gradual and continuous process is the source of the evolution of species. Natural selection is only part of Darwin's conceptual scheme; he also introduced the concept that all related organisms are descended from common ancestors in his second

book, *Descent of Man* (1871).

In *The Origin of Species*, Darwin did not offer solid evidences of human evolution, only suggesting in the conclusion that in the future, “*Much light will be thrown on the origin of man and his history.*” In the same book, Darwin described serious challenges to the whole concept of natural selection in three chapters with the following titles:

- Difficulties of the theory, chapter 6.
- Miscellaneous objection to the theory of natural selection, chapter 7.
- On the imperfection of the geological record, chapter 10.

In his second book, Darwin presented his guesswork about humans and apes. He believed that humans were the products of biological evolution, and that they descended from primitive ancestors. His hypothesis did not state that humans descended from any of the great apes: orangutan, gibbon, chimpanzee, and gorilla. Both humans and apes descended from some common primate ancestors that are now extinct.

The reaction to *The Origin of Species* was immediate. Some biologists argued that Darwin could not prove his hypothesis. Others criticized Darwin’s concept of variation, arguing that he could not explain the origin of variations. In fact, many scientists continued to express doubts for the following 50 to 80 years. The most publicized attacks on Darwin’s ideas, however, came not from scientists but from religious opponents. The thought that living things had evolved by natural processes denied the special creation of humankind and seemed to place humanity on a plane with animals; both of these ideas were serious contradictions to orthodox theological opinion.

3.3 Discrediting Evolution: Origin of Life

What do algae, a whale, a giant tree, and we have in common? These are just four of the 1,500,000 different living organisms found on Earth. They are about as different as living things can be; yet they are all alike in at least two ways. First they all carry on basic

life processes. Second, they all are made up of cells. In the late 1600's, people started using microscopes to observe things smaller than the naked eye could see. An Englishman called Robert Hooke was examining materials under the microscope. One of these materials was a piece of cork. He cut a very thin piece of cork and examined it under the microscope. He observed tiny, orderly, empty spaces that reminded him of the cells in a honeycomb. He called them cells.

The cell is the fundamental structural unit of all living organisms. Some cells are complete organisms, such as the unicellular bacteria and protozoa; others, such as nerve, liver, and muscle cells, are specialized components of multicellular organisms. Cells range in size from the smallest bacteria, which are 0.1 micron in diameter, to the egg yolks of ostriches, which are about 8 cm (about 3 in.) in diameter. Although they may differ widely in appearance and function, all cells have a surrounding membrane and an internal, water-rich substance called the cytoplasm, the composition of which differs significantly from the external environment of the cell. Within the cell is genetic material, DNA, containing coded instructions for the behavior and reproduction of the cell and also the chemical machinery for the translation of these instructions into the manufacturing of proteins. Viruses are not considered cells because they lack this translation machinery; they must parasitize cells in order to translate their own genetic code and reproduce themselves.

All cells are dynamic at some stage of their life cycle, in the sense that they use energy to perform a variety of cell functions: movement, growth, maintenance and repair of cellular structure, reproduction of the cell, and manufacture of specialized cell products such as enzymes and hormones. These functions are also the result of interactions of organic molecules.

The structure and functions of our cells could be compared to a central government or a factory. A factory, for example, is a place of great activity. Fuel and raw materials are delivered to the factory; the plant workers follow a set of directions from the main office as they do their jobs. Fuel is burned in the generators to provide energy. Energy is used to put the raw materials together

into finished products. During the manufacturing process, wastes are produced, and need to be removed. The finished product is packed, and stored until it is shipped out of the factory. These manufacturing processes inside a factory are very similar to the life processes carried out inside a cell. The finished products are the compounds that form the many parts of the cell. The main office and the planning department of our factory cell are the nucleus. The nucleus of the cell is the control center that controls everything that happens inside the cell.

To have an appreciation of your human body:

- *The human body contains 100 trillion cells (100,000,000,000,000 cells)*
- *There is a nucleus inside each human cell (except red blood cells). The size of the nucleus is less than four ten-thousandths of an inch in diameter.*
- *Each nucleus contain 46 chromosomes arranged in 23 pairs, one chromosome of every pair is from each parent. Our 46 chromosomes "threads" linked together would measure more than six feet.*
- *The chromosomes are filled with tightly coiled strands of DNA. The length of the DNA in your body is more than the distance from Earth to the sun.*
- *Genes are segments of DNA that contain instruction to make proteins - the building blocks of life.*

Each of the 100 trillion cells in each human functions like a walled city:

- *Power plants generate the cell's energy.*
- *Factories produce proteins, vital units of chemical commerce.*
- *Complex transportation systems guide specific chemicals from point to point within the cell and beyond.*
- *Guards at the barricades control the export and import markets, and monitor the outside world for any sign of danger.*
- *Disciplined biological armies stand ready to grapple with invaders.*
- *A centralized genetic government maintains order.*

Is there a chance that all of the above came from a hydrogen atom. Human being had to be created by a Mighty God. When the theory of evolution was first proposed, scientists had no clue of the fantastic complexity of a living cell.

Early Atmosphere

Scientists agree that the early atmosphere of the Earth was far different from what it is now. Some feel that it consisted of methane, ammonia, and water vapor. Others think it was composed of carbon monoxide, carbon dioxide, hydrogen, and nitrogen. Most believe that the main elements of organic compound - carbon, hydrogen, oxygen, and nitrogen - existed in the early atmosphere. In 1953 Stanley Miller circulated hydrogen, methane, ammonia and water vapor that he thought to be part of the early atmosphere throughout a chamber. He subjected these gases to electric discharges. The discharges represented the assumed sources of energy (lightning bolts and ultraviolet radiation) of the early atmosphere. Water vapor condensed and settled at the bottom of the chamber. At the end of one week, water was studied and found to contain large quantities of some of the many amino acids that are the building block of proteins (organic compounds).

It was therefore concluded that organic compounds could have been produced in a similar manner in the early atmosphere of Earth. This experiment exists in most textbooks of biology, and is presented as a model of the origin of life. Some biology teachers even hail this experiment as a definite proof that "life happened spontaneously on Earth." Miller got only 4 kinds of the 20 amino acids needed for life to exist. Other experiments like this one have produced other kinds of amino acids. However, scientists were still unable to produce all the 20 necessary amino acids under conditions that might simulate the early atmosphere. Some scientists still think that this is startling evidence that life can start spontaneously when the conditions are right.

Miller assumed that Earth's early atmosphere was similar to the one in his laboratory. He said, "*The synthesis of compounds of biological interest takes place only under reducing (free oxygen*

does not exist) conditions.” But evolutionists maintain that oxygen was present in the early atmosphere. This creates an interesting dilemma that is expressed by Hitching as follows: “*With oxygen in the air, the first amino acid would never have got started; without oxygen, it would have been wiped out by cosmic rays.*”

However, any attempt to predict the composition of the Earth’s early atmosphere can only be based on guesswork or speculation. Our present knowledge does not permit any actual facts about the exact composition of the early Earth’s atmosphere. Although Miller’s experiment is still a classic subject about the early atmosphere, new insights of planetary formations have made it extremely doubtful that methane and ammonia ever existed in the early atmosphere.

Origin of Life

The warm little pond that Darwin imagined as life’s birthplace contained a rich broth of organic soup. Over eons, he hypothesized that they would gradually assemble themselves into primitive organisms. For the next century, Darwin assumption was expanded by the neo-evolutionists that decided that the pond was really the ocean and began trying to figure out where the building blocks of life could have come from.

Most colleges and high schools textbooks in biology, zoology, and life sciences present the origin of life from the evolutionists’ point of view. Life just started through a series of happy coincidences that led to the development of the first living cell. Reading these books, one would find a great deal of usage of speculative sentences like “*could have been*”, “*might have been*”, “*it was suggested*”, and so on. However, the usual final conclusion of this subject is that “*life developed on Earth through a series of chemical reactions that just happened when the circumstances were right.*” This is part of the brainwashing of the education systems that are mostly controlled by evolutionists. No mention of the probability of the occurrence of a single step in this hypothetical scenario. There is no mention of the fact that we do not know exactly the composition and the environment of the early atmosphere. There

is no mention of any suggestion that there might be another alternative for the origin of life just in case that the hypothetical steps to start life do not add up. The biggest irony is that the origin of life is presented as a fact using doubtful languages!

Some scientists imagined that simple organic molecules produced in the early atmosphere *could* have fallen from space during heavy rain. The origin of these molecules *could* have been under the blazing skies of a faraway planet racked by volcanic eruption and bombarded by comets and asteroids. It is *hypothesized* that the molecules reacted to form more complex compounds such as fat, protein, and nucleotides. They were then *happened* to sweep into the newly formed oceans.

What are the chances of the whole above scenario to happen in the above sequence? Realistically speaking, not a single chance. However, in a science fiction movie, a group of scientists traveled back in time to watch the formation of this organic soup! The lightning and ultraviolet would quickly decompose any complex amino acids that formed. Miller saved the 4 amino acids that he obtained *only* because he removed them away from the discharges. Had he left them there, the discharges would have decomposed them.

However, if it were *assumed* that amino acids somehow reached the oceans, then under the surface of the water there would not be enough energy to activate further chemical reactions. Water in any case prohibits growth of more complex molecules. Thus, once the amino acids are in the water, they must get out of it if they are to form larger molecules and evolve towards becoming proteins. But once they get out of the water, they are faced with the destructive ultraviolet light again. In other words there are no chances to reach this first and relatively simple step (getting the amino acids) in the evolution of life. It is therefore difficult to see how polymerization (linking together smaller molecules to form bigger ones) could have proceeded in the early ocean, since the presence of water favors depolymerization (breaking up bigger molecules into smaller ones) rather than polymerization. That is to say that water has the property of dissolving matter and not combining them. This is one of the many difficult problems that encounter evolutionists.

To continue this science fiction's scenario, groups of these molecules *could* have come together in the oceans. Some kind of a membrane *might* have formed that kept them separated from the surrounding water. The chemical surrounded by the membrane *might* be called the first living cell on Earth! But this membrane is extremely complex, made up of proteins, sugar, and fat molecules. The cell membrane includes channels and pumps that specifically control the influx and efflux of nutrients, and waste products. These specialized channels involve highly specific proteins, which could not have been present at the very beginning of life. Other molecules outside the membrane *might* have been brought together in a simple "life machine." Some protein *might* have served as enzymes to activate chemical reactions. Sugar *might* have been formed and used as a source of energy. With energy from respiration that did not use oxygen, because it did not exist freely, early living cells became better organized. Nucleic acids eventually took over control of the activities (including reproduction) of these first cells.

It is also suggested that there was competition for energy sources between the primitive cells. This struggle for existence *might* have led to the evolution of the first producers. These are organisms that used photosynthesis to make their own food and provided food for the earlier consumers. Photosynthesis would have led to the existence of free oxygen, which in turn *could* have been used for respiration. As a result, more energy would be available for other functions.

As you read the above sequence of hypothetical events that led to the first living cell, you should ask yourself about the feasibility and the likelihood of each step. *The chance of composing a living cell in such a manner is equal to the chance of composing a book by an infinite number of monkeys using an infinite number of computers in 10 billion years!*

There are many unanswered questions that face evolutionists. For example, there are actually over 100 amino acids, but only 20 of the 100 are required for life's proteins. These amino acids come in two groups. Should they be formed at random, as in the imaginary organic soup, it is most likely that each half would be from one group. And there is no known reason why either group should

dominate living cells. Yet, the 20 amino acids used in producing life's proteins are from one group! It must be admitted that the explanation of this problem still remains one of the most difficult questions. Evolutionists just may never be able to explain it. What is the probability that 20 amino acids, of the same group, would come together by chance to form a protein molecule? To have an appreciation of this question, you may try the following experiment:

Mix a hundred grains of rice with another hundred grains of lentil. The rice represents one group and the lentil represents the other group. Plunge a spoon randomly in the pile as many times as you want. The objective is to get only 20 grains of rice arranged in a specified place in the spoon. How many numbers of times you think it will take you to achieve this objective? Do you think that it is even possible to do that? No. Then how would it have been possible in the hypothetical organic soup?

To understand the meaning of probability of something to happen, assume that you have 2 cards, 1 and 2, with faces down, and you want to get them in ascending order 12. So, if you get 1 and then 2, you are correct. But if you get 2 and then 1, you are wrong. Thus there is one chance in two that you get the right combination. This probability calculation is based upon the assumption that once you get a wrong combination you do not repeat it, because there is a chance that you may be unlucky and always get the wrong combination 2 and then 1.

Now, assume that you have three numbers: 1, 2, and 3, and you want to get the combination in ascending order 123. There are six possible ways to a combination: 123, 132, 213, 231, 312, and 321. Since you are required to get only 123, then you have 1 chance in 6 of success. The number of chances is obtained by calculating the factorial as follows:

| | | |
|------------------------------------|-----------------|------|
| Number of combination to 2 cards | = 2 x 1 | = 2 |
| Number of combination to 3 cards | = 3 x 2 x 1 | = 6 |
| Number of combination to 4 cards | = 4 x 3 x 2 x 1 | = 24 |
| Number of combination to 10 cards | = 3,628,800 | |
| Number of combination to 20 cards | = 2.43E18 | |
| Number of combination to 100 cards | = 1E158 | |

Now, assume that you already have the required 20 amino acids, and you just want to put them in the right sequence in a single protein molecule. If each trial to arrange the 20 amino acids takes one second, you would require $2.43E18$ seconds to do that. If we assume that the universe is 30 billion years old, then this number can be calculated in seconds as follows:

$$30,000,000,000 \times 365 \text{ days} \times 24 \text{ hours} \times 60 \text{ minutes} \times 60 \text{ seconds} \\ = 1E18 \text{ seconds}$$

It is now obvious that the time required to arrange the 20 amino acids in a single protein molecule ($2.43E18$ seconds) may be more than double the age of the universe! This is without considering that the 20 amino acids of the same group, and there are over 100 amino acids.

According to Henry Morris in "*Scientific Creationism*", the chance of even a medium protein molecule forming at random in an organic soup is only one in $1E600$ (one followed by 600 zero!). In plain English, this means that someone may try this $1E600$ times before getting a chance to succeed! Mathematicians consider this kind of a chance as never happening. This number of $1E600$ is larger than the estimated total number of electrons in the universe, which is $1E80$.

Yet another greater difficulty for evolutionary theory involves the origin of the complete genetic code - a requirement for cell production. The old philosophical paradox of "the chicken or the egg?" can now be stated "the proteins or the DNA?" This creates an interesting dilemma that is expressed by Hitching as follows "*Proteins depend on DNA for their formation, but the DNA cannot form without pre-existing proteins.*" Some evolutionists think that they have the answer; they developed by chance together at the same time and in the same place! Does this strike you as reasonable explanation even if this statement is coming from a modern serious scientist?

It is obvious that the origin of life discredits evolution.

3.4 Discrediting Evolution: The Fossil Record

Just as the biological hypothesis on the early atmosphere and the origin of life are hailed as factual evidence of the evolution, the fossil record is acclaimed as the most direct evidence for evolution! Fossils are the remains of past forms of life uncovered from the crust of the Earth. These may be complete remains (mammoths and insects), skeletons or hard parts of them such as teeth, bones, or shells. When most organisms die, they decompose quickly, so no record of their life is left. A hard part may be preserved if it is surrounded by clay or sand soon after death. The surrounding deposits prevent decomposition. Then, when these sediments turn to rock over long periods of time, the part of the organism is preserved.

Fossils formed in the sedimentary rock are the most common fossils. Layers settling on the top of each other form sedimentary rocks. When layers are not disturbed, the lower layers are the oldest, and the upper layers are the newest. The fossil record is important, since no one has witnessed the evolution of a major group of species. But the existing record provides dim and imperfect view of the ancient life. The complete record of the past is always beyond our reach since so many organisms left no trace. Yet incomplete as the record is, biologists rely on new discoveries, and the continued study of the existing fossils.

Darwin devoted one complete chapter in his book on the imperfection of the geological record, chapter 10. He conceded, "*The distinctness of specific (living) forms and their not being blended together by innumerable transitional links, is a very obvious difficulty.*" The existing life forms do not offer any support to the theory of evolution. That is why the fossil record became so important. It was felt that at least fossils would provide the evidence that the theory of evolution needed.

If the fossil records were complete, and the evolutionists were honest serious scientists, every one on Earth would accept the evolution as a fact. This record would show, for example, how a giraffe evolved. The long neck of the giraffe is often used to illustrate the evolution hypothesis. The long neck evolved from

short-necked ancestors. The short-necked giraffe could graze on grass, but as the grass became scarce, so the only remaining food source was the leaves of trees. Then each short-necked giraffe would stretch its neck to reach the leaves on the trees. As these giraffes reproduced, the result of the neck stretching would be passed to their offspring. This hypothesis can be criticized on several points. Where are, in the fossil record, giraffes with short necks? There is no answer. Why did this happen only to giraffes? There is no answer. Why don't we have donkeys, for example, with long necks? There is no answer. Why did not all the grass-eating animals develop long necks? There is no answer.

If evolution were a fact, the fossil record would reveal a gradual changing from one kind of life form to another. There should be at least one fossil that shows these changes. For example, there should be fish fins growing into amphibian legs with feet and toes, and gills growing into lungs. There should be reptiles with front limbs growing into bird wings, back limbs growing into legs with claws, scales growing into feathers, and mouths growing into beaks. But the fossil record does not include any of that. As Darwin himself asserted "*The number of intermediate varieties, which have formerly existed, (must) be truly enormous.*" He is right, but there are no developing organs in the fossil record, except in the imagination of the evolutionists.

In the evolutionary theory, it was suggested that one species evolved to two or three other species. If we know that we have 1,500,000 species on Earth, then we should expect at least 1,500,000 transitional forms. They should be abundant on Earth. They should be everywhere. However, any of the fossils that were manipulated to present a single transitional form cannot lend any credibility. As a matter of fact, the above statement of Darwin, regarding the number of the intermediate forms, should be considered as a final discredit of the whole fiction of evolution.

Evolutionary theorists have argued that the gradual change from one life form to another took a lengthy period of time for which the fossil record was missing! So evolutionists blame the incompleteness of the fossil record for not uncovering links between species. Even Darwin wondered about that. This frustrating

situation led him to say: "*Why then is not every geological formation and every stratum full of such intermediate links? Geology assuredly does not reveal any such finely graduated organic chain; and this, perhaps is the most obvious and serious objection which can be argued against the theory.*" The fossil record in Darwin's time proved to be discouraging to him in another way. He explained: "*The abrupt manner in which whole groups of species suddenly appear in certain formation has been argued by several paleontologists as a fatal objection to the belief in the transmutation of species.*" He added: "*There is another and allied difficulty, which is much more serious. I allude to the manner in which species belonging to several of the main division of the animal kingdom suddenly appear in the lowest known fossiliferous rocks. The case at present must remain inexplicable, and may be truly argued as a valid argument against the (evolutionary) views here entertained.*" Darwin attempted to explain these stubborn problems by attacking the fossil record. He said: "*I look at the geological record as a history of the world imperfectly kept, imperfect to an extreme degree.*"

Now, after extensive excavating of over a hundred million fossils, all catalogued and identified, and the record is still so imperfect in the eyes of the evolutionists. The existing record shows only one fact and one course: basic kinds of living forms appeared in a very short time and did not transform appreciably for long period of time. No developmental links between one major kind and another have ever been established. So what the fossil record actually reveals is the opposite of what the evolution hypothesis predicted.

Evolutionists maintain that life evolved in a very long time by chance through chemical reactions between non-living atoms. The Earth is now known to be formed about 4.6 billion years ago. Life is thought to form sometimes between 4.4 billion and 3.8 billion years ago. But heavy bombardment of the Earth by meteors occurred 4.5 billion to 3.8 billion years ago, and possibly destroyed all existed life. Volcanic eruptions expelled gases and contributed to a thick atmosphere of carbon dioxide, nitrogen, and carbon monoxide with traces of ammonia, methane, and hydrogen sulfide. Possible

evidence of life was found in the rocks of Greenland about 3.8 billion years ago. The earliest known fossils of the blue-green algae that lived 3.5 billion years ago were found in Australia. The first one-celled organisms with a nucleus lived on Earth 2.1 billion years ago. The first multicelled algae existed 1.8 billion years ago. Thus for 4 billion years and until about 550 million years ago, life on Earth consisted only of algae, bacteria, and plankton. Then at the start of what is called the Cambrian period (between 543 to 510 million years ago), in a burst of sudden creativity lasting no more than 10 million years, an astonishing array of multicelled animals show up in the fossil record. These creatures represent life forms than can swim, fly, and crawl. This time is often called an "explosion or the Big Bang" of life forms. During these 10 million years, all the major group of invertebrates made their first appearance in the most spectacular rise in diversity ever recorded on our planet. Snails, sponges, starfish, and many other complex sea creatures appeared. Some also had efficient and complex eyes more than any human.

After the Cambrian Big Bang of life, the testimony of the fossil record is exactly the same for all kinds of life: All life forms appeared suddenly with no transitional forms. Insects and plants present serious problems to evolutionists. If all life forms evolved from hydrogen, oxygen, carbon, and other atoms, then what are the evolutionary ancestors of insects and trees? Cockroaches appeared in the fossil record 280 million years ago. Flies appeared in the fossil record 40 million years ago. Ants appeared in the fossil record 25 million years ago. Cockroaches, flies, and ants in the fossil record are very similar to their present day counterparts. Cockroaches are still Cockroaches. Flies are still flies. Ants are still ants. Cockroaches did not evolve to flies, and flies did not evolve to ants!

As for the trees, they followed the same trend of every other life form. The fossil record contains leaves from oak, palm, and pine trees that existed for 180 million years. These ancient leaves are also very similar to their present day counterparts. The animal kingdom follows the same pattern. There are variations, but all are easily identified as the same "kind."

Another fact, which should discredit the evolutionary theory,

is that there exists no evidence in the fossil record of partially formed bones or organs that could be considered the start up of a new function. Evolution's textbooks are silent about the origin of flying creatures such as bats and birds. Evolutionists speculate about the evolution of one kind of finch to another, because they have common features, but they are silent about the origin of any finch. But none of these transitional forms have been found. There is not even a clue of a credible link.

- Are there any fossils of giraffes or camels with necks of one quarter, one half, and three quarters their present necks? *No.*
- Are there any fossils of birds evolving a beak from a reptile jaw? *No.*
- Is there any fossil evidence of fish developing an amphibian pelvis? *No.*
- Is there any fossil evidence of fish fins turning into amphibian legs, feet and toes? *No.*

The average layman can produce many other questions like the above ones, and some can be even funny. An unbiased zoologist may expand on the above questions, and write a complete book to further discredit the speculation of evolution. The fossil record is our only authentic evidence that reveals the type of life forms that lived on Earth for hundreds of million years. It clearly indicates that different life forms appeared suddenly and remained distinctly different without any trace of transitional forms. When the evolutionists claim that the fossil record support the speculation of evolution, they are committing a serious mistake. They present incomplete and distorted pictures to the students and the public at large. It does not support the speculation of evolution. It is definitely a strong evidence of sudden creation of separate life forms. *The fossil record reveals that the Omnipotent God created insects, trees, animals, humans, and all other life forms in their separate forms.*

It is obvious that the fossil record discredits evolution.

3.5 Discrediting Evolution: Humans or Apes?

Nearly 140 years after Darwin's *Origin of species*, evolutionists are still promoting his message in the educational systems and in the media. However, the longer scientists study the fossil record, the more convinced they become that evolution did not make a simple transition from ape to human, or that apes and humans both emerged from a common primate. There were many false starts and dead ends. Evolutionists know that a single bone that doesn't fit in the picture can upset everything. Also, polls consistently show that half of all the Americans reject this atheistic hypothesis. They prefer to believe, against all the marketing tactics of the evolution, the religious account of the creation model. Evolution should be taught as a controversial hypothesis accepted by some scientists, and not as a fact supported by all scientists.

Recall the saying of "A picture is better than a thousand words." Books, magazines, and TV documentaries provide pictures with artists' renderings of ape evolving to human. These artistic pictures supply the transitional links that do not exist in reality. *Are apes our ancestors?* Evolution hypothesis claims they are. That is why we see articles in magazines with titles such as: "*How man began? Or how ape evolved to man? Or the missing link between ape and man.*" Speculation and very creative artistic pictures answer these big questions.

What we are left with is the imagination of nineteenth century scientists and the marketing of evolution by the twentieth century neo-evolutionists. And we all know what the new techniques in marketing can do to an inferior product. It will still be sold. What is striking in the media is the existence of strong desire coupled with great excitement to announce the discovery of a reconstruction of an ape-man that is older than the oldest one on record. To achieve this, few bones and big imaginations are used. The fossils' discoverer, then, starts collecting on his fame and newfound wealth by overestimating the importance of one's own work. We watch the message of evolution in an interesting and fascinating show on television, while religious talk shows present subjects that most people knew and heard many times. Sometimes it looks like

everyone is gaining from evolution: neo-evolutionists are gaining wealth and fame, and some laymen might not want to accept the notion that God exists.

If the natural selection of Darwin is correct, why, then, only *some life* forms always move higher on the evolutionary ladder? Evolutionary theory assumes that humans are more advanced than apes, apes are more advanced than the rest of mammals, mammals are more advanced than reptiles, reptiles are more advanced than amphibians, and amphibians are more advanced than fish. According to natural selection, given time and we had 4 billion years, we should have only one species and that is human. We should not have the inferior fish, amphibians, reptiles, or mammals. Only the fittest humans should survive. Then we told that 1.5 million species still exist on Earth.

Why didn't all the inferior apes evolve to the superior humans?

Why didn't all the inferior reptiles evolve to the superior mammals?

Why didn't all the inferior amphibians evolve to the superior reptiles?

Why didn't all the inferior fish evolve to the superior amphibians?

Why didn't all the inferior species evolve to one single superior species?

Evolution is an incredible amount of argument over remarkably very little!

The Apes Family

1- Rat-Like Primate:

Mammals existed on Earth for more than 100 million years before they began to dominate the Earth some 70 million years ago. One of the earliest fossils of a mammal claimed to be in the order of primates that gave birth to the lineage of present day apes is a small, rodent like. They were insect-eating quadrupeds about the size and shape of squirrels. This mammal is called prosimian or premonkey. It had thirty-four teeth as compared to most present

day monkeys with thirty-two teeth. But is there enough evidence in the fossil record to support that this tiny animal was the ancestor of monkeys? No.

2- Aegyptopithecus:

After a gap of about 40 million years, the Fayum Depression in Egypt yielded remains of the earliest known members of the ape family. It was named Aegyptopithecus - Egypt ape, the suffix "pithecus" means ape. This creature is said to have lived about 30 million years ago. The fossil record does not show how the prosimians evolved into monkeys and apes. Since the discovery of Aegyptopithecus in 1967 to 1980, these apes were called the missing links and the common ancestors of the ape and human families.

3- Ramapithecus:

After another 20 million to 25 million years gap in the fossil record, another fossil creature has been presented as man's earliest known ancestors. It was given the official name Ramapithecus - Rama's ape (Rama was a mystical prince of India). Fossils of it were found in India about half a century ago, and in Kenya. Not many Ramapithecus specimens have been found so far, a total of some fifteen jaw fragments and more than forty teeth, representing perhaps twelve to twenty creatures. But that was enough to serve as the basis for a number of interesting speculations. These few specimens were found in India, China, Africa, Germany, and Spain. The hypothesis about Ramapithecus came from the study of his teeth and his small canines. A long list of speculations was developed about his size, eating habit, body structure and the tools that he used from 40 teeth. This list includes the usual speculative terms such as "maybe", "perhaps", "there are reasons to suggest"...etc. Using some teeth, and fragmented jaws, an ape was produced through artistic imaginations. This step was followed by the marketing propaganda as another overwhelming missing link in the human ladder of evolution! Natural history magazine, August / September 1979, stated: "*How did Ramapithecus, reconstructed only from teeth and jaws - without pelvis, limb bones, or skull - sneaked into this manward marching procession?*" Obviously a

great deal of wishful thinking must have gone into such an effort to package the few bones to headline stories.

4- Oreopithecus:

Oreopithecus, another so-called ancestor, is in fact an animal that existed 12 million years ago after a gap of about 10 million years in the fossil record. It lived in the forest and its arms were very long - much longer than its lower limbs - as in the case of apes that swing from one tree to another. It is very small in size in comparison with today's man (1.10 to 1.20 Mt.), and its brain capacity is quite small (400 cc.). As in the case of Ramapithecus, the fossils were not accompanied by any traces of human activities. Some scientists even consider Oreopithecus as an independent family.

5- Australopithecus:

After about 8 million years gap in the fossil record, Australopithecus - southern ape - was discovered in South Africa in 1924. This creature lived about 3.9 million years ago in the Savannah and not in the forest. It was about four feet tall. Fossils also were found near the great African Lakes. Remains were also found in Java in sediments that are possibly one to four million years old. Australopithecus had a small ape-like skull, heavy jawbone and was pictured as a hairy ape walking on two legs. The teeth are small at the front, and very large at the back. Its brain capacity remains small (about 500 to 550 cc.)

The reason for his peculiar teeth, the same as in the case of Ramapithecus, was probably because of their habitat, and resulting diet. Baboons, living today in Ethiopia, have teeth and jaws very similar to Ramapithecus and Australopithecus. The human like teeth and jaws of these baboons are apparently related to their habitat and diet and are clearly not indicative of any approach to humans.

A cousin of Australopithecus was discovered in 1967 in the Omo Valley in Ethiopia. The fossilized remains of a woman in her twenties were discovered in 1974 in the Afar, in sediments that date about 3.5 million years ago. 60 percent of the bones and much of the skull were missing. Its brain size was a third of the size of a human brain, and its skull was very

like a chimpanzee's. Scientists could tell that this creature stood 3 ft. 6 in. tall and walked fully upright. This is because the knee joint was built in such a way that the animal could fully straighten its legs. While the discoverer was examining the first fossils in his tent, the Beetles' song *Lucy in the sky with diamond* was playing on his tape recorder. So he gave it the name Lucy. The marketing forces of evolution promoted that name instead of these Latin names that the laymen cannot pronounce. Now, probably every one on Earth has heard of "Lucy".

Needless to say that evolution publications and newspapers acclaimed the discovery of Australopithecus and Lucy. *"The mystery is finally solved!" "It was Australopithecus that eventually evolved to Homo sapiens, or modern men." "By all the evidence men at last had met their long unknown, early ancestors." "The evidence was breathtaking, the long-sought missing link had finally been found."*

More researches are now rejecting the idea that Australopithecus and Lucy resemble the human beings. Anatomist Solly Zuckerman wrote in his book *'Beyond The Ivory Tower'*, 1970: *"When compared with human and simian (ape) skulls, the Australopithecine skull is in appearance overwhelmingly simian - not human. The contrary proposition would be equated to an assertion that black is white"* He also stated: *"Our findings leave no doubt that Australopithecus resembles not Homo sapiens but the living monkeys and apes. If any Australopithecus were found alive today, they would be put in zoos with other apes."*

6- Homo Erectus

A number of fossils are now grouped under the generic name Homo Erectus (upright man), including the somewhat notorious Java man, Peking man, Heidelberg man, and Meganthropus. They are believed to have lived about 500,000 years ago, to have walked upright, to have had brains of about 1000 cc., and to have developed a crude culture involving simple implements and weapons.

The evidence of all this is ambiguous, to say the least. Java Man was later discarded by his discoverer, and the bones of Peking man disappeared during World War II and are unavailable for

examination. Heidelberg Man consisted solely of a large jaw and Meganthropus consisted of two lower jawbones and four teeth and has been assigned by many to the Australopithecus.

However, other fossils of this general kind have apparently been found at various places around the world. It *may* well be that Homo Erectus was a true man, but somewhat degenerate in size and culture, possibly due to inbreeding, poor diet and a hostile environment.

In 1984, a 12-year-old boy of the Homo Erectus species, dated at 1.6 million years old was excavated in Kenya. His body skeleton was virtually indistinguishable from our own, and his skull and mandible looked much like Neanderthal man, except the brain capacity was only about 800 cc. This skeleton is believed to be the most complete skeleton of an early human "ancestor" ever found.

Some may question the true humanness of Homo Erectus on the basis of his small brain size (900 - 1100 cc.). However, that is definitely within the range of human brain size, although on the low end of the scale. Furthermore, there is no necessary correlation of brain sizes and intelligence.

The Human-Like Family

Modern type humans, with the capacity to reason, plan, invent, build upon previous knowledge and use complex languages, appear suddenly in the fossil record some fifty thousands years ago.

1- Neanderthal Man

The most famous of all so-called "missing link" is discovered in 1856 in the Neander Valley near Dusseldorf in Germany. Not until 1908, however, was the first more or less complete skeleton uncovered in France. Later identical types turned up in Spain, Italy, Greece, Morocco, Palestine, Iraq, and Java.

Although Neanderthal man was a medium size, perfectly biped, and endowed with well-developed muscles, his face shape was different from that of man today: His forehead was low, and the absence of a chin gave his face a muzzle-like appearance.

Compared to the ape family, Neanderthal man's skull is more developed: its capacity increased to 1,300 -1,600 cc. The development of his intellectual level is manifested by the quality of weapons and implements discovered near the remains of Neanderthal man. He most probably found shelters in caves, in which he made fire and arranged his surroundings to suit his convenience. Near his remains, burial sites were discovered for objects thought to be required in the afterlife (large pieces of animals, antlers and horns, stone implements), which may suggest some spirituality.

One wonders whether Neanderthal man gave birth to Homo sapiens, or whether both coexisted together. Fossils such as the Qafzeh Man discovered in Palestine, possess a skull that is almost the same as that of Homo sapiens. The coexistence of the two types may well have led to interbreeding. While this is simply a hypothesis, there is reason to think that man as we know him today displayed the same principal anatomical characteristics he has displayed some 35,000 to 40,000 years ago, thus constituting the species that we call Homo Sapiens.

2- Cro-Magnon Man

The best preserved and most accurately dated skeleton was found in France, which was discovered in 1868 in the Dordogne region. The height of Cro-Magnon Man is 1.80 Mt., and he still possesses certain archaic features: The occipital region of the skull is not yet entirely developed, the face is very wide but the orbits are situated at a lower position, and the nose is protuberant. These few remaining features were quickly to disappear, and then there were no noticeable changes in human morphology. Fossils of Cro-Magnon Man were discovered in many parts in Africa, Asia, and Europe.

Adam's Family

Since I do not believe the human interpretation of the evolution of species, because it just does not make a convincing argument, I am obliged to believe the creation story of The Creator Himself. The

authentic words of God states:

Surah 2, Ayah 30. "Behold, thy Lord said to the angles; "I will create a vicegerent on Earth." They said: "Wilt thou place therein one who will make mischief and shed blood? - Whilst we do celebrate Thy praises and glorify Thy holy (name)?" He said: "I know what ye know not"

The fascinating part of the above story is the answer of the angles to the Words of God. The angles, though pure and holy, and endowed with power from God, yet they do not know the future. Also their question was in no way a form of objection to the Will of God or a question to God's Wisdom. They do not know that the creature, that God will create, will make mischief and shed blood. So how did the angles get this idea about the behavior of that creature? The only explanation is that: "from what they already know about the Earth and its existing creatures at that time." They definitely knew about living creatures on Earth that were killing one another.

Now, who were those creatures at the time of Adam?

- Were these creatures fishes, amphibians, reptiles, birds, or mammals?
- Were these creatures Australopithecus, Home Erectus, Neanderthal or Cro-Magnon Man?

I do not claim to have an answer to the above question, and God knows best. But I understand from the above verse that there were life forms at the time of Adam, and that Adam was not the first living creature on Earth, and God knows best.

3.6 Discrediting Evolution: Comparative Anatomy

The fossil record establishes the evidence of all life forms that existed on our planet. As we have seen the fossil record clearly does not support the claim of the evolutionists that life evolved from one life form to another in a very long time. The biological

Bang at the start of the Cambrian period represents a major crisis in the evolution hypothesis. The lack of consistent and abundant transitional links between different species is an obvious puzzle in the evolutionary ladder.

Darwin used the buzz word “natural selection” that was actually introduced by Malthus and coined it with intuitive marketing and selling power. Now, most people on Earth know about natural selection, just as they know about hamburgers.

Any life form that lives on Earth has to interact with the environment. Living organisms have to move, reproduce, take nutrition, and dispose waste. As such, they have to have systems that allow the performance of the tasks of living. The study of systems of different organisms is called comparative anatomy. For example, dogs, sheep, and horses have similar legs and foot structures in number and position of bones. Each, however, is slightly different. The main structure of human’s arms, lion’s fore limb, and bird’s wing is also similar with slight variation. Does comparative anatomy support evolution, or is it another version of the Law of Repetition? The evolutionists believe that comparative anatomy is another “proof” of the evolution. This is without single evidence in the fossil record that details a transformation of one species to another. The fact that the main structure of the legs or fore limbs in some creatures is similar can well be understood. They are considered the optimal structure for moving in the common environment. This is just like saying that wheels are the optimal structure for moving cars on the common ground. The general appearance of all wheels is the same in spite of differences in size or treads patterns. No evolutionist can conclude that wheels evolved from a common ancestor without being considered insane.

Comparative anatomy indicates a Creative genius is behind all that, and His Law of Repetition is at work. In Galapagos, Darwin observed the famous 13 different kinds of finches. This is always presented as a “proof” of evolution from one ancestor finch to 13 “species” based upon the shape of their beaks. This can simply be explained as a *Divine adaptation* of the shape of the beaks to the eating habits of the finches. They are all still finches. They didn’t evolve from or to other species. They represent variations within

the same family of finches. The family of humans has more variations than the family of finches. Within the family of humans, there are different races, based upon the geographic location of the races. A classification of the human race may be defined as black, red, yellow, and white. There are many variations between these broad classifications. If you assemble a group of humans from Nigeria, China, Pakistan, Sweden, Eskimo, and Brazil with different heights, colors, and shapes of eyes and lips, can any evolutionist claim that they belong to different species? Or, are they the same species with variations to adapt in their environments?

The point is all species share many common features that are required for living in the same Earth's environment, and differ in the detail and specifics that suit the differences in the common environment. The fossil record and the existing life forms support the existence of varieties within one species and reject the concept of evolution from one species to another.

The following part will focus on the assumed transitional forms from one species to another. As you read on, consider the probability of each change happening by chance and spontaneously. The deception that some neo-evolutionist zoologists play on their students' mind is to show two creatures from two species that have some similarities, and then make the superficial point that evolution is correct.

From Protozoans to Invertebrates?

One of the most important fossil gaps is that between the protozoans, one celled microorganism, found in Precambrian fossils, and the abundant complex marine invertebrate life of the Cambrian. Invertebrates are life forms that do not have backbones, such as sponges and jellyfish. How did that happen? The fossil record is absolutely silent.

From Invertebrates to Vertebrates?

Vertebrates are life forms that have backbones. Invertebrates have soft inner parts and hard outer shells; vertebrates have soft outer

parts and hard inner parts, skeleton. The earliest vertebrates were certain kinds of fish. How did the backbone of vertebrates evolve? Did it evolve in steps, or as one piece? There is no evidence at all.

From Fish to Amphibian?

Fish: There exist about 25,000 species of fish. They have fins, gills, and streamlined body.

Amphibian example: Amphibian is a creature that could live in both water and on land, such as frogs and toads. (Greek, amphi. Both or double, + bios, life).

Backbones: The backbone of fish would have had to undergo major adjustments for the fish to become amphibians. You don't have to be an anatomist to look at a fish and a frog, and imagine how the backbone of the fish changed by itself to that of the frog.

Pelvis: Amphibian has pelvis, while fish do not. No fossil fish exists that show how the pelvis of amphibians evolved from fish.

Skull: The front part of the skull of frogs is larger than that of fish, whereas the back of the skull is much smaller. Look at the skull bones of fish and frogs. Are they similar or different?

Fins & limbs: Evolution assumes that fish fins evolved to jointed limbs in amphibians. This requires major alterations in muscles and nerves.

Gills & Lungs: For fish to evolve to amphibians, gills must change to lungs. Extensive efforts to attach the amphibian to some fish ancestors have all failed. The lungfish has been a preferred example, since in addition to gills; it has air bladder of single or paired lobes for breathing when it is temporarily out of water. This air bladder is also called swim bladder because it acts as a flotation device. Some evolutionists are tempted to think the air bladder evolved to lung. Why did not all other fish develop air bladder?

Hearts: In fish, hearts consist of two chambers, but in amphibians, hearts consist of three chambers. Fish fossils do not show how the third chamber was developed.

Hearing: Fish have receptor cells through their bodies for detecting wave vibrations and currents in water, but most frogs and toads have eardrums.

Tongues: Fish do not have an extendible tongue, but amphibians do.

Eyes: Fish do not blink, whereas amphibian eyes can blink.

From Amphibian to Reptile?

Reptile examples: Dinosaurs, snakes, lizards, crocodiles, turtles. (Latin, reptō, to creep)

Fertilization: External fertilization is the main rule in amphibians where eggs are soft and jelly like. Embryos in amphibian eggs release their waste in the surrounding water as soluble urea. Reptiles reproduce by internal fertilization. They have new sexual organs and new mating procedures that require major changes in anatomy and instinct. After the internal fertilization, the zygote travels into the oviduct, and develops a shell around it. Shelled eggs provide a complete environment for the developing embryo. They supply protection, moisture and food and a means for gas exchange and waste removal. Inside the shell there are various membranes and sacs. A sac holds the fluid in which the embryo grows. Another sac receives and stores embryonic wastes, serving as a bladder. The yolk sac contains blood vessels through which the food passes to the embryo. The entire embryo is surrounded with a sac filled with fluid to keep it moist. The reptile embryo is distinctive in having an egg tooth to help it break out of egg. The reptiles' complex eggs are supposed to be evolved from the soft eggs of the amphibians. How did the shell evolve? How did the sacs and membranes evolve?

From Reptile to Bird?

Birds' example: Pigeons, geese, ducks, parrots, hawks, owls.

Flight: Flight of birds is one of the biggest mysteries in the evolution

theory. Neo-evolutionists speculate that birds had to fly to escape attacks from wild animals. All species have enemies. Why do not zebras fly to escape attacking tigers? And why do not tigers grow wings to fly after zebras? Actually, Why not all species fly? Simply, birds fly because God wants them to fly. There is no other reasonable explanation.

Bird's flight, especially the familiar flapping of birds, is a very complex process. Despite careful analysis by conventional aerodynamic techniques and high speed photography, bird's flight is not well understood. Nevertheless, we know that the bird wing is an airfoil that is subject to recognized laws of aerodynamics. The aerodynamic shape of the wing causes suction on the upper surface and pressure on the lower surface of the wing. The result is a net upward force, which is called lift that lifts birds in air.

Blood: Birds are warm-blooded endothermic. Their bodies maintain relatively constant internal temperature regardless of the outside temperature. Reptiles, on the other hand, are cold-blooded exothermic. Their internal temperature will either decrease or increase depending upon the outside temperature. Changing the blood from cold to warm is another big mystery for the evolution. Some evolutionists claim that some dinosaurs were warm blooded. However, the general view is still dinosaurs, like all reptiles, were cold blooded.

Heart: In birds, hearts consist of four chambers, but in reptiles, hearts consist of three chambers. Reptiles' fossils do not show how the fourth chamber was developed.

Bones: The bones of birds are hollow and thin, to reduce their weights during flying, while the reptiles' are solid. There are braces inside the bird's bones like the stiffeners inside the airplane wings to add strength. How did the bones of birds become hollow and grow braces inside the bones? No answer.

Eyes: Birds have very sharp eyes so they can see from high altitude, and pick worms between grasses. Birds have more sensory cells in their eyes than any other creature.

Beaks: Beaks are exclusive to birds. Birds have beaks that come in many variations, such as crushing or fishing beaks. The evolutionists claim that beaks, with such specialized design evolved by chance from the noses of reptiles! This is another wild imagination of the evolutionists.

Feet: Birds have only four toes, while reptiles have five.

Sound: Birds do not have vocal chords, but they have vibrating vocal muscles, which produce harmonious songs like those of the mockingbirds and nightingales.

Respiratory system: In reptiles and mammals, lungs inhale and exhale air like bellows that alternately become full and empty. But birds have the most efficient respiratory system of all vertebrates. Many details of that system are not yet fully understood. It differs completely from the lungs of the reptiles. Also unique is the adaptation for meeting the high demands of flight. A Bird has two lungs and an extensive system of nine interconnecting air sacs. These sacs are also extended by tiny tubes into some of the long bones. During flight, a pigeon, for example, generate 27 times more heat than when at rest. However, birds do not have sweat glands to reduce their temperature. Therefore the respiratory system of birds ensures constant flow of fresh air to the lung, and in the same time act like an air-cooled engine. When the birds inhale, the air goes to some air sacs that push the air into the lungs. From the lungs, the air goes into other air sacs to expel it. The blood in the capillaries of the lungs flows against the airflow. The red blood cells in the bird's blood carry more hemoglobin, and thus, more oxygen supplied to the flight muscles. Because of that, birds can breathe the thin air of high altitudes, flying at over 20,000 feet for days as they travel thousands of miles. The body heat is relieved by internal circulation of the air between the air sacs, and the hollow bones. How did such a miraculous system evolve? The complexity and efficiency of this system is a definite proof for creation and not for evolution.

Eggs: Both reptiles and birds lay eggs. However, the incubation process of birds is totally unique. Some birds have a spot on the breast that does not have feathers and contains many blood vessels to give warmth to the eggs. Birds, without such a spot, pull out the feathers from their breast. This process requires new instincts for building the nest, for hatching the eggs and for feeding the young. This incubation process is a greatly unselfish, considerate behavior involving skills, hard work and exposure to danger.

Feathers: They are unique to birds. Evolutionists claim that scale in reptiles evolved to these marvelous structures. A feather is very lightweight, yet possesses remarkable toughness, and tensile strength. The shaft of a feather is a hollow cylinder with inside stiffeners. Out from the shaft of a feather are rows of barbs that are arranged in a closely parallel fashion and spread diagonally outwards. Each barb may have many barbules on each side. Each barbule has hundreds of barbicels with tiny hooks. After microscopic examination of a pigeon feather, it was revealed that it had several hundred thousands barbules, and millions of barbicels and hooks. These hooks hold all the parts of the feather together to make flat surfaces or vanes. A feather is an excellent airfoil as well as efficient insulator. A bird like a swan has some 25,000 feathers. How did this structural marvel evolve from scale? No Answer.

Archaeopteryx: “meaning ancient wing” This 150 million years old bird was believed by evolutionists to be the ancestor of modern birds that evolved from reptiles. It is interesting to note that archaeopteryx is presented in biology and zoology books and some dictionaries as the missing link between reptiles and birds. Its fossilized remains revealed reptilian features: toothed jaws and a reptile-like jaw articulation. It was a bird with wings and hollow leg bones. Its reptilian features exist in many modern birds. It was not the ancestor of modern birds because other fossils of birds were discovered in the same Bavarian rocks of the same geological period. No one really knows what it was.

From Reptile to Mammal?

Mammals: About 4,000 species. (Latin, mamma, breast). Mammals vary in size from 1.5 gram Hog nosed bat to the 100 ton whale. Mammals include lion, horse, deer, monkeys, rat, whale, and dolphin.

Breast: The name mammal refers to a mammary gland in the breasts. A mammary gland gives milk to the infants, and that milk changes its nutritional composition as the infants grow. Some evolutionists claimed that these milk glands *might be* modified sweat glands. But reptiles do not have sweat glands. Moreover, sweat glands produce waste, not food. Also, unlike baby reptiles, mammal infants have both the instincts and the muscles to suck the milk from their mother's breast.

Diaphragm: Mammals have a diaphragm that separates the thorax from the abdomen. Reptiles do not.

Placenta: Mammal mothers have highly complex placentas for the nourishment and development of their unborn babies. Reptiles do not.

Jaws: Reptiles have at least four bones in the lower jaws. Mammals have only one.

Teeth: Mammals have developed elaborate teeth. Instead of the simple peg like teeth of the reptiles, there are a great variety of mammalian teeth adapted to cutting, nipping, piercing, grasping, pounding, or grinding food.

Ears: The organ of Corti in the ears of mammals does not exist in reptiles. This tiny complex organ has 20,000 rods and 30,000 nerve endings. Also mammals have three bones in their ears, while reptiles have only one. Where did the extra two bones in mammal ears come from? Guess what, some evolutionist claim that the two extra bones in the ear came from the three bones that were lost in the

mammal's lower jaws! So, they claim that two bones of the reptile's lower jaw moved to the mammal's middle ear. As usual, there is no fossil evidence whatsoever to support this claim. It is just a wishful thinking.

Legs: Reptilian legs are located toward the side of the body so that the abdomen is on or very near to the ground. But in mammals the legs are under the body and raise it off the ground. Some evolutionists think that this is a minor difference that required minor changes in the skeleton.

What is the Origin of Insects?

Where are the insects in this evolution theory? Where did they come from? What did they evolve from? If the evolutionary origin of higher animals is confusing, the origin of close to 1,000,000 species of insects is completely blank. This figure may represent only a fraction on the species of insects that exist. They are extremely diverse and occur in all habitats capable of supporting life, but there is no fossil clue to their development from some kind of evolutionary ancestor. Insects have been found fossilized in a considerable numbers.

The most exceptional feature about such fossil insects is that they are very similar to those living now. In many cases, however, they are much larger than their modern relatives. There are giant dragonflies, giant cockroaches, giant ants, and so on. But their form is no different than that of modern insects. Some of the specific types have persisted throughout 70 million years.

What is the Origin of Plants?

More than 250,000 species of flowering plants are known. The plant kingdom is composed of five branches, three of which are algae. Most of the algae have no true tissues or organs. Both Algae and plants use the process of photosynthesis, by which light energy is absorbed and then converted into the chemical energy of glucose. This is another demonstration of the divine Law of Repetition.

The study of paleobotany (origin of plants) has been even more disappointing to evolutionists than that of ancient animal life. One of the outstanding paleobotanists was Professor C. A. Arnold of the University of Michigan. He said: *"It has been long hoped that extinct plants will ultimately reveal some of the stages through which existing groups have passed during the course of their development, but it must be freely admitted that this aspiration has been fulfilled to a very slight extent, even though paleobotanical research has been in progress for more than one hundred years. As yet we have not been able to trace the phylogenetic history of a single group of modern plants from its beginning to the present."*

It is obvious that the comparative anatomy discredits evolution.

3.7 Discrediting Evolution: Mutation

Just how did evolution happen? What is the basic mechanism that is claimed to cause evolution from one species to another? Evolutionists found an answer in the study of heredity and mutation. The transfer of hereditary characteristics usually produces normal results. This is manifested by, for example, the production of white children from white parents, and the production of black children from black parents. But, sometimes changes happen in the genetic message resulting from alterations in either chromosomes or genes. This change is called mutation. Thus, mutation is considered the basis for evolution.

Evolutionists believe that evolutionary changes take place over a long period of time (thousands or even millions of years) to allow one species to evolve to another. They often suggest that evolution in action provides direct evidence of evolution. Some examples are often cited to present their weak case. Penicillin kills many kinds of bacteria. However, sometimes a few bacteria survive the penicillin attack. They live to form colonies of bacteria that resist this form of penicillin, and they continue to produce more bacteria resistant to penicillin. When another treatment of the same penicillin is administered, all bacteria that are not resistant die, while those that are resistant survive to reproduce. Do the surviving

bacteria evolve to a new species? No, they are still bacteria. So, how does this example support the evolution?

Mutations can be caused by radiation and high temperature. The rate at which mutations occur varies widely. Evolutionists concentrate upon the examples where mutations occur fast to support their claims. Another example is often cited is the fruit flies in England in the early 1900's. Fruit flies are small (about 2 mm in length), easily handled, and they produce many offspring in two weeks. A male was found in 1910 with white eyes from a pure line having only red eyes. Experiments in heredity were performed to breed white-eyed male with red-eyed females. Studies were also performed on curly-winged fruit flies when bred at high and low temperature. Curly-winged flies bred at 25 °C will have offspring with curly wings. However, when bred at 16 °C, offspring will have straight wings. Regardless of the color of eyes or the shape of the wings, the fruit flies remained fruit flies. They did not change to another species.

A third example of the alleged observable evolution was the English moths. In these moths there are two colors, light and dark. H. B. D. Kettlewell found that dark moths constituted less than 2% of the population prior to 1848. The frequency of the dark moths increased in the following years. By 1898, the 95% of the moths in Manchester and other highly industrialized areas were of the dark type. Their frequency was less in rural areas. The moth population changed from mostly light colored moths to mostly dark colored moths. A single gene primarily determined the moth's color. Again, moths were moths before and after industrialization. Evolutionists consider this change as a case of mutation that supports the evolution. Jastrow, defending Darwin and hailing this discovery, wrote in his book *Red Giants and White Dwarfs*: "*Had he known it (The English moth), an example was at hand which would have provided him with the proof he needed. The case was an exceedingly rare one.*" The English medical journal *On Call* referred to using this example as "*notorious.*" It declared: "*This is an excellent demonstration of the function of camouflage, but, since it begins and ends with moths and no new species is formed, it is quite irrelevant as evidence for evolution.*"

The mutation may well be understood within the framework of the *Law of Repetition*. Mutation represents the irregularity in a uniform non-mutant life process. On a large scale, antibiotics kill many kinds of bacteria, but some bacteria become resistant to one kind of antibiotics. In this case the treatment involves more than one kind of antibiotics. Mutation is the exception and not the rule.

It is obvious that mutations discredit evolution.

3.8 The Creation Model

Two models exist for the origin of humans on Earth: creation and evolution models. The monotheistic religions do not acknowledge any explanation of man's existence on Earth other than that he was created by God. Evolutionists do not provide any conclusive proof to support their claims, nor do they accept arguments to abandon their assumptions completely. The California-based Institute for Creation Research founded in 1975 by a group of scientists to bring people to the biblical version of creation. They focus on the much evolution's inconsistency. They have strong arguments regarding the fossil record and the origin of life. However, they maintain that the Earth is only 10,000 years old at most and not 4.6 billion years, so evolution had no time to develop. This 10,000 years subject came from the literal interpretation of the Old Testament. In Islam, there is no reference in the Quran as to when the Earth came to existence.

Man was created with systems that are similar to other species according to the divine Law of Repetition. When evolutionists closely examine the case of a man and other species that have similar systems to him, they develop comparative anatomy that may rest on logical, but not enough, bases. The existence of some similarity between man and apes cannot be denied. But the resemblance between man and apes was imposed upon all animal and human species because they all share the same environment with all its variations. Thus man and other animals needed similar systems such as:

- A Respiratory system to consume oxygen from the *common* atmosphere.
- A Digestive system to ensure feeding from the *common* Earth
- Skeletal and muscular systems to move in the *common* environment.
- A Nervous system to receive information from the *common* environment.
- Eyes and ears to get information from the *common* environment.
- A Urinary system to maintain the chemical composition of the blood.
- A Reproductive system to keep their existence on the *common* Earth.

If one understands the above simple and logical argument, one will clearly be convinced with the creation model. Without these functional similarities, species could not survive in the common environment. Even some of the details of the above systems are similar in different species. For example:

- Birds and humans have four chambered hearts.
- The number of fingers or toes are five in humans, apes, and rats
- The number of neck bones (cervical vertebra) is seven in humans, giraffes, and porcupines.
- Chicken, cows and humans have their hearts on the left side.
- Birds, mammals and Humans have outside symmetric organs.

The conclusions that can be arrived at will undoubtedly depend to a great extent, not only on the strength of the faith that people possess, but also on their degree of knowledge in the fields involved in the study. In modern time, a scientific background may indeed provide enough reasons to cause people to strengthen their faith in God tremendously. However, there are those who reject the idea of God until they discover an equation that establishes the existence of God, in an attempt to project an image of analytical minds. Another approach may try to compromise between creation

and evolution without any substantiating evidences.

Persistence of life

It is known that some creatures appeared at certain time, and never changed since. This persistence of life is contrary to what one would expect from the evolution model. The following table shows when life started for certain classes of life, and those animals today are not much different than in the past.

| Period | Years before | Life persisted |
|---------------|--------------|----------------------------|
| Precambrian | 600 million | Algae, bacteria, fungi |
| Cambrian | 500 million | Sponges, snails, jellyfish |
| Ordovician | 425 million | Clams, starfish, worms |
| Silurian | 405 million | Scorpions, corals |
| Devonian | 345 million | Sharks, lungfish |
| Carboniferous | 280 million | Ferns, cockroaches |
| Permian | 230 million | Beetles, dragonflies |
| Triassic | 180 million | Pines, palms |
| Jurassic | 135 million | Crocodiles, turtles |
| Cretaceous | 70 million | Ducks, pelicans |
| Paleocene | 60 million | Rats, hedgehogs |
| Eocene | 40 million | Lemurs, rhinoceroses |
| Oligocene | 25 million | Beavers, squirrels, ants |
| Miocene | 7 million | Camels, wolves |
| Pliocene | .5-3 million | Horses, elephants |
| Pleistocene | 11 Thousand | Man? |

- For 425 million years, clams are still clams.
- For 345 million years, sharks are still sharks.

- For 135 million years, turtles are still turtles.
- For 60 million years rats are still rats.
- For 7 million years camels are still camels with their long necks.

The Human miracles

The human body consists of many organs and systems. Each one of them, when studied with objectivity represents a remarkable proof of a creation by the Almighty. Take, for example, the wrist joint that rotates 360 degrees and can stop at any angle. What would it take from a biomedical engineer to design such a joint in such a space that keeps on working for so many years without external greasing? Each system in the human body represents the most efficient system in the minimum space. Only two organs are presented in the following section that represents the ultimate complexity.

The Brain

Nothing on this Earth is more fantastic than the human brain. Doctors have made tremendous advances in studies of the brain. Even so, what they have learned is nothing compared to what remains unknown. One scientist said that we know only 10% of the brain and 90% remains mysterious. Definitely the human brain is the most mysterious part of the human body. Every second about 100 million bits of information flow into the brain from all senses. If we can think about one thing at a time, how does the brain handle these millions of simultaneous messages easily and all the time? Imagine a busy TV newsroom that receives news from all over the world. The news editors decide which stories are important. Then the news writers rewrite the important stories for broadcasting. These news stories are presented to the public. In some ways, the human brain acts like a newsroom. Here is how the human brain processes the information it receives and then reacts accordingly:

1. The brain stem has a network of nerves the size of which equals your finger. This network acts as a kind of traffic

control center, monitoring the millions of messages coming into the brain ignoring the trivial and selecting the important for attention. Each second this little network of nerves selects only a few hundred at most, to enter the conscious mind.

2. A further selection of our attention seems to come about by waves that sweep the brain 8 to 12 times per second. These waves cause periods of high intensity, during which the brain notes the stronger signals and acts accordingly. It is believed that by means of these waves the brain scans itself to select the more important items. Thus an astonishing flurry of activity is going on in our heads every second.

The miracle starts in the womb. Three weeks after conception brain cells start forming. They grow in outbursts, at times up to 250,000 cells a minute. After birth the brain continues to grow and form a network of connections. The gap separating the human brain from that of any animal quickly manifests itself: The brain of the human infant, unlike that of any other animal triples in size during the first year. There are about 10 billion (10,000,000,000) highly specialized nerve cells, called neurons that make up only 2 % of the body's weight.

The human brain has many specialized activities that are capable of learning. Computer science uses the word "hardwired" to refer to built-in capabilities based on fixed circuitry, in contrast to capabilities put in the computer by a program "software." Hard wiring in a human brain refers to inherent abilities like learning, but not the knowledge itself. Animals, by contrast, have hardwired instinctive wisdom, but limited capabilities to learn. The most intelligent animal never develops a mind like that of a human being. And unlike animals, humans have the free will to program their intellects as they choose, based upon their values, knowledge, opportunities, and goals. Specialists agree that the human brain is genetically programmed for language development, and that speech can be explained only on the basis of an inherent language processing capacity within the brain. Unlike the rigidity that is displayed in the instinctive behavior of animals, however, there is tremendous flexibility in a human's use of this hardwired capability

for the language. A specific language is not hardwired into our brains, but we are preprogrammed with the ability to learn languages. If two languages are spoken at home, a child can learn both. If exposed to a third language, the child can learn it also. In view of such inherent abilities, it is no surprise that a linguist said that the chimpanzee experiments with sign language actually prove that the chimps are incapable of even the most rudimentary forms of human language. One neurologist concludes: "*The more we attempt to investigate the mechanism of language, the more mysterious the process becomes.*"

A human originates thinking, sets goals, plans to reach them, initiates work to carry them out, and finds satisfaction in their accomplishment. Created with an eye for beauty, an ear for music, a flair of art, an urge to learn, an extreme curiosity, and an imagination that invents and designs - man finds a great sense of achievement in exercising these gifts. He is challenged by obstacles, and delights in using his mental and physical power to solve problems. Man has a moral sense to determine right and wrong, and a conscience to blame when he goes astray. He finds happiness in giving, and joys in loving and being loved. All such activities enhance his pleasure in living and give a sense of purpose and meaning to his life. A human can observe the plants and animals, the magnificence of the mountains and oceans around him, the vastness of the sky above him and feel his smallness. He is aware of time and space, wonders how he got here and where he is going, and tries to understand what is behind all that.

The Ear

The ear, one of the most complicated organs of the body, consists of three parts: the outer ear, the middle ear, and the inner ear.

The outer ear consists of the pinna, or external ear, which captures sound waves and directs them inward, and the ear canal, which leads to the eardrum.

The middle ear contains three tiny bones, or ossicles, commonly

called the hammer (malleus), the anvil (incus), and the stirrup (stapes).

The inner ear is formed of two main parts: a spiral structure, the cochlea, responsible for hearing and the semicircular canals, the labyrinth, which serve as the organ of balance and equilibrium. The inner ear is filled with clear fluids with precise chemical composition and accurate pressure. The regulation of chemical composition and fluid pressure is maintained through complex mechanisms not yet understood. The ear serves a dual purpose, not only hearing but also the vital function of equilibrium. Any change in fluid composition or pressure may cause hearing loss as well as sense of dizziness and imbalance, known as vertigo.

An oversimplification of how the extraordinary organ of the ear works is as follows: Atmospheric sound waves are collected by the ear and strike the eardrum, making it vibrate. This in turn activates the tiny chain of the three ossicles, in the middle ear, causing them to vibrate and conduct the sound waves to the inner ear. The eardrum and the ossicles not only conduct sound, but also amplify the sound energy by a factor of about 22 times. The sound waves, in turn, through the medium of the clear liquid in the inner ear transfer the vibrations to sensory cells (outer and inner hair cells), which convert the mechanical waves to electrical impulses. The impulses are conveyed to the brain via the auditory nerve. The mystery is the translation of vibrations into electric impulses, in such a small place, and then into identifiable sounds. It remains incomprehensible and incredibly complex to ear doctors. Many questions remain to be answered and lots of challenging mysteries stand reflecting our ignorance in front of a simple question:

How do we hear?

3.9 Law of Cause and Effect

For any theory to be correct, it should not violate the basic laws of nature. Those laws are correct and have been tested in many experiments under different circumstances. However, there must be a distinction between the laws of physics and Divine Miracles.

The known laws of physics are all acts of God, the Creator of all laws of Physics. Humans strive to understand these laws. Miracles are also acts of God that defy the laws of physics. The cosmic Big Bang challenges the laws of physics because it was a moment of Creation. All miracles performed by prophets, with the permission of God, defy the laws of physics. Humans sometimes confuse the Creator of the laws of physics and the discoverers of these laws. It is certainly within God's Omnipotence to stop a law that He created to let people contemplate about the Creator of these laws. With the exception of the law of cause and effect, all other laws have their own limitations. I mentioned that Newton's Laws of motions do not apply near the speed of light. This does not make these laws useless. They just have limitations. The atheistic concepts of the Big Bang and the evolution theory blatantly violate basic laws of physics, such as the law of cause and effect.

This law, which is universally accepted and applied in every branch of science, relates any phenomenon as an effect to a cause. The law states that:

"No effect is ever quantitatively greater nor qualitatively superior than its cause."

Have you ever looked at a beautiful skyscraper, and wondered who was the builder? If someone told that no one had built the skyscraper, but it had simply came to existence by itself, would you believe it? All what we see around us are effects created by The Ultimate Cause of everything.

If someone told you that all the physical laws that exist in the universe had simply happened by themselves, would you believe it? The global educational system attaches a name of a human being to every physical law, such as Newton's law of gravity or Einstein's theory of relativity. And somehow in the middle of this educational process, we tend to think that the discoverer of a certain law is actually *the creator* of that law. Well, he is not. Any discoverer is only a medium of revealing God's spectacle, and the Almighty is the One and Only Creator of all laws.

From the previous chapter, we know that all the energy and

matter in the universe were packed together in a cosmic egg! That cosmic egg exploded during the Big Bang, and formed the present universe. No one knows where the cosmic egg came from, or how it got there. It is simply assumed that it was there (someone even suggested that perhaps the cosmic egg came from a cosmic chicken!). No one knows how long it stayed there at its place, but, as the story goes, the cosmic egg exploded (no atheist knows why!). The universe expanded and cooled sufficiently that the hydrogen gas and the helium gas could form. From these hydrogen and helium, somehow, evolutionists believe that:

- A cosmic egg created itself somewhere and somehow for an unknown period of time.
- The cosmic egg exploded with an unknown reason.
- All laws of physics and chemistry created themselves, or by the scientists who discovered them.
- All galaxies and stars created themselves.
- Our solar system created itself.
- Life created itself.
- Finally from that first primordial form of life all other forms of life evolved according to Darwin's natural selection.

After studying the atheistic ideas of some of our modern serious scientists, I came to the conclusion that some *Homo sapiens* evolved to **Homo Aroganse!**

4

God

God in his utmost wisdom and mercy provided man with everything needed to conclude that He is the One Mighty God, the Creator and the Owner of everything in this universe. Contrary to the Christian doctrine that man is born sinner, Islam emphasizes that God forgave Adam, and every born baby on this Earth is pure, clean, and sinless. We do not inherit sins from anyone before us, not even Adam or Eve. This is what you would expect from a Just God. Why should we be punished for a crime that we did not commit, and we have nothing to do with it? In Islam, every newly born baby comes to this world with inherent submission to the One God. So if this baby were left alone without brainwashing him or her with atheistic or polytheistic ideas, he or she would grow up to be a Muslim. As man grows up, Allah provides him with a very special brain capable of discerning what is right and what is wrong. This gifted brain is also skillful of concluding that God is One if man just cares to look at the sky or look at himself. All the evidences are there if one cares to search for his Creator. However, if the search of one's Creator takes a low priority in life, then one has only himself to blame. This is the accountability of human and the Justice of God.

The last two chapters prove without any doubt that God exists. However, one does not really need to understand the cosmic or biological Big Bang to believe in God. Any simple-minded person can arrive at the same conclusion by asking who, why, what, and how about the simple things that he encounters in his daily life. For example, why the world does not get very hot or very cold for

people to perish by burning or by freezing. Who is adjusting the weather on Earth? Why trees come out after planting small seeds? What makes my heart beat? How can I face the frustration of life?

Religion is an integral part of our lives whether we like it or not. If we just understand that we are creatures of the Creator. If we just understand the responsibility of the Creator. If we just understand His unlimited bounty and His unlimited gifts that He bestowed on us. We live in His land. We eat His food. We drink His water. We breathe His air. We feel the warmth of His sun. In fact, we need Him in every step of this life. We need Him to make our life a little bit easier. We need Him to eliminate any hardship that we may face, or at least give us the patience to face the difficulties in this life and the belief in His justice if adversity persists. We need to be humble and thank Him for all His favors. And not just thank Him by words, but to actually feel that every part of our body is truly grateful.

4.1 Homo Arrogans

The Quran, the authentic words of God, is truly a remarkable miracle. The Quran has its own characteristics, which are so unique, and so inspiring. One of these Characteristics of the Quran is that a verse, "Ayah", is repeated in different places. One verse, for example, is repeated 31 times in one chapter, "Surah", (chapter 55.) This Ayah states: *"Then which of the favors of your Lord will you deny?"*

This Surah lists many favors that God (Allah) bestows upon us, and after citing each favor; the above Ayah is repeated as a continuous reminder to humanity to acknowledge His unlimited favors.

One time I was listening to the Quran, I noticed the repetition of the word "arrogance", either as a noun, verb or a synonym. For example, the Quran tells us the story of Adam and Satan in Heaven. God commanded the Angels and Satan to bow down before Adam. All the angles bowed, but Satan rejected the command of God.

