

Why Muhammad – peace be upon him – came to the world?

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Introduction

The book answers the question: "Was there any need for a prophet after Jesus?"

The book explains the reasons behind the advent of Muhammad after Jesus.

The six hundred years between Christ and Muhammad were truly the dark ages of the world. Religion was corrupted; the standard of morals fell low; many false systems and heresies arose; the divine books were corrupted and there was a break in the succession of prophets until the coming of Mohammad – peace be upon him.

Muhammad the son of man, the spirit of truth, the Messenger of the way, came with the universal Message of Islam to save humankind from disbelief, oppression, corruption, ignorance and moral decadence that was dragging humanity towards self-annihilation.

Muhammad came to amend and reform the path of salvation which was covered with falsehood and drowned in darkness.

The Prophet of Islam is Allah's chosen one to renew the faith. He came to restore the original faith of Allah that had been given to all prophets before him – pure monotheism.

Chapter 1

The condition of the world before the advent of Islam

The six hundred years between Christ and Muhammad – peace be upon him – were truly the dark ages of the world. Religion was corrupted; the standard of morals fell low; many false systems and heresies arose; and there was a break in the succession of prophets until the coming of Mohammad – peace be upon him.

Before the advent of Muhammad, humankind was immersed in a state of degeneration. The Messages of the past prophets had been distorted and ignored, civilization was on the decline and humanity had slumped into an age of darkness, with disbelief, oppression and corruption prevalent everywhere. The condition of the world at that time presented the gloomiest picture ever of human history.

Beginning with the condition of religions and beliefs in the Arabian Peninsula, the Arabs prior to Islam were committed in their hearts to idols, and what they saw around themselves they made into idols. They had idols made of wood or stones round which they made different turns whenever they went into their houses, and they took permission from them when they went out on a journey. Some of them used to make their own gods from sweets, and subsequently, they would eat them when they got hungry.

The town of Harran, where Abraham started his campaign against star worship, was the center of the Sabaeans. In this town, stars were the object of veneration. Belief in the stars and in the connection between the movements of the stars and earthly destiny was very strong. Each star was the god of one event images of Mars, Jupiter, Venus, etc. The stars were worshipped in the temples, and the worshippers asked them for help, and sometimes sacrificed to them. The thoughts of the Sabaeans sometimes turned to angels and jinn. The angels were the daughters of Allah, and were thought to influence events. They imagined that Allah had a wife who was one of the jinn (1).

The Arabs of that era turned the house (Ka'ba) which Prophet Abraham had built at the command of Allah in order for people to worship Him alone, into quarters for their idols. They replaced the monotheism of Abraham with the worship of idols, stars and demons. They believed that apart from the life of this world there was no other life.

The people of Makkah used to practice usury on large scale with high interest rates, when the debtors were not able to repay, they were enslaved or obliged to force their wives and daughters to commit adultery, in order to be able to collect enough money to repay the debt.

The Arabs before Islam were slaves of habits and impulses. They used to take pride in invasion and plunder. They were so brutal and insensitive that a number of them used to burry their daughters alive. Tribal rivalries and blood feuds ran among them like the burning desert sands of Arabia (2).

At the time of the birth of Prophet Muhammad, there existed two great powers on earth, the Persian Empire in the East, and the Roman Empire in the West. The two powers were actively hostile and almost permanently at war with each other.

In Persia many religions were being practiced, but the one which most people followed was Zoroastrianism. If Zoroaster was a true prophet who had a religion based on the Oneness of Allah, his true teachings had been changed by the passage of time. The foundations and principles of Zoroastrianism were transformed by the Magi and the priests to their own advantage and the ruling class. Thus the Oneness of Allah became polytheism. Zoroastrianism was filled with the ancient gods of the first times of the Arian tribes (1).

The fire-worshipping Persians, with their strange concept of dualism were further plagued by the still weirder Mazdakite doctrine (a socio-religious movement that flared up in the Sassanian Kavad (488-531 CE) founded by Mazdak son of Bamdad), that advocated communal ownership and even ruled that women were the common property of all men. Like Many a few centuries earlier, who had claimed a new religion by combining the teachings of Jesus and Zoroaster. Mazdakite's movement was also a reaction to the corruption of the traditional priestly class. Both creeds died away after the execution of their proponents, who more or less depended on royal patronage. On the other hand, the Sasanian aristocracy aligned with the Zoroastrian clergy was steeped in pleasure, burdening the oppressed masses with heavy taxes and oppression (2).

At the other end was the Byzantine world, which though claiming to profess a divinely revealed religion (Christianity), had in fact polluted the monotheist Message of Jesus with the sediments of ancient Greek and Roman pagan thoughts. In 281 CE, the Greco-Roman Church Council rejected the doctrine of Arius of Alexandria, to which most of the eastern provinces of the empire adhered, and in its place the council had coined the belief that Allah and Jesus are of one substance and therefore co-existent. Arius and his followers had held the belief in the uniqueness and majesty of Allah, Who alone, they said has existed since eternity, while Jesus was created in time.

There were colonies of Jews scattered across West Asia and North Africa, to whom several Messengers had been sent by Almighty Allah. However, even these divine favors had failed to reform them. The laws sent to Prophet Moses had been distorted and tampered with. The Jews had numerous sects fighting with each other. Some were altogether out of the pale, e.g., the Samaritans, who had a separate Torah of their own: they hated the other Jews and were hated by them. But even in the orthodox body, there were several sects; the Pharisees, who were literalists, formalists, and fatalists, and had a large body of traditional literature, with which they overlaid the Law of Moses; the Sadducees, who were rationalists, and seemed to have doubted the doctrine of the Resurrection of a hereafter; the Essenes, who practiced a sort of communism and asceticism and prohibited marriage.

Further to the East, lay the once flourishing cultures of China and India, which were groping in darkness. Confucianism had confused the Chinese, robbing their minds of any positive thinking. In India there were various religions, but idolatry prevailed. Hinduism had no universal pretensions whatsoever, and was peculiar to geographical

confines of India, or more properly Northern India and its Aryan invaders. Conversion of foreigners was difficult because one had to be born in a particular caste and it was the mystery of 'Karma' that determined one's fate.

The religious situation in Europe was like it was in Persia. Christianity had given up its original form and had become stuck in polytheism and the dogma of the Trinity. In France, Britain and Spain, people did not believe in a unique Allah (2).

The corruption of Christianity was complete by the end of the sixth century. The intellectual Islamic scholar Dr. Muhammad Fazl-ur-rahman in his book entitled, "Islam and Christianity" (3) described the condition of Christianity before the advent of Islam based on the statements of eminent Christian scholars. The following is some of their statements:

St Hilary, the bishop of Potiers in the fourth century A.C. and one of the fathers of the church wrote:

"It is a thing equally deplorable and dangerous that there are as many creeds as opinions among men, as many doctrines as inclinations, and as many sources of blasphemy as there are faults among us; because we make creeds arbitrarily and explain them as arbitrarily. The Homoousion is rejected, and received, and explained away by successive synods. The partial or total resemblance of the father and of the son is a subject for dispute for these unhappy times. Every year, nay every moon, we make new creeds to describe invisible mysteries. We repent of what we have done, we defend those who repent, and we anathematize those whom we defended. We condemn either the doctrine of others in ourselves or ours in that of others; and reciprocally tearing one another to pieces, we have been the cause of each other's ruin." (4).

The famous church historian Dean Milman supports the above statement with the following observations:

"The Bishop of Constantinople was the passive victim, the humble slave, or the factious adversary, of the Byzantine Emperor; he rarely exercised a lofty moral control upon his despotism. The lower clergy, whatever their more secret beneficent or sanctifying workings on society, had sufficient power, wealth and rank to tempt ambition or to degrade to intrigue; not enough to command the public mind for any great salutary purpose, to repress the inveterate immorality of an effete age, to reconcile jarring interests, to mold together hostile races, in general they ruled, when they did rule, by the superstitious fears, rather than by the reverence and attachment of great-full people. They sank downward into common ignorance, and yielded to the worst barbarism-a worn out civilization. Monasticism withdrew a great number of those who might have been energetic and useful citizens into barren seclusion and religious indolence. But except when the monks formed themselves, as they frequently did, into fierce political or polemic factions, they had little effect on the condition of the society. They stood aloof from the world-the anchorites in their desert wildernesses, the monks in their jealousy-barred convents, and secure, as they supposed, of their own salvation, left the rest of mankind to inevitable perdition" (5).

About the general degeneration, the rev. Dr. White remarks:

"Divided into numberless parties, on account of distinctions the most trifling and absurd, contesting with each other from perverseness, and persecuting each other with rancor, corrupt in opinion and degenerate in practice, the Christians of this unhappy period seemed to have retained little more than the name and external profession of their religion. Of a Christian Church scarce any vestige remained. The most profligate principles and absurd opinions were universally pre-dominant; ignorance amidst the most favorable opportunities of knowledge, vice amidst the noblest encouragements to virtue, a pretended zeal for truth, mixed with the wildest extravagances of error, an implacable spirit of discord about opinions which none could settle, and a general and a striking similarity in the commission of crimes, which it was the duty and interest of all to avoid.

"The images of the saints who had labored to disseminate, and the bones of the martyrs who had died to confirm the faith, were now by the art of a designing priesthood, and the ignorance of a superstitious multitude, held up as proper objects of religious adoration.

"The blind fury of superstitious zeal extinguished the tenderest sentiments of nature; the majesty of the laws was trampled on and violated with impunity; the cities of the East were deluged with blood." (6).

On an appeal by Dean Wace and others to the authority of the first six centuries, the Church Association of England adopted the following resolution:

"The first six centuries were characterized by fierce controversies as to the most fundamental verities of the Christian faith by the wholesale introduction of adult converts, who brought with them heathen and Jewish habits of thought and were in many cases of a low type of civilization; and the adulteration of the Gospel was further facilitated by the purely nominal adhesion of persons anxious to stand well with the first Christian emperors. The period was of incessant fermentation and of rapid and continuous change (7).

With regard to class and racial differences, in Persia people were divided into classes and each class had special privileges. The class connected with the ruling council had the most privileges. Similarly in Europe and India, society was divided into classes, and the persistent desire to possess land, to trade, and the exemption from taxes was the prerogative of the nobility. At that time also, every one of the people of the world thought themselves superior in terms of race over everyone else.

The situation of women in pre-Islamic society was catastrophic. In Arabia, woman was a commodity, counted in the wealth of the father, husband or son; and after death she was inherited like the other possessions and became the property of the descendents. It was a disgrace to have a daughter, and in some tribes the family buried this shameful thing with their own hands. In Persia, also the form of class society did not bring anything better for women.

In Greece, woman was a creature of perpetual filthiness, a child of Satan, similar to an animal. In India throughout her life, she was under the control of her father, husband or son, and had to address her husband as god, master and lord, and like a slave she

had no right to ownership. After the death of her husband she had no right to take another husband.

The revolting custom of Sati, the burning of the widow alive with the funeral pyre of her husband, was also practiced at that time.

In Japan, as well, woman was under the control of her father, husband or son for the whole of her life, and the daughter had no share in inheritance. In China the father was master of the house and had so much power that he could sell his wife and children to bondage and slavery, and sometimes he even had the right to kill them. On top of this, daughters had no esteem and sometimes they were left in the desert to be the prey of the wild pigs (1).

The Romans also considered women to be the incarnation of devil and as harmful spirits, and kept them like children under their control.

After all this persecution which took place for centuries between people enjoining the same religion, and after the distortion of the Torah and the Gospel, thus breaching the covenant with Allah, a last Warner to humanity had to be sent as a last resort.

Allah, the All-Merciful, wished to give his servants a last chance. He sent the Prophet of the end of time – the seal of the Prophets – with the Koran, the last of the Revelations. This time, the divine Book of Allah is preserved until the Day of Judgment; its verses are immune to violation or misinterpretation. The Koran was descended on the Prophet of Islam to narrate to the Jews and the Christians the true words of Moses and the true teachings of Jesus without alteration, a Book that will guide them to the path of rectitude. The Message of Islam is therefore a reformation of the former religions which had been distorted by their followers.

Since all previous religions were primarily about Islam (complete surrender to Allah) and believing in His Oneness (there is no God worthy of worshipping but Allah), Islam – the religion of all Prophets before Muhammad – had to be followed.

Muhammad came therefore with the universal Message of Islam to save humankind from disbelief, oppression, corruption, ignorance and moral decadence that was dragging humanity towards self-annihilation.

This divine will is in fact a mercy from the All- Merciful to his servants in order to rescue them from a terrible chastisement awaiting those who deviated from the right path. This is why Muhammad was described in the Koran as a mercy to all mankind.

We have not sent thee, save as a mercy unto all beings (Al-Anbiya, 107).

Chapter 2

The Covenant

Muhammad came to the world because the Covenants between Allah and His servants were breached. Muhammad came to restore the original faith of Allah that had been given to all prophets before him – Islamic Monotheism.

The Koran teaches that Allah entered into a covenant with the Prophets, mankind, the Children of Israel, and with those who say, 'We are Christians'.

1- The Covenant with the Prophets

There are many Prophets and Messengers of Allah. About twenty-five of them are mentioned in the Koran; out of these twenty-five, only five are of strong will: namely Muhammad, Nûh (Noah), Ibrâhîm (Abraham), Mûsâ (Moses), and Îsâ (Jesus), son of Maryam (Mary).

As mentioned in the Koran, there is an implied Covenant with all Prophets, strict and solemn, that they shall carry out their mission, proclaim Allah's Truth without fear, and be ever ready to His service in all circumstances. That gives them their position and dignity, and their tremendous responsibilities in respect of the people whom they come to preach and lead to the right path.

Allah entered into a covenant with each of the Prophets of the past just as He entered into a covenant with Muhammad, Noah, Abraham, Moses and Jesus. He bound them to a solemn and serious covenant, so that He questions on the Day of Judgment the apostles who were entrusted with His Message to relate to the people, how His Message of Truth fared in the world, how it was received, who opposed it, and who assisted it. Like all trustees they will have to give a full account of their trust. Allah knows all, and their account will not add to His information but it will be evidence for and against those to whom it was preached, so that the responsibility of those who dishonored it may be duly enforced. The primary custodians of spiritual truth are the prophets, but in descending degrees all men to whom Allah's Message comes are included. Meantime Allah has put in readiness for the infidels a punishment which shall vex them with great physical and mental suffering (8).

Allah says in the Koran:

"And when We took compact from the Prophets, and from thee (Muhammad), and from Noah, and Abraham, Moses and Jesus Mary's son; We took from them a solemn compact, that He may question the truthful concerning their truthfulness; and He has prepared for the unbelievers a painful chastisement" (Al-Ahzab, 7).

The Koran teaches that Allah gathered all the Prophets from Adam until Jesus and entered into a covenant with them. The covenant expressed the obligation to which they were bound. Allah said to them, "I have given you the Book (scrolls of Abraham, Zaboor of David, Torah of Moses, Gospel of Jesus etc...), and acquainted your hearts

with wisdom to the effect that when there comes an apostle (Muhammad if they reach his time) with a Book which validates the authentic books which you hold in possession, you shall uphold him and help him to accomplish his mission. And now do you all subscribe to this allegiance and shall you pledge yourselves before Me to keep the vow!" They said: 'We agree.' Then Allah said, "Bear witness; and I am with you among the witnesses."

This is why Muhammad was foretold in the Torah and the Gospel and was the invocation of Abraham to Allah to send to the Arabs a Prophet from among themselves to teach them the Book and wisdom.

Other Koranic verses also indicating Allah's covenant with the prophets are the following:

And when Allah took compact with the Prophets:

'That I have given you of Book and wisdom; then there shall come to you a Messenger (Muhammad) confirming what is with you – you shall believe in him and you shall help him; do you agree?' He said.

'And do you take my load on you on that condition?'

They said, 'We do agree.'

Allah said, 'Then bear witness, and I am with you among the witnesses.'

Then whosoever turns his back after that – they are the ungodly.