Surah 2, Ayah 34 *"He refused and was haughty."*

Satan thought that he was better than Adam, and therefore should not bow down to him. Satan, soon thereafter deceived Adam and Eve, and caused them to be expelled from the Heaven. God then condemned and cursed Satan forever because of his arrogance. Therefore, the original sin is clearly that of arrogance, committed by the original sinner, Satan. This point is tremendously significant in that arrogance can potentially lead to much graver sins. It should also inspire humanity to maintain its humility. When God asked Satan why didn't you bow down before Adam, Satan replied that he is better than Adam, hence he should not bow to him:

Surah 7, Ayah 12: *"I am better than He (Adam). Thou didst create me from fire, and him from clay"*

Satan's egotism in putting himself above Adam is obvious from the above Ayah. He established his own standard of comparison by assuming that fire is better than clay, so he ignored the order of Allah. Arrogance against God is the worst type of sins, and can be caused by complete ignorance coupled with superiority complex. Ancient history tells us about kings who thought of themselves as gods. For example, the pharaoh, who existed during the time of Moses, claimed to be the highest god. Moreover, there are those who may believe in God but restrict Him and his Laws according to their convenience. They may like His forgiving side, but reject His punishing side. In other words, some people want a man-made God! Religious traditions inform us of arrogant people who wanted prophets to their liking. All the prophets were accused during their time of being insane, liars, magicians, and power hungry.

The Quran and the Bible tell us many stories about the prophets, and those who continued rejecting their message.

- It was the arrogant chiefs during the time of Noah who rejected him.
- It was the arrogant chiefs during the time of Abraham who rejected him.
- It was the arrogant chiefs during the time of Moses who

rejected him.

- It was the arrogant chiefs during the time of Jesus who rejected him.
- It was the arrogant chiefs during the time of Muhammad who rejected him.
- It was the arrogant chiefs during the time of any prophet who rejected him.

The Quran makes many references to these chiefs and actually calls them "chiefs." The Quran also talks about their arrogance, because they felt that religion would take their power away from them. The past and present self-appointed chiefs include some of the elite "scientists" as well as some of the religious leaders in all religions. These people believe that their ideas, no matter how wrong they are, should be imposed on the laymen who should not challenge their scientific or religious arguments. In most cases, arrogant people underestimate the degree of their arrogance by using their own standard to "measure" arrogance. They usually justify their approaches as a means of influencing the laymen for a noble cause, such as educating the ignorant masses!

A person can be considered arrogant if one emphasizes his importance and does not think for a moment that he is vulnerable. Every human is vulnerable. No one knows what is going to happen to him in the next hour. One may have a heart attack, a paralyzing car accident, an airplane crash, an earthquake, and the list is endless. *But some people are tempted to ignore our factual vulnerability and prefer an illusory mortality.* One of the effective means of combating arrogance is to keep remembering our vulnerability. And if it happens that Satan tries to convince us that we know a lot or even enough, keep remembering that the human knowledge is very limited:

- Over 90% of the mass of the universe is **UNKNOWN**
- The action of aspirin is **UNKNOWN**
- The mechanism of dreaming is **UNKNOWN**
- Over 90% of the human brain is **UNKNOWN**
- How the brain interprets our senses is **UNKNOWN**

If we are this humble in our knowledge, how can anyone be arrogant?

Now consider the following:

Evolutionists introduced the names “Homo Erectus” (Latin, upright human) and “Homo Sapiens” (Latin, wise human), and I would like to introduce the term “**Homo Arrogans**” (Latin, arrogant human) for those who think that they have all the answers. This is the title of this section. I put it in Latin, because, at present time, if you want to sound scientific, you have to use Latin or ancient Greek terms as if that the English language is not good enough. Evolutionists should be able to explain how those species evolved from Homo Erectus to Homo Sapiens to Homo Arrogans!

Homo Arrogans have many holes in the fabric of their logic. They look at some similarities or some differences between species and build an entire theory. This is similar to the following hypothetical story:

Imagine that most of the life on Earth is somehow destroyed. Several thousand years later, civilization starts and people are anxious to know their past. Some of their elite scientists evolved to Homo Arrogans species. They have no idea about our means of transportation. An archaeologist collects many fossils. The specimens that he collected are a horse wagon, a bicycle, a car, a train, and an airplane. He notices definite similarities and definite trends. He discovers that all specimens have wheels and a body. Similar materials exist in all the specimens such as: wood, iron, and leather. However, there is a problem; the lowest species, which is the wagon and the bicycle, do not have engines. And the engine of the car is smaller than that of the train, and that in turn is smaller than that of the airplane. He conclude that the metal in the wagon evolved to the gears in the bicycle, and this evolved to the engine in the car, which then evolved to the diesel engine in the train, and finally this evolved to the jet engine of the airplane.

Where do you think the archaeologist went wrong?

4.2 God and Science

In the West, the news media often represent the interaction of religion and science as a battle to death between religious scholars and scientific atheists. But for many scientists, who belong to the mainstream faith, things look entirely different. Throughout the last millennium, the Church was looked upon as a controlling mother with two defiant sons called physics and biology. Yet, despite strained relations, there is always optimism that religion and science can benefit from each other.

Medieval scientists, assured by their faith that the universe is rational, took their first steps towards uncovering God's Design. The first great conflict happened between the Church on one side and Galileo on the other side. In 1595 Galileo supported the Copernican theory that the earth revolves around the sun against the Aristotelian and Ptolemaic assumption that planets circle a fixed earth. Galileo was condemned by the Church for his scientific beliefs and was ordered in 1616 not to discuss Copernicanism either orally or in writing. Only in 1984 a papal commission acknowledged that the church was wrong, but it was not until 1992 that the church actually reversed its condemnation of Galileo. It took the Church about 4 centuries to admit that it was wrong.

Therefore, the son physics moved out of the house, and for a while, science enjoyed its freedom. The telescopes of the following centuries saw many stars in a huge void, evoking the dream of infinite universe with no sign of a beginning or a prospect of an end. Some scientists thought that the universe was never changing. To them, there was no need for a God!

This simple view did not last. Edwin Hubble discovered the red shift of the distant stars, and in 1920's the whole world knew that the universe had a beginning called the Big Bang. The fact that the universe had a beginning asserted the existence of an Omnipotent Designer that started the Big Bang. Cosmology used physics to uncover a magnificently organized universe; fine-tuned to foster life within it. In its adulthood, physics realized that mother is much smarter than she had been credited. The son physics started to have a tremendous appreciation for creating the universe and

his mother's wisdom.

Biology moved out of the house later than physics and is later to return as well. Darwin introduced a concept of evolution of species by natural selection. It was an interesting guesswork, but where in this scheme was the Designer? In the 19th century the foundation of life was in a total mystery. Scientists of the time hoped that the complexity of humans and animals would resolve into simplicity when more was learned about life. Darwinists had no way of knowing about proteins, amino acids, the genetic code and other mysteries of the living cell.

In the last 50 years biology has uncovered some of the mysteries of the living cell, and the results firmly indicate another Grand Design. The marvels of the living cell include precisely tailored microscopic systems that include molecular trucks to haul neatly tagged cargo from one end of the cell to the other along a molecular railroad tracks. It also includes power plants to generate the cell's energy; disciplined biological armies standing ready to fight the invaders; and a centralized genetic government to maintain order. Darwin's natural selection lies in smoking ruins. Darwinism may explain simple things like the shape of finch beaks, but for the more complex questions of how life evolved and why, biology is still reluctant to admit God's Grand Design.

At the present time biology seems to be in a state of complete denial that controlled physics when the concept of the Big Bang was first introduced. Some modern biologists look for anything to reject the prospect of intentional design of life. Their denial won't last long, though; evidences are too strong. Other biologists suggested an interesting compromise. It is called creative evolution. They believe that God created Adam, but they may exclude the controversial Biblical statement that God created Adam in His own image. Now, they ask the question: Who was really Adam? Could he be the first living cell on Earth? Creative evolution advocates evolution not by natural selection but by the guidance of God. This conclusion is based upon incomplete evidences. And all the conflicts and contradictions of evolution will have to be defended by the creative evolutionists and that was never done successfully.

The news media often ask scientists how science can be

reconciled with religion. A better question would be how could anyone with some knowledge of science avoid watching the overwhelming evidences of One God?

Humans managed to divide science into three main categories:

- **Physical:** such as physics, chemistry, and engineering.
- **Biological:** such as medicine, embryology, botany, and zoology.
- **Sociological:** such as psychology, economics, anthropology, and history.

However, the great scientific pioneers in the human's history could not really be classified as physicist, biologists, or sociologists. Most of them had knowledge in many branches of science. An inspiring list of those pioneers includes Newton, Galileo, Al-battani (Albatenius), and Ibn Sina. Without exception, true scientists were devout religious people. They simply understood that science would never have answers to all complex questions.

At present, in trying to deal with the enormous scientific and spiritual information that is available to us, it may help to abandon the above categorization of science and put the above three categories under a new name called Evidences of God! Or attach the Name of God to all branches of science such as physics of God, biology of God, etc. If we do that, the simplest physical law, biological and sociological phenomenon can then make sense. Asking questions about: who, why, and how can then have one answer, and one answer only. Some scientists are limiting their creativity by rejecting the concept of God. If scientists make it their business to uncover some of God's Grand Design, humanity will enjoy a much greater scientific achievements, paralleled only to the great scientific advances that Islam inspired in the Middle Ages.

This would certainly require a major overhaul in the entire educational system. Teachers would be required to be more inspirational. Books would have to be rewritten to include the thoughts of the scientific pioneers, and not merely their works without any human attachments. This would change the life of

physicists, biologists, engineers, botanists, and all other professionals. Every simple physical law, biological test or analysis is approached within the framework of the Grand Design. If that happens, the entire human family would be in a state of submission to the Will of God. And that is what Islam is all about.

The attitude of Islam towards continuous knowledge and scientific development is quite remarkable. As a matter of fact, the first word revealed in the Quran was "Read." It was an order from the Creator to the Muslims to seek true knowledge, because this is the only way to achieve an appreciation for the Glory and Greatness of God. With this order, science took on an international character in the Islamic universities of the Middle Ages. During that time, Muslims had a great advantage because the Quran inspired the Muslims to study the sky and the earth to find proof for their faith. Muhammad encouraged the Muslims to seek knowledge from the cradle to the grave, no matter if their search took them as far as China. Studying is considered an act of worshipping God. It is an established fact that scientific upsurge by Muslims came as a result of religious influence. Anyone who knows something about Islamic history is aware of the period of the Middle Ages, which saw cultural and scientific peaks in the Islamic world.

Muslims made great contributions in the fields of mathematics, astronomy, physics, botany, medicine etc. There is no numeral of greater significance than the zero, which came from the Arabic word "sifr" or empty. Solutions of algebraic equations were introduced early in the Islamic world, where it was known as the "science of restoration and balancing." (The Arabic word for restoration, al-jabr, is the root of the word algebra, and algebra as a science is an Islamic contribution.) Al-Khwarizmi (780-850) of Baghdad popularized the use of the decimal numbering system and wrote the first clear textbook on algebra. The title of this influential Arabic book was "al-jabr wa al-muqabala", which means "the art of bringing together unknowns to match known quantities." The key word "al-jabr" or "bringing together" gave rise to the word algebra. Al-Battani (850-929) in Damascus is considered the greatest Muslim astronomer and mathematician. He improved trigonometry and calculated the first table of cotangents. The

Latinos, called al-Battani "Albatenius". Other Muslims such as Abu Kamil, and Omar Khayyam are only few names that contributed in Algebra.

Ibn Al-haitham (965-1039), known as "Alhazen" in the West, was one of the greatest investigators of optics of all times. He was also a physician. His fame came from a book on optics that became known to Kepler during the seventeenth century. This masterpiece, "Ketab Al-Manazeer" (Book of Mirrors) had great influence on the training of later scientists in Europe, in which he described the nature of light as consisting of particles which carry heat and energy. Thabit Ibn Qurra (833-902) in Baghdad was the commentator on higher mathematics, and wrote on the theory of numbers. He, also, wrote about gravity and its relationship with mass, stating that when there are two bodies, the larger body exerts a stronger influence on the lesser mass. Islamic astronomers of the Middle Ages, having learned how to build mathematical instruments, were setting up observatories and charting the movements of stars and planets, while contemporary Europeans were ignorant of nearly all sciences. During the 10th century, Cordoba, the largest city in Europe, was a center for Islamic learning. Its mosque, known as La Mezquita, was one of the largest in the Islamic world. Ibn Rushd (1126-98), born in Cordoba, known in Latin as Averroës, was a Spanish-Arab Islamic philosopher, jurist, and physician. He also studied theology, philosophy, and mathematics under the Arab philosopher Ibn Tufayl (1105? -85) and medicine under the Arab physician Avenzoar (1090-1162). It is interesting to note that prominent Muslim scientists were given Latin names with the effect of obscuring their identity and origin, and their association with the Islamic civilization. The Caliph's library at Cordoba included 400,000 books. Scholars from all over Europe went to study at Cordoba. As the signs of mathematical awakening in Europe appeared in the thirteenth century, the Christian monks made contact with Islamic universities in Spain, opening the way to the Renaissance, and the translation from Arabic to Latin started.

The first university on earth, Al-Azhar (the resplendent) was established after the founding of Cairo itself in 969 AD. This university has an important effect upon the development of

educational institutions in Europe. The wearing of black academic gowns, traditions of public disputations, and division of undergraduate and graduate faculties originated at Al-Azhar University. Non-Arab speaking students from Europe had to take a crash course in Arabic for 6 months, because Arabic was the language of science.

4.3 Polytheism

Polytheism is defined as a multiplicity of individualistic divinities having human and/or animal forms and feelings. According to Islamic traditions, the first idols on Earth were during the time of Noah (Pbuh i.e. Peace be upon him). Noah was the tenth grandson of Adam (Pbuh). The names of these idols were Wadd, Sawaa, Yaguth, Yauq, and Nasr. They were righteous people, and everyone used to love and listen to them. When Wadd died, his followers missed him, and became very sad. Satan encouraged the people to make a picture of Wadd so they can keep it in their places, and remember this spiritual leader. They accepted Satan's offer and became heavily involved in the pictures. When Satan saw what they did, he extended his offer to give them a statue of Wadd. Once again, they accepted Satan's offer. Their following generation saw how their parents glorified those statues. Eventually, those statues were treated as gods, and during Noah's time there were five idols.

This story explains how Satan takes the human being step by step towards every sin, even when the intention, of the people that accepted the pictures, might have been sincere. That is why the Islamic laws prohibit all actions that may lead to major sins.

Moreover, this story indicates that Man did not invent polytheism out of nothing. Adam believed in One God. His children followed satanic steps, and converted monotheism to polytheism. As time passes, religious beliefs and traditions were adulterated and contaminated from one generation to another. That is why most polytheistic beliefs or philosophical notions still have some elements of the monotheistic religion.

Many gods as well as the embodiment of Gods in human form (incarnation) characterize polytheism. Because of their human

forms and the multitude of gods, they usually fight with each other, and they marry and get children who are also gods. Since the beginning of time, knowledge and wisdom were always transmitted from parents to children. Thus, the ancient relationships of gods to humans were as close as fathers and sons.

Babylonian Mythology

Babylon, one of the most important cities of the ancient world, whose location today is marked by a broad area of ruins just east of the Euphrates River, 90 km (56 mi.) south of Baghdad, Iraq. Babylon was the capital of Babylonia in the second and first millennia BC. This dynasty reached its high point under the powerful king Hammurabi in 1730 BC. In 1595 BC Hittites captured the city, and shortly thereafter it came under the control of the Kassite dynasty (1590-1155 BC). The Kassites transformed Babylon the city-state into the country of Babylonia by bringing all of southern Mesopotamia into permanent subjection and making Babylon its capital. The city thus became the administrative center of a large kingdom. Later, probably in the 12th century BC, it became the religious center as well. During their peak days, the priests filled the temples to recite *Enuma Elish*, the most famous of the ancient Near East poem. The purpose of the epic poem was to praise Marduk, the main god of Babylon and to celebrate the victory of Gods over chaos. The story begins with the creation of the gods, and *three gods* emerged: Apsu (the ocean), his wife Tiamat (the salty sea), and Mummu (the womb of chaos). These gods begot the successive generations of the gods, and then tried to destroy them. The plan failed, and the wise Ea (the Earth god) slew Apsu and locked Mummu away. Ea with his goddess wife Damkina produced their perfect son Marduk (the sun god). According to *Enuma Elish*, Tiamat created monsters and married their chief Kingu. Marduk conquered Tiamat and Kingu, the dragons of chaos, and thereby gained supreme power. Marduk fashioned the first man from the blood of the slain Kingu, and then, established Babylon as his dwelling place. Acknowledged as the creator of the universe and humanity, the god of light and life, and the ruler

of destinies, he rose to such eminence that he claimed 50 titles. Eventually, he was called simply Bel, meaning "Lord."

The people of Canaan (near the Mediterranean Sea) were influenced by the myth of Ea (the god) and Marduk (the son of god). Later, Christianity adopted this concept of god and son of god into its doctrine.

Egyptian Mythology

The religious beliefs of the ancient Egyptians had a major influence in the development of their culture. However, a true religion, in the sense of a unified theological system, was never recorded. The Egyptian faith was based on an unorganized compilation of ancient myths, nature worship, and innumerable deities. In the most significant and famous of these myths, a divine hierarchy was developed and the creation of the Earth was explained. The supreme deity of ancient Egypt was Ra, (the sun god), which was represented by a man with the head of a hawk, crowned with a solar disk.

According to the Egyptian account of creation, only the ocean existed at first. Then Ra came out of an egg (a flower, in some versions) that appeared on the surface of the water. Ra brought forth four children, the gods Shu and Geb and the goddesses Tefnut and Nut. Shu and Tefnut became the atmosphere. They stood on Geb, who became the Earth, and raised up Nut, who became the sky. Ra ruled over the entire universe and humans. Geb and Nut later had two sons, Set and Osiris, and two daughters, Isis and Nephthys. Osiris succeeded Ra as king of the Earth, helped by Isis, his sister and wife. Set, however, hated his brother Osiris and killed him. The powerful charms of Isis resurrected Osiris, who became king of the underworld, the land of the dead. *Horus was believed to be the son of god Osiris and goddess Isis.* Horus later defeated Set in a great battle and became king of the Earth.

In the fourth dynasty, the Egyptian king Snefru declared himself as the incarnation of the living sun god Ra. Cheops, his son and successor and the builder of the great pyramid of Giza, followed his father's royal footsteps, and took the title son of the god Ra. Later, all Egyptian Pharaohs assumed the title god as well

as the son of god Ra.

Ancient Egyptians believed in many articles of monotheistic faith such as: the hereafter, Day of Judgment, hell and paradise. Pyramids were their resurrection machines, with The Book of Dead, written on the walls of the deceased's chamber, described the safe passage to paradise. It has been suggested that their original monotheistic belief came from *Osiris*, who was actually *Enoch* of the Old Testament, and Prophet *Idris* in Islam. Notice the similarity of the names Osiris and Idris.

Greek Mythology

The legends of ancient Greece are more familiar because they have become so permanently embedded in literary traditions of Western civilization. Herodotus believed that the ancient Greek religion had been derived from the Egyptians. However, there was no worship of animals or of gods in animal form, as there was in Egypt. Greek gods and goddesses were pictured as being much like men and women. The term for this is anthropomorphism, meaning "in the form of a human." Greek conceived the gods to be more heroic in stature, more outstanding in beauty and proportion, and more powerful and enduring than humans. They were nevertheless endowed with many human weaknesses. They could be jealous, envious, hateful, and trivial.

During the Hellenistic period (about 323-146 BC), ancient Greeks became exposed to the Egyptian and Asian myths. A great poet called Homer brought many of the ancient stories together in a long poem of heroic adventure, called *Iliad and Odyssey*. These epics revealed much about the religion of the Greeks of that time. They believed in gods and goddesses who had many human traits and often took part in the lives of the people. These gods and goddesses, who often laughed, ate, drank, loved and hated, were said to live above the clouds of Mount Olympus in northern Greece. Each god or Goddess had some power over the forces of nature and the humans. For example, Aphrodite was the goddess of love, Athena was the virgin goddess of wisdom and war, Sofia goddess of wisdom, and Apollo was the god of the sun, poetry, and music.

At the head of the divine hierarchy was Zeus, the spiritual father of gods and men. His wife was Hera, queen of heaven and guardian of the sanctity of marriage.

Hindu Mythology

Hinduism is a collection of religions, which has evolved over 4000 years on the Indian subcontinent. Hinduism is a major world religion, not only by virtue of its many followers (estimated at more than 900 million) but also because of its deep influence on other religions during its long history. The word Hindu is derived from the Sanskrit word *sindhu*, "river." The Persians in the fifth century BC called the Hindus by that name, identifying them as the people of the land of the Indus. Hindu beliefs are so diverse; it has been suggested that "Hindu religion" does not exist. There are, however, some basic beliefs that are shared among the Hindus:

- Belief in the unity of all things in the world. The Hindus believe that there is one spirit that runs through all humans, animals, and plants. The Hindus call this unifying spirit *Brahman*.
- Belief in reincarnation of souls. They believe that when a person dies, he or she will be reborn in another life form. For example, the soul of dead animal might move to a newborn child.
- Belief in the *Karma*, which is the spiritual law of the universe that has great power, even though we cannot see it or touch it. It records the good and the bad deeds that a person does while alive and determines where the person should go in the next life. Being reborn as a Hindu of the high caste might be the reward a good person. An evil person may be reborn as an animal.
- Belief in the non-injury of any living creature. Since the Hindus believe that the same spirit unites all humans, animals, and plants, many of them do not kill animals or eat meat.
- Belief in many gods and goddesses who are different forms of *Brahman*. The trinity in Hinduism involves *Brahma* the

creator, Vishnu the preserver, and Shiva the destroyer. Vishnu is also worshipped in the form of a number of “Avatars” - avatar is the descent of a god to Earth in human form, more generally used of a person who is believed to embody or incarnate the divine. Shiva is said to have appeared on Earth in various human, animal, and vegetable forms. The great river goddess Ganga (the Ganges) is said to be a wife of Shiva. The goddess of music and literature, Saraswati, associated with the Saraswati River, is the wife of Brahma. Some scholars suggested that this Hindu form of trinity was the model adopted later as a Christian doctrine.

- Belief in working without worrying about results.

Many minor gods are associated with the great gods or with their children and friends. Hanuman, the monkey god, appears in the Ramayana as the cunning assistant of Rama in the siege of Lanka. *Skanda, the General of the Army of the gods, is the son of Shiva and Parvati.* Ganesha is the elephant-headed god of scribes and merchants, the remover of obstacles, and the object of worship at the beginning of any important enterprise.

It is interesting to note the close resemblance between the names Brahman, the Hindu unifying spirit, and Rahman, one of the Names of God in Islam. This may suggest that Hinduism had monotheistic origin.

Buddhism

Buddhism is closer to philosophy than religion. It was founded in northeastern India by Siddhartha Gautama (560 - 480 BC), who is known as the Buddha, or Enlightened One. He was born near the present Indian-Nepal border. He was the son of the ruler of a small kingdom. He had everything that he wanted, but was disturbed by the sorrow and suffering of some of the people in the kingdom. Therefore, at the age of twenty-nine, he left the palace, his wife and his son, to search for the cause and the solution of suffering. He meditated underneath a bodhi tree, near what is now Nepal, until he attained the enlightenment for which he had been searching.

Once having known this ultimate truth, the Buddha underwent a period of intense inner struggles. He began to preach, wandering from place to place, gathering a body of disciples, and organizing them into a monastic community known as the sangha. In this way he spent the rest of his life.

Buddha means the enlightened one. This title applies to any person who has attained the ultimate reality "nirvana," but it is often used for the founder of Buddhism. The original teachings had little ritual and downplayed the importance of deities. Legends surrounded the Buddha's life quickly turned into miracle stories, and after the Buddha died (from eating a poisoned meal) his bones and teeth were spread far and wide as holy relics. The Buddha was an oral teacher; he left no written body of thought. Later followers arranged his beliefs. The original Buddhism seems to present a moral and philosophical way of life rather than a religion.

Although never actually denying the existence of the gods, Buddhism denies them any special role. Their lives in heaven are long and pleasurable, but they are in the same condition as other creatures, being subject eventually to death and further rebirth in lower states of existence. They are not creators of the universe or in control of human destiny, and Buddhism denies the value of prayer and sacrifice to them. The deities are so preoccupied by their own pleasures that they lose sight of the need for salvation. Enlightenment is possible only for humans, and not for gods.

The Four Noble Truths: At the core of the Buddha's enlightenment was the realization of the Four Noble Truths:

1. Everything in life is suffering. It is a statement that, in its very nature, human existence is essentially painful from the moment of birth to the moment of death. Even death brings no relief, for the Buddha accepted the Hindu idea of life as cyclical, with death leading to further rebirth.
2. All suffering is caused by ignorance of the nature of reality and the craving, attachment, and grasping that result from such ignorance.
3. Overcoming ignorance and attachment can end suffering.

4. The means to achieve nirvana lies in the Noble Eightfold Path of right views, right intention, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindedness, and right contemplation. These eight are usually divided into three categories that form the cornerstone of Buddhist faith: morality, wisdom, and concentration.

Nirvana: is the ultimate goal of the Buddhist path in life. To achieve this goal is to reach nirvana, an enlightened state in which the fires of greed, hatred, and ignorance have been extinguished. Not to be confused with total annihilation, nirvana is a state of consciousness beyond definition. After achieving nirvana, the enlightened individual may continue to live, burning off any remaining karma until a state of final nirvana is attained at the moment of death.

The ethic that leads to nirvana involves cultivating virtuous attitudes, known as the Palaces of Brahma: loving, kindness, compassion, sympathetic joy, and patience. The ethic that leads to better rebirth, however, is centered on fulfilling one's duties to society. It involves acts of charity, as well as observance of the five ethics that constitute the basic moral code of Buddhism. The ethics prohibit killing, stealing, harmful language, sexual misbehavior, and the use of intoxicants. By observing these ethics, the three roots of evil—lust, hatred, and delusion—may be overcome.

4.4 Monotheism

Throughout history, humans have experienced spiritual experiences that cannot be explained. However we choose to interpret this encounter, these spiritual experiences are a fact of life. Buddhists deny that their visions are derived from a supernatural source. On the other hand, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam maintain that those experiences are divine. These monotheistic religions agree that it is impossible to describe those experiences in normal conceptual languages. Monotheism is a belief in the Unity of the God, or in One God. Jews are forbidden to pronounce the sacred Name of God. Muslims are prohibited to depict God, or any of his prophets, in human form. This discipline is a constant reminder that God is

beyond all human comprehension.

There is striking similarity in Jewish and Islamic concepts of God. The Jews and Muslims find the Christian doctrines of the trinity and incarnation almost impious. One form of Christianity, Unitarianism, denies the doctrines of the Trinity, maintaining that God exists in One Being only. From the middle of the second century to the end of the third century a succession of distinguished Christian teachers maintained the undivided unity of God. Unitarianism is based upon Arianism, which was a Christian sect in the fourth century that denied that Jesus Christ had the same divine substance as that of God and hold instead that he was only the highest of created beings. It was named after its author, Arius (256-336). A native of Libya, Arius studied at the theological school of Lucian of Antioch, where other supporters of the Arian's belief were also trained. Unitarians are generally close to the Jews and Muslims. They deny the doctrines of the Trinity, the delegated atonement, the deity of Jesus Christ, and the original sin.

According to the Islamic religion, the perception of God's Uniqueness is the basis of the morality of the Quran. To give allegiance to earthly things or associate God with anyone or anything is considered blasphemy, the greatest sin in Islam that will not be forgiven on the Day of Judgment. Any other sin may be forgiven by God's mercy if He wills. The Quran detests the pagan deities in almost exactly the same way as the Old Testament. These pagan gods are totally useless: they are powerless, and they cannot guide or protect humans. Instead, Muslims believe that Allah is the ultimate and unequalled reality:

Surah 112 "Say: He is Allah, The One; Allah, the Eternal, the Absolute; He begetteth not, Nor is He begotten; And there is none Like unto Him"

The nature of Allah here is indicated to us in few words that anyone can understand. Here we are specially taught to avoid the pitfalls into which humans have fallen at various times in trying to conceptualize Allah. We can understand Him as follows:

- We have to note that his nature is so elevated, so far beyond our limited conceptions; that the best way in which we can realize Him is to feel that He is a Personality, "He", and not a mere abstract conception of philosophy. He is near us; He cares about us; we owe our existence to Him.
- He is the One and Only God, the Only One to Whom worship is due; all other things or beings that we can think of are His creatures and in no way should be compared or associated with Him.
- He is Eternal without beginning or end, Absolute, not limited by time, space or circumstance. He is the Ultimate the Reality.
- We must not think of Him as a human having a son or a father, for that would be to import human qualities into our conception of Him.
- He is not like any other person or thing that we know or can imagine. His qualities and nature are unique.

The unity, consistency of creative designs and the fundamental facts in our existence, proclaim the unity of the Designer, Maker, and Creator. This Surah sums up the whole argument and warns us especially against anthropomorphism, the tendency to conceive Allah after our own pattern, an evil tendency that creeps in all times and among all peoples. Islam returns to the Semitic concept of the divine unity and refuses to imagine that God can "beget" a son. There is no deity but Allah, the creator of heaven and Earth, who alone can save man and send him the spiritual and physical sustenance that he needs. Only by acknowledging Him the Uncaused Cause of all being, Muslims address a dimension of reality beyond time and space.

The call for Muslims to prayer starts by "Allah Akbar", which is translated, and may be understood by some Muslims, as God is great. This is not a correct translation or meaning. It actually means, "Allah is greater." Full stop. Period. According to rules of any language, this is not a complete sentence. But this phrase actually means that Allah is greater than anything that anyone may conceptualize. "Allah Akbar" distinguishes between God and the rest of all realities. I heard this phrase thousands of time in my life,

but the first time I realized its true meaning, two pictures came to my mind: the intricate design of the universe and the living cell, and I was shaken and overwhelmed by the Greatness, Power, and Glory of Allah. Only by contemplating the verses of the Quran and the signs of nature, Muslims can grasp that aspect of divinity, because we can see God only through His words or His creations. The Quran emphasizes Allah as the Absolute, who alone has true and eternal existence:

Surah 55, Ayah 26 "All that is on Earth Will perish. But will abide (for ever) the face of Thy Lord - Full of Majesty, Bounty, and Honor"

The first pillar of Islam is "Shahadah", which is the Muslim profession of faith:

"I bear witness that there is no god but Allah, and that Muhammad is His messenger." This is not simply an affirmation of God's existence, but an acknowledgment that Allah is the only true reality or perfection, the only true form of eternal existence, and all beings that exist owe their existence to His Will. To make this assertion demands that Muslims integrate their lives by making God their focus and sole priority. To say that God is One is not a mere numerical definition, but it is a call to make this unity the driving factor of one's life. The divine unity requires Muslims to recognize that everything they do is for God's sake. A Muslim works because God asks him to work and in this case working becomes an act of worship. A Muslim marries because God asks him to marry, and in this case, marriage becomes an act of worship, and so on. Therefore, a Muslim is always reminded with the divine unity of Allah. Because there is only one God, all rightly guided religions must derive from Him alone, and the basic beliefs of those religions should not change. The unity of God is also manifested in the Quran by the command of Allah to the Muslims to believe in the authentic revelations and books revealed to all prophets, even if they do not exist in our present time.

The Search for One God

The search for a single deity, by thinkers and scientists, happened throughout the history of mankind. Many used logic, science and philosophy to resolve this crucial question.

The Egyptian Pharaoh Akhenaton concluded that the Sun god is the ultimate and only supreme power in the life of humanity. He abandoned polytheism in favor of monotheism by worshipping the sun god and ignored all the other traditional deities of Egypt, but his policies were immediately reversed by his successor King Tut.

Ibn Sina (980-1037), who is known by his Latin name Avicenna, was a great Muslim physician, and at the age of 18 he had mastered mathematics, logic, and physics. At that age, he was rewarded for his medical abilities with the post of court physician to the Samanid ruler of Bukhara. But his chief concern was religion. Ibn Sina extended the logical approach, based upon philosophical concepts, of Al-Kindi (870), another Muslim thinker. Ibn Sina formulated his approach to prove the existence of God, in his book *Kitab Ash-Shifa* (Book of Healing). His logic starts with a reflection of the way our minds work. We have the tendency of looking at anything in a global manner, and then examining the details later. A sentence consists of verbs and nouns, and these consist of letters. We learn first how to pronounce words and sentences, and then know the letters. A human body consists of a head, belly, arms, and legs, and these consist of cells. This process of breaking things into their components is our way of search for simplicity. We use bricks as simple building blocks to construct a complex skyscraper. The Earth consists of land and water. The Earth is one part of a more complex solar system, which is in turn a part of more complex star system, and so on. Also, simple things are inferior to complex things, such as an arm is inferior to the whole human body. Ibn Sina took it for granted that the whole universe follows a repetitive logic or laws. He also believed in the law of cause and effect. Thus, he considered that everything in this physical universe is a part of Unlimited Reality, a Supreme Creator that started it all. Since we cannot comprehend the physical universe, which should be inferior to the Unlimited Reality, then we will not be able to grasp the true

power of the Supreme Creator. God, the Unlimited Reality, is the Creator of all realities. Because He is at the top of all realities, He must be absolutely Perfect and worthy of human submission, praise, and worship.

Abu Hamid Alghazaly (1058- 1111) was a great Muslim thinker. He was born in Khurasan. He started his search for God by considering Sufism, a mystical interpretation of religion. Later, Alghazaly abandoned Sufism and formulated an approach that would be accepted by the majority of Muslims. He had several major publications that address the basic faith in Allah. One of his books, *Revival of Religious Knowledge*, a five-volume text, is considered a great Islamic reference. Alghazaly set himself to defend Islam against philosophy and mysticism. He tried to discern between right and wrong, between the reliable tradition of Islam and heretical innovation. He searched for a reliable unshakable faith in God. He believed that philosophy should restrict itself to obvious phenomena such as medicine, physics and astronomy. Philosophy should not be utilized as a way of proving God's Existence. How can anyone state facts about God that He himself did not reveal? Ibn Sina became the target of attack on philosophy by Alghazaly. After an agonizing search he found what he was looking for. Without abandoning reason, Alghazaly discovered that spiritual experiences, which cannot be explained by physical laws, yielded a direct and intuitive way to God. However, he resented taking that spiritual experience beyond its reasonable limits such as someone may claim that he is God's incarnate when he encounters such an experience. Like Ibn Sina he concluded that humans are inferior of the Unseen God Who supplies the physically unexplained spiritual experience.

Sir Isaac Newton (1642-1727) used the avenues of science and logic to achieve total conviction in God. Newton began with an attempt to explain the universe, with God as the Creator of all the physical laws that govern the universe. Newton believed that all natural laws are the effects with God as the only Cause of all actions. In fact, he believed that gravity is a divine action; in effect, a stone fell because God's finger was pushing it down. As Newton was investigating the universe, he became convinced that he had a

solid proof of God's existence. He wrote " *Gravity may put the planets into motion, but without the divine power it could never put them into such a circulating motion as they have about the sun, and therefore, for this as well as other reasons, I am compelled to ascribe the frame of this system to an intelligent Agent.*" God who had designed all this so perfectly, had to be a supremely intelligent "Mechanick" and extremely powerful to manage this huge universe. In Newton's Principia, he concluded that humans know God only by examining the evidences of His creations:

"This most beautiful system of the sun, planets, and comets could only proceed from the counsel and dominion of an intelligent and powerful Being. He is eternal and infinite, omnipotent and omniscient; that is his duration reaches from eternity to eternity; his presence from infinity to infinity; he governs all things, and knows all things that are or can be done. We know him only by his most wise and excellent contrivances of things, and final causes; we admire him for his perfection; but we reverence and adore him on account of his dominion; for we adore him as his servants.

According to "A History of God" by Karen Armstrong, 1993 and "Anti-Trinitarian Biographies," Vol. III, 1850 by A. Wallace, Newton rejected the divinity of Jesus and the doctrine of the trinity. He attributed these doctrines to the corruption of the New Testament. Newton came to the conclusion that the Fathers of the Church had imposed their doctrines on the Church in a misleading bid for pagan converts. He believed that the concept of the "three in heaven" was never once thought of. The verses of the New Testament that were used to "prove" these doctrines were erroneous. In 1690, He wrote a manuscript on the corruption of the New Testament concerning I John 5:7 and Timothy 3:16. It was entitled, "A Historical Account of Two Notable Corruptions of Scripture."

Newton became obsessed with clearing the Christian faith. He believed that Noah had founded the original religion - a Gentile faith - that had been simple and free from mysticism. Noah advocated the unity of God. Later generations had corrupted this pure religion with weird mixtures of idolatry and superstition. Thus

God had sent a succession of prophets to put humanity back on course. Newton's approach to monotheism was as close as it can be to the Islamic teachings.

During the eighteenth century, Christian scholars began to apply the new scientific methods to the Christian faith and came to the same conclusion of the existence of God as Newton. However, during Newton's time, there were those who claimed that Newton unfolded all the mysteries of God and discovered all His physical laws that govern the universe, and consequently God has nothing else to do!

4.5 God in the Bible

Humans are always looking to the sky for one supreme deity, who has created the world and governs human affairs. Belief in such a High God or Sky God is still a feature in many tribes in Africa, Australia, and South America. They look at the sky to ask God for help. The primitive tribes in south Australia climb a tree to be closer to God and then seek his help. Those tribes are higher in their concept of God Almighty than millions of the many humans who impose human characteristics on God. Though all theology originated with God, mankind played games with these pure and holy concepts.

The Old Testament had many imperfect descriptions of God portraying God after man's own image:

God regrets making man: (Genesis 6:6)

"And it repented the Lord that he had made man on Earth, and it grieved him at his heart."

This is in reference to the time of Noah, when people became evil and started associating idols with God Almighty.

God smells sweet savor: (Genesis 8:21)

"And the Lord smelled a sweet savor; "

God smelled the burned birds and animals that Noah sacrificed

on the altar (a stoned table used for burning)!

God came DOWN: (Genesis 11:5)

"The Lord came down to see the city and the tower, which the children of men builded"

This is a reference to the tower of Babel, where God caused people to spread all over the Earth. Babel is the place where God confused the language of the whole world, and Babel may mean "confuse" or the "gate of God."

God Wrestles with Jacob: (Genesis 32:24- 26)

"And Jacob was left alone; and there wrestled a man with him until the breaking of the day. And when he saw that he prevailed not against him, he touched the hollow of his thigh; and the hollow of Jacob's thigh was out of joint, as he wrestled with him. And he said, Let me go, for the day breaketh"

God changed the name of Jacob to Israel which might mean, "he fights with God", or "he whom God broke his leg"!

It is logical that a prophet fights for God or with the devil, but how can we understand that a prophet fights with his Creator all night long, and that God is afraid of the light because He wanted to leave before the daylight!

Jacob saw God face to face: (Genesis 32:30)

"And Jacob called the name of the place Peniel; for I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved"

God rested and was refreshed: (Exodus 31:17)

"For in six days the Lord made heaven and Earth, and on the seventh day he RESTED AND WAS REFRESHED."

Moses asked God to repent from evil things! : (Exodus 32:12)

"..Turn from thy fierce wrath, and repent of this evil against thy people.."

Do you believe that Moses said that to God? The Easy-to-read Version of the Bible made this unacceptable statement as follows: *"Please change your mind! Don't destroy your people!"*

What is worst: God obeyed Moses and repented!: (Exodus 32:14)

"And the Lord repented of the evil which he thought to do unto his people"

Ask yourself now who is the god and who is the prophet?

Moses threatened God! : (Exodus 32:32)

"Yet now, if thou wilt forgive their sin-; and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book which thou hast written"

Moses asked God to erase his name from his book, if he did not forgive the people of Israel! Again, do you believe that? Who is the god and who is the prophet?

Moses sees God's back parts: (Exodus 33:23)

"And I will take away mine hand, and thou shalt see my back parts: but my face shall not be seen"

This is when God talked to Moses and was about to leave him.

God rejected Israel completely: (Psalm 78:59)

"And God heard this and became very angry, And God rejected Israel Completely!"

God like a drunken man: (Psalm 78:65)

"And the Lord awakened as one out of sleep, and like a mighty man that shouteth by reason of wine."

This is when God reminded Israel of all the favors that He bestowed upon them when He took them from Egypt, and then they turned like their fathers.

Reading the Bible makes one wonder about the concept of God in the Jewish and Christian scripture. Here is a God that rested and refreshed to commemorate the Sabbath because God Almighty became tired and needed to be rejuvenated after His six days of hard labor.

Out of the 73 books of the Roman Catholics, and the 66 books of the Protestants of the Holy Bible, endless number of quotations can be found to illustrate man's various imperfect descriptions of God. No nation has had as much opportunities as the people of Israel had. And despite repeated warnings to the effect that:

Exodus 20:4-5 *"Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the Earth beneath, or that is in the water under the Earth. Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the Lord thy Lord am a jealous God"*

And in our present time, you can see God in the movies: walking, talking, and even smoking cigar, in the Hollywood movie "Oh God." Also, you can see books or chapters in books with titles such as *"When God does not make sense"*, *"The future of God"*, and even *"The death of God"*. One can only wonder about the effect of "The Holy Bible" in creating a human image of God.

Although the Bible said: *"So God created man in his own image,"* Genesis 1:27.

It looks also that Homo Arrogans created God in their own images!

This is a standing insult to God, the most powerful, as the Quran says:

Surah 2 Ayah 255 *"Allah! There is no God but He, - the Living, The Self-subsisting, Supporter of all, No slumber can seize Him Nor sleep. His are all things in the heavens and on Earth"*
Surah 50, Ayah 38 *" We created the heavens and the Earth and all between them in six days, nor did any sense or weariness touch us"*

The above verses state clearly that God has no need for rest or sleep. His activity, like His Life, is perfect and self-subsisting. This is in contrast with expressions, used by the Bible, such as awakened, repented, rested, and refreshed. This Islamic perception of God confirms that of the prophet Isaiah that people can't imagine what God is like:

"Hast thou not known? Hast thou not heard, that the everlasting god, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? There is no searching of his understanding" Isaiah 40:28.

4.6 His Name is Allah

Christianity and Islam originated in the Middle East. Any Christian in this area when asked about the Name of God, he will say Allah!

The English Bible starts with:

"In the beginning God created the heaven and Earth."

And the Arabic Bible starts with:

"In the beginning Allah created the heaven and Earth."

The western Christians are unaware of the Name of God of their eastern brothers. Some Christians think that Allah is the idol that the Islamic cult worships! The Office for the Non-Christian Affairs at the Vatican published a document under the title "Orientations for a Dialogue between Christians and Muslims. It is a very important document in that it shows the new position adopted towards Islam. In the third edition of this study (1970), the document stresses this fundamental point in the following terms:

"It would seem pointless to maintain that Allah is not real God, as do certain people in the west!" The Conciliatory document has put the above assertion in its proper place. There is no better way of illustrating Islamic faith in God than by quoting the

following extracts from *Lumen Gentium*, produced by the second Vatican Council (1962-1965):

“The Muslims profess the faith of Abraham and worship with us the sole merciful God, who is the future judge of men on the Day of Reckoning.”

El, Yahweh, or Jehovah

According to Biblical scholars, Abraham’s God was El, the High God of Canaan. This name of God was preserved in such Hebrew names as Isra-El, Ishma-El, or Beth-El. Bethel means house of Allah (In Arabic Bait Allah). The last words of Jesus, in his own native Aramaic language, on the cross:

Matthew 27:46 “Eli, Eli la’ma sa-bach’tha-ni? That is to say My God, my god, why hast thou forsaken me?”

It is interesting to note that the Aramaic “la’ma sa” is the same as the Arabic “why”, and pronounced “lemasa.” This is just one of the many words that shows the common origin of the Arabic and Aramaic languages.

In 1780, the German professor, J. H. Eichhorn discovered that there are two versions of many of the Biblical stories that are different in the details. He also discovered that one version refers to God as Yahweh. He called the writer of this version “J”, which in German is pronounced like the English Y. The writer of the second version E referred to God as El (Elohim in Hebrew). J was from the southern Kingdom of Judah, while E was from the Northern Kingdom of Israel.

Whenever the name of God appeared in its true Hebrew form “YHWH”, these four letters were preceded by a substitute word “Adonai,” to warn the reader that the following word should not be pronounced. The Jews took meticulous care in repeating this exercise six thousand, eight hundred and twenty three times - interpolating the words “Adonai” or “Elohim.” They sincerely believed that this awesome name of God should never be

pronounced. This prohibition was no ordinary affair: it called for a death penalty on one who dares to utter it, and this restriction has been more powerful than all the "Do's" and "Don'ts" of the Ten Commandments put together.

The English Bible refers to YHWH as "Lord God", and to Elohim as "God"

Genesis 1:26 *"And God said, Let us make man in our own image"*

Genesis 2.7 *"And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground"*

The word "Jehovah" did not exist prior to the sixteenth century. If Jehovah is the name of God, and if the twenty seven Books of the New Testament were inspired by Him, then it is extremely strange that He (Jehovah) did not have His own name recorded in "His Own Words." The Geek version of the New Testament does not have the name "Jehovah" written in it. Curiously this name of God has been replaced by the Greek words Kyrios and Theos, which mean Lord and God.

Hallelujah means Praise God in both secular and religious sense. The Jewish interpretation means Praise Jah (abbreviation of "Yahweh"). It is also used in Revelation 19:1 as Alleluia. It is possible that Hallelujah consists of both Hall (praise) and elujah (El or Eloh or Allah). If Hallelujah means praise Allah, then in this case, no one has been able to eliminate the name "ALLAH" from the originals of the Bible. *Consider this divine intervention!*

The exact sound of the four letters YHWH is known to neither the Jews nor the Gentiles, (Gentile is anyone who is not Jewish!). The European Christians replaced the letter Y with J as follows:

| | |
|----------|--------------------|
| Yehuda | changed to Judah |
| Yusuf | changed to Joseph |
| Yunus | changed to Jonah |
| Yeheshua | changed to Joshua |
| Yehowa | changed to Jehovah |
| Ychudi | changed to Jewish |
| YHWH | changed to JHVH |

YHWH became Yahweh and JHVH became Jehovah! Jehovah Witnesses say that the Letters YHWH occur in the Hebrew Scriptures 6823 times, and it occurs with combination with the word "Elohim" 156 times in Genesis alone. This combination YHWH / ELOHIM has been consistently translated in the English Bible as "Lord God." Since the Jews did not articulate the word YHWH for centuries, and since the Chief Rabbis would not allow the unspeakable to be heard, they have forfeited the right to claim dogmatically how the word should sound. We have to seek the aid of the Arabic language to revive Hebrew, a language that had once died out. In every linguistic difficulty, recourse has to be made to the Arabic, a sister language, which has remained alive and viable.

Note the startling resemblance between the two languages; very often the same sounding words carry identical meaning in both:

| HEBREW | ARABIC | ENGLISH |
|--------|---------|---------|
| Shalom | Salaam | Peace |
| Yaum | Yaum | Day |
| Ikhud | Ahad | One |
| Elah | Ilah | God |
| Yahuwa | Ya Huwa | Oh he |

YHWH, YaHuWa, Ya HuWa all means the very same thing; "Ya" is a vocative and an exclamatory particle in both Hebrew and Arabic, meaning Oh. Also notice the similarity of **huwa**, **Huwa**, and **he** in Hebrew, Arabic, and English. Together, they mean Oh He! So instead of YHWH ELOHIM, we now have:

Oh HE! ELOHIM. This is very close to *Surah 112 in the Quran*: "Say: He is Allah,"

The suffix "IM" of the word "ELOHIM" is a plural of respect in Hebrew. In Arabic and Hebrew, there are two types of plurals: one for numbers and the other for honor as in royal proclamations. Since the plural of honors is uncommon in the language of the European, he has confused these plurals to connote a plurality of God, hence his justification of the Doctrine of the Trinity.

El in Hebrew means God and this was His name in the northern kingdom of Israel when it separated into two kingdoms. EL also was known to be the God of Abraham. El is also the name of God that Jesus called upon on the cross "Eli". (Eli means my God). This means that El, Elah, Eloh, and ELOHIM are not distinctly different words. They all represent the single Arabic name Allah.

In the English Bible, "*New and improved Edition*," edited by Rev. C.I. Scofield, D.D., with his Bible Commentary in comment No. 1, the eight authors concur that:

"Elohim, (sometimes El or Elah), English form God, the first of the three primary names of Deity, is a uni-plural noun formed from EL = strength, or the strong one, and Allah,"

All the authors agreed that Allah is a name of God. However, in a later version with new authors, "*The New Scofield Reference Bible*," the name Allah was taken out. Western Christian scholars simply do not want any association with Allah, the God of Eastern Christians and Muslims.

There is no difficulty in understanding that in the languages of the world, every nation has given a distinctive name to God. Most of these names are attributive names, describing some aspect of God. But the proper name for God Almighty in the Semitic languages' i.e. in the mother tongues of Moses, Jesus, and Muhammad (Peace be upon them all) is Allah. The name Allah exists in the Arabic Bible. The name Allah came from the lips of Jesus. The name Allah exists in the western world in "Hallelujah." In Revelation 19:1, John saw a vision, in which he heard the angles in the heaven singing alleluia. This vision is the same as the Islamic tradition that the angles are praising Allah all the time.

If you look in the Second College Edition, The American Heritage Dictionary, you will find the following:

Babel: Akkadian bab- ilu (also in Arabic) Bab, door or gate, El, God.

Ishmael: Hebrew (Ismael in Arabic) yisma, He will hear, El, God.

Until now in the Middle East most names have meanings. In Babylonian mythology, Marduk was called Bel (B + El), meaning "Lord." Also Israel means, "He fights with God." Also notice the vowel *u* at the end of *bab- ilu*, which means a vowel exists after El or IL. Therefore in ancient languages El meant God, and a vowel can be added to EL or IL. If you add to that Hallelujah, Eli, Eli la'ma sa-bach'tha-ni, Allah in Scofield's Bible, and the Arabic Bible, you will come to the conclusion that the name Allah, the Almighty, has been in existence for thousands of years. One may argue that El does not pronounce Allah. But El has been translated from Akkadian and Hebrew to Greek, to Latin, and then to English. And if you want to know what time can do to the pronunciation and writing in the same language, consider the following:

"Yes" is written and pronounced "Yeah"

"Want to" is written and pronounced "wanna"

"Got to" is written and pronounced "gotta"

And this only happened in few decades in the same language, without translation to four languages in at least 5000 years.

What is His Name? ALLAH.

4.7 The Religion Criteria

Now that we know that God Almighty exists, and that he creates humans, He communicates with His people to give them his message. God has done that by sending messengers to show them the right way that leads to paradise in the hereafter, and to warn them against the devil's way that leads to hellfire. Some of the messengers were local for a certain time and to certain people. Some had larger responsibility and left their people with Holy Books that would guide them after the Prophets died. These Holy Books are like an owner's manual of cars or a user's manual of computer's software. If you follow the instructions, you will get the maximum benefit, but if you ignore the instruction and the proper way of usage, then you will have a lot of troubles. This is a valid principle that applies to cars, computers, or humans.

Religion and Faith

We mentioned in the introduction of this book, that you could realize the existence of God by examining His signs or by having intuitive faith. However, this faith should not be blind, but based upon reasonable judgment. The reason is that in this world we have seen hundreds of people making all sorts of claims. Many claimed that they were prophets, receiving revelation from God. Others claimed to be the expected Messiah that will come before the end of the world. Even pagan religions asked its followers to have faith. Scriptures are said to be inspired or revealed by God, and they are so many. And each preacher emphasizes the usual sentence: “you either have faith or not.” If humans accept this argument blindly, there will be much confusion. Faith should be based upon a rational and sensible conclusion. Furthermore, it not enough for a religion to call for such terms as brotherhood, global peace, equality, mercy, etc. to be accepted. Religion is a serious business, and choosing the right religion requires some reasoning. Religion should be treated at least as any other decision that humans make every day. You should not rush to a conclusion, and at the same time you should not treat it as a long-term decision.

In the next section, an attempt will be made to present a set of criteria for accepting a religion based upon the following necessary and sufficient conditions:

Universality

Since we know that God is One, and we are all His people that came from a single father and mother, it follows that there must be one religion. This is because God is not going to change His rules to suit different nations. He measures all humanity with only One Standard. Therefore, the religion should be universal regardless of race, color, time, place, wealth, or gender.

This condition right away excludes Judaism unless we accept the notion that God has chosen the Jews and only the Jews to the rest of humanity for His religion. In this case, this contradicts one of God’s attributes, Justice. Jews do not have missionaries, and do

not invite any one to join them. If someone wants to convert to Judaism, which is supposed to be a religion of God, he will have hard times. Often times, the media reports that the Jews in Israel reject the conversion of a teenager from a Jewish father. According to the Jewish law in Israel, the mother determines religion. Therefore, if someone manages to be converted by a Jewish organization outside Israel, the Jewish establishment in Israel will not recognize that conversion. Therefore, to follow a monotheistic religion, we are left with Christianity and Islam.

Simplicity

Throughout history, there existed a class of theologians and philosophers that claimed that they had knowledge about religion and God that the public could not understand. An example to such theology is the Gnostic Christian movement that flourished during the second and third centuries AD. Gnosticism presented a major challenge to orthodox Christianity. The term Gnosticism is derived from the Greek word *gnosis* (“revealed knowledge”). To its adherents, Gnosticism promised a secret knowledge of the divine dominion that the laymen would not comprehend. Therefore denying the public from comprehending the religion that they were supposed to believe in.

A religion by definition should be understood and practiced by all people regardless of their intellectual and educational capability. A religion should be for the illiterate as well as those with the highest degrees. There should not be any confusion or ambiguity in explaining the religion.

Uniqueness

The Holy Scriptures should be unique and only the original version should be used. There should not be multiple versions that are revised and revised again by humans. If a translation of the original version exists, it should be accompanied by the original text in its original language. Human translation of Holy Books is never perfect. Translation of Holy Books is a serious business, because it

involves the imperfect human perception of the translators.

Openness

Following the above condition of simplicity, a religion should be opened with all its aspects. The exact history should be presented. The evolution of doctrine, if any, should be known and accessible to the public. The honest preachers should not attempt to keep their congregation in the dark about any subject relating to the religion. It is nice for a religion to emphasize the good morals, but should this be the only criterion of accepting a religion? Preachers should state the whole truth, and not half the truth, about religions.

Authenticity

The scriptures of a religion should be authentic and traceable to its origin. All the records should not be adulterated or tainted with any Human ideas or perception. The original writer or writers of the scriptures should be known, and there should be sufficient evidences for the trustworthiness of the writers. The subject of authenticity should be very clear and definite without any confusion about who actually wrote the scriptures.

Consistency

God revealed the Holy Books. One should not expect inconsistency or contradictions in the scriptures. There should not be any error or even a claim of error associated with Holy Books.

The Prophet

The character of the Prophet who received the revelation should be impeccable before the revelation. His life should be documented before and during the revelation to make sure that he was honest and truthful. He should not have bowed to anyone else but God.

The Holy Book

The Holy Book should have the following characteristics:

- It should identify God in names and attributes.
- It should show Humans the proper way of communicating with God.
- It should convey a message that does not contradict human intuition and accepted morals.
- It should guide humans to the right path for salvation that leads to paradise.
- It should warn Humans against evil acts that lead to hellfire.
- It should project a sense of purity and holiness.
- It should outline the divine standard that humans should follow.
- It should include overwhelming prophecies and scientific miracle as a continuous challenge to the unbelievers.

All the above conditions will be examined in the next chapters in an attempt to arrive at the religion of Allah.

5

Setting the Stage for Christianity

Reading the Old Testament can be a very confusing experience for an average careful reader. Some verses strike the reader as the “Word of God.” Others register as the “words of the Prophets.” And most of the verses were written by historians who injected their environment and tribal feud in the stories of the Old Testament. And the serious question is how the average layman can separate the above three categories? Should the seeker of the authentic Word of God in Bible depend on himself or his preacher? Will the preacher state the facts or keep quiet? It is extremely hard to get information from the Bible if the above three categories are merged together. That is why the Islamic sources of knowledge are divided into five main separate categories:

1. The Word of God, as revealed to Prophet Muhammad (Pbuh), is found in The Holy Quran, which is the same Arabic text that exists everywhere in all Islamic countries, for more than fourteen centuries.
2. The words of Muhammad (Pbuh), the Prophet of God, are recorded in books called the Hadith. There are two kinds of Hadith: Hadith Qudsi (or Sacred Hadith) and Prophetic Hadith. Hadith Qudsi are the sayings of Prophet Muhammad (Pbuh) as revealed to him by Allah. Hadith Qudsi are so named because their authority is traced back to Allah but Prophet Muhammad (Pbuh) put them in his own words. The Prophetic

- Hadith are the majority of Hadith and are traced back to the Prophet. There are two major accepted collections of the Hadith collected by the Islamic scholars Albukhari and Muslim. Every Hadith is recorded with the chain of people who heard it. This chain may include one person, or many persons. Based upon the trustworthiness of each reference included in the narration, the Hadith is classified as accepted, good, or weak. It is interesting to note that the Bible does not even enjoy this complex referencing system of the Hadith.
3. Interpretation of the Quran where each verse of the Quran is discussed as to why, when, and where it was revealed. The interpretation of the Quran is always accompanied with the original verses of the Quran as a precaution against misinterpretation. It should be noted that few verses in few interpretations were not correctly interpreted, and were rejected by the majority of the Islamic scholars. There must be certain qualifications to interpret the Quran. Among these qualifications are memorizing of the whole Quran by heart, knowledge of the Arabic language and its grammar, and good Islamic character.
 4. Interpretation of the Hadith where each saying of the Prophet is explained as to why, when, and where it was said. The interpretation of the Hadith is always accompanied with the original saying of the Prophet as a precaution against misinterpretation.
 5. Islamic history, written by historians of high integrity and knowledge, and others of lesser trustworthiness. This history extends from the life of Muhammad (Pbuh) to the present time. The life of the Prophet is detailed from his birth to his death in many references.

As a hypothetical situation, if someone attempts to mix the Quran, sayings of the Prophet, the different interpretations, and Islamic history, in one composite text, then anyone who reads that confusing text will surely find contradictions. And if the composite text is thought to be totally inspired from God, then surely researchers will eventually find the contradictions, and question

the authenticity of the whole text. This situation is what I will attempt to prove happening in the case of the Old and New Testament. This is not a personal point of view from a Muslim. It is the Biblical scholars' works that the average Christian does not know, and the information that the Sunday classes' preachers are not volunteering. Thank God, Muslims kept the above five kinds of books separate, hence there was no way to add any word, or even a comma for that matter, to the Quran, the authentic Word of God. This was a promise from God Himself that He will protect the Quran. And that is what happened:

Surah 15, Ayah 9 *"We have without doubt, sent down the message. And We will assuredly guard it (from corruption)"*

The purity of the text of the Quran through fourteen centuries is an indication of eternal care with Allah's Truth protected through all ages. As promised by God, this Holy Truth will never suffer corruption, or any human adulteration.

The Quran as a text is undoubtedly preserved by the promise of Allah Himself. Furthermore, the recitation of the Quran, anywhere on Earth, is the same recitation as that of the Prophet. In the written Quran there are some symbols that indicate that the Prophet joined verses or break long verses in his recitation. These symbols are listed at the end of the Quran. Therefore, in reciting the Quran, Muslims use those symbols to stop where the Prophet stop, and continue where he continued. It is quite exceptional to imagine the Power of God's promise to secure the Quran in writings as well as in readings.

Reciting the Quran is an established science in Islamic schools. The Quran is 604 pages long. During the time of the Prophet thousand of his companions memorized the whole 604 pages. In the present time millions of Muslims everywhere know the Quran by heart.

5.1 The Old Testament

It important to start with that the Bible admits its own corruption by the scribes who wrote down and copied the different chapters

of the Old Testament. First Moses warns the people of Israel that the Covenant, heaven and earth would be against them because they are very stubborn, Deuteronomy 31:24-29. He predicted that the Jews, who refused to obey him while he was with them, would become evil and corrupt. Then in the Revised Standard Version, Jeremiah 8:8, God asked Jeremiah to tell the people of Judah:

"How can you say, 'We are wise, and the law of the LORD is with us'? But, behold, the false pen of the scribes has made it into a lie."

The Holy Bible, Easy to Read Version makes it even clearer:

"You keep saying, 'We have the Lord's teachings! So we are wise. But that is not true. Why? Because the scribes have lied with their pens."

This is an obvious statement from Prophet Jeremiah that the scribes corrupted the Bible. They claim that the Bible says that they are wise, but they are liars.

The term Bible is derived through Latin from the Greek *biblia*, or "books," the diminutive form of *byblos*, the word for "papyrus" or "paper," which was exported from the ancient Phoenician port city of Biblos. The Bible consists of the Old Testament of the Jewish scripture, and the New Testament of the Christian books. The remainder of this chapter will focus on the Old Testament.

The order and the number of books differ between the Jewish Bible and the Protestant and Roman Catholic versions of the Bible. The Jewish Bible is the Hebrew Scriptures. It consists of 39 books originally written in Hebrew, except for a few sections in Aramaic. The Bible of Judaism consists of three distinct parts:

1. The Torah, or Law, also called the books of Moses.
2. The Nebiim, (plural for Nebi, "Prophet") or Prophets, divided into the earlier and latter Prophets.
3. The Ketubim, (plural for Ketub, "book") or Writings, including Psalms, wisdom books, and other diverse literature.

The Christian Old Testament organizes the books according to their type of literature:

1. The Pentateuch, the first five books of the Old Testament, corresponding to the Torah.
2. The historical books.
3. The poetical or wisdom books.
4. The books of the Prophets.

The Protestant and Roman Catholic versions of the Old Testament place the books in the same sequence, but the Protestant version includes only those books found in the Bible of Judaism. Christians and Jews have been reading the Bible for over two thousand years. In the present time Christians go to Sunday classes after a full week of work to attain spiritual doses. They hear good lessons about the importance of moral values and the message of Jesus or Isaiah to be righteous and to love thy neighbor and all the uplifting speeches according to the Bible. After all, the Bible is the heart of Christianity and Judaism. Biblical scholars are preaching and studying it in churches, synagogues, and seminaries. People read it, study it, appreciate it, write about it, scrutinize it, and argue about it. And no one knows who actually wrote it. No one knows when or where it was written.

However, the layman accepts the hypothesis that the first five books of the Bible were written by Moses, half of the Psalms by David, the Gospel of Mark by Mark, and the Revelation by John and so on. After all in Exodus, 17:14, God told Moses "*Write this for a memorial in a book.*" John in his Gospel, 5: 46-47, makes Jesus say the following "*For had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me: for he wrote for me. But if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe my words.*" Paul, in his letter to the Romans, 10:5, referring to Leviticus, affirms "*Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law.*" John wrote in the Revelation, 1:9, "*For the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ.*" So, everything was fine, and everyone believes that the whole Bible is the authentic Word of God.

In the third century AD the Christian scholar Origen responded

to objections to the authenticity of the Torah by suggesting that contradictions are only apparent contradictions. They can be explained after very complex interpretation that the Bible did not include. For example Moses described his own death and where he was buried because God had told Moses this would happen. He also knew that Israel cried for him for thirty days, Deuteronomy 34:8. Investigators accepted, for eleven centuries, this argument that Moses wrote the first five books: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. These books are known as the Pentateuch (from Greek, meaning "five scrolls"). Then Isaac ibn Yashush, a Jewish physician of a Muslim ruler in Spain in the eleventh century, discovered that the list of the Edomite kings that appeared in Genesis 36 mentioned kings who lived long after Moses. Ibn Yashush proposed that another one wrote this part after Moses. The response to his theory was that he was called "Isaac the blunderer" by Abraham ibn Ezra, who was a twelfth century Spanish rabbi. He recommended that the book of Ibn Yashush to be burned. Ironically, it was Ibn Ezra that discovered that it was impossible for Moses to write the first five books of the Bible. These books referred to Moses in the third person, described places that he had never seen, and used language that reflected another time and place than those of Moses. He concluded that "*And if you understand, then you will recognize the truth.*" Then he wrote "*And he who understands will keep silent.*"

In the fifteenth century other scholars came to the same conclusions as those of Ibn Yashush. In the sixteenth century, van Maes, a Flemish Catholic scholar, suggested that later writers expanded the original text of Moses. They achieved that by making the text more current and more understandable. Later the Catholic Church classified this book as a Prohibited Book. In the seventeenth century, Isaac de la Peyrere, a French Calvinist, published a book that categorically said that Moses was not the author of the Pentateuch. He referred to the first verse of Deuteronomy, when "*Moses spake to all Israel on this side of Jordan.*" But Moses himself never recorded that he had been in Israel in his life. The book was also banned and burned. He was arrested and was ordered to recant his views to the Pope himself,

which he did. Later, other Christian scholars investigated the Bible, and found more contradictions such as "*There arose not a prophet since in Israel like unto Moses,*" Deuteronomy 34:10. This statement does not sound like the words of the humblest man on earth as Moses described himself. The Catholic Church took the same stand as with other scholars. Books were burned and scholars were arrested.

The Tribes of Israel

Joseph, the son of Jacob, brought his parents and brothers to Egypt. The sons of Jacob formed twelve tribes in Egypt. According to biblical tradition these tribes varied considerably in size and population. Moses counted all the people of Israel in Numbers 1:1-15. These tribes are divided into two groups:

1. The first group, included the tribes of Reuben, Simon, Levi, and Judah, settled in the south. Later, they formed the Kingdom of Judah.
2. The second group, included Issachar, Zebulun, Benjamin, Dan, Asher, Gad, Nephtali, and the descendants of Joseph: Ephraim and Manasseh, settled in the north. Later, they formed the Kingdom of Israel.

After the first generation of the Israelites died, many of the people of Israel worshipped the idol Gods of the Canaanite Baal and Asherah. For the following few centuries, judges governed the people. When the judges became corrupted, Israel asked for a king to lead them. The first king was Saul who committed mistakes and sins. God was sorry that he made Saul king. Then God chose David, from the tribe of Judah, to be the new king. He ruled over all of Israel and wrote many of the songs (or Psalms). He committed adultery with Bathsheba, and later he married her. When David was old, he appointed Solomon, his son from Bathsheba as the king of Israel. When Solomon was old, his wives pushed him to worship their idol gods. In the Quran, David and Solomon are recognized as two righteous kings and Prophets. Their sins in Bible

do not exist in the Quran.

After Solomon's death, his son king Rehoboam did not have the skills to keep the country united. The tribal feud expanded, and the unified Israel did not last long. Israel was divided into two kingdoms: the northern tribes called themselves Israel, and the southern tribes called themselves Judah. The people of Israel chose a man named Jeroboam as their king (reigned 786-746 BC). In the northern kingdom of Israel, several dynasties came and went. The kings of Israel had several capital cities at various times, the last of which was Samara. There were many wars between Israel and Judah.

The choice of priests by Jeroboam for his new kingdom was crucial to the authorship of the Old Testament. In order to strengthen his hold on the people, he changed the way they worship God. He built two temples for worshipping golden calves, one at Dan and the other at Bethel. Jeroboam appointed new priests, including individuals who were not Levites, to the function of the altar of the golden calf. The priests from the Levi family had no place in Jeroboam's new religious structure. They condemned the golden calves, which were the symbol of a pagan religion. Since the tribe of Levi had no territory of its own, as the other tribes had, the Levites had only two choices: they could move to Judah and try to find a place in the priestly hierarchy there, or they could stay in Israel and perform various religious services outside Dan and Bethel. The pious priests of Levi turned into poor and homeless people.

The existence of the kingdom of Israel in the north lasted for about two hundred years. During the time of Isaiah, the Assyrian empire, presently north of Iraq, destroyed Israel in 722 BC and deported the ten tribes of Israel into many places in the empire. Many Israelites fled from Israel south to Judah to escape the approaching Assyrian army. The Assyrians replaced the people of Israel with the Samaritans who came with their pagan religion. The Assyrians invaded Judah in 701 BC, and many cities were conquered. But they could not defeat Judah and they returned back. In 586 BC the Babylonians finally conquered Judah and its people led away into exile.

The two Jewish kingdoms existed side by side for two hundred years. They had common language and history, but they had many tribal hostilities and feuds. The priests of the Levi tribe became extremely bitter and frustrated from the tribes of the north who revived pagan religions. With this picture of the early years of the biblical world, the writers of the Old Testament can be identified.

J, E, P, and D

During the eighteenth century three independent investigators discovered that the Old Testament has two or three versions of the same story. They are: the German minister H. B. Witter in 1711, the French Physician Jean Astruc in 1753, and the German professor J. H. Eichhorn in 1780. Some of these versions have different details to the extent that careful studying of the Bible should raise serious challenges to the issue of the divine inspiration. It was Eichhorn who discovered that the two versions of many of the Biblical stories were written by J and E who referred to the deity as Yahweh and Elohim respectively. This step paved the way to further criticism of the Pentateuch. Even in the English translation of the Bible, it is easy to observe that biblical stories often appear with variations of details in two different places in the Bible. In one version, the deity was referred to as "God". In the second version God was referred to as "Lord God."

1. There are two stories of the creation of the world.
2. There are two stories of the flood.
3. There are two stories of the covenant between God and Abraham.
4. There are two stories of the naming of Abraham's son Isaac.
5. There are two stories of Abraham's claiming to a foreign king that his wife Sarah was his sister.
6. There are two stories of Jacob making a journey to Mesopotamia.
7. There are two stories of a revelation to Jacob at Bethel.
8. There are two stories of God's changing Jacob's name to Israel.

9. There are two stories of Jacob's giving birthright.

The assumption that the two earliest biblical writers, J and E, developed the whole Pentateuch lasted only eighteen years. Biblical researchers used the same technique of separating the Pentateuch into J and E to perform further separation of E. They discovered that there was a third source that appeared interested in the priests. This source was called P for the priestly interest. P had a dignified and distinguished belief of God. For example P did not believe that anyone could actually see God. When Moses beseeched God to see Him, God responded: "*You cannot see my face, for no man can see me and live*" (Exodus 33:20). However, P believed that humans could have spiritual experiences as a sign to His existence, which is not to be confused with God Himself. While J and E consider any Levite could be a priest, P recognized only the descendants of Aaron as priests over those of Moses. J and E were hostile to P.

The criterion of having three writers of the whole Pentateuch did not apply to the fifth book, Deuteronomy. Again there were major differences in the interest and style of the three writers and that of the Deuteronomy. The differences were obvious even in the translation. There are different expressions and favorite sentences. Biblical stories were different from those of the first four books. Deuteronomy appeared to be an independent fourth source, called D. There are blatant contradictions of details between D and the others. For example, D has different Ten Commandments! D was hostile to P since both fought for the priestly advantages.

At the end of the nineteenth century, Julius Wellhausen established the new critical model of discerning the four sources (JEPD) of the Pentateuch. Up to the present time, this theory goes by his name. It constitutes a solid foundation that any further work should be developed upon it. This study draws the ultimate conclusion of suggesting a new position instead of the prevailing one of divine revelation to Moses. This criticism downgraded the historical authenticity of the Biblical traditions. This critical analysis has extended beyond the five books of Moses and has touched every book in the Old and New Testament. There is hardly a biblical

scholar in the world actively working on the problem that would claim that the Pentateuch was written only by Moses - or by one single person. No serious biblical researcher can ignore it, and no other explanation of the evidences has opposed it.

5.2 Contradictions in The Old Testament

It is not our intention to present all the contradictions in the Old Testament. This would require more than one book devoted to this subject. As such, only samples of the contradiction are presented in this chapter. The Old Testament is full of stories about tribal feud of the people of Israel, and because of that the Old Testament is full of contradictions. Many biblical scholars approach this issue with the conclusion that the whole Old Testament could not be inspired by God. In this case, how can anyone discern the Word of God from the human words? How can then anyone separate the authentic Word of God from those stories? The analysis and criticism of the Old Testament began since the eleventh century. Yet Sunday classes, TV Evangelists, and Jewish rabbis decided that this information could be confusing to the layperson. So they all approach religious preaching from a position of comfort that emphasizes the moral lessons of the Bible rather than introducing confusing issues that may be very hard to explain. Most likely, biblical preachers use the advice of Abraham ibn Ezra when he said "*And he who understands will keep silent.*"

The Story of The Creation

The creation event is a fascinating case of two versions of the same story. At the beginning of the Bible, one version of how the world was created is presented. The second chapter of the Bible starts with a different version of creation. And both versions are scientifically inaccurate. In several points they contradict each other. For example, they describe the major events in different order.

1. In Genesis 1:1-26, God created plants on the third day and fish and birds on the fifth day. On the sixth day, He created

animals and man.

2. In Genesis 2:7-25, God created man first. Then He created plants. Then, for man to have company, God created animals and birds. And finally, God created woman.

The two stories have different sequences of steps of creation. Biblical scholars noticed that the first version referred to the deity as "God" thirty five times. The second version always referred to Him by name "Yahweh God" eleven times. The first version never calls Him Yahweh, and the second version never calls Him only God. Therefore, it can be concluded that the first version was written by P, and the second version was written by J. P described the creation in great details to give a sense and a feel of the supremacy of God. It is interesting to note that Genesis 2:1-3 referred to the deity as "God", after that He was referred to as "Lord God", which might mean that the first three verses of Genesis 2 should be the end of genesis 1, and thus was part of P. However, in describing the details of the creation in seven days, P had created a theological crisis:

1. If the sequence of the creation is not the same in the two versions, then which one is correct?
2. If P, who holds an omnipotent view of God, wrote the whole first version, then how did P make God rest in the seventh day? Did someone other than P write the seventh day resting story? *Was there a fifth source, for example "F"?*
3. Why the details of P have major scientific inaccuracies? Maurice Bucaille in his book *The Bible, the Quran and Science* listed many scientific inaccuracies that show that the P version of creation is inconsistent with what we know now about the Big Bang theory.

Keeping in mind that God cannot contradict Himself, the following points can be concluded:

1. God did not exactly inspire these two different versions.
2. The authentic story from God was edited, interpreted and

- expanded by at least two writers.
3. The authentic sequence of creation, if any, was changed to conform to the different audience and the readers at the time of compilation.

Now, we can understand why the Islamic religious books are divided into five categories, and the authentic Word of God is kept separate.

The Flood of Noah

The story of the flood exists in Genesis 6:5 to 8:22. Biblical scholars investigated this part of Genesis and separated the entire story from its two sources J and P. The P part refers to the deity as God, while the J part refers to God by the name Yahweh. The two versions differ in important details of the story:

1. J stated that God regretted that he had made humans, and He was grieved to His Heart, Genesis 6:6. P did not say that.
2. P says that the flood lasted for almost *one year* (7:11, 7:24, 8:3, and 8:13). J says that it lasted for *forty days and forty nights* (7:17).
3. P says that Noah sent a *raven*, while J says it was a *dove*, Genesis 8:7-8.
4. J has *seven pairs* of clean animals and one pair of unclean animals. ("Clean" means proper for sacrifice like sheep, "unclean" means not proper for sacrifice like lions.) This is because Noah offers a sacrifice at the end of the story in J. P has *one pair* of each kind of animal and the sacrifice event was not mentioned.
5. J stated that God smelled the sacrifices of Noah and it pleased Him, Genesis 8:21.

Now, we can understand why the Islamic religious books are divided into five categories, and the authentic Word of God is kept separate.

The Ten Commandments

The fact that the Ten Commandments are repeated in Exodus 20 and in Deuteronomy 5 almost word for word, with the exception of the fourth commandment raises very intriguing questions. Why? How did it happen? If these are words inspired by God, then why did God repeat Himself in 17 verses or in about half a chapter? Someone may say that God uses repetition for emphasis, why then is the fourth commandment the only difference?

Biblical investigators agree that P wrote the Exodus version and D wrote the Deuteronomy version. The fourth commandment deals with the reason given by God for keeping the Sabbath. The Exodus version, 20:10, by P states that the reason is because God rested on the seventh day. The Deuteronomy version by D gives a very general reason like "*And remember that thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt, and Yahweh thy God brought thee out thence through a mighty hand and by stretched out arm.*" Deuteronomy 5:15. If P wrote this verse of Exodus, why then did he abandon his perspective of the deity as an Almighty and All-powerful God and made God rest on the seventh day. This part actually conforms to J, because it certainly does not fit the Priestly P. It is fascinating to note that the Exodus version, with God's resting, is more publicized than the second one. This is probably to present a more potent reason to rest on Saturday. However, in doing that, they give the Almighty human characteristic.

Now, we can understand why the Islamic religious books are divided into five categories, and the authentic Word of God is kept separate.

The Golden Calf

One of the most intriguing stories of the bible is that of the golden calf. Moses liberated the Israelis from slavery in Egypt. They had seen many miracles, the last of which was the splitting the Red Sea. While Moses was receiving the Ten Commandments on the mountain, Aaron made a golden calf for the people, Exodus 32:4-5. The people said: "*these be thy gods, O Israel, which brought*

thee up out of the land of Egypt.” And Aaron said: “*Tomorrow is a feast to the Lord.*” The people sacrificed and celebrated wildly. At the same time, God told Moses about the terrible sin that the Israelis were committing, and God said that he would destroy the Israelis and make a great nation from Moses. Moses then asked God to repent of this evil act against the Israelis! The Lord repented and did not destroy the people. Moses came down from the mountain with Joshua, and saw the calf and the condition of the people. He, then, smashed the tablets in anger. The tribe of Levi gathered around Moses and carried out a bloody purge among the people. The story has many questions:

1. Why did the writer of the story portray his people as rebellious at the very time of their freedom and their receiving the covenant?
2. Why did he describe Aaron as the leader of this paganism?
3. Why did Aaron not suffer any punishment?
4. Why did the writer depict a golden calf?
5. Why did the Jews refer to the golden calf (which is singular) as “*these are your gods*” (plural)? This sentence is exactly the same as that of Jeroboam when he built two temples for the golden calves, 1 king 12:28. Jeroboam was justified in using plural for the calves, but in Exodus they worshiped a singular calf.
6. Why did they say, “*which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt.*” when the calf was made after they left Egypt?
7. Why did Aaron say, “*Tomorrow is a feast to the Lord.*” when he allowed worshipping an idol?
8. Why did he picture the Levites as acting in bloody rage?
9. Why was Joshua not included in association with this particular sin?
10. Is it conceivable that Moses asked God to repent of the evil of His wrath?

The story was written by E from the Northern Kingdom of Israel who used to criticize both the northern and southern religious organizations. Aaron was regarded as a high priest. E could not

change the history and the tradition by punishing the high priest. But E chose Aaron because the priests of the family of Aaron had been firmly established in Judah. So he accused Aaron, Moses' brother, of paganism. In Exodus 4:10-15, when Moses first spoke to God, he said: "*I am not a skilled speaker. I have never been able to speak well.*" According to the story in the Bible, Moses was reluctant to accept God's Command, and therefore God said: "*I will give you someone to help you. I will use your brother Aaron, from the family of Levi.*" If this Word of God did not mean that Aaron was a Prophet, then what does? He was not just a high priest. Aaron was a Prophet in Judaism and Islam. However according to the Old Testament, due to tribal hostilities and wars between the north and the south, Prophet Aaron was accused of paganism, and was demoted from a Prophet to a high priest.

Now, we can understand why the Islamic religious books are divided into five categories, and the authentic Word of God is kept separate.

Judah or Ephraim

This is a story of birthrights and inheritance issues with Jacob distributing his wealth among his family. E story is in Genesis 48 and J story is in Genesis 49. In the E version, Jacob granted Joseph's sons, Ephraim and Manasseh equal share in everything he owned. Jacob was old and his eyes were weak. When Jacob was blessing Joseph and his sons, Joseph put Ephraim on his left side and Manasseh on his right side. But Jacob crossed his arms, so his right hand was on Ephraim's head even though Manasseh was firstborn. This did not make Joseph happy. He took his father's hand and wanted to put it on Manasseh's head, but Jacob refused and argued that Ephraim would be greater than Manasseh. Why Ephraim? The writer of the E version was from Israel, and king Jeroboam was from the tribe of Ephraim.

Jacob's first son was Reuben, Simon was the second, Levi was the third, and Judah was the fourth. The J story justifies the superiority of Judah and the formation of the kingdom of Judah. The first son Reuben was excluded from his birthright because he

slept with one of his father's wives and his father found that out. Simon and Levi were also excluded because they planned evil things, killed men, and hurt animals for fun. Therefore the birthright, in the J version, went to Judah who was praised by his father, described as a lion, and was told that his family would be kings.

Now, we can understand why the Islamic religious books are divided into five categories, and the authentic Word of God is kept separate.

Isaac or Ismael

Christian scholars apply their investigative techniques to biblical stories, and usually defend any evil action of some biblical figures. But when it comes to Ismael, then this is another story. There is no sense here to investigate who wrote the story of Hagar and Ismael. If J wrote that Judah got the birthright, and E claimed that the birthright went to Ephraim, and J and E were from the twelve tribes of Jacob, the son of Isaac, can anyone expect good words about Ismael, the brother of Isaac, from any writer? Ismael was the firstborn, and of course he was denied his birthright as in the above stories. Any reference to Hagar is accompanied with such description as the maid and the Egyptian servant. The entire blessing and the praise went to Isaac. The Angel of the Lord told Hagar that *"Ismael would be wild man; his hand will be against everyone and everyone's hand would be against him, and he shall dwell in the presence of all his brethren,"* Genesis 16: 12. Recall that Aaron got much more disrespect when he was accused with paganism in the golden calf story. The honor of ultimate test of obedience, Abraham sacrificing his "only son", was given to Isaac instead of Ismael, Genesis 22. In fact, it was Ismael who was about to be sacrificed for the sake of God. Ismael knew what would happen to him and he surrendered to the will of God. So the writers of the Bible took the honor and praise from Ismael.

In Genesis 17:20 God said to Hager: *"As for Ismael, I have heard thee: Behold, I have blessed him, and will make him fruitful, and will multiply him exceedingly; twelve princes shall he beget, and I will make him a great nation."* This verse states clearly that

Ismael is blessed. God also said that his children would form a great nation. This great nation is obviously the Arab nation that started in the Saudi peninsula.

Also, God the Almighty left us with a formidable miracle that no one could take away from Ismael and his children. In Genesis 21:17-20 God's angel came to help Hagar and the baby Ismael when they were thirsty, and God allowed Hagar to see a well of water. So Hagar went to the well and filled her bag with water. Then she gave water to Ismael to drink. Now, what is this formidable miracle? This referenced well still exists in the Paran desert in Mecca. Since the time of Abraham, that well never dried. Every year millions and millions of Muslims still drink from the well. It is called Zamzam. The Saudis added compressors to the well Zamzam to lift up more and more water. This living miracle has existed for thousands of years. All miracles of the Bible disappeared, but the will of God for praising Ismael still defies time.

Now, we can understand why the Islamic religious books are divided into five categories, and the authentic Word of God is kept separate.

To See or Not To See

After Jacob wrestled with God, *"And Jacob called the name of the place Peniel: for I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved."* Genesis 32:30.

When Moses beseeched God to see Him, God responded: *"You cannot see my face, for no man can see me and live"* Exodus 33:20.

E wrote the first verse claiming that Jacob wrestled with God, saw his face and nothing happened to him. P wrote the second verse that denied the action of seeing God by anyone.

1. Which story do you believe?
2. Was E trying to elevate the status of Jacob above Moses?

To Rest or Not to Rest

The Jews' reason to rest on Saturday "*For in six days, the Lord made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day he rested, and was refreshed.*" Exodus 31:17.

The Prophet Isaiah says that people can't imagine what God is like "*Hast thou not known? Hast thou not heard, that the everlasting god, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? There is no searching of his understanding*" Isaiah 40:28.

Which verse of the Old Testament fits your perception of God the Almighty?

The Lord or Satan

David was asked by the Lord to number Israel and Judah:

*"And again the anger of the **Lord** was kindled against Israel, and he moved David against them to say, Go, number Israel and Judah"* 2 Samuel 24:1.

Then in 1 Chronicles 21:1, David was provoked by Satan to number Israel:

*"And **Satan** stood up against Israel, and provoked David to number Israel."*

Again, these two verses raise very interesting questions:

1. Are these explanations of the reason for numbering the Jews refer to the same story?
2. Or did God ask David to number Israel and Judah, while Satan provoked David to number Israel alone? And if so, why?
3. Did the two writers have different political interests about the reason for numbering? And if so, could both stories be inspired by God?

The revisers of the Revised Standard Version of the Bible had this to say about the authors of Samuel and Chronicles:

1. Samuel: Author "Unknown"
2. Chronicles: Author "Unknown", probably collected and edited by Ezra.

5.3 The Prophets in the Old Testament

Islam is based on reason and on pure teachings of all the Prophets of Allah not contaminated with paganism or corruption. Allah sent all the Prophets for the guidance of mankind. All Prophets were humans, and every one of them is a righteous example for the entire humanity. Because they were humans, they could do mistakes, *not sins*. However, the Bible is full of degrading stories about many Prophets as if God had sent the wrong people for our guidance. No Muslim would dare to write a book and stamp the Prophets of Allah (Allah' blessings and peace be upon all) with paganism, rape, adultery, prostitution or incest. They all have the respect that they deserve. The subject of the Prophets should not be approached as such: if you are Jewish, Moses is the only Good example, and if you are a Christian, Jesus is your only example and savior. Each Prophet is a good example for the entire human race to follow.

Here are some of the stories from the Bible about the corruption and sins of the Prophets. These stories show that the Jewish people did not have any respect for most of their Prophets. None of the following stories are mentioned in the Quran or the Islamic tradition.

Drunken Noah

The Bible states that after the flood, Noah became a farmer, (Gen. 9:20-23). He planted a field of grapes. Noah made wine and drank it. He became drunk and lay naked in his tent. Ham, the father of Canaan, saw his naked father. He told his brothers outside the tent. Then Shem and Japheth got a coat. They walked backwards into the tent, so they did not see their father naked. The wine made

Noah sleep. But when he woke, he learned what Ham had done. He cursed Ham, and prayed that he be the slave of his brothers.

We are familiar with the tribal feuds of the Israelis. Who wrote this story? Of course, it should have not come from the tribes of Ham, but most likely from the tribes of Shem or Japheth.

- Does this story identify a man that God chose to save the righteous people and destroy the unbelievers?
- What is the moral lesson in this story of the Holy Bible?
- Can Christian preachers tell this story in the church to young people?

Moses Kills Women and Boys

The book of Numbers narrates an incredible story about Moses. He asked his army to get even with the Midianites. The Israeli army killed all the Midianite men and burned all their towns and villages. They took the women, children, and animals and brought them to Moses. Moses was very angry with the leaders of the army. Moses said to them "Why did you let the women live." "Now kill all the Midianite boys and women and spare the women who had not sexual relations with any man" Numbers 31:15-17. The women who were spared were 32,000! Now imagine how many men, women and boys were killed by the command of Moses.

- Is this the same Moses who preached the commandment "Thou shall not kill"?
- If those people were killed because they had sexually transmitted disease, why kill the boys and spare the girls? And how many people did they slaughter?
- Can Christian preachers tell this story to Christian boys?

Lot and incest

Lot was the nephew of Abraham, and he is a Prophet in Islam. However, the Bible (Genesis 19:30-36) tells an unbelievable story. Lot took his two daughters to live in a cave in the mountain. The

daughters conspired to use their father to grow a family by getting him drunk and then having sex with their father each in one night. They did that, and they became pregnant. The older daughter gave birth to a son called Moab (Hebrew: from my father!), and the younger daughter gave birth to a son called Ben-Ammi (Hebrew: Son of my father!)

So the Bible tells us that it was not enough for Lot's daughters to commit this scandal, but to give their illegitimate children names to publicize their act!

- What is the moral lesson in this story of the Holy Bible?
- Can Christian preachers tell this story in the church to young people?

Jacob and the Red Lentil Soup

This is another story of the effect of tribal politics on compiling the Old Testament. Abraham's son, Isaac, married Rebekah. While she was pregnant, God told her that she would have twin sons in her body, and that the older son would serve the younger, Genesis (25: 22-34). The first baby was red and hairy, so he was called Esau, (means hairy). When the second baby was born, he was holding tightly to Esau's heel, so he was called Jacob, (means heel or tricky). In the ancient Near East, birth order was extremely important, because the firstborn son was entitled to the birthright, which meant the largest portion of the father's inheritance. Esau and Jacob grew up. One time Esau came back from the field hungry. He asked his brother to let him have some of the red lentil soup that Jacob was eating. And for some of the red lentil soup, Jacob asked for Esau's rights as firstborn in return. Esau did not have a choice. If he died from hunger, Jacob would have all of his father's wealth anyway.

When the time came for Isaac to give the birthright to Esau, Rebekah encouraged Jacob to pose as his older brother. To deceive his weak-eyed father, Jacob put on his brother's clothing and goatskin on his arms to simulate hairy arms. Isaac gave Jacob the blessing and the birthright that included the control over Esau. When

Esau came in from hunting, he knew what happened and he asked Isaac for another blessing for him. Isaac said: Jacob tricked him, and you will be a slave to your brother, but you will break away from his control.

Again this story has many questions:

- Why all these details, that even included red lentil soup, in the Word of God?
- Why did the story emphasize that Esau and Isaac were twin brothers?
- Why did the writer say that God told Rebekah that her older son would serve her younger son?
- Why did Isaac give the birthright to Jacob?
- Why was Esau given the promise that he would be free from Isaac?

The answers lie in the history of the tribes of Israel, and the knowledge about their tribal feud and wars between Israel and Judah. First, the writer of this story conforms to J, because he refers to God Yahweh, and J is from Judah. The southern kingdom of Judah had borders with the land of Edom, the tribe of Esau. J was actually fabricating a part of history, not the Word of God. J composed the story of his people's ancestors with an eye on explaining and justifying the present and past history. Esau, after eating the red lentil soup, became known as "red". The word for red in Hebrew is "Edom". Esau and Jacob were twins, like Judah and Edom were related neighbors, in language and origin. The United Kingdom of Israel-Judah under David defeated Edom and controlled it for two hundred years. Then Edom achieved its independence in 848 BC.

Sunday preachers do not mention this deceiving action or even justify the cunning behavior of Jacob, the father of Israel. The greedy negotiating tactic of Jacob for getting his father's wealth in exchange of some red lentil soup is just beyond comprehension. Even if it is mentioned, it is usually minimized or justified as God's will.

Jacob's Family

The Prophet Jacob was married to two sisters, Leah and Rachel, at the same time. (Gen. 29 22-30). Leah was the mother of all his children except Joseph and Benjamin whose mother was Rachel. Jacob's daughter Dinah was kidnapped and raped by the son of the king, Gen. 34:2. Dinah's brothers, Simon and Levi, killed the king and his son for revenge, Gen. 34:26. Jacob's sons from Leah conspired to throw Joseph into a well, Gen. 37:20. Jacob's first son Reuben was accused by Jacob of sleeping with one of his father's wives, Gen. 49:4.

This Biblical story does not seem like a family of a Prophet of God, but a soap opera on the TV. But we all know how those stories were written. May the blessings and peace of Allah be upon Jacob and Joseph.

- What is the moral lesson in this story of the Holy Bible?
- Can Christian preachers tell this story in the church to young people?

Judah and Tamar

To continue the saga of Jacob's family, Judah was one of his sons. Genesis 38 tells the story of the father of the Jewish race, from whom we derive the name Judea and Judaism. This patriarch of the Judaism got married and God granted him three sons: Er, Onan, and Shelah. When the first-born was old enough, Judah had him married to a lady called Tamar. *"But Er, Judah's first born was wicked in the sight of the Lord; and the Lord slew him."* Gen. 38:7. Following the Jewish tradition, if a brother died and left no offspring, it was the duty of the other brother to give "seed" to his sister in law, so that the deceased's name might be perpetuated. Judah, in honor with this custom, ordered his second son Onan to do this duty. But jealousy entered his heart. It would be his seed, but the name would be his brother's. *"He spilled it (sperms) on the ground...and the thing he did displeased the Lord: wherefore He slew him also."* Gen. 38:9-10. The sexual therapists call the act of

Onan "Onanism!"

Now Judah told his daughter in law, Tamar, to return to her father's house until his third son Shelah grew up, and then she would be back to marry the third son. Shelah grew up and perhaps married another woman. Judah was terrified to fulfill his promise to Tamar, because he already lost two sons. The distressed young lady resolved to take revenge on her father in law for depriving her of her "seed" right. Tamar learned that Judah was going on a trip. She planned to get even with him on the road. Judah saw her but he thought that she was a prostitute because she had covered her face. So Judah went to her and said: Let me have sexual relations with you. He promised her in return that he would send her a young goat. She asked for his seal as a guarantee for the goat. He accepted and he *"came in unto her, and she conceived by him."* Gen. 38:18 Judah knew that Tamar sinned like a prostitute, and she was pregnant and Judah wanted to burn her. Of course after he learned what happened, he did not burn her or burn himself!

- What is the moral lesson in this story of the Holy Bible?
- Can Christian preachers tell this story in the church to young people?

David and Adultery

King David was a Prophet of Allah. The Bible tells a story about David when he was in Jerusalem, (II Samuel 11:1-5). In an evening, David got up from his bed. He walked around the roof of the king's house. While he was on the roof, he saw a woman bathing. The woman was very beautiful. So David sent for his soldiers and asked them who the woman was. An officer answered that the woman's name is Bathsheba and she was married to one of David's soldier called Uriah. David sent messengers to bring Bathsheba to him. When she came to David, he had sexual relation with her. She washed herself, and then went back to her house. But Bathsheba became pregnant, and she sent word to David about her pregnancy. David did not stop at that, but he sent Uriah to the front line where the fighting was the hardest to be killed in the battle.

- What is the moral lesson in this story of the Holy Bible?
- Can Christian preachers tell this story in the church to young people?
- How could David then be accepted in the genealogy of Jesus when it started with a person who committed adultery? Allah forbids it!

David Kills Tens of Thousands

Saul put David in charge of the Israeli army who went to fight the Philistines. On the way home after the battles, Israeli women in every city in Israel came out to meet David. They enjoyed very much the slaughter of people; they danced and played music. They sang: "Saul killed thousands of the enemies, but David killed tens of thousands." It was a competition of slaughtering people between Saul and David. 1 Samuel 18:5-7.

- Did David believe in the Ten Commandments? He killed people and committed adultery.
- Can Christian preachers tell this story in the church?

Solomon and Paganism

Solomon the son of David was a Prophet of Allah who gave him wisdom and wealth. According to the Bible, (1 Kings 11:3-10), Solomon had 700 wives. He also had 300 slave women that were like wives to him. When Solomon was old, his wives forced him to follow their gods. Solomon worshipped Ashtoreth, the Cananite goddess of love and war. And Solomon also worshipped Milcom, the god of the Ammonite people. Solomon built a place on a hill next to Jerusalem for worshipping Chemosh, the idol of the Moabite people. Solomon also built a temple for Molech, the idol of the Ammonite people. Solomon did the same thing for all of his wives from other countries. The Lord came to Solomon and told him that he must not follow other gods. But Solomon did not follow the Lord's command.

- What is the moral lesson in this story of the Holy Bible?
- Can Christian preachers tell this story in the church to young people?

David's Son and Incest

According to the holy Bible, (II Samuel 13:1-20) Prophet David had a son named Amnon. Amnon had a half-sister called Tamar who was very beautiful. Amnon was in love with Tamar who was a virgin. He pretended to be sick and asked his sister to bring him food into the bedroom and feed him with her hand. When she began feeding her brother, he grabbed her and asked her to sleep with him. Tamar refused, but he forced her to have sex with him. After that he hated her, and locked her in a room. In this story, there is a private event in the Holy Bible between Amnon and his sister. How was this story revealed to the writers of the Bible?

- Did Amnon damage his sister's name by bragging about sexually assaulting her?
- What is the moral lesson in this story of the Holy Bible?
- Can Christian preachers tell this story in the church to young people?

Another one of David's Son and Multiple Rape

Yet another multiple rape episode by Absalom, the brother of Tamar, on David's wives, as told in II Samuel 16:20-23. David left some of his wives to take care of the house. Absalom was given advice to go and have sexual relations with them, so all the Israelis would hear that David hated his son, and the people would be encouraged to give Absalom more support. Absalom put up a tent on the roof of the house, and he had sexual relations with his father's wives. All the Israelis saw it!

- What is the moral lesson in this story of the Holy Bible?
- Can Christian preachers tell this story in the church to young people?

- Do you believe that anyone, even a barbarian, in the world could do this?

Societies today are raged by violence and sex. However, the present violence and sex do not reach that level that were committed by Prophets and their families. Are these the Prophets of God that we should look up to them as examples for righteousness and obedience of Allah?

5.4 The Axial Age

Historians call the period from 800 to 200 BC the axial age. This period witnessed the introduction of major world religions. It was a period of great empires in Mesopotamia, Assyria, Babylon, Persia, and then Greece. International politics had an impact on religion and the belief of the people in the Middle East and its surroundings. The Greek philosophy had reached its peak during this time. This period had a crucial effect on the development of Christianity after Jesus. During this time, polytheistic religions, history, and philosophy were setting the stage for shaping a religion that was founded by Jesus, and later compromised and reinterpreted by other people.

When the Assyrian Empire destroyed the kingdom of Israel in 722 BC, Judah was a weak kingdom. The great empires of the East were interested in destroying the rest of the Jews in Judah. The kings of Judah honored a pagan god in the Temple, and the priests denounced them for promoting paganism. King Hezekiah ruled Judah around 715 to 687 BC, and carried out religious and political reforms. But then his son and grandson did not follow his footsteps. Assyrian forces returned to Judah and reintroduced pagan worship. Then an important change took place in the international scene. The Assyrian empire was getting weaker, and Babylon was threatening to replace it as the major power in the Near East. In 597 BC, Nebuchadnezzar captured Jerusalem and took Jehoiakim, king of Judah, and many of his people prisoners to Babylon. In 587 BC, Nebuchadnezzar burned Jerusalem. Its population was exiled as prisoners in Babylon or as refugees in Egypt. Their temple was

destroyed, and the Ark was lost, which remains a mystery to this day.

The exile of the Judeans to Babylon was a major turning point in Jewish theology. The prior history of Israel now was reinterpreted in light of the burning of Jerusalem in 587, laying the foundation for the traditional biblical Pentateuch, Prophetic canon, and historical books. The Prophets Ezekiel and Isaiah believed that Yahweh had used the Babylonian Empire to punish the Israelites for their sins, and he therefore had the power to redeem them from captivity if they repented. The Jews hoped for a restored Judean kingdom under the leadership of an heir of the royal house of David. In 539 BC the kingdom of Babylon fell to the Persian Cyrus the great (600 - 529 BC). After the defeat of Babylon, he permitted a restoration of subject populations and local temples. The Persians did not allow the re-establishment of a Judean monarchy, but only a temple-state with the high priest as its chief administrator. The Persian Empire was the most powerful state in the world until its conquest two centuries later by Alexander the Great.

Zoroaster (628 - 551 BC) founded the Zoroastrian religion in Persia. The basic concept of this religion consists of an interesting mixture of monotheistic worship of Ahura Mazda (Lord Wisdom) and an ethical dualism of opposing Truth and Lie, which encompass the entire universe. All that is good derives from, and is supported by, Ahura Mazda's emanations: Spenta Mainyu (Holy Spirit) and his six assisting entities, Good Mind, Truth, Power, Devotion, Health, and Life. All evil is caused by Angra Mainyu and by his assistants. Angra Mainyu is evil by choice, having allied himself with Lie, whereas Spenta Mainyu has chosen Truth. So too, human beings must choose between Truth and Lie. Upon death each person's soul will be judged at the Bridge of Discrimination; the follower of Truth will live in paradise, and the adherents of Lie will fall into hell. All evil will eventually be eliminated on earth in an ordeal of fire and molten metal. The religious practice was centered about worship of fire. For example, a sacred flame was always kept burning in their temples. After Alexander the Great conquered the Persian Empire, the Zoroastrian religion underwent a constant decline. Eventually, the Persians regained their

independence. During the Sassanid dynasty (226 - 651 AD), Zoroastrianism was again adopted as the state religion of Persia. A dualistic form of the Zoroastrian religion affected the fourth century Christianity in Manichaeism.

Confucius (551 - 479 BC) established a religion in China that is a mixture of sacred philosophy and ethical doctrine. Confucianism provides rules for the proper conduct of family, community, and political affairs. Although Confucianism became the ethic of the mandarin class, the elite group, Confucius himself came from a poor family. The principle upon which he built his doctrine is reciprocity, meaning to treat people as you want to be treated. This is considered central to producing an ideal relationship, and is recorded in the *Analects*, a collection of Confucius's most famous sayings. Confucius also taught the importance of many other virtues, including loyalty, wisdom, self-control, piety, and self-development. Confucius used the family as a model for society. Those who are in power should rule for the well being of the people, while the rest of society should obey and respect the authority, as children do to their parents. Unlike the major religions, Confucianism is not oriented to the metaphysical. Confucius did not speculate about afterlife. In this religion there are no sins, only errors and mistakes.

5.5 The Hellenistic Age

The Hellenistic Age (4th-1st century BC) is the period between the conquest of the Persian Empire by Alexander the Great and the establishment of Roman supremacy. In this era, Greek culture, art and philosophy were introduced to the Mediterranean and the Middle East. One of the greatest achievements occurred in sciences, where Greek and non-Greek mingled to produce remarkable results. It is called Hellenistic (Greek *Hellas*, "Greece") to distinguish it from the Hellenic culture of classical Greece.

Alexander the Great (356-323 BC), king of Macedonia, was one of the greatest military geniuses of all times. Aristotle was Alexander's tutor; he gave Alexander a thorough training in rhetoric and literature and stimulated his interest in science, medicine, and

philosophy. Before the end of the summer of 336 BC he had reestablished his position in Greece and was elected by a congress of states at Corinth.

Alexander began his war against Persia in the spring of 334 BC with an army of 35,000 Macedonian and Greek troops. Alexander encountered the main Persian army, commanded by King Darius III, at Issus, in northeastern Syria. The Battle of Issus, in 333, ended in a great victory for Alexander. He captured Gaza next and then passed on into Egypt, where he was greeted as a deliverer. By these successes he secured control of the entire eastern Mediterranean coastline. Later in 332 he founded, at the mouth of the Nile River, the city of Alexandria, which later became the literary, scientific, and commercial center of the Greek world.

In the spring of 331 Alexander made a pilgrimage to the great temple of Amon-Ra, Egyptian god of the sun, whom the Greeks identified with Zeus. The earlier Egyptian pharaohs were believed to be *sons* of Amon-Ra; and Alexander, the new ruler of Egypt, wanted the god to acknowledge him as *his son*. The pilgrimage apparently was successful, and it may have confirmed in him a belief in his own divine origin. Turning northward again, he crossed the Euphrates and the Tigris rivers and continued to expand his empire. His domain then extended along and beyond the southern shores of the Caspian Sea, including modern Afghanistan and Balochistan, and northward into Bactria and Sogdiana, the modern Turkestan, also known as Central Asia.

Shortly before he died, Alexander ordered the Greek cities to worship him as a god. Although he probably gave the order for political reasons, he was, in his own view and that of his contemporaries, of divine birth. The order was largely nullified by his death. To bind his conquests together, Alexander founded a number of cities, most of them named Alexandria, along his line of march; these cities were well located, well paved, and provided with good water supplies. Greek veterans from his army settled in them; young men, traders, merchants, and scholars were attracted to them; Greek culture was introduced; and the Greek language became widely known. Thus, Alexander vastly extended the influence of Greek civilization.

The Hellenistic world was dominated by three great monarchies founded by the successors of Alexander: Egypt under the Ptolemies; Syria, ruled by the Seleucids; and Macedonia under the Antigonid dynasty. The urban elite in these kingdoms spoke koine (common) Greek, which became the new international language, and their religion, art, and literature were a mixture of Greek and native elements. Under the Ptolemies, who used their wealth to attract poets, scholars, artists, and scientists, Alexandria became a great economic, cultural, and religious center. Systematic scholarship was encouraged at new institutes of learning, such as the famous Alexandrian Library, where studies in historical linguistics, grammar, lexicography, and literary criticism were pursued. Many advances were made in such sciences as empirical medicine, astronomy, and mathematics. The basic views of Hellenistic thinkers were not seriously challenged until the 16th century. Two of the main philosophical schools of the age were Stoicism and Epicureanism:

1. The Stoics taught that one should live according to nature, which is the divine reason, *Logos* that permeates all things. *Logos*, a word signifying reason, is the governing principle in the universe. The prudent should be free from passion and calmly accept everything, as the unavoidable result of the divine will, thus achieve freedom from suffering. The stoics also taught that it is possible for a moral human being to become divine. This had also been essential to the Platonic view.
2. The Epicureans were devoted to the pursuit of pleasure. They were fond of good food, comfort, and ease of life. Their philosophy sought freedom from pain and suffering, rejected the afterlife and the influence of gods, and held that all things are composed of atoms.

The religion of the Hellenistic Age combined the Greek gods with Eastern deities. The Hebrew bible was translated into Greek at Alexandria, and the language of the later New Testament was koine. As the Hellenistic monarchies declined in the second and

first centuries BC, the Romans gradually extended their control over Greece and the Middle East. The Roman civilization that subsequently became dominant was in many ways a continuation of Hellenistic culture.

5.6 Greek Philosophy

Greek Philosophy is a compilation of philosophical concepts developed by the Greeks, particularly during the peak of Greek civilization between 600 and 200 BC. Greek philosophy formed the basis of all later philosophical concepts in the Western world. The intuitive hypotheses of the ancient Greeks suggested many theories of modern science. Also many of the moral ideas of pagan Greek philosophers have been incorporated into Christian moral doctrine. Educated Greeks turned to philosophy, not religion, for enlightenment. Their saints and priests were such philosophers as Plato, Pythagoras and Epictetus. They even saw them as sons of god. Plato, for example, was considered to be *the son of Apollo*. The average Greeks trusted philosophers to provide answer for the eternal questions of why do humans suffer and how to enjoy life. The people needed a simple answer that they could understand. Greek philosophy may be divided between those philosophers who sought an explanation of the world in physical terms and those who emphasized the importance of human thoughts or ideals.

The Search for Wisdom

The word philosophy means, "love of wisdom." Greek schools sought the wisdom that would help people to live happy and worthwhile lives. The Ionian school was the first important school of Greek philosophy. It was based upon materialistic concepts that attempted to discover the building block of all matter. This school was founded by Thales of Miletus (640? -546? BC), who suggested that water is the basic substance from which all matter is created. A more complex view was offered by Anaximander (611-547 BC), who held that the raw material of all matter is an eternal substance that changes into the known forms of matter. These forms in turn

change and merge into one another according to the rule of justice, that is, balance and proportion. Heraclitus advocated that fire is the original source of matter, but he believed that the entire world is in a constant state of change and that a mixture of different matters produces most objects and substances. He considered the soul, for example, as a mixture of fire and water. Anaxagoras (500-428? BC) introduced dualistic explanation of the universe, that is to say that the universe consists of living and non-living matters. He developed the concept of *nous* (reason), which he considered as an infinite and unchanging substance that entered into and controlled every living object. This concept of eternal substance was later adopted in formulating the doctrines of Christianity during the Ecumenical Councils of Church.

A more materialistic interpretation was made by Empedocles, who accepted the belief that reality is eternal, but considered that it consists of the four basic substances: fire, air, earth, and water. Materialism applied to daily life inspired the philosophy of a group known as the Sophists, who were active in the fifth century BC. With their emphasis on the importance of human wisdom they doubted that humanity would ever be able to reach truth through logic and taught that material success rather than truth should be the purpose of life.

The division between idealism and materialism became more distinct. Pythagoras stressed the importance of form rather than matter in explaining material structure. The Pythagorean School also emphasized the importance of the soul, regarding the body only as the soul's "tomb." The beliefs of Pythagoras formed the basis of the idealism that was to characterize later Greek philosophy.

Socrates

The ideas of Socrates, (470-399 BC), represented Greek philosophy at its highest level. He spent much of his time teaching and asking questions of the people he met. He asked: What is the purpose of your life? What is good? What is justice? Such questions stimulated people to examine the conduct of their lives? Socrates believed that a life without questions is not worth living. Socrates wrote

nothing himself, but from the writings of his student Plato, we know the important ideas he taught. He advocated that each person should learn to understand himself. "Know thyself" was the slogan of Socrates. Socrates described the soul as a combination of an individual's intelligence and character.

Socrates' contribution to philosophy was essentially ethical in character. Belief of such concepts as justice, love, and virtue, and the self-knowledge that he emphasized, was the basis of his teachings. He believed that all corruption is the result of ignorance, and that no person is willingly bad; thus morality is knowledge, and those who know the right will act rightly. His logic placed special emphasis on rational argument.

Although a patriot and a man of deep moral values, some leaders of Athens were afraid of his ideas. They accused Socrates of teaching young people dangerous concepts leading them away from the principles of democracy, and they brought him to trial. He was charged in 399 BC with neglecting the gods of the state and introducing new divinities. Since he refused to change his way, Socrates was sentenced to die by only a small majority. When, according to Athenian legal practice, Socrates made an ironic counter proposition to the court's death sentence, proposing only to pay a small fine because of his value to the state as a man with a philosophic mission, this offer angered the jury that it voted by an increased majority for the death penalty. Socrates' friends planned his escape from prison, but he preferred to obey the law and die for his cause. At the age of seventy, he was executed according to the Greek custom by being given a cup of the poison hemlock.

Plato and Aristotle

The death of Socrates did not stop other Greeks from continuing the search for wisdom. His idealism was arranged by his student Plato, (428-347 BC). Plato wrote many *dialogues*: books describing real and imaginary philosophical conversations among his friends. In such dialogues as the *republic*, Plato presented his ideas: People should be guided in their lives by eternal principles such as justice, love, and honor. Only the wisest men and women should rule the

people. There should be no rule by vote of the majority. In his theory of ideas, Plato considered the objects of the real world as being merely shadows of divine Forms or ideas. Only these divine Forms can be the objects of true knowledge; the perception of their shadows, that is, the real world as heard, seen, and felt, is merely opinion. Plato believed that the eternal Forms, "Gods", communicate to people through their powers and not by themselves. They are the highest reality that the human mind can grasp. The goal of the philosopher, he said, is to know the eternal Forms and to educate others in that knowledge.

Aristotle. (384-322 BC). was the son of a physician to the royal court. From his father, Aristotle gained an interest in biology, zoology, physics, anatomy, astronomy, geology, and almost every other field known to the ancient Greek. He was one of the students who studied under Plato. He believed that people should examine, describe, and classify as many forms of life as possible, because it is important to have scientific knowledge. Aristotle stated that the universe consists of four elements, fire, air, earth, and water, plus a fifth element that exists everywhere and is the sole constituent of the heavenly bodies "above" the moon.

Aristotle advocated the existence of a divine being, described as the Prime Mover, who is responsible for the unity and direction of nature. God is perfect and therefore the aspiration of all things in the world, because all things desire to share perfection. The Prime Mover, or God, described by Aristotle was not very suitable for religious purposes, as many later philosophers and theologians have observed. Aristotle limited his "theology," however, to what he believed science requires and can establish. Aristotle seemed to have been strongly opposed to Plato's view of the Forms, rejecting the concept that they had a prior and independent existence.

Philo of Alexandria

Philo of Alexandria (20 BC - 50 AD) was a Jewish-Hellenistic philosopher. Philo was considered the greatest Jewish philosopher of his time. However, he used exclusively the doctrines of Greek philosophy that he must be considered also a Greek philosopher.

He combined the Greek philosophical concepts into an original form.

Philo was born in Alexandria, Egypt, to a wealthy, aristocratic Jewish family and received a thorough education in the Old Testament and in Greek literature and philosophy. He had an intimate knowledge of the works of Homer and of the Greek tragedians, but his chief studies were in Greek philosophy, especially the teachings of the Pythagoreans, Plato, and the Stoics.

Philo was a devout Jew. He considered the divinity of the Jewish law as the basis and test of all true philosophy. He maintained that the greater part of the Pentateuch, in both its historical and legal portions, could be explained symbolically, and that its deepest and truest significance is to be found through such interpretation. He conceived God as a being with neither attributes nor human qualities: to say that God is "angry", for example, is wrong. God is better than virtue and knowledge, and better than the beautiful and the good. He is a Being so exalted above the world. God communicates with the world through his "powers", which seem close to Plato's Forms. These powers are real, active powers, surrounding God as a group of attendant beings. An individual's duties consist of adoration of God and love and righteousness toward others. Humans are immortal by reason of their heavenly nature. Mere living after death, common to all humanity, differs from the future existence of the perfect souls, for whom paradise is oneness with God.

Many of the numerous existing works of Philo are concerned with the adoration and the symbolic interpretation of Genesis and with the display of the Law of Moses to Gentiles. He interpreted the story of God's visit to Abraham with two angles, for example, as God's essence with two senior powers. His other writings include biographies of biblical characters and a series of works on the Ten Commandments. Jews have always found that Philo's concept of God somewhat inauthentic. Christians, however, would find him extremely supportive. The concept of the oneness with God in paradise was later used in the New Testament.

5.7 Jewish Religious Groups

By the first century BC, the Law of Moses had become extremely important to the Jews. The people had studied and argued over the law. They understood the Law in different ways, but many Jews were ready to fight and die for that Law. There were three major religious groups among the Jews and there were scribes (lawyers or scholars) in each group.

The Sadducees

One of the groups was called the Sadducees, who descended from mainly aristocratic families. This sect was formed about 200 BC. They accepted only the Law (the five books of Moses), and not the oral tradition accepted by the Pharisees. Many of the priests and the people in authority were Sadducees. The Pentateuch taught many things about the priests and sacrifices, but it did not teach them about life after death. So the Sadducees did not believe in the resurrection of the dead because it is only found in the book of Daniel, composed long after Moses' time, which in their view lacked authority. Their sect was centered on the cult of the Temple, and they ceased to exist after its destruction in 70 AD.

The Pharisees

This second group established their name from a Hebrew word meaning "separatists" or "deviants." Their opponents were the Sadducees, who probably gave them their name. The Pharisees began their activities about 166 B.C. with an attempt to teach and interpret the Law of Moses to the common people. The Pharisees accepted an interpretation of Judaism that was in opposition to the priestly Temple cult. They stressed faith in the One God; the divine revelation of the law both written and oral handed down by Moses through Joshua, the elders, and the Prophets to the Pharisees. So they were very careful about what to eat, what to touch, about washing their hands and bathing. They also believed in eternal life and resurrection for those who keep the law, because they understood that many later Prophets said that it would happen. By

separating Judaism from the Temple cult, and by stressing the direct relation between the individual and God, the Pharisees laid the groundwork for standard rabbinic Judaism. Their influence on Christianity was substantial as well, despite the passages in the New Testament that label the Pharisees “hypocrites” or “offspring of the vipers.” St. Paul was originally a Pharisee. After the fall of the Temple 70 A.D., the Pharisees became the dominant party until 135 A.D.

The Essenes

This was the third group of a small Jewish religious sect, starting in the second century B.C. They lived as a highly structured community that held possessions in common. They believed that many of the priests in Jerusalem did not live according to the way of God. Also, the Romans had appointed many of the high priests, and some of these men were not qualified according the Law of Moses. Because of this, the Essenes did not think that worship and sacrifices were being done properly in Jerusalem. So the Essenes moved out in the Judean desert to live. They formed their own community, where only other Essenes could come and live. The Essenes fasted and prayed and waited for God to send several Messiahs and purify the Temple and the priesthood. Their practice of purification through ritual submergence in water might have been a significant influence on the development of the ritual of baptism in the early Christian church. Although they did not condemn marriage as impious, they expected full members of the community to be celibate. The sect ceased to exist sometime in the second century. A.D.

6

Evolution of Christianity

I tried to understand how did the teachings of Jesus (Pbuh) evolve into a religion, with a name that was neither declared by Jesus, the original founder, nor mentioned in the Bible. How did the theology of Christianity evolve? Who started the name “Christianity”? What is the origin of the Trinity? Jesus never mentioned the Trinity. As I was studying the Christian history, it became obvious that Christianity evolved in four phases. Each phase took it further away from Jesus’ message. Historians report stories of the past with a certain package that depends on their intention and the message that they attempt to emphasize. Sometimes, historical facts are being “tampered and altered” to convince the people with certain points of view. Christian history is abundant with such views. Christianity as it exists today is an altered version of the teachings of Jesus Christ.

The Four Phases Theory

The Theory of the Four Phases started right after Jesus, and lasted for about 800 years. Each phase took the religion further away from the original message of Jesus. This Four Phases Theory can be identified in chronological order as follows:

1. **The first phase:** The establishment of Pauline Christianity as a major drive to attract the Gentiles to the new religion.

This was accomplished by the victory of the liberal Paul, who cancelled the Mosaic Law, over the conservative original apostles.

2. **The second phase:** Writing of the Gospels *according to* Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, and their influence on the pagan converts.
3. **The third phase:** The fierce theological struggle of the fathers of the church to accommodate their perceptions of God of the Old and New Testaments with the Greek culture.
4. **The fourth phase:** The establishment of the doctrines by the Ecumenical Councils and the role of the emperors and empresses in shaping the Christianity.

Because of these four phases, we have a religion that was compromised to attract more pagan converts at the expense of the purity and the holiness of the original message of Jesus.

Due to the crucial importance of the Gospels, this chapter starts by examining the Gospels. The average Christians believe that all the writers of the Gospels were contemporaries of Jesus, recording the message of Jesus with honesty, integrity and virtue. They assume that Matthew wrote the Gospel according to Matthew, and Mark wrote the Gospel according to Mark, etc. They also believe that the Evangelists wrote the New Testament by inspiration of God or the Holy Ghost. It can be proven that the Gospels according to the Evangelists are full of major contradictions. Thus negating the notion that any of these Gospels was inspired by God or the Holy Ghost. It is important to note that if there were even a single contradiction in the Gospels, the idea of divine inspiration would collapse. The Almighty does not contradict Himself.

For a quick head start, consider the following questions:

- Who are the real Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John?
- What were Jesus' last words on the cross in the Gospels according to Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John?
- How did Judas die in the Gospels according to Matthew, and Acts?
- How did the people who arrested Jesus identify him in the Gospels according to Matthew, and John?

To prove that God did not inspire the entire New Testament, let us apply the same method that was adopted in the previous chapter. The origin and the contradictions in the New Testament will be exposed. First, the name "New Testament" should be questioned, because nowhere does it refer to itself with such name. Christian scholars followed the same steps of analysis that the critics of the Old Testament had pursued. As mentioned before, the contradictions in the Old Testament started by scholars noticing that there are parts in the Books of Moses, that should have been written after Moses, especially the part that addresses Moses' death. Then scholars found more and more contradictions. Next, when contradictions are found in a Holy Book, supposedly inspired totally by God, then the question of authenticity of the entire book is raised.

As for the New Testament, it appears that the discrepancy of the genealogy of Jesus according to Matthew and Luke was the first contradiction that was discovered. This was followed by critical examination of the entire New Testament to establish the degree of inconsistency. Apart from the general accounts of Jesus' arrest, trial, death, and resurrection, which are generally similar in all four Gospels, they differ in important details. Neither Matthew nor John accounts for Jesus' Ascension. Luke in his Gospel places the Ascension on the day of the Resurrection and forty days later in the Acts of the Apostles, which is assumed to be by the same Luke. Mark mentions it, without giving a date, which suggests that it is not thought to be authentic. The Ascension, which is a major Christian event, therefore, has no solid scriptural basis. Commentators nevertheless approach this subject casually.

The first three Gospels are called synoptic Gospels because despite their differences, they can be viewed together. General comparison of Matthew, Mark, and Luke impresses the reader with such agreements that they have generated many theories about their relationships. One of the most widely held scholarly opinion is that Mark was the earliest Gospel and became a source for Matthew and Luke. Most likely, Matthew and Luke each had other common sources as well. This assumption is based upon the source of much shared texts not found in Mark. The interrelation of the Gospels also has continued to attract much study. In 1863, Holtzmann

introduced the Two Source Theory, with Q and Mark being the common sources of Matthew and Luke. Q is short for the German word "Quelle" which means "source." In 1972 the Four Source Theory was introduced, with Q, A, B, and C as the sources of all Gospels. Does this sound familiar to J, E, P, and D of the Old Testament? In a preface the author of Luke 1:1-4 stated that he learned from some other people that saw those things from the beginning before writing his Gospel. The fourth Gospel of John stands most noticeably apart from the synoptic Gospels.

The Gospels translated into Modern English by J. B. Phillips in London, with editors Geoffrey Bles, had the following to say about the Gospel of Matthew:

"Early tradition ascribed this Gospel to the apostle Matthew, but scholars nowadays almost all reject this view. The Author, whom we still can conveniently call Matthew, has plainly drawn on the mysterious "Q", which may have been a collection of oral tradition. He has used Mark's Gospel freely, though he has arranged the order of events and has in several instances used different words for what is plainly the same story. The style is lucid, calm, and tidy. Matthew writes with certain judiciousness as though he himself has carefully digested his material and is convinced not only with its truth but of the divine pattern that lies behind the historic facts. If Matthew wrote, as is now generally supposed, somewhere between 85 and 90, this Gospel's value as a Christian document is enormous. It is, so to speak, a second-generation view of Jesus Christ the Son of God and the son of man. It is being written at that distance in time from the great event where a sober reflection and sturdy conviction can perhaps give a better balanced portrait of God's unique revelation of Himself than could be given by those who were so close to the light that they were partly dazzled by it."

The above quotation stated frankly the facts about "Q", and then tried to reason as why Christians should still accept second generation accounts of Jesus: *the first generation could not handle*

both the light of Jesus and writing of the Gospels!

Many ancient translations of the Bible have received critical attention and are available in scholarly form. The language in the New Testament has received much attention not only for theological reasons but also from students of history of the Greek language. The study of the Aramaic language, the native language of Jesus and the contemporary Palestinian Christians, has also advanced. Scholars advocate that the traditions used by the Gospel writers and the author of Acts existed in Aramaic, perhaps in manuscripts but certainly in an oral form. It remains a matter of debate to translate the New Testament from Greek to Aramaic in an attempt to recreate the original manuscripts or the oral tradition.

Early Christianity, just like Judaism, took the idea of authenticity and inspiration of the scriptures for granted. No formal doctrine of the divine inspiration of New Testament was initially proposed. Christians generally believed, however, that the Bible is the word of God as transmitted by the Holy Spirit, first through the patriarchs and prophets and then through the apostles. The writers of the New Testament, in fact, relied upon the authority of the Hebrew Scriptures to support their claims concerning Jesus Christ.

To set a New Testament canon beside the Old implied divine inspiration of the entire Bible. The New Testament writings were considered as "prophecy" given by the Holy Spirit to the disciples. However, Paul did not think of his letters to his churches as constituting inspired revelation to the entire humanity at all time. It was suggested that the divine inspiration was a case of verbal inspiration that took over the voice of the prophet. This view implied that the words are divinely given; so any text can be interpreted in the light of other texts. This theory of verbal inspiration was considered as acceptable for the first Greek translation of the Old Testament. Christian scholars Origen and Augustine adhered firmly to this theory. At times, this took a sophisticated form of explaining discrepancies between the Biblical texts, such as a divine will to teach the point of a deeper meaning that lies beyond human comprehension! During the 19th century, the doctrine of the inspiration of the Bible by the Holy Spirit was promoted in response to the development of new biblical criticism. Scholarly studies

seemed to challenge the divine origin of the New Testament. Those who advocate the authenticity of the Bible, word for word, cannot prove their claim easily.

The subjects of authenticity and history of the early Bible are not readily available in common Christian bookstores. It appears that the history of Christianity began in 325 AD, when the council of Nicaea condemned the theology of Arius and declared that Christ is "*one in essence with the Father*". There are no written details of events of what actually happened after Jesus until the council of Nicaea. Biblical apologists attributed the lack of information to the oppression that the Christians faced over three centuries. It is also quite difficult to find detailed information from Christian scholars. This is because most of them are writing to average Christians and the information has to be packaged in an acceptable way that should not cause public confusion. For example, I tried unsuccessfully to find out what happened to the Virgin Mary after Jesus, and what was her role in the early Christian history. To the Christian, Mary is a model to all believers. To the Muslims she is the holiest woman ever among all the Jewish, Christian and Muslim women. When Mary holds such a unique stature, one would be tempted to know everything available about her role. Jesus was obedient to his parents, (Luke 2:51). When Jesus began his public ministry, he called his mother "woman", (John 2:4, 19:26). Sometimes I wonder if this is the same Jesus that said in Matthew 19:19 "Honor your father and your mother." This would indicate that Mary's maternal role on his behalf is finished. It is hard to believe that Jesus called his mother "woman". Is this a permit for anyone to call his mother woman? Or was this the writing of someone that did not appreciate the mother of Jesus for one reason or another? Looking at the Holy Bible, Easy to Read Version, I found that in John 2:4, the word "woman" is replaced by "Dear woman." This was a little bit of a relief; at least someone else feels that it is inappropriate to call the holiest woman ever simply a "woman". A Christian apologist suggested that Jesus called his mother "woman" in a soft tone! There is no knowledge about "tape recording" the tone of Jesus! The question still remains. Did Jesus call his mother woman, dear woman, mother, or dear mother?

Did he or did he not honor his mother? And, what was Mary's role after Jesus?

6.1 Versions of the New Testament

The New Testament consists of 27 documents written between 60? - 150? AD. Although some have argued that Aramaic originals lie behind some of the Gospels, especially the Gospel of Matthew and the Epistle to the Hebrews all have been circulated in Greek. For a period of time, some Christian scholars treated the Greek of the New Testament as a special kind of religious language. It is now known that the language of the New Testament was koine, i.e. common Greek that was used everywhere. The 27 books of the New Testament are only a fraction of the Christian scriptures in their first three centuries. The New Testament was widely copied and recopied. As many as 50 Gospels were circulating during this time. Many of these non-canonical Christian writings have been collected and published as New Testament Apocrypha, i.e. doubtful authority.

Existing Greek manuscripts of the New Testament - complete, partial, or fragmentary - now number about 5000. It is important to know that none of these manuscripts have the signature of its author. Probably the oldest is a fragment of the Gospel of John dated about 120 to 140 AD. There are broad similarities among these manuscripts. Discrepancies, however, involve omissions and additions. The more significant of these variants usually appear in English translations as footnotes citing what other ancient authorities say. For example, John 7:53 - 8:11 has a footnote saying that the oldest and the best Greek copies do not have these verses according to the Bible, Easy to Read Version. So, who added them, and why?

Tracing the history of the development of the New Testament by noting which of the books were quoted or cited by the early Fathers of the Church is an uncertain process. It seems that the earliest attempt to establish a canon was made about 150 AD by a heretical Christian named Marcion, whose acceptable list included the Gospel of Luke and Ten Pauline Epistles, edited in a strong

anti-Jewish language. Perhaps opposition to Marcion accelerated efforts toward a canon of wide acceptance.

By 200 AD, 20 of the 27 books of the New Testament seem to have been generally regarded as acceptable. However differences still existed between the Eastern and Western Churches. Generally speaking, the books that were disputed for some time but were finally included were James, Hebrews, 2 John, 3 John, Jude, 2 Peter, and Revelation. Other books widely favored but finally rejected, were Barnabas, 1 Clement, Hermas, and the Didache.

As was mentioned before, the Jewish Bible was written in Hebrew, except for a few sections in Aramaic. When Aramaic replaced Hebrew as the language of everyday life, translations to Hebrew became necessary. This fact that the Old Testament was written in Hebrew helped the Jews to reserve their Scriptures. On the other hand, the New Testament was written in Greek and Aramaic. The present English translation of the Bible came from a long history of translation, collection, and interpretations, as outlined in the following:

Original Manuscripts

One would assume that the word of God that was delivered to Jesus would be recorded somehow. Moses got the Ten Commandments written on tablets and Muhammad got his revelations immediately recorded and memorized. So what happened to the original New Testament? This is one of the biggest mysteries in Christianity. It is agreed upon that the original manuscripts of the Christian Bible have perished!

Ancient Versions

The rapid spread of Christianity beyond the regions where Greek prevailed necessitated translations into Syrian, Old Latin, Coptic, Gothic, Armenian, Georgian, Ethiopian, and Arabic. Syrian and Latin versions existed as early as the second century, and Coptic translations began to appear in the third century. These early versions were in no sense official translations but happened to meet

regional needs in worship and preaching. The translations were, therefore, conducted in local languages by unknown translators and often included only selected portions of the New Testament.

The Septuagint and Other Greek Versions

The first major Greek version is called the Septuagint (from “seventy”) because of the legend that seventy scholars in Alexandria translated the Torah in the third century BC. The legend narrated how seventy translators had worked in independent cells and had all come up with the identical versions of the sacred text. Thus the Septuagint often ranked as an inspired version. Some of the Fathers of the Church thought the legend had been ridiculous, while others adhered firmly to it. Eventually other scholars, whose skills and backgrounds differed, translated the remaining Hebrew Scriptures.

The most valuable versions of the Hebrew Bible are the translations into Greek. In some instances the Greek versions actually offer readings superior to the Hebrew, being based on older Hebrew texts. Many of the existing Greek manuscripts are much older than the manuscripts of the Hebrew Bible; they were included in copies of the Christian Bible that date from the fourth and fifth centuries. The oldest and the most complete text of the Old and New Testaments are in the form of fragments as different from scrolls, are:

- **Codex Vaticanus** is located in the Vatican Library and whose place of discovery is unknown. It contains nearly all the Greek Bible, but lacks Mark 16:9-20.
- **Codex Sinaiticus** is located in the British Museum. It contains almost all the New Testament (Lacks Mark 16:9-20, and John 7:53- 8:11), and over half of the Old Testament. Tischendorf in the Mount Sinai Monastery discovered it in a wastebasket in 1844. It was presented by the Monastery to the Russian Tsar, and bought by the British Government for 100,000 pounds on Christmas Day 1933.
- **Codex Alexandrinus** is located in the British Museum. It is believed that it was written in Greek in Alexandria, Egypt.

Numerous other Greek translations were discovered; most of them existing only in fragments or quotations by the early Fathers of the Church and others.

Vulgate

During the fourth and fifth centuries, efforts were made to replace the old Latin versions with more standardized and widely accepted translations. Missionaries perhaps translated pieces of the Bible into Latin. Pope Damasus I in 382 commissioned St. Jerome to generate a Latin Bible using many individual efforts. This Bible, known as the Vulgate. (Latin *vulgata*, “popular edition”) aroused deep opposition. As is usually the case, the new version slowly and painfully replaced the old versions.

English Translations

Christianity reached England with a Latin Bible. There was a need to offer an English Bible for both the clergy and the laymen. Between the seventh and fourteenth centuries, parts of the Bible were roughly translated into English as an aid to the clergy. Interest in translation from Latin to English grew rapidly in the fourteenth century, and in 1382 the first complete English Bible appeared in manuscript. It was the work of the English scholar John Wycliffe, whose goal was to give the Bible to the people.

In 1525 the English scholar William Tyndale translated the New Testament from the Greek text. It was printed in Germany and smuggled into England. Tyndale’s translation of the Old Testament from the Hebrew text was only partly completed. His simple writing and popular expression established a style in English translation that dominated future versions.

In 1535 the English scholar Miles Coverdale published an English translation based on German and Latin versions in addition to Tyndale’s. This was not only the first complete English Bible to appear in printed form, but unlike its predecessors, it was an approved version by the Canterbury Convocation. Later, Oliver Cromwell nominated Coverdale to produce a new Bible, which

appeared in six editions between 1539 and 1568. This Bible was called the Great Bible, which was primarily a scholarly Bible. The next important version was produced in Geneva in 1560 by English Protestants in exile, and was called the Geneva Bible. This Bible contained several innovations including the division of chapters into numbered verses. The final revision of the Great Bible, in 1568, by scholars and bishops of the Anglican Church was known as the Bishops' Bible. This Bible was designed to replace the Great Bible with a translation for the laymen.

The King James Version and Its Revisions

In 1604 King James I commissioned a new revision of the English Bible; it was completed in 1611. Following Tyndale primarily, this Authorized Version, also known as the King James Version, was widely acclaimed for its beauty and simplicity of style. In the years that followed, the Authorized Version underwent several revisions, the most notable being the English Revised Version (1881-85), the American Standard Version (1901), and the revision of the American Standard Version undertaken by the International Council of Religious Education, representing 40 Protestant denominations in the US and Canada. This Revised Standard Version (RSV) appeared between 1946 and 1952. Widely accepted by Orthodox, Protestant, and Roman Catholic Christians, it provided the basis for the first accepted English Bible. In the Preface of the RSV, 1971, the following is written:

"The King James Version has grave defects. By the middle of the nineteenth century, the development of Biblical studies and the discovery of many manuscripts more ancient than those upon which the King James Version was based, made it manifest, that these defects are so many and so serious as to call for the revision of the English translation." The preface continued to refer to the unhappy experience with unauthorized publications, "which tampered with the text of the English Revised Version, in the supposed interest of the American public."

The New Revised Standard Version (NRSV, 1989) eliminated much obsolete and ambiguous usage. The New King James Bible, with contemporary American vocabulary, was published in 1982. The Holy Bible, Easy-to-Read version, in 1987 and 1989, was adapted from the existing text by the World Bible Translation Center to represent present day English.

The Roman Catholic Versions

Roman Catholics in English-speaking countries commonly used the Douay or Douay-Rheims Bible, completed between 1582 and 1609, until the eighteenth century, when the English bishop Richard Challoner considerably revised it. The Douay Bible was a translation from the Latin Vulgate, primarily the work of two English exiles in France, William Allen (1532-1594) and Gregory Martin (1540? -1582). During the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, Roman Catholics replaced the Douay and Challoner Bibles with other translations. In the United States, one of the most widely used is the New American Bible of 1970. It is the first complete Bible to be translated from Hebrew and Greek by American Roman Catholics.

The Roman Catholic Version, RCV, is the oldest version that one can buy today. Despite its antiquity, the whole Protestant world condemns the RCV, because it contains seven extra books, which they refer to as the Apocrypha. Notwithstanding the terrible warning contained in the Apocalypse, which is the last book in the RCV (renamed as "Revelation" by the Protestant), it is "revealed":

Revelation 22:18-19 "If any man shall add unto these things God shall add unto him the plagues written in this book. And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book."

In spite of the above warning, the Protestants have eliminated or the Catholics have added seven whole books from their "Word of God". These books are: Tobias, Judith, Wisdom, Ecclesiasticus,

Baruch, 1 Machabees, and 2 Machabees.

6.2 The Gospels

The four Gospels are the heart of the New Testament. The first three Gospels are called synoptic because they generally correspond to each other. Yet, the origin of these Gospels is the greatest mystery of Christianity. There are so many mysteries relating to the Gospels. Who did actually write them? When and where were they written? These Gospels are full of contradictions. Apologists through complex and elusive interpretation might handle some contradictions. Others are shy of explanation or outright unacceptable.

The careful reader that is interested in reading the titles of each chapter in the Bible may ask why the titles of all four Gospels have the word "according to", like the Gospel **according to Saint Matthew**. Why "according to"? Why did the authors not identify themselves first? In the Gospel according to Matthew 9:9:

*"And as Jesus passed forth from thence, he saw a man, **named Matthew**"*

Why did Matthew not say, "he saw me" instead of "he saw a man, named Matthew"?

*In John 21:24 "This is the disciple which testify of these things, and wrote these things: and we know that **his** testimony is true."*

Who are "we"? And why did John talk about himself as third person "his"? And why in the following verse, he referred to himself as "I"? Was verse 21:24 written by someone else and verse 21:25 written by John?

Gospel According to Matthew

Matthew was one of the apostles of Jesus, although not a distinguished one. According to tradition, he was the author of the

first Gospel and therefore one of the four evangelists. However, little is known about Matthew. The first three Gospels state that he was a tax collector who would have been a man of some education, skilled in arithmetic and able to speak both Aramaic and Greek. Some scholars suggest that he left to Ethiopia for preaching Christianity where he died there at 63 or 70 AD.

There are evidences to indicate that this Gospel was written for the Jews, because the Gospel includes many references to Jewish scripture. The Gospel was written in Hebrew, then an unknown person translated it to Greek, and the original Hebrew manuscript has perished. This raises a serious question about the knowledge and intention of the translator. Was he knowledgeable enough in the two languages? What was his background? Was he a Jew or a Gentile? Did he try to push certain concepts in the Gospel? Early Christian writers suggested that Matthew wrote his Gospel in Palestine; others favored the city of Antioch in Syria. The date of writing, as frequently suggested, was around the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD, perhaps from 65 to 80 AD. The date of writing the original manuscripts is unknown. Why did Matthew wait 40 years after Jesus to write his Gospel? Was it really written by Matthew or someone from the second generation, perhaps one of his students? The author of Matthew used Mark and "Q" as his two major sources.

Matthew emphasizes that Jesus is the promised Messiah of the Jews. Jesus states that he did not come to destroy the Law of Moses, but to fulfill (5:17). Also, Jesus commands his disciples to preach "*to the lost sheep of the house of Israel*" (10:6). The influence of this Gospel on Christianity has been authoritarian ever since its writing. This is because the Gospel was used in the formulation of doctrine and the divine nature of Jesus, an importance shared only by the Gospel of John.