What, do they desire another religion than Allah's, and to him has surrendered whoso is in the heavens and the earth, willingly and submit tingly, and to Him they shall be returned? (Al-Imran 81-83).

The Islamic scholar Abdullah Yussuf Ali explained the above verses by the fact that the people of the Book (Jews and Christians) are bound by their own oaths, sworn solemnly in the presence of their own Prophets. In the Old Testament as it now exists, Muhammad is foretold in Deut. xviii; and the rise of the Arab nation in Isaiah xlii. 11, for Kedar was a son of Ishmael and the name is used for the Arab nation.

Also in the New Testament as it now exists, Muhammad is foretold in the Gospel of St. John, xiv. 16. 16. xv. 26, and xvi. 7; the future Comforter cannot be the "Holy Spirit" as understood by Christians, because the holy Spirit already was present, helping and guiding Jesus. The Greek word translated "Comforter" is "Paracletos", which is an easy corruption from "Periclytos", which is almost a literal translation of "Muhammad" or "Ahmad". (8).

2- The covenant with the Children of Israel

Prophet Mûsa (Moses) is mentioned in the Holy Koran more than any other Prophet. We find a lot of detail in the Koran about Mose's childhood, and his life as a Prophet who lead his nation in most difficult of circumstances.

The Ten Commandments and the Law were given to Moses at the Mountain of Sinai, a prominent mountain in the Arabian Desert, in the peninsula between the two arms of the Red sea. The Israelites encamped at the foot of it for nearly a year. The Covenant was taken from them under many portents (Exodus. Xix. 5, 8, 16, 18), which are described in Jewish tradition in great detail. The Israelites solemnly entered into the

Covenant: all the people answered together and said, "All that the Lord has spoken we will do."

The Koran mentioned the Covenant with the Children of Israel:

And when We took compact with you, and raised over you the Mount: "Take forcefully what We have given you and give ear." They said, " We hear and rebel"; and they were made to drink the Calf in their hearts for their unbelief. Say: "Evil is the thing your faith bids you to, if you are believers." (Al-Baqarah, 93).

And when We took compact with the Children of Israel: "You shall not serve any save Allah; and to be good to parents, and the near kinsman, and to orphans, and to the needy; and speak good to men, and perform the prayer, and pay the alms." Then you turned away, all but a few of you, swerving aside (Al-Baqarahh, 83).

And again Allah entered with the Children of Israel into another covenant, thus: 'You do not shed your own blood, nor oust each other from your own dwellings', and this they ratified and bore witness, as stated in their own Book, the Torah.

The Koran says about this:

And when We took compact with you: "You shall not shed your blood, neither expel your own from your habitations"; then you confirmed it and yourselves bore witness (Al-Baqarah, 84).

Yet again they ignored the principles which they have ratified and they killed each other and they expelled some of their people from their homes and they allied themselves with their enemies in sin and transgression against the divine Law, and when some of them fell in captivity, they reverted to the principles of the Torah and redeemed them, albeit the same principles forbid them to shed their own blood or to oust each other from their homes. They credited part of the Book upon the ground of Allah's authority and discredited part upon the ground of their authority! Allah stated in the Koran that he who adopts this line of conduct shall suffer for his offense in the present life and in the Hereafter he shall be consigned to the most grievous torment.

Then there you are killing one another, and expelling a party of you from their habitations, conspiring against them in sin and enmity; and if they come to you as captives, you ransom them; yet their expulsion was forbidden you. What, do you believe in part of the Book and disbelieve in part? What shall be the recompense of those of you who do that; but degradation in the present life, and on the Day of Resurrection to be returned unto the most terrible of chastisement? And Allah is not heedless of the things you do (Al-Baqarahh, 85).

These people and such-like persons are they who had exchanged the Hereafter for the worldly life and its vanities; their suffering shall never abate nor shall their excruciating pain be mitigated nor can anyone come to help them out of their misery.

Those who have purchased the present life at the price of the world to come – for them the chastisement shall not be lightened, neither shall they be helped (Al-Baqarahh, 86).

Allah set among them twelve-head men of Jacob's prosperity to set good watch over the fulfillment of the divine agreement in which Allah had declared thus: I will be with you, with the proviso that: 1) you faithfully engage in the act of worship 2) give alms 3) that you acknowledge all my Apostles 4) and give credence to their missions, and that you give them all the help they need to accomplish Allah's purpose 5) and that unto Allah you lend a gratifying loan featured in benevolence. Then and then will I remit your iniquities and admit you into gardens of bliss and surpassing beauty beneath which rivers flow. But if any of you after this, disbelieved, he has indeed gone astray from the straight path.

The Israelites however, breached their divine Covenant with Allah, a matter that brought them within the major of Allah's wrath. Allah withdrew his overflowing Grace from them. This made their hearts grow hard. They were no longer protected from the assaults of evil, and they became impervious even to the Message of forgiveness which is open to all Allah's creatures. When the Children of Israel lost Allah' grace, they began to sin against their religion. They translocated the words of the sacred Scriptures to alter the intended sense of Allah's words and willfully neglected a part of what was imparted to them. They belied their Prophets and killed some others. They belied Muhammad, the last of the Messengers and tried to kill him. In doing so, they forgot a part of the original Message and purpose of Allah, and they invented new deceits to support the old ones (8).

The Koran narrates the breaking of the Children of Israel their compact with Allah:

Allah took compact with the children of Israel; and We raised up from among them twelve chieftains.

And Allah said, 'I am with you.

Surely if you perform the prayer, and pay the alms, and believe in my Messengers and succor them, and lend to Allah a good loan, I will acquit you of your evil deeds, and I will admit you to gardens underneath which rivers flow.

So whosoever of you thereafter disbelieves, surely he has gone astray from the right way.

So for their breaking their compact We cursed them, and made their hearts hard, they perverting words from their meanings; and they have forgotten a portion of that they were reminded of; and you will not cease to discover deceit in them, except a few of them.

Yet pardon them, and forgive; surely Allah loves the good-doers (Al-Maidah, 12, 13).

And We took compact with the Children of Israel, and We sent Messengers to them. Whensoever there came to them a Messenger with that their souls had not desire for, some they cried lies to, and some they slew (Al-Maidah, 70).

Moses came to the Children of Israel with the Torah which guides out of darkness into illumination, yet in his absence to fulfill the divine assignation, they paid

reverence to the calf and thereupon, they committed themselves to an evil line of conduct and a wrongful action.

And Moses came to you with the clear signs, then you took to yourselves the Calf after him and you were evildoers (Al-Baqarah, 92).

When the Children of Israel worshipped the calf and saw that they had gone astray, they realized that if Allah had no mercy upon them and forgive them, they shall certainly be of the losers. Here Moses chose out of his people seventy men to meet Allah on Mount Sinai in order to show their repentance and regret. But Moses and his men were seized with a violent earthquake as an expression of strong divine reproach against those who worshipped the calf. There and then did Moses pray for Allah's forgiveness: "O Allah my Creator: had you willed you would have planted their Hereafter and mine before now. Would you destroy us in requital of the evil which was committed by the foolish ones among us? It is only your trial by which you lead astray whom you will and keep guided whom you will. You are our protector. We beseech you to forgive us and to have mercy on us, for you are the Most Merciful of all who forgive."

Here Allah said to Moses, "With my punishment I smite whom I will, and my mercy extends to all things, I shall ordain it for those who do right, and practice regular charity, and those who believe in our signs. Those who follow the Messenger, the unlettered Prophet (Muhammad) whom they find mentioned in the Torah (Deut, xviii, 15) and the Gospel (John xiv, 16) which are with them. He will enjoin on them that which is right and forbid them what is wrong. He will make lawful for them what is good and prohibits them what is bad; and he will relieve them of the burdens and the fetters that are upon them. Then those who will follow Muhammad, and honor him, and help him, and follow the light which is sent down with him they are the successful.

The story of Moses on Mount Sinai beseeching mercy for his people from Allah after they worshipped the calf is clearly mentioned in the Koran:

And Moses chose of his people seventy men for Our appointed time; and when the earthquake seized them, he said, My Lord, if it had been your will you could have destroyed them before, and me. Would you destroy us for what the foolish ones of us have done? It is only your trial whereby you lead astray whom you will, and guides whom you will. You are our protector; so forgive us and have mercy on us, for you are the best of forgivers.

And prescribe for us in this world good, and in the world to come; certainly we have turned unto you."

He said, "As My Punishment I smite with it whom I will and My Mercy embraces all things, and I shall prescribe it for those who are god-fearing, and pay the alms, and those who believe in our signs, those who follow the Messenger, the unlettered Prophet whom they find written down with them in the Torah and the Gospel, bidding them to honor, and forbidding them dishonor, making lawful for them the good things and making unlawful for them the corrupt things, and relieving them of their loads, and the fetters that were upon them. Those who believe in him and succor him and help him, and follow the

light that has been sent down with him – they are the prosperous (Al-A'raf 155-157).

When the prophesy of the coming of Muhammad in the Torah was fulfilled and Muhammad came carrying the final Message from Allah and with him came the Koran which authoritatively validates the Torah, some of the Jews shut their eyes to the prophesy and ignored their own Book and turned their backs upon it as if they did not know.

When there has come to them a Messenger from Allah confirming what was with them, a party of them that were given the Book (Jews) threw away the Book of Allah behind their backs, as though they knew not (Al-Baqarah, 101).

And when they are told to acknowledge the Koran which Allah has imparted to Muhammad whom they know to be the last of Allah's messengers, they said: 'We only acknowledge what had been imparted to us', and they renounced all else when they knew fully well that the Koran was the truth which confirmed the Torah. Here Allah ordered the Prophet to say to them: 'Why then did you slay Allah's prophets in the past if your hearts have been really impressed with piety.'

And when they were told, 'Believe in that Allah has sent down,' they said, 'We believe in what was sent down to us'; and they disbelieve in what is beyond that, yet it is the truth confirming what is with them. Say: 'Why then were you slaying the prophets of Allah in former time, if you were believers?' (Al-Baqarah, 91).

Muhammad's Message was similar to the revelation which they had already received, and if they had looked into their own books honestly, they would have found proofs in them to show that the new Message was true and from Allah. But they ignored their own books or distorted them according to their own fancies.

And when Allah took compact with those who had been given the Book: 'You shall make it clear unto the people, and not conceal it.' But they rejected it behind their backs and sold it for a small price – how evil was that their selling! (Al-Imran, 187).

At the time of Moses some of the Jews rejected the Torah because it was not in accordance with their taste and liking; it excited their displeasure and disgust, and had it not been for a word that went forth before from Allah the torment would have overtaken them and the matter would have been settled between them. When Muhammad brought them the Koran they doubted it with suspicions amongst their thoughts.

And We gave Moses the Book; and there was difference concerning it, and but for a word that preceded from thy Lord, it had been decided between them; and they are in doubt of it (the Koran) disquieting (Fussilat, 445).

In addition to breaking their Covenant with Allah, the Children of Israel had several other iniquities. They rejected Allah's signs as conveyed by Muhammad; they killed Allah's Messengers thus deliberately defying Allah's law; they made false charges against Mary the mother of Jesus; they claimed that they killed Jesus; they hindered

people from Allah's way; by means of usury and fraud they oppressed their fellow-men.

The false charge against Mary was that she was unchaste:

Then she brought the child to her folk carrying him; and they said, 'Mary, thou hast surely committed a monstrous thing!

Sister of Aaron, thy father was not a wicked man, nor was thy mother a woman unchaste.' (Maryam 27, 28).

Such a charge is bad enough to make against any woman, but to make it against Mary, the mother of Jesus was to bring into ridicule Allah's power itself. Islam is especially strong in guarding the reputation of women. Slanderers of women are bound to bring four witnesses in support of their accusations, and if they fail to produce four witnesses, they are to be flogged with eighty stripes and debarred forever from being competent witnesses.

The people of the Book (the Jews) will ask thee to bring down upon them a Book from heaven; and they asked Moses for greater than that, for they said, 'Show us Allah openly.' And the thunderbolt took them for their evildoing. Then they took to themselves the Calf, after the clear signs had come to them; yet We pardoned them that, and We bestowed upon Moses a clear authority.

And We raised upon them the Mount, taking compact with them; and We said, to them. 'Transgress not the Sabbath': and We took from them a solemn compact.

So, for their breaking the compact, and disbelieving in the signs of Allah, and slaying the Prophets without right, and for their saying, 'Our hearts are wrapped' (with coverings so that they do not understand what the Messengers said) – nay, but Allah sealed them for their unbelief, so they believe not, except a few.

And for their unbelief, and their uttering against Mary a mighty calumny, and for their saying, 'We slew the Messiah, Jesus son of Mary, the Messenger of Allah' – yet they did not slay him, neither crucified him, only a likeness of that was shown to them.

Those who are at variance concerning him (Jesus) surely are in doubt regarding him; they have no knowledge of him, except the following of surmise; and they slew him not of a certainty – no indeed; Allah raised him up to Him; Allah is All-Mighty, All-Wise (An-Nisa 153-157).

A party of the Jews in the time of Muhammad ridiculed the Muslim belief that Gabriel brought down revelations to Muhammad. Michael was called in their books 'The great prince which standeth for the children of thy people' (Daniel, xii. 1). The vision of Gabriel inspired fear (Daniel, viii 16.17). But this pretence-that Michael was their friend and Gabriel their enemy-was a manifestation of their unbelief in angels, Prophets and Allah himself. It was wrong to say that they believed in one angel and not in another, because true faith is founded on the belief in Allah alone, all his divine books, all His angels, all his Prophets and in the Hereafter.

In any case it was disingenuous to say that they believed in one angel and not in another. Muhammad's inspiration was through visions of Gabriel. Muhammad had been helped to the highest spiritual light, and the Message which he delivered and his spotless integrity and exemplary life were manifest signs which every one could

understand except those who were obstinate and perverse. Besides, the verses of the Koran were in themselves reasonable and clear (8).

Allah said about this party of the Jews:

Say: "Whosoever is an enemy to Gabriel - he it was that brought it (the Koran) down upon your heart by the leave of Allah, confirming what was before it, and for guidance and good tidings to the believers. Whosoever is an enemy to Allah and his angels and His Messengers, and Gabriel, and Michael-surely Allah is an enemy to the unbelievers." (Al-Baqarahh 97, 98).

Worse, they followed something which was actually false and mischievous, such as the belief in magic and sorcery. They were attracted to the allegation related by those of them who attributed Solomon's prerogative of prophet hood and power to the skill in the art of sorcery and occult qualities; a defying impiety and a serious offence of which Solomon was innocent. In fact it was those with satanic characteristics among them who committed themselves to bid defiance to Allah. They taught people necromancy which they practiced through contact with the evil spirits and through the knowledge they inquired through the revelations which were imparted to the two Babylonians with angelic attributes Harut and Marut. But Harut and Marut made it clear to the people who they taught that their art was a source of temptation and an incitement to evil, and they cautioned against indulgence in the practice of this art as it meant defiance to Allah. Yet they pursued the evil aspect of this art to sow discord between a husband and his wife and similar evil acts. Yet they knew that he who engaged sorcery in the cause of vice shall have no share in the bliss of Hereafter (9).

And they follow what the satans recited over Solomon's kingdom; Solomon disbelieved not, but the satans disbelieved, teaching the people sorcery, and that which was sent down upon Babylon's two angels, Harut and Marut; they taught not any man, without they said, 'We are but a temptation; do not disbelieve.' From them they learned how they might divide a man and his wife, yet they did not hurt any man thereby, save by the leave of Allah, and they learned what hurt them, and did not profit them, knowing well that he whoso buys it shall have no share in the world to come; evil then was that they sold themselves for, if they had but known. Yet had they believed, and been god-fearing, a recompense from Allah had been better, if they had but known (Al-Baqarahh 102, 103).

The Message to Moses had unity: it was one Book, the Torah. The present Old Testament is a collection of old books 'sheets' of various kinds. There is no unity in such books, and much of the spirit of the original is lost or concealed or overlaid.

They measured not Allah with His true measure when they said, "Nothing did Allah send down to any mortal." Say: 'Who sent down the Book that Moses brought as a light and guidance to men?' You put it into parchments, revealing them, and hiding much; and you were taught that you knew not, you and your fathers.' Say: 'Allah.' Then leave them alone, playing their game of plunging (Al-An'am, 91).

3- The Covenant with the Christians

Muhammad came to the world because the Gospel of Jesus was corrupted.

Allah also took Covenant from the Christians: never to deviate from authentic Scriptures which betoken Allah's Oneness, Sameness, Uniqueness, Omnipotence and Ultimate authority. But they willfully neglected the Message that was delivered to them by Jesus, and considered him as Allah or the son of Allah, thus committing the most grievous sin by associating with Allah other partners. In consequence, Allah stirred up enmity and hatred among them till the Day of Resurrection. On the Day of Judgment Allah shall inform them of what they used to do.

And with those who say we are 'Christians' We took Compact; and they have forgotten a portion of that they were reminded of. So We have stirred among them enmity and hatred, till the Day of Resurrection; and Allah will assuredly tell them of the things they used to do (Al-Maidah, 14).

Allah made a covenant with the people of the Book (Jews and Christians) that they shall make the Book (Torah and Gospel) genuinely known to the people and not to hide the least of its text, but they cast it behind their backs and exchanged the truth for the worthless vanity of the fleeting world. Islam teaches that those who rejoice at their successful perversion of their own Scriptures from its original purity to what accords with their own desire, and love to be credited with theological virtues which they do not possess, they shall in fact be put to the torture.

And when Allah took compact with those who had been given the Book: 'You shall make it clear unto the people, and not conceal it.' But they rejected it behind their backs and sold it for a small price – how evil was that their selling. Reckon not that those who rejoice in what they have brought, and love to be praised for what they have not done – do not reckon them secure from chastisement; for them awaits a painful chastisement (Al-Imran 187, 188).

The Christian Covenant is also the charge which Jesus gave to his disciples, to welcome Ahmad (the second name of Prophet Muhammad which literally means the one who praises Allah more than others), but when Ahmad came confirming what Jesus foretold and presented the Christians and the Jews and the pagans of Makkah with the Koran, the last divine revelation, they strove to quench the light of Allah and called it all sorcery - they called Islam unreal which became the most solid fact of human history.

But who is wicked than him who relates falsehood to Allah at a time when he is graciously invited to Islam, to believe in the One and only God Allah! Allah however, does not impress piety upon the hearts of the perverse that are wrong-headed and wrongful in actions.

"And when Jesus son of Mary said, "Children of Israel, I am indeed the Messenger of Allah to you, confirming the Torah that is before me, and giving

glad tidings of a Messenger who shall come after me, whose name shall be Ahmad."

Then, when he (Muhammad) brought them the clear signs (the Koran), they said, 'This is a manifest sorcery.'

And who does greater evil than he who forges against Allah falsehood, when he is being invited to Islam. And Allah guides never the people of the evildoers (As-Saff 6, 7).

Allah mentions in the Koran that Muhammad was sent to the Jews and the Christians to make intelligible to them much of what they have concealed of the Scriptures – such as Allah's Oneness, prohibition of usury...etc so that they apprehend what is purely spiritual and intellectual, and repeal much of what is now irrelevant.

Muhammad came to them as a light and the Koran as a plain Book, wherewith Allah guides all those who seek His good pleasure to way of peace, and brings them out of darkness by His Will unto light and guides them to the Straight Way (Islamic Monotheism):

People of the Book, now there has come to you Our Messenger, making clear to you many things you have been concealing of the Book, and effacing many things. There has come to you from Allah a light, and a Book Manifest whereby Allah guides whoever follows His good pleasure in the ways of peace and brings them forth from the shadows into the light by His leave; and He guides them to a straight path (Al-Maidah, 15-16).

In the Koran Allah the All-Mighty clearly and strongly declares that infidels indeed are those who believe that Allah is the Messiah, Jesus the son of Mary. Allah ordered Muhammad to say to the Christians, "Who then can restrain Allah in any way, shape or form if He willed to destroy the Messiah, Jesus, the son of Mary, his mother and all those domiciled on earth. To Allah alone, belong all that is in the heavens and all that is on earth and all that lies in between; He creates and brings into being whom and whatever he will; He is indeed Omnipotent.

They are unbelievers who say, "Allah is the Messiah, Mary's son."

Say: "If Allah chose to destroy the Messiah, Mary's son, and his mother and all those who are on earth, who has the power to prevent Allah from this? For to Allah belongs the Kingdom of the heavens and the earth, and all that is between them, Allah creates what He pleases. Allah is powerful over everything (Al-Maida, 17).

Wrapped in their imagination, the Jews and the Christians say: "We are the sons of Allah and His beloved". Allah instructed Muhammad to say to them: "Why then does He punish you and afflict you with pain and suffering in requital for your evil deeds! Indeed you are but creatures that form a part of those He brought into being and caused to exist. He forgives whom He will and torment whom He will and to Allah alone belong all that is in the heavens and all that on earth and all that lies in between, and to Him is the end and the purpose for which all are destined.

And the Jews and the Christians say, "We are the sons of Allah, and His beloved ones."

Say: "Why then does He chastise you for your sins? No; you are mortals, of His creating; He forgives whom He will, and He chastises whom He will." For to Allah belongs the kingdom of the heavens and of the earth, and all that is between them; to Him is the homecoming. (Al-Maida, 18).

The Jews and the Christians used "son" in a physical sense, or "beloved" in an exclusive sense as if Allah loved only the Jews and the Christians, thus making a mockery of religion by staining it with extreme racism. This refrain in the above verse negatives the idea of son ship, and negatives the idea of an exclusive "Beloved". In both cases it means that Allah is independent of physical relationships or exclusive partiality.

The Jews and the Christians carried their religious beliefs to excess and beyond the truth, and inclined to the same inordinate desires propounded by a people who erred and went wrong in judgment afore time like the Romans who adopted Christianity and caused many to go wrong by deviating from the path of rectitude.

Say: 'People of the Book, go not beyond the bounds in your religion, other than the truth, and follow not the caprices of a people who went astray before, and led astray many, and now again have gone astray from the right way (Al-Maidah, 77).

Maledictions were poured upon the Children of Israel by the words uttered against them with the tongues of David and Jesus, the son of Mary, on account of their disobedience and their willful transgression and violation of Allah's Commands. They did not forbid one another the iniquities which they committed. The Psalms of David have several passages of imprecations against the wicked (Psalms six 17-18; Lxxviii. 21-22): "Therefore the Lord heard this and was wrath: so a fire was kindled against Jacob, and anger also came up against Israel; because they believed not in God, and trusted not in His salvation"; Psalms Lxix. 22-28, and Psalms v.10. Jesus in Matt. xxiii.33: "Ye serpents generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of Hell"; also Matt. Xii. 34.

Cursed were the unbelievers of the Children of Israel by the tongue of David, and Jesus, Mary's son; that, for their rebelling and their transgression. They forbade not one another any dishonor that they committed; surely evil were the things they did (Al-Maidah 78, 79).

The Jews call Uzair (Ezra) a son of God, and the Christians call Jesus the son of God. Taking men for gods and sons for god was not a new thing. All ancient mythologies have fables of that kind.

Priest worship and the worship of saints is a form of superstition to which men have been prone in all ages. The grown of Jewish superstition is shown in the Talmud, and of Christian superstition in the doctrine of papal infallibility and the worship of saints. The mere idea of a separate order of priesthood to stand between Allah and man and be the exclusive repository of Allah's secrets is derogatory to the goodness and all-pervading grace of Allah.

False teachers and preachers distort the Message of Allah by the false words of their mouths, but Allah always perfect His Light, and make it shine all the brighter in the eyes of men. Islam being the perfect Light of truth is bound to prevail, in spite of the displeasure of those to whom light is an offense (8).

The Jews say, 'Ezra is the Son of God'. The Christians say, 'The Messiah is the Son of God.' That is the utterance of their mouths, confirming with the unbelievers before them. Allah assails them! How they are perverted. They have taken their rabbis and their monks as lords apart from Allah, and the Messiah, Mary's son – and they were commanded to serve but one God; there is no God but He; glory be to Him, above that they associate – desiring to extinguish with their mouths Allah's Light; and Allah refuses but to perfect His Light, though the unbelievers be averse. It is He who has sent His messenger (Muhammad) with the guidance and the religion of truth, that He may uplift it above every religion, though the unbelievers be averse (Al-Tawbah 30-33).

4- The Covenant with Mankind

The Koran or the Trust (moral responsibility and all the duties which Allah has ordained in the Koran) was offered to the heavens and the earth and the mountains but they declined to bear it, and were afraid of it, but man bore it, and in that he was unjust to himself and ignorant of its results.

Allah says in the Koran:

We offered the Trust to the heavens and the earth and the mountains, but they refused to carry it and were afraid of it; and man carried it. He was indeed unjust (to himself) and ignorant (of its results) (Al-Ahzab, 72).

The Trust is something given to a person, over which he has a power of disposition: he is expected to use it as directed or expected, but he has the power to use it otherwise. There is no trust if the trustee has no power, and the Trust implies that the Creator – the giver of the Trust – expects that the trustee would use it according to His wish.

Offering the trust to man is a serious matter in the sight of Allah and breaching of the trust invites his punishment. Those who profess faith but work in the opposite direction and those who defy or deny Allah shall be severely punished.

The heavens, the earth, and the mountains, i.e. other creatures of Allah besides man, refused to carry a Trust or a responsibility. They did not wish to be given a choice between good and evil. They preferred to submit their will entirely to Allah's will, which is All-Wise and perfect, and which would give them far more happiness than a faculty of choice, with their imperfect knowledge. Man was too audacious and ignorant to realize this, and the result has been that man as a race has been disrupted. The evil ones have betrayed the trust and brought punishment on themselves, though the good have been able to rise far above other creation to be the nearest ones to Allah.

In that sense, Allah offered the trust to other creatures, but they refused lest they should betray it, but man was less fair to himself. In his ignorance he accepted and betrayed the trust, with the result that some of his race became hypocrites, polytheists, atheists and unbelievers and were punished, though others were faithful to the Trust and received Allah's Mercy (8).

Allah intended a very high destiny for man, and placed him in his uncorrupted state even above the angels, but in his corruption man made himself even lower than the beasts.

**And when thy Lord said to the angels,
'I am setting in the earth a viceroy.'
They said, 'What, wilt Thou set therein one who will do corruption there, and shed blood, while we proclaim Thy praise and call Thee holy?'
He said, 'Assuredly I know that you know not.'
And He taught Adam the names (of everything), all of them;
Then He presented them unto the angels and said, 'Now tell me the names of these, if you speak truly.'
They said, 'Glory be to Thee! We know not save that Thow has taught us. Surely Thou art the All-knowing, the All-Wise.'
He said, 'Adam, tell them their names.'
And when he had told them their names He said, 'Did I not tell you I know the unseen things of the heavens and the earth? And I know what things you reveal, and what you were hiding (Al-Baqarahh 30-34).**

What was it that made man so high and noble? The distinguished status which Allah gave man was that Allah breathed something of His own spirit into man.

**And He originated the creation of man out of clay, then He fashioned his progeny of an extraction of mean water, then He shaped him, and breathed His spirit in him.
And He appointed for you hearing, and sight, and heart; little thanks you show (Al-Sagdah 7-9).**

**And when thy Lord said to the angels,
'See, I am creating a mortal of clay of mud molded.
When I have shaped him, and breathed my spirit in him,
Fall you down, bowing before him!' (Al-Hijr, 29).**

Natural disposition which is integral to man's soul was created by Allah so that man may acknowledge Him as the Lord who has power over all things. Oneness of Allah is integral to man's disposition because Allah in His infinite wisdom wished that man recognizes Him as the One and only God. This is why man was able to acknowledge his Lord before his existence on earth. This period before man was born into this world is called the pre-existential state of involuntary submission to Allah and of acknowledging Him.

The Covenant was made between Allah and His servants when He drew forth from the children of Adam - from their loins - their descendants, and made them testify concerning themselves saying, "Am I not your Lord?" They said, 'Yes, we do testify'.

Allah said, "Lest you should say on the Day of Judgment: 'Of this we were never mindful.' "

And when thy Lord took from the children of Adam, from their loins, their seed, and made them testify as to themselves, "Am I not your Lord?" They said, "Yes, we testify" lest you should say on the Day of Resurrection, "As for us, we were heedless of this" or lest you say, 'Our fathers were idolaters aforetime and we were seed after them. What, will you then destroy us for the deeds of the vain-doers "(Al-A'raf 172, 173).

Thus, mankind entered into a covenant with Allah by their affirmative answer to the question, "Am I not your Lord?" Their answer, "Yes, we testify" is engraved upon the intellect of man as a proof which reminds him of Allah's Lordship.

Carrying this trust however is not an easy task. In order for man to be nearer to His Creator he must acquire Allah's attributes such as piety, forgiveness, forbearance, honesty, Justice, Love, Mercy, compassion...etc.

Enjoining these attributes would draw man nearer to his Creator than is possible for any other creature of Allah. This was part of Allah's will and plan, but little did man realize what a tremendous task he was undertaking. Because man is weak and might fail to carry the trust, Allah's grace came to his assistance. He made the environment responsive to his needs. He further sent Messengers and Teachers for his guidance. Where man did his best he won through by Allah's grace, even though man's best was but a poor good. By carrying this great responsibility man became Allah's vicegerent on earth. Man must therefore obey Allah's Covenant with him and abide by it.

The role of the prophets then is to remind people of the Oneness of Allah which is embedded in their natural disposition from the very beginning before the descendance of Adam to earth.

The Covenant between Allah and his servants is completed in this way. His servants acknowledged that Allah is their creator, Cherisher and Sustainer. This obligation follows from their nature when it is pure and uncorrupted. The faculties in man are enough to teach him the distinction between good and evil, to warn him of the dangers that beset his life. There is therefore, no excuse for any individual to say, either that he was unmindful, or that he should not be punished for the sins of his fathers, because his punishment if any come from the personal responsibility and is for his own rejection of faith.

The Covenant made between Allah and humanity necessarily implies Trust, and its breach necessarily implies punishment.

Those who betray the trust act either as hypocrites or as unbelievers. Hypocrites are those who profess faith but bring not forth the fruits of faith. Unbelievers are those who openly defy faith, and from whom therefore no fruits of faith are to be expected.

Those who remain firm to their faith and their Covenant will receive the aid of Allah's Grace; their faults and weaknesses will be cured, and they will be made worthy of their exalted destiny, for Allah is Oft-Returning and Most –Merciful.

**O believers, fear Allah, and speak the truth.
That He may set right your deeds for you and will forgive you your sins.
Whosoever obeys Allah and His Messenger has won a mighty triumph.
That Allah may chastise the hypocrites, men and women alike; and idolaters,
men and women alike; and that Allah may pardon the believers, men and
women alike. Allah is All-Forgiving, All-Compassionate (Al-Ahzab 70, 71, 73).**

Because the covenants between Allah and his servants had been breached,
Muhammad the seal of the prophets had to come as a last Warner to guide people to
renew the old religion of Allah – pure monotheism.

Chapter 3

Corruption of the Old Testament

Muhammad came to the world because of the corruption of the Torah.

At the end of his life, Moses admonished his people: **"Take to heart all the words I have solemnly declared to you this day, so that you may command your children to obey carefully all the words of this law. They are not just idle words for you. They are your life."** (Deuteronomy 32: 46-47).

Moses predicted the tampering of the Torah after his death (Deuteronomy 31: 25-29).

The Book of Jeremiah which came 826 years after the Torah did confirm this corruption. God said, **"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.'**" (From the RSV Bible, Jeremiah 8: 8).