Matthew includes some exclusive stories: the visit of the wise men from the East (2:1); the travel of Jesus' family to Egypt to escape the slaughter of male children by Herod the Great; and their return from Egypt after Herod's death. The death of Jesus' betrayer, Judas Iscariot (27:3-10), the dream of Pontius Pilate's wife (27:19), Pilate's washing his hands of liability for Jesus' death (27:24-25),

the earthquake following Jesus' death (27:51-53), the guard at the tomb (27:62-66), the earthquake at the time of Jesus' resurrection (28:2-4), and the appearances of the risen Christ to Mary Magdalene and the other Mary (28:9-10) and to his disciples in Galilee (28:16-20). Matthew (1:18-2:23) shows similarities between Moses and Jesus to appeal to the Jews. Both were hidden from an evil king that massacred children, and both lived in Egypt in their childhood.

Many scholars regard Matthew as a writer with wild imagination. He includes stories in his Gospel that are unbelievable. An example, of his outrageous imagination, is the description of the events relating to the crucifixion of Jesus. The whole country became dark for three hours, the temple was torn into two pieces, the tears started at the top and tore all the way to the bottom, an earthquake happened, and many dead people were resurrected and went to Jerusalem, and were seen by many (27:51-53). *This is a big story.* It should have been reported in the other Gospels. Did these stories convert a large number of people to Christianity? These stories have no correspondence in the other three Gospels.

The most debatable story in the Gospel of Matthew concerns Jonas' sign (12:38:40). When the Pharisees ask Jesus for a proof, Jesus replies that the son of man will give the miracle that happened to Jonas. Luke has the same story, but Mark is in contradiction with Matthew and Luke with regards to the sign of Jonas.

Matthew reports the saying of Jesus on the Cross: "*Eli, Eli, lama sabachtani?*" This means My God, my God, why did you abandon me? (Matthew 27:46), which is identical to Mark 15:34.

The conclusion is that the author of this Gospel is unknown, the place of writing this Gospel is unknown, the time of writing this Gospel is unknown, and the Gospel contains stories that contradict other Gospels. Yet the Church wants us to believe that the Almighty inspired the whole Bible, word for word.

Gospel According to Mark

The Gospel begins with "*The Good News about Jesus Christ, the Son of God...*" *The Easy to Read Bible* has a footnote stating that

some Greek copies omit the "Son of God" from this verse. Taking into consideration that "the son of god" is the most important statement in Christianity, how can it be added or omitted from the Gospel of Mark? Did Mark or did he not write this statement? Is it possible that the statement "the son of god", in this verse is a Hebrew expression that meant intimacy with God? There are many references in the Old Testament about prophets being called Son of God.

The Gospel of Mark is the shortest of the four Gospels. In the third century the Christian historian Eusebius of Caesarea, relates this Gospel to Mark, using a statement from an earlier writer named Papias (60? -125?). Papias suggested that Mark was John Mark, cousin of Barnabas, mentioned in Acts 15:37-39, in several letters of Paul, (Colossians 4:10; 2 Timothy 4:11; Philemon 24), and in 1 Peter 5:13. It is extremely difficult to confirm that Mark was actually John Mark. Some Christian scholars think that an unknown Christian named Mark wrote this Gospel.

In chapter 13, Mark refers to the destruction of Jerusalem, which makes the writing of this Gospel to be around 70 AD. Clement of Alexandria stated that Rome was the place of writing, while other scholars suggested that it might have been written in Galilee or Syria.

This Gospel does not include any information about Jesus' childhood. It starts with his baptism by John the Baptist. The story goes on until his arrest, crucifixion, and burial. Mark (8:11-13) is in contradiction with Matthew and Luke with regards to the sign of Jonas. In Mark, Jesus says that there will be no sign without any exception. Mark states that during crucifixion at noon the whole land became dark (15:33). Mark reports the saying of Jesus on the Cross as follows:

"Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachtani?" (Mark 15:34), which is identical to Matthew 27:46.

There are two versions for ending of this Gospel. Most of the Greek manuscripts have the "long ending," closing at 16:20. The second version with the "short ending" extends only through

16:8. Most scholars believe that the short version is the correct one. Verses 16:9-20 are not included in the two oldest manuscripts of the Gospels, Codex Vaticanus and Codex Sinaiticus. There was a sudden and improper ending of the Gospel of Mark. Verses 16:9-20 are added from the Gospel of Luke to have a reasonable ending! What a blunt admission is provided for us here? Human manipulation of the texts of the holy inspired Scriptures is just outrageous!

The conclusion is that the author of this Gospel is unknown, the place of writing this Gospel is unknown, the time of writing this Gospel is unknown, and the Gospel contains stories that contradict other Gospels. Yet the Church wants us to believe that the Almighty inspired the whole Bible, word for word.

Gospel According to Luke

Christian tradition suggests that this Gospel is attributed to “Luke, the beloved physician” (Colossians 4:14), who is one of the “fellow laborer” (Philemon 1:24) mentioned by Paul. Also, the Acts of the Apostles is credited to Luke. Most Christian scholars accept Luke’s authorship of both works. Some scholars suggest that Luke was one of Paul’s disciples. Others doubt that Luke and Paul were closely associated during Paul’s missionary work, because of contradiction between Paul’s letters and the stories of Paul in Acts.

Many scholars suggest that this Gospel was written for the Gentiles, while others imply that it was written for the Greeks or the Egyptians. Most scholars agree that the writing of this Gospel is from 70 to 80 AD. Other possible dates might be 53, or 63, or 65, or the end of the first century. It is also unknown whether the Gospel was written in Rome, Asia Minor, or Greece.

This Gospel is an expanded version of the Gospel of Mark. Most scholars agree that Luke used the source “Q” as well as an oral tradition, sometimes known as “L” collected by or known only to Luke. Luke has some exclusive stories that include the annunciation (1:26-38); the visit of Mary, the mother of Jesus, to Elizabeth, the mother of John the Baptist (1:39-56); the birth of

John the Baptist (1:57-80); Jesus' circumcision and presentation in the Temple (2:21-40); Jesus' appearance in the Temple at 12 years of age (2:41-52); Jesus' last words to his disciples (22:21-38), his words on the way to the cross (23:28-31), the words of the two crucified criminals (23:39-43), the appearances of the risen Christ on the road to Emmaus and in Jerusalem (24:13-49), and Jesus' ascension (24:50-53).

Luke introduces a genealogy of Jesus that is different from that of Matthew. Luke locates the place of Jesus' Great Sermon on a flat place (6:17), while Mark states a hilltop (6:20-49). Luke attributed different last words of Jesus on the cross from those of Matthew or Mark (23:46).

The conclusion is that the author of this Gospel is unknown, the place of writing this Gospel is unknown, the time of writing this Gospel is unknown, and the Gospel contains stories that contradict other Gospels. Yet the Church wants us to believe that the Almighty inspired the whole Bible, word for word.

Gospel According to John

The Gospel according to John is another story. The author explains his reason of writing this Gospel, 20:30-31: he states many miracles of Jesus for the reader to believe that Jesus is the Christ and the Son of God. John did not introduce the trinity, but confirms the "duality of God." Both father and son are gods. This Gospel was not included in the acceptable documents of the Fathers of the Church in the second and third century.

Scholars suggest that this Gospel is written in the latter part of the second century, possibly in the ancient Greek city of Ephesus. There are many serious questions about this Gospel. Why did the author of this Gospel choose completely different direction from the synoptic Gospels? Why did he emphasize the divinity of Jesus? It is a fact that this Gospel was written after the synoptic Gospels. This indicates that many Christians did not believe in the divinity of Jesus, before writing this Gospel. Some scholars suggest that bishops that believed in the divinity of Jesus asked the author of

John to write a Gospel that states clearly that Jesus is divine. Other suggests that the author was a philosophy student in Alexandria, who had been asked to write a Gospel that brings Greek philosophy and Christianity closer together. We may never know the truth about this Gospel, but the fact is this is very different from the rest of the New Testament.

The author establishes from the start that he follows the Greek philosophy and the concept of the Logos (1:1-18). Jesus Christ is the incarnation of “*the Word*” who has a pre-existent life before his mother and anyone else for that matter. Jesus’ death is the return of the incarnate Son to the Father. The Gospel tells a story of a woman caught in adultery (7:53-8:11). *The Easy to Read Bible has a footnote stating that this incident is not included in the best Greek copies.* Again, the question is: why then were these words added?

To establish that Jesus is the Logos, the author states many miracles: the changing of water into wine for the wedding at Cana (2:1-11); the healing of an official’s son (4:46-54); the healing of a man who had been sick for 38 years (5:1-9); the feeding of about 5000 men (6:1-15), the only miracle recorded in each of the four Gospels; the healing of a man who had been blind from birth (9:1-7); and the raising of Jesus’ friend Lazarus from the dead (11:1-46); Jesus walking on the sea (6:16-21); his death (19:30) and appearances as the risen Christ (20:1-29).

The conclusion is that the author of this Gospel is unknown, the place of writing this Gospel is unknown, the time of writing this Gospel is unknown. The Gospel focuses on the duality rather than the oneness of God, and the Gospel follows the Greek polytheistic philosophy to introduce a monotheistic religion. Yet the Church wants us to believe that the Almighty inspires the whole Bible, word for word.

6.3 Other Gospels

The Gospel of Jesus

Prophets of great missions, like Jesus, always have a revelation from God. And their followers usually keep this revelation. That

happened with the Books of Moses. If Jesus did not have a Gospel, can we extend the argument of J. B. Phillips, mentioned above, that Jesus, God forbid, could not handle both his Light and writing or dictating a Gospel! This is what some scholars may conclude regarding the nonexistence of the Gospel of Jesus. However, there are evidences from the Bible that Jesus had a Gospel:

- Matthew 4:23 *“Jesus went everywhere in the country of Galilee. Jesus taught in the synagogues and preached the Good News about the kingdom of heaven.”*
- Mark 1:14-15 *“After this, John was put into prison. Jesus went into Galilee and preached the Good News from God, Jesus said, “The right time is now here. The kingdom of God is near. Change your hearts and lives and believe the Good News”*
- Romans 1:9 *“For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the Gospel of his son”*. It is interesting to note that *“of his son”* was changed to the easy phrase *“about his son”* in the Easy-to-Read version. And what a difference between of and about! This is a clear evidence of what changing the original texts is all about. This is a translation from English to English in a few decades. Imagine what could happen to the translation of Aramaic narratives to Greek text to classical English to Modern English to Easy-To- Read English in two thousand years!

The Good News is the Gospel. There is no doubt that the Good News that Jesus was preaching is not one of the known four Gospels. It is also illogical to assume that Jesus was preaching the Bible according to Luke or John. And the above statements of Jesus clearly mean that Jesus was preaching “his own Gospel,” and not a Gospel “according to Jesus.” What is interesting is that Paul mentioned the Gospel of Jesus, and he did not refer to any of the four other Gospels, because these Gospels were written after Paul. It is obvious that Jesus had a Gospel, and now that Gospel is not known to anyone. This, of course, raises some serious questions:

- Is the Gospel of Jesus the original text that he preached, and everyone else used according to his perception and motive?
- Is "Q" the Gospel of Jesus?
- Where is this Gospel?
- Who destroyed that Gospel and why?

Mental Hospitals and clinics frequently encounter someone claiming to be Jesus Christ. Also, in the West, people claim that they are the promised Messiah, and they get believers, and in most cases the story ends in a tragedy of killing of believers and their alleged Messiah. Sometimes I wonder when the real Jesus comes, looking for his Gospel, how is the world going to receive him? Will he recognize any book in the New Testament? Is he going to be a subject for the psychoanalysts and the TV talk shows? How will the Churches receive him? Will Jesus agree with TV Evangelists that he has the same substance as that of God? What would he say about their wealth, their singing and screaming, and their collecting money from old people to build their own mansions? Will the Churches reject the message of the real Jesus and go back to the Gospels according to the Evangelists? Will the Christians reject him as the Jews rejected him before? Most likely he would be captured and accused of being a terrorist. This is an idea for a successful Hollywood movie.

The Gospel of Barnabas

Barnabas was one of the members of the early Christian church in Jerusalem, and introduced in the New Testament as the "son of consolation" (Acts 4:36). A Levite and a native of Cyprus, Barnabas is credited for having founded the Cypriot church. He was a successful preacher with a charismatic personality. Anyone tormented by the clash of creeds found comfort and peace in his company. His eminence as a man, who had been close to Jesus, had made him a prominent member of the small group of disciples in Jerusalem who had gathered together after Jesus. They observed the Law of the Prophets: Jesus has come, "not to destroy but to fulfill". (Matthew 5:17). They continued to live as Jews, and

practiced what Jesus had taught them. The disciples never regarded Christianity as a new religion. They were devout and practicing Jews, and they were distinguished from their neighbors only by accepting the message of Jesus. In the beginning they did not organize themselves as a separate sect and did not have a synagogue of their own. There was nothing in the message of Jesus, as understood by them, to require a break with Judaism. However, they incurred the hostility of the vested interests among the Jewish Rabbis. The conflict started by the Rabbis because they felt that the Christians would undermine their authority and power.

Barnabas introduced Saul of Tarsus, later St. Paul, to the other apostles in Jerusalem. But the disciples *"were all afraid of Paul and believed not that he was a disciple. But Barnabas took him and brought him to the Apostles,"* (Act 9:26-27). Barnabas accompanied Paul to Antioch, Cyprus, and Asia Minor. At the council held in Jerusalem, Barnabas agreed with Paul's views that the church had a mission for the Gentiles. In Lystra, Paul was said to have performed spiritual healing, so the people coined the terms "Jupiter" for Barnabas, and "Mercurius" for Paul, (Acts 14:12). In the Roman State religion, Jupiter was the supreme god and Mercury was a god that served as a messenger to other gods and was himself the god of commerce, travel, and thievery. He and Paul later separated, however, when Barnabas insisted that his cousin Mark, who had deserted them on a previous journey, should accompany them again. Barnabas and Mark together continued missionary work in Cyprus (Acts 15:39).

The writings attributed to Barnabas have been the source of dispute among biblical scholars. The early Christian writer Tertullian assigned to him the authorship of the Epistle to the Hebrews, in accordance with second century church tradition. The apocryphal Acts of Barnabas, a work of late date, recounted his missionary tours and his death by martyrdom in Cyprus. The existing Epistle of Barnabas, found in a New Testament manuscript (part of the Codex Sinaiticus), is morally instructive work.

Some biblical scholars believe that the Gospel of Barnabas was accepted as a canonical Gospel in the churches of Alexandria until 325 AD. Irenaeus (130-200) wrote a work against paganism

known as "*Against the Heresies*." He had quoted extensively from the Gospel of Barnabas in support of his views. This proves that the Gospel of Barnabas was in circulation in the first and second centuries of Christianity. In 325 AD, the Nicene Council was held, where it was ordered that all original Gospels in Hebrew script should be destroyed. A decree was issued that anyone in possession of these Gospels would be executed. In 383, the Pope secured a copy of the Gospel of Barnabas and kept it in his private library. In the fourth year of the emperor Zeno (478 AD), the remains of Barnabas were discovered and there was found, on his chest, a copy of the Gospel written with his own hand, (*Acta Sanctorum Boland Junii Tom II, pages 422 and 450, Antwerp 1698.*) The Vulgate Bible appears to include some sayings from this Gospel. Pope Sixtus (1585-1590) had a friend called Fra Marino. He found the Gospel of Barnabas in the private library of the Pope. Fra Marino was interested in the Gospel because he had read the writings of Irenaeus where Barnabas had been respectfully quoted many times. This Italian manuscript passed through many hands until it came to the possession of Cramer, a Councilor of the King of Prussia. In 1713 Cramer gave it to Prince Eugene in Savoy. In 1738 along with the library of the prince, the Gospel found its way to Vienna, where it now exists. An English translation of this Gospel exists in USA and Europe.

Some Christian Scholars claim that this Gospel has Arabic comments, and was written originally in Arabic. Some even claim that it has an Islamic origin, or was used by Muhammad in writing the Quran. All historical accounts establish that Muhammad was unlettered; that is to say that he could read or write. After Islam, there were debates between Muslims and Christians, and no Muslim ever referred to that Gospel. Therefore, this Gospel was not known in Islamic history. Unless that some scholars claim that Islamic history was corrupted and the usage of this Gospel was concealed! Anyone who studies Islamic history will immediately know that this is one of the many stereotype claims against Islam.

The Gospel of Barnabas differs from the Biblical Gospels in the following basics of the Christian religion:

- Jesus is not the Son of God. He was a great prophet.
- The sacrifice that Abraham offered to God was Ismael and not Isaac.
- The Gospel made clear prophecy about the coming of Muhammad.
- Jesus was not crucified. The one that was crucified in Jesus' place was Judas by another miracle of God.

Gospel of Thomas

Thomas was one of the twelve apostles of Jesus Christ. Although much has been written about his life, biblical accounts refer to him three times only in the Gospel of John. The first reference (John 11:15-16) implies Thomas' devotion to Jesus; when Jesus set out for Judea, where Jews have threatened to stone him, Thomas suggests, "*Let us also go, that we may die with him.*" The second reference (John 14:1-7) occurs at the Last Supper, during which Jesus says, "*And you know the way where I am going.*" Thomas asks, "*... how can we know the way?*" Jesus responds, "*I am the way, and the truth, and the life.*" In John (20:19-29), Thomas, absent when Jesus first appears to the apostles after the Resurrection, doubts the others' account of the event. When Jesus appears again and invites Thomas to touch his wounds, the apostle exclaims, "My Lord and my God!" Thus Thomas was the first to explicitly recognize Christ's divinity. The phrase "doubting Thomas" stems from this account.

The Gospel of Thomas was recovered from Naj Hammadi, Egypt. This compilation, written in Coptic, has been translated and published. Major scholarly attention has been focused on the Gospel of Thomas, which suggests that 114 of Jesus' sayings were delivered privately to Thomas. This Gospel was accepted until late in the second century and rejected at the first ecumenical council of Church.

6.4 Sources of the Gospels

According to the commentators of the Ecumenical translation of the Bible, the Gospels appeared to be "disjointed", with a plan that

lacks continuity “with seemingly insuperable contradictions”. It is important to refer to their authority because the consequences of their evaluation of this subject are extremely serious. It is also important to examine the religious history of the time when the Gospels were written. This should cast some light on the development of Christianity to a state that Jesus himself would condemn.

The Fathers of the Church approached the problem of sources in a very simplistic way. In the early centuries of Christianity, the only source available was the Gospel of Matthew, the first complete manuscript. The problem of sources only concerned Mark and Luke, because John constituted a completely separate case. St. Augustine claimed that Matthew had inspired Mark, who appeared second in the order of the Bible. He further considered that Luke, who came third, had used data from both.

The experts in critical examinations at this period were able to estimate the degree of corroboration between the Gospels, and find a large number of verses that are common to two or three synoptic. Today, the commentators of the Ecumenical translation of the Bible provide the following figures:

- Verses common to all three synoptic 330
- Verses common to Mark and Matthew 178
- Verses common to Mark and Luke 100
- Verses common to Matthew and Luke 230

The verses unique to each of the first three Gospels are as follows: Matthew 330, Mark 53, and Luke 500. The fact that each Evangelist has his own exclusive stories raises serious Questions. Why did each of the Evangelists not know about important events that were supposed to be public knowledge? Or did the Evangelists know those events and decided not to include them in their Gospels? It is hard to believe that the Evangelists did not know those stories. And if this is the case, why did they decide not to include those stories?

For eighteen centuries, no new issues were being raised on the sources of the Gospels. Every Christian was accepting the

tradition of the authenticity and the idea of the divine inspiration of the Gospels. It was not until modern times that it was realized that each Evangelist compiled his own specific writings guided by his own personal view. Great weight was attached to actual collection of material of the narratives. Each Gospel came from oral traditions of the communities on one hand, and from a common written Aramaic source that has not been discovered on the other hand. This written source could have formed from one source, or have been composed from many fragments of different traditions used by each Evangelist to compile his own Gospel.

The Two Sources Theory

Intensive studies in the nineteenth century have led to theories that seem reasonable. The first of these theories is the Two Sources Theory presented by Holtzmann in 1863. According to this theory, Q and Mark are the common sources of Matthew and Luke. Q is short for the German word "Quelle" that means "source." Mark may have inspired Matthew and Luke on one hand, and by "Q" which has since been lost. Matthew and Luke each had, as well, his own source. Scholars' criticism of this theory are based on the following points:

1. Mark's work, used by both Matthew and Luke, was probably not the author's Gospel, but based upon an earlier version.
2. The Two Sources Theory does not lay enough emphasis on the oral tradition. This appeared to be of major importance, because it alone preserved Jesus' words and the description of his mission for thirty or forty years until the first Gospel was compiled. During that time, each of the Evangelists was the spokesman of the Christian community that supplied him with the oral tradition.

The Four Sources Theory

The latest studies in biblical criticism of the sources of the Gospels have clearly shown an even more complicated compilation process of the Gospels. A book by Benoit and Boismard, both professors at the Biblical School at Jerusalem, called "*Synopsis of the Four*

Gospels," 1972-1973, stresses the evolution of the Gospels in stages parallel to the evolution of tradition. Benoit presents introduction to Boismard's part of the book in the following terms:

"The wording and form of description that result from a long evolution of tradition are not as authentic as in the original. Some readers of this book (The New Testament) will perhaps be surprised or embarrassed to learn that certain of Jesus' sayings, parables, or predictions of his destiny were not expressed in the way we read them today, but were altered and adapted by those who transmitted them to us. This may come as a source of amazement and even scandal to those not used to this kind of historical investigation."

The alterations and adaptations to the Gospels made by those who transmitted them to us were done in a way that Boismard explains by a highly complex diagram. It is a development of the Two Sources Theory, and is a product of examination and comparison of the Gospels that is impossible to summarize here. Those readers who are interested in obtaining further details should consult the original work in that book.

Four basic documents: A, B, C, and Q represent the original sources of the Gospel:

1. Document A comes from a Judeo-Christian source. Matthew and Mark were inspired by it.
2. Document B is a reinterpretation of document A, for use of Churches in originally pagan communities. All Evangelists were inspired by it with the exception of Matthew.
3. Document C inspired Mark, Luke, and John.
4. Document Q constitutes the majority of sources common to Matthew and Luke. It is the common document in the Two Sources Theory, referred to earlier.

None of these basic documents led to the production of the Gospels that we know today. Between them and the final version lay intermediate versions: intermediate Matthew, intermediate Mark, intermediate Luke, and intermediate John. These four

intermediate documents were to lead to the final versions of the four Gospels. These four basic documents A, B, C, and Q of the New Testament are similar to the four basic documents of the Old Testament J, E, P, and D.

The results of this scriptural research are extremely important. They show how the texts of the Gospels "*not only have a history, but also a pre-history,*" to use Boismard's expression. This means that before the appearance of the final versions, they underwent alterations and adaptations at the intermediate document level. Thus, it is now possible to explain, for example, how a well-known story from Jesus' life, such as the miracle of catching the fish, is shown in Luke to be an event that happened during his life, and in John to be one of his appearances after resurrection.

The conclusion to be drawn from the above is that when we read the Gospels, we can no longer be at all certain that we are reading Jesus' words or learning about his life. Benoit attempted to comfort the readers of the Gospels: "*If the reader is obliged in more than one case to give up the notion of hearing Jesus' voice directly, he still hears the voice of the Church and he relies upon it as the divinely appointed interpreter of the Master who long ago spoke to us on earth and who now speaks to us in his glory.*"

How can anyone reconcile this scholarly statement of the adulteration of the Gospels with the phrase used in the dogmatic constitution on Divine Revelation by the Second Vatican Council assuring us to the contrary, i.e. the faithful transmission of Jesus' words:

"These four Gospels, which it (the Church) unhesitatingly confirms are historically authentic, faithfully transmit what Jesus, Son of God, actually did and taught during his life among men for their eternal salvation, until the day when he was taken up into the heaven."

It is quite clear that the work of the Biblical School of Jerusalem flatly contradicts the Council's declaration.

6.5 Contradictions in the New Testament

I was talking to a Christian friend about the authenticity of the Bible. A few days later, he gave me a book from his pastor, and told me that if I read this book, I would understand and believe in the authenticity of the Bible. The book is called "*Evidence That Demands a Verdict*", and was written by McDowell in 1972. The book deals with "Apologetics" which is a branch of theology that provides a defense for belief in God through a presentation of evidences that answer criticism against the Christian doctrine. The author, like all apologists, presented tremendous evidences about confirmation of the Bible by history as well as archaeology. The book emphasized the moral values that Jesus preached. The author also addressed many of the prophecies in the Old Testament and showed that these prophecies actually happened.

No single monotheist dares to say that the Old Testament or the New Testament should in any way be disregarded as a whole. No one should disagree about the effectiveness of the sayings of Jesus and Moses regarding the well being of humanity. However, a witness in a court of law is usually asked to speak the truth, **the whole truth**, and nothing but the truth. Do the Christian apologists and the Sunday preachers really believe in this witness swearing in the courts? They preach half the truth and prefer to keep their congregation in the dark about the other half. No Christian preacher in a Sunday class or on TV addresses the many conflicts in the Bible. And even if he does, he is going to approach any contradiction very casually. The preacher may even use the approach of Origen and St. Augustine and explain contradictions between the biblical texts as a divine will to teach a point of a deeper meaning that lies beyond human comprehension!

Each of the four Gospels includes a large number of descriptions relating events that may be unique to a single Gospel, or common to some or all of them. Common stories that contradict each other represent a serious question about the authenticity of the Bible, especially if one holds the notion that whole Bible is divinely inspired. Also, when events are unique to one Gospel, they too raise serious problems. Thus in the case of an event of

considerable importance, it should be surprising to find the event mentioned by only one Evangelist: Jesus' Ascension into heaven on the day of resurrection, for example. Elsewhere, numerous events are differently described - sometimes very differently indeed - by two or more Evangelists.

Christians are often astonished at the existence of such contradictions between the Gospels - if they ever discover them. This is because it has been repeatedly said in tones of the greatest assurance that their authors were the eyewitnesses of the events described! If there are few contradictions in the New Testament, one might attempt to find a reasonable interpretation, or blame it on our human limitation. But if the contradictions are so many and they exist in serious events, then this is another story. One might, in this case, question any event in the New Testament that does not conform to the previous religious history.

Some of the following contradictions were presented in the above sections. However, in the following section an attempt is made to list some of the contradictions in details, for the reader to appreciate the seriousness of the problem, and how can anyone explain all these conflicts. One Christian Apologist suggests a common answer for all the contradictions in the Bible. He says, "*We know every apparent contradiction in the Bible. They happen because different authors receive different divine inspiration.*" Now, which divine inspiration do we believe? This explanation is almost as comical, or sad, as the fact that he believes that.

The Genealogies of Jesus

The French surgeon Maurice Bucaille in one complete section comprising 10 pages in his book "The Bible, The Quran, and Science" has treated this subject. Also, the Egyptian scholar Abu Zahra, in his book "*Lectures in Christianity*" devoted a good portion to this subject. The following is an attempt to summarize their findings:

The Gospel (like the Quran) describes the biological origin of Jesus. The creation of Jesus occurred in circumstances beyond human comprehension. Mary was a Virgin mother. Jesus is a

biological miracle from God the Almighty. The two genealogies presented in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke give rise to serious problems in authenticity. These problems are a source of great embarrassment to Christian commentators, because they refuse to see in them what is obviously the product of human imagination or the lack of serious recording of the Bible. This is a case of inspiration by imagination. The following shows the some of the differences in Jesus' genealogy according to Matthew 1:6-16, and according to Luke 3:23-31.

- In Matthew, Joseph was the son of Jacob; in Luke, Joseph was the son of Heli.
- In Matthew, Salatheil was the son of Jechonias; in Luke, Salatheil was the son of Neri.
- In Matthew, Abiud was the son of Zorobabel; in Luke, Rhesa was the son of Zorobabel.
- In Matthew, Jesus descended from Solomon son of David; in Luke, Jesus descended from Nathan son of David.
- In Matthew, 27 names are mentioned between David and Jesus; in Luke, 42 names are mentioned between David and Jesus.

Christian apologetics explain, for example, the discrepancy about Joseph' father as Jacob was his father and Heli was his "father in law." This indicates that the western expression "father in law" was known in the Aramaic language! Other apologetics defend both Matthew and Luke as historians, authentically reporting two different family histories, and that was not their problem if the family histories were not consistent!

The Last Words of Jesus

The last words of Jesus on the cross come as a big embarrassment to Christian scholars. First, there are four different versions in the Gospels according to Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. These verses are part of a Christian doctrine of divine inspiration. If God had inspired these four writers, why did God inspire them to record

different words? These verses are not just different words, but totally different concepts.

The following are the “last words” of Jesus:

- In Matthew 27:46 Jesus’ last words were “*Eli, Eli, lama sabachtani?*” *My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?* (Mark 15:34) though it is Eloi instead of Eli
- In Luke 23:46 Jesus cried: “*Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit.*”
- In John 19:30, Jesus tasted the vinegar. Then he said, “*It is finished.*” Jesus bowed his head and died.

If God inspired the Evangelists, and if they considered Jesus the Son of God, then how could there be any discrepancy about the last words of God or the Son of God on Earth? How can these verses be part of a supposed “divine inspiration”? No Answer. One Christian Scholar has a simplistic answer: Jesus said all of the above! Then why none of “divine inspirations” stated all of the above? It seems that the reasonable statement should be the one that Jesus said in his own Aramaic language. Besides those words were reported in two Gospels, Matthew and Mark. But this statement raises more serious questions.

The last words of Jesus according to Matthew and Mark represent an eternal mystery for Christianity. Why did Jesus think that God abandoned him? It is hard to believe that Jesus said that God abandoned him. There are three possibilities:

- He said that. Then, why did the Son of God think that his father abandoned him? Jesus told his disciples that he would die and rise from the dead in three days. He knew that he would die and be resurrected, so how can that be called abandonment? If he is the Son of God that came to save humanity with his blood, so how can that can be called abandonment? If he knew his mission in life, so how can that be called abandonment? This statement simply contradicts the entire New Testament. Many Christian scholars have the same trouble justifying this statement.
- He did not say that. This means that Matthew and Mark were

not accurate, and God did not inspire the Gospels, because God would not allow any inaccuracies.

- The man on the cross was not Jesus! This may seem at first sight that it is an unreasonable idea. But if we know that the same sentence, word for word, exists in the songs of David, Psalm 22.1, one may be tempted to suggest that the man on the Cross was a Jew asking God for help from his Old Testament.

The Gospel of Barnabas gives the only reasonable explanation. The man on the cross was not Jesus. He was Judas. Barnabas reported that before the alleged arrest of Jesus, God commanded the Angels to take Jesus out of this world, Barnabas 215. Then God acted miraculously that Judas was so changed in speech and in face to be like Jesus that the apostles believed him to be Jesus, Barnabas 216. When Judas was taken to the cross, he did nothing else but cried out "*God, why hast thou forsaken me, seeing that the malefactor hath escaped and I die unjustly?*" Barnabas 217. The first sentence is a prayer of the Jews from Psalm 22:1, so Judas was praying to God from the Old Testament. The guardian angles of Mary ascended to the third heaven, where Jesus was in the company of Angels, and told him that his mother was weeping. Jesus prayed to God to come down to Earth to see his mother and his disciples. Then God commanded the angles to bear Jesus into his mother's house, and they kept watching over him for three days. After the third day, Jesus was carried up into heaven.

The Sign of Jonas

One of the most debatable stories in the Gospel of Matthew concerns Jonas' sign:

"Then certain of the scribes and the Pharisees answer, saying, Master, we would see a sign from thee. But he answered and said unto them, An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no signs be given to it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas: For as Jonas was three days and

three nights in the whale's belly, so shall the son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. (12:38:40)

Luke 11:29. "*and there shall no sign be given it, but the sign of Jonas the prophet*"

Mark is in contradiction with Matthew and Luke with regards to the sign of Jonas:

"And the Pharisees came forth, and began to question with him, seeking of him a sign from heaven, tempting him. And he sighed deeply in his spirit, and saith, why doth this generation seek after a sign? Verily I say unto you, There shall be no sign be given unto this generation, And he left them." (8:11-13).

Matthew and Luke are in agreement, and Mark is in contradiction with Matthew and Luke. Those verses refer to the discussion between Jesus and the Pharisees. Jesus says in both versions that this generation seeks a sign to believe. In Matthew and Luke, Jesus adds that there will no sign but the sign of Jonas. In Mark, Jesus says that there will be no sign without any exception. This is really outrageous. Did Jesus say the sign of Jonas or not? Can any apologist claim that Jesus said that and did not say that at the same time?!

Which version is right? Can God inspire right and wrong versions?

Is Jesus God?

- In John 10:30, Jesus said, "*I and my father are one.*"
- In John 14:28, Jesus said, "*I go unto the Father: for my Father is greater than I.*"

In the first verse John records that Jesus equated himself with God, his father. In the second verse John states that Jesus said that

his father (God) is greater than he. Athanasius adopted the first verse, and extended it to mean that God and Jesus are *made* of the same substance. Arius embraced the second verse. They had a heated argument in the start of the fourth Century, that led to the first council of church.

Which version is right? Can God inspire right and wrong versions?

The Death of Judas

- In Matthew 27:5, Judas hanged himself.
- In Acts 1:18, Luke wrote that Judas fell on his head, his body broke open, and all his intestines poured out.

Which one of these stories was inspired, and which one was not? The best explanation that any Christian has come up with is this: Judas hung himself, and was hung for days and became swollen and bloated so that when they cut him down he burst open! Sometimes the explanation is almost as humorous as the fact that people actually believe the story in the first place.

When was Jesus crucified?

- In Mark 15:25, *“And it was the third hour, and they crucified him.”*
- In John 19:14-16, *“And it was the preparation of the Passover, and about the sixth hour: and he (Pilate) saith unto the Jews, Behold your King! But they cried out, Away with him, away with him, crucify him. Pilate saith unto them, Shall I crucify your King? The chief priests answered, We have no king but Caesar. Then delivered he him over therefore unto them to be crucified. And they took Jesus, and led him away.”*

The third hour of the day was 9 am and the sixth hour was noon. This is even spelled out in the NRSV Bible that gives the times and not the hour.

Jesus' Apostles

- In Matthew 10:2-4, "*Now the names of the twelve apostles are these: The first, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother; James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother; Philip, and Bartholomew; Thomas, and Matthew the publican; James son of Alphaeus, and **Lebbaeus** whose surname was Thaddaeus; Simon the Canaanite, and **Judas Iscariot**, who also betrayed him.*"
- In Luke 6:13-16, "*And when it was day, he called unto him his disciples: and of them he chose twelve, whom also he named apostles: Simon, (whom he named Peter,) and Andrew his brother, James and John, Philip and Bartholomew, Matthew and Thomas, James the son of Alphaeus, and Simon called Zelotes, And **Judas the brother of James**, and **Judas Iscariot**, which also was the traitor.*"

The first list includes Lebbaeus Thaddaeus and only one Judas, and the second list has two Judas

Do you believe that Matthew and Luke do not know the twelve Apostles? What would they do if the number of the Apostles were 24!

Matthew or Levi

- Matthew 9:9, "*And as Jesus passed forth from thence, he saw a man, named Matthew, sitting at the receipt of custom: and he saith unto him, follow me. And he arose, and followed him.*"
- Mark 2:14, "*And as he passed by, he saw Levi the son of Alphaeus sitting at the receipt of custom, and said unto him, follow me. And he arose and followed him.*"
- Luke 5:27, "*And after these things he went forth, and saw a publican, named levi, sitting at the receipt of custom, and he said unto him, follow me.*"

Jesus was walking and he saw a tax collector, whose name could be Matthew or Levi!

Is it the Gospel according to Matthew or according to Levi?

The Arrest of Jesus

- In Matthew 26:47-50, Judas planned to do something to show the people, who came to arrest Jesus, which man was Jesus. Judas said *"The man I kiss is Jesus. Arrest him."*
- In John 18:1-8, Judas led a group of soldiers to the garden. Judas also brought some guards from the leading priests and the Pharisees. They were carrying torches, lanterns, and weapons. Jesus knew everything that would happen to him. Jesus went out and asked, *"Whom seek ye? They answered him, Jesus of Nazareth." Jesus said, "I am he"*

Which one of these stories was inspired, and which one was not? Can we gain any reasonable answer from the apologetics?

The Gentile woman

- In Matthew 15:21, a Canaanite woman asked Jesus to help her daughter who had a demon inside her.
- In Mark 7:26, the woman was not a Jew. She was Greek, born in Phoenicia, an area in Syria.

Was this woman Canaanite or Phoenician?

Does it make a difference? Yes it does, if both sources claim to be inspired by God.

The Last Super

- John places the Last Super "before the Passover celebration."
- All other three Gospels place the Last Super during the celebration.

Does it make a difference? Yes it does, if both sources claim to be inspired by God.

What did Jesus drink on the cross?

- Matthew 27:34. *"They gave him (Jesus) vinegar to drink, mingled with gall."*
- Mark 15:23 *"And they gave him (Jesus) to drink, wine mingled with myrrh."*

This is two different authors account of the same event, Jesus on the cross. The first is Matthew saying that they gave Jesus to drink vinegar (old wine) mixed with gall, which is a product that comes from the oak tree. It is used in inks and medicines.

The second verse is from Mark, and it says wine mixed with myrrh, which is a gum resin used in the making of incense. Mark clearly wrote his gospel first, and Matthew must have not been clear on what Mark meant.

The High Priests

The High Priests condemned Jesus because he had "blasphemed" God for they found no other reason. The High Priests asked whether he was Christ, the Son of God:

- The answer according to Matthew (26:64): *"Thou hast said."*
- The answer according to Mark (14:62): *"I am."*
- The answer according to Luke (22:70): *"Ye say that I am."*
- John gives more detailed information. Jesus defended himself before the high priests: *"I ever taught in the synagogue and in the temple, whither the Jews always resort; and in secret have I said nothing."* (John 18:20)

The contradictions of the four evangelists are understandable. None of them were present at the trial; they are merely reporting rumors.

Who carried Jesus' cross?

- Mark 15:21, *"And they compel one Simon a Cyrennian, who passed by, coming out of the country, the father of Alexander*

and Rufus to bear his cross."

- John 19:16-17. *"Then delivered he him therefore unto them to be crucified. And they took Jesus and led him away. And he bearing his cross went forth into a place called the place of a skull, which is called in the Hebrew Golgotha"*

In Mark's version, the soldiers forced Simon to carry the cross. In John's version, Jesus carried his own cross. So, Who is right? Neither of the authors of these tales can say for sure because they were not there. Half the truth Christian preachers publicize the story of John because it is more dramatic.

The resurrection

The four Gospels have different accounts about the resurrection

- Matthew makes the whole scene very dramatic (28:1-9). Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of James went to the tomb, which was closed. At that time there was a strong earthquake. An angel of the Lord came from the sky, his face like lightning and his robe as white as snow, moved the stone, sat on it, and spoke to the women. He showed them the place where Jesus' body was and said that he had risen, and that they were to inform the disciples quickly. The fact that they also met Jesus on the way is no longer connected to the visit to the tomb.
- Mark (16:1-8) says that Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices to anoint Jesus. On the way they were wondering how they would move the stone from the tomb, when they saw that it was already opened and that a young man in a long white garment sat inside. He told them not to be afraid, for Jesus, whom they sought, had risen from the dead. They were to tell the disciples. But the women fled in panic; *"neither said they anything to any man, for they were afraid."* "Neither" implies two women, but Mark stated the names of three women!
- Luke (24:1-6) only mentions "women" (not mentioned by

name), who went to the open tomb and found it empty. While they stood there sadly, two men in “shining garments” said to them: *“Why seek ye the living among the dead? He is not here, but is risen.”*

- John (20:1-2) describes things differently. According to him, only Mary Magdalene went to the grave early on the first day of the week and found the stone already removed. In a panic, she ran to Simon Peter and the other apostles, telling them that “they” had taken Jesus away to an unknown place.

One really wonders why the countless collaborators of the Bible had not taken some care to synchronize this central event of resurrection, and check their references. The “original texts of God’s word” did not contain a unified story about this major event, and the simple Bible reader has the right to ask: What did really happen?

The apostles’ reaction to the phenomenal events is also most remarkable. They did not believe a word of the story told by the women, who were the two Marys and Joanna: *“And their words seemed to them idle tales, and they believed them not.”* (Luke 24:11). John (20:9) even affirms: *“For as yet they knew not the scripture, that he must rise from the dead.”* This is quite incomprehensible. Throughout their four Gospels, the evangelists reported Jesus’ statement that he would die and rise again, yet at the end they knew nothing about it?

Jesus’ Ascent:

The account of Jesus’ ascent into heaven is also contradictory:

- According to Matthew (28:16-17), Jesus had summoned the disciples to a mountain near Galilee for an appearance. When they saw him, they worshipped him, *“but some doubted.”* Matthew has nothing further to say about the ascent into heaven.
- Mark (16:19) has one sentence to cover this important event: *“So then after the Lord had spoken unto them, he was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God.”* It is as

simple as that.

- Luke (24:50-51) makes Jesus himself lead the disciples “*out as far as Bethany.*” While he was blessing them, “*he was parted from them, and carried up into heaven.*”
- John (21) has nothing to say about the ascension into heaven!

The most important event in Jesus’ life, as recorded by “God’s word,” was undoubtedly the resurrection and the ascent into heaven. The evangelists reported very many unimportant details that one cannot understand why they did not describe the central event on which the Christian doctrine is based in a colorful and genuinely inspired language. If Jesus had ascended into heaven in full view of everyone, or at least in the circle of his disciples, the news would have spread through the streets of Jerusalem like a forest fire on the very first day. The people had taken a great interest in the trial and the crucifixion, but not a single Roman or Jewish historian noted down a single word about these Earth shaking events. The evangelists show only the most basic knowledge of them, and they could not have been eyewitnesses, because of their contradictory reports about these major events.

Did Paul’s traveling companions see and hear correctly?

- Acts 9:7, “*And the men which journeyed with him [Paul] stood speechless, hearing a voice, but seeing no man.*”
- Acts 22:9, “*And they that were with me [Paul] saw indeed the light and were afraid; but they heard not the voice of him that spake to me.*”

The author of the Gospel of Luke contradicts himself! This first verse is Luke relating the story of Paul’s encounter with the spirit of Jesus that caused his conversion. The second is Paul relating this story to some men that had been beating him. The first says the men heard a voice but saw no man, while the second says that they saw a light but did not hear a voice.

Theological Contradiction – Paul versus Jesus

- Mark 3:29, “*He that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost hath never forgiveness.*”
- Acts 13:39, “*And by him that believe are justified from all things.*”

This first verse is Jesus speaking to his disciples. He is basically saying that the one thing that cannot be forgiven is blaspheming against the Holy Ghost, not the Father or the Son. He continues by saying that they run the risk of eternal damnation.

The second verse is from Acts and is written by the same author who wrote the Gospel of Luke. It is Paul addressing the congregation at Antioch. Paul is saying that through belief in Jesus the Christ, all things are forgivable. No exception is made. Was Paul not aware of Jesus’ teachings? This is a blatant contradiction to Jesus’ teaching. This is just one situation when Paul is taking charge of the theology of Christianity.

6.6 Paul and the Judeo-Christianity

All historians agree that the existing Christian theology is based on the perception of Paul and not on the true message of Jesus. Paul is called the greatest missionary of Christianity and its first theologian. Yet all Christian preachers attribute Christianity to both Jesus and Paul.

Paul: Evangelist to the Gentiles

In the late 1900s, major attention in the history of Christianity was focused on Paul. This was due to a strong critical examination of his views on Judaism and the Mosaic Law. His position regarding the Law changed completely after his conversion. The book of Acts and Paul’s Epistles have been used as a source of understanding Paul’s early life, conversion, and approach to theology. However, there are problems in reconciling the accounts in Acts with those in Epistles. Gal. 1:15 suggests that, immediately before his

conversion and for three years afterwards. Paul lived in Arabia and Damascus. Acts seems to suggest that he lived in Jerusalem (7:58-8:3; 9:1-2; 22:3). Similarly, while Paul's letters mention two visits to Jerusalem (Gal. 1:18; 2:1), and that he hoped to make a third (Rom. 15:25; 1 Cor. 16:4), Acts makes obvious references to five visits (9:26-28; 11:27-30; 15:1-4; 18:22; 21:17-19). Attempts to reconcile these contradictions were extremely difficult; so many scholars accepted their discrepancy and used Acts and the Epistles separately without trying to confuse the public.

Paul was born in Tarsus, a city in Cilicia (in present day Turkey) in 4 AD. He became a convert to Christianity after experiencing a vision of Jesus during a journey from Jerusalem to Damascus (Acts 9:1-19, 22:5-16, 26:12-18) about 33-35 AD. It is important to remember the above contradiction relating to his companions during Paul's vision. After 14 quiet years, Paul began to write his Epistles that took him through Syria, Galatia, Asia Minor, and Rome. Some scholars argue that Paul spent those missing 14 years in Macedonia, Greece. This is probably true if one assumes that he was testing and adjusting his method to present the new religion to Pagans. Though Paul was in Jerusalem at the same time as Jesus, it is doubtful that the two men ever met. His zeal for Mosaic Law led him to persecute the Christian church. First he thought of the church to be a Jewish sect that was untrue to the Law and should therefore be destroyed (Gal. 1:13). Acts 7:54-60 portrays him as a supportive witness to the stoning of St. Stephen, the first Christian martyr. Paul was arrested in Jerusalem after riots heated by his Jewish opponents, and was eventually sent to Rome to stand trial. It is unclear how that trial ended, or if he ever left Rome. Eventually, in 64 he was executed near Rome.

Paul established his credibility by maintaining that Jesus spoke to him after he was raised to Heaven. Paul perceived this revelation to mark the end of all religions, and thus of all religious distinctions. He consistently spoke of God's "call" to him. God has called people and is continuing to call people into the Christian community. Paul recognized Peter's effort to introduce Christianity to the Jews, but he was convinced that Christianity was God's call to the entire world. Although scholars do not fully understand Paul's motive

for this effort, it is certain that he attempted to bring together the churches of his Gentile mission with the Jewish Christians in Palestine.

The New Testament contains 13 letters bearing Paul's name as author, and 7 of these were almost certainly written by Paul himself: 1 Thessalonians, Galatians, 1 Corinthians, 2 Corinthians, Romans, Philippians, and Philemon. Christian scholars debate the authenticity of the rest of the letters. The seven letters, attributed to Paul, in which he occasionally speaks of his personal experience and his work, are the major sources of knowledge about the course of his life. Most scholars concentrate on them and consult the Acts of the Apostles as an additional source.

The letters of Paul reveal that his missionary itinerary was focused on three major objectives:

- The expansion of Christian missionary to the Gentiles in areas not approached by other Christian evangelists—hence his plan to go as far west as Spain, (Romans 1:14; 5:24, 28).
- The concern of a preacher to revisit his own congregations as problems arose. This was demonstrated by his several visits to Corinth.
- His constant determination to collect money from his largely rich Gentile churches and to deliver the money himself to Jesus' Apostles in Jerusalem.

Without a doubt, Paul had remarkable qualities that made him the top evangelist in the history of Christianity:

- He was very active in traveling and propagating his version of Christianity to the Gentiles.
- He had an extraordinary capability for adapting himself to the situation of his audience.
- He was more effective in writing than in speaking.
- He knew very well how to package the new religion, and presented it in an acceptable form to the Gentiles.

After knowing that about Paul, it is no wonder that very many "successful" TV evangelists are adopting Paul's approach in

addressing the Christian public. TV evangelists receive calls from God, and they continually talk about those divine calls. These God's calls range from requesting money, to God's revelation to the evangelist of his forgiveness if the evangelist committed a major sin.

The Pauline and Judeo-Christianity

In the early stages of Christianity, there were two versions of Christianity: one presented by James, a relative of Jesus, and the rest of the apostles as a mission to the Jews. Paul introduced the second version as a religion for Gentiles. Barnabas introduced Paul, to the other apostles in Jerusalem. But the disciples "*were all afraid of Paul and believed not that he was a disciple, but Barnabas took him and brought him to the Apostles*", (Act 9:26-27). The apostles had doubtful feelings that Paul was not what he seemed to claim. Paul tried first to preach to the Jews, but he was unsuccessful as some of the Apostles. They understood that the Jesus' message was for "the black sheep of Israel", and Jesus came not to "destroy but to fulfill." And here was someone, that they did not trust, pushing to steal the show and expand the religion beyond its original boundaries. The apostles were trying to conserve the Jewish law, while Paul was exempting the Gentiles from this law. In Paul's view, it was very difficult, or even impossible to approach a Greek or Roman with a new religion and then, for example, ask the future convert, to be circumcised. Just imagine a thirty-year old Greek leaning towards Christianity, and then someone tells him: by the way, *you need to be circumcised; or if you commit adultery you are going to be stoned to death!* What do you expect his reaction to be?

The author of 2 Peter speaks of difficulties in understanding Paul (2 Peter 3:16), and then he said that: "*as also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which untaught and unstable people twist to their own destruction, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures.*" Peter was referring to the teachings of Paul. What did Peter mean by that? How were the scriptures explained in a way that was hard to

understand? Who was Peter referring to by untaught and unstable people? The Bible does not give any clues to these questions.

The small group of apostles formed a Jewish sect that remained faithful to the form of worship practiced in the temples. Some men went to Antioch in 49 AD, and told the Gentiles "*Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved.*" (Acts 15:1). Paul and Barnabas were against this teaching. When converts from paganism were presented to the apostles, a "special system" was offered to them in the council of Jerusalem in 49 AD that exempted them from circumcision and the Mosaic Law. This council was a meeting of Peter, Paul, and the leaders of Jerusalem's Christians. Many Judeo-Christians rejected this concession. This conservative group was separated from Paul. For Paul, the circumcision, Sabbath, and rituals of worship practiced in the temple were old fashioned, even for the Jews. Christianity was to free itself from Judaism and open itself to the Gentiles. The head of the community at that time was James. James represented the Judeo-Christian camp, which consciously adhered to Judaism as opposed to the Pauline Christianity. Jesus' family, and certainly the Virgin Mary too, had a very important role in supporting the Judeo-Christian church of Jerusalem.

It was not just in Jerusalem and Palestine that Judeo-Christianity predominated during the first hundred years of the church. The Judeo-Christian mission seemed to have developed everywhere before the Pauline mission. This is certainly the explanation of the fact that the letters of Paul had difficulties in understanding the new religion. The whole Syrian-Palestinian coast from Gaza to Antioch was Judeo-Christian as witnessed by the Acts and the writings of Clement. In Asia Minor, Paul's letters to the Galatians and Colossians indicated the existence of Judeo-Christians.

It is important to know these facts to understand the struggle between communities that ended up by shaping Christianity. The Gospels began to appear around 70 AD, the time where the two rival groups were engaged in a fierce struggle, with the Judeo-Christians winning this battle. Then the Jews revolted against Rome in 66 AD, and after the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD the

Pauline version won the victory after his death. From 70 AD to about 140 AD, the Gospels of Mark, Matthew, Luke, and John appeared. They did not constitute the first Christian documents: the letters of Paul dated well before them.

Paul is the most controversial person in Christianity. He was considered to be a traitor to Jesus' teachings by the family and apostles of Jesus. Paul created Christianity at the expense of those whom Jesus had gathered around him to spread his Gospel. He proved the authority of his mission by declaring Jesus, raised from the dead, had appeared to him on the road to Damascus. It is reasonable to state that Christianity would not be the same without Paul. It is almost certain that if this atmosphere of struggle between Christians had not existed, we would not have had the Bible that we know today. The Gospels started to appear at a time of fierce struggle and political upheaval, when Pauline Christianity won the battle of the Gentiles, and created its own collection of documents. These texts constituted the "Canon" which condemned and excluded as heretical any other documents that were not following Paul's version of Christianity. The Judeo-Christians were cut off from the church that gradually freed itself from Judaism and the Law. However, they existed in few numbers in the third and fourth centuries, especially in Palestine, Arabia, Jordan, Syria, Egypt, and Mesopotamia. They kept the original Christianity in their hearts, and tried very hard to keep it alive. This was demonstrated by the efforts of Arius in Alexandria to revive Judeo-Christianity.

Paul's Theology

Paul created a theology that was never described by Jesus. He adapted his version of Christianity to the Gentiles, after unsuccessful attempts to join the Judeo-Christians. The fact that each of his letters were written to a specific church with a different approach indicates that he wanted to adjust his teachings to address that church's previous belief. The following is an attempt to summarize Paul's thought:

- **Jesus' Status:** Unlike the Fathers of the Church, Paul never called Jesus "God". He called him "the Son of God" in the

- Jewish sense; Adam, David, and Israel were called sons of God. He never suggested that Jesus had been the incarnation of God. He only suggested that Jesus had the powers of God.
- **Rejection of the Jewish Law:** After the incident of Antioch in 49 AD, Paul rejected the Mosaic Law "*The service that brought death (the law) was written and engraven in stone*" (2 Cor. 3:7); "*Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the Law*" (Gal.3: 13).
 - **Allegorical Interpretations:** Paul was emphatic that by getting the broken bread and wine, the Christian is sharing in the sacrificing of the son to the father in his broken body and shed blood.
 - **The Cross:** According to Paul's ideology, the cross can be perceived to reveal God's great power, a power made perfect in weakness. God confirmed this power by raising Jesus from the dead, by sending the Holy Spirit, and by establishing the church as the foundation of his New Kingdom.
 - **Accepting Jesus:** Paul emphasized that Jesus died for our sins, (1 Cor. 15:3). The resurrection of Jesus established his victory over our sins. He rejected the prevailing Judeo-Christian emphasis on repentance and forgiveness of sins. Paul did not call upon his audiences to repent of any sin, but rather to *accept Jesus and his crucifixion as the only way of salvation*. The symbol of the cross was a victory over all sins, and humans do not need to repent or ask God for forgiveness. Paul even rejected the call of John the Baptist to the Jews to repent, which Jesus did not object.

6.7 Gnosticism

The term Gnosticism is derived from the Greek word *gnosis* ("revealed knowledge"). Gnosticism competed with orthodox Christianity for the first 350 years of Christian history, and affected tremendously its doctrine. They promised salvation through secret knowledge that they claimed was revealed to them alone. Scholars trace their origin back to such various sources as Jewish mysticism, Hellenistic mystery and Iranian cults, and Babylonian and Egyptian

mythology. Most Gnostic sects adhered to Christianity, but their beliefs sharply differed from those of the majority of Christians. Christian ideas were quickly incorporated into the Gnosticism sect. The most prominent Christian Gnostics were Valentinus and his disciple Ptolemaeus, who during the second century were influential in the Roman church. Valentinus accepted not only the four Gospels but also many additional traditions that included the Gospel of Thomas. Christian Gnostics showed that the traditional God of Judaism did not satisfy many of the new converts to Christianity. They did not experience the world as good world created by a merciful god. Until the discovery at Nag Hammadi in Egypt of key Coptic Gnostic documents in 1945, knowledge of Gnosticism depended on Christian sources, notably Irenaeus, Tertullian, and Clement of Alexandria.

Marcion (100-160) established a rival Christian sect in Rome about 140. He listed contradictions between the Old and New Testaments, and developed a sophisticated apologetic method for approaching the discrepancies in the Bible. He believed that unknown persons determined to keep Christianity Jewish had corrupted the Gospels. Marcion rejected the Old Testament and almost all of the New Testament, including the accounts of the incarnation and the resurrection. He based his teachings on ten of the Epistles of Paul and on an "altered version" of the Gospel of Luke. The existence of four versions of the Gospels was a troublesome mystery in itself. He believed in a dualistic interpretation of God, whereby God is divided into the just God of Law, who was the Creator of the Old Testament, and the good God, the infinitely superior deity revealed by Jesus Christ. The popularity of his teachings showed that he had voiced a common anxiety due to public confusion. He had put his finger on something important in the Christian experience by rejecting the Jewish One God and introducing, instead, a dualistic God.

Much of early Christian doctrine was formulated in reaction to this movement. Marcion represented a formidable challenge to the Church. His exclusion of many of the apostolic writings provided a strong motive to the church's need to classify which books did or did not rank as authoritative documents. In later

Christian debate, the formation of the Biblical canon became a sensitive issue: were the books admitted to the Church's canon because they were authentic? Or did the Church actively *created* the canon in response to Marcion's "inspired" text? Christian historians believe that both questions have to receive affirmative answer. The criterion for admission of accepted books in the New Testament was governed by the Christian belief of the Fathers of the Church during the second and the third centuries.

By the third century Gnosticism began to yield to orthodox Christian opposition and persecution. Partly in reaction to the Gnostic heresy, the church strengthened its organization by centralizing authority in the office of bishop, which made its effort to suppress the poorly organized Gnostics movement. Furthermore, as orthodox Christian theology and philosophy developed, the primarily mythological Gnostic teachings began to appear weird and crude. Christians defended their identification of the God of the New Testament with the God of Judaism and their belief that the New Testament is the only true "revealed knowledge." By the end of the third century many Gnostics were converted to orthodox beliefs. Gnosticism as a separate movement vanished.

6.8 The Fathers of the Church

A father of the Church is a name given by the Christian Church to the writers who established the Christian doctrine. The writings of the Fathers consolidated Christian doctrine as found in the Bible, especially the Gospels, the writings of the Apostolic Fathers, and decisions of Councils of Church. They provided an authoritative body of Christian teaching to the peoples of the Roman Empire. They also introduced ambiguous concepts and interpretations that had not been stated by Jesus himself. The Fathers of the Church consist of four Western Fathers, including Saints Ambrose, Augustine, Pope Gregory I, and Jerome, and four Eastern Fathers, including Saints Athanasius, Basil, John Chrysostom, and Gregory of Nazianzus. The earlier Eastern Fathers, including Clement of Alexandria, St. Justin Martyr, and Origen, were strongly influenced by Greek philosophy. The Western Fathers, however, including

Tertullian and Saints Gregory I and Jerome, generally avoided the mixing of pagan and Christian theology. In the east, Clement and Origen preached a peaceful joyous return to God, but in the western Church a more frightening God demanded shocking death of his son as a condition of salvation.

It is important to know that when the Fathers of the Church were teaching Christianity, there was no official doctrine. No one knew for sure if Jesus was human, God, or the Son of God. No one knew for sure how a human being had been divine. No one knew for sure if God is one, two, or three. During that time Christianity was so vague to the extent that the preachers themselves were struggling to understand it. They were attempting to develop a Christian doctrine that can be reconciled with Jewish concepts and Greek philosophy. They had to do that to attract many Jewish and pagan converts to Christianity. All previous efforts to incorporate the Greek and the Roman cultures with the Judeo-Christians had provoked fierce resistance. The Jews fought placing of a statue of Zeus in the Temple. The Jews perceived the Roman Empire and the pagan society as intolerant and anti-Semitic. Educated Greeks and Romans thought of Judaism as a strange cult with no sacrifices except in Jerusalem, with weird food law excluding pork, with circumcision, and a distinctive calendar. The acceptance of the Gentile Christians without a requirement to observe the Mosaic Law seemed to the rabbis as excessive liberalism.

But persecution mainly came upon the Christians from the Roman government. Nero at Rome set the precedent in 64 when Paul was executed. Provincial governors soon followed Nero. The mere profession of Christianity was considered a crime. The Roman government ordered burning of all Christian texts. A Christian defendant could be set free by offering incense on a pagan altar, to refuse it was to suffer imprisonment, torture, being thrown to wild beast, or in the case of Roman citizen, being beheaded. When the Romans executed Christians, they were accused of atheism because their concept of divinity seriously offended the Roman tradition. Christianity seemed to the pagans as a barbarian creed that ignored the achievement of the civilized Romans. The persecution of Christians and burning their texts were on and off until the beginning

of the fourth century. It was in the middle of this theological confusion, persecution, and burning of Christian texts that the doctrine of Christianity was established.

The Fathers of the Church attempted to answer the following questions:

- What is Jesus?
- Does Jesus have one or two natures?
- Does Jesus have one or two wills?
- Is the Son co-eternal with God or not?
- What is the relation of Christ to God the father?
- How could a human being incarnate the Logos?
- What exactly did it mean that Jesus was a divine?
- How could an omnipotent God have suffered in Jesus?
- Is Jesus made of same or similar substance as that of God?
- Did the Lord, to whom and through whom Christians pray, pray?
- Was the Logos the same as such Biblical terms as Word or Wisdom?
- What is the relation between the Logos and the concept of one God?
- How can God be the father, son, and the holy spirit, and yet still be one?
- How could Christians believe that Jesus was divine, and in the same time believe in one God?

Justin Martyr

Justin Martyr (100-165) was a philosopher, theologian, and one of the earliest apologists of the Christian church. He sought to reconcile Christian doctrine and pagan culture. He was born in Nablus, West Bank in Palestine. His parents were pagans. As a young man Justin devoted himself to the study of Greek philosophy, notably the writings of Plato and the Stoic philosophers. However, he had clearly failed to understand what was involved in the Greek philosophy. He lacked the diligence and intelligence for philosophy. An elderly Christian converted him to Christianity. Justin moved

on to Rome where he offered lectures in his own school on the Christian philosophy. He strove by his teachings and writings to bring others to the truths he had discovered. Justin was beheaded during the reign of the Roman emperor Marcus Aurelius because he refused to offer sacrifice to the pagan gods. Justin was included in the martyrology of the Roman Catholic Church in the ninth century.

The books that are credited to him with certainty are the two Apologies for the Christians, which consist of a defense of Christians against charges of atheism and rebellion in the Roman state, and the *Dialogue with Trypho the Jew*, which professes to be the record of an actual discussion at Ephesus. He maintained that the God of Plato is the same God of the Christians. Both Greek philosophers and Jewish prophets had prophesied the coming of Jesus. Abraham and Socrates were Christians before Christ! He also claimed that Jesus was the incarnation of the *Logos*, or the divine *Word and Reason*. Justin maintained the distinction of the Father as God transcendent from the Son as God. Like the Stoic philosophers, he believed that the logos had been active in the world since its beginning. One can easily see his ideas at the first verses of the Gospel of John. Justin probably knew the Gospels according to Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. He affected the thinking process of Irenaeus, bishop of Lyons.

Justin accepted the Apocalypse of John as inspired book and interpreted it to mean that Jesus would return to rebuild Jerusalem and reign for a thousand years. This was based on the Babylonian mythology of the concept of millennial periods of the seven planets. Justin understood Psalm 90:4 "*For a thousand years in your sight are like yesterday when it is past*" to provide interpretation of the seven days of creation with the Sabbath as a divine day of rest. Irenaeus developed this notion further to suggest that the world history will last for six thousand years, followed by a seventh millennium of reign under Jesus. Very few Fathers of the Church accepted this version, but this notion persisted in the west.

Clement of Alexandria

Clement of Alexandria (150? -215?), was a Greek theologian and an early Father of the Church. He was probably born in Athens and was educated at the catechetical school in Alexandria. Some time after Clement's conversion from paganism, he was ordained a presbyter. In about 190 he became the head of the catechetical school, which became famous under his leadership. During the persecution of the Christians, Clement moved from Alexandria to Caesarea. He was sometimes considered a saint; his name appeared in early Christian martyrology. Many scholars believe Clement to have been the founder of the Alexandrine school of theology. According to Clement's system of logic, the thought and will of God warns, educates, and perfects the true Christian. This process takes place in three stages, described in *A Hortatory Address to the Greeks, The Tutor, and Miscellanies*, Clement's major works. The first work is a defense of the faith; the second contains instructions in manners and morals; and the third is a discussion of various points of doctrinal theology. Clement had no doubt that Yahweh and the gods of the Greek philosophers were one and the same. Yet, Clement believed that Jesus was God, the living God that suffered and is worshipped. If Christians imitated Jesus, they too would become deified.

Clement's doctrine became fundamental to the Christian concept of God. Yet, his theology left many crucial unanswered questions about the relationship between God and Jesus. Later an unknown Christian suggested that the biblical terms: Father, Son, and the Spirit could be compared to the masks worn by an actor to assume another role to make their message audible. At that time, it was clearly difficult to find a way of adapting the Christian theology that Jesus had been divine with the equally strong belief that God is one.

Irenaeus

Irenaeus (Greek, "Peacemaker") (130-202) was an early Father of the Church. He was born in Asia Minor. There, as a child, he

heard the preaching of St. Polycarp the disciple of St. John. In 177 Irenaeus was appointed bishop of Lyons. He converted many pagans and was an ardent opponent of Gnosticism. About 180 he wrote a work against the Gnostics, known as *Against the Heresies*, which has contributed to the knowledge of Gnosticism. Irenaeus taught a similar doctrine like Clement that Jesus had been the incarnate Logos, the divine reason. Both Irenaeus and Clement were adapting the Jewish God to concepts that were accepted by pagan converts of that time and culture. Justin's language about the distinction of the Father as God transcendent from the Son as God, which Irenaeus had made his own, precipitated sharp debate in Rome. In combating Gnostic dualism, orthodox writers had insisted that there is one Supreme God. Irenaeus skillfully vindicated the four Gospels on numerological ideas. For example, four was a sacred number that corresponded to the four winds, or the four faces of the cherubim in Ezekiel. He defended the Gospel of John, to whom he also ascribed the Revelation.

Irenaeus declares that Christians believe *"in one God the father Almighty, maker of the heaven and earth and the seas and all that is therein, and in one Christ Jesus the son of God, who was made in flesh for our salvation and in the Holy spirit who through the prophets preached the dispensations and the comings and the virgin birth and the passion, and the rising from the dead and the assumption into heaven in his flesh of our beloved Lord Jesus Christ"*

Tertullian

Tertullian (160? -220?) is the first important Christian writer in Latin, whose work is remarkable for its vigor, candid sarcasm, intolerant, and skillfulness. He was born in Carthage. His training was in law and practiced his profession in Rome. He became a convert to the Christian faith while still in Rome. In 197 he returned to Carthage, where he became a presbyter of the church. In 207 he became the leader of the Montanists. Montanus who was seized by the Spirit, and together with two women delivered religious

utterances to which other Christians objected formed this sect. The Montanists, increasingly in conflict with church authorities, were finally declared heretical.

Tertullian would rank among the great Fathers of the Church if he had not embraced the Montanist heresy. He profoundly influenced all Christian theologians of the West. The Roman Catholic Church accepts many of his works as orthodox. After espousing Montanist doctrines, he was a severe critic of orthodox Christians.

Tertullian reveals a profound knowledge of Greek and Latin literature, both pagan and Christian. He was the first writer in Latin to formulate Christian theological concepts. Using Greek mythology and the legal vocabulary of Rome he coined the terminology that was to dominate the future of Christianity, such as the nature of the Trinity "*three persons in one substance*", or in Christ "*two substances or natures in one person*". Tertullian enjoyed paradox. He believed that a human mind could not invent the divine doctrine of Christianity. The crucifying of the Son of God sounds ridiculous and scandalous: "*I believe because it is outrageous.*" Moreover, Tertullian had castigated women as evil temptresses and an eternal danger to mankind.

Origen

Origen (185-254) was a famous Christian writer, teacher, and theologian. He was born in Alexandria, Egypt. When Clement left Alexandria to become Bishop in Caesarea, Origen, his student, assumed his position when he was twenty years old. His father died a martyr's death, and Origen tried to join him, believing that martyrdom was the way to heaven. Origen taught for about 28 years, lecturing Christians and pagans. He composed his major dogmatic treatises there and began his many critical works. During the persecutions of the Christians in 250 AD under Emperor Decius, Origen was imprisoned and tortured. Released in 251, but weakened by injuries, he died about 254, probably in Tyre.

Origen stands as a giant among biblical scholar of the early church. His accomplishments in the critical examination of the text

of the Old Testament were outstanding. He discovered discrepancies between the Septuagint and a translation of the Hebrew Old Testament. For example, the History of Susanna did not exist in the Hebrew text of the book of Daniel. The Synagogue suppressed this story, because it was critical to the Jewish elders. Origen believed that the story could have been added by the translators, but that did not prove that there was no Hebrew original.

He was a voluminous writer whose works include letters, treatises in dogmatic and practical theology, apologetics, exegeses, and textual criticism. In addition, Origen is regarded as the father of the symbolic method of scriptural interpretation. He taught the principle of the threefold division of the person into body, spirit, and soul, which was then a common concept. He was a Platonist and endeavored to combine Greek philosophy and the Christian religion. He developed the idea of Christ as the Logos, or Incarnate Word, who is with the Father from eternity, but he taught also that the Father is greater than Son in power and dignity. Some of Origen's contemporaries accused him of failing to understand the language about the pre-existence of the Word. Paul never mentioned anything like that. Others regarded Origen as a heretic who had corrupted Christianity with the poison of Greek culture. Origen adjusted his Platonic philosophy to Semitic scriptures by developing a figurative way of understanding the Bible. For example, the virgin birth of Jesus in the womb of Mary was not to be understood literally but as the birth of the divine wisdom in the soul. Origen's view of Jesus did not conform totally to the later Christian theology. For example, he did not believe that humans had been saved by the death of Christ.