The Torah is frequently referred to in the Koran. It was the Scripture given to Moses as a Law and a guide for the Children of Israel. The Koran tells us that Allah made the Torah the standard of judgment and the canon law by which Moses and the Prophets who came after him would administer righteousness and justice between the Jews. And so would the rabbis and the canonists who were entrusted with it as the guide Book of Allah, and were witnesses to its divinity. Allah commanded the Jews not to fear the people but fear Him only. Nor should they change the truth of His Revelations for the vanity of the fleeting world. And to remember that he who does not judge matters according to the rules of the Torah, will have denied Allah, and such-like persons are indeed infidels.

Surely We sent down the Torah, wherein is guidance and light, by its standard have been judged the Jews, and the rabbis and the priests, for to them was entrusted the protection of Allah's Book, and they were witnesses thereto. So fear not men, but fear you me (O Jews); and sell not my verses for a little price. Whoso judges not according to what Allah has sent down – they are the unbelievers (Al-Maidah, 44).

He has sent down upon thee the book with the truth, confirming what was before it, and He sent down the Torah and the Gospel aforetime, as guidance to the people, and He sent down the Criterion (of judgment between right and wrong – this Koran).

As for those who disbelieve in Allah's signs, for them awaits a terrible chastisement; Allah is All Mighty, Vengeful (Al-Imran 3, 4).

The Koran teaches that Allah's Message comes to any nation or people as a matter of sacred trust. It should be broadcast and made clear to all within reach, but privileged priesthood erected a barrier and tampered with the truth, taking what suits it and ignoring the rest. The rabbis and the priests trampled down Allah's truth and enthroned false standards of worship. They took credit for virtues they do not possess and seeming successes that came in spite of their despicable deceptions. They caused

mischief and misery to others and sold Allah's gift for a miserable profit, but how miserable they will learn when Nemesis comes.

And when Allah took compact with those who had been given the Book; you shall make it clear unto the people, and not conceal it.' But they rejected it behind their backs and sold it for a small price – how evil was that their selling! (Al-Imran, 187).

In the Koran the Jews were accused with two charges: they twisted the words of the Torah to suit their own purposes, because they feared men rather than Allah, and what they had was but fragments of the original Law given to Moses mixed up with a lot of semi-historical and legendary matter, and some fine poetry. The Torah mentioned in the Koran is not the Old Testament as we have it now, nor is it even the Pentateuch.

The translation of the Torah by the words 'The Old Testament' is obviously wrong. The 'Old Testament' is a Christian term applied to a body of old Jewish records. The Protestants and the Roman Catholics are not agreed precisely as to the number of records to be included in the canon of the 'Old Testament'. They use the term in contradistinction to the 'New Testament.' Nor is it correct to translate the Torah as the 'Pentateuch,' a Greek term meaning the 'five Books.' These are the first five books of the Old Testament, known as Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. They contain a semi-historical and legendary narrative of the history of the world from the creation to the time of the arrival of the Jews in the Promised Land. There are in them some beautiful idylls but there are also stories of incest, fraud, cruelty, and treachery, not always disapproved. A great part of the Mosaic Law is embodied in this narrative. The books are traditionally ascribed to Moses, but it is certain that they were not written by Moses or in an age either contemporary with Moses or within an appreciable distance of time from Moses. They were in the present form probably compiled some time after the return of the Jews from the Babylonian captivity. The decree of Cyrus permitting such return was in 536 B.C. Some books now included in the Old Testament such as Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi were admittedly written after the return from the captivity - Malachi being as late as 420-397 B.C. (8).

The Apocrypha contain certain books which are not admitted as Canonical in the English Bible. But the early Christians received them as part of the Jewish Scriptures and the council of Trent (A.C. 1545-1563) seems to have recognized the greater part of them as Canonical.

The statement in 2 Esdras (about the first century A.C.) that the Law was burnt and Ezra (about 458-457 B.C.) was inspired to rewrite it, is probably true as to the historical fact that the Law was lost, and that what we have now is no earlier than the time of Ezra, and some of it a good later.

So far this was the Christian view of the Old Testament. The Jewish view however is different. The Jews divide their Scripture into three parts: (1) the Law (Torah), (2) the Prophets, and (3) the Writings. This division was probably current in the time of Jesus. In Luke xxix 44 Jesus refers to the Law, the Prophets and the Psalms. In other places, (Matt. vii.12) Jesus refers to the Law and the Prophets as summing up the whole Scripture.

Two versions of sacred history existed, different in language, style and spirit, and they were combined together into a narrative in the reign of Hezekial (B.C. 727-697). This forms the greater part of the Pentateuch as it exists today, excluding the greater part of Deuteronomy and Leviticus. In the reign of Josiah about 622 B.C., certain priests and scribes with Jeremiah the Prophet promulgated a new code, pretending that they had found it in the Temple (II. Kings, xxii. 8). This law (Torah) was the basis of Judaism, the new religion then founded in Palestine. This was further completed by the sacerdotal and Levitical Torah compiled under the inspiration of Ezekiel, about 575 B.C., and contained mainly in the Book of Leviticus, with scattered fragments in Exodus, Numbers, and Joshua (8).

The original Torah must have been in old Hebrew, but there is no Hebrew manuscript of the Old Testament which can be dated with certainty earlier than 916 A.C. Hebrew ceased to be a spoken language with the Jews during or after the captivity, and by the time we come to the period of Jesus, most cultivated Hebrews used the Greek language, and others used Aramaic (including syrac and chaldee), Latin or local dialects. There were also Arabic versions.

For historical purposes the most important versions were the Greek version, known as the Septuagint, and the Latin version known as the Vulgate. The Septuagint was supposed to have been prepared by 70 or 72 Jews working independently and at different times, the earliest portion dating from about 284 B.C. This version was used by the Jews of Alexandria and the Hellenized Jews who were spread over all parts of the Roman Empire. The Vulgate was a Latin translation made by the celebrated father of the Christian church, St. Jerome from Hebrew, early in the fifth century A.C., superseding the older Latin versions. Neither the Septuagint nor the Vulgate has an absolute fixed or certain text. The present standard text of the Vulgate as accepted by the Roman Catholic Church was issued by Pope Clement VIII (A.C. 1592-1605).

It is evident therefore that there is no standard text of the Old Testament in its Hebrew form. The versions differ from each other frequently in minor particulars and sometimes in important particulars. The Pentateuch itself is only a small portion of the Old Testament. It is a narrative form and includes the laws and regulations associated with the name of Moses, but probably compiled and edited from older sources by Ezra (Arabic, Uzair) in the 5th century B.C. as Renan remarked in the preface of his "History of the People of Israel, " the definite constitution of Israel may be dated only from the time of Ezra."

The Jews in Muhammad's time and since went a great deal by the Talmud, or a body of oral exposition, reduced to writing in different schools of doctors and learned men. The Talmudists took the divergent texts of the Old Testament and in interpreting them by a mass of traditional commentaries and legendary lore, evolved a standard body of teaching. Just before the preaching of Islam they evolved the Massorah, which may be regarded as the body authoritative Jewish Hadith (sayings and deeds of Moses).

The first part of the Talmud is called the Mishna – a collection of traditions and decisions prepared by the Rabbi Judah about 150 A.C. He summed up the results of a great mass of previous rabbinical writings. The Mishna is the "second Law." It bound

heavy burdens, grievous to be borne, and laid them on men's shoulders; (Matt. xxiii. 4.)

There were also many Targums or paraphrases of the Law among the Jews, mostly in Aramaic, and they constituted the teaching of the Law to the masses of the Jewish people.

The Torah is recognized in Islam as "The law"; an inspired Book which in its original form was promulgated by Moses. But it was lost before Islam was preached. What passed as "The law" with the Jews in the prophet's time was the mass of traditional writing. (8).

The Koran pointed out that what the Jews has in possession as a scripture was of no value, although it recognized Moses as an inspired Messenger and his original Law as having validity in his period until it was superseded.

In its criticism of the Jewish position the Koran said in effect, "You have lost your original Law; even what you have now as its substitute, you do not honestly follow; is it not better, now that an inspired Teacher (Muhammad) is living among you, that you should follow him rather than quibble over uncertain texts?"

A.F. Kilpatrick, D.D., who was Master of Selwyn College, Regius Professor of Hebrew in the university of Cambridge, and canon of Ely Cathedral, writes in his standard work: *The Divine Library of the Old Testament* (a book selected for examination by the Christian Evidence society in March, 1907):

"The books (of the Old Testaments) were constructed out of earlier narratives; some were formed by the collections of poetry or prophecies; some betray marks of reviser's hand; and even books which bears the names of well known authors in some cases contain matter which must be attributed to other writers."

As regards to the last twenty seven chapters of Isaiah, Kilpatrick commented, "I do not see how we could resist the conclusion that these chapters were not written by Isaiah but an unknown Prophet towards the close of the Babylonian Exile;...it will inevitably seem to many students of the Bible that, in assigning the prophecy to a date so near to the events which it foretells, we are detracting from its truly predictive character and diminishing its value."

"The Psalms like the Proverbs have a long literary history. They are poems by different authors, and David may be one of them."

Modern criticism claims, and claims with justice, that the Hexateuch, like so many of the other books, is composite in its origin and has a long literary history."

That the Pentateuch was entirely written by Moses is merely a Jewish tradition, which passed into the Christian Church and was commonly accepted until modern times."

Some of the variants of the Septuagint from the Hebrew text are due, no doubt, to errors and interpolation and deliberate alterations; but after all allowance has been made for these, I do not see how any candid critic can resist the conclusion that many

of them represent variations existing in the Hebrew text from which the translation was made."

It was probably at the very beginning of this period (from the fall of Jerusalem to the end of the 5th century), towards the close of the first century A.D., that the final settlement of an authoritative text took place...How come that all the copies containing other readings disappeared? Copies differing from it (i.e., the standard text) would die out or be deliberately destroyed."

The oldest Hebrew manuscript in existence, of which the date is known, was written in 916 A.D. – i.e., separated by more than a thousand years from the latest of the works included in the Canon."

These conclusions utterly destroy the divine character of the Old Testament. Dr. Kilpatrick is conscious of it and, being a clergy man, feels uneasy about it. He finally offers the following fundamental question but leaves it unanswered:

"In what sense it is asked, can this legislation, which is now said to be Mosaic in elemental germ and idea only, and to represent not the inspired deliverance of a supremely great individual, but the painful efforts of many generations of law-makers; these histories which have been compiled from primitive traditions, and chronicles, and annals, and what not; these books of prophecy which are not the authentic autographs of the Prophets, but posthumous collections of such writings (if any) as they left behind them, eked out by the recollections of their disciples; these proverbs and Psalms which have been handed down by tradition and altered and edited and re-edited; these histories which contain errors of date and fact, and have been, perhaps, idealized by the reflection of the circumstances and ideas of the writers' own times upon a distant past; these seeming narratives which may be allegories; and these would be prophecies which may be histories; in what sense can these be said to be inspired? In no sense to be sure!"

For our purpose it would be best to refer to the work of notable Christian scholars published in *Encyclopedia Biblica* (46). The names of some of such ministers and authorized representatives of the Church who investigated the authenticity of the Old Testament are: Rev. Archibald R.S. Kennedy; Rev. C.F. Burney; Rev. George Adam Smith; Rev. S.R. Driver; Rev. T.K. Cheyne; Rev. T. Witton Davies; Rev. W.H. Bennet; Rev. A.B. Davidson as well as several others.

The views of these scholars concerning the Old Testament are essentially the same as those of Dr. Kilpatrick cited above. For them, the Book of Genesis is a composite narrative based on older records long since lost; the stories of the patriarchs like Abraham, Isaac, Joseph, are legendary; the book of Exodus is a composite legend; the character of Moses and the origin of the ten commandments are legendary; the book of Deuteronomy is a composite and a considerably modified version of an older work; the psalms is a composite book of doubtful character; the book of Job is not a literary unity but a growth; Jonah is a Jewish madras written after the exile; Isaiah is the work of several authors; the book of Daniel is fabulous in character and was written during or after the happening of the events which are foretold therein.

Previous revelations are not to be denied because those who nominally go by them have corrupted and deprived them of spiritual value by their controversies and disputes. The Jews could have settled such disputes but Allah's plan was to revive and rejuvenate His Message through Islam, amongst a newer and younger people, unhampered by the burden of age-old prejudices.

Muslims believe that Moses existed; that he was an inspired man of Allah; that he gave a Message which was afterwards distorted or lost; that attempts were made by Israel at various times to reconstruct that Message; and that the Torah as we have it is no earlier than the middle of the fifth century B.C.

Allah gave Moses the Torah, but his people were disputant about it. And had it not been for Allah's word which was proclaimed beforehand to put punishment in respite, their hereafter would have been planted in the now.

And We gave Moses the Book; and there was difference regarding it, and but for a word that preceded from thy Lord, it had been decided between them; and they are in doubt of it disquieting (Hud, 110)

The Koran teaches that those who conceal Allah's revelations in the Torah and exchange the truth for a miserable profit simply consume nothing but fire in their bellies. Allah shall ignore them on the Day of Judgment, He shall not absolve them from guilt and they shall be put to the torment.

Those who conceal what in the Book Allah has sent down on them, and sell it for a little price – they shall eat naught but the Fire in their bellies; Allah shall not speak to them on the Day of Resurrection; neither purify them; there awaits them a painful chastisement.

Those are they that have bought error at the price of guidance, and chastisement at the price of pardon; how patiently they shall endure the Fire! (Al-Baqarah 174, 175).

Chapter 4

Corruption of the New Testament

Muhammad came to the world because of the corruption of the New Testament.

I will begin this chapter with the words of the American political leader and orator, Robert G. Ingersoll:

"Somebody ought to tell the truth about the Bible. The preachers dare not, because they would be driven from their pulpits. Professors in colleges dare not, because they would lose their salaries. Politicians dare not. They would be defeated. Editors dare not. They would lose subscribers. Merchants dare not, because they must lose customers. Men of fashion dare not, fearing that they would lose caste. Even clerks dare not, because they might be discharged. And so I thought I would do it myself..."

Former Catholic priest and biblical scholar, John Dominic Crossan said:

"God sacrificed his own son in place of humans who needed to be punished for their own sins might make some Christians love Jesus, but is an obscene picture of God. It is almost heavenly child abuse, and may infect our imagination at more earthly levels as well. I do not want to express my faith through a theology that pictures God demanding blood sacrifices in order to be reconciled to us." (page 145-146). The fact that we have four Gospels lies at the very heart of our problem. Because we read particular parables or sayings or stories in several different versions, we can't miss the disagreement between them." (Page 3-4, from 'Who is Jesus' by John Dominic Crossan) [35 years of searching for the historical Jesus and former Catholic priests].

The subject of Biblical criticism is so vast that it would be beyond the scope of this book. Any attempt in that direction would require a separate volume. So we will be concerned here mainly with the conclusions which the Christian research scholars have arrived at. The authorities selected for testing the authenticity of the Bible are professional representatives of Christianity and theologians and ministers considered in the West as the pillars of orthodox Churches.

One may ask: Can we honestly regard the New Testament a genuine record of the life and teachings of Jesus? Unfortunately the reply of the greatest Christian scholars, who devoted their lives investigating the textual and historical problems of the Bible during the last two centuries as well as those of the third millennium, is in the negative.

Sir Richard Gregory in his book entitled, "Religion in Science and civilization" - P.86 wrote:

"With the advance in the technique of textual criticism in the course of the last generation, with a more searching analysis of the matter of the text, and with the use of the comparative method in evaluating the tradition embodied in the narrative, it has become even more patently evident that orthodox opinion in regard to the authenticity of the Bible cannot be maintained."

The New Testament was impeached so thoroughly by modern criticism that it would be difficult to find today a single Christian scholar of note who could endorse belief in its divine character. In despair they have to detach Christianity from mere narrative and seek to appreciate it as a spiritual reality, which appeals to the imagination, the emotions, and the soul (3).

The celebrated theologian of Germany, Dr. Adolph Harnack, who was professor of Church History in the university of Berlin and a member of the Royal Prussian Academy, thus sums up his conclusions regarding the New Testament in his well known work: 'What is Christianity?' : "These (three) Gospels are not historical works any more than the fourth, they were not written with the simple object of giving the facts as they were; they were books composed of the work of the evangelization."

Dr. Mohammad Fazl ur-Rahman in his book entitled "Islam and Christianity in the Modern World" (3), mentioned the views of the eminent Christian scholars about the authenticity of the Bible. He referred to the conclusion of their research included in the Encyclopedia Biblica. They, as ministers and authorized representatives of the Church, are the last persons to be accused of falsehood or prejudice against Christianity. The names of some of these eminent Christian scholars are:

The Rev. Schmiedel, D.D., of Zurich. The Rev. W. C. Van Manen, D.D., Professor of Old Christian Literature and New Testament Exegesis, Leyden. The Rev. E.A. Abbot, D.D. hulsean Lecturer, Cambridge, Select Preacher, Oxford. The Rev. A.B. Bruce, D.D., Professor of Apologetics and New Testament Exegesis, Free Church College, Glasgow. The Rev. Archibald R.S. Kennedy, D.D., Professor of Hebrew and Semetic Languages, Edinburgh. The Rev. C. F. Burney, M. A., Lecturer in Hebrew and fellow of St. John's College, Oxford. The Rev. George Adam Smith, M.A., D.D. L.L. D., Professor of Hebrew and Old Testament Exegesis, Free Church College, Glasgow. The Very Rev. J.A. Robinson, D.D., Dean of Westminster. The Rev. Owen Charles Whitehouse, M.A., Principal and Professor of Biblical Exegesis and Theology in the Countess of Huntingdon's College, Chestnut, Herts. The Rev. Charles, M.A. D.D., Professor of Biblical Greek, Trinity College, Dublin. The Rev. S.R. Driver, D.D., Regius, Professor of Hebrew, Canon of Christ Church, Oxford. The Rev. T.K. Cheyne, M.A., D.D., Oriel Professor of the interpretation of the Holy scripture, Oxford, Canon of Rochester. The Rev. T. Witton Davies, B.A., Ph.D., Professor of Old Testament Literature, North Wales, Baptist College, Bangor. The Rev. W.H. Bennet, D.D., Professor of Biblical Languages and Literature, Hackney College, London, and Professor of Old Testament Exegesis, New College, London. The Rev. A.B. Davidson, D.D., Professor of Hebrew and New Testament Exegesis, United Free church, New College, Edinburgh.

The following is a brief summary of their conclusions:

The four Gospels compiled by Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, and appeared thirty or forty years after the death of Jesus, can no longer be maintained. The four Gospels were compiled from earlier materials which have perished. Even if we accept more conservative opinions which place the earliest Gospel about 65 A.D., that would not, of course, make any material difference, nor affect the conclusions of criticism as to their contents. Some of their statements of facts are quite erroneous, and the data are

often in direct contradiction to one another. The evangelists made it clear that they wrote with a "lack of concern for historical precision". The imperfection of gospel accounts is every where manifest. The text must not be taken as trustworthy guide to his (Jesus) original meaning. It merely shows us what the evangelists or their predecessors believed him to mean. The situations in which the words of Jesus are said to have been spoken cannot be implicitly accepted. Both St. Matthew and St. Mark seem to have read into the utterances of Jesus details borrowed from subsequent facts or controversies.

The historical value of the third Gospel is lowered by evidence of the writer's errors and misunderstandings. It has been widely assumed that it was written by the physician Luke, and Luke was the companion of Paul. This view of its Pauline character, however, can now be maintained only in a very little sense. It is clear that the third Gospel and the Acts are by the same author, but that author was not Luke. In the fourth Gospel we find more ambiguities than in all the other three together. The records of the miracles in the fourth Gospel are all poetic developments. It is vain to look to the Church fathers for trustworthy information on the subject of the origin of the Gospels.

The Acts of the Apostles does not come from a companion of St. Paul. It is the work of several hands. No statement merits immediate acceptance on the mere ground of its presence in the book (10).

According to Professor Van Manen, none of the Epistles attributed to St. Paul were written by him. Others, however, regard the four generally accepted Epistles as genuine. The Book of Revelation, can no longer be regarded as a literary unit, but is an admixture of Jewish and Christian ideas and speculations. Presbyter John, rather than the Apostle, was its author.

"There are only nine passages in the Gospels", said Rev. Dr. Schmiedel, which "might be called the foundation – pillars of a truly scientific life of Jesus. It is not possible to know exactly when or where Jesus was born, when he died and how he ministered."

The Rev. Dr. A.B. Bruce regards the Gospel account of Jesus as unreliable in many details. For instance, the Temptation is a symbolic representation of a spiritual experience; the story of the crucifixion is not pure truth, but truth mixed with doubtful legend; the night trial, the mocking, the incident of Barabbas, the two thieves, and the preternatural concomitants of the death are picturesque accessories of doubtful authenticity (11).

According to Dr. Schmiedel, the Gospel accounts, on which the actuality of the resurrection depends for its establishment, "exhibit contradictions of the most glaring kind. The silence of St. Paul regarding the details of the story of resurrection proves its untrustworthiness."

Rev. Dr. A.B. Bruce, D.D. in his article on "Jesus" in the Encyclopedia Biblica, showed how the divinity of Jesus started. He pointed out that while in the Gospel of St. Luke Jesus is called "the Lord" about a dozen times, the early Gospels of St. Mathew and St. Mark refer to him simply as "Jesus" a fact which seems to indicate the gradual evolution of the belief in his divinity.

A very significant fact is the confusion which prevailed in the early Church regarding the nature of the Trinity. The council of Nice held in 325 A.C. decided that Christ was truly God, co-equal and co-eternal with his father - separate yet one. The council of Constantinople in 381 A.C. determined that he was also truly man. The council of Ephesus held in 431 A.C. resolved that the two natures were indivisibly one. The council of Chalcedon held in 451 A.C. established that the two natures were nevertheless perfectly distinct. Constantine II (581 A.C.) accepted the doctrine that in Christ the two wills were harmonized. Heraclitus by his decree of 630 A.C. affirmed that while in Christ there were two natures there was only one will. The Catholic Church maintained that there were two wills although they always coincided (3).

John Davenport (12) mentioned that the celebrated text of three witnesses (John I. V. 7) which is the foundation of the doctrine of the Trinity, has been proved by the works of Newton, Gibbon and others to have been an interpolation; and Clamet himself acknowledges that this verse is not found in any ancient copy of the Bible. Jesus taught the belief in one God, but Paul, with the Apostle John, who was a Platonist, despoiled Christ's religion of all its unity and simplicity, by introducing the incomprehensive Trinity of Plato or *Triad* of the East and also by deifying two of God's attributes, namely, His Holy Spirit or the *Agion Pneuma* of Plato and His Divine intelligence, called by Plato *logos* (Word) and applied under this form to Jesus (John I).

"The Bible" says Sir Richard Gregory, "fails to justify faith in its inerrancy on account of its inconsistency with itself, its variance from current concepts of what should constitute Christian belief, and from current codes of morality, its failure in its adaptability as regards statements of fact and the discoveries of science relating to the record of happenings in the cosmic process, and finally in its inability to withstand the investigation of textual criticism, when directed to the claims of authorship upon which the authenticity of its various parts has been based... Even in the early Church from the days of Origen onwards, there was uneasiness as to the character of the text and content of the Bible..."

Sir Richard Gregory continues, "Origen and others of the fathers after him interpreted the inconsistencies and other weaknesses of the Biblical text as allegory and metaphor. As a consequence of these condonations and interpretations of the text there grew up a body of apologetic and exegetic literature based in part on tradition not embedded in the text, and dealing with both doctrine and ritual, which came to be in their sphere as authoritative as the original. It was out of these that there grew the dissensions, which in their turn have given rise to division, leading to the separate existence of the Greek and eastern churches, the uprising of numerous heretical sects of the Middle ages, the Reformation and the creation of the various Protestant churches, and finally within the Protestant faith the separate forms of belief which have brought about, among others, the separation of non-conformity from the ritual and doctrine of the Church of England." (13).

There was a time when no Christian could even think of questioning the validity of his faith, but when modern criticism proved that human modification has touched the doctrine of the Christian faith, this principle was changed.

An honest course would have been either to hold on to Christianity in spite of all the forces arrayed against it or renounce it altogether. But that would have perhaps meant the choice between the devil and the deep sea (3).

The easier course was to change first the connotation of the term 'divine revelation' itself and then to recast and improve the faith.

Sir Richard Gregory supports the newly adopted course in these words: "Just as in scientific investigations, hypothesis is subject to modification in the light of increased knowledge, so in matters of theological doctrine, orthodoxy is not static, but must vary in connotation with increase of understanding and a clearer view of the cosmic process. Further, such understanding may bring about change in forms of belief, without affecting faith in the central doctrine of Christianity... It may seem that to hold such a view of the relation of the evolution of theological dogma to the development of scientific thought is to make the validity of religious belief dependent upon the finite intelligence of man and to be incompatible with the tenets of a religion which takes its stands upon divine revelation. Yet it is possible to regard both the growth of scientific knowledge and the development of dogma, each in its own respective field, as two sides, two aspects of the same process – the search for truth, in which the Divine Purpose is revealed gradually to man *pari passu* with the preparation of his heart and intellect to receive it with understanding." (13).

For all honest Christians, however, such a point of view is fallacious and dishonest. Thus, for instance, the very Rev. Dr. Mansell, formerly Dean of St. Paul's and a much greater theological authority than Sir Gregory, observes: "Many who would shrink with horror from the idea of rejecting Christ altogether, will yet speak and act as if they were at liberty to set up for themselves an eclectic Christianity, separating the essential from the superfluous portion of Christ's teaching, deciding for themselves how much is permanent and necessary for all men, and how much is temporary, and designed only for a particular age and people. Yet if Christ is indeed God manifest in flesh, it is surely not less impious to attempt to improve His teachings than to regret it altogether. Nay, in one respect it is more so, for it is to acknowledge a doctrine as the revelation from God, and at the same time, to proclaim that it is inferior to the wisdom of man."

Michael H. Hart in his book 'The 100: A ranking of the Most Influential Persons in History' - New York: Hart Publishing Company. Inc., 1978, p. 33 - chose Muhammad to lead the world's most influential persons because he was the only man in history who was supremely successful on both the religious and secular level. According to Hart, the honor for founding Christianity is to be shared between Jesus and St. Paul. The latter he believes to be the real founder of Christianity. Out of the total of 27 Books of the New Testament, more than half is authored by Paul. As opposed to Paul, Jesus has not written a single word of the twenty-seven books. No learned Christian will ever dispute with the fact that the real founder of Christianity is St. Paul. Therefore Michael Hart to be fair, had to place Jesus, in slot number three.

It seems that most of the Christians of today are not sure of their religion. Jesus said, **"If you love me keep my commandments."** He said further, **"Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the Kingdom of Heaven** (Matthew 5:19). However, if the

Christians were asked, "Do you keep the laws and commandments?" They usually answer, "No, because the law is nailed to the cross, we are now living under grace!"

In the third Millennium, we find bishop John Shelby Spong with courage and imagination unimpaired by conventional wisdom has chosen to fight for establishing a new Christianity for a new world.

Bishop Spong was the Episcopal Bishop of Newark, NJ, for more than twenty years and is one of the leading spokespersons in the world for progressive Christianity. He is the author of 15 books including the best selling 'Rescuing the Bible from Fundamentalism', 'Living in sin', 'Liberating the Gospels', and 'Why Christianity Must Change or Die'.

Under the title 'A New Christianity for a New World' I received several e-mails from Bishop Spong regarding his views about how modern Christianity should be. His views were answers to questions forwarded by his readers regarding this important issue.

About his views regarding the Old Testament he wrote: "The Old Testament is a library that contains 39 unique and different books. These books were written over a period of perhaps a thousand years. They represent a wide variety of types of literature. Some are descriptions of tribal history. Some are filled with liturgical and ethical injunctions; some are interpreters of history; some are wisdom literature; some are poetry; some are the writings of Prophets; some are protest literature. There is no doubt that parts of this body of sacred literature are eternal and therefore relevant to us today. Other parts are so clearly time bound as to be totally irrelevant to our world today. The issue is how one separates the wheat from the chaff."

About a question addressing how has the Jesus Seminar changed his view of Jesus and his relationship with Jesus? Bishop Spong replied:

"...I have enormous respect for the Jesus Seminar and its members. They are people who have dedicated years of their lives and a significant amount of their energy to a clearly defined task. The stated purpose of the Seminar and its inception was to re-establish the quest for the historical Jesus, by searching the words attributed to Jesus in the Gospels for clues to their authenticity. This first task was completed and its results were published in a book called the five Gospels edited by Seminar founder Robert Funk. Using a color coordinating vocal system of beads, the scholars determined whether or not the particular saying attributed to Jesus was clearly from the Jesus of history (red), was close to but not a direct quote from the Jesus of history (pink), was probably a saying the Christian community later attributed to Jesus (gray), or was a saying that though attributed to the Jesus, the Jesus of history could never have spoken (black)."

The Seminar's conclusion, that less than 20% of the Gospel sayings of Jesus are authentic with more than 80% not being so, received wide publicity and no little amount of hostility... I have found the Jesus Seminar, and the scholars identified with it, valuable allies in my own ministry of translating the Christian story into the world of the 21st century."

Answering the question, "What do you mean when you speak about idolatry among Christians?" Bishop Spong replied: "Idolatry means ascribing to anything less than God the qualities that pertain to God alone. Infallibility, inerrancy and eternal truth are but a few of these God qualities that have been applied to people, books and churches. In the history of Christianity various bodies of Christians have claimed infallibility for the ex-cathedra utterances of their spiritual leader, inerrancy for the words of scripture that human wrote, and absolute truth for human formulations of doctrines and dogmas. Recognizing the weakness of such idolatrous claims for particular people, human creations and human formularies, they developed an even stranger claim that the Holy spirit somehow directed the leader in his (not her) infallible utterances, since god will not let the Divine Church live in falsehood, or that the holy spirit guided the authors of the scriptures so that the words were inerrant, or that the Holy Spirit assisted the Church in its doctrinal formulations so the Creeds might reflect God's ultimate truth. Each of these claims borders on the ridiculous. The evil that has been done by papal claims, biblical claims and doctrinal claims can be documented too easily. One has only to look at the Crusades, religious wars, the inquisition or at the way the bible has been used in the defense of such outdated evils as the divine right of kings, the condemnation of science, slavery, segregation, and second class status for women, homophobia, and religious persecution. People also justify aggression by claiming an ultimate justice for their own badly compromised national vested interest. There is an ultimate truth of God, I do believe. No person, no nation, and no institution, however, can claim to possess it without becoming idolatrous. Idolatry is, therefore, a fact, in Christian history."

"If God doesn't intervene, what is the meaning of intercessory prayer?" Another question was addressed to Bishop Spong. He replied, "...The time has come for human beings to grow up, to claim the grandeur of our humanity and to abandon our Santa Claus view of God. When we do that we will begin to raise very different questions about the nature of faith in the 21st century. The intervening God who answers our intercessory prayers is a comfortable fiction that is no longer worthy of our worship."

Bishop Spong also wrote: "...A more accurate statistic, however, is that behind these shifts Christianity itself is a declining reality in the 21st century in every developed nation of the world. Increasingly, modern, educated people abandon the church because its Message no longer makes sense to them. Those who remain become more and more narrowly focused on a smaller and smaller piece of reality. They claim certainty and thus attract those in search of security. That is their primary appeal. Some of them have also developed positive public relation campaigns to promote growth where churches engage reality and confront the thought processes of the modern world; they can no longer talk in terms of the traditional religious language of miracles, divine intervention, answered prayers and Jesus as the sacrifice that paid for their sins. They become more certain about what they do not believe than they are about what they do believe. Negative Messages are never appealing. That is why the main line churches are dying." (14).