Athanasius

Born in Alexandria, (293-373), Egypt, Athanasius received a classical education before entering the famous theological school in his native city. He was ordained a deacon as a young man and served as secretary to the bishop of Alexandria. It was then that he began to take a prominent position in the intense theological struggle that ended in the Council of Nicaea in 325. At Nicaea, Athanasius

opposed Arius (256-336), the Alexandrine priest who advanced the doctrine known as Arianism. Athanasius was by far the most formidable antagonist encountered by Arianism. Athanasius formulated a doctrine, according to which the Son of God is of the same essence, or substance, as the Father. Arius, on the other hand, maintained that the Son was of an inferior substance from that of the Father and that Jesus was merely a creature that was more perfect than any other creature. After the creed was signed, it was clear that crucial terms of the creed were not understood.

Athanasius became bishop of Alexandria around 328. During the Arian argument, politics mixed with theology, and each side struggled to win the approval of the Roman emperor Constantine I. Athanasius used his powerful skills of argument to impose his theology on the bishops with the support of the atheist emperor. Later, Athanasius was exiled five times. He spent the rest of his life quietly at his post in Alexandria. The theological battle was practically over, and the victory rested with the cause of Nicene orthodoxy. Athanasius was a rich writer, especially in his attack on Arianism; *Discourses Against the Arians*, *History of the Arians*, *Apology Against the Arians*, and *On the Decrees of the Nicene Synod*.

6.9 The Ecumenical Councils of Church

The word Ecumenical means the whole Catholic Church. The arguments of Fathers of the Church lead to confusing the average Christians about the relationship of the Father with the Son. A fierce theological passion occurred in the Churches of Egypt, Syria and Asia Minor. Gregory, Bishop of Nyssa complained that he could not obtain a straight answer to a simple question "*If you ask someone to give you change, he philosophizes about the begotten and the unbegotten. If you say to an attendant: Is my bath ready, he will tell you that the Son was made out of nothing.*" Buying bread from a bakery turns to a heated argument about whether or not the Father is greater than the Son. These kinds of Byzantine arguments were heating up everywhere and on all levels of intellect. Is the Son of the same substance as the Father, or is it a similar

substance? Does Jesus have one or two natures? Is the Son co-eternal with God or not? What is the relation of Christ to God the father? In what sense can God be the father, son, and the holy spirit, and yet still be one? How can there be a God with true unity combined with true diversity? During that time, no one can possibly prove anything definitively one way or another. The whole Byzantine Empire transformed into scholarly theologians! It is interesting to note that in the present day Egypt, the expression Byzantine argument means a useless argument in which each opposing party could never prove their point of views!

At the middle of the third century, political crises, inflation, civil war, drastic trade recession, and barbarian invasions almost brought the collapse of the Roman Empire. In 284, the emperor Diocletian took power with the army's support. For the first nineteen years of his reign, persecution of the Church was not supported and the Church prospered in numbers. But the infiltration of Christianity in high places was strong, mainly through the governor's wives. Diocletian died in 306, and the army chose his son Constantine as his successor. Constantine's mother may have had Christian sympathies.

The average Christian may not know that councils of senior pastors established the Christian doctrine. Those pastors were arguing about theological subjects that Jesus himself did not introduce. A prerequisite for the appointment of an official in the councils was to have "charisma" which means that he was filled with the Holy Ghost. So when councils with famous members met, the Holy Ghost was among them, omnipotent and active!

The assembly of the first seven Ecumenical Councils of the early Christian world would establish the standards of the doctrine and hierarchy of the new religion. Usually pastors that represented the opposition to the final agreement of the council were fired or transferred to smaller churches. It is worthwhile to pause and take a look at how the Councils came into being and what decisions were made by them - presumably for all eternity. It is also important to examine the political background that surrounded the decision making process that changed Christianity forever.

The First Council in Nicaea I - 325

The first Ecumenical Council took place in Nicaea. Constantine sought to exploit the rapidly expanding religion, with its great potential, to strengthen the Roman Empire. Constantine was persuaded that the disunity of the church was destabilizing the empire. In 324 he felt sure that soon he would go to the Holy Land to see the sacred sites, and to be baptized in Jordan. But his plan was abruptly aborted. He found the Greek churches in Egypt, Palestine, Syria and Asia Minor boiling with controversy about the nature of Jesus. The intense theological emotion started in Alexandria by the charismatic presbyter Arius, who had a soft and impressive voice. He issued a challenge to his bishop Alexander, that the latter found impossible to ignore and even more difficult to argue: *how could Jesus have been God of the same substance like God the father?* Arius argued that it was blasphemous to think that Jesus was divine by nature. Jesus had specifically said that the father was greater than he. Alexander and his assistant Athanasius immediately realized the theological problem. Arius was asking vital questions about the nature of Jesus and his relationship to God. Arius followed the concept of the divine trinity as Origen had taught. It was not easy to endorse that the son and the father as being identical or of one substance without fairly complicated clarifications. Origen had felt the difficulty himself. He avoided the problem by saying that Jesus' relation to God is a characteristic of divine life. Arius reasoned that Jesus, who was physically born of Mary, grew in wisdom "*Logos*", suffered failure and death must be less than the unbegotten, deathless, and eternal father. He believed that God is beyond Jesus, and that Jesus coming on Earth was by the will of God, and not by the will of Jesus. Arius therefore clashed with a principle strongly stated by Irenaeus: "*Through God alone can God be known.*"

Arius was not an idiot; he received the support from scholarly and politically powerful bishops. He knew the scriptures well and produced many texts to support his claim that Jesus, *the Word*, could only be a creature like us. The *Logos* had been the instrument used by God to bring all creatures into existence. The *Word* or the

Logos had to be entirely different from God. He believed that Jesus had lived a perfect life; he had obeyed God even unto his death on the cross, notwithstanding the last words of Jesus on the cross according to Matthew. He contended that humans by imitating Jesus, the perfect creature, they too would be perfect creatures of God. Alexander and Athanasius harassed Arius. They had a different view regarding the weakness of humanity. Athanasius saw the need for God Himself to descend on earth and be crucified to save humanity because God alone is the Perfect Being. So a domestic dispute in Alexandria became a wide crisis in the Byzantine Empire!

When Constantine selected and brought together 318 bishops for the Council, it was a military and political decision. He needed the support of the new religion in his battles. He claimed that he saw a vision of the Cross in the middle of the sun, his god before converting to Christianity in his last day. Even the bishops had no illusion about that, for not only did the Emperor preside over the Council, he also proclaimed that his will was a divine law. The senior pastors accepted him as a "Universal Bishop" even though he was not baptized, and they let him take part in votes on church doctrine. Constantine was completely ignorant of Jesus' teachings. He was a follower of the solar monotheism of Mithras (the ancient Iranian god of light), who was portrayed on coins as the "invincible sun". When Constantine gave his name to the old Greek commercial city of Byzantium and made Constantinople in 330, five years after the Council, the capital of the Roman Empire, he had a mighty column erected for the ceremonial opening with the Emperor and the "invincible sun god" on the top of it.

When the bishops gathered to resolve the crisis, very few bishops shared Athanasius' view of Christ. Most held position between Arius and Athanasius. Nevertheless, Athanasius used his powerful skills of argument to impose his theology on the bishops with the support of the atheist emperor. Only Arius and two companions refused to sign this creed. The creed stated, "*the Creator, God the father, and the Redeemer, Son of God, were of the same nature, and that Jesus is the only begotten of the father.*" This absolutely vital Christian law became the church's canon by

imperial decree. That is how Jesus became identical with God. With this as a foundation, the bishops took Pauline Christianity to another level.

After the council, the bishops went on teaching the new creed, and the Arian crisis continued for another sixty years. Arius and his followers fought back and managed to regain imperial favor. Athanasius was exiled about five times. It was still very difficult to explain this creed because it was not in the scriptures and had pagan association. To an outsider or to an average Christian, these theological arguments seemed a waste of time: no one can possibly prove anything definitively one way or another, and the dispute simply proved to be divisive. No one disagreed about the special place that Christ holds, but the question remained in very many minds: What is Jesus Christ? Pauline Christianity had always been an inconsistent faith. Now at the first council, the church had added another paradox of incarnation, despite its apparent incompatibility with monotheism.

The atheist Constantine did the church another enormous favor. He was led by "divine inspiration" to discover the grave of Jesus, who had just become of the same substance of God. However, in spite of his spiritual inspiration and moral Christian values, Constantine did not stop murdering his close relatives during the same year: his son, his wife whom he had plunged into boiling water, and his father in law whom he forced to commit suicide. This is the image of the emperor and the Universal Bishop who managed the Nicene Creed, and who, when the council was over, told the Christians that the agreement was "the decision of God."

The Second Council in Constantinople I - 381

The first council provided the duality of God, while the second Ecumenical council extended the duality to the trinity. The emperor Theodosius I (347-395), who was appreciated when he made the Christian doctrine as the state religion, convened the second council at Constantinople. The church gave him the name "the Great". This Roman emperor was an oppressor of the poor. He overwhelmed the people with intolerable taxes. With his full imperial power, he

prevented anyone to give refuge to his oppressed people. If they did so, he had all the inhabitants of the offending village slaughtered. In the year 390, he had seven thousand rebellious citizens murdered in a frightful blood bath; at the same time the "Halleluiah" came to be used in the Christian churches.

In this council, the dogma of the trinity of the Father, Son, and the Holy Ghost was introduced and agreed upon as the church doctrine. Theodosius instructed the recognition of the "Nicene Creed," and the Council extended the worshipping to the Holy Ghost beside the Father and the Son. Also, the council declared the Holy Ghost to be made of the same substance of God. Today the church still feeds on this dogma of trinity that was added under Theodosius the Great.

The Third Council in Ephesus - 431

During this second phase of the next four councils, the center of interest shifted from the trinity to the identity of Christ. If Christ is truly God, then in what sense is he also human? And if at the same time God and man are the same, how can he be one? To answer these difficult questions, the Virgin Mary had to be brought in the picture. *Notice the step by step formulation of the Christian doctrine that was never mentioned in the scriptures, even though their authenticity is highly questionable.*

The East Roman emperor Theodosius II (408-450) and the West Roman emperor Valentinian III (425-455) convened this third Ecumenical Council. These two emperors were not really interested in religion or complicated theology. They were young and fun loving. Theodosius II devoted himself wholly to his hobbies, and tyrannically levied taxes on his subjects to pay for his extravagant way of life. It is no wonder that Theodosius was completely under the influence of his power hungry elder sister Pulcheria (399-453). For some time she acted as a regent for her brother and publicized herself as a virgin. After her brother's death, she had his rival murdered. As for the West Roman Empire, Valentinian was controlled by his mother, and ultimately was assassinated.

This council declared that the Virgin Mary is "God's bearer"

or "*Mother of God.*" The council stated that what Mary bore, was not a human closely united with God, but a single and undivided entity who is God and man at the same time. One attendant who expressed reservation on the title "God's bearer" was condemned for making a big deal of contrast between Jesus the God and Jesus the man. The council of Ephesus led to a lasting division between the East and the West. The Christians in east Syria and Mesopotamia, living mainly in the Persian Empire and outside the Byzantine borders, felt unable to accept that definition of Mary. While in the West, it was believed that the Church of the East divided Christ into two different entities.

The Fourth Council in Chalcedon - 451

Unable to obtain a fair hearing at the third council, the Christians from Antioch were, to some extent, reinstated at the fourth ecumenical council at Chalcedon. This council was formally convened by the Byzantine emperor Marcianus (396-457), but in reality it was run by the virgin Pulcheria, who had married Marcianus after the death of her brother Theodosius. She knew far better than the bishops what she wanted. She convened the council against the will of the various churches, and she held the deliberations firmly in her hand.

Pope Leo I initiated the dogmatic formula that Jesus had two natures. The council proclaimed the doctrine that divine and human nature are inseparably united in the person Jesus. This was an attempt to compromise and strike a balance between the Alexandrine and Antiochene approaches, allowing for both the diversity and the unity within the incarnate Christ. However, in Alexandria they felt that Antioch had imposed their approach on them, and this further increased the division between the churches. They were willing to say that Christ is "*from two natures*" but not that he is "*in two natures.*" This double nature still persists as the Chalcedon creed. The council also entrusted the preservation of the unity of the doctrine to the Pope, who would intervene when he saw fit. This is how the religious dominance of Rome started. Today the Vatican people must still be grateful to Pulcheria for

pushing through the council of Chalcedon.

The Fifth Council in Constantinople II - 553

The East Roman emperor Justinian I (483-565) staged this council. The bishops of this council had virtually nothing major to do. Anything that Justinian had in mind had been achieved long before by imperial decrees and laws. It is not without irony that this assembly is described in the theological literature as the "council of acclamation." Justinian summoned Pope Vigilius (537-555) who was later quoted by opponents of Papal infallibility to prove their case. Vigilius and the bishops submitted themselves to the powerful political interest of the emperor, who found his place in history books because of his savage laws against heretics. Therefore, a heretic was defined as anyone who denied the Christian doctrine, and was subject to savage punishment, or death. An army of Roman officials tracked down dissenters, rounding them up in droves and forcing them to accept the Christian baptism on Justinian's orders. The third council proclaimed that "God was born", and this council stated that "God died", and the lord was "crucified in flesh." This council also condemned the critical examination of the Bible by Origen for his deviations as unorthodox. When the council took this decision, persecution was not confined to Origen's numerous followers; it also included many others who were not following all the decrees of the councils.

The Sixth Council of Constantinople III - 680-81

The saga of the dual nature of Jesus continued in this council. The council researched the question that if Jesus had two natures; did he have one or two wills? If Jesus was genuinely human, then he must have possessed authentic human freedom. The fourth council gave Jesus two natures, and the sixth council gave him two wills; a divine will as well as a human will. This was a compromise between two opposing parties. Both parties agreed that Christ was truly divine as well as truly human. It was ironic that in the two centuries following the fourth council a lasting agreement between the two

sides proved impossible.

The Seventh Council of Nicaea II - 787

The next stage of the Christian era of the seventh council was another controversy about icons. By icons is meant an image, visual representation, or a statue of Christ, the Virgin Mary, the Angels, and saints. It may take the form of a painted panel of wood, but could be a mosaic on the church's wall, a portrait in metal, or a statue, although statues were extremely rare in the East Christian art. The first attack on the use of icons lasted from 726 until 780. This conflict, as usual, needed imperial politics, and the Empress Irene brought it to an end. Therefore the council convened by the Empress, and stated that it was theologically correct to depict Jesus, Mary, and the saints as icons. In 843, Empress Theodora ordered the restoration of the holy icons. It is interesting that the imperial champions of icon adoration should both have been women, who happened to like art. This seventh council finally transformed the monotheistic religion of Jesus Christ to a polytheistic and pagan religion.

It is important to know the history of the evolution of Christian doctrines that was developed by humans and not by Jesus. Humans developed serious and complex fundamental Christian concepts. If these concepts were true, they should have been spelled out plainly by Jesus in the clearest way. They should not have been left to human interpretations of the Fathers of the Church or the Ecumenical Councils of Church. The job of the messenger of God is to deliver clearly the message of God and live as a role model of the teachings of the religion. This is what Moses, Jesus, and Muhammad did. The messages of Moses and Jesus were blurred and smeared by tribal feud and outrageous incorrect interpretations. On the other hand, Muhammad kept the message of God faithfully and steadfastly.

Consequently, it is important to remember the story of the people of Noah, and how the devil convinced them to commemorate the righteous people by making pictures of

them. The next step was to persuade the people to make statues for those righteous people. The last step was to worship the statues, and that was when God sent Noah to them. These stories of the past, we see in churches today. And there is no difference between a Christian church, and a Buddhist or Hindu temple; they all have statues that people worship. Christians, in churches, are presented by the pure moral teachings of Jesus Christ, Peace and Blessing of Allah be upon him, mixed with polytheism and paganism. The memories of moral values affect anyone and make them feel good, while the Emperors and Empresses smile from beyond!

7

Islam and Christianity

The confusion in the doctrines of Christianity started by a mathematical error! Jesus is called the Word of God. In John 1:1: *“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.”* Now the mathematical equation goes like this:

1. Jesus = The Word
2. The Word = God
3. Therefore Jesus = God!

If you replace the Word (Logos) with Jesus, the above verses read as follows:

“In the beginning was Jesus, and Jesus was with God, and Jesus was God.”

The basic flaw in the above equation is that the first verse is misunderstood; as for the second verse, no one really knows where it came from; and the third verse is meaningless without using the Greek philosophy. It is no wonder that the Gospel of John is completely different from the synoptic Gospels. Once a person accepts the divinity of Jesus besides God, belief in the divinity of the Holy Ghost too is not a problem, since the majority of Christians do not know exactly what it is. However, the Bible tells stories about people who were filled with the Holy Ghost:

- Acts 11:24, "*For he (Barnabas) was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost and of Faith*",
- Acts 5:32, "*And so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey.*"
- Luke 1:15. "*And he (John the Baptist) shall be filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother's womb.*"

See further Acts 6:5; II Peter 1:21; II Timothy 1:14; I Cor. 2:16; Luke 1:41. If we use correct mathematics for the above verse in Acts 11:24, as follows:

- Full of the Holy Ghost and of Faith
- The Holy Ghost = Faith

It is clear from the above equation and the many verses of the Bible, that the Holy Ghost may simply mean faith. It may also mean the Angel that God sends to strengthen human faith, just like the one that was sent to Jesus during his crucifixion. "*And there appeared an angel unto him from heaven, strengthening him.*" (Luke 22:43). It does not mean that complex concept of a physical Holy Ghost made of the same essence of God to assemble the tri-theistic form of God. The Holy Ghost filled the hearts of Barnabas, John the Baptist even in his mother's womb, or any one who obeys God. Religious people sometimes experience spiritual feeling of faith that fills up the hearts, and may send shivers through the whole body, which indicates that at this moment they are very close to God.

Christianity is a very complicated religion that certainly did not follow the previous messages of God, delivered by hundreds of prophets before Jesus. But the Christian apologists have answers to all questions regarding their doctrines. Sometimes those answers just do not make any sense. For example, why did not God reveal before Jesus that he is actually one with three different persons? One apologist claims that humanity was not ready for that language of one god with different personalities. The example that he gives to clarify this point is that his son used to call the lid of a can of coke door when he was a child. When his son grew up, he knew

that it is the lid that opens the coke! Similarly, God was one; and when humanity grew up, God revealed that he is still one but with three personalities! The conclusion is that you do not really ask any question about Christianity because the more you ask, the more confused you will be. Just accept Jesus and your sins are forgiven and you guaranteed paradise! And by the way, keep silent about what Matthew said in 7:21, "*Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven.*" A Muslim, by definition, is the one who does to the Will of God. It is certain that without the backing of the atheist imperial power of the Roman Empire Christianity would have not succeeded.

7.1 The Doctrine of Trinity

According to the first two Ecumenical Councils of Church, God is three gods merged into one God. This one God is called the Trinity. This name of God does not exist anywhere in the New Testament! Also Jesus never mentioned the trinity and certainly did not explain it in the clearest way. However, to say that God is three, in Christianity, is a blasphemy of the highest order. All three parts of the Trinity are "coequal" "co-eternal" and "of the same substance." In other words, while the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost sustain distinct relationships to one another, they share the same divine nature. For this reason, this doctrine as described is an "eternal mystery" because it was a human's fabrication. Unlike the "Byzantine monotheism" of Christianity that allows for a plurality within the divine essence, Islam and Judaism condemn such a pluralistic concept of God.

There are over 200 verses in the Bible that proclaim the unity of God, the Only Creator and the only Savior. The following verses are just samples:

Exodus 20:3, "*Thou shalt have no other gods before me.*"

Deuteronomy 6:4, "*Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is One LORD*"

Isaiah 43:3, "*For I am the LORD thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Savior.*"

Isaiah 44:6, "*I am the **First**, and I am the **Last**, and beside me there is no god.*"

I have capitalized the letters in the above "First" and "Last," because these are attributes of God in Islam. Every time I hear these Names, I become overwhelmed with the concept that God is the First, nothing was before Him, and the Last, nothing comes after Him. Human mind just can't comprehend this concept of First and Last. This shows the limited capability of the human mind.

Mark 12:29, "*And Jesus answered him, the first of all the commandment is, Hear, O Israel; The LORD our God is **One LORD.***"

John 12:44-45, "*Jesus cried and said, He that believeth on me believeth not on me, but on him that sent me. And he that seeth me seeth him that sent me.*"

I Corinthians 8:4, "*and that there is none other God but one.*"

Ephesians 4:6, "*One God and father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.*"

I Timothy 2:5, "*For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the **man Christ Jesus;***"

With all the adaptations, adulterations and translations of the Old and the New Testament, the above verses are still there for anyone to recognize the Oneness of God. However, there are references in the New Testament to the trinity, in the First Epistle of John 5:7-8. --

"For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one. And there are three that bear witness in earth, the spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three are one."

The above verses exist **only in the authorized King James Version**, and form the strongest evidence for the doctrine of trinity. As mentioned in the previous chapter, the King James Version has grave defects. Now this part, "*the Father, the Word, and the Holy*

Ghost: and these three are one" has been removed in the Revised Standard Version of 1952 and 1971, and many other Bibles. In the New Revised Standard, 1989, those same verses read as follows: "*There are three that testify, the Spirit and the water and the blood, and these three agree.*" The differences between these recognized Bibles represent a theological crisis. The average Christian, as well as many Christian preachers and ministers may not be aware of the removal of the strongest verses advocating the trinity from their Bible! Any one should ask himself why these verses of the King James Version were deleted from later versions of the New Testament, and how they were introduced in the first place! I would encourage the reader to search for those verses in different versions of the Bible. As a matter of fact, reading the same verses from different versions of the Bible can be very confusing and frustrating experience.

In Matthew 28:19, there is a reference to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, without stating that they are one. This statement has nothing to do with trinity. In John 14:11, it states that Jesus said, "*Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me.*" And in John 17:21, "*They (the disciples) all may be one; as Thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us.*" It is clear from the first verse that God and Jesus are one, but also in the second verse that the disciples are one in God and in Jesus. Now if Jesus is God because Jesus is in God, why are not the disciples being recognized as gods, as they all are one in Jesus and in God? If God, Jesus, and the Holy Ghost form the trinity, then with the 12 disciples included, should they form One God with fifteen beings, and not three? Moreover in Revelation 4:5, John mentions the seven Spirits of God. Each Holy Ghost or Spirit is a God. It follows that the trinity includes God, Jesus, 12 disciples, and 7 Spirits of God. Therefore the trinity should be 21 and not 3!

Some Christian apologists advocate that God shows us trinity everywhere:

- Time is divided into past, present, and future and they are all time.

- Matter is divided into gas, liquid, and solid and they are all matter.
- Coordinate is divided into X, Y, and Z and they are all coordinates.

Anyone can assemble an argument for duality such as day and night, positive and negative, good and evil, etc. Anyone can assemble an argument from the very many natural facts to strengthen his claim. The Pyramid of Giza was exhausted in numbers to prove that it is a cosmic structure. So where does this leave us? Should we believe in duality, trinity, 15, or other numbers based upon these rationales? Should we ignore the strong argument in the Old and New Testament and in Islam about the Unity of God and follow human assumptions mixed with Greek philosophy?

When Jesus said in John 14:9 “... *he that hath seen me hath seen the Father,*” does this statement mean that someone can actually see God? Of course not. Jesus said in John 4:24 that God is Spirit, and in John 5:37 “*ye have neither heard his voice at anytime, nor seen his shape.*” Now, if God is Spirit according to John, and Jesus is of the same substance as God according to Athanasius, then the substance of both God and Jesus is Spirit. It follows that humans should not be able to see Jesus, because he is spirit!

We now know how the Gospels were assembled and how the Ecumenical councils formulated the main doctrine of Christianity. The effect of the Romans on Christianity was enormous. The Sabbath was shifted to Sunday. December 25, which was the birthday of their sun god Mithra was made Jesus' birthday. The decoration of the Christmas tree with silver and gold was adopted in spite of its forbidding in Jeremiah 10:2-5. The Roman Julian calendar made the Christian calendar.

The Quran affirms that Jesus is the Word of God, which is simply “*Be and it is.*” as in Surah 19, Ayah 35. This is the simple meaning of the Word of God. It is not the Logos of the Greek philosophy. It is the literal Word as John describes it in the start of his Gospel. It is the Word of God that created Jesus just like Adam. God created Adam without a father or a mother. Jesus was created

without a father. An Islamic scholar stated that the four alternatives of human creation are as follows:

- God created Adam without male or female.
- God created female from male (Eve from Adam)
- God created humans from male and female (like all of us)
- To show us his total power of creation, he created male from female (Jesus from Mary)

The Holy Ghost is the most confusing member of the trinity. It was declared god in the second Ecumenical Council of Church in 381 AD. The Holy Ghost is presented on different occasions as a dove (Luke 3:22); strong wind or flames of fire (Acts 2:2-4); and the breath of Jesus on his followers (John 20:22). In ancient India, a dove was considered the symbol of the Holy Spirit, or Spirit of God. In ancient Rome a dove or pigeon was the symbol of the female procreative energy, and frequently a legendary spirit. The Christian Holy Ghost was given by the Father and the Son to do God's work among people. Jesus referred to this trinity when he commanded his apostles to go everywhere and persuade men to become his disciples and baptize believers "in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." (Matthew 28:19). However, in this verse, Jesus did not state that these three entities are one. This is only the wishful thinking of the apologists, which usually attaches a complex explanation to any simple verse. In the miraculous birth of Jesus, Matthew (1:18) stated that Mary was pregnant by the power of the Holy Ghost. Luke (1:26-37) stated that God sent the Angel Gabriel to the Virgin Mary and that the Holy Ghost would come to her. What is then the Holy Ghost? The Quran declares the Holy Spirit as the Angel Gabriel that was sent to all prophets. Therefore:

- **God is God**
- **Jesus is a Prophet**
- **The Holy Ghost is the Angel Gabriel.**

7.2 The Doctrine of the Son of God

Muslims take a strong exception to the Christian belief that “*Jesus is the only begotten son.*” **The word “only begotten” exists only in the Gospel according to John, only in the King James Version (1:14,1:18,3:16,3:18).** Interestingly enough, this word “only begotten” does not exist in the Revised Standard Version, New Revised Standard, or the World English Bible. **Consequently, the two basic principles of Christianity, trinity and son of god, exist only in Gospel according to John and in First Epistle of John, only in the King James version, a version that was described as having grave defects.** The average Christian should have the right to ask why was the basics of my Christian faith deleted from later versions of the Bible, and what happened to my faith? These are very serious and crucial questions. We all know by now that the writing of John is completely different from the synoptic Gospels. Again the question is why this word, that is extremely important, was deleted from later Bibles? But this is what Christians are made to believe in the churches without any references to the authenticity of the Gospels or to the different versions of the Bible. However, Christians also know that God has many sons according to the Bible:

Genesis 6:2, “*That the sons of God saw the daughters of men.*”
 Exodus 4:22, “*Israel is my son, even my firstborn*”
 Deuteronomy 14:1, “*Ye are the children of God.*”
 Psalms 2:7, “*The Lord hath said unto me, (David) Thou art my son: this day have I begotten thee.*”
 Jeremiah 31:9, “*for I (God) am a father to Israel, and Ephraim is my first born.*”
 Luke 3:38, “*which (Adam) was the Son of God.*”
 Romans 8:14, “*For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.*”

It is quite clear from the above verses that many righteous people were called sons of God. Israel and Ephraim were God’s firstborn. David and Jesus were called begotten sons of God. So

what does that mean? It is a metaphorical, not literal, descriptive term that is commonly used by the Jews to indicate closeness and affection to God. The authors of the New Testament used the same title of the Son of God to indicate closeness to God. The apostles and Paul were Jews using Jewish terms. Jesus also said, *"God is not only his father, but also your father"* (Matthew 5:45 & 48). This metaphorical term is quite obvious in II Cor. 6:18 *"And will be a father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty."* Christians agree with that, but emphasize that Jesus was an exception based upon only the Gospel according to John only in the King James Version. God created Adam. But both Adam and Jesus had no fathers. As a matter of fact, creating Jesus was simpler, in a human sense, than creating Adam, because Adam had no father or mother, while Jesus had a mother. God created every living creature. He is the Lord, Creator, Cherisher, and Sustainer of all. Metaphorically speaking therefore God is the father of all.

In the Hebrews 7:3, there is a dramatic story about Melchisedec:

"Without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, or end of life; but made like unto the Son of God; abideth a priest continually."

Melchisedec was the king of Salem and a priest of God. He met and blessed Abraham, Genesis 14:17-24. According to the above verse he is eternal, with no beginning or end, with no father or mother. He was in a position to bless Abraham. He was made like the Son of God. What more can you ask for a God? According to the Christian logic in the Bible, Melchisedec should be the Son of God or even god himself. He is more unique than Jesus or Abraham or Adam. None of these prophets are eternal. Why is Melchisedec very much unknown to the Christians? A person with his credential should be more famous than Jesus! Some may argue about the verse *"like unto the son of God"* that he is like but not actually the Son of God. In this case, who would confirm that the word *"like"* was not added to the text, and who would confirm the

authenticity of this whole part of the Hebrews, or who was the real author of this part? As usual this story is completely changed in other versions of the Bible. For example without mother changed to his mother was unknown!

Jesus called himself son of man and refused to be called Son of God:

Luke 4:41, "*And the devils also came, out of many, crying out, and saying, Thou art Christ the Son of God*"

It is clear here that the devils attempted to call Jesus as Son of God, but he refused that title, as the devils knew Jesus was the Christ. Jesus even refused to be called "the Christ of God", and called himself the son of man, (Luke 9:20-22)

Jesus was the expected Messiah and a prophet. Humans escalated and promoted him from a teacher to a prophet to the Son of God, and finally to God himself.

Teacher:

John 3:2, "*The same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God...*"

Prophet:

Matthew 21:11, "*And the multitude said, this is Jesus the prophet of Nazareth of Galilee.*"

Luke 7:16, "*That a great prophet is risen among us.*"

Luke 24:19, "*Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, which was a great prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people.*"

John 6:14, "*This is of a truth that prophet that should come into the world.*"

John 7:40, "*Many of the people therefore, when they heard his saying, said, of truth this is the prophet.*"

Luke 13:33, "*Nevertheless I (Jesus) must walk to day, and to morrow, and the [day] following: for it cannot be that a Prophet perish out of Jerusalem.*"

Son of God:

Acts 9:20, "*And straightway he (Paul) preached Christ in the synagogues, that he (Jesus) is the Son of God.*"

God:

John declared Jesus as God at the start of his Gospel.

The following verses describe the human Jesus in his own words:

Jesus' Words:

John 7:16, "*My doctrine is not mine, but His that sent me.*"

John 14:24, "*The word which ye hear is not mine but the Father's which sent me.*"

Jesus' Will:

John 4:34, "*My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work.*"

Luke 22:42, "*Saying, Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me, nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done.*"

Jesus' Power:

John 5:30, "*I can of mine own self do nothing; as I hear, I judge; and my judgment is just, because I seek not mine own will but the will of the Father which hath sent me.*"

John 13:16, "*The servant is not greater than his lord; neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him.*"

Matthew 20:23, "*But to sit on my right hand and on my left, is not mine to give, but it shall be given to them for whom it is prepared of my Father.*"

Jesus' Knowledge:

Matthew 24:36, "*But of that day and hour knoweth no man, not the angels of heaven, but My Father only.*"

Mark 13:32, "*But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father.*"

Jesus' Status:

Matthew 7:21, "*Not everyone that saith unto me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doeth the will of My Father which is in heaven.*"

Mark 10:18, "*And Jesus said to him, "Why callest thou me good? There is none good but one, that is, God"*

John 8:50, "*And I seek not mine own glory; there is One that seeketh and judgeth.*"

Many Christians believe that Jesus is the Son of God and God. From the above verses, it is clear that Jesus denied being God or the Son of God. It now leaves the Christians who believe that Jesus is God to provide just one single verse in the Bible where Jesus says, "I am God." God in the Old Testament declared, "I am God" over 200 times.

It is obvious that Jesus called himself son of man; the people called him teacher and prophet; the devils called him Son of God; Paul called him son of God in the Jewish sense; and John called him God using the Greek philosophy. In Matthew 10:24, Jesus, after calling himself as the son of man, he continued to claim the highest honor of being *the servant of God*:

"The disciple is not above his master, nor the servant above his lord."

Who was Jesus?

Jesus, son of Mary, was a mighty prophet and servant of God.

7.3 The Doctrine of Original Sin and Atonement

In Christian theology, every human is born sinful. The origin of this concept has been attributed to Adam who disobeyed God by eating the forbidden fruit. Consequently, Adam's sin is transmitted by heredity to the entire human race. The Old Testament says nothing about the transmission of hereditary sin to everyone. Also, the term *original sin* is not found in the Bible. Paul suggested that

humans are sinners. He said in Acts 13:39 that we can have forgiveness from our sins through Jesus, that the Law of Moses could not free us from our sins, and every person who believes in Jesus is free from all his sins. In Acts 13:23, Paul proclaimed Jesus, not God, as the savior. And again keep silent about what Matthew said in 7:21. With these teachings of Paul, Christians can commit all sorts of sins, from adultery, homosexuality, using drugs, to killing. In one moment the Christian is a born again by accepting Jesus as a savior, and then and only then can all his sins be forgiven. This was in contradiction with the teachings of John the Baptist, who was carrying the message of repentance to God, as this is the only way to human salvation. In a difficult and vague passage, Paul hinted about the original sin. When Adam sinned: "*sin entered the entire human race. Adam's sin brought death, so death spread to everyone, for everyone sinned.*" Roman (5:12). In the Gospel of Luke 11:13, Jesus was teaching about prayer, he says, "*If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children.*" Tertullian coined the phrase *original sin* based upon the above verses of Paul and Luke. Then St. Augustine (354 - 430) took this idea from Tertullian and developed it further.

The church accepted this doctrine of Atonement and original sin four centuries after Jesus. It contradicts the Bible itself as in Deuteronomy 24:16: "*The father shall not put to death for the children, neither the children be put to death for their father: every man shall be put to death for his own sin.*" In Jeremiah 31:30: "... *But every one shall die for his own iniquity...*" In Ezekiel 18:20: "*The soul that sinneth, it shall die, the son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son: the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him.*" In Matthew 7:1-2: "*Judge not, that ye be not judged. For what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again.*" In I Cor. 3:8: "...*and every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labor.*" To prove that children are born without sin, Jesus asked not to let children suffer, (Matthew 19:14): "*But Jesus said, suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven.*"

In the Middle Age, Aquinas, whose teachings became the essence of the official doctrine of the Roman Church, stated that the sin was in Adam. He insisted that the loss of the original righteousness was an ultimate grace from God and not a part of man's created nature. This concept seems so vague. Most justice systems of the free world assume that a suspect is innocent until proven guilty. But this doctrine assumes that humans are guilty. Does this mean, God forbid, that human systems have more justice than the Creator of Justice Himself?

In Hebrews 1:3, it states that the death of Son of God, who is made of the same substance as that of God, had purged our sins. But that death was a death of a real man. How, then, did the substance of God die? Christian scholars take great pain in explaining this intellectual puzzle, which only adds to the confusion of anyone. Religion is supposed to be simple, not only understood by the scholars but also by the average person or even the unlettered. How can anyone have faith in this doctrine that contradicts the Bible and is illogical? Faith should be accompanied by common sense. So, was Jesus crucified to save us from our original sin, and while being crucified asked God why did He abandon him?

This looks like a present day marketing ploy of shocking someone and then saving him by selling him a "cure-all." The Church tells you that you are condemned to hell, not because of what you did. Then the only way to save yourself is to accept a story about Jesus' death on the cross. It is agreed upon that no one saw the process of resurrection. They found the sepulcher where Jesus was laid down empty, and came to the conclusion that he was resurrected because the disciples and other witnesses saw him alive after the supposed crucifixion. The Gospels alleged that Jesus should suffer, and that he was going to Jerusalem to die, and on the third day he would come back. But the Gospels did not say plainly that Jesus' suffering had been to save us from the sin of Adam!

Oh God!

Here is another idea for the Hollywood sequel movies "Oh God":
The movie starts with an old man, a father of very many sons

and daughters. All of his sons and daughters are committing all kinds of sins from paganism to adultery. All are sinners, except one son who is truly righteous among all his brothers and sisters. The father is very troubled with the behavior of the sinners. He thinks about a way to convince the sinners to follow his righteous son. Finally, he comes up with a brilliant idea. Some of his evil sons should kill their righteous brother to save all sinners!

What would you say about this father?

Islam has taken a unique position on this whole issue, a position that is not shared by any other religion. The Quran states that Adam and Eve were directed by God to reside in the Garden of Eden and enjoy its produce as they pleased, assured of bountiful supplies and comfort. But they were warned not to approach a particular tree so that they would not run into harm and injustice to themselves. This was a lesson from God to teach humanity limits and boundaries. Then Satan intrigued them to temptation and caused them to lose their joyful state. They were expelled from the Garden and brought down to earth to live, die, and rise up on the Day of Judgment. Having realized what they have done, they felt shame, guilt, and remorse. They prayed for God's mercy, and were forgiven by the Most Merciful. They committed a sin, repented and were forgiven. *This is the whole idea. People commit sins, and they repent to God, and He will forgive them.* On the other hand, Satan did not repent out of arrogance. The original sin was committed by Satan, who was arrogant and refused to obey God, and refused to repent. It is that simple.

7.4 The Crucifixion and the Resurrection

The four Gospels do not agree on many details of the crucifixion and the resurrection. As was proved before, the contradictions in the New Testament are a fact of life. Thus attempting to produce a credible story on the many events in the New Testament is extremely difficult or even impossible. However this is an attempt to construct a reasonable story.

On the cross, Jesus asked God for help: "*My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me.*" (Matthew 27:46). To believe that

Jesus said that is to discredit his whole mission. Prophet Abraham, when God asked him to sacrifice his son, a request that is as painful as sacrificing himself, did not say, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me." In Luke 22:42, Jesus said: "Saying, Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done." (This cup is the cup of death). Most likely, Jesus' prayer not to die on the cross was accepted by God, according to Luke, Hebrews, and James. Then how could he still die on the cross? "And there appeared an angel unto him from heaven, strengthening him," (Luke 22:43). This Angel assured him that God would not leave him helpless. In Hebrews 5:7, "Who in the days of his flesh, when he (Jesus) had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared." Jesus prayers were heard, which means answered in a positive way by God as in James 5:16 "...The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much." Jesus himself said, Matthew 7:7-10, "Ask, and it shall be given you: seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you." After the alleged crucifixion, his legs were not broken by the Roman soldiers, (John 19:32-33) "Then came the soldiers, and brake the legs of the first, and of the other which was crucified with him. But when they came to Jesus, and saw that he was dead already, they brake not his legs." Can we rely on the soldiers for pronouncing the death, or did they want to save Jesus as they found him innocent? Thus there is a strong probability that Jesus did not die on the cross.

When the Pharisees asked Jesus for a sign of his true mission, he answered: "For as Jonas was **three days and three nights** in the whale's belly, so shall the son of man be there **three days and three nights** in the heart of the earth" (Matthew 12:40). As was mentioned before, Luke has the same story, but Mark contradicts with Matthew and Luke with regards to the sign of Jonas.

God Almighty commanded Jonah to go to Nineveh, (the capital of Assyria, a city of a hundred thousand people) and to warn them to repent, and quit the evil things people were doing there, or the Lord will destroy them. Jonah felt desperate, fearing that the materialistic Ninevites will not listen to him. So, instead of

going to Nineveh, he attempted to run away from the Lord. He went to Joppa at the Mediterranean Sea, and set sail for a faraway city. At sea there was a terrible storm and, according to superstition of the mariners, whosoever runs away from his master creates such turmoil at sea. An inquiry began and Jonah realized that he was the guilty party, that as a prophet of God he had to obey his Master. Jonah reasoned that it was better for him to be thrown overboard, and thus avert a disaster. Jonah said, "*Pick me up and throw me into the sea; then the sea will become calm for you. For I know that this great tempest is because of me.*" (Jonah 1:12). Therefore Jonah was thrown into the sea alive.

Now the storm subsides, and a fish came and swallowed Jonah. From the fish's belly, he asked God, the Only One that can save him, for help. On the third day, the fish threw up him onto the seashore, and Jonah, was alive. Not surprisingly that Jesus chose the sign "miracle" of Jonah as his only miracle. When a man is expected to die, and he does not die, then it is a miracle. Jonah is expected to die, but he did not die. Jesus too, after the ordeal that he supposedly went through, ought to have died. If he died, it would not be the miracle of Jonah that Jesus had prophesized. But if he lived, as he had himself foretold in Matthew and Luke, then it would be a miracle. Jesus, like Jonah, had the same miracle during the story of crucifixion and resurrection. Jesus, like Jonah, prayed to God for help, and God accepted their prayers.

But Christianity is a big business. Preachers and TV evangelists are very well educated in the Bible, as well as public speaking, psychology and marketing. The first rule of business and marketing is: *when you have a hot item, capitalize on it!* The dramatization of the crucifixion and resurrection sell very well by Christian preachers. Also, it is not easy for the average Christians to agree that Jesus was alive after the crucifixion, because their salvation depends on it. When Christians are confronted with the above argument, they change the emphasis on the time factor of the three days and the three nights. They say that it was that time factor that Jesus was prophesying about, and not whether he would be dead or alive. The word "three" is repeated four times in Matthew 12:40.

Christians everywhere celebrate Good Friday. They say it is because Christ died for their sins on that day. All Christian sects and denominations are almost all in agreement that Jesus was supposed to have been in the tomb on the **night** of Friday. He was still supposed to be in the tomb on the **day** of Saturday. And he was still supposed to be in the tomb on the **night** of Saturday. But on Sunday morning, when Mary Magdalene visited the tomb, she found the tomb empty. None of the 27 Books of the New Testament record the time of his exit from the tomb. Not a single writer of the 27 Books was an eyewitness to this alleged resurrection. And the only one who could have told us about his resurrection was silent. It is possible that Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus, (John 18:38-39) had taken their Master soon after dark that very Friday evening to a friendly place for rest and recuperation. Could it be that these two apostles and the others were referring to some one that looked like Jesus. In II Cor. 11:14, Paul says: "*And no marvel: for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light (messenger of God).*"

Now if it was the time factor that Jesus was trying to emphasize in the prophecy, then this time does not add up to three nights and three days. The maximum that Jesus could have stayed in the tomb was **two nights and one day**. Therefore, the Christians have two problems arising from one prophecy:

1. The Christians allege that Jesus was unlike Jonah. Jonah was alive for three days and three nights, whereas Jesus was dead in the tomb.
2. Jesus said that he would be in the tomb for three days and three nights, whereas the Christians say that he was in the tomb for only one day and two nights.

Now, whom do we believe, Jesus or the Christians? To solve this dilemma, one Christian scholar suggested that it was actually Good Wednesday not Friday, by counting backwards from the time he was discovered on Sunday morning (the first day of the week). When this scholar was asked: Who deceived over a billion Christians for two thousand years by making them celebrate Good Friday? His answer was: "The devil!" If the devil can succeed in

confusing the Christians for two thousand years in the most strong aspect of faith, how much easier it would be for the devil to mislead them in other aspects of faith?

After the alleged resurrection, Jesus himself stated that he did not die on the cross. Early Sunday morning Mary Magdalene went to the sepulcher, which was empty. Why did she go there? "*To anoint him*", Mark 16:1. Anoint means to rub, or to massage bodies with spices. Do Jews massage dead bodies after three days? The answer is "No." It would, however, make sense if she were looking for a live wounded person. Mary was about the only person besides Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus who had given the final rites to the body of Jesus. She saw someone standing who looked like a gardener. She recognized him after conversation to be Jesus and wanted to touch him. Jesus said (John 20:17): "*Touch me not, for I am not yet ascended to my Father.*" Why did Jesus not want her to touch him? Was it because his fresh wounds still hurt him? If he did not yet ascend to his Father, does this mean that he is still alive, not dead yet? This is the strongest proof admitted by the only reliable witness, by Jesus himself.

Jesus was not a spirit after resurrection. It was Jesus himself in flesh and blood. Jesus convinced the disciples by letting them touch his hands and feet, that he was the same person. As they could not believe him yet, he asked for meat to show them that he still ate like any living person: "*And they gave him a piece of broiled fish, and of a honeycomb. And he took it, and did eat before them.*" (Luke 24:42-43).

To believe in his death on the cross is to totally discredit his prophethood. In Deuteronomy 13:5, "*And that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams, shall be put to death.*" The Jews maintain their belief in having killed Jesus on the cross and consequently portrayed him to be a false prophet. Christians believe in the crucifixion necessary for their salvation and redemption of sin, and therefore have to accept the accursedness of Jesus, too. This Christian belief is against the sayings of Jesus (Matthew 9:13): "*But go ye and learn what that meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice...*" Also in Matthew 12:7, he said: "*...I will have mercy, and not sacrifice...*"

It was Paul who taught the resurrection (Acts 17:18): "... And some (Jews) said, *What will this babbler say? Other some, he (Paul) seemeth to be a setter forth of strange gods: because he preached unto them Jesus, and the resurrection.*" Paul, who never saw Jesus, also admitted that the resurrection was *his* gospel (II Timothy 2:8): "*Remember that Jesus Christ of the seed of David was raised from the dead according to my gospel.*" As for Mark (16:19), when he mentioned that Jesus rose up to heaven and sat on the right hand of God, it was already mentioned that Mark 16:9-20, were expunged from certain Bibles, and it was originally added to fill in the spaces.

The Holy Quran states that Jesus did not die on the cross:

Surah 4, Ayah 157: "*That they (Jews) said (in boast), "We killed Christ Jesus the son of Mary, the Messenger of Allah"; - but they killed him not, nor crucified him, but so it was made to appear to them"*

The big business of Christian churches would never admit that there is a slight chance that Jesus never died on the cross. Preachers want people to attend churches, tell them that they are sinners, and Jesus died for their sins, and then get their donations. Bumper stickers are everywhere proclaiming that "*Jesus loves me*", "*Jesus died for me*," "*Jesus blood saved me.*" It makes those people feel good and feel special that someone as great as Jesus died for them. The churches know the power of this concept, and they would not give it up.

Most of the Christian doctrines were initially very simple. But somehow, Christian scholars take a simple event or a simple verse and add mountains of complexity and confusion just to satisfy their intellectual curiosity.

7.5 Jesus Christ (Pbuh)

Muslims believe that Jesus was one of the mightiest messengers of Allah; that he was the Christ, that he was born miraculously - without male intervention; that he gave life to the dead with God's permission, that he healed those born blind and with leprosy with

God's permission, and that he did not die on the cross. In fact no Muslim is a Muslim if he does not believe in Jesus! Yet many Christians have no basic concept of Islam. Many are skeptical because they have been so brain washed for centuries.

In the present time, when one listens to some of the TV Evangelists, and reads the New Testament one gets completely different sides of Jesus. Those Evangelists are experts in presenting half the truth about both Jesus and Muhammad. They stress only one side in the most forceful and persuasive way. They raise the slogan "believe in Jesus." But one should have the right to ask, which Jesus?

- The one who said honor your father and mother, Matthew 15:4, or the one who called his mother Woman, John 2:4?
- The one who said love your enemies, Matthew 5:44 or the one who said he did not come to give peace on earth, but rather division, Luke 12:51.
- The one who said if some one slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other to him, Matthew 5:39, or the one who went to the temple and drove people out and overturned the tables, Matthew 21:12?
- The one who said have peace with one another, Mark 9:50 or the one who said he did not come to bring peace but a sword, Matthew 10:34?
- The one who said forgive, and you will be forgiven, Luke 6:37, or the one who said if your hand or foot causes you to sin, cut it off and cast it from you, Matthew 18:8?
- The one who said bless them that curse you, Matthew 5:44, or the one who said he who curses father or mother, let him be put to death, Matthew 15:4?

As a Muslim, I understand both sides, because Jesus, like Muhammad, was both merciful when mercy was required and powerful when power was required. God himself has both heavens and hellfire. Yet half the truth Evangelists never failed to present only the merciful side of Jesus, and only the powerful side of Muhammad.

The word Christ is derived from the Hebrew and Arabic words "Messiah." In Arabic the root word "masaha" means to rub, to massage, or to anoint. Priests and kings were anointed when being consecrated to their offices. But in its translated Greek form "Christ", it seems unique: befitting Jesus only. The Messiah in Hebrew means anointed. The Greek word for anointed is "christos." Just delete the "os" from christos, and change the little "c" to a capital "C" and you get Christ. So Christ means anointed, and anointed means appointed in religious connotations. Jesus was appointed (anointed) at his baptism by John the Baptist as a God's Messenger. Every prophet of God is so appointed or anointed. The Bible is so abundant with the anointed ones. Not only were prophets, priests, and kings anointed (christos-ed) but horns, cherubs, and lamp-posts also:

Genesis 31:13, *"I am the God of Bethel, where you anointed as a pillar"*

Leviticus 4:3, *"If the priests that is anointed do sin..."*

Leviticus 8:10, *"And Moses...anointed the tabernacle and all things that was therein..."*

1 Samuel 2:10, *"...the Lord shall... exalt the horn of his anointed...."*

Isaiah 45:1, *"Thus saith the Lord to his anointed to Cyrus..."*

Ezekiel 28:14, *"Thou art the anointed cherub..."*

Christians do not know that every time a Muslim speaks the name of Jesus, he must add these words of respect: peace be upon him, (Pbuh). Christians do not know that the Holy Quran has titles of three chapters related to Jesus:

1. Surah 3: The family of Imran (of Mary). Ayat 31 to 53 describe the miracles related to Jesus' birth and his ministry.
2. Surah 5: The Table. Ayah 109 to 120 describes the miracles of Jesus.
3. Surah 19: Mary, Ayah 16-40 detail the birth of Jesus, and how Mary was slandered by her people, but Jesus confronted them while he was a baby!

As a matter of fact, the Quran lists many of the miracles in the bible that Jesus performed, with the permission of God, and more! Also in the Quran, Jesus is mentioned by name in twenty five places with respect as a messenger of God:

Surah 2, Ayah 87, "*We gave Jesus the son of Mary clear signs and strengthened him with the holy spirit.*"

Surah 3, Ayah 45, "*O Mary, Allah giveth thee glad tidings of a word from him: his name will be Jesus Christ, the son of Mary. Held in honor in this world and in the hereafter, and (of the company of) those who are nearest to God*"

Surah 4, Ayah 171, "*O People of the Book! Commit no excesses in your religion: nor say of Allah aught but the truth. Christ Jesus, the son of Mary, was (no more than) a messenger of Allah, And his word which He bestowed on Mary, And a spirit proceeding from Him: So believe in Allah and His messengers. Say not three; desist. It will be better for you. For Allah is one God, Glory be to Him. (Far exalted is He) above having a son...*"

So Jesus is spoken of in the Quran as "the word of God", as "the spirit from God", as "the sign of God", as the "Messiah", and numerous other titles of honor spread over fifteen chapters. But the Christians read into these words, a meaning which they do not carry. They equate the word "*Christ*" with the concept of *God incarnate*, and the *Word of God to be God*. The miraculous birth of Jesus does not make him a God or the son of God. No! Says the Holy Quran:

Surah 3, Ayah 59: "*The similitude of Jesus before Allah is that of Adam: He created him from dust, then said to him: Be And he was.*"

This is the Word of God: "*Be And he was.*" The logic is that, if being born without male parent entitles Jesus to being equated with God, then, Adam and Melchisedec would have a greater right to such an honor, and this no Christian would readily

concede. Thus, Muslims reject this Christian doctrine that exists only in writing of John and only in the King James Version.

The Holy Quran refers to Jesus as "Eesa", and this name is used more times than any other title. So his proper name is "Eesa" in Arabic, or "Esau" in Hebrew; classical "Jeheshua", which the Christians of the west latinized as Jesus. Recall that the letter "Y" was changed to "J"

The above verses from the Quran stress the attributes of Jesus as follows:

- That he was the son of a woman, Mary, and therefore a man.
- That he was a messenger, a man with a mission from Allah, and therefore entitled to honor.
- That he was a word bestowed on Mary, for he was created by Allah's word: "*Be*" and he was.
- That he was a spirit proceeding from Allah, but not Allah.

Therefore, Islam rejects the doctrines of the trinity and the son of god, for Allah is independent of all needs, and has no need for a son to manage His affairs. The Gospel of John and the Fathers of the Church put a great deal of emphasis on describing Jesus as the "*Word of God*". They extended the simple concept of all creations as a word of God: "*be and it will be*", to the complex concept of Greek philosophy of the word "Logos." Adam was created by the "*Word of God*." The whole universe was created by the "*Word of God*." So why single out Jesus as the "Word of God" and extend its true literal meaning to a pagan concept based upon ancient philosophy and beyond the realm of God?

Also the simple concept of the "*Spirit of God*" was extended to another complex concept. The Islamic concept about "Spirit from God" is simply a spirit proceeded from God, and not literally the "Spirit of God." And we all know what a difference it makes if we choose the wrong proposition.

Moreover, the simple concept of describing Jesus as "Sign of God" is quite obvious. His birth and his death were miracles with the permission of God; he performed many miracles, like many

other prophets, with the permission of God, his second coming will be another miracle with the permission of God. Why is it so difficult to accept that Allah showed miracles or signs to humanity? As was mentioned before, anyone who does not believe in miracles, can go to Mecca in Saudi Arabia and examine the physical miracle of the well of Zamzam that has been pumping pure water for thousands of years with no sign of drying up. Or anyone can read the Quran and see the real spiritual and scientific miracles in this Book. It is not a coincidence that the only two miracles that exist on this Earth belong to Islam, while all the miracles that Jesus or Moses performed are only recorded in the Holy Books.

Surah Maryam (Mary)

There is a chapter in the Quran, named Surah Maryam, "Mary's Chapter." Chapter number 19 named in honor of Mary the mother of Jesus. Such an honor is not found in the Bible. Out of the 66 books of the Protestants or the 73 books of the Roman Catholics, not one is named after Mary or Jesus. Mary is chosen in the Quran as having an esteemed position above all the women of the world:

Surah 3, Ayah 42, "Behold the angels said: O Mary! Allah Hath chosen thee and purified thee - chosen thee above the women of all nations."

This is the position of Mary in Islam. If Muhammad (Pbuh) were the author of the Quran, then he would not have failed to include with Maryam, the mother of Jesus, his own mother, or his own wife, or his own daughter. This is one of the proofs that the Quran is not his own work. Keeping in mind that he was, in fact not learned, i.e. unlettered.

The story of Mary is spread into many chapters in the Quran. Mary's mother, Hannah, was barren. She poured out her heart to God: If only God would grant her a son, she would surely dedicate such a son for the service of God in the temple. God granted her prayer, not a son but instead delivered a daughter called Mary. She was disappointed, because in no way is the female like the male,

for what she had in mind. She had made a vow to God. She waited for Mary to grow up to fend for herself. When the time came, Hannah took her daughter to the temple, to hand her over for temple services. Every priest was clamoring to be the godfather of this child. They cast lots with arrows for her to see who would achieve this honor. Eventually she fell in the lots of Zakariya, the father of John the Baptist (Prophet Yahya in Quran), but not without a dispute. Every time Zakariya visited Mary to check on her needs, he found her surrounded by light and food. When he asked Mary where does she get this food, she answered from Allah. This inspired Zakariya to ask God for a son knowing that his wife was barren. So God granted him John the Baptist. Mary's mother asked for a son, but Allah gave her much more. He gave her a daughter and then made this daughter the holiest woman ever. Such generosity from the Almighty!

The first section of Surah Maryam tells the story of Zakariya and the birth of John the Baptist. The Islamic name for John is "Yahya" which suggests life. The Hebrew form is "Johanan" which means "Jehovah has been Gracious." The Quran says that Allah, for the first time, named his prophet a name that never existed before, John.

The second section of Surah Maryam, Surah 19, Ayah 16 to 40, tells the story of the birth of Jesus:

"Relate in the Book (The story of) Mary, when she withdrew from her family to a place in the east. She placed a screen (to screen herself) from them. Then We sent to her our angel, and he appeared before her as a man in all respect. She said: "I seek refuge from thee to (Allah) Most Gracious, (come not near) if thou dost fear Allah." He said: "Nay, I am only a messenger from thy Lord (to announce) to thee the gift of a pure son." She said: "How shall I have a son, seeing that no man has touched me, and I am not unchaste." He said: "So (it will be) thy Lord saith, 'That is easy for me: and (We Wish) to appoint him as a sign unto men and a Mercy from Us. It is a matter (so) decreed. So she conceived him. And she retired with him to a remote place. And the pains of the childbirth

drove her to a trunk of a palm tree; she cried (in her anguish): "Ah! Would that I had died before this! Would that I had been a thing forgotten. But (a voice) cried to her from beneath the (palm tree): "Grieve not! For thy Lord hath provided a rivulet beneath thee; And shake towards thyself the trunk of the palm tree; it will let fall fresh ripe dates upon thee. So eat and drink and cool (thine) eye. And if thou dost see any man, say: I have vowed a fast to (Allah) Most Gracious, and this day will I enter into no talk with any human being." At Length she brought the (babe) to her people carrying him (in her arms). They said: "O Mary! Truly a strange thing has thou brought. O sister of Aaron! Thy father was not a man of evil nor thy mother a woman unchaste." But she pointed to the babe. They said: "How can we talk to one who is a child in the cradle?" He (Jesus) said: "I am indeed a servant of Allah. He hath given me revelation and made me a prophet. And He hath made me blessed wheresoever I be, and hath enjoined on me prayer and Zakat (charity) as long as I live. (He hath made me) kind to my mother, and not overbearing or unblest. So peace is on me the day I was born, the day that I die, and the day that I shall be raised up to life (again)". Such (was) Jesus the son of Mary: (it is) a statement of truth about which they (vainly) dispute. It is not befitting to (the majesty of) Allah that He should beget a son. Glory be to Him! When He determines a matter, he only says to it "Be", and it is."

The above verses represent the personal side of the experiences of the worshippers of Allah in relation to their families or environment. But where did Muhammad get this knowledge? He was unlettered. He did not know how to read or write. He was made by God Almighty to tell this story in such details that was not mentioned in the Bible. In this story, the accusation of Muhammad of plagiarizing the Quran from the Jews and Christian collapses, because he was unlettered and because this story is not in the Bible. Knowing fully that the whole Quran is the authentic Word of God, we will nevertheless agree, for the sake of argument, with the critics of Islam for a moment that he wrote it. With any

reason we can proceed that Muhammad was an Arab addressing Arabs in Arabic. Whether those critics agreed with him or not, he told them in the most sublime form - words that offended the hearts and minds of his Arab listeners that Mary the mother of Jesus - A JEWESS - was chosen above all the women of all nations. For everyone his own mother, wife, or daughter would come before other women. Why then would the prophet of Islam honor a woman from the opposition? The only reasonable answer is that he had no choice. It was revealed to him like that, and he could not change it.

The Bible says the first miracle of Jesus, occurred when he was over thirty years old. In John 2:1-10, this first miracle when wine flowed like water. Jesus made this potent wine that the men have "*well drunk*." This was not grape juice. It was the same wine that, according to the Bible, enabled the daughters of Lot to seduce their father, Genesis 19:32-33. It was the same wine that the Christian is advised to avoid in Ephesians 5:18 "*And be not drunk with wine*". The Quran does not mention this alleged miracle to Jesus.

On the other hand, in Islam, Jesus' first miracle occurred when he was a baby. He spoke as an infant. He talked to defend his mother from any devious judgment from her people. Now ask yourself, which version of the first miracle would you choose for Jesus? The Islamic version or the Biblical version? The Christian could read in the Quran everything he wanted to know about Jesus, but in the most noble, elevated, and sublime language. A Christian or a Muslim, when reading the above story in the Quran, could not help being moved by it. I personally saw Muslim adults crying in humility when reading or listening to this miraculous story of the birth of Jesus.

Therefore, the Quran tells us the following:

- That Mary, the mother of Jesus, was a virtuous woman, and honored above the women of all nations.
- That the Quran was God's own Revelation to mankind.
- That Jesus was the "*Word of God*." "*Be: And he was*."
- That Jesus was the Christ that the Jews were waiting for.

- That God empowers Jesus to perform miracles even in his infancy.
- That Jesus was born miraculously, without any male intervention.
- That God gave him Revelation.
- That Jesus was very kind to his mother.
- That Jesus gave life to the dead by God's permission, and that he healed those born blind and with leprosy by God's permission.

The Holy Quran has something definite to say about every deviation of Christianity. The Quran exonerates Jesus from all the false charges of his enemies as well as the misplaced passion of his followers. His enemies allege that he blasphemed against God by claiming divinity. His followers claim that he did declare his divinity, but that was not blasphemy because he was God. This is what the Jews and Christians say about Jesus. The Quran calls the Jews and Christians: "*People of the book.*" This is a very respected title that they are addressed as in the Quran. The Quran asks both the Jews and Christians to say only the truth of Allah. Muslims are commanded to invite People of the Book to a common platform that we worship none but God. Because none but God is worthy of worship, not because "the Lord is a jealous Lord," Genesis 20:5. But because he is our Lord and Cherisher, our Sustainer and Evolver, worthy of all praise, prayer and devotion. Thus the Quran gives the Jews and the Christians the following proposition:

Surah 3. Ayah 64, "Say: O People of the Book! Come to common terms as between us and you: That we worship none but Allah; That we associate no partners with Him; That we erect not, from among ourselves, lords and patrons other than Allah. If they turn back, say ye: Bear witness that we (at least) are Muslims (bowing to God's Will)."

7.6 Muhammad (Pbuh) in the Bible

Throughout the history, the Jews promoted the following concepts to reject Christianity:

- Abraham was Jewish, although everyone knows that Judaism came from Judah son of Jacob. The Quran says in Surah 3, Ayah 65: *“Ye People of the Book, why dispute ye about Abraham, when the Torah and the Gospel were not revealed till after him. Have ye no understanding.”*
- Jesus was an illegitimate son of Joseph or son of a Roman soldier.
- Jesus was crucified, therefore he is not the expected Messiah.

The Christians fell in this Jewish trap that Abraham was Jewish and that Jesus was crucified. Some Jews and Christians reject Islam for many different reasons. Their hate to the greatest man ever lived is based upon twisting the facts, misreading the history, and simply wishful illusions. The unbelievers in Mecca called Muhammad all kind of names, and accused him with many lies. According to the Quran, he was called crazy, a poet, as well as touched by the devils. He was also accused of collecting the old stories from the Jews and Christians, and then rewriting them. Some Jews and Christians say the same things about the messenger of Allah, and much more. The Jews accuse Jesus as the false Messiah, while the Jews and the Christians accuse Muhammad as a false prophet. It is the same old story.

When anyone speaks kindly about the greatest man that ever lived, the opponents of Islam give an immediate answer: either he was a fool or the Arabs bribed him!

- Michael H. Hart put Muhammad No. 1 on his list of the 100 most influential people in history, and his own Lord and Savior Jesus Christ No. 3.
- William McNeil, US historian, considers Muhammad as worthy of honor in his list of the first three names.
- James Gavin, US lieutenant General, puts Muhammad before Jesus Christ.
- James Masserman, Psychoanalyst and Professor, judges Muhammad No. 1 and his own Moses a close second.
- Thomas Carlyle said that the Christian scholars' lies about Muhammad are disgraceful.

- George Bernard Shaw said: *"I have studied him - the wonderful man - and in my opinion far from being an anti-Christ, he must be called the savior of humanity."*
- Encyclopedia Britannica calls Muhammad the most successful of all religious personalities.

McNeil, Gavin, and Masserman statements appeared in the Time magazine, July 15, 1974, in essays as to "What makes a great leader? Throughout history, who qualifies?"

It is a fact that Muhammad, like all the Arabs, came from Ismael, the son of Abraham. Just like the Jews discredit Jesus, both the Jews and the Christians claim that Ismael was an illegitimate son of Abraham. Another insult added to the prophets of God. They are talking about Abraham, the father of all the prophets, the prophet that God honored in the three religions of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. They maintain that Isaac was superior to Ismael, but that is not what the Bible states:

Genesis 16:10, *"And the angel of the Lord said unto her (Hagar), I will multiply thy seed exceedingly, that it shall not be numbered for multitude."*

Genesis 17:20, *"And as for Ismael, I have heard thee: Behold, I have blessed him, and will make him fruitful, and will multiply him exceedingly: twelve princes shall he beget, and I will make him a great nation."*

We still see some verses in the Bible that escaped all the alterations and adaptations. The above verse states clearly that God blessed Ismael. Is it possible that God blessed an illegitimate child? Can God promise a mother that her illegitimate child would make a great nation? The Jewish and the Christian rebuttal would be as such: Yes, it is the will of God! Is it possible that the mighty prophet Abraham would have an illegal wife and a son out of wedlock? The Bible says:

Genesis 16:3, *"...And (Sarah) gave her (Hagar) to her husband to be his wife."*

Genesis 20:12, *“And yet indeed she (Sarah) is my sister; she is the daughter of my father, but not the daughter of my mother, and she became my wife.”*

For the sake of honesty, the above two verses conclude that Hagar was a legitimate wife, while Sarah was not, because she was his “half sister”! Then for the sake of alterations and adaptations, Ismael was the legitimate child because his mother was his father’s wife, and Isaac was illegitimate, God forbid, because his mother was his father’s sister! Islam does not advocate this nonsense. Both Sarah and Hagar were legal righteous wives, and both Ismael and Isaac were legitimate sons and prophets. This is the noble way to think.

The name Ismael was chosen by God himself:

Genesis 16:11, *“And the angel of the Lord said unto her (Hagar), Behold, thou art with child, and shalt bear a son, and shalt call his name Ismael.”*

What an honor to be named by God himself! Different versions of the Bible began adapting the story of Ismael. The RSV Bible added that Ismael would be a wild man; the Easy To Read Bible added that Ismael would be wild “like a wild donkey”! **HOW SAD!** Where is the reference to a wild donkey? This is a clear example of the adulteration and alteration of the “Holy Bible.” Any Christian who reads this statement about Ismael, should research the origin of the wild donkey! Do you think that this is **Easy to Read Bible, or Easy to Manipulate Bible!** Please recall the above Genesis 17:20.

Criterion of the Prophet

A criterion of the prophet is given by Jeremiah 28:9: *“The prophet which prophesieth of peace, when the word of the prophet shall come to pass, then shall the prophet be known, that the Lord hath truly sent him.”* The word Islam also signifies peace. Peace between the Creator and his creatures. This prophecy of Jeremiah cannot

be applied to Jesus, as he himself stated that he did not come for peace:

Luke 12:51, *“Do you suppose that I came to give peace on earth? I tell you, not at all, but rather division.”* Why then during Christmas, is the slogan of “peace on Earth” related to Jesus if he said: Nay to peace on Earth! Muslims believe that Jesus came for “peace on Earth”, unlike Luke!

Until Shiloh Come

The message of Jacob to his sons before he died as in Genesis 49:10:

“The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be.”

Shiloh is also a name of a town, but its real meaning is peace, i.e. Islam. It could never refer to a town here. It is referred to a person. It could be an alteration of the word “Shaluah”, which means a messenger of God. So the Israelite Prophethood in the lineage of Isaac would stop as soon as Shiloh comes. This corresponds with the Quran:

Surah 2, Ayah 133: *“Were ye witnesses when death appeared before Jacob? Behold, he said to his sons: “What will ye worship after me?” They said: “We shall worship Thy God and the God of thy fathers, of Abraham, Ismael and Isaac, - the One (True) God; To Him do we submit.”*

The shift of the prophethood to another nation was threatened in Jeremiah 31:36:

“If those ordinances depart from before me, saith the Lord, then the seed of Israel also shall cease from being a nation before me for ever.”

Also Jesus hinted about the same threat in Matthew 21:45:

"Therefore say I unto you, the kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof."

Baca Is Mecca

According to the Islamic tradition, Abraham took Ismael and Hagar, and made a new settlement in Mecca, called Paran (Arabia) in the Bible (Genesis 21:21), because of divine instruction given to him as part of God's plan. When Abraham left, Hagar ran seven times between two hills, Safa and Marwa, looking for water. This became an Islamic ritual for the annual pilgrimage in Mecca by millions of Muslims from all over the world. The well of water mentioned in Genesis 21:19 is still present, now called Zamzam, one of the living miracles in Islam. Both Abraham and Ismael later built the holy house of God in Mecca, called Kaabah. The place where Abraham used to pray near the Kaabah is still present, now called Maqam Abraham, i.e. the station of Abraham. The place where Ismael used to pray near the Kaabah is still present, now called Maqam Ismael, i.e. the station of Ismael. During the days of the pilgrimage, pilgrims in Mecca and Muslims all over the world commemorate the ultimate test of obedience of Abraham and Ismael by sacrificing a lamb. The name Mecca is mentioned once in the Quran in Surah 48, Ayah 24. Another name for Mecca is Bakka, depending on the dialect of the tribe. This name is also mentioned once in the Quran:

Surah 3, Ayah 96, *"The first House (of worship) appointed for men was that at Bakka: Full of blessing and of guidance for all worlds."*

Amazingly enough, this name Bakka is mentioned by prophet David in his Psalm 84:6:

"Who passing through the valley of Baca make it a well; the rain also filleth the pools."

The well here is the well-known well of Zamzam, close to the Kaabah.

Chariot of Asses and Chariot of Camels

The vision of Isaiah of the two riders was as follows, in Isaiah 21:7

"And he saw a chariot with a couple of horsemen, a chariot of asses, and a chariot of camels."

Who was the rider upon an ass? Every Sunday school student will know him. That was Jesus, as in John 12:14:

"And Jesus, when he had found a young ass, sat upon it, as it is written."

Who, then, is the promised rider on a camel? The readers of the Bible have overlooked this mighty prophet. This is the prophet Muhammad. If this is not applied to him, then the prophecy has yet to be fulfilled. That is why Isaiah mentioned further in the same chapter, in 21:13: *"The burden upon Arabia."* Which means the responsibility of the Arab Muslims, and of course now of all the Muslims, to spread the message of Islam.

Isaiah 21:14: *"The inhabitants of the land of Tema brought water to him that was thirsty, they prevented with their bread him that fled."* Tema is probably Madinah where the prophet Muhammad and his companions fled. Each immigrant was brothered by one inhabitant of Madinah and was given food and shelter.

Isaiah 21:15: *"For they fled from the swords, from the drawn sword, and from the bent bow, and from the grievousness of the war."* This was when the prophet Muhammad and his companions were persecuted and left Mecca to Madinah.

Isaiah 21:16: *"For thus hath the Lord said unto me, within a year according to the years of an hireling, and all the glory of Kedar shall fail."* Exactly in the second year of immigration, the pagans were defeated in the first battle in Islam.

Finally Isaiah 21:17 concludes with: *"...the mighty men of the children of Kedar, shall be diminished, for the Lord God of Israel hath spoken it."* Kedar is the second son of Ismael, (Genesis 25:13), from whom ultimately Muhammad came. In the beginning, the children of Kedar were attacking Islam and Muhammad. But as many of them accepted Islam, the number of the children of Kedar who resisted Islam was diminished. In some verses in the Bible, Kedar is synonymous with Arab in general, as in Ezekiel 27:21: *"Arabia, and all the Princes of Kedar..."*

The Prophet Like Unto Moses

God addresses Moses in Deuteronomy 18:18: *"I will raise them up a prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee (Moses), and will put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him."*

- Brethren of the Israelites (descendant of Abraham through Isaac) are the Ishmaelite (descendant of Abraham through Ismael). Jesus should be excluded, as he is an Israelite; otherwise the above verse should say: "Prophet from among yourself."
- Is Muhammad not like unto Moses? If not accepted, then the promise has yet to be fulfilled. The table in the next page is self-explanatory.

In Deuteronomy 18:19: *"And it shall come to pass that whosoever will not hearken my words which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him."*

In the Quran 113 of the 114 chapters starts with *"In the name of Allah, most Gracious, most Merciful."* Also, in their daily work, Muslims start with this saying. Notice "in my name", not in the name of God. God talks about His Personal Name that is Allah. As it is a Personal Name, it is not subject to gender, like god or goddess, or to plurality, like god or gods. Christians start with "In the name of the father, the son, and the holy spirit." Thus the above verse of Deuteronomy applies only to Muhammad.

Art Thou That Prophet?

The Jews are still expecting the fulfillment of the prophecy of “*unto like Moses.*” When Jesus said that he is the Messiah of the Jews, they began to inquire about Elias and the prophet. The Jews had a parallel prophecy that before the coming of the Messiah, Elias must come first in his second coming. Jesus confirms this Jewish belief:

Matthew 17:11-13, “...Elias truly shall first come, and restore all things. But I say unto you, that Elias is come already, and they knew him not, then the disciples understood that he spake unto them of John the Baptist.”

The Jews did not believe Jesus about Elias, so they sent priests and Levites to John the Baptist to ask who he really was:

John 1:20-21, “And he (John the Baptist) confessed and denied not; but confessed, I am not the Christ. And they asked him, what then, Art thou Elias? And he saith, I am not. Art thou that prophet? And he answered, No.”

Jesus said that Elias came, and it was understood that he was John the Baptist. But John the Baptist denied that. I will leave this discrepancy between John the Baptist and Jesus for the Christian scholars to solve!

The Jews were waiting for the fulfillment of three distinct prophecies:

1. The coming of Christ.
2. The coming of Elias.
3. The coming of *that prophet.*

And the crucial question here is “Art thou that prophet?” Who was then the long awaited prophet after the advent of John the Baptist and Jesus? Was it not the one like unto Moses, as described above, who was Muhammad?

| Area of comparison | Moses | Muhammad | Jesus |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Birth | Usual | Usual | Unusual |
| Family life | Married, children | Married, children | Not married |
| Death | Usual | Usual | Unusual |
| Career | Prophet/Statesman | Prophet/Statesman | Prophet |
| Forced immigration | To Median | To Madinah | None |
| Encounter with enemy | Hot pursuit | Hot pursuit/Battles | No similar encounter |
| Results of encounter | Moral / physical victory | Moral / physical victory | Moral victory |
| Recording revelation | In his life (Torah) | In his life (Quran) | After him |
| Nature of teachings | Spiritual / legal | Spiritual / legal | Spiritual |
| Acceptance by his people | Rejected then accepted | Rejected then accepted | Rejected by most Israelites |

Another Comforter

John is the only apostle to report the story of the last dialogue between Jesus and the apostles. It happened after the last supper and before Jesus' arrest. It ends with a speech of four chapters long; John 14-17. It is interesting to note that the synoptic do not refer to this very long speech. Did the text initially exist in synoptic and then removed? If so, why? This adds to the long list of mysteries of the Bible. Nevertheless, these chapters present a futuristic outline with very important subject.

This farewell speech seemed like Jesus was addressing the entire humanity with his vision and recommendations. His main concern was to specify who would guide humanity after him. In John 14:16: "*And I will pray the father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever.*" We do not know exactly the original Aramaic word that Jesus used for the Comforter. Other Bibles use Consoler, Advocate, Helper, and in Greek Bibles the word is Baraclete. There are different explanations for the Comforter: the Holy Ghost, the Word, a person, etc. In John 14:18, Jesus said: "*I will not leave you comfortless.*" This means that he referred to himself as Comforter. However, in John 14:26, the Comforter is referred to as the Holy Ghost! And Christian preachers assure their audience that the comforter is the Holy Ghost, without any mention to the following references from John 15:26: "*...he shall testify of me.*"

John 16:7-8, "*...It is expedient for you that I go away, for if I go not away, the comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment:*"

John 16:13-14, "*Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth, for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak, and he will shew you things to come. He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you.*"

Does the above descriptions fit the Holy Ghost, spirit, or a person? The comforter is described as to be able to hear and speak; does this fit a spirit or a person? Did a deliberate adaptation of the Bible add a few words here and there to alter the intended meanings that predicted the advent of a prophet after Jesus? Was the Holy Ghost absent when Jesus was on Earth, and it was waiting for him to depart, so it can guide the believers? Without any prejudice, one can honestly conclude that Jesus was talking about a prophet that will establish righteousness and Judgment. This is what Muhammad accomplished: righteousness and Judgment, faith and law.

Whatever the explanation is for the Comforter, we conclude that Jesus left unfinished work and that someone was coming to complete his mission.

If one puts together all the above-mentioned verses of the Bible about Shiloh (Islam), Baca, chariots of camels, Prophet like unto Moses, Art thou that Prophet, and Comforter, one should conclude without any doubt that these verses relates to Islam and Muhammad. These verses escaped the human's revision of the Bible. And we can only hope that these verses will not be expunged from the next revised version of the Bible!

8

Islam

Religion is a very serious business. Humans should not be fooled by the present day slogan: "All religions lead to one god." Well, they do not. There is only one way to God and that is His Way. Choice of a religion should be the highest priority of any human being who believes in the Day of Judgment. This choice should be based upon the careful examination of the message and the messenger. In this chapter, an attempt will be presented to briefly summarize the main features of Islam and introduce its fundamentals to prove its compatibility with human nature and logic. In no way, may this be thought of as comprehensive teaching of the religion of Allah. This is because Islam comprises all aspect of life for the individual as well as the society. The interested reader may consult with Islamic bookstores or Mosques to get more information. The Islamic library is replete with invaluable treasure of literature over fourteen centuries in most parts of the globe.

Islam is a true monotheistic religion that requires the belief in the Almighty God alone, without any partnership with any of His creations. The ultimate purpose of humanity is to worship Allah alone, and to achieve a religious order free from any corruption. The word Islam comes from the Arabic root "SLM" which means, among other things, peace, purity, submission and obedience. But as a religious term in the Quran, it means, "to surrender to the will of God." The relationship between the original and religious meanings of the word is strong and obvious. Only through submission to the will of God and by obedience to His Law can one achieve true peace and enjoy a lasting purity. According to the

Quran, Islam is the eternal and universal religion, and even the universe and nature themselves are Muslims, because they automatically obey the laws of God. For humans and jinn, who possess free will, practicing Islam does not involve automatically obeying but rather freely accepting the religion of God. Islam is the religion of all prophets of Allah from Adam to Jesus, completed finally by the mission of Muhammad.

Unlike all existing religions that associate the name of the religion to its founder, the name "Islam" is associated with an action. Christianity took its name from Christ, Judaism from Judah, Buddhism from Buddha, and so on. In an attempt to cast public confusion on Islam, some call Islam "Muhammadism" to imply a personal cult of Muhammad, which is emphatically rejected in Islam. This mischief implies that Islam takes its name from a mortal being, Muhammad, and that Islam is no more than another "ism" like Judaism, Hinduism, Marxism, etc. Another implication of this mischief is that some might think of Muslims as worshippers of Muhammad, or as believers in him in the same way as Christians believe in Jesus. The Quran is full of verses about Islam and submission to God, such as:

Surah 11, Ayah 14: *"If then they (your false gods) answer not your (call), know ye that this revelation is sent down (replete) with the knowledge of Allah, and that there is no god but He! Will ye even then submit (to Islam)?"*

It is important to emphasize that different versions of the Bible include the name "Islam" that means submit to God, humble or yield to God.

Exodus 10: 3, *"So Moses and Aaron went to Pharaoh and said. This is what the LORD, the God of the Hebrews, says: How long will you refuse to submit to me? Let my people go, so they can worship me."*

2 Chronicles 30: 8, *"Do not be stubborn, as they were, but submit yourselves to the LORD"*

Psalms 68:31, *"Let Ethiopia bow in submission to God"*

Psalms 83:16, "*Utterly disgrace them until they submit to your name, O LORD.*"

Ephesians 5:22, "*You wives will submit to your husbands as you do to the Lord*"

Islam is the fastest growing religion, due to the growth of the Muslim population, and the many converts to Islam. The Muslim world population is estimated at more than 1.3 billion. Islam has flourished in very diverse climatic, cultural, and ethnic regions. The world community of Islam includes the Arabs (North Africa and the Middle East); Turks and Turkish peoples (Turkey, parts of the former USSR, and Central Asia); Iranians; Afghans; the South Asians (Pakistan, India, and Bangladesh); Southeast Asians (Malaysia, Indonesia, and the Philippines); and a small percentage of Chinese. Islam is the second largest religion after Christianity in Europe, US and Canada.

8.1 Islamic Sources

The two fundamental sources of Islamic doctrine and practice are the Quran and the Sunnah, or the exemplary conduct of Muhammad, the Messenger of Allah.

The Quran

The Quran literally means "the recital." Muslims regard the Quran as the authentic revelation of God to Muhammad, revealed in Arabic by Gabriel, the Angel of revelation to all the Messengers of Allah. This divine revelation of the Quran implies that the words are divinely given; so any text can be interpreted in the light of other texts. The Quran is the collection of the verses revealed to Muhammad during approximately 23 years of his prophetic life (610-32). It is divided into 114 chapters (Surah) of unequal length, the shortest containing only 3 short verses, and the longest containing 286 verses. Both Islamic and non-Islamic scholars agree on the essential integrity of the text of the Quran throughout its history. Because of the distortion of all previous Books by humans,

God kept his promise that He Himself will protect the Quran. The Quran is complete and authentic. Nothing of it is missing and no more of it is expected. Its authenticity is beyond any doubt, and no serious scholar or thinker has ventured to question its genuineness. God made it incumbent upon Himself to protect it against distortion of any kind. Thus it is given to mankind as the standard or the criterion by which all other books are judged. Consequently, whatever agrees with the Quran is accepted as divine truth, and whatever differs from the Quran is rejected. God says:

Surah 15, Ayah 9, *"We have, without doubt, sent down the Message; and We will assuredly guard it (from corruption)."*

The purity of the text of the Quran through fourteen centuries is a foretaste of the eternal care with which Allah's Truth is guarded through all ages. Allah's Pure and Holy Truth will never suffer eclipse in any time or in any place. Unlike the Bible, in the present day, millions of Muslims (Arabs and non-Arabs) memorize the whole Quran by heart. Some of them have been able to memorize the entire Quran by the age of ten. This is a simple and yet an overwhelming fact. Not only did God preserve the text of the Quran, but also the style of reciting the Quran by today's Muslims is exactly the same style of recitation as that of Muhammad himself. Muslims, when reading verses of the Quran, stop where the Messenger of Allah stopped, and continue where he continued. One may really wonder about the strength of God's promise to preserve the Quran in writing as well as in reading. When one recites the Quran, one is reading the authentic Words of the Only God, with the exact reading style of the greatest man ever lived. This is definitely an enormous spiritual experience.

From the very beginning of the revelation, the Messenger of Allah and the Muslims recited the Quran by heart, and the scribes wrote it down in his presence. The Quran therefore starts with two elements of authenticity that the Gospels do not have: true divine inspiration and immediate recording. This continued until the Messenger's death. This memorization of the Quran by heart was crucial because not everyone could write, but everyone was able

to recite. About thirty thousand companions of the Prophet memorized the whole Quran during his time. The Arabs at that time used to memorize very long poems. All these poems exist in the present Arabic literature. So it was not difficult for the Arabs to memorize a very long text by heart. Also the fact that millions of present day Muslims know the entire Quran by heart provides an assurance that it was done before. This memorization of the Quran provides a considerable advantage because of the double-checking that occurred when the definitive text was compiled.

The Angel Gabriel made the first Quranic revelation to Muhammad when he was in the cave of Hira in a mountain outside Mecca. He never worshipped any idols, and he used to go to this cave every year on the month of Ramadan (the ninth Arabic month) to meditate and search for the truth. The first verses that were revealed to him were those of Surah 96, Ayah 1-5. The first revelation was as follows:

*“Proclaim! (or read!) in the name of thy Lord and Cherisher,
Who Created. Created man, out of a (mere) clot of congealed
blood: Proclaim! And thy Lord is Most Bountiful, He Who
taught (the use of) the pen, Taught man that which he knew
not.”*

In these first verses, the Quran praises reading, knowledge, and using pens, which explains the Messenger's concern for recording the Quran in writing. When the revelations became known, he was accused that the Quran was tales of the ancients which he has caused to be written and they were dictated to him, Surah 25, Ayah 5. The unbelievers treated him as an impostor, and they spread rumors that the established Jewish and Christian communities in Arabia dictated the stories to him! This is in spite of the fact that during many divine revelations he was with his family or his companions, and those fictitious sources never revealed themselves.

All sources agree in stating that whenever a verse of the Quran was revealed, the Prophet called one of his literate companions and dictated it to him, indicating at the same time the exact position

of the verse in the fabric of what had already been received. The Prophet Muhammad then asked the scribe to reread to him what had been dictated so that he could correct any inaccuracies. It is a known fact that there were 27 scribes in his following. The most famous of scribes, Zaid Ibn Thabit and Obayy Ibn Kaab, have recorded their names in history. Another famous tradition tells how every year in the month of Ramadan, the Prophet would recite all the revealed Quran to Gabriel. Also in the month of Ramadan preceding the Prophet's death, Gabriel had made him recite the Quran twice. It is a fact that millions of Muslims all over the world recite the Quran in its original Arabic language during the month of Ramadan, following the habit of the Prophet. The method of doubly preserving the text both in writing and by memorization proved to be extremely precious.

Not long after the Prophet's death (632), his successor Abu Bakr, the first religious head of the Islamic state or Caliph, asked Muhammad's former head scribe Zaid Ibn Thabit to assemble an official copy; this he did. On Omar's initiative (the future second Caliph) Zaid Ibn Thabit consulted all the information (those who memorize the Quran, copies of the Book on various materials belonging to individuals) he could assemble, all with the objective of avoiding any possible errors in transcription. According to the instruction of Abu Bakr, a verse could be accepted only if it was presented at least in two manuscripts and should conform to the memorized version of the commission headed by Zaid Ibn Thabit. A parallel to this conscientious performance does not exist in the case of any other scripture in the history of the world. Thus an extremely faithful copy of the Quran was obtained. Truthful history states that Caliph Omar, Abu Bakr's successor in 634, subsequently made a single volume that he preserved and gave on his death to his daughter Hafsah, the Prophet's widow who was one of the few literate women of her time.

The third Caliph Othman, who held the Caliphate from 644 to 655, realized that copies of the Quran from the original text at Hafsah had to be available to different Islamic countries. Othman entrusted it once again to Zaid Ibn Thabit with the request that its copies should be prepared, compared and corrected for spelling

mistakes. The commission consulted Muslims that knew the Quran by heart. The critical analysis of the authenticity of the text was carried out rigorously. The agreement of all the witnesses were deemed necessary, before the slightest verse containing debatable material was retained. Othman ordered that all the finished copies of the Quran should be read aloud, one by one, from the beginning to the end in the Prophet's Mosque. The result was an authentic text containing an order of the Surah that reflects the order followed by the Prophet in his complete recital of the Quran during Ramadan. The Quran is classified as to the place of revelation, whether it is Mecca or Madinah. Some verses are doubted only regarding the place of revelation.

Othman sent a copy of the verified text to the centers of the Islamic Empire, and that is why, copies attributed to Othman exist in Tashkent and Istanbul. About fifty photocopies of that of Tashkent exist in Cairo, London, Kabul and other cities. The oldest documents known to be present today are identical; the same is true for the documents preserved in Europe. The numerous ancient texts that are known to exist all agree. The ancient writing was simpler than that of the present day, due to the absence of diacritical marks. This could make a verb either active or passive, and in some instances, masculine or feminine. More often than not, this was hardly of any consequence, since the context indicated the meaning in many cases. The fact that the Quran is memorized by heart throughout the years, since its revelation, helped to eliminate any change in the meaning. As an example, because of the different Arabic dialects, the Quran calls Mecca as Bakka. But every Muslim on Earth knows that Bakka is Mecca.

A large number of descriptions, in the Quran, are mentioned in several places in the text, sometimes giving rise to repetitions. Very frequently, a verse will add details to a description that appears elsewhere in a compressed form. Verses associated with scientific facts, like many other subjects dealt with in the Quran were spread throughout the Book without any attempt of classification.

An author of a history book criticized the Quran as "disjointed." He expected the Quran to be divided into chapters, with each chapter dealing with one subject. He expects the Quran

to be like, for example, a physics book, where the first chapter deals with static and the second chapter deals with dynamics and so on. This author fails to understand that the Quran is a Book of Guidance to mankind. It is not a history book; it is not a science book. It is a Book for the soul that is designed with absolute perfection to handle spiritual issues and materialistic subjects. This point will be dealt with in the next chapter.

The Sunnah

The second authoritative source of Islam is the Sunnah, or examples of the Prophet's way of life and his genuine statements known as "Hadith". It represents a body of traditions based on what the Prophet said or did regarding various issues. There are some traditions that suggest that the Prophet gave orders not to record his sayings. This is because he wanted to give the highest priority to recording the Quran. However, some companions approached the Prophet for permission to write down the traditions. The permission was granted to Abdullah Ibn Amr, Anas Ibn Malik, Abu Hurayrah, Zaid Ibn Thabit and others. A large number of his companions checked their writing with the Prophet. The collection of the tradition included thousands of his sayings during his life. For example, Abu Hurayrah knew thousands of traditions by heart and the numerous volumes he compiled for his students are still intact. Moreover, his companions and followers followed all the religious practices of Muhammad (Pbuh).

During the time of Caliph Omar ibn Abdul Aziz, the formal documentation of the Sunnah was performed. There are those who claim that the Sunnah takes a secondary place in Islam, or may deny it completely. This is in spite of the clear order from Allah:

Surah 4, Ayah 59, "O ye who believe, Obey Allah and obey the messenger, and those charged with authority among you. If ye differ in anything among yourselves, refer it to Allah and His messenger, if you do believe in Allah and the Last Day: That is best, and most suitable for final determination."

The Quran orders the Muslims to pray but does not detail the method and number of prayers. Then the prophet said: "Pray like you see me praying." Thus, all Muslims during the last fourteen centuries pray the same way as Muhammad did. The authentic traditions are recorded in two main references collected by Albukhary and Muslim among others. Each contains about four thousands authentic saying of the prophet. These four thousands authentic saying were chosen from a total of sixty thousands saying. Albukhary insisted on a chain of narration, a feature peculiar only to Muslims, and practically unknown to others. Sometimes he started with three intermediate narrators, the maximum number being nine, and culminated with the Prophet. Those authentic statements of the prophet are treated as part of the religion.

Islamic Law

Islamic law called the Shariah, spells out the moral goals of the community. In an Islamic society, therefore, the term law has a wider significance than it does in the modern secular West, because Islamic law includes both legal and moral imperatives. For the same reason, not all Islamic law can be stated as formal legal rule or enforced by the courts. Much of it depends on conscience alone.

Islamic law is based on four sources, or "roots of law." The first two are the Quran and the Sunnah, or Hadith. The third source is called *ijtihad* ("responsible individual opinion"). It has been used when an issue is not covered by passages in the Quran or Sunnah. A Muslim jurist may then resolve the issue by using analogical reasoning (*qiyas*). Such reasoning was first employed when Islamic theologians and jurists, during the fast spread of Islam, were confronted with the need to integrate local customs and laws with the Quran and Sunnah. Later, Islamic authorities considered this original thinking a threat to the Quran and Sunnah and laid down strict rules limiting its use. Because of the profound changes in the Muslim world's community during the last few decades, however, a renewed emphasis has been placed on the innovative thinking of *ijtihad*. The fourth source is the consensus (*ijma*) of the community, which is reached by gradually discarding some opinions and

accepting others. Because Islam has no official dogmatic authority, this is an informal process that often requires a long period of time.

Five main schools of law developed in Islam, four Sunnite and one Shiite. The four Sunnite schools emerged in the first two centuries of Islam: the Shafii, the Hanafi, the Maliki, and the Hanbali. All use systematic reasoning to deal with areas of law not covered by the Quran or Sunnah. They differ primarily in their emphasis on textual authority or analogical reasoning, but each school recognizes the conclusions of the others as being perfectly legitimate and within the framework of orthodox Islam. Each school tends to predominate in certain areas: the Hanafi in the South and Central Asia, Turkey, and to some extent in Egypt, Jordan, Syria, Iraq, and Palestine; the Maliki in North Africa; the Shafii in Egypt and Southeast Asia; and the Hanbali in Saudi Arabia. The Shiite school (called the Jafari) prevails in Iran.

8.2 The Five Pillars of Islam

Islam requires practices to be performed by Muslims. Five duties offered directly to God, known as the “pillars of Islam,” are regarded as fundamental in Islam and central to the life of the Islamic community. Each of these pillars of Islam is intended to constantly purify the soul and body of the Muslim.

Shahadah - Declaration of Faith

In accordance with Islam’s absolute commitment to monotheism, the first duty is the declaration of faith (the Shahadah): *“I declare that is no Deity but Allah and Muhammad is Messenger of Allah.”* Every Muslim must make this profession publicly, or at least in front of two or more witnesses, at least once in lifetime “by the tongue and with full consent from the heart”; it defines the membership of an individual in the Islamic community. This testimony is accepted as evidence of one converted to Islam. Muslims repeat it on the average of twenty times every day.

Salah – Prayer

The second duty is that of the five daily prayers. The first prayer (Fajr) is offered before sunrise, the second (Dhuhr) is in the very early afternoon, the third (Asr) is in the late afternoon, the fourth (Maghrib) is immediately after sunset, and the fifth (Isha) is before retiring and before midnight. In prayers, all Muslims face the Kaabah (a small, cube-shaped structure) in the courtyard of al-Haram (the “inviolable place”), the great mosque of Mecca. Kaabah is the first house of worship built on earth for the worship of Allah, the One True God. It was re-built (raised from the existing foundation) by Prophets Abraham and Ismael. The Kaabah is 40 feet long, 33 feet wide and 50 feet high. It is covered with a black cloth with verses from the Quran written in golden letters. A single unit of prayer consists of a standing posture, then a bow followed by two prostrations, and finally a sitting posture. During these five prayers verses from the Quran are recited during the standing posture in Arabic, the language of the Revelation. During other postures supplications, glorifying and praising Allah, exalting and blessing Prophets Muhammad and Abraham and their followers are offered. Every Muslim on earth should know at least few Surahs in Arabic to perform the prayers.

All five prayers in Islam are congregational and are to be offered in a mosque, but they may be offered from any location such as: house, office, bus, airplane, car, wilderness, etc. A Muslim riding a bus, airplane or a car may pray in the direction of the vehicle and does not have to face Mecca during prayer. Before praying, the worshiper must make ablution which is washing of at least the hands, face, arms up to elbows, rubbing head with water, and washing feet up to ankles. There are certain concessions with regard to the timings of prayers. For example, when one travels, one may combine Dhuhr with Asr at any time from the beginning of the period of Dhuhr to the end of Asr prayer. One can also combine Maghrib with Isha at any time during the range for both prayers. Also, when there is a good reason that prevents a person from offering prayer, he may combine Dhuhr with Asr and Maghrib with Isha even in his hometown. Shortening prayers is another

concession given to travelers after they have started their journey. Only Dhuhr, Asr and Isha can be shortened. Maghrib and Fajr remain as they are. The Messenger of God encouraged Muslims to offer voluntary prayers (Nafl) because Allah will reward Muslims for these added prayers that are over and above the religious duties that Allah has imposed, but He does not punish anyone for their omitting. Nafl is not obligatory. Before every congregational prayer, the muezzin (from azan, "call to prayer") makes a formal public call to prayer from a minaret of the mosque. The call to prayer may also be offered inside the mosque in the prayer's area of the Imam (leader of the prayer). In recent times the call has been made over a microphone so that those at some distance can hear it.

Special early afternoon prayers are offered on Fridays in congregation at mosques, preceded by a sermon by the Imam. On the two annual religious festival days called Eid (one immediately after the end of the fasting month of Ramadan and the second during the pilgrimage to Mecca on the tenth day of the Islamic lunar month of *Dhul-Hijjah*), there are special prayers followed by sermons in the morning. These prayers are not held in mosques but in a wide space outside set apart for this purpose.

Zakat – Almsgiving

The third duty of a Muslim is to pay Zakat, primarily to help the poor. The word Zakat in Arabic means both "purification" and "growth." This was the required charity ordered by Allah and collected by Muhammad (and later by Muslim states) from every Muslim who has at the end of the year in his or her possession certain minimum prescribed value called 'Nisab.' Zakat requires a minimum rate of two and half percent of Muslims' wealth above the value of 'Nisab.' Islam teaches that humans own nothing in life. God gives everything they possess as a trust; they are trustees. Only when Zakat has been paid is the rest of a Muslim's property considered purified and legitimate. In most Muslim states Zakat is no longer collected by the government and instead has become a voluntary charity, but it is still recognized as an essential duty by

all Muslims. In a number of countries, strong demands have been made to reinstate *Zakat* as a tax.

Sawm – Fasting

The fourth duty is the fasting during the Islamic month of Ramadan. Because the Islamic calendar is lunar, fasting is not confined to any one season. Even during hot summers, most Muslims meticulously observe fasting. During fasting, one must refrain from eating, drinking, smoking, and sexual intercourse from dawn until sunset. After sunset, all lawful in food, drink and sex are allowed. Throughout the month one must abstain from all sinful thoughts and actions. If one is sick or on a journey that causes hardship, one need not to fast but must compensate by fasting on subsequent days or feed poor people. The Messenger of God encouraged Muslims to offer voluntary fasting because Allah will reward Muslims for these added fasting. Fasting is a religious method of self-purification. By cutting oneself off from worldly comforts, even for a short time, a fasting person gains true sympathy with those who live daily lives without even the most basic necessities, food and drink. It is also intended as a time to grow one's spirituality and Islamic values of love, honesty, devotion, and generosity.

Hajj – Pilgrimage

The fifth duty is the pilgrimage to the Kaabah at Mecca. Every adult Muslim who is physically and economically able to do so must make this pilgrimage at least once in his or her lifetime. Hajj activities take place during six days (from the eighth to thirteenth) of the Islamic lunar month of *Dhul-Hijjah*. Every year, during pilgrimage, the world witnesses the wonderful spectacle of this international exhibition of Islam in leveling all distinctions of race, color, and rank. Not only do the Americans, the Europeans, the Africans, the south Asians, the Arabs, the Chinese and all other nationals meet together in Mecca as members of one divine family, but they are all dressed in one dress, every person in two simple pieces of white seamless cloth, everyone chanting,

“Here am I, O God; at Thy command; Thou art One and the Only; here am I.”

Thus there remains nothing to differentiate the high from the low, the rich from the poor, the peasant from the king. The fact is: no religion in the world can show a parallel to what Islam has done towards the establishment of the principle of international unity and human brotherhood on such universal foundations.

During Pilgrimage, Muslims abstain from shedding blood and even cutting either hair or nails, and avoid all forms of vulgarity. The main activities of the Hajj, which are of Abrahamic origin, include seven circumambulations of the Kaabah, walking fast between two mounds near the sanctuary seven times, marching three miles to the city of Mina, then proceeding six miles to the mountain of Arafat, staying the afternoon and listening to a sermon there, stoning of three pillars representing Satan's temptation of Abraham, his wife Hagar and his son Ismael, then marching back to Mecca, cutting the hair to symbolize the completion of *Hajj*, offering a sacrifice in the memory of Abraham's attempted sacrifice of his son Ismael, and once again circumambulating the Kaabah. During the tenth day of *Dhul-Hijjah*, Muslims worldwide gather for communal prayers

During recent years, air travel has allowed Muslims from all parts of the world to perform the pilgrimage. In 1977 the reported number was close to 2 million. Through the centuries, the Kaabah has played an important role as a meeting place of Islamic scholars for the exchange and diffusion of ideas. For the past two decades, the pilgrimage has also been used to promote political solidarity in the Muslim world.

Besides these five basic pillars, other important laws of Islam include the prohibition of alcohol consumption and of eating the flesh of swine. Besides the Kaabah, the central shrine of Islam, the most important centers of Islamic life are the Prophet's mosque in Madinah and Al-Aqsa mosque in Jerusalem, and all the mosques where daily prayers are offered, and where the Friday service are held.

8.3 Articles of Faith in Islam

Faith is recognized in Islam as a higher step than practicing Islam. It is a matter of belief in one's heart. Every faithful Muslim believes in the following articles of faith:

God

Monotheism is central to Islam—a belief in only One God, Unitary, Supreme and Eternal, Omnipotent and Mighty, Merciful and Compassionate. Belief in a plurality of gods or in the extension of God's divinity to any person is emphatically rejected. Islam rejects the human attributes that the Jews and the Christians added to their doctrines such as God's wrestling with his prophet or the incarnation of God. God created nature through a primordial act of mercy; otherwise there would be pure nothingness. God provided each element of his creation with its own proper nature, or laws governing its conduct, so that it follows a characteristic pattern. The result is a well ordered harmonious whole, a cosmos in which everything has its proper place and limitations.

Messengers of God

A Muslim has to believe in all the messengers of God without any distinction among them. Every known nation has at least one messenger from God. They were chosen by God to guide mankind and deliver His divine message that is submission to the Will and Laws of God. They were sent at different times and places. All prophets are human; they have no share in divinity, but they are the most perfect exemplars for humanity. The Quran mentions the names of twenty-five prophets, and Muslims accept them all. All prophets are considered national or local messengers, with the exception of Muhammad who is considered a prophet for all nations and all time. The message of all prophets was basically the same because it came from One God. Muhammad stands as the last messenger, and the crowning glory of the foundation of the prophethood. This is not an arbitrary attitude, nor is it just a

convenient belief. Thus, the Quran describes Muhammad as the "Seal of all Prophets." From this arises the Islamic belief that prophethood was accomplished and finished with him and that the Quran is the final and authentic perfect revelation of God, consummating and superseding all earlier holy books. The Quran acknowledges the miracles of earlier prophets (Noah, Abraham, Moses, Jesus, and others). Muhammad's eternal miracle is the Quran, the like of which no human can reproduce.

Although right and wrong are inscribed in the human heart, the inability or refusal of many people to interpret that inscription has made prophetic guidance necessary. This guidance is universal: no one on earth has been left without it. Adam was the first prophet; after his expulsion from the Garden of Eden, God forgave him (for this reason Islam does not accept the doctrine of original sin). The messages of all prophets emanate from the same divine source. Religions are, therefore, basically one. They all call for worshiping One God.

The Holy Books

As a result of believing in all the messengers of God, Muslims also have to believe in all the scriptures and revelations of God. In the Quran, a special reference is made to the books of Abraham, Moses, David and Jesus. But long before the revelation of the Quran to Muhammad, all the holy books had been lost or altered. The Quran stands untainted for the past 14 centuries.

The Angels of God

Muslims believe in the Angels of God. They are purely spiritual and splendid beings, whose nature requires no food, drink or sleep. They have no physical desires of any kind nor material needs. They spend their whole time in the service of God. There are many of them and each one of them is charged with a specific duty. If we cannot see the Angels with our naked eyes, it does not necessarily deny their actual existence. There are many things in the world that are invisible to the eye or inaccessible to our senses, and yet

we believe in their existence e.g. electricity and sound. Belief in the Angels originates from the Islamic principle that knowledge and truth are not entirely confined to the sensory knowledge or the sensory perception alone.

The Day of Judgment

The divine activities of creation, sustenance, and guidance end with the final act of judgment. This world will come to an end some day, and the dead will rise to stand for their final and fair trial. On the Day of Judgment, all humanity will be gathered, and individuals will be judged solely according to their deeds. The “successful ones” will go to the Garden (heaven), and the “losers,” or the evil will go to hell. Because God is merciful, He will forgive those who deserve forgiveness. Only God knows the real nature of heaven and hell, and their exact descriptions.

If some people think that they are shrewd enough and can get away with their wrong doings in this life, they are wrong, for they will not be able to do so on the Day of Judgment. Also, if some pious people do good deeds to please God and seem to have no appreciation or acknowledgment in this temporary world, they will eventually receive their full reward on that day. Absolute justice will prevail for all.

Belief in the Day of Judgment is the final relieving answer to many complicated problems of our world. There are people who commit sins, neglect God, and indulge in immoral activities, yet they seem to be “superficially” successful in business and prosperous in life. And there are virtuous and God-minded people. Yet they seem to be getting fewer rewards and more suffering in this life. This may seem puzzling and incompatible with the Justice of God. If the guilty can escape the human laws unharmed and, in addition, be more prosperous, what is, then, left for the virtuous people? There must be some way to reward goodness and arrest evil. If this is not done here on earth, and we know that it is not done regularly or immediately, it has to be done some day. That day is the Day of Judgment. This is not to ignore injustice or tolerate mischief in this world. This is not to sedate the deprived or comfort

the exploiters. Rather, it is to warn the deviants from the right path and remind them that the Justice of God shall run its full course sooner or later.

Besides the Last Judgment, which will be on individuals, the Quran recognizes another form of divine judgment, which happens to nations, peoples, and communities. Nations, like individuals, may be corrupted by wealth, power, and arrogance, and, unless they reform, these nations are punished by being destroyed or subjugated by more virtuous nations. This has been evident all over the history of humanity.

The Ultimate Plan

Muslims believe in the timeless knowledge of God and in His Power to plan and execute His Plans. God is not indifferent to His world nor is He neutral to it. His knowledge and power are in action at all times to keep order in His vast domain and maintain full command over His creation. He is Wise and Loving, and whatever He does must have a good motive and a meaningful purpose. If this is established in our minds, we should accept in good faith all that He does, although we may fail to understand it fully, or even think it is bad. We should have strong faith in Him and accept whatever He does because our knowledge is limited and our thinking is based upon individual or personal considerations, whereas His Knowledge is limitless and He plans on a universal as well as individual basis.

This does not in any way make man helpless. It simply draws the line between what is God's concern and what is man's responsibility. Because we are by nature finite and limited, we have a finite and limited degree of power and freedom. We cannot do everything, and He graciously holds us responsible only for the things we do. The things that we cannot do, or things that He Himself does, are not in the realm of our responsibility. He is Just and has given us limited power to match our finite nature and limited responsibility. On the other hand, the timeless knowledge and power of God to execute His plans do not prevent us from making our own plans in our limited sphere of power. As a matter of fact, God encourages us to think, to plan and to make sound choices, but if

things do not happen the way we wanted or planned, we should not lose faith or surrender ourselves to mental strains and shattering worries. We should try again and again, and if the results are not still what we wanted, then we know that we tried our best and rest assured that we are not held responsible for the results. The important point is to try, and then leave the results to God. The Muslims call this article of faith: the belief in "Qadaa" and "Qadar", which simply means, in other words, that the Timeless knowledge of God anticipates events, and that events take place according to the exact knowledge of God.

8.4 The Prophet (Pbuh)

Prophet Muhammad (Pbuh) was born in 570 A.D. in the city of Mecca, an important trading center in western Arabia. Muhammad was a descendant of Prophet Ismael, son of Abraham, through the lineage of his second son Kedar. Muhammad's father, Abd Allah, died before he was born. His mother, Amina, died when he was 6 years old. His grandfather Abd al-Muttalib then raised him until the age of eight. After his grandfather's death, Abu Talib, his uncle, raised him. Under the guardianship of Abu Talib, Muhammad began to earn a living as a businessman and a trader. At the age of twelve, he accompanied Abu Talib with merchant caravans as far as Syria. The Meccans popularly knew Muhammad as 'Al-Ameen' for his impeccable character. The title Al-Ameen means the honest, the reliable and the trustworthy, and it signifies the highest standard of moral and public life. Upon hearing of Muhammad's impressive credentials, Khadijah, a rich and noble widow, asked Muhammad to take some merchandise for trade to Syria. Soon after this trip when he was twenty-five, Khadijah proposed marriage to Muhammad. Muhammad accepted the proposal. At that time, Khadijah was twice widowed and forty years old.

Muhammad's spiritual search had been long. At the age of 40, while in a cave on Mount Hira outside Mecca, he had a revelation in which he was called on to preach the message entrusted to him by God. Further revelations came to him intermittently over the remaining 23 years of his life, and these revelations constitute

the text of the Quran. At first in private and then publicly, Muhammad began to proclaim his message: that there is but One God and that Muhammad is his servant and messenger sent to remind people to submit to the Will of God, and to warn them of the Judgment Day. The Meccans responded with hostility to Muhammad's monotheism. Abu Talib protected him as long as he was alive. In 619, however, Abu Talib died, and the new clan leader was unwilling to continue the protective arrangement. At about the same time Muhammad lost another faithful supporter, his wife Khadijah. In the face of persecution and curtailed freedom to preach, Muhammad and about 70 followers reached the decision to move to Madinah, a city about 400 km (250 mi.) to the north. This move, called the hijra (Arabic: "emigration"), took place in 622, signified the first year of the Muslim calendar.

In Madinah an organized Muslim community gradually came into existence under Muhammad's leadership. To guarantee the peace and serenity, the Prophet proposed a treaty defining terms of conduct for all inhabitants of Madinah. All Muslims, non-Muslim Arabs and Jews ratified the treaty. After his emigration to Madinah, the enemies of Islam increased their assault from all sides. The Battles of Badr, Uhud and Allies (Trench) were fought near or around Madinah. In these battles until the year 627, the nonbelievers with encouragement from Jews and other Arabian tribes attacked the Prophet and Muslim community. The Muslims lost many men while defending their city and religion. This condition resulted in many widowed Muslim women and numerous orphaned children. In these circumstances, Prophet Muhammad married several women during his fifty-sixth year up to the sixtieth year of his life. He did not contract any marriage in the last three years of his life, following the revelation limiting the number of wives up to a maximum of four. This is the first time in the history of revealed scriptures that a limit on the number of wives was imposed and the terms of conduct were specified. The Prophet was instructed not to divorce any of his wives after this revelation, Surah 33, Ayah 52. All of the ladies he took as wives were either widowed or divorced, except Aishah, the daughter of Abu Bakr, his closest friend and the first Caliph.

In 632, he announced that God perfected and completed the

religion of Islam. Three months later, he died. At the end of his mission, the Prophet was blessed with many hundred thousand followers (men and women) of Islam. Thousands of his friends memorized the full text of the Quran, and prayed with him at the mosque and listened to his sermon. Hundreds of sincere Muslims would find every opportunity to be with him following five daily prayers and at other times. They used to seek his advice for their everyday problems, and listened carefully to the interpretation and application of revealed verses to their situation. They followed the message of the Quran and the Messenger of Allah with utmost sincerity, and supported him with every thing they had.

By the time of his death, Muhammad had spread Islam on most of Arabia. His followers carried the message of Islam after the Prophet, and within 100 years the light of Islam reached Spain, North Africa, the Caucasus, northwest China and India, and Islam embraced more territory than did the Roman Empire. In no event, Islam was imposed by force on any population. This is evident because Muslims never attempted to convert anyone according to the instruction of the Quran 2:256. Muslims ruled Spain and India and their people were never converted to Islam. Also the existence of non-Muslims in many Islamic countries attests to the fact that Islam did not spread by the sword.

However, "half the truth" Evangelists claim that, in contrast to Moses and Jesus, Muhammad was a man of war. They ignore the fact that Muhammad fought only a handful of battles in his lifetime, resulting in barely 1,000 casualties on all sides. This might be compared to Moses, who chastises his army for sparing the women and children of the defeated Midianites, Numbers 31:15. Moses then commands his army to go back and slaughter the women and the boys. This also might be compared to David, who is praised in I Samuel 18 for killing his "tens of thousands," famously earning the murderous jealousy of Saul who only killed his "thousands."

To compare Muhammad to Moses or Jesus, or against some contemporary standard, is meaningless and obsolete. The world that Moses, Jesus and Muhammad lived in was lawless and violent, different from even the Roman dominated world in which Jesus lived. Strong vested interests opposed the monotheism each

preached, genocide was commonplace, and slavery was taken for granted. Women had few rights, and might was the only law.

In this context Muhammad and Moses and all the other Biblical figures sought to create a new society based on justice and on the belief in a Compassionate God. Their achievements in accomplishing this in lasting ways form the only relevant contemporary standard by which they can be truly judged.

Mahatma Gandhi published this statement in 'Young India,' 1924:

"I wanted to know the best of the life of one who holds today an undisputed sway over the hearts of millions of mankind. I became more than ever convinced that it was not the sword that won a place for Islam in those days in the scheme of life. It was the rigid simplicity, the utter self-effacement of the Prophet, the scrupulous regard for pledges, his intense devotion to his friends and followers, his intrepidity, his fearlessness, his absolute trust in God and in his own mission. These and not the sword carried everything before them and surmounted every obstacle. When I closed the second volume (of the Prophet's biography), I was sorry there was not more for me to read of that great life."

Sir George Bernard Shaw wrote in 'The Genuine Islam,' Vol. I, No. 8, 1936.

"If any religion had the chance of ruling over England, nay Europe within the next hundred years, it could be Islam."

"I have studied him - the wonderful man and in my opinion far from being an anti-Christ, he must be called the Savior of Humanity."

"I believe that if a man like him were to assume the dictatorship of the modern world he would succeed in solving its problems in a way that would bring it the much needed peace and happiness: I have prophesied about the faith of Muhammad that it would be acceptable to the Europe of tomorrow as it is beginning to be acceptable to the Europe of today."

A historian once said, a great man should be judged by three tests:

1. Did his contemporaries find him to be truthful?
2. Was he great enough to rise above the standards of his age?
3. Did he leave anything as permanent legacy to the world at large?

This list may be further extended but all these three tests of greatness are exceedingly satisfied to the highest degree in the case of Prophet Muhammad (Pbuh).

Impeccable Character

Authentic historical records show that all the contemporaries of Muhammad, both friends and foes before and after revelation, acknowledged his spotless honesty, noble virtues, absolute sincerity, and absolute trustworthiness of the apostle of Islam. Before revelation, the tribes of Mecca accepted him as arbitrator in their personal disputes on account of his conscientious fairness. After revelation, some of those who did not believe in his message were forced to say: "*O Muhammad, we do not call you a liar, but we deny Him who has given you a Book and inspired you with a message.*" Some thought evil spirits possessed him. They tried violence to cure him. But the best of them saw that a new light had dawned on him and hastened to seek that enlightenment. It is a notable feature in the history of the Prophet of Islam that his nearest relation, his wife, his beloved cousin, and his close friends, who knew him most intimately, were thoroughly inspired with the truth of his mission. If these men and women, noble, intelligent, and certainly not less educated than the fishermen of Galilee, had perceived the slightest sign of earthiness, deception, or material motives, Muhammad's hopes of moral regeneration and social reform would all have crumbled to dust in a moment.

On the contrary we find that the devotion of his followers was such that he was voluntarily acknowledged leader of their lives. They braved for his sake persecutions and danger. They believed,

trusted, obeyed and honored him even in the most excruciating torture and severest mental agony even unto death. Would this have been so had they noticed the slightest backsliding in their leader?

To read the history of the early converts of Islam, every heart would melt at the sight of the brutal treatment of innocent men and women. Bilal, an innocent man was thrown on the hot sands with a huge stone on his chest. He was asked to denounce Muhammad and Islam. Instead he kept repeating, "God is One." The torture in the heat of desert continued until Abu Bakr, the first Caliph, bought him and set him free. Another example is made with Khabbab Bin Adi who was put to death in a cruel manner by mutilation and cutting off his flesh piece by piece. In the middle of his tortures, he was asked whether he did wish Muhammad in his place? He cried out that he was gladly prepared to sacrifice himself, his family and his children and all to save Muhammad from the pierce of a thorn. Scores of heart-breaking incidents of this type may be narrated. But what do all these incidents show? Why was it that these sons and daughters of Islam not only surrendered to their Prophet their allegiance, but also made a gift of their bodies, hearts, and souls? Is it not their intense faith and absolute conviction a sign of the noblest testimony to his sincerity?

And these men and women were not of low class or of inferior mental caliber. In the early days of Islam, his followers gathered what was the best and the noblest in Mecca, its flowers and cream. The first four Caliphs, with their towering personalities, were among the converts of this early period. The success of the Prophet was not a mere accident. It was not a windfall. It was recognition of the fact that his contemporaries found him to be truthful. It was the result of his admirable and compelling personality. Most of all, God, the Omnipotent, willed the success of His messenger.

Standard for All Humans

What a dramatic succession of striking scenes? There was Muhammad, the prophet. There was Muhammad, the general. There was Muhammad, the businessman. There was Muhammad, the warrior. There was Muhammad, the preacher. There was

Muhammad, the statesman. There was Muhammad, the protector of slaves. There was Muhammad, the liberator of women. There was Muhammad, the judge. There was Muhammad, the reformer. There was Muhammad, the saint. And above all, he was the highest example of modesty and humility.

Orphanhood is the extreme of helplessness and his life on Earth began with it. From an orphan boy, to a persecuted refugee, then to an overlord - spiritual as well as temporal - of a whole nation, he had stood the fire of the world and came out of it unscathed to serve as a model in every phase of life. His achievements were not limited to one aspect of life, but cover the entire fields of human activity. He is a role model for youths. He is a role model for kings and presidents. He is a role model for Judges. He is a role model for any human at any age, in any field, in any place, and at any time.

- If greatness consists of purification of a nation immersed in moral darkness, then he who transformed an entire nation, sunken low as the Arabs were, and made them torchbearers of civilizations, has every claim to that greatness.
- If greatness lies in unifying disharmonious elements of society by the ties of brotherhood and charity, the Prophet of the desert has got every title to that distinction.
- If greatness consists of uplifting those immersed in degrading superstition and destructive practices of every kind, the Prophet of Islam had wiped out superstitions and irrational fear from the hearts of millions.
- If a conqueror is a great man, Muhammad founded a nation that has survived fourteen centuries.
- If a devotion that a leader commands is a measure of greatness, the Prophet's white dress, beard, style of recitation of Quran, what and how he ate, even his way of bathing are followed by millions of Muslims for fourteen centuries.
- If the number of followers of a role model is the criterion of greatness, the Prophet's name even today exerts a magic charm in the hearts of over a billion of souls.

And the list goes on and on.

The Unlettered Prophet

Muhammad had not studied philosophy in the schools of Athens or Rome, Alexandria, India or China, yet he could proclaim the highest truths of eternal values to mankind. Born as an orphan and blessed with no worldly goods, yet he was loved by all. He had studied at no military academy, yet he could organize his forces against tremendous odds and gained victories through the moral forces that he marshaled. In the person of the Prophet of Islam, the world has seen the most exceptional union of a prophet, organizer, and leader. He was unlettered, yet he could speak with an eloquence and fervor that moved men to tears of ecstasy.

His supposed weakness (being unlettered) was his greatest miracle. He was among Arabs who considered the mastering of their language as important as their pride. When the Quran was revealed, the beauty of the language of the Quran overwhelmed the Arabs. They were astounded by the rhetorical miracle of the language. Allah challenged the Arabs to compose ten verses like the Quran. When the Arabs failed, He challenged them to compose only one verse. Once again, they failed. Like Moses' and Jesus' miracles, the miracle of Muhammad (the Quran) is in the subject that his people perfected, mastered and held in high regard.

Before the revelation, Muhammad was not known to be among those who mastered the language. It is a known fact that no one can master a language instantaneously at the age of forty. So when Muhammad started reciting the Quran to his people, they accused him of being possessed by evil spirits, because they had not seen him talking this way. Any Arab-speaking student can differentiate right away between any verse in the Quran and a statement from the Prophet. None of the thousands verses in the Quran has any similarity in style to any of the thousands sayings of the Prophets. Because the Arabs did not see anything like the Quran, which was narrated by an unlettered man, and they denied the message, they concluded that the Quran must have been from evil spirits. This is a classic case in all religions. *It is the same old story:*

- Pharaoh accused Moses with black magic, and that Moses

was possessed with evil spirits, Surah 20, Ayah 71.

- The Jews accused Jesus with black magic, and that Jesus was possessed with evil spirits, Luke 11:15
- The pagan Arabs accused Muhammad with black magic, and that Muhammad was possessed with evil spirits.
- Now, some Christians and the Jews accuse Muhammad with black magic, and that Muhammad was possessed with evil spirits in Sunday schools and by half the truth TV evangelists!

The Quran refers to the accusation of the pagan Arabs to Muhammad in many verses:

Surah 51, Ayah 52 *"Similarly, no apostle came to the Peoples before them, but they said (of him) in like manner, "A sorcerer, or one possessed!"*"

Surah 25, Ayah 5 *"And they say: "Tales of the ancients, which he has caused to be written: and they are dictated before him morning and evening."*

The pagans spread the rumor that Muhammad, similar to all previous prophets, was a sorcerer, or one possessed with evil spirit. When the beauty and power of the Quran are pointed out, and its miracle as coming from an unlettered man, the pagans hint at other men wrote them, though they could not produce any one who could write anything like the Quran.

Pure and Humble

After the fall of Mecca, more than one million square miles of land lay at his feet. The Lord of Arabia repaired his own shoes, fixed his woolen garments, milked the goats, swept the hearth, and kindled the fire. The entire town of Madinah, where he lived, grew wealthy in the later days of his life. Everywhere gold and silver was in abundance and yet in those days of prosperity many weeks would pass without a fire being kindled in the hearth of his house, his food being water and dates or bread and vinegar. His family would go hungry many nights because they

could not get anything to eat in the evening. He slept on rough bed, with a palm mat after a long busy day. He spent most of his nights in prayer, often bursting with tears before his Creator to grant him strength to continue his duties. As the reports go, his voice would get choked from weeping. The house that spread light to the whole world was in darkness because there was no oil in the lamp. He did not accept a salary from the state. He had to work to earn money, yet during his busy day the time to work was very little and his earning was very humble. On the day of his death, his only assets were a few coins, a part of which went to satisfy a debt and the rest were given to a needy person who came to his house for charity. He denied his family any inheritance from the Islamic State. The clothes in which he breathed his last breath had many patches.

Circumstances changed, but the Prophet of God did not. In victory or defeat, in power or hardship, in "prosperity" or poverty, he was the same man, disclosed the same character. He remained "Al-Ameen", the truthful, the honest, and the poor. That is why Muhammad was ranked number ONE in "*THE 100 a ranking of the most influential persons in history*" book by Michael Hart.

8.5 Islam and Community

The community (Ummah) in Islam is not founded on race, nationality, locality, occupation, kinship, or special interests. It does not take its name after the name of a leader or a founder or an event. It transcends national borders and political boundaries. The foundation of the community in Islam is the attitude that designates submission to the Will of Allah, obedience to His Law, and commitment to His Cause. In short, an Islamic community is present only when it is nourished and fostered by Islam. Its foundation is the family.

The Islamic community has a historic mission far beyond mere survival, sheer power, breeding, or physiological continuity. Such a mission is described in the Quran as follows:

Surah 3, Ayah 104, "*Let there arise out of you a band of people inviting to all that is good, enjoining what is right,*

and forbidding what is wrong: They are the ones to attain felicity."

Surah 3, Ayah 110 *"Ye are the best of peoples, evolved for mankind, enjoining what is right, forbidding what is wrong, and believing in Allah."*

The historic role of the Islamic community is to be the embodiment of the virtuous, the wholesome, and the noble. A truly Islamic community is the alert guardian of virtue and the bitter enemy of evil. What is required from the community at large is likewise required from every individual member. This is because the whole community is an entity with every member accountable to Allah. The statement of the Prophet (Pbuh) best describes the role of the individual Muslim:

"Whoever of you sees something wrong must seek to rectify it by action or deed; if he cannot, let him try to change it by word; if he cannot, let his feelings of disapproval and condemnation intensify and this is the minimal degree of faith."

As we see, this description is very significant and comprehensive. In this age of revolutionary media, no one in his right mind can underestimate the power of corrected actions, or the power of communication by words, or the power of feelings.

The historic role of the Islamic community is further restated in the Quran:

Surah 2, Ayah 143, *"Thus, have We made of you an Ummah justly balanced, that ye might be witnesses over the nations, and the Messenger a witness over yourselves."*

Such a role of witnessing is both highly significant and extremely demanding. It means that the community of Islam must be exemplary. It must set the highest standard of morality and be the reference point of others. It must avoid excesses and extravagances and static rigidity. To strike a middle course of action, to be steadfast and consistent, to know what to accept and what to reject, to have morals and at the same time remain adaptable is probably the hardest test of human character and social viability.

But this is the role of the Islamic community and the historic mission of Muslims. And it is the very criterion that qualifies the Muslim as the best human community ever to evolve.

With regard to the continuity of the Islamic community, certain points are noteworthy. It is the duty of Muslims to do everything within their means to ensure that continuity. The rules of marriage and inheritance, the duties of charity and pilgrimage, the human rights and obligation of kin, the individual conscientiousness and social belongings - all these are oriented towards the healthy continuity of the community in Islam. On the other hand, God has pledged to protect this community in several ways.

1. First, He pledges to preserve and protect the Quran that is the source of all wisdom. This also means that there shall always be a community to follow the Quran; the Quran shall not be without followers even though there are followers of other books.
2. Second, Islam itself is continuity. Whenever a nation deviated from the path of Allah, He restated His word, reaffirmed His Truth, and commissioned new reformers to carry on.
3. Thirdly, Allah has issued a strong warning to the effect that if Muslims turned away from the right path, they would be the losers, and Allah would replace them by righteous people, Surah 47, Ayah 38.

Again, the believers are warned that if they neglect their faith, soon God will produce people whom He will love and they will love Him, humble towards the believers and strong against the unbelievers, fighting in the way of God, and never afraid of reproaches, Surah 5, Ayah 54.

The Family

There have been many definitions and descriptions of the family. For our purpose, I shall adopt the following simplified definition. The family is a human social group whose members are bound together by the bond of blood ties and/or marital relationship. This

family bond entails mutual expectations of rights and obligations that are prescribed by religion, enforced by law, and observed by the group members. Accordingly, the family members share certain mutual commitments. These relate to identity and provision, inheritance and council, affection for the young, security and respect for the elderly, and maximization of effort to protect the family.

Islam recognizes the religious virtue, the social necessity, and the moral advantage of marriage. The normal course of behavior for the Muslim individual is to be family oriented and to seek a family of his own. Marriage and the family are central in the Islamic system. There are many verses in the Quran and the statements by the Prophet which goes as far as to say that when a Muslim marries, he has thereby perfected half of his religion; so let him be God-minded and careful with the other half. Muslim scholars have interpreted the Quran to mean that a marriage is a religious duty, a moral safeguard, and a social commitment. As a religious duty, it must be fulfilled; but like all other duties in Islam, it is enjoined only upon those who are capable of meeting the responsibilities involved.

Marriage in Islam is regarded first and foremost as a righteous act. Sexual control is a moral triumph. The moral values and purposes of marriage would take on a special meaning and be reinforced if they are intertwined with the belief in God. And this is the focal point of marriage in Islam.

Surah 4, Ayah 1, "O mankind! reverence your Guardian-Lord, who created you from a single person, created, of like nature, His mate, and from them twain scattered (like seeds) countless men and women,"

Surah 7, Ayah 189, "It is He Who created you from a single person, and made his mate of like nature, in order that he might dwell with her (in love)."

Surah 30, Ayah 21, "And among His Signs is this, that He created for you mates from among yourselves, that ye may dwell in tranquility with them, and He has put love and mercy between your (hearts): verily in that are Signs for those who reflect."

Even at the most trying times of married life, and in the midst of legal disputes and litigation, the Quran reminds the parties of God's Law; it commands them to be kind to one another, truly charitable towards one another, and above all dutiful to God.

It is noteworthy that the Islamic provisions of marriage apply to men and women equally, "except that men are a degree higher" because they are charged with the household expenditure. Women are not required to contribute in the house finances, even if they are wealthy. Sexual fidelity is sternly demanded, and proven adultery is punishable in some Islamic countries. The Quran also advocates measures that were intended to improve the conditions of women. The infanticide of girls, formerly prevalent among certain Arabic tribes, is forbidden; daughters are given a share of inheritances, although only half of that allotted to boys. The Quran grants to wives the right of divorce in case of maltreatment. The Quran approves polygamy, allowing as many as four wives, but also states,

Surah 4, Ayah 3, "but if ye fear that ye shall not be able to deal justly (with them), then only one,"

The polygamy is offered as an alternative for extra marital affairs and committing adultery. The abuse of polygamy has recently led to the enactment of reformed family laws in most Muslim countries.

Islam's general approach to parent-child relationships may be summarized in a few principles:

- It is a divine command that no child may become the cause of harm to the parents, Surah 2, Ayah 233.
- By implication, the parents should cause the child no harm either. The Quran recognizes very clearly that parents are not always immune from over protectiveness or negligence.
- One of the most inalienable rights of the child in Islam is the right to life and equal chances, Surah 6, Ayah 151.
- Islam is strongly sensitive to the crucial dependence of the child on the parents. Their decisive role in forming the child's

personality is clearly recognized.

The Quran sums up the whole question of the parent-child relationship in the master concept of *ihsan*, which means what is right, good, and beautiful. It also means to strive for perfection in performing Islamic duties. The practical implications of this concept of *ihsan* for the parents entail active understanding and patience, gratitude and compassion, respect for them and prayers for their souls, mercy and honoring them.

Surah 17, Ayah 23-24, "Thy Lord hath decreed that ye worship none but Him, and that ye be kind (Ihsan) to parents. Whether one or both of them attain old age in thy life, say not to them a word of contempt, nor repel them, but address them in terms of honor. And, out of kindness, lower to them the wing of humility, and say: My Lord! Bestow on them thy Mercy even as they cherished me in childhood."

Parents have the right to expect obedience from children if only in partial return for what the parents do for them. But if parents demand the wrong or ask the improper, such as forcing children to paganism, disobedience become not only justifiable, but also imperative.

Recognizing that the first priority of anyone is towards God, the second priority of children is towards their parents. This means that the children are responsible for the support and maintenance of parents. It is an absolute religious duty to provide for the parents in case of need and help them to make their lives as comfortable as possible, especially in their old ages.

In the above verse, there exists more than just simple gratitude to parents; it goes up into the highest spiritual level. Following God's command to mankind to only worship him, children are commanded to treat their parent with the full meaning of *ihsan*. God ordains respect and mercy for parents. However, today, in the name of freedom, respect is replaced with rebellion, and mercy is hardly existent.

8.6 The Divine Standard

Throughout history, humans have adopted many standards. These standards range from social, cultural, political, to economic and juridical. Human standards or laws can sometimes be useful or beneficial if they adhere to the divine standards. As these standards get further away from the religious laws, they produce benefits only to limited special interest groups, with the public as a whole suffering or at least not benefiting from these laws. Most people judge situations or other people based upon certain preconceived ideas and rules that they accumulated in their past. Often times, these judgments may not be universally fair or righteous. Generally speaking, there are three different kinds of standards that humans follow when facing different issues:

1. **Divine Standard:** these are the set of laws, behaviors, and actions that are prescribed by God upon all humans regardless of race, color, wealth or gender. These laws are pathways to piety and absolute justice.
2. **Society standard:** the laws and the morals that specific societies impose upon themselves that are supposedly for the welfare of the whole society at that time. However, no society standard could include all the issues that affect its people. This leaves open issues that cause major differences in opinion. For example, The American society is almost evenly divided on major issues such as abortion and gun control with no side being able to convince the other.
3. **Individual standard:** This is the standard that an individual adopts to satisfy his own needs and desires regardless of its effect on others. Many people judge an event or action based upon their own standard that can be totally impious.

It will be shown that the Divine standards and values in Islam are far superior to any other society or individual standards. One of the functions of a religion is to teach humans a set of rules and standards that are universally beneficial at all times. However, a liberal society or person may find the divine standard too restrictive and against human rights! Someone may condemn the Islamic laws

of flogging or amputation of hands of criminals without entertaining the idea that these laws can protect the whole society. This is regardless of the fact that many social or human standards are always accused of being biased and unfair.

The multitude of the stories in the Holy Books is for a divine wisdom. For example, Moses was a fascinating choice as a messenger of Allah. One of a prophet's human qualifications is his ability to speak and convince people with the religion. However, Moses could not speak clearly, he used to stutter. So he asked God to make his brother Aaron a co-messenger to help him with the Egyptians. God accepted the plea of Moses. When Moses went to the pharaoh to deliver the message of God, he was accused that he could not speak clearly and would not be able to "sell" the message of God. By the human standard, a stuttered prophet may not do a good job in delivering the message. But by God's standard, His mercy can be given to anyone regardless of his physical ability and he *will succeed with the help of God*. As a matter of fact, Moses is considered as one of the most recognized prophets in the three monotheistic religions, and he miraculously achieved a great deal.

Criminal Law

Crime is rampant and prevalent in the United States as well as the Western World at large. The USA is the country that has the highest number of churches on earth. At the same time, it is the country that has the most violent crimes. It is also the country that has the highest number of prisons on earth. The Federal Bureau of Investigation in USA in its 1987 Annual statistical summary reported that a major crime occurs every 3 seconds and a murder every 27 minutes. National surveys conducted by universities and governmental agencies indicate that most citizens of the USA feel that the existing criminal justice system is too soft on criminals. The major problem as envisioned by social scientists is that the goal of the criminal justice system is not punishment but correction. Hence, the prisons are called "Corrective Facilities", and the prisoners to a large extent are pampered and spoiled. When judges and juries convict criminals, sometimes the punishment is sadly

inadequate. For example, a life sentence for killing a person would be in a corrective facility, and in most cases not for the remainder of the criminal's life! A life sentence equates to merely a 33 years prison term, but the murderer may be set free after serving just one third of the sentence, or 11 years for good behavior. On the other side, if the murderer is sentenced to death, the method of execution varies from state to state in the same country USA; there is no standard for executing murderers. Execution can be performed by lethal injection, electrocution, gas chamber, firearms, or hanging. The different methods of execution are chosen based upon which one is easier and faster. Obviously it may well be that no one really knows the easiest way of killing murderers. And the irony is that the justice system is trying supposedly to find the easiest way for execution whether or not the victim is killed in a violent or an easy way. Furthermore, Gangs' crimes are raging in the USA. It was reported that in one city (Fort Worth, Texas), there were about 5000 gang members committing all kinds of crimes from shooting innocent people at random, to fighting against each other. Crimes committed by children in schools, teenagers' suicide and pregnancy, drug overdose, killing for the adrenaline rush, etc., are quite common that psychologists, religious and government spokesmen have no clues for the reason of this phenomena.

And yet, the western person considers the Islamic Laws and traditions, dealing with criminal matters not only uncivilized but also barbaric. In a rather interesting book entitled "The Arabs", by David Lamb, Random House, New York, 1987, the author reports of the tremendous disparity in the crime rates between the whole Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and city of Los Angles during the calendar year 1982. Both Saudi Arabia and Los Angles had a population of 7 Million, and their respective crime statistics compares as follows:

| Crime Category | Los Angles | Saudi Arabia |
|-----------------------|-------------------|---------------------|
| All Crimes | 499,499 | 14,200 |
| Murders | 1415 | 79 |
| Suicides | 1760 | 32 |

It is important to know that the 14200 total crimes in Saudi Arabia included 3124 offenses due to the use of alcohol. If alcohol use were to be an offense in Los Angeles, the total number of crimes would exceed several million! Also in Saudi Arabia, it is very common that jewelry, trading currency stores and all other stores can be left opened and unattended at any time with no fear of robbery. Can you imagine the sense of security that you have if you are able to do that?

At first glance, it can be assumed that this tremendous discrepancy in the crime rate that exist between Muslim societies, such as Saudi Arabia, and the western countries such as the USA is due to the manner in which justice is rendered. The justice system in Saudi Arabia is based upon divine laws and standards as well as the prophetic teachings, whereas that in the western countries is generally based upon man-made laws inherited to a large degree from Romans.

In an attempt to clarify this point, we should perhaps first examine the criminal Islamic laws. It is appropriate to explain the basics of the overall features concerning these laws:

1. First, all crimes that injure or inflict wounds on other individuals are oppressive to humans and offensive to the Creator. Thus in all such crimes the right of God and the right of the individual are included. The criminal is an offender to both God and humanity. However, in some cases the right of the individual is dominant, while in others the right of God is governing. Thus, the commands in the Islamic Law in imposing punishment are based upon which right is governing.
2. Second, the Islamic criminal law, except for a few stated crimes, has not fixed any specific punishment but has left it to the discretion of the judges to determine according to the needs of the time, place, and nature of each crime. It is also lawful for Islamic Government to determine a standard range of punishment for the entire state or to impose a limitation on the powers of the judges in accordance with the requirements of time and place.

Robbing and stealing are acts of taking other people's property without any lawful claim to it. God and His Messenger Muhammad prescribed very severe punishment to this act.

Surah 5, Ayah 38, "As to the thief, Male or female, cut off his or her hands: a punishment by way of example, from Allah, for their crime: and Allah is Exalted in power."