The Gospel of Jesus spoken by the Koran is not the New Testament. It is not the four gospels now received as canonical gospels and in some others, of which traces survive (e.g., the Gospel of St. Barnabas, the Gospel of Childhood). Muslims think that what is in the true tradition of Abraham and all that is truthful and real in the older

revelations are already incorporated in the Koran and in the teaching of Muhammad, the last of the Prophets. Muslims also believe that the current Old Testament after being altered in many places is not the one Allah gave to Moses. All missing links in the Bible of the Jews and the Gospel of the Christians are found in the Koran.

Because Allah is Most Merciful, He replaced the abused Bibles with a far superior Book, the Koran - a Book that stood the test of time in order to give mankind a chance to reform, correct and amend - a last chance to mankind to follow Allah's right path, hence protecting themselves against a terrible chastisement awaiting the disbelievers. This is why Allah promised in the Koran that He will personally guard it from corruption.

"We (Allah) have, without a doubt, sent down the Remembrance (the Koran); and We will surely guard it (from corruption) (Al-Hijr, 9).

Today we have only one Arabic Koran – a Book which had also been translated into mostly all the languages of the world.

The Koran was not only addressed to the Arabs, but also to the Jews, the Christians and to the whole world at large.

The Koran came to purify the Torah of Moses and the Gospel of Jesus from the violations which were added to their texts, thus perverting the original words of Allah and as a consequence led people astray.

Allah in the Koran invited the Jews and the Christians to Islam.

People of the Book (Jews and Christians), now there has come to you Our Messenger, making clear to you many things you have been concealing of the Book, and effacing many things. There has come to you from Allah a light, and a Book Manifest whereby Allah guides whosoever follows His good pleasure in the way of peace, and brings them forth from the shadows into the light by His leave; and He guides them to a straight path (Al-Maidah 15, 16).

Muslims do not claim to have a religion peculiar to themselves. Islam is not a sect or an ethnic religion. In its view all religion is one. It was the religion preached by all the earlier prophets. It was the truth taught by all inspired books. In essence it amounts to a consciousness of the Will and Plan of Allah and a joyful submission to that Will and Plan. If anyone wants a religion other than that, he is false to his own nature, as he is false to Allah's Will and Plan. Such a one cannot expect guidance, for he has deliberately renounced guidance (8).

And whoever seeks a religion other than Islam, it will never be accepted of him, and in the Hereafter he will be one of the losers (Al-Imran, 85).

Chapter 5

Muhammad came to the world as a result of Abraham's supplication to Allah while building the Ka'ba with his son Ishmael, and as prophesized in the Torah of Moses and the Gospel of Jesus.

1- Muhammad came to the world as a result of the supplication of Abraham while building the Ka'ba.

There are several prophecies in the Bible and the Gospel indicating the coming of the Prophet of Islam to the world. But before going through these prophecies we must go back first to Abraham, the founder of the religion of Islam. Muhammad came to the world because of the supplication of Abraham while building the Ka'ba, the house of Allah.

Abraham was a great Prophet and a righteous man of Allah, a Muslim, and so were his children. Allah Almighty ordered him to build the Ka'ba in Makkah long before the Temple of Jerusalem was built. With the help of his first son Ishmael, Abraham built the Ka'ba and purified it, and laid the foundations of the universal religion, which is summed up in word Islam, or complete submission to the will of Allah. Abraham was therefore the founder of the original Islam in Arabia. Abraham and Ishmael were thus true Muslims.

Abraham was tried by Allah with certain commands which he completely fulfilled. He built the sacred refuge of the Ka'ba; he purified Allah's house; he submitted his will to Allah, and thus became the founder of Islam. As devout Muslims, Abraham and his son Ishmael offered and dedicated their work to Allah in humble supplication, addressing Him as the All-Hearing and the All-Knowing. Abraham then asks for a blessing on himself and progeny generally, both the children of his eldest-born Ishmael and his younger son Isaac. He beseeches Allah to make Makkah a safe retreat that affords security and peace of mind and provide its people with the kindly fruits of the earth. Accordingly, Allah promised him the leadership of the world. Abraham further asked his Lord that this leadership be given to his progeny as well, his prayer was granted, with the limitation that, he who shall disbelieve, Allah will leave him in contentment for a while, and then He shall compel him to the torment of the Fire.

With Prophetic vision Abraham foresees that there will be corruption and backsliding in both branches of his family. Makkah will house 360 idols, Jerusalem will become a harlot city (Ezekiel xvi. 15), a city of abomination. So Abraham prays for Allah's mercy and asks Him to send a Prophet in Makkah teaching the people as one of their own, and in their beautiful Arab language. He asks for a blessing on Muhammad's ministry, appealing to the power and Wisdom of Allah.

And remember when the Lord tested Abraham with certain words, and he fulfilled them.

He said, 'Behold, I make you a leader for the people.'

Said he, "And my seed?"

He said, "My covenant shall not reach the evildoers."

And when We appointed the House to be a place of visitation for the people, and a sanctuary, and: 'Take to yourselves Abraham's station for a place of prayer.' And We made Covenant with Abraham and Ishmael: 'Purify My House for those that cleave to it, to those who bow and prostrate themselves.'

And when Abraham said, 'My Lord, make this a land secure, and provide its people with fruits, such of them as believe in Allah and the Last day.'

He (Allah) said, 'And whoso disbelieves, to him I shall give enjoyment a little, then I shall compel him to the chastisement of the fire – how evil a home coming!'

And when Abraham and Ishmael with him, raised up the foundation of the House: 'Our Lord, receive this from us; Thou art the All-Hearing, the All-knowing; and our Lord make us submissive to Thee, and of our seed a nation submissive to Thee; and show us our holy rites (the ceremonies of pilgrimage), and accept our repentance. Truly, You are the One who accepts repentance, the most Merciful.

Our Lord, do thou send among them a Messenger, one of them, who shall recite to them Thy signs, and teach them the Book (Koran) and the Wisdom, and purify them, Thou art, the All-mighty, the All-Wise.

Who therefore shrinks from the religion of Abraham, except he be foolish-minded?

Indeed We chose him in the present world, and in the world to come he shall be among the righteous (Al-Baqarahh 124-130).

2- Muhammad in the Torah

When the Children of Israel worshipped the calf, Moses chose seventy of his people and took them up to the Mount. They were dazed with thunder and lightning, and might have been destroyed but for the intercession of Moses. Moses prayed to Allah seeking forgiveness for his people, and Allah replied that His mercy extends to all things and that He shall ordain it for those who do right, and practice regular charity, and those who believe in His Signs, and those who follow the Messenger, the unlettered Prophet (Muhammad), whom they find mentioned in the Torah and the Gospel.

And Moses chose of his people seventy men for Our appointed time; and when the earthquake seized them, he (Moses) said, 'My Lord, if it had been Your Will, You could have destroyed them and me before; would you destroy us for what the foolish ones of us have done? It is only Your trial by which You lead astray whom You will, and guides whom You will. You are our Protector; so forgive us, and have mercy on us, for You are the best of forgivers.

And prescribe for us in this world good, and in the world to come; we have repented unto you.'

Said He (Allah). 'My chastisement – I smite with it whom I will; and My mercy embraces all things, and I shall prescribe it for those who are god-fearing and pay the alms, and those who indeed believe in Our Signs, those who follow the Messenger, the unlettered Prophet whom they find mentioned in the Torah and the Gospel... (Al-A'raf 155, 156, 157).

In the last koranic verse, there is a prefiguring, to Moses, of the Arabian Messenger, the last and the greatest of the Messengers of Allah.

In Deuteronomy 18, Moses addressed the Jewish tribes in Sinai:

"The Lord your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from among your own brothers. You must listen to him." [15].

" I will raise up for them a Prophet like you from among their brothers; I will put my words in his mouth, and he will tell them everything I command him [18]. If anyone does not listen to my words that the Prophet speaks in my name, I myself will call him to account [19]. But a Prophet who presumes to speak in my name anything I have not commanded him to say, or a Prophet who speaks in the name of other gods, must be put to death." [20].

These verses refer to Muhammad and his Book, the Koran. Since all the Jews were present in Sinai, the reference to their brothers means the Arabs, descendants of Ishmael who was Abraham's first born son and heir according to ancient customs. The Arabs and Muhammad among them are of course descendants of Ishmael and his son Kedar.

There were hardly any two prophets who were so much alike as Moses and Muhammad. Like Moses, Muhammad spoke to Allah, married, fathered children and led his nation. Moses took shelter in Midian, which was later named Yathrib after his father-in-law, Jethro. Muhammad migrated to Yathrib, which was later named Medina. Both were given a comprehensive law and code of life. Both encountered their enemies and were victorious in miraculous ways. Both were accepted as prophets and statesmen. Both migrated following conspiracies to assassinate them.

When the companions of Moses saw Pharaoh's army, they cried out: "Surely we are being overtaken!" But Moses replied, "By no means, my Lord is with me, He will show me a way out." While hiding from pursuing enemies in the cave of Hira, Muhammad reply to his companion Abu Bakr was, "Do not worry, Allah is with us."

Also, Isaiah 42: 1-13 speaks of the servant of Allah, His "chosen one" and "Messeger" who will bring down a law. "He will not falter or be discouraged till he establishes justice on earth. In his law the islands will put their hope." (42: 4). Verse 11 connects that awaited one with the descendants of Kedar, the second son of Ishmael (Genesis 25: 13), the ancestor of the Prophet Muhammad.

As indicated in the verses above, Allah will put his words in the mouth of this Prophet. Indeed, the words of Allah as expressed by the holy Koran were truly put into Muhammad's mouth. Allah sent the Holy Spirit, the Angel Gabriel to teach Muhammad the exact words of Allah, the Holy Koran., and asked him to dictate them to the people as he heard them. The words are therefore not his own. They did not come from his own thoughts, but were put into his mouth by the Angel Gabriel. During the life time of Muhammad, and under his supervision, these words were then memorized and written by his companions.

Also, the prophecy in Deuteronomy mentioned that this Prophet will speak the words of Allah in the name of Allah. If we look at the chapters of the Koran we can see that

all its chapters, except chapter 9, begin with the phrase, "In the name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful."

The Bible referred to a third major phase of Allah's religion superceding the earlier phases and coming from the mountains near Makkah.

He said: "The Lord came from Sinai and dawned over them from Seir; He shone forth from Mount Paran. He came with myriads of holy ones from the south, from His mountain slopes." [Deuteronomy [33:2].

Coming from Sinai refers to the mission of Moses, which was superceded by the dawning of the mission of Jesus which was superceded by the shining of the mission of Muhammad. Paran refers to a mountain near Makkah.

The Bible refers to the Arabs, the children of Ishmael, as a great nation and tells us that Allah was with Ishmael as he grew up in the desert of Paran. In Genesis [21] Allah comforted Hagar, Abraham's Egyptian wife, in a dream and told her that her son Ishmael will not die of thirst:

"Lift the boy up and take him by the hand, for I will make him into a great nation." [18]. Then Allah opened her eyes and she saw a well of water. So she went and filled the skin with water and gave the boy a drink [19]. Allah was with the boy as he grew up. He lived in the desert and became an archer [20]. While he was living in the desert of Paran, his mother got a wife for him from Egypt." [21].

Isaiah [42] predicted a new religion starting in Arabia by descendants of Kedar the son of Ishmael. One of the rituals of that religion would be singing the praise of Allah from the mountaintops.

"Sing to the Lord a new song, his praise from the ends of the earth, you who go down to the sea, and all that is in it, you islands, and all who live in them [10]. Let the desert and its towns raise their voices; let the settlements where Kedar lives rejoice. Let the people of Sela sing for joy; let them shout from the mountaintops." [22].

During the Muslim pilgrimage, myriads of Muslims gather on a mountain south of Sinai (Mount Arafat) to atone for their sins and celebrate the glory of Allah.

Revelation [19] describes a final leader of religion and state, who will defeat the forces of evil and make the Word of Allah supreme.

"I saw heaven standing open and there before me was a white horse, whose rider is called Faithful and True. With justice he judges and makes war [11]. His eyes are like blazing fire, and on his head are many crowns. He has a name written on him that no one knows but he himself [12]. He is dressed in a robe dipped in blood, and his name is the Word of Allah [13]. The armies of heaven are following him, riding on white horses and dressed in fine linen, white and clean [14]. Out of his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the

nations. He will rule them with an iron scepter. He treads to winepress of the fury of the wrath of Allah Almighty." [15].

The Prophet Muhammad was the last prophet. He rode horses and waged war on the enemies of Islam. He was known as "the Honest, the Trustworthy" long before he started receiving the Koran. His face was compared to the sun. His tent and favorite coat were red. The red coat was passed on to those who followed him in leading the Muslim Nation and became an article of succession.

His main Message was the Word of Allah, the Koran. The Koran is also referred to as the Furqan, the separator, which separates right from wrong. Muhammad's followers rode horses, dressed in white and were clean since Muslims are required to clean themselves and their clothing before each of the five daily ritual prayers. The holy roman and Persian empires were struck down by the early Muslims. Muslims brought the wrath of Allah on the infidels. The Muslim battle cry was: "Allahu Akbar" which could be translated as "Allah is most great" or "Only Allah is great"(15).

The Prophet of Islam is described in the Torah with some of the qualities attributed to him in the Koran. Atâ bin Yasâr narrated: "I met Abdullah bin Amr Al-As and asked him, 'Tell me about the description of Allah's Messenger in the Torah.' He replied, 'Yes. By Allah, he is described in the Torah with some of the qualities attributed to him in the Koran as follows: 'O Prophet! We have sent you as a witness (for Allah's true religion), and a giver of glad tidings (to the faithful believers), and a Warner (to the disbelievers), and a guardian of the illiterates. You are My slave and My Messenger, I have named you Al-Mutawakkil (who depends upon Allah). You are neither discourteous, harsh nor a noise-maker in the markets and you do not do evil to those who do evil to you, but you deal with them with forgiveness and kindness. Allah will not let him die till he makes straight the crooked people by making them say, "Lâ ilâha illalâh" (none has the right to be worshipped but Allah), by which blind eyes, deaf ears and closed hearts will be opened.'" (Sahih Al-Bukhari, Vol. 3. Hadith No. 335).

3- Muhammad in the Gospel

In John 14: 15-16, Jesus says:

"If you love me, keep my commandments, and I will pray to the Father and He shall give you another comforter."

In John 16: 7, we have:

"Nevertheless, I tell you the truth: it is expedient for you that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Comforter will not come to you. However, if I depart, I will send him to you."

The disciples do not want Jesus to go, obviously, but he says that if he does not go, the Paraclete cannot come. There is therefore a divine plan that Jesus must go in order for the Comforter or the Paraclete to come.

The Koran states that Jesus said to his followers:

"...And giving glad tidings of a Messenger to come after me whose name shall be Ahmad." (As-Saff, 6).

In Arabic the names Ahmad (more praiseworthy) and Muhammad (praised) have the same root letters and related meanings.

'Ahmad' or 'Muhammad', the praised one, is almost a translation of the Greek word periclytos. In the present Gospel of John, 14: 16, 15: 26, and 16: 7, the word 'Comforter' in the English version is for the Greek word 'Paracletos'. Muslim scholars contend that Paracletos is a corrupt reading for Periclytos, and that in the original saying of Jesus there was a prophecy of Muhammad by name (8).

Based on the above Koranic verse and on what Jesus said to his disciples in John 14: 16, 15: 26, and John 16: 7, Muslims believe that such verses indicate that Muhammad is the promised Comforter or Counselor.

Christians believe that 'paraclete' (paracletos in Greek) refers to the Holy Spirit of Allah, and that this Holy Spirit comes to live in each Christian in order to help him fight sin. According to the Gospel, the Holy Spirit is the guiding Spirit of Allah and not the angel Gabriel.

The Comforter in John 14: 16 can never be the Holy Ghost because Jesus had already explained:

And I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever.

As the Islamic scholar Ahmad Deedat (16) put it: the emphasis is on the word 'another', it means an another, a different one, and additional one, but of the same kind, yet distinctly different from the first. Who is then the first Comforter? The Christian world is unanimous that Jesus is the first comforter; then the other, the one to follow must be like nature; subject to the same conditions of hunger, thirst, fatigue, sorrow and death.