The extreme severity of this Islamic punishment is no doubt what westerners have in mind when they call the Muslims barbaric. This punishment can only be understood if one bears in mind the fundamental principle of the Islamic Law that no duty is ever imposed on man without his being granted a corresponding right, and the duty also comprises, in this context, liability to punishment. Now, among the inalienable rights of every member of the Islamic society - Muslim as well as non-Muslim - is the right to protection (in every sense of the word) by the community as a whole. As is evident in many Quranic verses as well as the Prophetic authentic teachings, every citizen is entitled to a share in the community's resources and, thus to the enjoyment of social security. In other words, every citizen must be assured of an equitable standard of living commensurate with the resources at the disposal of the community. Islam envisages and demands a society that provides for not only for the spiritual needs of man but also for his bodily and intellectual needs as well. **It follows, therefore, that in order to have a truly Islamic State, the laws must be constituted such that every individual must enjoy a minimum of basic requirements of material rights and security.** Without these basic requirements, there can be no human dignity, no real freedom, and no spiritual progress. There can be no real happiness and strength in a society that permits some of its members to suffer from hunger while others have more than their needs. If certain groups of an Islamic society live in prosperity, while the majority is forced to use up their energies in search of their daily bread, poverty becomes the most dangerous enemy of the spiritual progress. Poverty may derive the entire community from being God-conscious and into the arms of soul-destroying materialism.

Consequently, the social legislation of Islam aims at a state of affairs in which every individual has:

- Enough to eat and wear.
- An adequate home.
- An ample security.
- Equal opportunities and facilities for education.
- Medical care in health and in sickness.

It is against the background of this social security system that Islam imposes the severe sentence of hand cutting as a deterrent punishment for robbery and stealing. Since, under the circumstances outlined above, temptation cannot be admitted as a justifiable excuse. In an Islamic State which neglects or is unable to provide complete social security for all its members, the temptation to enrich oneself by illegal means often becomes irresistible. In such a case, should one be inflicted by this harsh punishment? Should the society, which is unable to fulfill its obligations with regard to every citizen, have the right to invoke the full sanction of the criminal law against the individual transgressor? Reason dictates otherwise and in fact during the time of the second Caliph Omar, the hand-cutting law was waived in a period of famine that afflicted Arabia for some time.

In addition to this exception, the majority of Islamic jurists hold that petty thefts are exempt from this punishment. The general opinion from the Bible is:

Matthew 18:8, "If your hand or your foot causes you to sin, cut them off, and cast it from you: it is better for you to enter into life halt or maimed, rather than having two hands or two feet to be cast into everlasting fire"

Also, during the time of Jesus, thieves were crucified according to the Roman law:

Matthew 27:38, "Then were there two thieves crucified with him,"

The above discussion makes it clear that those who accuse Islam of being uncivilized or barbaric do not know the full story behind this severe punishment and certainly they do not know the Bible as well. They do not know that Jesus decreed a much harder punishment than the Islamic law, because Islam adopts hand cutting only for stealing, while Jesus made it general for any sin caused by hand or foot. This verse of Matthew 18:8 is never mentioned by half the truth TV Evangelists, while the softer Quranic verse of hand cutting is always publicized.

Illegal intercourse (Zina in Arabic) is another issue in Islamic Law. This, in general includes four categories as understood in the western world, and they are:

- Adultery: Sexual intercourse between a man and a woman, at least one of them is married to someone else.
- Fornication: Sexual intercourse between unmarried persons.
- Incest: Sexual intercourse between parent and child, any sibling pair, or between close blood relatives.
- Rape: sexual intercourse with a person against his or her will and through the use of threat of force or fear.

Following Islamic law, illegal intercourse is defined as that between a man and a woman without the legal relationship of husband and a wife. Historically, all social systems, that have been close to human nature have always considered illegal intercourse a serious crime and have prescribed severe punishment. But with the deterioration in moral standards, the society has become more and more liberal. The first common lapse in this matter was caused by the absence of clear distinction between adultery and fornication. Fornication was taken as an ordinary offense while adultery was taken as a punishable crime. For many reasons, this distinction is a direct outcome of the erroneous conception formed by the Christians resulting from the incident of the Jews asking Jesus to pronounce judgment on a case of adultery and his reply to them

John 8:7, "He that is without a sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her"

The above statement by Jesus could well mean that the accusers should be sinless and should start by themselves first before accusing someone else. Certainly, it does not mean that Jesus supported adultery.

According to the Christian interpretation, illegal intercourse between an unmarried man and unmarried woman is a sin, but not a punishable offense. But if either of them (or both) is married, it is adultery in which case it is treated as a crime. This is because unlawful intercourse is not the issue at hand but rather the vow of fidelity taken by each other before the priest or the pastor at the altar. Nevertheless, in this secular western society, there is no actual punishment even for adultery, except that the wife or the husband may sue each other and claim separation. Likewise in the Code of Criminal Procedure of the USA, it is not a punishable crime to commit adultery or fornication.

In Islamic law, in clear contrast, illegal intercourse is a punishable crime. This is not because of the violation of the oath of fidelity during the marriage ceremony nor because the marital rights of the other, but because the criminal resorts to an unlawful method when there exists a lawful method for satisfying sexual needs and desires. Furthermore, it is regarded as an abomination and an evil way as stated by Allah:

Surah 17, Ayah 32, "*Nor come nigh to adultery, for it is an indecent (deed) and an evil way.*"

Is punishment the solution? It certainly is, but as a last resort, Islam does rely on punitive law alone for saving humanity from the menace of illegal intercourse. It employs both reformatory and prohibitory measures on a larger scale. In fact, contrary to some of the western concepts on Islam, it is not the intent of Islam to flog people day and night. Its real aim is that people should not commit this crime at all. Also people should not put themselves in a position that may lead to this crime. Hence Islam endeavors to purify humans through prayers, fasting and charity. Moreover, Islam provides all possible facilities for a man to marry. In fact he may even marry four *provided* that he can treat them equally. Furthermore, in cases

of dispute between the married couple, provisions exist for reconciliation or divorce. In addition, Islam puts an end to all factors that lure man and woman to illegal intercourse or provide the opportunity for it. For instance, Muslim women are commanded to cover themselves with their garments, and the wives of the Prophet were given Quranic instruction to stay in their houses and not to display their adornment. Likewise, the free mixing of men and women is discouraged, and they are both enjoined to restrain their gaze so that unrestricted feasting of the eyes should not lead to illegal love. Many of these admonishments were revealed in the Quran as well as taught by Muhammad.

Islamic Law states that the punishment of fornication is flogging each man and woman with a hundred stripes, while the adulterers, stoned to death. We find on examining the Old Testament in the Book of Leviticus 20:10.

“And the man that committeth adultery with another man’s wife, even he that committeth adultery with his neighbor’s wife, the adulterer and the adulteress shall surely be put to death.”

Furthermore, the Old Testament states in the Book of Deuteronomy 22: 23-24,

“If a damsel that is a virgin be betrothed unto a husband, and a man find her in the city, and lie with her: Then ye shall bring them both out unto the gate of that city, and ye shall stone them with stones that they die.”

Therefore, the Quran was revealed to restore many of the original laws that were applied, before Christians abolished all the Mosaic laws.

There are many conditions, however, that must be applied for the illegal intercourse to be punishable. Some of these conditions are as follows:

- **The burden of the proof is on the state and not the accused.**

- Only an Islamic court in an Islamic state has the authority to punish the defendant. This applies to any punishment in Islamic Law. There is no place for vigilant justice.
- The Islamic Law does not make it obligatory that a person must confess his guilt of illegal intercourse, or that those who have knowledge of it must inform the Islamic Authorities about it.
- The Islamic authority shall not take actions against anyone for illegal intercourse unless it is fully proved.
- Confession of the accused may be used against him, and the Islamic Court must satisfy itself that the confession was voluntary and that at the time of the confession, he was in the right sense.
- To prove an illegal intercourse, there should be at least four reliable eyewitnesses to prove the guilt.

Besides illegal intercourse, Islamic attitude towards slander is totally different from that in the western world. To begin with, slander is not a criminal offense in the West. It is a civil offense, and the burden of proof is on the accuser. Furthermore, under the disguise of freedom of speech and press, especially in the USA, many slanderous statements are made on a daily basis published in all kinds of magazines and newspapers. In many cases, the reporting is correct; however, they still have the detrimental effect on society since they create an atmosphere of immorality that over the years becomes the norm of the society. For instance, several decades back, in a conservative and more religious USA, fornication was socially and morally unacceptable. Now, however, fornication is part and parcel in the American way of life, and, also bragging about it is every day sort of fun. Islam does not only forbid unlawful intercourse, but also discourages publicity of such. False accusation or slander is punishable in the most severe way. For example, false accusation against the chastity of a pure woman is punishable by eighty lashes, Surah 24, Ayah 4.

Therefore, one can conclude that the law of slander prescribed the punishment for the person who accused another man or woman of illegal intercourse and could not produce four eyewitnesses to

prove the charge. The question, however, arises as to what should a man do if he finds out that his own wife was involved in illegal intercourse, or vice versa. If he kills her, he will be guilty of murder and be punished. If he searches for witnesses, the offenders will no doubt escape. If he accuses his wife without witnesses, he will be again punished for slander. If he divorces his wife, there will be no moral or physical punishment for his wife or her seducer, and if the illegal intercourse results in pregnancy, he will have to suffer the burden of bringing up the child.

This problem was in fact raised as a practical case, and actually there were such cases during the life of Muhammad (Pbuh). One particular incidence involved a man who presented the case of his wife whom he had himself witnessed her act of illegal intercourse. The Apostle of Allah said, "Bring your proof, otherwise you will have the prescribed punishment of slander inflicted upon you." At this time the panic spread among the companions, and the man replied "I swear by Allah who has sent you as a Prophet that I am speaking the truth; I have seen it with my eye and heard it with my ears. I am sure that Allah will send down a Command which will protect my back from punishment." The traditions confirm that the following verses were revealed to the Prophet at that time:

Surah 24, Ayah 6-9, "And for those who launch a charge against their wives, and have no evidence but their own, let one of them testify four times by Allah that he is of those who speak the truth. And the fifth oath (should be) that he solemnly invokes the curse of Allah on himself if he tells a lie. But it would avert the punishment from the wife, if she bears witness four times (with an oath) by Allah, that (her husband) is telling a lie. And the fifth oath should be that she solemnly invokes the wrath of Allah on herself if (her accuser) is telling the truth."

Who could ever come up with a solution like that? The divine solution is if the man's word is against his wife's word, each of them swears by Allah four times, and the fifth oath they accept the curse and wrath of Allah if they are telling a lie. This may seem

strange these days, since not very many people understand the significance of the wrath of God, which to the real believer, is much more than any kind of worldly punishment.

Economic Systems

Economic systems vary in several important regards. One of the most important issues is the question of who owns the capital or productive capacity. In some economies, capital is for the most part privately owned; in others it is mainly publicly owned; and in yet others it is a mix of public and private ownership.

Capitalism is one in which most of the capital is privately owned. Capital or productive capacity includes manufacturing plants, distribution systems, land, raw mineral, and money can be converted into such items. Capital can be thought of as income-producing wealth: if you own something that produces income, you own capital. The larger the share of capital that is owned privately, the more capitalist an economy is said to be. In a purely capitalist system - an ideal type that does not exist in real life - all productive capacity would be privately owned. The USA is the most capitalist nation in the world. More of its productive capacity is privately owned than is the case in most other western nations - but it is not completely capitalist. Certain important economic functions (highway construction, mail, and education) are performed predominantly by government-owned organizations. Although capitalism is primarily found in industrialized economies, countries of various stages of industrialization have adopted its basic characteristics.

Socialism, on the other hand, is a system in which capital is publicly owned. Sometimes, to emphasize the major role of government, this system is referred to as state socialism. Just as there is no such thing as a purely capitalist economy, so is there no purely socialist system. Some socialist countries permit farmers to have privately owned land and sell what they produce, as long as they meet production quotas for their collective farm or commune. Moreover,

many socialist countries have black markets - illegal private sales of goods and services.

Communism, as defined by Karl Marx as the “classless communist society,” was the final stage of economic evolution that could only come after capitalism and socialism. In communism, as predicted by Marx, capital would be controlled not by government, but by collectives of workers who would own and operate the establishments at which they work. The role of the government would fade away because the people would act collectively and democratically at the local level. Individuals would contribute according to their talent and abilities and receive according to their needs. Because people would control their work situation, they would be able to perform to their fullest potential. Marx’s utopian ideal has never been achieved.

Capitalism and socialism both reflect and produce dramatically different value systems. Capitalism depends on the norm of maximization that assumes that people will seek to get as much wealth and income as they can. One may think that this is human nature. In fact it is not human nature. It only seems this way because the norm of maximization is so deeply engraved in the culture of capitalist societies.

Early capitalist economists such as Adam Smith believed that the norm of maximization would benefit all groups in a society. By rewarding greater efficiency with high profits, they argued that capitalism would improve overall productivity and thus make everyone’s life better. Smith was writing about individual capitalism. Modern corporate capitalism operates differently from what he envisioned. Corporate management systems, in its worst case, can produce an economy that is governed solely by the stock market. In this case, the owners of the capitals, or the shareholders, demand a quick return on their investment regardless of human sufferings, research and development, long term planning, and even the interest of the society as a whole. Smith would probably no more recognize capitalism in the USA today than Marx would recognize communism in the Soviet Union before its collapse. Capitalist systems resulted in a society with chronic social diseases

such as high rates of suicide, drug and alcohol abuse, and homeless people.

On the other hand, socialism is based upon a very different set of human standards than those that sustain capitalism. Central to socialism is the belief that nobody should become wealthy if someone else must do without necessities, such as food, shelter, clothing, health care or the opportunities for meaningful employment. Thus the first priority of a socialist economy is to meet the basic needs of the population, even if it means operating at a loss, using government subsidies, or maintaining unprofitable organizations. Rather than competing for wealth, the ideal value of socialist economies is the cooperation for the common goals of leaving nobody's basic needs unmet. Socialist systems appealed to poor countries that were governed by dictators. It ended up with not a single class, but actually two classes where the "elite" governing class can have anything at their disposal, while the masses are deprived of their basic needs. Therefore, socialist economies are sometimes labeled as a mere capitalist system of the few. The masses in socialist systems are actually living on a dream, of general equality, that will never happen. The statement of Marx that religion is the opium of the people can actually be stated as socialism is the opium of people. This is because socialism in the late Soviet Union had produced a nation that worked by force in the morning, and drank Vodka in the evening.

According to the Islamic system, man is encouraged to work, is free to enterprise, and is entitled to earn and possess. However, the fact that he is a mere trustee provides the necessary measure to ensure proper handling of his possessions, his trusts. God the Almighty is recognized as the absolute owner of every wealth, and working to earn a living is a kind of worship. Therefore, work has to be performed with efficiency and honesty. Once the work is done, the employee is entitled to a fair wage. Failure of the employer to pay a fair wage is a punishable act according the Laws of God.

Business transactions enjoy a great deal of attention from Islam. Honest trade is permitted and blessed by God. This may be carried out through individuals, companies, agencies, and the like. But all business deals should be concluded with frankness and

honesty. Cheating, hiding defects of merchandise, exploiting the needs of customers, monopolizing to force one's own price are all sinful acts and punishable by Islamic Law. To combat cheating and exploitation, Islam demands honesty in business, warns the cheaters, encourages decent work, and forbids usury or the taking of interest just in return for lending money to the needy. Lending money with interest is imposed by the capitalist system on the individuals as well as on other nations to the extent that it is becoming almost the global norm. However, Islamic countries like Saudi Arabia forbid interest on borrowing money.

Inheritance

Inheritance is a fascinating subject where in many cases the individual and sometimes the state standards contradict the Divine Standard. Inheritance is a very serious business in the life of a family. Many crimes are committed if the will of the deceased is not liked by his relatives. Parents are even murdered by their sons in order to get their inheritance faster. Relatives of the deceased sometimes argue about the distribution of the will even during a funeral. The greedy nature of some people may lead them to fight for money. Therefore, human wills may result in spreading hate or even killings. Islam realizes this issue, and consequently, the principles of inheritance are laid down in broad outline in the Quran. The precise details have been worked out on the basis of the Prophet's practice and the practice of his companions, and by interpretation and analogy. Muslim jurists have collected a vast amount of learning on this subject, and this body of law is enough by itself to form a long study. The Islamic law of inheritance covers every conceivable case of existence of the parents and the spouse of the deceased, the number of his sons, daughters, brothers, sisters, etc.

Chapter 4 in the Quran outlines the Divine Laws of inheritance. Before, detailing the rules of inheritance, special considerations by Allah are prescribed against injustice to orphans in the strongest way.

Surah 4, Ayah 10, *“Those who unjustly eat up the property of orphans, eat up a fire in their own bodies: they will soon be enduring a blazing fire.”*

Once again, in this chapter of the Quran, strong emphasis is placed on the definition of properties where ultimately all property belongs to Allah. In this case, God, the Real Owner, is the one that has the right to distribute the property according to His Will and not according to any human desire. By realizing this simple fact, humans must surrender to the will of Allah and accept His Judgment.

Success in Life

In the present materialistic world, human’s measure of success in life is based upon:

- How much money does a person have?
- How much control does a person exercise over other humans?
- How much an image of success does a person project?
- How much knowledge does a person have?
- How much importance does a person have?

If someone has more money and control over another, then human standard judges the first is more successful than the later. Human nature tends to project one’s success if one is successful by human’s standards. That is why the old cliché of “dress for success and show to impress” is regarded with great care. Many years ago, IBM adopted a dress code for its salesmen that consisted of pinstriped dark suits, white shirts, and red ties. This immediately became the standard of the business dress, regardless of the weather. Lately, IBM abolished this dress code, realizing that this dress code alone did not really help its bottom line.

It is also fascinating to watch a discussion between two persons. In many cases, you find that each one is implying that he is more successful, by human’s standard, than the other one. People like to talk about their houses and how big they are, about their cars and how luxurious they look, about their kids and how smart

they are, about their knowledge and how useful it is for humanity, etc. Of course this discussion is not going to be conducted bluntly, but the implication is there for anyone to get the idea.

The Apostle of Allah recommended reading Surah 18 every Friday. This particular Surah has many stories that indicate the importance of humility, truth, patience, and other virtues. One of the stories shows a simple story of the contrast between two men. One was arrogant and forgot that what he had was from Allah, by way of a trust and a trial in this life. The other did not brag about what he possessed, and his trust was in Allah. The two men began to compare notes. The arrogant one was bragging about his possessions, his income, and his large family, and thought in his self-satisfaction that it would last forever. The Quran states:

Surah 18, Ayah 34, "(Abundant) was the produce this man had: he said to his companion, in the course of mutual argument: More wealth have I than you, and more honor and power in (my following of) men."

The worldly wealth of the first was destroyed, and he had nothing left. The second was the happier in the end. This part of the above Ayah "*More wealth have I than you, and more honor and power in men*" is really very striking, because it reveals the standard of human materialistic life. One sees and hears this sentence many times every day, and everywhere. It is not the wealth that ruined him, but the attitude of his mind. He was unjust, not so much to his companion, but to his own soul. In his love for material, he forgot and openly defied the spiritual. In his mind "better" means more wealth, and more power, of the kind he was enjoying in his life. Although in reality, even what he had, rested on a shaky foundation and was doomed to perish and bring him down with it.

So what is the true and lasting standard of success in life? In one Ayah, Allah addresses all mankind and not only the Muslims about His Divine Standard:

Surah 49, Ayah 13, "O mankind! We created you from a single (pair) of a male and a female, and made you into nations and

tribes, that ye may know each other (not that ye may despise (each other). Verily the most honored of you in the sight of Allah is (he who is) the most righteous of you. And Allah has full knowledge and is well acquainted (with all things).

This Ayah defines clearly the Divine Standard of success; it is piety. Piety is not a matter of convenient claims and oral confessions. It is much more serious. According to the authentic tradition, when the Prophet was asked about piety, he said its place is in the heart. No person can claim having more piety than another. This is because there is no worldly measure of piety. Only Allah knows the degree of piety of everyone. Piety has nothing to do with wealth, color, or race. The Prophet also once said that:

“Perhaps a dirty and dusty person, if he asks Allah anything, He will grant him his wish.”

Therefore, we do not know who is really better than who. An arrogant person may look down on another, and in fact the later is much more successful than the former. The Quran, as our best source of knowledge, describes pious people as those who believe in the Unseen (which is taught by God), are steadfast in prayer, and spend their money on charity; and who believe in the revelation sent to Muhammad and all the prophets before him. Piety demands a high degree of self-control over one's anger and emotions, a moral capacity for forgiveness and patience, and a conscious urge to make the sinner return to God in regret and repentance. Piety, righteousness, and meaningful faith are interrelated and all pour in one channel. This leads to the formation of the true Muslim.

8.7 The Fastest Growing Religion

Throughout history, Muhammad was accused of all kinds of fallacies from a false prophet to being crazy. Could a false man be the founder of a religion? Could a false man have over one billion followers? Could a false man establish spiritual, social, and economic systems? But, perhaps, the greatest crime of Muhammad

in the eyes of the Christians is that he did not allow himself to be killed by his enemies. He ably defended himself, his family, and his followers, and finally was the most successful man in history. His struggle and victory over the forces of evil and disbelief made the editors of Encyclopedia Britannica exclaim Muhammad as "The most successful of all religious personalities."

How can the opponents of Islam account for Muhammad's phenomenal success and achievements except to claim that he spread his religion at the point of the sword? In *Islam at the crossroads*, London 1923, by historian De lacy O'Leary, page 8, he said:

"History makes it clear however, that the legend of fanatical sweeping through the world and forcing Islam at the point of the sword upon conquered races is one of the most fantastically absurd myths that historians have ever repeated."

The Muslims ruled Spain for 736 years. However, after eight centuries in Spain, the Muslims were totally eliminated from that country. If the Muslims had used force, military or economic, there would not have been any Christian left in Spain to fight the Muslims out. One cannot charge the Muslims of converting the Spaniards to Islam by the sword. Also, the Muslims ruled the subcontinent of India from 1001 to 1858 A.D. They did not convert the Hindus or the Sikhs to Islam by force. This same argument is true for many countries like Egypt, Iran, and Indonesia. Muslims converted by choice.

Today Islam is still growing and spreading all over the world and the Muslims have no sword! Islam has continued to win new converts, especially between Afro and white Americans as well as in Europe. Someone may argue that the Afro-American needs a religion that embraces equality of races, then what about the white Americans and European. How about the soldiers and engineers that went to the Gulf war, and saw the real Islam in Saudi Arabia and Turkey, and converted to Islam? There was no sword there. How can we explain the phenomenal increase in the number of Mosques in the US, Canada, and Europe? There was no sword

there. How about the famous rock star Cat Stevens who converted to Islam? There was no sword there. It was the search for true peace and tranquility of the soul. How about the French surgeon Bucaille who converted to Islam? There was no sword there. He narrates his encounter with the Quran:

“It is not the faith in Islam that first guided my steps, but simple research for the truth. This is how I see it today. It was mainly fact which, by the time I had finished my study, had led me to see in the Quran a text revealed to a prophet.”

But the critics of the religion will not stop charging that Islam with spreading by the sword. In 1840 when Carlyle defended Muhammad and refuted the allegation about the sword, there was no rich Arab country to bribe him. The whole Islamic world was under influence of the Christians, except for a few like Persia, Afghanistan, and Turkey. Carlyle defended Islam when the Muslims were the underdogs.

That was yesterday and many yesterdays before, but what about today in our present time? During half a century from 1934 to 1984, according to the Reader's Digest Almanac and Yearbook, 1983, Islam is the fastest growing religion in the world. The overall increase of all sects and denominations of Christianity was a staggering 138 %, and the incredible increase in Islam was 235 %. It is further affirmed that in Britain and US, Islam is the fastest growing faith. What, then, about the sword?

- It is the sword of Truth.
- It is the sword of intellect.
- It is the sword of real peace.
- It is the sword of security.

God promised to preserve the Quran. He did and He does. He also made another promise:

Surah 48, Ayah 28, *“It is He Who has sent His Messenger with Guidance and the Religion of Truth, to proclaim it over all religion: and enough is Allah for a Witness.”*

The destiny of Islam is spelt out here in the clearest terms. Submission to Allah will prevail, overcome, and supersede every other faith, whether it is Hinduism, Buddhism, Judaism, or any other "ism."

Islam shall prevail. It is the promise of God and His Promise is true. But how? Not with the sword. The Quran forbids the Muslims from using force as a means of converting. Allah said:

Surah 2, Ayah 256, "*Let there be no compulsion in religion*"

How, then, would Islam be the most dominant of all religions? The triumph of its doctrine has already started and is gaining hold over religious ideology and doctrines of the various schools of thought in the world. Muslims never use organized missionaries, like Christians, to spread their faith. They are not using money, hospitals, or schools to spread Islam. The doctrines of Islam are being rapidly used into the various religious groups. Ask any theist, polytheist, or Trinitarian: How many Gods do you believe in? One will hesitate to say anything but ONE. This is the effect of the strict monotheism of Islam.

8.8 The Process of Elimination

I could stop right here. I have made my point that the Islam is the only universal monotheistic religion by a scientific approach called "process of elimination." This procedure is used by many such as doctors and chemists among others. This process states the following:

"If you have different options to a fact, and you exclude all the options except one, then this one is your right answer."

We have only three monotheistic religions:

Judaism: is not universal. Jews do not accept anyone in their faith.

Christianity: universal religion that started as a monotheistic faith then reversed its direction through a human process of distortion

and edition. Its main ideology promoter (Paul) is not the original founder of the faith, and he compromised with the religion to attract more converts. The sources of the New Testament are unknown. The writers of the Gospels are unknown. Greek philosophy and the different Myths in the Middle East affected the fathers of the Church who shaped the doctrines of Christianity. These doctrines were formalized in human Ecumenical Councils that were affected by politics.

I proved all of the above. Using the process of elimination, Judaism and Christianity are excluded, and Islam is the only universal and authentic religion.

However, I will go another step to introduce the eternal miracle of God, the Book of Guidance, and the revealed authentic Words of Allah. This is for the reader to have an appreciation for the Quran. This is for the reader to examine the scientific miracle of the Quran. This is for the reader to examine the scientific verses and ask the following question:

Could an unlettered person narrate these verses in the seventh century? Or it has to be narrated by a Prophet of God?

9

The Scientific Miracle

There are over seven hundred Ayat in the Quran that deal with scientific facts. In the present time, we understand many of those Ayat. Other Ayat imply different meanings, and we do not have enough information to interpret their meaning correctly. This subject of the scientific miracle of the Quran is becoming increasingly fascinating. The available amount of work is so voluminous, and some of the studies are so scientifically detailed. It is very difficult to cover this huge subject in one book, let alone a chapter in a book. However, an attempt will be presented to introduce some of the recent advances in this subject.

The scientific verses in the Quran represent serious challenge to the atheists as well as the Christians. This challenge in no way represents a negative process, but a positive one that keeps humanity reflecting on the many miraculous signs of God as stated in the Quran. How else can anyone explain that an unlettered Arab in the seventh century stated scientific facts that became known after fourteen centuries? Can there be any reasonable explanation except that the Creator of all realities revealed these facts to him? These verses also serve the purpose of providing Muslims with yet another proof of the Divinity of the Quran.

The history of the scientific miracles of the Quran goes back to the time of the revelation to Muhammad (Pbuh). The Prophet and his companions had interpreted some verses according to human perception at that time. Also, the Hadith of the Prophet include many statements that deal with life sciences. The accuracy of those

scientific statements is quite astounding considering the fact that he was unlettered. Dr. Abdel Razik Nofal wrote one on the pioneering books on this subject in Arabic with the title "Allah and Modern Science." The book was an original attempt to explain the following Ayah:

Surah 54, Ayah 49, "*Verily, all things have we created in proportion and measure (perfection).*"

The author concentrated on the proportions that relate to life on earth and how they represent a perfect balance provided by Allah. For example, the amount of oxygen in the air is perfect; if it is less, humans will not be able to breathe; if it is more, fires could start everywhere. Also the distance of the earth from the sun is perfect; if it is less, we will burn from the heat of the sun; if it is more, we will freeze. Potentially deadly radiation is kept at bay by the terrestrial atmosphere. Carbon dioxide and water vapor help warm the surface, but there is no runaway effect because both are perfectly recycled in various ways. On earth, complex life forms exist consisting of human, vegetable and animal life, from microscopic bacteria to huge elephants, and from minute viruses to giant trees. Although the earth possesses a dense core surrounded by an outer crust and an atmosphere, it has this unique difference - life. During the twentieth century, it has become clear that life exists on earth only because conditions are perfect. Moreover, the chemical and biochemical environments are in perfect balance, to ensure not only the existence of living things but also their continuity.

During the last decades, the number of books and papers that deal with this subject, from Muslims and non-Muslims alike, increased tremendously. Many Muslims understood the orders from Allah to "read", "look", and "think" as a call for a better appreciation of the Power of God. Also, Islamic institutions exist in countries such as Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, and Egypt that focus on the scientific miracle in the Quran.

Before presenting some of the scientific miracles of the Quran, the following three points are emphasized:

This is not an attempt to prove that the Quran is authentic and is scientifically correct because it includes physical facts that conform to some modern theories. However, it is inevitable that the Muslim scholars become enthusiastic when modern scientific theories conform to the Quran that was revealed fourteen centuries ago. But some Muslim scientists may rush to judgment and attempt to authenticate the Quran to new theories. It should be understood that this process could be extremely dangerous, because theories are changed or modified. The Quran does not need science to prove its correctness or authenticity. It is a Book of religion, worship, and a way of life. But Allah in His great wisdom knows that a time will come when some people will raise the slogan that the time of religion has passed and the time of science has started. Therefore, the Quran has included over 700 Ayat that have direct connection with science that should be considered as a miracle from the Creator of science. The Quran proves that the present time of science and technology achieved facts that were revealed to an unlettered Prophet for all generations after him. It has Ayat that are incredibly accurate, with broad spectrums of knowledge from embryology to cosmology that were only recently discovered. It should be understood that the Quran is the standard by which facts or theories are judged, and not vice versa.

The second point deals with the interpretation of the Quran. All scientific Ayat in the Quran were not interpreted in detail fourteen centuries ago. There are two reasons for this:

- It would have not been understood, because human capabilities were limited. There was not enough accumulated knowledge to explain, for example, the Big Bang.
- Humans can benefit from many things without knowing their details. For example, humans benefit from the rotation of the earth whether they know it or not. Most people benefit from TV, radios, lamps, remote controls, or cars without knowing how they work. Babies are born every second without any knowledge of embryology. Therefore, the scientific signs in the Quran are useful to mankind whether they were understood or not.

The third point is that, in most scientific verses, Allah addresses the unbelievers as a real challenge to them. These verses usually start by "*Don't the unbelievers see that....*" The level of scientific knowledge in the seventh century is incomparable with that of our present time. What would be an honest explanation for an unlettered man, such as the Prophet Muhammad, to include such scientific facts in the seventh century, when they only began to surface ten to fourteen centuries later? There are two possible explanations; he was either a scientific genius or the words were not his - making him only a messenger to spread the divine message. The Prophet Muhammad was never known to be a scientific genius. For the Muslim, the scientific miracle of the Quran is very comforting. It does not initiate faith, but it emphasizes it. Abraham, the father of the prophets had a similar experience narrated in Surah 2, Ayah 260. Abraham had complete faith in Allah's power, but he wanted, with Allah's permission, to authenticate his faith and soothe his mind and heart. Abraham wanted to see the process of resurrection, so Allah asked Abraham to cut four birds into pieces and mix them together. Abraham divided the pieces into four equal portions and put each portion on the top of a mountain. Allah asked Abraham to call upon the birds. With the permission of God, the birds came flying. Similarly, the scientific miracles in the Quran comfort the Muslim's heart. But to the unbelievers, it is a tremendous challenge that they will never be able to explain.

Translation of the Quran

Translating the whole Quran is a tremendous task. It requires scholars who are fluent in the Arabic language and the language to which the Quran is being translated. It also requires knowledge of the grammar of the two languages. If the translation is intended for those who are blessed with faith or for those who seek the basics of Islam, then the existing translations are a great dose of faith and spiritual guidance. May Allah rewards the translators of the Quran for their efforts in spreading the Words of God. If, on the other hand, the translation is intended to address the scientific miracles, the knowledge and mastering of the Arabic language is crucial as

indicated in the case of the French surgeon Maurice Bucaille. He studied the Quran with an open mind for ten years. The purpose of his study was to form an opinion about contradictions in the Quran. He studied the Arabic language. Then after ten years of research, he declared in his books that he did not find one single scientific contradiction in the Quran. Another approach for the scientific translation of the Quran is to have an organization consisting of specialists of all branches of science such as cosmology, medicine, geology, anatomy, and engineering, as well as Islamic studies.

Some non-Muslims scholars claim that the “*translated*” Quran contradicts scientific known facts. There are many reasons for that. First, there may exist a conflict of theological interest. Second, the lack of knowledge of the Arabic language and its grammar can mislead the meaning of some verses. Also, the translation of the Quran to other languages may be, in some verses, difficult, thus not conveying the Arabic meaning of short sentences. Allah is the only Author of the Quran, and there are no contradictions in the Quran. Translations of the Quran are nevertheless the work of highly eminent Arabists. It is well known fact, that a translator, however an expert, is liable to make human mistakes in the translation of a highly specialized scientific Ayah, unless he happens to be a specialist in the discipline in question.

An example of translating scientific verses in the Quran deals with the definition of the building block of all matters. Atoms were assumed to be the smallest unseen part of matter. Neither the atom nor its components can be seen. However, each atom has a weight, and scientists discovered the constituents of the atom. In one such Ayah, Allah addresses the unbelievers with a challenge about the weight and components of atoms:

Surah 34, Ayah 3, “*The unbelievers say*’ “*never for us will come the Hour (Day of Judgment): say, Nay. But most surely, by my Lord, it will come upon you by Him who knows the unseen. From Whom is not hidden the weight of an atom in the heavens or on earth: nor is there anything less than that or greater, but is in the Record Perspicuous.*”

The available translation refers to the above Arabic words "*the weight of an atom*" as "*the least little atom*," and the word "weight" is taken out. This demonstrates the difficulty in translating the Quran. Thank God, anyone can refer to the original Arabic text and get better translation. From the above Ayah, one can state the following:

- The atom is unseen.
- The atom is not the smallest thing in the universe.
- The atom has a weight.

Ancient commentators considered the weight of the atom to be equal to the weight of an ant! They believed this because the ant is the smallest thing that can be seen with the human eye. But this is not correct because the Ayah clearly refers to the unseen not the seen ant. When the fourth Caliph, Ali, the cousin of the Prophet, was asked about the meaning of the atom, he said:

"If we look inside the atom, any atom, we will see a sun in its core." This statement, showing the spiritual vision of Ali, was never understood until the twentieth century. But it clearly simulates the atomic structure with that of the solar system.

In my attempt to address the subject of the scientific miracles of the Quran, I tried to use the existing English translations. In many places, I found difficulty in using these translations. The following are some examples:

1. Stars are translated as planets, and planets are translated as stars.
2. The basic rules of the conjunctions in the Arabic language are not translated correctly. For example, existing translations do not address the difference between Arabic conjunctions "*fa*" and "*thumma*". The first implies immediate succession, while the second implies succession after a delay in time, and this can make a big difference in some branches of science

such as cosmology and embryology.

3. Some translators do not reflect the actual Arabic meaning or are unable to grasp the scientific meaning. For example, God states that He is expanding the universe; this is translated as the universe is "so expanse, to make wider, more spacious, to extend, to expand, we give generously."

Finally, there are rules for interpreting the Quran. The basic rule is that the Quran interprets itself. This implies that the words are divinely inspired; so any text can be interpreted in the light of other texts where the same word exists. Moreover, the statements of Muhammad interpreted many verses of the Quran. He was the living example of the teaching of the Quran.

9.1 The Divine Big Bang

History of the universe is divided into three distinct phases: the start, the expansion, and the end. The Quran deals with these phases in astounding descriptions. The Quran refers to the start of the Big Bang in two short Ayat, presenting an accurate summary to the conditions that led to creating the universe:

Surah 21, Ayah 30, "*Do not the unbelievers see that the heavens and the earth were joined together (as one unit of creation) before We clove them asunder?*"

Surah 41, Ayah 11, "*Then He turned to the sky and it had been (as) smoke.*"

In the first Ayah, Allah declares clearly that the universe (the skies and the earth) was joined together, and then Allah caused it to explode. There is a very important choice of words in the original Arabic text whose translation is given above. The Arabic word *ratq* translated as "joined together" means "mixed in each, blended" in Arabic dictionaries. It is used to refer to two different substances that make up a whole. The phrase "*We clove them asunder*" is the verb *fataqa* in Arabic and implies that something comes into being by tearing apart or destroying the structure of *ratq*. In this Ayah,

skies and earth are at first subject to the status of *ratq* and then they exploded. Intriguingly, cosmologists speak of a “cosmic egg” that consisted of all the matter in the universe prior to the Big Bang. In other words, all the heavens and earth were included in this egg in a condition of *ratq*. This cosmic egg exploded violently causing its matter to *fataqa* and in the process created the structure of the whole universe.

The accuracy of the Arabic words of such divine description of starting the universe is well beyond comprehension. A cosmic fact was revealed to an unlettered Arab that took humanity one thousand and four hundred years to discover. This Ayah addresses the unbelievers with an overwhelming challenge. No one can claim that Muhammad had knowledge of spectroscopic observations or he had instruments to measure cosmic background radiation. Also, he was not a genius mathematician. This Ayah, as with many of the scientific miracles in the Quran, addresses the unbelievers in a strong challenge. If they could not use their inherent intuition to figure out the existence and the uniqueness of One Creator, then they can listen to an unlettered Arab explaining the creation of the universe.

In the second Ayah, Allah describes the sky, after the explosion, as a smoke, not a cloud or fog, but smoke. To emphasize the importance of the smoke, the title of this Surah is “The Smoke.” In the past, cosmologists used to describe the gaseous state of the young universe as a cloud or fog. Only recently, has the word “smoke” been coined, because it is closely descriptive of the initial gaseous state. The definition of smoke is a suspension of particles in a hot gaseous medium. This is truly the perfection of the Quran in choosing the closest words to describe an event. The word smoke could indicate that just after the Big Bang, the formation of planets and stars took different directions from the start. Planets were formed from the suspended particles of the smoke, while the stars were formed from the hot gases. This is quite possible since the structure of stars is different from that of the planets. The sun for example consists of 73.5 percent hydrogen and 25 percent helium. These gases were formed in the first few minutes after the Big Bang, and the rest of which is the product of the nuclear reactions

in the sun. There are also traces of heavier atoms such as oxygen, carbon, iron, magnesium and so on. None of these traces of elements account for even 1 percent of the weight of the sun. On the other hand, the earth is made up of over a hundred elements with a nickel-iron core. Oxygen, hydrogen, nitrogen, carbon and other elements that exist in earth and its atmosphere were all united as compound particles that existed in the original phase of the smoke. When the earth changed from the smoke phase to liquid phase during the cooling process of the universe, the compound particles reserved their composition in a melted state, and inert gases escaped from the earth. The atmosphere with its water vapor was formed from the gases produced during the cooling process of the Earth's crust. The earlier assumption that the Earth evolved from the sun is no longer accepted.

Allah again challenges the unbelievers by adding some details to the creation sequence as follows:

Surah 41, Ayah 9-12, "Say: Is it that ye deny Him Who created the earth in two days? And do ye join equals with Him? He is the Lord of (all) the Worlds. He set on the (earth) mountains standing firm, high above it and bestowed blessings on the earth and measured therein its sustenance in four days, alike for (all) who ask. Then He turned to the sky and it had been (as) smoke. He said to it and to the earth: come ye together, willingly or unwillingly. They said: we do come together in willing obedience. So He completed them as seven firmaments in two days and He assigned to each heaven its duty and command."

The above Ayat begin by addressing the unbelievers by giving them a difficult passage, describing the primal creation of the earth and the skies around us. If we count two days for the creation of the earth, four days for stabilizing, blessing, and providing its sustenance, two days for making the seven skies, we get a total of eight days, while in all other verses of the Quran, creation is stated clearly in six days. This is a fascinating example of verses that may have a different interpretation. Some commentators understand

the four days of providing the earth with its needs to include the two days of creating the earth. This could be reasonable because the process of completing the earth forms a chain of events. In the first step it is the creation of the formless earth; in the second step it is the gradual evolution of the form of the earth, its mountains and seas, and its animal and vegetable life with a perfect balance. In the above Surah 21, Ayah 30, the Quran states that the earth and the skies exploded together from a compressed state. In Surah 11, Ayah 9-12, the creation of the earth and its development are mentioned first; and the making of the sky into seven firmaments is mentioned last. The two statements are not inconsistent, because it is stated that when the sky was made into seven firmaments, it had existed previously as smoke: *"Then He turned to the sky and it had been (as) smoke."* Non-Muslim critics who claim that this Ayah contradicts the known six-day period of creation misinterpret this part of the Ayah. They claim that the creation period in this Ayah adds up to eight days, and therefore the Quran contradicts itself. They simply choose to ignore the statement that God turned to the sky and He ordered the sky and the earth to obey his Laws. How can He turn to the sky and order it to obey His Laws if it did not exist yet? Again, the miracle of these Ayat is that Allah addresses the unbelievers who search for anything to confuse the issue of God as the Creator of this universe.

Therefore the development of the Big Bang could have taken the following sequence:

- Explosion of a fantastically dense and fantastically hot matter.
- Planets and skies existed as smoke. The earth existed as a formless state and the sky existed as a gas. This process took two days.
- Providing the earth with mountains, seas, blessing and its sustenance took another two days. Thus completing the creation and readiness of the earth in four day.
- God ordered the earth and the sky to obey His physical laws.
- The sky was made into seven firmaments in two days.

And Allah knows the best.

Who told Muhammad that? How could anyone explain the

fact that Muhammad said these words in the seventh century? It was a revelation from the Mighty Creator.

9.2 The Existing Universe in the Quran

The Quran is full of reflections on the heavens. Instead of a continuous narration, there are verses scattered all over the entire Book which deal with certain aspects of Creation and provide information on the successive events marking its development with varying degrees of details. To gain a clear idea of how these events are presented, the scattered verses must all be examined together. This is quite easy now, since there are dictionaries for all the words in the Quran, and one can obtain all the Ayat that deal with a particular subject. Again, it is extremely important to keep in mind that the Quran is a Divine Book and not a science book. These verses are scattered in many chapters to serve the purpose of reflection on the Glory of the Almighty in many places and in many times. Occasionally, one listens to the Quran without grasping the divine meaning of the verse. When one is ready to receive and feel the meaning of a certain Ayah, then this becomes a great spiritual experience.

The Expansion

Expansion of the universe is one of the most awesome discoveries of the twentieth century. The evidences for expansion of the universe are so powerful to the extent that it is considered a fact. The discussions of cosmologists are focusing now on the mechanism and the factors that affect this expansion.

Allah refers to the expanding universe in the following verse:

Surah 51, Ayah 47, "*We have built the firmaments with might and we indeed have vast power.*"

The above translation does not reflect the actual meaning of the Ayah. Any Arab speaking person will translate the above verse as follows:

"We have built the skies with might and we indeed are expanding (them)"

The Arabic verb used means continually expanding, and refers to the previous noun that is the skies. Other translations of this verb include "width and generosity", and "to make them wider." One of the translations called "The choice" or in Arabic "Montakhab", stated clearly its meaning that the universe is expanding.

The fact is that Allah described the expansion of the universe in a short sentence. Muhammad stated this fact that took humanity ages to discover and measure. Who told him that? This fact could not be envisioned in the seventh century and authored by an unlettered Arab when he had no previous knowledge about cosmology. It must have been a divine inspiration!

Interstellar Material

Throughout the Quran, Allah refers to the skies and the earth and what is between them:

Surah 15, Ayah 85, *"We created not the heavens, the earth, and all that in between them, but for just ends."*

Surah 50, Ayah 38, *"We created the heavens and the earth and all between them in six days, nor any sense of weariness touch us."*

What is in between the skies and the earth? The creation of the universe occurred by condensing the material of the primary nebula followed by its division into fragments that constituted the primary Protogalaxies, the first celestial bodies. The latter split up into galaxies, stars and planets. The concept of having some form of interstellar material was recently introduced to account for the huge missing mass of the universe. Does this interstellar material consist of cosmic strings that, if they exist, have tremendously dense matter and energy? Does this interstellar material consist of neutrinos or black holes? Here we are in the twenty-first century

and we just do not know what is this ghost matter. Their more scientific name is "interstellar material" There is no doubt now that interstellar material exists and it can be imagined as bridges of material between or inside galaxies.

Until recently, no one ever dreamt of a matter of such magnitude and weight existed. Yet an unlettered Arab in the seventh century spoke of this very same interstellar material. If he were the author of the Quran, how did he come up with such a concept that was only discovered recently? And the exact nature of this interstellar material is still unknown. These findings should further stimulate an attempt to understand and dissect each word of the Quran very carefully, thus shedding light on what we still do not know. And God Knows the Best.

The Black Holes

In Surah 81, Ayah 15-16, Allah states in 5 Arabic words:

"So verily I call to witness the planets (stars) that recede. Go straight, or hide"

A literal translation of the above Ayat could be stated as follows:

"So verily I swear by the hidden stars that move and vacuum"

These Ayat refer to stars that recede and become hidden. This type of stars was not known until recently. Only in the last decades, Muslim scientists started examining these Ayat, and concluded that these objects are the black holes. Black holes are objects with gravitational pulls so intense that light cannot escape from them. This is why such objects are now called black holes. One Muslim scientist defined the black hole as a super giant vacuum cleaner. Some astrophysicists believe that minute black holes could have been formed from very dense matter crushed together at an early stage of the Big Bang. But black holes of larger masses probably exist in the central region of spiral and elliptical galaxies. Others

suggest that black holes formed after the catastrophic collapse of very large stars. And God Knows the Best.

The Conquest of Space

Some people believe that mentioning the subject of jinn is unscientific and superstitious. Their usual argument is that if something exists, then we should be able to measure, analyze, and examine it. It should also conform to our known laws of physics, as if we have discovered every law in the universe. These idle ideas represent a severe limitation to the vision and imagination of mankind. Yet, if one approaches this subject with an open mind, the existence of jinn can solve many of the unresolved mysteries or phenomena that we dare to explain without any evidence.

For the conquest of space, five Ayahs in the Quran in two Surah should command our full attention. The first expresses, without any trace of ambiguity, what jinn and men collectively should and will achieve in this field:

Surah 55, Ayah 33-35, "O ye assembly of Jinns and men! If it be ye can pass beyond the zones of the heavens and the earth, pass ye! Not without authority shall ye be able to pass! Then which of the favors of your Lord will ye deny? On you will be sent (O ye evil ones twain!) a flame of fire (to burn) and a smoke (to choke): no defense will ye have."

The translation given here requires some explanatory comments:

1. The condition in the first sentence is for the achievable hypothesis (Arabic, "in"), which clearly means that conquest of space is achievable with power. The Quran therefore suggests the material possibility of this concrete realization. This subtle linguistic distinction formally rules out the mystic interpretation that some have accepted. This mystic interpretation suggests that evil things, such as fire and molten brass, will punish the evil spirits.

2. God is addressing the jinn and mankind and not allegorical figures, as some may suggest.
3. The Arabic literal word for "to pass" in the above Ayat is "to penetrate" which means to "to pass right through and come out of the other end." It therefore suggests a deep penetration and emergence at the other end of the regions in questions.
4. The power that jinn and man will use to achieve their goal would seem to come from the Lord, since the following sentence is an invitation to recognize the Lord's blessing. That power could well be the science that Allah taught us.
5. If jinn or man penetrate deep in space beyond certain limits, God will send a flame of fire or molten brass on them.

We know that jinn have more power of motion than man does. They may have attempted to cross certain limits and were returned back by flames of fire. The reference to molten brass may refer to some metallic meteors that come from all direction of space. There can be no doubt that these Ayat indicate that humans will travel deep in space, and not just in the immediate atmosphere of the earth.

In the second Surah, God is speaking of the unbelievers in Mecca, as follows:

Surah 15, Ayah 14-15, "Even if we opened out to them a gate from heaven and they were to continue (all day) ascending therein, they would only say: Our eyes have been intoxicated: Nay, we have been bewitched by sorcery."

The conditional "if" in above Ayat is an unachievable hypothesis for the unbelievers of Mecca. These Ayat express astonishment at a remarkable spectacle, different from anything man could imagine.

The Quran presents two passages when addressing the conquest of space

- One of them refers to what will one day become a reality, thanks to the powers of intelligence and ingenuity that God

gave to jinn and man.

- And the other describes an event that the unbelievers of Mecca will never witness; hence its character is a condition that will never be realized by them. Others will however see the event, as referred to in the above first Surah. It describes the human reaction to the unexpected spectacle that space travelers will see: their confused sight as in drunkenness, and the feeling of seeing magic.

The second Surah expresses exactly how astronauts have experienced this remarkable adventure since the first human space flight around the earth in 1961. It is a known fact now that once a human is above the earth's atmosphere, the skies no longer have the azure appearance we see from earth. This is due to the phenomena of absorption of the sun's light into the layers of the atmosphere. The sun's light consists of different frequencies. Human eyes can detect a certain range of these frequencies that are translated by the brain in the known spectrum of light: red, orange, yellow, green, blue, and purple. Red color has long wavelength, and can penetrate easily through the earth's atmosphere. Blue color has short wavelength, and cannot penetrate the earth's atmosphere. Therefore blue color tends to disperse and reflect on the small particles that exist in space. We, on earth, see the reflection of that blue color in the sky. But the human observer in space above the earth's atmosphere sees a black sky, and the earth seems to be surrounded by a halo of bluish color due to the same phenomena of absorption of light by the earth's atmosphere. The moon has no atmosphere however, and therefore appears in its true color against the black background of the sky. It is a completely new spectacle that human observers in space are not accustomed to. Now the photographs of this spectacle have become well known and famous to the present-day man.

Here again, it is extremely difficult not to be impressed, when comparing the text of the Quran to the data of modern science, by statements that simply cannot be ascribed to the thought of an unlettered Arab who lived more than fourteen centuries ago.

9.3 The End of the Universe in the Quran

Allah stated the facts about the Big Bang and the expansion of the universe. This is simply because He is the Creator of the Big Bang and the Cause of the expansion. These two facts were stated in the Quran in short Ayat.

In any direction they look, astronomers see galaxies moving away from us. It may be assumed that this expansion will continue forever, with galaxies becoming more and more thinly dispersed. However, the theory of relativity and physics of the cosmos derived from it predicts that the end of the universe can follow only three possibilities:

1. The universe may expand to a maximum, before converging again. This is called the Big Crunch.
2. The galaxies may spread apart with the radius of the universe reaching infinity after infinite time.
3. The radius of the universe reaches a certain value (not infinite) and finally stops expanding after infinite time.

An attempt to resolve this mystery is based upon whether or not the universe is surrounded by a huge boundary. Depending upon the location and the properties of this boundary, the universe may reverse to the Big Crunch if the boundary is extremely solid. This is like throwing a ball on a rigid wall. The name for this event, according to cosmologists, is the Big Bounce that will be followed by the Big Crunch. If the boundary of the universe is not strong enough, the impact of the expanding universe will overcome the boundary and the universe will increase its radius forever or reach a certain radius and stop after infinite time. However, there are many problems with this model. Where is this boundary? And what exists on the other side of the boundary?

Prediction of the future of the universe represents fascinating intellectual problems, the answer of which may not be in the realm of human capabilities. However, the summary of our present situation can be stated as follows: "What we really have is local events, based upon limited measurements that are not precise, and

we are trying to extrapolate those local events to solve global universal events.” The following examples represent some analogies from our daily life of what we are trying to achieve:

- From our observations of the weather in a small place on earth during a limited time, we are trying to predict the weather on earth until eternity.
- By studying an earthquake in one city on earth that happened at a certain time in the past, we are trying to establish a complete picture of all the future earthquakes in all places at all times.

In the above two examples, it seems that we have all the information that we need to establish an accurate prediction of the weather or earthquakes. We live on earth. We know the rules of movement of cold and warm fronts. We have good foundations in aerodynamics. We can get the properties of the earth. We know how an earthquake starts. And above all, we have a long history of information on weather and earthquakes. So, why can't we predict weather or earthquakes precisely? The answer is that these two problems are very complicated, and we just do not know how to solve them.

Studying life and death of the stars is a very difficult process, because cosmologists cannot examine the development of stars from life to death. This cycle is estimated to take billions of years. Besides, all information received from a star comes from the surface and not its core. Then we use the information from the surface to predict what happened inside the core. Allah refers to death of stars as follows:

Surah 77, Ayah 8, *“Then when the stars become dim.”*

Surah 81, Ayah 2, *“ When the stars fall, losing their luster.”*

The above two Ayat state that all stars, including our sun, will become faint and fade away. What kind of stunning statements are those in the Quran!

As stars and planets have different structures and different

birth processes, they also have different ends.

Surah 82, Ayah 2, "*When the stars (planets) are scattered.*"
Surah 99, Ayah 1-3, "*When the earth is shaken to her (utmost) convulsion, And the earth throws up her burdens (from within), And man cries (distressed): 'What is the matter with her?'*"

The above Ayat describe the death of planets and the earth by huge earthquakes, accompanied by volcanic eruptions, throwing away enormous boulders and lava from beneath the crust of the earth. They are thrown up as if they were a burden to the earth personified. So in the great and final convulsion, the dead who had been buried and forgotten will rise and will be crying in distress about what is happening.

The end of the universe as a whole is referred to in the Quran in many verses, as follows:

Surah 21, Ayah 104, "*The Day that We roll up the heavens like a scroll rolled up for books. Even as we produced the first creation, so shall we produce a new one.*"
Surah 75, Ayah 9, "*And the sun and moon are joined together.*"

In the first Ayah, Allah states that before the Day of Judgment, the heavens will be rolled up as the scrolls are rolled up. And in the second Ayah, He stated that the sun and the moon will be joined together. This can be a reference to stopping the expansion of the universe, and collapsing it all. Most likely, this is a reference to the recent theory of the Big Crunch. And Allah knows the best.

Scientists tell us the end of the universe is going to happen after Billions of years. The cosmic model that they are using is missing a great deal of information, the least of which is the mass of the universe. This concept introduces in the human mind that the Day of Judgment is far away, and we have nothing to be concerned about. No one really knows when the end will come. The Creator of all the physical laws can certainly stop these laws, or create another set of laws that fit the Big Crunch. Another

possibility is that the existing cosmos has phantom interstellar objects and that the Big Crunch may happen at any time. The Creator of this whole universe said:

Surah 54, Ayah 50, "*And Our Command is but a single Word, like the twinkling of an eye.*"

In this Ayah, Allah tells us that the execution of His Command, any Command, is like the twinkling of an eye, which is the shortest time a simple human can imagine: the closing of the eyelids and their reopening are all almost like a simultaneous act. In Allah's Command, the word "Be" includes everything, without the intervention of, or the dependence upon any other being or thing whatsoever. An earthquake, a tornado, or any other earthly event can happen at any time and in any place. It seems incomprehensible that we live on this earth, and we have the means to measure, and the theories to predict many of things, and yet we cannot predict accurately one earthly earthquake. And with our theoretical background, our huge and extremely fast computers, and our records of the past earthly events, we fail miserably to save lives if a catastrophe were to happen.

The Smoke

In the above Surah 21, Ayah 104, there is an obvious reference that Allah will end the universe as he started it. This Ayah states that Allah created all these worlds that we know a very small part of them out of nothing by His order "Be." This Ayah may also be a reference to The Big Crunch, since it presents the analogy of expanding and collapsing the universe to the opening and closing scrolls.

As mentioned before, there was smoke at the beginning of the universe, Surah 41, Ayah 11. Then the Quran states that:

Surah 44, Ayah 10 –12, "*Then watch thou for the Day that the sky will bring forth a kind of smoke, plainly visible. Enveloping the people: This is a chastisement Grievous. (They*

will say): Our Lord! Remove the chastisement from us, for we do really believe!"

The significance of the smoke is demonstrated by Surah 44, which has "The Smoke" as its title. As a matter of fact, the smoke is one of the major signs of the imminence of the Day of Judgment, as narrated by the Prophet. Some commentators associate the smoke of Surah 44 with a severe famine in Mecca. However, in the context of using verses of the Quran to explain other verse, if we put Surah 21, Ayah 104, with these verses, it may be that Allah refers to the literal word "smoke" and not to the famine. Accordingly, smoke is one of the signs of starting and ending the universe. And God Knows the Best.

9.4 Solar System in the Quran

Many references exist in the Quran about the difference in nature between stars, as generating light, and planets, as reflecting light.

Surah 25, Ayah 61, "Blessed is He Who made constellations in the skies, and placed therein a lamp, and a moon giving light."

Surah 71, Ayah 16, "And (He) made the moon a light in their midst, and made the sun as a (glorious) lamp."

The Quran makes clear a distinction between the sun and the moon. The sun is referred to in many verses as a lamp, which is a device that generates light, heat, and radiation. The Quranic choice of the word "lamp" is an incredibly accurate representation of the sun, regardless of the difference in the light producing process. The moon is referred to as an object in the sky that is lighted up, but it does not generate light by itself.

In a reference to the planets, Allah says:

Surah 24, Ayah 35, "Allah is the Light of heavens and the earth. The parable of His Light is as if there were a niche and within it a lamp. The lamp enclosed in glass: the glass as it were a brilliant star (planet)"

The actual Arabic word in the above Ayah is planet; however the English translation refers to the planet as star. The glass by itself does not shine. But when the light comes into it, it reflects the light and shines like a brilliant star. This glorious parable of the Light of Allah contains layer upon layer of transcendent truth of spiritual mysteries. No statements can do adequate justice to its full meaning. The physical light is but a reflection of the true Light in the world of Reality and that true Light is Allah. We can only think of Allah in terms of our own phenomenal experience, and the phenomenal world; light is the purest thing we know.

Equilibrium and Orbits

The equilibrium of the universe is referred to in the following short Ayat:

Surah 55, Ayah 5-7, "The sun and the moon follow courses (exactly) computed; And the star and the trees - both (alike) bow in adoration. And the Firmament has He raised high, and He has set up the Balance (of Justice)"

In the great mathematical universe, there are great mathematical laws that require calculations. We now understand that these Ayat refer to the laws discovered by Kepler and Newton. These laws bear witness to Allah's Wisdom and also His favors to His creatures. We all benefit from the energy and light, the seasons, and the numerous changes in the tides and the atmosphere. Quranic commentators interpret the balance in the above Ayat as one of the following:

- Balance of Justice between humans.
- The heavens themselves are sustained by Divine equilibrium.
- The sun enters the Constellation Libra (the balance) at the middle of the zodiacal year.

The divine equilibrium of the skies discovered by Newton in 1687 had not been realized in the seventh century. Yet the Creator

of equilibrium revealed one of His favors to humanity.

The equilibrium of the stars and planets requires an orbital motion that each should follow. Therefore, in other Chapters in the Quran, a clear mention of the orbital motion is presented:

Surah 21, Ayah 33, *"It is He Who created the night and the day, and the sun and the moon: All (celestial bodies) swim along, each in its rounded course (orbit)."*

Surah 36, Ayah 40, *"It is not permitted to the sun to catch up the moon, nor the night outstrips the day: Each (just) swims along in (its own) orbit (according to Law)"*

The orbital motion of all celestial objects is repeated twice in the above Ayat for emphasis. These orbital motions of stars and planets are described as "swimming" through space with perfectly smooth motion. Swimming is "the action of propelling oneself by means of the movements of the body." This perfect description of celestial motion by the action of swimming indicates that heavenly objects have two motions: one is moving forward, and a second motion of the body around itself. This second motion is the rotation of the stars and planets about an internal axis. It is quite impossible that someone in the seventh century, even if he had all the knowledge of his time, to use such an expression "swim in orbits" to describe the motion of stars and planets. Who told him that? It is the Only One that Knows. It is Allah Himself, the Creator of orbits.

Julian and Lunar Calendars

The Muslim calendar is based upon the moon, which revolves around the earth in periods of about 29 days. The Islamic calendar was established by the second Caliph Omar in 639 AD to begin with the new moon of the first Arabic month (Muharram) of the year in which the migration of Muhammad from Mecca to Madinah took place. That first day was 16 June 622 of the Julian calendar.

Nearly fourteen centuries ago, the Quran was revealed to the Arabs in the deserts of the Arabian Peninsula, who were used to the lunar system. It was correct to address them in the only language

they could understand and not to upset their habits. It is known how well versed men living in the desert are in the observation of the sky; they navigated according to the stars, and told time according to the motion of the sun and the moon. This was the simplest and the most reliable system available for them.

Most people are unaware of the perfect correlation between the Julian and the lunar calendar: 235 lunar months corresponds exactly to 19 Julian years of 365 1/4 days, (228 months). The length of our year of 365 days is not perfect because it has to be rectified every four years (with a leap year). With the lunar calendar, the same phenomena occur every 19 Julian years. The Quran refers to this relationship between the lunar and the Julian systems as follows:

Surah 18, Ayah 25, "*So they stayed in their cave three hundred years, and nine (more)*"

The literal translation of the above Ayah replaces "and nine" by "increased by nine." This suggests that one has to be careful about each word or letter in the Quran. The latest calculation of the lunar month is 29.53059 days. Therefore, the lunar year is $12 \times 29.53059 = 354.36708$ days. This means that 300 Julian year ($300 \times 365.25 = 109575$ days) is equivalent to 309 lunar years ($354.36708 \times 309 = 109499.43$). This is a miraculous accuracy. Therefore the above Ayah can be explained as "So they stayed in their cave three hundred solar years, and increased by nine lunar years". This is just an amazing revelation from the Creator of time. Only Allah knows the exact time of any event in any reference of time.

Surah 18, Ayah 26, "*Say: Allah knows best how long they stayed*"

9.5 The Earth in the Quran

The earth is mentioned in the Quran about 450 times! The Quran devotes many verses to the signs of God on the earth. Because we

live on this planet, we are supposed to look for signs of its Creator. Also, scientists know about our beautiful planet more than any other object in the universe. They are on hand to experiment directly, to interpret the evidences and to draw conclusions. The verses of the Quran that describe the earth are quite astounding. As in the case of any other scientific miracle, these verses are scattered throughout the Quran. They are presented in the context of spiritual enlightening for someone who looks around for the signs of Allah.

Mountains

Mountains affect life on earth in many ways. Apart from the obvious mineral, forest, agricultural, and recreational resource values, they have a significant influence on climate, economy, and history. Humans enjoy the glorious scenery of mountains, and many sometimes feel humbled in front of these gigantic structures. How and when did they form? What are they for? What is the mechanism of keeping them on the earth's crust, in spite of their huge weight?

The first question is answered by geologists, who presented three ways of forming mountains:

- By crustal uplift, that is, folding, faulting, or arching of the earth's crust.
- By differential erosion or land sculpturing.
- By volcanic activities.

The Creator of the mountains reveals:

Surah 78, Ayah 6-7, "*Have we not made the earth as a wide expanse, and the mountains as pegs?*"

Allah states that the mountains are similar to pegs or wedges. A peg is used to fasten things so they cannot move, like the peg that is used to fix the ropes of a tent. Or, you can imagine the crust of the earth as a carpet, and the mountains as the nails that hold the carpet in place. It is now known that the crust of the earth is much deeper under the mountains, which indicate the existence of a root

system under high mountains. According to recent measurements, the depth of a mountain's roots can reach 40 miles underground, while the highest known mountain reaches only 5.6 miles above ground.

The similarity between mountains and pegs is quite obvious. Pegs sink underground by the force of a hammer, while mountains sink underground by the force of gravity. Pegs hold and fix the tent. Mountains hold and fix the earth's crust. The thickness of the fabric of a tent is small compared to its size. The crust of the earth is no more than 1 percent of the radius of the earth. Therefore, one can conclude that describing the mountains as pegs is a perfect description. Muhammad used to worship Allah in a cave in a mountain near Mecca, but he certainly did not take measuring instruments to get information about the underground structure of the mountains. There is just no way that Muhammad could have established this description on his own. No one can explain the mountains with such accuracy except the Designer and Creator of the mountains themselves.

The balance and the stability of mountains are also explained in the Quran as follows:

Surah 16, Ayah 15, *"And He has set up on the earth mountains standing firm, lest it should shake with you."*

Surah 21, Ayah 31, *"And We have set on earth mountains standing firm, lest it should shake with them."*

Think about the similarity of the above verses! Other verses in the Quran also give the same meaning (Surah 31, Ayah 10; Surah 79, Ayah 32). When the meaning of a verse is repeated like that, then this is an invitation to mankind to take these words and examine them carefully. It should be also an invitation to scientists to examine each verb, each noun, and each letter in the scientific verses of the Quran, since that could well direct them to an explanation to an existing fact. The Arabic verb that describes the standing of the mountains indicates stability of ships in the sea as they dock alongside a pier. Ships in this case do not go down because of the upward buoyant force that acts upon the ship. This upward buoyant

force is equal to the downward gravitational force; hence the ship stays in equilibrium. The choice of the Arabic verb that indicates the stability of mountains, and its similarity to docking ships, is just beyond human comprehension.

In another Ayah, Allah states that the mountains move:

Surah 27, Ayah 88, "Thou see the mountains and think them firmly fixed, but they shall pass away as the clouds pass away. (Such is) the artistry of Allah, who disposes of all things in perfect order: for he is well acquainted with all that ye do."

In the above Ayah, Allah states clearly that mountains move like clouds. However, people think that mountains are firmly fixed to the earth. So if the mountains move, so does the earth. This is an obvious reference to the motion of the Earth, and this information was not available in the seventh century.

What do you think of Muhammad's knowledge about mountains, ships, Archimedes' principle, density of the earth, density of mountains, and motion of mountains and earth? If you think that he knew about any of these subjects, then he must have been a great geologist. But if you think that he had no information about these subjects, then it must be considered factual that the Quran is the authentic Words of God.

Earthquakes

Humans stand helpless in front of a devastating earthquake. All the wealth and power of a human cannot help avoid the consequences of any natural catastrophe. In this case, all people are equal, and earthquakes do not differentiate between poor or rich, powerful or humble, or sick or healthy. A violent earthquake is a terrifying experience in its suddenness and its power of destruction to shake or uproot the strongest buildings. With all our amazing technologies and power to solve complicated equations, yet no scientist is capable of predicting the place and time of the next earthquake.

The immediate cause of earthquakes is fracturing of crustal

rocks. The earthquake map of the earth shows a strong concentration around the whole Pacific Ocean, in the middle of Atlantic Ocean, south of Europe in the Mediterranean Sea, and in the middle of the Indian Ocean. Statistics show the extent of destruction and consequences of major earthquakes in highly populated areas. In most cases earthquakes last from few seconds to one minute and half. But the suddenness of the earthquakes and their short time still represent a major puzzle to seismologists.

The Glorious Quran addresses the subject of earthquakes in many places, and one chapter has the earthquake as its title. Surah 99:

Surah 99, Ayah 1-2. *"When the earth is shaken to her utmost convulsion (earthquake), and the earth throws her burden (weights) from within."*

The above Surah refers to the tremendous earthquake and the uprooting that will take place when the present order of the world is dissolved and the new world of Justice and Truth takes its place. The sign used is that of an earthquake which will shake our present material and phenomenal world to its very foundation. This overwhelming event, before the Day of the Judgment, will be a bigger and more far-reaching convulsion than any earthquake we have ever known.

Will humans remember the frightful events of the Day of Judgment? Will they continue to neglect the purpose of their creation? How long will they persist in discrediting God and attach human attributes to Him? How long are they going to keep arguing about His Existence and His Unlimited Power? How long are they going to ignore the Quran and the message of Muhammad? Can't we look at earthquakes and other natural catastrophes in their right prospective? Read what Allah says:

Surah 22, Ayah 1, *"O mankind! Fear your Lord! For the convulsion (earthquake) of the Hour (of Judgment) will be a terrible thing."*

The Spherical Earth

At a time when it was held that the earth was fixed at the center of the world, and that the sun moved around the earth, the Quran approached the motion of the earth by the above-mentioned Ayat of mountains, and by the following Ayat about day and night:

Surah 31, Ayah 29, *“Seest thou not that Allah merges Night into Day and he merges Day into Night”*

Surah 39, Ayah 5, *“He created the heavens and the earth in true (proportions). He makes the night overlap the day and the day overlap the night”*

The above two Ayat provide interesting material on the process of interpretation and especially on winding the night upon the day and the day upon the night in the second Ayah. The literal Arabic text for the verb “to overlap” above is “to make a sphere.” This is an astounding use of this verb that refers to the earth as a sphere.

Astronauts have seen and photographed what happens from their space ships especially at great distances from the earth. They saw how the sun permanently lights up (except in the case of an eclipse) half of the earth’s surface that faces the sun, while the other half is in darkness. The earth then turns on its axis, and the light from the sun stays the same, so that an area of another half a sphere is subjected to light. The light makes one revolution around the earth’s surface in twenty-four hours. This perpetual rotation of night and day is quite clearly described in the above Ayah. It is easy to grasp this notion in the present time and age, because we know the solar system and the orbit of the earth.