But this promised Comforter was to **'abide with you for ever'**. No one lives for ever. Even Jesus was mortal so the coming Comforter also must be mortal. No son of man can ever be immortal! The soul does not really die, but when it separates at the time of the death of the body, the soul will get a taste of death. But as Jesus said, the Comforter was to 'abide', continue, and endure for ever. All Comforters abide with us for ever. Moses is here with us today in his teachings, so are Jesus and Muhammad in their teachings today.

It is said that the Comforter was promised to the immediate disciples of Jesus and not to a people six hundred years later. But the early followers of Jesus, forever ran, forlornly fleeing persecution. They ran from one city to another in Israel scanning every dark cloud for the descent of Jesus in his second coming. The missionaries see no anomaly in their millennium of unfulfilled prophecies. Allah Almighty did not

keep them waiting for even a quarter of the time for the advent of the 'Paraclytos,' – the Comforter or Ahmad which is another name for the Praised One.

The comforter is definitely not the 'Holy Ghost' because the coming of the comforter was conditional whereas that of the Holy Ghost was not as we observe in the prophecy in John 16: 7 (" If I don't go he won't come, but if I go, I will send him."). There are numerous instances in the Holy Bible about the coming and going of the Holy Ghost, before the birth and departure of Jesus.

...and he (John the Baptist) shall be filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother's womb (Luke 1: 15).

One may wonder after the descent of the 'dove' with whose help did Jesus perform his many miracles if not with the help of the Holy Ghost? When Jesus was accused by his own people, the Jews that he was working in league with Beelzebub (the chief of the devils) to work his miracles, Jesus rhetorically question them, "How can Satan cast out Satan?" The Jews imputed that this spirit of holiness – the Spirit of Allah – which was helping him, was devilish. This was treason of the highest order. So Jesus gives them a dire warning:

...but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, it shall never be forgiven (Matthew 12: 31).

This 'Holy Ghost' is non other than what Matthew himself has described in the following verse:

But if I (Jesus) cast out devils by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God is come upon you. (Matthew 12: 28).

In Look 3: 22 we have:

But if I (Jesus) by the finger of God cast out devils, no doubt the kingdom of God is come upon you.

...as my Father hath sent me, even so I send you (the disciples of Jesus), and when he had said this, he breathed unto them, and saith unto them, 'Receive ye the holy Ghost.' (John 20: 21-22).

It is evident that the 'finger of God', 'Spirit of God' and 'Holy Ghost' are synonymous phrases. So the Holy Ghost was helping Jesus in his ministry. The Holy Ghost was also helping his disciples on their missions of preaching and healing. So if the Holy Ghost was with John the Baptist, Jesus and also his disciples; then all this makes nonsense of the saying that 'if I go away, the comforter will not come to you.' It is clear therefore that the comforter is not the Holy Ghost (16).

All koranic commentators understand that Allah communicates with His Messengers through the Holy Ghost, Archangel Gabriel. The Christians of today however, think that Jesus meant by comforter the Holy Ghost.

The Koran states that Jesus was supported from Allah with the Holy Spirit'

...And We gave Isa (Jesus) the son of Mary clear signs and supported him with the Holy Spirit (Archangel Gabriel) (Al-Baqarah, 87).

We now come to the four decisive verses in John chapter 16 to solve the enigma of the successor to Christ. Jesus said:

I have yet many things to say unto you, but you cannot bear them now (John 16: 12).

And he (Jesus) saith unto them (the disciples). Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith? (Matthew 8. 26).

And (Jesus) said unto him (Peter) O thou of little faith... (Matthew 14: 31).

...he (Jesus) said unto them (the disciples), O ye of little faith, why reason among yourselves (Matthew 16: 8).

...he (Jesus) said unto them (the disciples) where is your faith? (Luke 8: 25).

It should be pointed out that this is not the indictment of Jesus on the indecisiveness of the Jews, but on his very own elect, the disciples. In order to make things plain to his disciples he is compelled to burst out in frustration:

And Jesus said, "Are ye even yet without understanding? (Matthew 15: 16).

And when he was provoked to breaking point, he rails against his chosen ones:

...O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you, how long shall I bear with you? (Luke 9: 41).

Sadly, Jesus was the most unfortunate of Allah's Messengers. His family disbelieved him (**For neither did his (Jesus) brethren believe in him – John 7: 5**). In fact they went to the extent of wanting to apprehend him, believing that he was mad.

And when his relatives heard of it, they went out to lay hold on him (Jesus); for they said, he is beside himself (Mark 3. 21).

Who were these friends and relatives of Jesus who had concern for his sanity? Rev. J.R. Dummelow. M.A. in his one volume Bible Commentary tells us. On page 726 he says:

"They appear to have been his mother and brethren...His family said, '**He is beside himself,**' (meaning that he is not right in his head); the Scribes said, '**He is possessed by the devil himself.**' It is not, however, implied at all that his family was in sympathy with the Scribes (the learned men of the Jews). Their apprehension being simply that his mind was unsettled, and that he needed to be under restraint."

That was the verdict of the close relation of Jesus. What then was the response of his own nation, the Jews, after his beautiful preaching and mighty miracle workings? His

disciple puts it very mildly:

He came unto his own (the Jews) and his own received him (Jesus) not (John 1: 11).

What was the response of the chosen twelve? Professor Momerie describes this in his own inimitable words:

"His immediate disciples, were always misunderstanding him and his work: wanting him to call down fire from the heaven; wanting him to declare himself king of the Jews; wanting to sit on his right hand and on his left hand in his kingdom; wanting him to show them the Father to make God visible to their bodily eyes; wanting him to do and wanting to do themselves anything and everything that was incompatible with his great plan. This was how they treated him until the end. And when that came, they all forsook him and fled."

Quoted from Sayed amir in his book 'The Spirit of Islam' page 31:

"It was most unfortunate that Jesus Christ had no real choice in selecting his disciples. They let him down as no other group of devotees had ever let down their Prophet before. It was no fault of the Master. He bewailed his plight: **"The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak."** (Matthew 26: 41). Truly, this is not the clay out of which a new Adam could be made. He passes on that responsibility to his successor, whom he calls here – 'The Spirit of Truth,' i.e. the Prophet of Truth, the Prophet of Righteousness!"

As seen in John 4:1, it has been established biblically that the word Spirit is used synonymously for 'Prophet,' hence the 'Spirit of Truth' would be the Prophet of Truth - a Prophet in whom Truth is personified. He had walked through life so honorably and industriously that he had won for himself even from his pagan fellow countrymen the noble designation of as-Sadek (the Truthful one) and al-Ameen (the Honest), the Man of Faith, the Upright, the Trustworthy - a man who never broke his word. His life, his personality, his teachings are the veritable proof of Muhammad being the embodiment of Truth (al-Ameen) – the Spirit of Truth. Muhammad really was the true Friend, the Helper, the Advocate, the Glorifier, and the Testifiers of these prophecies in John 14: 15-16. (17).

Jesus prophesized the coming of Muhammad whose universal message will stay forever:

"And I will ask the father, and He will give you another counselor to be with you forever." (John 14:16).

"He is the one who comes after me, the thongs of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie." (John 1:27).

In John 16: 12-14, Jesus says:

"I have yet many things to tell you, but you cannot bear them now. Howbeit when 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 shall he speak. And he will show you things to come, and he shall glorify me."

Six centuries later, the entire truth was revealed to humanity via the Spirit of Truth, known to history as Prophet Muhammad. Allah revealed that the Message he brought was universal.

And We have not send you (O Muhammad) except as a giver of glad tidings and a Warner to all mankind, but most of them know not (Saba', 28).

As foretold by Jesus, Muhammad spoke only what was revealed to him, and he did not speak of his own authority.

Nor does He speak of his own desire.

It is only a revelation revealed.

He has been taught (this Koran) by one mighty in power (angel Gabriel) (An-Najm, 3-5).

Muhammad truly glorified Jesus. In fact, without believing in Jesus, one cannot be a Muslim. The Koran states that Isa (Jesus) the son of Mary was one of the greatest prophets. He was born of a miraculous birth from the chaste Virgin Mary and he proved his prophet hood by many miracles. There is even in the Koran a whole chapter called 'Mary'. Truly Muhammad was the Paraclete, the Spirit of Truth as foretold by Jesus. The 'Spirit of Truth', or this Prophet of truth, will not be speaking spiritual truth of his own impulse, but he will speak on the same basis as his previous comforter – Jesus had spoken.

History does not record much as to when first Jewish migration from north to Medina began as their numbers remained small throughout their stay there. Among the major reasons for their settlements in Arabia were the relative peace and security in North Arabia. The area was rich with orchards and gardens, in addition to the Arab trade route linking Yemen, Arabia, Syria and Iraq. Some of the learned men among the Christians and Jews had also moved to this area based on their conviction that the advent of the final Prophet of Allah was near, and he was to settle in this area.

Bahira, the monk and Salman, the Persian, were some of the people who moved to the caravan route near this area. Salman who became later on one of the closest companions of the Prophet, was told by his last Christian sage:

"He will be sent with the religion of Abraham and will come forth in Arabia where he will emigrate from his home to a place between two lava tracts, a country of palms. His signs are manifest: he will eat of a gift but not if it is given as alms and between his shoulders is the seal of prophecy."

Medina was the only city fitting this description.

Salman was born into a Zoroastrian family of Isfahan, Persia. He became a Christian as a young boy and traveled to Syria in search of truth about Allah and associated himself with the Bishop of Mosul. After the Bishop's death Salman associated himself to several other Christian sages. On one of his travels to Gulf of 'Aqaba, north of Red

Sea, he was sold to a Jew of Banu Quraizah in Medina just before Prophet Muhammad's migration.

After confirming these signs, Salman accepted Islam and, due to his sincerity and dedication to Islam, he was accepted by the Prophet as one of the Prophet's household. It was on his advice a trench was dug around Medina. The trench in the Battle of Ahzab, also known as the Battle of Trench, took the Makkkan army by surprise and they and their confederates (Arab pagans and Jews) could not accomplish the plan of wiping out Islam and Muslims of Medina.

The Jews who lived in Arabia at the time of Muhammad were expecting the Prophet in the Paran (Arabia) area. They used to mock the Arab pagans that the Prophet will soon come and lead them to victory over the pagans, as foretold in their Scriptures. But when Muhammad came, they resisted him and sided with pagan Arabs against him. It is also important to understand that there were many Christians who did not believe that Jesus was God. They understood that Jesus was an honored Prophet and Messenger of God, but only human.

These great masses of Christians were concentrated in North Africa, and they were also expecting the Prophet, as the Bible foretold. Therefore, when the Message of Islam reached the North Africans, they readily followed the Message of the Prophet, Muhammad. This contributed to the fact that North Africans are Muslims today, and the majority of Christians left in the world who did not follow Muhammad were and are those that take Jesus as God.

In the time of Jesus, the Jews were waiting for the fulfillment of three distinct prophecies. The first was the coming of Christ; the second was the coming of Elijah; the third was the coming of the Prophet. This was obvious from the three questions that were posed to John the Baptist. We read in John 1: 19-21:

"Now this was John's (the Baptist) testimony when the Jews of Jerusalem sent priests and Levites to ask him who he was. He did not fail to confess, but confessed freely, 'I am not the Christ.' They asked him, 'Are you Elijah?' He said, 'No, I am not.' Are you the Prophet?' He said, 'No.'"

John the Baptist turned to be Elijah as Jesus later clarified in Matthew 11: 14:

"And if you are willing to accept it, he is Elijah who was to come."

And in Matthew 17: 14:

"But I tell you, Elijah has already come, and they did not recognize him...Then they realized that he was speaking of John the Baptist."

It is clear then that Jesus was the Christ or the anointed one, and John was Elijah. So who was the Prophet? No other Prophet came after Jesus but Mohammad. He came from Mount Paran, which is according to the Bible around Makkah and Medina. He conquered Makkah with ten thousand companions (Saints) and liberated the Ka'ba from idol worship and brought a fiery law. He was to be like unto Moses and came from the brethren of the Israelites. He was illiterate and only spoke what words Allah

put in his mouth, and only spoke in the name of Allah. He was to conquer his enemies and establish the Law of Allah and guide the faithful into all truth.

Muhammad was the only Prophet who came after the departure of Jesus and glorified him. Because the Koran mentioned Jesus and his teachings with honor and dignity, now more than one billion and two hundred and fifty million Muslims inhabiting the globe believe in Jesus and glorify his Message (17).

Allah has guided the Prophet of Islam to the path of glory, the path of moral straightness, goodness and integrity, virtue and piety; the path of rectitude, the path on which was founded the religion of Abraham, the Orthodox Muslim who never incorporated with Allah other deities.

Say: 'As for me, my Lord has guided me to a straight path, a right religion, the Creed of Abraham, a man of pure faith; he was no idolater (Al-An'am, 161).

There were Christians and Jews at the time of Muhammad who recognized that Islam was a logical and natural development of Allah's revelations as given in earlier ages, and they not only welcomed and accepted Islam, but claimed that they had always been Muslims. In that sense Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses and Jesus had all been Muslims.

When the news of the arrival of the Prophet at Medina reached the leader of the Jews Abdullah bin Salâm, he wanted to be certain that Muhammad was the seal of the prophets, the Prophet foretold in the Torah. Abdullah bin Salâm went to the Prophet and asked about three things which only a Prophet can answer.

What is the first sign of the Hour? What is the first food which the people of Paradise will eat? Why does a child attract the similarity of his father or to his mother?

The Prophet replied, "**Gabriel has just now informed me of that.**"

Ibn Salâm said, "Gabriel is the enemy of the Jews from amongst the angels."

The Prophet said, "**As for the first sign of the Hour, it will be a fire that will gather the people from the east to the west. As for the meal which the people of Paradise will eat, it will be the caudate (extra) lobe of the fish liver. As for the child, if the man's discharge precedes the woman's discharge, the child attracts the similarity to the man, and if the woman's discharge precedes the man's discharge, then the child attracts the similarity to the woman.**"

Here Abdullah bin Salâm said, "I testify that none has the right to be worshipped but Allah and that you are the Messenger of Allah."

In the Koran Allah states that the sincere Jews and Christians to whom Allah sent the Torah and the Gospel before the advent of the Koran do believe in the divine Message of Muhammad and do acknowledge the Koran. When the Koran is recited to them, they say, "We believe in it. Verily, it is the truth from our Lord: indeed we have been Muslims (submitting to Allah's will) long before the coming of the Koran." Such-like persons shall be requited in double, in that before they knew Islam they followed the earliest Law in truth and sincerity, and when they were offered Islam, they readily recognized and accepted it, and suffered in patient perseverance for its sake.

Those to whom We gave the Book before this believe in it. And when it is recited to them, they say, "We believe in it; surely it is the truth from our Lord. Indeed, even before it we surrendered." These shall be given their wage twice over for that they patiently endured, and avert evil with good, and expend of what We have provided them (Al-Qasas 52-54).

Because the Message of Islam is universal, it was also addressed to the Jews and the Christians. Allah instructed Muhammad to invite the Jews of Medina to Islam. Although Muhammad's Message to the world and his qualities as a Prophet are mentioned in the Torah and the Gospel as mentioned earlier, the Children of Israel of Medina were the first to deny the Message of Islam, and refused to give it solemn recognition.

In the Koran Allah warned the Jews of Medina not to exchange the truth of the Koran and His Apostle Muhammad for the vanity of the fleeting world, nor to conceal the truth of his coming as the last of the Prophets when they know that it conforms to facts mentioned in their Book, the Torah.

Children of Israel, remember My blessing wherewith I blessed you, and fulfill My covenant and I shall fulfill your Covenant; and have awe of Me. And believe in what I have sent down, confirming that which is with you, and be not the first to disbelieve in it. And sell not My Signs for a little price; and fear you Me. And do not confound the truth with vanity, and do not conceal the truth wittingly (Al-Baqarah, 40-42).