Further to the above reflection on the sequence of night and day, one must also mention, with quotation of some Ayat from the Quran, the idea that there is more than one east and one west. For example, God refers to Himself as:

Surah 70, Ayah 40, *“Lord of Easts and Wests”*

Surah 55, Ayah 17, *“Now I do call to witness the Lord of the two Easts and the two Wests.”*

Anyone who carefully watches the sunrise and sunset knows that the sun rises at different points in the east, and sets at different points in the west, according to the season. Each of the points of the east and the west are limited between two extreme points for the east and the west. The two extreme points of the east and the west are those that are referred to in the above second Ayah. Allah swears by the Lord of the two easts and the two wests. He swears by His Creation, and whatever He swears with represents an object of great significance. That is why keeping all the points of the east and the west between two limits represents one marvelous Creation of the Lord of everything.

The Earth's Atmosphere

In addition to many Ayat specifically related to the sky, the Quran contains many passages dealing with phenomena that occur in the atmosphere. The comparison between these Ayat and the present scientific data proves without any shadow of doubt that the Quran is the authentic Words of God.

It is a known fact that discomfort is experienced by man in high altitude, which increases the higher one climbs. As altitude is increased, the atmospheric density and pressure decrease. Humans cannot survive, or at least be comfortable, for a long period of time in atmospheric conditions higher than 8,000 feet. It has been also established that most humans could not survive atmospheric conditions equivalent to altitude of about 40,000 feet for more than a very short period of time. This experience is expressed in the Quran as follows:

Surah 6, Ayah 125, *"Those whom Allah willeth to guide, He open their chests to Islam: Those whom He willeth to leave straying, He make their chests close and constricted as if they had to climb up in the skies"*

Some commentators explain the above Ayah as related to the will of God to guide one to the Truth. The above Ayah also means that in spiritual and physical worlds, there are laws of justice, mercy,

grace, penalty, etc., which work surely as anything we know. If, then, a man refuses the guidance of God and becomes a rebel, then with each step he goes further and further astray, and his pace will be accelerated. He will scarcely be able to take a spiritual breath, and his recovery, in spite of Allah's mercy that he rejected, will be difficult as if he had to climb up to the skies.

Electricity and Lightening

Electricity in the atmosphere is a result of lightening and hails as referred to in the following Ayat:

Surah 24, Ayah 43, "Seest thou not that Allah makes the clouds move gently, then joins them together, then makes them into a heap? - Then wilt thou see rain issue forth from their midst. And He sends down from the sky mountain masses (of clouds) wherein is hail: He strikes therewith whom He pleases and He turns it away from whom He pleases, the vivid flash of His lightning well-nigh blinds the sight"

Surah 13, Ayah 12-13, "It is He Who doth show you the lightning, by way both of fear and of hope: It is He Who doth raise up the clouds, heavy with (fertilizing) rain! Nay, thunder repeateth His praises, and so do the angels, with awe: He flingeth the loud-voiced thunder-bolts, and therewith He striketh whomsoever He will..Yet these (are the men) who (dare to) dispute about Allah, with the strength of His power (supreme)!"

Clouds form from existing water vapors in the atmosphere. As the height of the clouds increases, water vapors are then condensed into raindrops, hail, and freezing rain, due to the motion of air currents inside the clouds. Small raindrops move up and down in the cloud, until they become bigger and heavier. When their weights exceed the aerodynamic forces, rain falls down. Some clouds exceed high mountains reaching a height of 6,500 feet. They look dark and usually produce rain, hail, or freezing rain.

The verb "join" in the above first Ayah indicates assembling

or overcoming repulsion due to the different electrostatic charges that exist in these high clouds. It is not known exactly how electrostatic charges form in the clouds, because some clouds may have positive charges at the top, negative charges in the middle, and positive charge at the bottom. With these different charges, the significance of the word "join" can be seen in spite of the repulsive forces between positive and negative charges.

The description of high and heavy clouds in the first Ayah is accurate. This Ayah also shows a relationship between forming hailstorms and lightening. Moreover, it indicates that hail is quite a local phenomenon. You see hail on one street while on the neighboring one, there is no sign of it! Sparks between positive and negative charges cause lightening. The temperature at the spark may reach 1,000 degrees, and that expands the air rapidly causing the air to explode as in a thunderstorm.

Heavy thunderstorms and hailstorms are quite frightening. There is no telling of what may happen to any person or any property during these storms. It may be that someone may remember his Creator during these frightening moments. It is fascinating that thunder, that sends shivers to our hearts due to its suddenness, praises the glory of Allah, while some people deny His existence!

9.6 Life and Death in the Quran

No other subject has caused so much turmoil throughout history than that of life and death. Philosophers and scientists approached life and death with so many concepts and assumptions. Any discussion on life and death without considering the Creator in this process is just a waste of time. This is like a group of laymen gathering around an engineer to discuss his invention, and their conclusion is that they understand the invention more than the inventor himself. This is the kind of scientific joke that some scientists and their followers are publicizing in the name of fighting superstitions. But death is unseen: no one ever died for a long period of time and returned back to tell the world what happens after death. And since death is unseen, then any discussion about it is pure guesswork. Consequently death is subject to imagination and

guesswork because no one can prove otherwise. This subject of guesswork is stated in the Quran as follows:

Surah 18, Ayah 51, "I called them not to witness the creation of the heavens and earth, not (even) their creation, nor is it for me to take as helpers such as Lead (men) astray"

So Allah tells us that people will come and present ideas and hypotheses about the creation of the universe and life, and those people were not helping God in His Grand Design. Their arrogant ideas served the purpose of confusing the average person. The above Ayah is one of the prophecies of the Quran, and we can see the result of this prophecy very vividly in our present time. The theory of evolution and the self behaving universe are mere human guesswork and assumptions that cannot be proved.

It is a known fact that a living human body consists of water, many chemicals and a soul. But what is the soul? Is it in the brain that thinks? Is it in the heart that pulses? Is it in the hands or feet? Where is it and what is it? What does it look like? Scientists attempted to weigh a body before and after death to know if the soul has weight. They found a minute decrease in the weight. Who knows if the scale is exact enough? Who knows if some chemical phenomena happen at the moment of death and reduced the weight?

No one knows about the soul except its Creator. And may be this is just one of the eternal divine challenges a human will never face. And if we don't know about something inside our bodies, how then can we claim we know all the secrets of this entire universe? We are supposed to search, study, examine, and observe; but if we come to a limit or a wall then we have to realize that there are many things beyond our comprehension and in the end we are limited creatures. The human brain is limited but it has a very serious function. Its main purpose is supplying us with a choice to select alternatives, and to differentiate between the good and evil. But this brain is designed to acknowledge the unseen, which only can be told to us by God. Thus if we want to know the unseen, then our only choice is to learn from the Creator of the unseen. This is our only way to know any unseen matter whether it is the soul, the

Angels, or life and death.

Water and Origin of life

The Quran refers to the origin of life in a very concrete statement as follows:

Surah 21, Ayah 30. *“Do not the unbelievers see that the heavens and earth were joined together (as one unit of creation) before We clove them asunder? And We made from water every living thing. Will they not then believe?”*

The Quran states that every living thing is made of water (as its essential component) or that every living thing originated in water. These two possible meanings are strictly according to our present knowledge. About 70 percent of the surface of earth is still covered with water. This shows the predominance of water on our globe. Apart from the fact that protoplasm, the building block of living matter, is a liquid or semi-liquid, there is the fact that man and animals show, in their embryological development, organs indicating the watery origin of their original habitat. The protoplasm consists of about 80 to 85 percent water. Also chemical compounds necessary for life such as protein, fat and DNA consist of 25 percent water.

There is no life without water. We look for water on other planets as a tool in determining the possibility of life. We now know that earth is the only planet in our known solar system that has water. This is due to its appropriate distance from the sun that allows water to exist as a liquid. If we were closer to the sun, water would evaporate, and if we were further away from the sun, water would turn into ice. It is also known that water vapor originated from volcanic action in the early history of the earth. That water vapor condensed into huge clouds that surrounded the earth and then caused huge amounts of rain to fall. This in turn caused flooding engulfing the earth for millions of years yielding huge pits that became the oceans.

The Vegetable Kingdom

There are many Ayat in the Quran that refer to the rain that makes vegetation grow. Fruits and vegetables are mentioned in the Quran as a sign of creation for the believers:

Surah 6, Ayah 99, "It is He Who sendeth down rain from the skies: with it We produce vegetation of all kinds: from some We produce green (crops), out of which We produce grain, heaped up (at harvest); out of the date-palm and its sheaths (or spathes) (come) clusters of dates hanging low and near: and (then there are) gardens of grapes, and olives, and pomegranates, each similar (in kind) yet different (in variety): when they begin to bear fruit, feast your eyes with the fruit and the ripeness thereof. Behold! in these things there are signs for people who believe"

Each fruit - whether it is grape, olive or pomegranate - varies in flavor, shape, and size. Believing in God implies both understanding and spiritual feeling. Understanding is a higher faculty than knowledge, and believing is a higher faculty than understanding. Allah asks us to look at the fruits, as they are signs for the believers. Unbelievers eat fruit without thinking, while the believers eat the same fruit and praise God for His favors, and thank Him for His bounty. Our Creator will ask everyone on the Day of Judgment whether we gave thanks for the many glorious gifts He bestowed upon us throughout our lives.

The Quran also details the reproduction in the vegetable kingdom that can be either sexual or asexual. Only the former can be termed "reproduction", because this defines a biological process that results in a new individual identical to the one that gave it birth. A sexual reproduction is quite simply a multiplication process. It is the result of the fragmentation of an organism that has separated from the main plant and developed in such a way as to resemble the parent plant. A simple example of this is a cutting taken away from a plant, and placed in suitably watered soil, can be regenerated by growing new roots.

Sexual reproduction in the vegetable kingdom is carried out by the unifying of male and female parts on a same plant or one located on another plant. This is the form that is mentioned in the Quran:

Surah 20, Ayah 53, *"..and (God) has sent down water from the sky." With it have We produced diverse pairs of plants each separate from the others"*

Surah 36, Ayah 36, *"Glory to Allah, Who created in pairs all things that the earth produces, as well as their own (human) kind and (other) things of which they have no knowledge"*

Surah 51, Ayah 49, *"And of every thing We have created pairs, that ye may reflect"*

The pairs or couples mentioned in the above Ayat, and many others, mean two accompanying each other like married couples. Fruit is the end product of the reproduction process of superior plants that have the most highly developed and complex organization. The stage preceding the fruit is the flower, which has male and female organs (stamens and ovules). Fruits therefore imply the existence of male and female organs. This emphasizes the meaning of the above Ayat in the Quran.

These Ayat, and many others, emphasize the importance of the concept of pairs through all creation - in man, in animals, in plants, and also in things not yet discovered.

The Animal Kingdom

Many Ayat describe the creation of certain species of the animal kingdom with the purpose of making man reflect upon the divine Beneficence extended to him. These Ayat are quoted basically to provide an example of the way in which the Quran describes the harmonious adaptation of creation to man's needs; it relates in particular to the case of people who live in rural and desert areas.

The reference in the Quran to the reproduction in the animal kingdom is given as a general statement:

Surah 53, Ayah 45-46, *"That He did create the pairs, - male and female, From a sperm-drop when lodged (in its place);"*

The "pair" in the above Ayah is the same as that expressed above in the Ayat that deal with reproduction in the vegetable kingdom. Here the sexes are given. The detail that is absolutely remarkable is the precision with which it is stated that a small quantity of liquid is required for reproduction. The word itself signifying "sperm" is used for man, which will be presented when discussing embryology.

Allah states that animals and birds exist in communities like human communities:

Surah 6, Ayah 38, *"There is not an animal (that lives) on the earth, nor a being that flies on its wings, but (forms part of) communities like you. Nothing have we omitted from the Book, and they (all) shall be gathered to their Lord in the end."*

The above Ayah states that animals and birds form communities like those of the human beings. They also will be resurrected in the Day of Judgment. The Justice of Allah will prevail over all living creatures including animals and birds. The animals will be judged and then turned to ashes again. There are no statements in the Quran about the extent of judgment of animals in the Hereafter. Why? That is God's business.

Animal behavior has been closely investigated in recent decades with the result that genuine animal and bird communities have been shown to exist. It has only been recently shown that the mechanisms that preside over this kind of organization have been discovered for certain species. The most studied and best-known case is undoubtedly that of bees.

When neurological biologists wish to provide striking examples of the extraordinary organization directing animal behavior, the most likely referred to animals are the bees and the birds (especially migratory birds). Whatever the case, there is no doubt that these groups constitute a model of highly evolved organization. In the Quran, bees are the subjects of long Ayat:

Surah 16, Ayah 68-69. *“And thy Lord taught the Bee to build its cells in hills, on trees, and in (men’s) habitations; Then to eat of all the produce (of the earth), and find with skill the spacious paths of its Lord: there issues from within their bodies a drink of varying colors, wherein is healing for men: verily in this is a Sign for those who give thought”*

Allah refers to the bees as following His way in humility, like all other creation, such as the stars, the earth, the trees, etc. All His creations follow His way with the exception of those consumed by excessive arrogance, as is the case with some humans and jinn.

The bee’s instinct is due to Allah’s teaching. Bees have remarkable nervous organization that supports their behavior. It is known that the pattern of the bee’s dance is a means of communication with other bees; in this way, bees are able to convey to their own species the direction and the distance of flowers from which nectar is to be gathered.

Allah states that Prophet Solomon, son of Prophet David, has been taught the language of birds and ants.

Surah 27, Ayah 18-19. *“At length, when they came to a (lowly) valley of ants, one of the ants said: “O ye ants, get into your habitations, lest Solomon and his hosts crush you (under foot) without knowing it.” So he smiled, amused at her speech; and he said: “O my Lord! so order me that I may be grateful for Thy favors, which thou hast bestowed on me and on my parents, and that I may work the righteousness that will please Thee: And admit me, by Thy Grace, to the ranks of Thy righteous Servants.”*

In the grand scheme of the world, the ant may be neglected or even crushed by people who mean no harm. Yet, by its wisdom it carries on its own life within its own atmosphere, and makes its own contributions in the balance of life on earth. So there is room for the humblest people to contribute in the spiritual world.

Birds are frequently mentioned in the Quran. They appear in the life’s story of Abraham, Joseph, David, Solomon, and Jesus.

Two other Ayat highlight the bird's strict submission to the Will of Allah:

Surah 16, Ayah 79, *"Do they not look at the birds, held poised in the midst of (the air and) the sky? Nothing holds them up but (the power of) Allah"*

Surah 67, Ayah 19, *"Do they not observe the birds above them, spreading their wings and folding them in? None can uphold them except (Allah) Most Gracious"*

The above Ayat stress the extremely close dependence of the bird's behavior on the Divine Will of God. The degree of perfection attained by certain species of birds with regard to coordinating their movements is mind-boggling. The curvature of the bird's wing provides the upward lift required to overcome the downward pull of gravity. The design of airplane wings has benefited over the years from studying of the wings of birds.

There is no explanation of instinct in many birds and animals. How is it possible for such complicated instinctive knowledge to develop and be passed from one generation to the others? Their intelligence comes from the Utmost Intelligence, and their wisdom came from the Utmost Wisdom of Allah.

There is one Ayah in the Quran that addresses the source and the constituents of cattle milk.

Surah 16, Ayah 66, *"And verily in the cattle (too) will you find an instructive sign. From what is within their bodies, between excretions and blood, We produce, for your drink, milk, pure and agreeable to those who drink it"*

Milk is a secretion (making and giving off useful chemical compounds) in the female body, like other secretions but more specialized. Is it not wonderful that the same food, eaten by males and females, produces in the latter the wholesome and complete food called milk? Then, when cattle are tamed and specially bred for milk, the supply of milk is vastly greater than the need of their young and lasts for a longer time than during the period of breast-

feeding. Cattle milk is also a wholesome and agreeable diet for man. Yet it is a secretion like other secretions, between the excretions (removal of waste) that the body rejects and the precious blood stream that circulates within the body.

The way this Ayah has been translated and interpreted is personal, because even modern translation or Arabic interpretation does not reflect the true scientific miracle of this Ayah. It is well known fact however, that a translator, however expert, is liable to make human mistakes in the translation of a highly specialized scientific Ayah, unless he happens to be a specialist in the discipline in question.

A literal translation to the above Ayah may be as follows:

Surah 16, Ayah 66, "And verily in the cattle there is a lesson for you. We give you to drink of what is inside their bellies, coming from a conjunction between the contents of the intestine and the blood, a milk pure and pleasant for those who drink it"

This translation is very close to the one given in the Muntakhab, 1973, edited by the Supreme Council of Islamic Affairs, Cairo, which relies on its support on modern physiology. From a scientific point of view, physiological notions must be called upon to grasp the meaning of this Ayah.

The substances that ensure the general nutrition of the body come from chemical transformations that occur along the length of the digestive tract. These substances come from the contents of the intestine. Most digestion takes place in the small intestine. Once digestion is complete, the process of absorption begins. The digested food leaves the small intestine and enters the bloodstream to reach each cell in the body. The small intestine is a very long coiled tube that takes up very little space. Its inner lining has many tiny folds. Both the length and the folds increase the surface area of the small intestine. Thus there are more places where the digested food can be absorbed. The constituents of milk are secreted by the mammary glands. The products of food digestion, carried by the blood stream, nourish the mammary glands. Blood therefore plays the role of

collector and conductor of what has been extracted from food, and it brings nutrition to the mammary glands, the producers of milk, as it does to any other organ.

Here the initial process, which sets everything else in motion, is the bringing together of the contents of the intestine and the blood at the level of the intestinal wall itself. This very precise concept is the result of discovery made in the chemistry and physiology of the digestive system.

Yet in one short statement in the above Ayah, a precise description of the source and constituents of milk is presented. No one can dare to think that this knowledge was available to an unlettered Arab in the desert in the seventh century. So, again, how did he know that? Who told him that? The only logical answer is the Creator of the milk and the digestive system. All the Praise and Glory be to Allah.

Life before Adam

The Quran refers to life forms before Adam's creation in a fascinating discussion between Allah and His Angel, as follow:

Surah 2, Ayah 30, "Behold, thy Lord said to the angels: "I will create a vicegerent on earth." They said: "Wilt Thou place therein one who will make mischief and shed blood? Whilst we celebrate Thy praise and glorify Thy holy (name)?" He said: "I know what you know not"

Allah informed the Angels that He will create man on earth. They wondered and referred to a previous creation that had shed blood. This was not an objection to God's Will. It was a surprise that Allah would create man with free will, which may ultimately lead to mischief on earth. It would seem that the Angels, though holy and pure, and endued with power from Allah, represented only one side of the purpose of Creation. We may imagine them without passion or emotion. If man was to be endued with emotions, these emotions could elate him or destroy him. The power of will or choosing is dominated by emotions, such that man may steer his

own course. We may assume the Angels had no independent will of their own. Their perfection, in other words, reflected Allah's perfection, but could not elevate them to the dignity of vicegerency. The utmost vicegerent is he who has the power of initiative himself, but whose independent action always reflects precisely the will of God.

The Angels in their one-sidedness saw only the consequence of mischief and blood shedding by this new creation. In humility and true devotion to Allah, they were surprised. One must not imagine the least trace of jealousy, as they are without emotions. We know that the Angels have no way of foreseeing the future, which only belongs to God. So the question arises: How were they able to reference the acts of mischief and bloodshed? It must be from their previous or present knowledge, but not from knowledge of the future. Their statement could only mean one thing. They were referring to animals or other creatures on earth that existed before Adam that were killing each other. Their reference to these creatures before the creation of man coincides with our knowledge of the fossil record. And God knows the Best.

Death

Philosophers and scientists have many concepts of life and death. A vast amount of superstition as well as imaginative and psychological literature has grown about life and death. But the simplest and the truest religious concept are stated here in few words. And, there is only one fact about death that is stated in the Quran as follows:

Surah 67, Ayah 2, " *He Who created death and life, that He may try which of you is best in deed*"

Death and life are both creations of God as a means of testing human deeds. Death is put before life, and is, therefore, not merely a negative state to life. Death, then, is the state before true life begins and is the state in which life as we know it ceases to exist. Creation of death and life, like any other creation, is not without

purpose with respect to man. We can barely understand the states before or after our present life. But our present life is clearly given to enable us to strive by good deeds to reach a more noble state.

As one studies the Quran, one feels that Allah gives answers to many questions that linger in one's mind. He gives examples to make a difficult concept of the unseen closer to human grasp. For example, resurrection is made analogous to a land that seems dead in the winter, and as rain falls in the spring, it is brought back to life:

Surah 50, Ayah 9-11, "And We send down from the sky rain charged with blessing, and We produce therewith gardens and grain for harvest. And the tall (and stately) Palm-trees, with shoots of fruit-stalks, piled one over another. As sustenance for (Allah's) servants; And We give (new) life therewith to land that is dead: thus will be the resurrection."

This similarity between the resurrection and the process of bringing life out of dead land is repeated in many other verses. But how many people notice the tiny plants when they are returned to life and start turning green? How many people relate this process to the resurrection and the Day of Judgment? How many people watch this resurrection of the plants with humility and reflection? Humans see resurrection at least once every year and most are idle to this miraculous process.

Death is also treated in the same fashion. Some people claim that there are no facts in this life except what we can see when we are awake. Yet, these same people die and return to life every day. They move from one state, with its governing laws, to a different state, with completely different laws each day without knowing or thinking about it. Allah Says:

Surah 39, Ayah 42, "It is Allah that takes the soul (of men) at death; And those that die not (He takes) during their sleep: those on whom He has passed the decree of death, He keeps back (from returning to life), but the rest He sends (to their bodies) for a term appointed. Verily in this are signs for those who reflect"

The similarity between death and sleep is made obvious in this Ayah. When man is awake, he sees physical things in our space and time. But when he sleeps, he moves to another world not subject to any known laws. He moves beyond space, time and gravity. He does not feel the passing of time. He may sleep in the dark and see the sunlight, or sleep during the day and see the dark night in his dream. He does not even know the duration of time that he slept.

During sleep, man is completely isolated and separated from the physical world. He sees with his eyes closed! He walks and runs with his feet in bed! He falls down from a mountain, yet there is not a single injury to his body. He cries with tears and laughs without noise during his dreams. He travels in an airplane, crosses continents and oceans in few seconds. This movement from a physical state to a spiritual state is a Mercy from the Merciful. He graced us with the perception that when we sleep, we move to a spiritual world; and when we wake, He returns our souls back to our bodies.

Why? For man to understand death; for man to become familiar with his next state; for man to know that the physical laws are not the only laws in the world; for man to believe in his Creator. And all that happens every night. So we see death every night as we see resurrection every spring. Yet, there are those who deny these obvious facts.

The real mystery of life and death, sleep and dream is a fascinating puzzle, but, then again, Allah gave us pieces to this puzzle. His Mercy brings many abstract religious concepts to human level and comprehension:

- Sleeping is a vivid example of death.
- Bringing life to the land in the spring is a vivid example of resurrection.
- The best life on earth is a vivid example of heaven.
- Earthly fire is a vivid example of hellfire.

What is sleep? As far as human life is concerned, it is the cessation of the working of the nervous system. Yet, other human functions, such as digestion, growth, and the circulation of blood,

continue, possibly at a different pace. The mental processes are also suspended in sleep except those that deal with recollections, which are present vividly in our subconscious. But there are other kinds of dreams in which the dreamer sees things as they actually happen, backwards or forwards in time, or in which gifted individuals see spiritual truths otherwise invisible to them. How can we explain this? It is stated in the above Ayah that our souls go to a plane of spiritual existence analogous to physical death. In poetic imagery, "Sleep is the twin brother of Death."

During sleep or "minideath", our souls are, for a period of time, released from the bondage of flesh. Allah reclaims them during this time. If, as some do, we are to die peacefully in sleep, our souls do not come back to the physical body that, then, decays and dies. If our time to die has not yet dawned allowing us to fulfill our lives according to God's Will, our souls return to our bodies, and we resume our functions in life.

If we are to contemplate these concepts, we can clearly see many spiritual truths:

- That life and death are not the only elements of our existence.
- That in our bodily life, we may be dead in the spiritual world, and our bodily death may be our awakening to the spiritual world.
- That death is only a short visit to the grave.
- That our nightly sleep, besides performing the function of rest in our physical life, gives us a foretaste of what we call death, which does not cease our personality.
- That the resurrection is very similar to our daily rising from sleep.
- That sleep is analogous to death.
- That this life is not the true eternal life. It will end by death.
- That death is not an eternal process. It will end by the resurrection.

Allah calls every living human in this world dead, i.e. man is destined to death. For that, Allah addresses the Prophet by saying:

Surah 39, Ayah 30. *"Truly thou wilt die (one day), and truly they (too) will die (one day)."* The literal translation of this Ayah is *"Truly you are dead, and truly they (too) are dead"*

The above Ayah was intended for the Prophet and his companions, who were alive during the time of the revelation. So why did Allah refer to them as dead? He is reminding humanity of their destiny. The above Ayah is unfathomable to anyone who assumes that he is still alive. When a human is born, the arrow of death is released simultaneously. This arrow searches for the human throughout his life. In one instance, the search is over, the arrow of death finds its companion, and the human dies.

Why should death be an important aspect of our life? Because human life is based, wrongly, on greed, which is the continuous passion for seeking an increase in wealth, position, the number of followers or supporters, mass production and mass organization. This greed affects most people as it affects entire societies or nations. The greed in man's nature may be limitless if not controlled; the more we receive, the more we want. This obsession distracts us from the true purpose of life. People's rivalry in such things aggravates the situation. To a certain point, it may be good and necessary. But when it becomes an obsession and a competition for the gain of more materialistic things, it leaves no time for higher and noble planes of existence. And most humans, when they are engulfed in this piling up process, deny that they have reached a critical state, and always justify their actions. And this ugly case of greed is justified as a means for achieving a noble purpose for humanity!

The piling up scenario continues until one lays down for a long nap in the grave, forgetting exactly just what he fought for. The true reality will then be clear before you. And Who can explain this better than Allah:

Surah 102, Ayah 1-2, *"The mutual rivalry for piling up (the good things of the world) diverts you (from the more serious business). Until you visit the graves"*

9.7 Embryology in the Quran

This section is based on an article entitled "Highlights of Human Embryology in the Koran and Hadith" by Dr. Keith Moore, Professor of Anatomy and Chairman of the department, Faculty of Medicine, at the University of Toronto, Toronto, Canada, 1982.

Human beings have always been intrigued by questions such as: Where they came from? How they developed before birth? We know from the earliest records that primitive peoples realized that the birth of a baby was the result of sexual union or intercourse. However, for many centuries the idea of human prenatal development was based on speculation and mysticism. Aristotle wrote the first embryology book in the fourth century BC. In it he recorded some observations on comparative embryology, especially on the general progress of the developing chick. He promoted, however, the incorrect idea that the human embryo developed from a formless mass that resulted from the union of semen with menstrual blood.

Scientific knowledge of embryology did not progress significantly for nearly 2000 years. It was not until near the end of the 17th century, when the microscope was invented, that the early stages of human development could be effectively studied. After it was possible to examine cells under the microscope, it was reasoned in the 18th century that embryonic development resulted from the growth and differentiation of embryonic cells.

The realization that the embryo develops in stages in the uterus was not discussed or proven until the 15th century, although Galen mentioned the placenta and fetal membranes in his book "On the Formation of the Fetus" written in the second century AD. Galen must have known about the uterus. After the microscope was developed in the 17th century, descriptions of the early stages of the developing chick were made as observed with simple lenses. The staging of human embryos was not proposed until the 1942 by Streeter, and the stages as we know them now were not adopted worldwide until a few decades ago. The Glorious Quran refers to the embryonic stages and the uterus as follows:

Surah 39, Ayah 6, "...*He creates you in the wombs of your mothers in stages, one after another, in three veils of darkness. Such is Allah, your Lord and Cherisher. To Him belongs (all) dominion. There is no God but He: Then how are ye turned away (from your true Lord)?*"

It is realistic to interpret the three veils of darkness in the above Ayah as follows:

1. The mother's abdominal wall.
2. The uterus wall.
3. The surroundings of the fetus (placenta, embryonic membranes, amniotic fluid).

The above three anatomical layers protect the embryo from external injury. The above Ayah refers to the stages of embryonic development without giving any details about these stages.

Before proceeding in describing the embryonic stages as narrated in the Quran, it is important to define the following Arabic words that are used in the Quran:

- **Nutfah:** a drop of sperm; zygote.
- **Alakah:** something that clings; leech-like structure; blood clot.
- **Mudgah:** piece of flesh; bead-like segmental masses of flesh; like chewed gum with teeth marks.

It is interesting to note that B. Sproul translates "Nutfah" into "moist germ" in his book "*Primal Myths*"! This distorted translation implicates that the Holy Quran fades in its validity.

A human being develops from a single cell, the zygote, which forms when an ovum (Latin for egg) is fertilized by a sperm (Greek for seed). The Quran refers to this process as follows:

Surah 32, Ayah 8, "*And made his progeny from the quintessence of a despised liquid*"

Surah 75, Ayah 37, "*Was he (Man) not a drop of sperm emitted*

(in lowly form)?

Surah 76, Ayah 2, "*Verily We created Man from a drop of mingled sperm*"

The above Ayahs make it clear that the sperms are derived from a very small part of the fluid or the semen that is ejaculated from the penis. They are expelled from the urethra via the same route followed by the urine that is sometimes referred to as a "despised fluid." There are other references in the Quran to the origin of man from a small quantity of "mingled fluids", undoubtedly the male and female sexual secretions. The resulting mixture (drop) composed of the ovum and the penetrating sperm, becomes a zygote.

A popular idea in the 17th century among scientists was that sperm contained a miniature human being that simply enlarged inside the sperm. Another equally strong idea was that the ovum contained a miniature human being that was stimulated to grow by the semen. It was not until the 18th century that Spallanzani experimentally demonstrated that the initiation of development required sex products from male and female. From his experiments, including artificial insemination in dogs, he concluded that sperm was the fertilizing agent. The mixture of the male and female fluids was discovered recently though it was known in the Quran for fourteen centuries. There are some theories that the female fluid acts as an agent to prevent the rejection of the sperms, which are foreign bodies in the uterus.

In the following Ayah, more details are given about the staging process:

Surah 23, Ayah 12-14, "*Man We did create from a quintessence (of clay), (Arabic, **sulalah**); Then We placed him as (a drop of) sperm (Arabic, **nutfah**) in a place of rest, firmly fixed; Then We made the sperm into a clot of congealed blood (Arabic, **alakah**); then of that clot We made a (fetus) lump (Arabic, **mudgah**); then we made out of that lump bones and clothed the bones with flesh; then we developed out of it another creature. So blessed be Allah, the best to create!"*

This Ayah states that God made human from a drop into a thing that clings in the mother's womb, then to a leech-like form that soon changed to a shape that looks like a piece of chewed gum. The "mudgah" then took the shape of bone and was clothed with flesh.

During the embryonic period, the embryo acquires distinctive human characteristics as bones and muscles begin to form. By the end of the embryonic period, the blossoming of all the main organ systems is established. The external appearance of the embryo is greatly affected by the formation of the brain, heart, liver, bones, limbs, ears, nose, and eyes. As these structures develop, they affect the appearance of the embryo as unquestionably human.

The second major stage of prenatal development is the fetus stage. This is a period of rapid growth and differentiation. At that time the fetus is capable of survival if born prematurely.

The idea that development results from a genetic plan contained in the chromosomes of the zygote was not discovered until the end of the 19th century. The Quran say:

Surah 80, Ayah 19, "*From a sperm-drop, He has created him (man), then (right away) mouldeth him in due proportions.*"

This Ayah from the Quran clearly implies that the "nutfah" contained the blueprint for the future characteristics and the features of the developing human being. It is reasonable to interpret the drop (Arabic, nutfah) as the small sample of sperms which are extracted from the ejaculated semen, because it is well established that only a few hundred of the several million sperms in the semen are able to pass through the uterus and surround the ovum in the uterine tube. The Arabic conjunction used to join the two sentences in the above Ayah is "fa" which means a rapid succession. So immediately after insemination, the genetic future is determined. The realization that sex is determined at the moment of fertilization was established about 60 years ago when the sex chromosomes were discovered.

The blastocyst, or the early embryo implant, subsides in the uterus about 10 days after fertilization. The embryo assumes human

appearance during the eighth week, i.e. 40 to 50 nights after its implantation in the uterus. Before that, there is no difference between human and animal embryos. The Prophet said:

"The angel will come to the "nutfah" 40 to 50 nights after it settles in the uterus."

The Prophet did not study embryology; he was unlettered! He did not have a microscope to examine the embryo. He did not conduct experiments on chicks or animals of other sorts. Yet, he said the above Hadith that is recorded in the authentic Hadith's book. The similarity of the leech and the human embryo at 24 days is astounding. A human embryo at 28 days shows pairs of bead-like segmental masses that make the appearance of the embryo similar to the chewed gum with teeth marks! Another reference to this stage is given as:

*Surah 22, Ayah 5, "O mankind! If you have a doubt about resurrection, (consider) that We created you out of dust, then out of sperms (Arabic **nutfah**), then out of leech-like clot (Arabic, **alakah**), then out of morsel of flesh (Arabic, **mudgah**) partly formed (differentiated) and partly unformed (undifferentiated)...."*

Allah addresses mankind and their doubts about life, death, and resurrection by providing a simple and logical answer; He is the Creator of all mankind. Then, Allah proceeds by stating overwhelming facts about their physical growth from lifeless matter, to seed, fertilized ovum, embryo, fetus, child, youth, old age and then death! How can there be any doubt about the Author of all these wonderful stages of life? How can there be any doubt about the ability of the Creator of life to create another life and cause resurrection of all mankind?

In the above Ayah, Allah states that during the chewed stage, the embryo has both differentiated and undifferentiated parts. It is now well established that the brain and the heart are only partially differentiated at the end of the fourth week when the embryo

resembles a chewed substance. After the chewed-like appearance, bones develop, which are soon clothed with muscles. The bones begin to form in the sixth week and muscles attach to them shortly thereafter. By the beginning of the seventh week, the bones give human shape to the embryo's body. The ears and the eyes begin to form in the fourth week and are clearly visible at the sixth week, 42 days after the zygote or "nutfah" forms. Sex is not distinguishable at this stage. The Prophet said:

"After 42 nights of forming the zygote "nutfah" God sends an angel to it to make its features, hearing, vision, skin, flesh, and bones. 'Oh God', the angel asks, "male or female."

In the above Surah 80, Ayah 19, the sex of the child is determined immediately after insemination. The inquiry of the Angel about the sexual differentiation of the embryo indicates that Angels do not know the future. Because the Angel is shaping the organs of the zygote and all that is common between male and female, he asks Allah about the sex to form the sex organs. The external genitalia are not distinctly male or female until the 12th week.

There are many other Ayat and sayings in the Hadith about embryology. Some Ayat we understand now, and others we may understand in the future, God's willing. The meaning, of some of the Ayat that we understand, became clear to us only few decades ago. These Ayat are an overwhelming challenge from God to those who do not believe in Him and to the non-Muslims. There is no other holy book that has such information about embryology. There is no other explanation except that the Quran is a revelation from God to the Prophet. All the above-mentioned Ayat are stated not as stand-alone scientific facts, but rather in context of encouraging mankind to think and to believe in The Creator.

9.8 Physics in the Quran

As stated before, any repetition in the Quran of an Ayah requires special attention. Also we mentioned before, that the Quran includes

over 700 verses that deal with scientific miracles. In our present time, some of these verses are understood, and some are not. This is because the Quran is a challenge to humanity throughout the generations until the end of the physical world. This challenge in no way represents a negative process, but a positive one that keeps humanity reflecting on the many miraculous signs of God.

Vibration and Earth

There are two Ayat, with almost the same words, that relate the earth to rain and oscillation. Translations and commentaries of the Quran do not exactly explain this relationship. However, we will attempt to explore this link. The following argument may shed some light on the exact meaning of this relationship. And Allah knows the best.

Vibrations occur regularly in our surroundings. These are motions that repeat themselves. There are oscillating guitar strings, bells, diaphragms in telephones and speaker systems, and quartz crystals in wristwatches. Less obvious are the oscillations of the molecules of the air that transmit the sensation of sound, of the atoms in a solid that convey the sensation of temperature and of the electrons in the antenna of radio and TV transmitters.

Vibration is divided into free and forced vibration. A person swinging in a swing without any other help is an example of free vibration. If a friend keeps on pulling or pushing the swing periodically, we have a forced vibration. Free vibration happens if the friend pulls or pushes once and then the swing is left to oscillate freely.

One important property of oscillatory motion is its natural frequency, or the number of oscillations that are completed in one second. Any system has one or more natural frequencies of vibration depending upon its mass and how stiff it is. Resonance happens when a system is excited at one of its natural frequencies. The amplification of the sound from a radio is a case of resonance. When you move the station selector to get a certain station, you are actually bringing the frequency of the circuit in the radio in balance with the signal frequency of the selected station. When

that happens, you get the maximum amplification of the sound. When you move the station selector, i.e. changing the circuit frequency from the input frequency, the sound decreases and then disappears.

Allah defined precisely this case of forced vibration where an input with driving frequency causes plants to grow as follows:

Surah 22, Ayah 5, "...*And (further) you see the earth barren and lifeless, but when We pour down rain on it, it is stirred (to life), (oscillates), it swells, And it puts forth every kind of beautiful growth (in pairs).*"

Surah 41, Ayah 39, "*And among His Signs in this: thou seest the earth barren and desolate; but when We send down rain to it, it is stirred to life (oscillates) and yields increase. Truly, He Who gives life to the (dead) earth can surely give life to (men) who are dead. For He has power over all things.*"

The existing translation refers to the Arabic word "oscillate" as "it is stirred" which does not reflect the actual Arabic word. A possible explanation of the above phenomenon is that when rain drops on the dead ground, it oscillates and grows. If there are seeds in the ground, rain causes them to grow or germinate. The exact mechanism of the effect of rain on germination may not be fully understood. However, this may be left to specialists in the field of botany to examine from the point of view of vibration.

Regardless of discovering the exact mechanism of the above phenomenon, the above Ayat clearly describe a case of vibration. Understanding this phenomenon of vibration is undoubtedly a knowledge that was not available in the seventh century, and may not be fully understood in our present time. No one can claim that Muhammad was a master dynamist and knew about vibration. Where did he get this information? It is from the Master and Only Creator of vibration.

The Relativity of the Time

There is absolutely no ambiguity whatsoever in the Biblical description of the Creation in six days followed by a day of rest,

the Sabbath, analogous to the days of the earthly week. This clearly shows the interjection of human concepts to a divine action. The word "day", in the Bible, means the interval of time between two successive sunrises or sunsets for an inhabitant of the earth. When defined this way, the day is conditioned to the rotation of the earth on its own axis. It is obvious that, logically speaking, there can be no such definition of "days" as explained in the Bible, if the mechanism that caused them to appear - the existence of the earth and the sun - had not already been created.

On the other hand, we read in the Quran in many Ayat, the Creation process in six days without any analogy to the earthly days. To understand what the Quran means by a day, one should put all the verses in which the word "day" is mentioned and then attempt to extract a common meaning.

Surah 7, Ayah 54, "Your Guardian-Lord is Allah, Who created the heavens and the earth in six days"

Surah 32, Ayah 5, "He directs the affairs from heavens to the earth; then it ascends unto Him on a day, the measure of which is (as) a thousand years of your reckoning"

Surah 70, Ayah 4, "The angels and the Spirit (Gabriel) ascend unto Him in a day, the measure whereof is (as) fifty thousand years"

How could the immense mystery of time be enforced in our minds better than that? A day in the standard of Allah may be one day, or 1,000 years, or 50,000 years, depending on the event, relative to the human standard of time!

According to the theory of relativity, the time change of a fast moving object is very real and has nothing to do with any mechanical change that takes place in a clock because of its motion. An example to understand this time change is to imagine an astronaut traveling in space at a speed close to the speed of light. It would appear to him that he traveled an incredibly large distance in a very short time. On his return back to earth, he would find that thousands of earthly years had passed, and many generations had been born and died during this time expansion, while he might still

be middle aged!

The relativity theory postulates that the maximum speed attainable is that of the speed of light. But who would say that this is really a fact that can be applied on all conditions? What if the speed of light represents a singularity or a barrier between two classes of realities? Our physical reality goes from zero speed to the speed of light. And beyond this barrier, there may be another reality that has speed range from the speed of light to, perhaps, a much faster speed.

During a dream one can travel enormous distances in a very short period of time, may be at a speed faster than the speed of light. So the above Ayat describe that on a spiritual level something that takes one day, according to the Divine Standard, could take a thousand or fifty thousands years according to the human standard. Therefore, the day in the Quran signifies a period of time and may not be equal to the earthly 24 hours. Modern commentators of the Quran, such as Yusuf Ali (1934) stressed the importance of taking the word "day" to mean in reality "very long period, or Ages, or Eons."

How were the different events in the Quran described in different time frames? Who told Muhammad that time has a relativistic property? It is the Creator of time itself.

10

Conclusions

Throughout history religion has been abused and misunderstood. Some people use it as a means of exploitation and suppression, as a pretext for prejudice and persecution. Others use it as a source of power and domination over the elite and masses alike. In the name of religion unjustifiable wars have been launched, freedom of thought and expression has been oppressed, science has been persecuted, the right of the individual to maturity has been denied, and man's dignity and honor have been flagrantly violated. And in the name of religion injustice has been inflicted upon humanity with the result that religion itself has suffered many losses.

These are historical facts that no one can deny. But is this the proper function of religion or the right approach to religion? Could this be the purpose of religion? The indisputable answer is an emphatic NO. There are many religions, and sects of religions, and each one claims to be the one and only true religion. Each religion is supposed to have come from the One God for the right guidance of mankind. But these claims contradict each other and have caused dissension among people and intense reactions to religion - instead of bonding mankind into one universal brotherhood under the One Universal Benevolent God. This situation makes any neutral observer confused and perhaps reluctant to all kinds of organized religion.

The Islamic concept of religion is unique in the broadest sense of the word. It is true that genuine religion must come from God for the right guidance of man. And it is equally true that human nature and major human needs are basically the same at all times.

This concept leads to only one conclusion, and that is:

There is only one true religion revealed from the One and the Same God. This religion is ISLAM. Because Islam means to surrender to the Will of God, it should be kept in mind that Islam was not taught by Muhammad alone. On the contrary, all the prophets before Muhammad had taught humans to surrender to the Will of God. The true followers of Abraham, Moses, Jesus and the rest of the prophets were all called Muslims. So Islam has been and will continue to be, the true universal religion of God, because God is One and Changeless, and because human nature and major human needs are fundamentally the same, irrespective of time and place, of race and age, and of any other considerations.

Bearing this in mind, the Islamic concept maintains that religion is not only a spiritual and intellectual necessity, but also a social and universal need. It is not to confuse man but to guide him. It is not to humiliate man but to elevate his moral nature. It is not to deprive him of anything useful, or to burden him, or to oppress his quality, but to open for him inexhaustible treasures of sound thinking and right action. It is not to confine him to narrow limits, but to launch him into wide horizon of truth and goodness. It improves his knowledge of God - the Highest Truth in the universe - and of himself. It teaches him about the secrets of life, about good and evil, and about right and wrong. It purifies the soul from evil, clears the mind from doubts, strengthens the character and corrects the thinking and convictions of man. All this can be achieved only when man faithfully observes the spiritual duties and physical regulation introduced by religion.

True religion educates man and trains him in hope and patience, in truthfulness and honesty, in love for the right and good, in courage and endurance, all of which are required for the mastery of the great art of living. Moreover, true religion insures man against fear and spiritual losses, and assures him of God's help and unbreakable alliance. It provides man with peace and security and makes his life meaningful.

That is what a true religion can do for humanity, and that is the concept of religion in Islam. Any religion that fails to bear these fruits is not Islam or, rather, is not a religion at all. And any

man who fails to draw these benefits from religion is not devout or God-minded. God is absolutely Truthful when He says in the Holy Quran:

Surah 3, Ayah 19, *“The Religion before Allah is Islam (submission to His Will).”*

This is what Islam and the original Christianity and Judaism are all about. Islam is a solid religion based upon unshakable foundation. The critics of Islam present their own distorted version of Islam in the Western Media. Only the arrogant or the ignorant of Islam denies the fact that out of the desert came a revelation that inspired social, scientific, and economic achievements. The critics of Islam strive to publicize half the truth about all religions. Most of those who attack Islam never read anything about it from Islamic sources, or read one complete verse from the Quran for that matter. One frequent tactic by half the truth TV Evangelists is to present half a verse from the Quran, such as Surah 2 Ayah 191. The first half of this verse says *“And slay them wherever ye catch them.”* This part of the verse is publicized to convince the audience with the violent nature of Islam. However, in the same verse the Quran says, *“If they fight you, slay them.”* And this part is never mentioned. This whole verse is about self-defense and sacred rights of humans who were subjected to persecution and oppression.

Another Ayah that is frequently publicized is Surah 5 Ayah 51: *“O ye who you believe, take not the Jews and the Christians for your friends.”* This Ayah is marketed to warn Jews and Christians against Muslims who are claimed to be hostile against non-Muslims. This is far away from the truth and that is not what the Quran advocates. The exact Arabic word of the above translation of friends is “Awliyaa.” This Arabic word is repeated in the Quran over 70 times. The root of this word has a few meanings: guardian, protector, friend or one who holds public authority or religious authority. The singular of this Arabic word is “Wali,” and this is one of the names of Allah who is the ultimate religious Authority. Therefore, the meaning of the above Ayah is: *“O who you believe, take not the Jews and the Christians as an authority in religious*

matters.” And this is what the Christians and Jews do. They do not consider followers of other religions as their religious authority. There are other Ayat in the Quran that command the Muslims to be fair to everyone and treat everyone with justice. History shows this fact. As a matter of fact, Jews and Christians thrive during the Islamic Caliphates. The Quran calls the Christians and Jews as “People of the Book” which is a very respected title.

Furthermore, half the truth Evangelists claim that Muhammad was a man of war in contrast to Moses or Jesus. They conveniently ignore history books and their Bible too. This is a part of their long history of unjustified anti-Islamic bias. But may be Muhammad and the Muslims are guilty in their eyes because Muslims do not follow their lead. Muslims respect Muhammad and do not accept any insult to their beloved Prophet, while some Christians insult Jesus in their books and movies. Muslims take their religion seriously even if they do not practice Islam, while some Christians treat Christianity as a big show business. Muslims respect their true monotheistic religion, while Christians promote Santa Claus as another god beside the trinity. In summary Muslims treat Islam as a religion, while TV Evangelists treat Christianity as a show business.

However, defense of Islam against this hatred always comes from many sources. The first and the most authoritative source is God Himself who promised to protect this religion until the end of time. This can be clearly seen by the thousands of non-Muslims that convert to Islam through their own rational approach and not by force. The Mongols who crushed the Islamic Caliphate in Baghdad converted to Islam in Turkstan and in Syria, and the name Khan became an Islamic name. This is the only case in history where the invaders followed the religion of the country that they defeated. Muhammad Ali, (1942-), the first boxer to become world heavyweight champion three times, originally named Cassius Marcellus Clay, Jr., converted to Islam and assumed an Islamic name. Cat Stevens, one of the top singers during the 1970’s, converted to Islam in 1977, and assumed the Islamic name of Yusuf Islam. He preaches Islam in Europe, the US, and the Middle East. This man who used to be glamorous singer, now projects an aura

of humility and serenity. Another example is the French surgeon Maurice Bucaille who was struck by the existence of the Muslim piety, and the scientific revelation in the Quran that is impossible to be known from an unlettered Arab in the desert. His book, *The Bible, The Quran and Science*, was translated to English, Arabic, Turkish, and Indonesian. In this book, he mentioned that another source that came to the defense of Islam is the Vatican. The Office for the Non-Christian Affairs at the Vatican published a document under the title "*Orientations for a Dialogue between Christians and Muslims.*" It is a very important document because it shows the new position of the Vatican towards Islam. In the third edition of this study (1970), this new position calls for "*a revision of our attitude towards it (Islam) and a critical examination of our prejudices*" ... "*We should first set about progressively changing the way our Christian brothers see it. This is the most important of all*" ... "*We must clear the way the out-dated image inherited from the past, or distorted by prejudice and slander*" ... "*and recognize the past injustice towards the Muslims for which the west, with its Christian education, is to blame.*" The Vatican document is nearly 150 pages long. In the same document, the authors address the following suggestions to the Christians: "*Here also, we must surrender to a deep purification of our attitude. In particular, what is meant by this are certain 'set judgments' that are all too often and too lightly made about Islam. It is essential not to cultivate in the secret of our hearts views such as these, too easily or arbitrarily arrived at, and which the Muslim finds confusing.*"

One extremely important view is the attitude that leads people to repeatedly use the name Allah to mean the God of Muslims, as if the Muslims believe in a God who was different from the God of the Christians. The same document stresses this fundamental point in the following terms:

"It would seem pointless to maintain that Allah is not real God, as do certain people in the west!" The Conciliatory document has put the above assertion in its proper place. There is no better way of illustrating Islamic faith in God than by quoting the following extracts from *Lumen Gentium*,

produced by the second Vatican Council (1962-1965):
“The Muslims profess the faith of Abraham and worship with us the sole merciful God, who is the future judge of men on the Day of Reckoning.”

This book dealt with the most important issue of man's life, that is, the existence of God. One may think that this issue is not that important, but in reality it is the most crucial and the highest priority issue in man's life if true happiness is the objective of life. It is the most fundamental question and answer in this whole universe. Some people are blessed with faith in their hearts, and they do not need proof. This is the simple intuition of faith that everyone is born with. Others are polluted with the notion and slogan of “modern serious science” that seeing is believing, and they attempt to apply human approach to the spiritual world.

God does not show Himself to us because we are limited creatures and cannot comprehend the Unlimited Being. But, because of His mercy, He shows us His signs everywhere, if we care to look. He shows us what we need to see, and what we can comprehend.

- We see His Greatness in the vast universe that we are trying to understand.
- We see His Creation and Ingenuity in the perfection of the cell and its components.
- We see the resurrection every spring when plants in dead land come to life.
- We see sleeping as a foretaste of death.
- We see spiritually different laws applied to everyone during sleeping and dreaming.
- We see paradise as the ultimate dream of every human where true peace and happiness exist.
- We see hell in the earthly fire.
- We see His system of reward and punishment applies in many courts on earth.

Indeed, Praise be to Allah, we have all what we need to believe

in Him. Thank you God, for showing us your way. And if one does not see that now, one will certainly be convinced at the Day of Judgment.

However, the real threat to monotheistic religions is the high tide of atheism that advocates the theory of evolution and unsubstantiated scientific theories. In USA, where freedom of speech and expression is protected by the constitution, some have concluded that their freedom should not have any limits. They can voice their atheistic views. Atheists claim that science, the Big Bang, the theory of relativity, and human evolution point to energy and not to Almighty Creator. They have no clues of who or how this energy started. They simply state their ignorance about the origin of this energy. These atheistic views contribute to the lack of serious understanding of the concept of faith. The USA is the country that has the most churches on earth. Simultaneously, it is the country that has the most violent crimes. It is also the country that has the largest number of prisons on earth.

So, God exists and his name is not father, son, Holy Ghost, Buddha, Yahweh, or Jehovah. His name in Arabic is Allah. This Name still exists in the Arabic Bibles, and was taken away from the non-Arabic Bibles.

For the Muslims:

- God is adequate for guidance, happiness, and salvation.
- There is no original sin. God forgave Adam's mistake that drove him out of heavens. Adam achieved forgiveness by imploring God for few short words of repentance. Satan's rebellion towards God, has established him as God's eternal adversary.
- The Quran is the authentic Word of God. It includes the Divine Standards that humans should follow, if they seek happiness in this world and in the hereafter.
- All Prophets were Muslims. They all surrendered to the Will of God.

And for our Christian friends:

- God alone is not enough for happiness and salvation.
- He needed Jesus to die on the cross to save humanity from the original sin.
- He needed the Holy Ghost to provide humanity with faith.

And for the atheists:

- They reject the Christian concept of the original sin and the belief that humans were expelled from paradise!
- They believe that God is in everything and everywhere. God is in the trees, in the cows, in the rocks, and in the computers!
- They believe in many gods that may represent one deity, who may be male and female!
- Modern scientific atheism refers all phenomena to energy!

As has been demonstrated, the whole Bible is full of contradictions, politics, tribal feud, and human perceptions. The Bible itself admits its own distortion by the lying pens of the scribes. Biblical theologians when confronted with the many problems in the Bible, their usual answer is that these contradictions are from the liberal mind, not the conservative one. This answer is usually followed by a request to just have faith in Jesus, and you will be saved. However, this faith has to be a validated faith. No one should accept Buddhism on the grounds of having faith in Buddha. No one should accept Hinduism with its many gods on the grounds of having faith. No one should accept atheism on the grounds of having faith in energy. Faith has to be validated and convincing.

Islam recognizes Jesus as one of the great prophets of God and as the Messiah. Outside the Christian Church, no other religious community has given Jesus so much honor, respect, esteem and love as Muslims have. Thousands of Muslims are proud and believe that they are blessed to have the name "Eesa" or "Maryam" which are the Arabic names for Jesus and Mary. Islam recognizes the miraculous birth of Jesus by the Virgin Mary. However, Muslims and Christians do interpret this birth differently. Christians see it as an incarnation of God on earth of the son of god. Muslims see it as a special miracle. Every prophet has a special miracle that suits

the needs and the challenges of his time. Since Jesus contemporaries used to deny the existence of spirit, they were shown the presence and the power of the divine spirit by this miraculous birth. The message of Jesus was basically the same as the message of all the prophets of God. He was sent to invite people to the worship of One God, to do the righteous deeds and to be kind and loving to others. He reminded his people to pay attention not only to the letter of the laws but also to the spirit of the laws.

The Quran states that Jesus was mistreated, denied and rejected by his people just as other prophets were also mistreated. Some of his contemporaries opposed him and tried to crucify him. Jesus, however, prayed to God to save him from them, and to “*take this cup (death) away*” from him, Luke 22:42. God accepted his prayer, and saved him from crucifixion. The generally accepted Muslim view is that Jesus was lifted up to heaven, and he still lives in his body in heaven:

Surah 4, Ayah 157-158: “*That they said (in boast), “We killed Christ Jesus the son of Mary, the Messenger of Allah; - but they killed him not, nor crucified him, but so it was made to appear to them, and those who differ therein are full of doubts, with no (certain) knowledge, but only conjecture to follow, for of a surety they killed him not: - Nay, Allah raised him up unto Himself; and Allah is Exalted in Power, Wise.”*”

Jesus has yet to fulfill his Messianic role. Muslims, like Christians, believe that Jesus is the Messiah and that he will come back to earth before the end of time and restore peace and order, fight the Anti-Christ and demonic forces, and bring victory for truth and righteousness. The true followers of Jesus will prevail over those who deny him and refuse to surrender to the Will of God.

It is obvious that our present time systems, with its contradicting human standards, have failed in most important aspects that affect the necessities of human life on earth:

- Failure in the global economic systems, whether it is a socialist

or capitalist system.

- Failure in the fields of freedom, security, and peace for most people on earth.
- Failure in the moral and spiritual levels that lead to an increase in crimes.
- Failure in the political systems, where corruption is the norm and not the exception.
- Failure in the education systems that exclude God and constraint the thinking process.
- Failure in the legal systems that ignore the rights of both the victims and suspects.
- Failure in basic human relationships, especially those at the family level.

All these failures can only be attributed to one basic phenomenon: the conflicting human standards to reach the ultimate human goals for happiness and peace. The solution is provided in the only authentic User's Manual for the individual and the society: the Quran, where the Divine standard is clearly and simply presented. It has been shown throughout the history of humanity:

- Humans are happy when they adhere to the true guidance of the Creator.
- Humans are miserable when they forget the true guidance of the Creator.

Therefore, Islam and the Quran are the only solutions to all human illnesses. As for the Muslims, they need to have strong faith, and not just an elementary knowledge of this glorious religion. They need to go back to the basics of Islam and quit chasing the fake western image of success. They need to regard the authentic Word of God as their guidance in life. They need to "feel", and not just "know" the following Ayah:

Surah 21, Ayah 92, "Verily, this Ummah of yours is a single Ummah, and I am your Lord and Cherisher, therefore, Serve me (and no other)."

The meaning of the above Ayah is repeated in the following Ayah:

Surah 23, Ayah 52, *“And verily, this Ummah of yours is a single Ummah, and I am your Lord and Cherisher, therefore, Fear me (and no other).”*

In the above short Ayah, Allah states that the Islamic nation is one nation, with Him as the Lord, and the Muslims are given a command to worship and serve Him. Any conscientious Muslim should take these Ayat very seriously. Allah states a fact, followed by a command to worship and serve Him. And when Muslims are given a command from the Almighty, should anyone ignore it? Or should they treat this command with the proper respect it deserves? The response of the Muslims to the above Ayat should be “we hear, we obey.” Muslims are responsible for reestablishing the Word of Allah. They are entrusted by the most significant sentence in this Universe: “No God but Allah.” Muslims should exert much effort to establish *one* nation, worshipping *One* God, following *one* Book, following *one* last Messenger, praying towards *one* Kaabah for the true peace on earth.

10.1 The Religion Criteria

Humanity searches for truth and freedom. Chaos and turmoil will result if everyone is practicing freedom without limits. However, when it comes to freedom of religion, one has to be prudent and objective. Humans can make choices, but no one can guarantee the consequences. That is what I attempted to achieve throughout this work. In Chapter 4, I established criteria for a religion and for a Holy Book. Since, I am only addressing monotheistic religions, I will confine the following analysis to Judaism, Christianity and Islam.

Universality

Since we know that God is One, and we are all His people, it follows that there must be one religion. This is because God does not change

His rules to suit different nations at different times. Also, because we all came from a single father and mother, He measures all humanity with only One Standard. Therefore, religion should be universal regardless of race, color, time, place, wealth, or gender.

This condition automatically excludes Judaism unless we accept the notion that God prefers the Jews and only the Jews to the rest of humanity. In this case, this contradicts one of God's attributes: Justice. Jews do not have missionaries, and they do not invite any one to join them. Moreover, if someone wants to convert to Judaism, which is supposed to be a religion of God, he will encounter difficulties with that conversion. It is a fact that the Jews in Israel do not accept offspring from a Jewish father. According to the Jewish law in Israel, only the mother determines religion. Therefore, if someone manages to be converted by a Jewish organization outside Israel, the Jewish establishment in Israel will not recognize the conversion.

Therefore, this criterion of universality applies only to Christianity and Islam.

Simplicity

A religion by definition should be understood and practiced by all people regardless of their intellectual and educational capability. A religion should be for illiterate as well as those with the highest degree. There should not be any confusion or ambiguity in the explanation of the religion.

The doctrine of the trinity has never been understood for two thousand years, since the beginning of the Byzantine arguments until the present time. The Christian creed that Jesus and the Holy Ghost are made from the "same substance" as that of God is an eternal puzzle. Tyler Roberts, lecturer at Harvard University, said: "A lot of my students express questions about *the troubled Jesus near the end of his life, when he felt he was being forsaken by God. To some this means he couldn't be the Son of God, because why would he, God, do that?*" Life, December 1994.

On the other hand, as we have seen, Islam is an extremely simple religion, that advocates Truly One God for all Creations.

Therefore, the criterion of simplicity applies only to Islam.

Uniqueness

The Holy Scriptures should be unique and only the original version should be used. There should not be multiple versions that are revised and revised again by humans and if a translation of the original version exists, it should be accompanied by the original text as a protection against incorrect human translation. The basic Christian doctrines of the son of god and trinity exist only in the King James Version, and these doctrines are deleted from later versions. This represents a serious problem to the Christian faith.

In the present time, the category of niche Bibles, as the publishing industry calls them is exploding. These are Bibles in well-known translations, such as King James or the New International versions, tailored and marketed to a person's interests. Of those on the market today, *The Promise* (by Nelson) features pastel heavenly skies. *The Women's Devotional Bible* (by Zondervan) is pink with flower illustrations. *The Eager Reader Bible* (by Tyndale) for the kids bears a cartoon of Noah on the front. The language has turned contemporary as well. Because the Bible is a best seller, the "Word of God" is now a marketing item.

Then there is *The New Testament and Psalms: An Inclusive Version* (Oxford University Press). In this latest revision of the Scriptures, the editors' "politically correct" purposes and processes are outlined in the front: "*replace or rephrase all gender-specific language not referring to particular historical individuals, all pejorative references to race, color or religions*" through the use of acceptable means of conforming the language of the work to an inclusive idea. Inclusive mainly means ridding the text, as much as possible, of masculinity, both in syntax and in metaphor. Since the Bible refers to God as He or Himself, and the Almighty has no gender, the editors replaced all reference of "He" by "The Great One" or "The Mighty One."

This is what is happening to the Word of God in Christianity. Some people believe that they can write a revision of the Bible better than God Himself. God only knows the number of versions

and revisions of the Bible. But with the Quran, there is only one unique Arabic text for all times in all places.

Therefore, the criterion of uniqueness applies only to Islam.

Openness

Following the above condition of simplicity, a religion should be opened with all its aspects. The exact history should be presented. The evolution of doctrine, if any, should be known and accessible to the public. The honest preachers should not attempt to keep their congregations in the dark about any subject relating to religion. It is nice for a religion to emphasize good morals, but should this be the only criterion of accepting a religion? Many times when a Muslim discusses religion with a Christian and presents him with historical facts, the Christian's usual answer is: I did not know that.

The average Christian is not aware of the evolution of Christianity as a religion in four phases as demonstrated earlier in Chapter 6. The average Christian is not aware of any contradictions in the Bible. Christian preachers do not volunteer most of what is presented in this book. They only emphasize good morals in Christianity and avoid any controversial subject in the Scriptures. The whole truth is not presented, and only the positive side is preached.

With the Quran or Islamic preaching, everything is in the open for anyone. Allah said in the Quran:

Surah 22, Ayah 78, "...and (He) has imposed no difficulties on you in religion.."

Islam gives freedom and full play to man's faculty of every kind. Islam imposes no restrictions on knowledge or acquiring any information from the highest to the lowest level. Anything can be discussed in Islam, except, of course, the nature of God, which is beyond human comprehension.

Therefore, the criterion of openness applies only to Islam.

Authenticity

The scriptures of a religion should be authentic and traceable to its origin. Also, all the records should not be adulterated or tainted with any *Human* ideas or perception. The original writer, or writers of the scriptures should be known, and there should be sufficient evidences for the trustworthiness of the writers. The subject of authenticity should be very clear and definite without any confusion about who actually wrote the scriptures.

As was demonstrated, the Bible is a collection of the Word of God, the sayings of the prophets, and the human perception of events. All intertwined to the extent that it is impossible to separate them. It was also shown that the human input to the Bible lead to many contradictions. If there are few contradictions in the New Testament, one might attempt to find a reasonable interpretation, or blame it on our human limitation. But the contradictions are so many and they exist in serious events. As such, one should question any event in the New Testament that does not conform to the previous religious history.

It should by now be very clear, that the authors of the Gospels are actually not confirmed as the true writers of the Gospels. Also the dates and places of writing the Bible are unknown.

With the Quran, all the information about the Revelation and its authenticity is documented in the Islamic library. The entire Quran has been memorized from the time of the Prophet until our present time by millions of Muslims. Not even a comma or full stop was added or deleted from the original Arabic text of the Quran. Even the way of reciting the Quran by hundreds of millions of Muslims is traceable with a chain of narrations to the exact recitation of the Prophet himself. This is the promise of Allah to guard the Quran, not only in writing but also in recitation. Islamic scholars record the sayings of the Prophet. Each saying is associated with a chain of narration, with the level of trustworthiness of each narrator. This makes the Hadith better reserved than the entire Bible.

The Christian and Jewish libraries are full of books with titles like "Who wrote the Old Testament, " "Who wrote the New Testament," and "Who wrote the Bible", etc. that raise serious

questions about the authenticity of the entire Bible. The Islamic or non-Islamic libraries do not include books with titles like "Who wrote the Quran." No serious scholar ever questions the authenticity of the Quran.

Therefore, the criterion of authenticity applies only to Islam.

Consistency

Because a Holy Book is revealed from God, then one should not find inconsistency or contradictions in the scriptures. There should not be any error or even a claim of error associated with the Holy Books.

We have seen how the Bible was written; the Old Testament by J, P, E and D, and the New Testament by A, B, C, and Q. We have seen many inconsistencies in the Bible because authors based their material on their political background and tribal feud.

With the Quran, there is not a single inconsistency in the whole text. Even the Ayat that describe the scientific miracles of the Quran were shown to be accurate, and explain the known facts of our present day precisely.

Therefore, the criterion of consistency applies only to Islam.

The Prophet

The character of the Prophet on whom the revelation was revealed should be impeccable before the revelation. His life should be documented before and after the revelation to confirm that he was honest and truthful. He should not have bowed to anyone else before God.

However, the Biblical views of the Jewish Prophets are extremely distorted. These Prophets are described as committing adultery, incest, and worshipping idols. On the other hand, Islam holds high moral views for all the messengers of God.

Therefore, the criterion of the Prophet applies to Moses, Jesus and Muhammad.

The Holy Book

The Holy Book should have the following characteristics:

- It should identify God in names and attributes.
- It should show Humans the proper way of communicating with God.
- It should convey a message that does not contradict human intuition and accepted morals.
- It should guide humans to the right path for salvation that leads to paradise.
- It should warn Humans against evil acts that lead to hellfire.
- It should project a sense of purity and holiness.
- It should outline the divine standard that humans should follow.
- It should include overwhelming prophecies and scientific miracle as a continuous challenge to the unbelievers.

Only the Quran satisfies all of the above and more! The beauty and eloquence of the Quran resonates with the deepest aspirations of man to change his whole way of life. One feels that Allah authors every Ayah as it touches the heart and inspires the mind. The sensation of listening to the Quran is quite overwhelming. It feels that each Ayah descends from heaven with all the blessing of Allah to mankind, and recitation of the Quran in the original recitation style of the Prophet himself adds reverence to this sensation.

Therefore, the criterion of The Holy Book applies only to the Quran.

After examining all the above religious criteria, the conclusion is:

Islam is the True and Perfect religion. And that is what Allah states precisely about Islam:

Surah 12, Ayah 40, “..That is the true religion, but most among mankind know not.”

Surah 30, Ayah 30, “..That is the true religion, but most among mankind know not.”

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<http://islamicity.com/mosque/default.shtml> IslamiCity in Cyberspace.

<http://www.quran.org.uk/> Holy Qur'an Resources on the Internet in 24 languages.

<http://www.islaam.com/> Islamic Web site.

<http://www.islamworld.net/> The solution to any problem.

<http://www.understanding-islam.com/> Understanding Islam.

<http://www.sultan.org/> Discover Islam.

<http://isna.net/> Islamic Society of North America

<http://www.icna.com/main.shtml> ICNA (Islamic Circle of North America)

<http://www.islamiska.org/> Swedish, Danish, English, Arabic.

<http://www.islamic.org.uk/> Investigating Islam, UK.

<http://www.msa-natl.org/> Muslim Student Association national site in USA.

<http://www.islamic-awareness.org/> Islamic answers to Christian Missionaries and Orientalists.

Bible Study

<http://bible.crosswalk.com/> Search engine of different versions of the Bible.

Dedications

To The God of the universe.

Thank You for showing me Your way.

- O Allah, I bear witness that there is no god but You.
- O Allah, all Praises are to You for Your Glory, Mercy, and Bounty.
- O Allah, please accept this humble effort and forgive me for my shortcomings.
- O Allah, help me to disseminate this knowledge to all those who need it.
- O Allah, Help me to live as a Muslim, and die as a believer.
- O Allah, bless anyone who seeks the truth, and Your way.
Amen.

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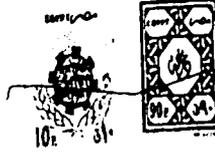
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نموذج رقم ١٧

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من طبعه على تفننكم الخاصة .

مع التأكيد على ضرورة العناية التامة بكتابة الآيات القرآنية والأحاديث
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عيسى

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Most Merciful.

“Praise be to Allah, the Cherisher and Sustainer of the Worlds; Most Gracious, Most Merciful; Master of the Day of Judgment. Thee do we worship, and Thine aid we seek. Show us the straight way, The way of those on whom thou hast bestowed Thy Grace, those whose (portion) is not wrath, and who go not astray.”

Ameen

(Quran 1 : 1-7)