Similarly, Allah mentions in the Koran that when the Koran was presented to the Jews they refused to accept it, in spite of the fact that their Torah clearly foretold of the coming of the Prophet Muhammad, an event which they had always expected and at times wished it to be hastened on to help them get the upper hand in argument with pagan Arabs and gain victory in war over those who deny Allah. Yet when the prophecy was fulfilled and there came the Prophet Muhammad and with him came the Koran, they refused to acknowledge the truth of his mission. The Jews in their arrogance claimed that all wisdom and all knowledge of Allah were enclosed in their hearts. They closed their hearts to any further knowledge because of some little fragment which they have got and which they think is the whole of Allah's Truth. Racial arrogance made them adverse to the reception of Truth when it came through a servant of Allah, not of their own race.

How worthless is the price they received for selling their own souls when they rejected the last divine revelation to mankind; a defying impiety induced by sincere hate to whom Allah had chosen to be the recipient of His Mercy and Prophet hood, an excellence they could not reach. And when they were asked to believe in Muhammad and the Koran, they said that they only acknowledge what is imparted to them, and they deny all else though they know fully well that the Koran is the Truth which corroborates the Torah. They further said that their hearts are wrapped, and they do not hear or understand Allah's Word. Their bosoms treasure every branch of divine

knowledge and wisdom that they can absorb no more. Such an attitude showed clearly lack of faith and Allah cursed them for their blasphemy.

As a result for this impiety and transgression Allah instructed Muhammad to tell the Jews of Medina, "Why did you slay Allah's Prophets in the past if your hearts have been really impressed with piety and religious virtues?"

And We gave Moses the Book, and after him sent succeeding Messengers; and We gave Jesus son of Mary the clear signs, and strengthened him with the Holy Spirit; and whensoever there came to you a Messenger with that your souls had not desire for, you grew arrogant, and some you cry lies to, and some you slay?

And they say, 'Our hearts are wrapped.' Nay, but Allah has cursed them for their unbelief, little will they believe.

When there came to them a Book from Allah, confirming what was with them – and they aforesaid prayed for victory over the unbelievers – when there came to them that they recognized, they disbelieved in it; and the curse of Allah is on the unbelievers.

Evil is the thing they have sold themselves for, disbelieving in that which Allah sent down, grudging that Allah should send down of His bounty on whomsoever He will of His servants, and they were laden with anger upon anger; and for unbelievers awaits a humbling Chastisement.

And when they were told, 'Believe in that Allah has sent down,' they said, 'We believe in what was sent down on us'; and they disbelieve in what is beyond that, yet it is the truth confirming what is with them.

Say: 'Why then were you slaying the Prophets of Allah in former time, if you were believers?' (Al-Baqarah, 87-91).

The people of the Book (Jews and Christians) to whom Allah gave the Torah and the Gospel which foretold the advent of Muhammad in later times know very well the truth of Muhammad's mission as they knew their own sons. Their past traditions and teaching should have made them receptive of the Message of Islam. They knew Muhammad to be true and upright, they knew him to be in the line of Abraham. They knew him to correspond to the description foretold among themselves; but selfishness induced them to act against their own knowledge and conceal the truth.

Those whom We gave the Book (Jews and Christians) recognize him (Muhammad) as they recognize their sons, but verily, a party of them conceal the truth while they know it.

This is the truth from your Lord; then be not among the doubters (Al-Baqara 146, 147).

Those who keep from the knowledge of others the clear and plain revelations which Allah presented to the people in the Torah and the Gospel have come within the measure of Allah's wrath. They have earned the curse of Allah and the angels and the pious whose curse takes effect against whom it is uttered.

Those who conceal the clear signs and the guidance that We have sent down, after We have shown them clearly in the Book – they shall be cursed by Allah and the cursers (Al-Baqarah, 159).

In the Koran Allah emphasizes that those who keep from the knowledge of others the clear revelations which Allah has revealed in the Torah and exchange the truth with the worthless vanity of the fleeting world, simply consume nothing but fire in their bellies; Allah shall ignore them on the Day of Judgment, He shall not absolve them from guilt nor from the notorious crime and they shall be put to the torment.

Those who conceal what Allah has sent down of the Book, and purchase for them a small gain, they eat into their bellies nothing but Fire. Allah will not speak to them on the Day of Resurrection, nor purify them, and theirs will be a painful torment (Al-Baqarah, 174)

Chapter 6

Muhammad - the Son of Man - the Spirit of Truth - the Messenger of the Way - Lord Commander

The Jews persistently claim that they are highly distinguished than all other human races by being the “Chosen People” and the people of the “Covenant”. According to the Hebrew bible, Israel’s character as the chosen people is conditioned by obedience to Allah’s commandments.

”Now therefore, if you will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then you shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people. For all the earth is mine: and you shall be unto me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.” (Exodus 19:5, 6).

This means that Jews have been chosen to fulfill the mission of proclaiming Allah’s Message among all the nations. This implies a special duty and responsibility on the part of the Jewish people. This duty stems from the belief that Jews had been pledged by the covenant with Allah concluded with the biblical patriarch Abraham, their ancestor, and with the entire Jewish nation at Mount Sinai, to testify, by percept and example, to the truth revealed to them, to lead a holy life as Allah’s priest-people, and, if needs be, sacrifice their very lives for the sake of this truth.

Starting in early medieval Europe, during a time of intense persecution of Jews, some Jewish thinkers began teaching that the meaning of choosiness implied that Allah loves Jews more than other human beings, and that Jews were inherently superior to non-Jews. Over time such views became popular among a segment of the Jewish community, and by all mainstream organizations. It would seem that the more extreme, and exclusive, interpretations of the doctrine of election, among Jewish thinkers, were partly the result of reaction to oppression by the non-Jewish world. This type of interpretation reaches its height in the Jewish idea that while the souls of Israel stem ultimately from Allah; the souls of the gentiles are merely of base material (shells).

Supersessionism is the Christian belief that Christians have replaced Israel as Allah’s Chosen people. In this view, the Jews’ choosiness found its ultimate fulfillment through the Message of Jesus; Jews who remain non-Christian are no longer considered to be chosen, since they reject Jesus as the Messiah and son of Allah. Christian identity groups, based on a fusion of Nazi ideology, white supremacy, and fundamentalist Christianity, have developed a theology which holds that Allah hates the Jews, and that only white Christians are Allah’s chosen people. These groups are rejected as non-Christian by the great majority of mainstream Christian churches. As an example, the Covenant, the Sword and the Arm of the Lord is a Christianity identity movement which preaches that Jews of today are not Allah’s chosen people, but are in fact an anti-Christ race, whose purpose is to destroy Allah’s people and Christianity by forcing inter-racial mixings and perversions through Talmudic teaching.

Islam rejects the idea of chosen people, making believe in Allah, piety and good deeds the only way to heaven. Thus a direct relationship is established with Allah, without any intercessor.

According to Islam the leaders of both Judaism and Christianity deliberately altered the true words of Allah, and thus led all of their believers down a false path. In the Koran Allah charges the Jewish people with falsehood, distortion, and of being corrupters of Scripture. In this view, the Jewish Bible and Christian New Testament are true, but the Jews and Christians misinterpreted and misunderstood the meaning of their own Scriptures, and thus need the Koran to clearly understand the will of Allah. This is known as the 'doctrine of the corruption of the text'.

O people of the Book! Why do you clothe Truth with falsehood and conceal the Truth while you have knowledge? (Al Imran 71).

Do you (Muslims) expect that they (Jews) will be believers, while some of them (Rabbis) used to listen to the Revelations of Allah (Torah), then intentionally perverted and tampered with it, while they knew it was the Truth (Al Baqara 75).

So woe to those who write the Scripture with their hands, then say, "This is from Allah." To trade with it for a pitiful price! So woe to them for what their hands have written, and woe to them for what they earn from it (Al Baqara 79).

The Koran, the last divine revelation rewrote the role of Abraham and presented Muslims as the only people chosen to carry the true word of Allah. The Koran teaches that Abraham is the founder of Islam, and that Prophet Muhammad was ordered by Allah to follow the religion of Abraham. All religious practices in Islam came to Muslims from Abraham. Abraham was the first recipient of the concept of Islam as a practice, and the first to call believers to the Oneness of Allah.

In this connection the Koran revealed:

"And strive for Allah as His due; for He has chosen you, and has not imposed difficulty upon you in religion. The faith of your father Abraham, he named you Muslims before, thus the Messenger will be a witness over you, and you will be witnesses over all mankind. So establish prayer, and pay the alms, and hold fast to Allah, He is your protector, the most Excellent Protector, the most Excellent Helper." (Al Hajj, 78).

O people of earlier Scripture! Why do you argue about Abraham, when the Torah and Injeel (Bible) were not revealed until after him? Do you have not minds? (Al Imran 65).

Abraham was neither a Jew nor a Christian but he was truly Muslim, and never was he of the polytheists.

Most surely the people who are worthier of Abraham are those who followed him, this Prophet (Muhammad) and those who believed. Allah is the Guardian of the believers (Al Imran, 67-68).

Indeed Abraham was a nation devoting himself to Allah, a man of pure faith and he was never of the polytheists. Grateful for His favors, He chose him, and guided him to the Straight Path.

And We blessed him with goodness in this world. And surely, he in the Hereafter shall be among the righteous.

Then We revealed to you: “Follow the religion of Abraham a man of pure faith who was never of the polytheists (An Nahl 120-123).

There is a very ancient religious dispute between the Jews and the Muslims about the questions concerning the birthright and the Covenant.

Allah does not act arbitrarily, but deals with individuals and nations on the basis of great contracts or covenants which He Himself initiates. Everything Allah has done in regard to man’s salvation is made on one or more of the covenants He has made in the past.

Before and during the time of Noah, the human race passed through a state of corruption to the point that Allah sent a flood to destroy the evil. Allah preserved the eight persons who still trusted in Him, Noah and his family. After the flood, Allah told the people to be fruitful and increase in number and fill the earth. So they immigrated in all directions. Those who immigrated east built a city and a tower at Babylon, and established there a false religious system. Several hundreds years later people had established cultures in many places. There were some who still retained the truth passed down to them by their fathers from the time of Noah, but there were many who had abandoned that truth (Oneness of the only true God, Allah). Allah picked out one man called Abraham from the city of UR of the Chaldees, a place where most people no longer believed in Allah.

The Lord had said to Abraham, “Leave your country, your people and your father’s household and go to the land I will show you. I will make you into a great nation and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you.” (Genesis 12:1-2).

Abraham manifested his love and zeal for Allah when he entered into the temple and destroyed all the idols and images therein. He came out unhurt and triumphantly from the burning furnace wherein he was cast by the order of Nimrod. He left his native land for Haran in the company of his father and his nephew Lot. He was seventy-five years old when his father died at Haran. In obedience and absolute resignation to the divine call, he left his country and started a long and varied journey to the land of Canaan, to Egypt and to Arabia. His wife Sarah was barren; yet Allah announced to him that he was destined to become the father of many nations, that all the territories he was to traverse shall be given as an inheritance to his descendants, and that, by his seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed. This unique promise was met with an unshaken faith on the part of Abraham who had no son. When he was led out to look at the sky at night and told by Allah that his posterity would be as numerous as the stars, and as innumerable as the sand which is on the shores of the sea, Abraham believed it. And it was this belief in Allah that was counted righteousness.

A virtuous poor Egyptian girl called Hagar was a slave and a maid in the service of Sarah. At the consent of Sarah Hagar was married to the Prophet, and from this union Ishmael was born, as foretold by the Angel. When Ishmael was thirteen years old, Allah again sent His Angel with His revelation to Abraham; the same promise was repeated to Abraham; the rite of circumcision was formally instituted and

immediately executed. Abraham at his ninetieth year of age, Ishmael, and all the male servants, were circumcised; and the "Covenant" between Allah and Abraham with his only begotten son was made and sealed. It was a kind of treaty concluded between Heaven and the Promised Land in the person of Ishmael as the only offspring of the nonagenarian patriarch. Abraham promised allegiance and fealty to his Creator, and Allah promised to be forever the Protector of the posterity of Ishmael.

Ishmael was therefore the legitimate son of Abraham, his first born, and hence his claim to birthright was quite just and legal. The Covenant was then made between Allah and Abraham as well as his only son Ishmael before Isaac was born. The prerogative that by Abraham all the generations of the earth shall be blessed, was the heritage by birthright, and was the patrimony of Ishmael. The inheritance to which Ishmael was entitled by birthright was to subjugate and occupy forever all the territories extending from the Nile to the Euphrates, which were inhabited by some ten different nations. These lands had never been subdued by the descendants of Isaac, but by those of Ishmael. This was an actual and literal fulfillment of one of the conditions contained in the Covenant.

Isaac was also born miraculously and blessed by Allah. He was promised the land of Canaan which was actually occupied by Joshua. The Jews however, had always been jealous of Ishmael because they knew very well that in him the Covenant was made and with his circumcision it was concluded and sealed, and it was out of this rancor that their rabbis had corrupted and interpolated many passages in their scriptures. To efface the name Ishmael from the second, sixth, and seventh verses of the twenty-second chapter of the Book of Genesis and to insert in its place Isaac, and to leave the descriptive epithet "the only begotten son" was to deny the existence of the former and to violate the Covenant made between Allah and Ishmael.

In this regard Allah says in the Koran:

Do you (Muslims) expect that they (Jews) will be believers, while some of them (Rabbis) used to listen to the Revelations of Allah (Torah), then intentionally perverted and tampered with it, while they knew it was the truth? So woe to those who write the Scripture with their hands, then say, "This is from Allah", to trade with it for a pitiful price! So woe to them for what their hands have written, and woe to them for what they earn from it. Surely those who conceal what Allah has revealed of the Book, and sell it for a miserable price, eat nothing in their bellies but fire, and Allah will not speak to them on the Day of Resurrection, nor will He purify them, and for them there will be a painful chastisement. Those are they who buy error for guidance, and torment in place of forgiveness, how will they be able to bear the fire? (Al Baqarah 75, 79,174,175).

And when Allah took Covenant with those who were given earlier Scripture, "You shall certainly make it known to all people, and you shall not conceal it." But they flung it behind their backs and bartered it away for a miserable price, how evil was that they purchased! (Al Imran, 187).

Allah who made the Covenant with Ishmael described the law of inheritance, namely: if a man had two wives, one beloved and the other despised, and each one had a son,

and the son of the despised wife was first born, that son, and not the son of the beloved wife, was entitled to the birthright. Consequently the first born shall inherit twice that of his younger brother (Duet.xxi.15-17). Was not, then, this law explicit enough to put to silence all who dispute the just claim of Ishmael to birthright?

Abraham was a nomad chief as well as a great Prophet. He used to live in a tent and had large flocks of cattle and great wealth. Nomad tribesmen do not inherit lands and pastures, but the prince assigns to each of his sons certain clans or tribes as his subjects and dependents. As a rule the youngest inherits the hearth or the tent of his parents, whereas the elder succeeds him to his throne. Isaac, who was the younger of the two, inherited the tent of his father and became like him a nomad living in tents. But Ishmael was sent to Hijaz to guard the House of Allah, which he together with Abraham had built as referred to in the Koran. There Ishmael settled, became Prophet and prince among the Arab tribes who believed in him. It was at Makkah that the Ka'aba became the center of the pilgrimage called al-Hajj. It was Ishmael that founded the religion of one true Allah and instituted the circumcision. Prophet Muhammad is a direct descendant of Ishmael, and was born in Makkah as a fulfillment of the prayer of Abraham and Ishmael while both were building the Holy House of Allah, Al Ka'aba in Makkah, as explained in the following verses of the Koran:

And when Abraham was tested by his Lord, with commands which he fulfilled, Allah said, "I will make you an ideal to the people." He prayed, "And from my offspring." Allah said, "But my Covenant does not extend to wrongdoers." And We made the Sacred House (The Ka'aba) a sanctuary for the people, and take Abraham's place of worship as your place of worship, and We entrusted Abraham and Ishmael to purify my House for those who encompass it, and for those who retire to it for devotion and prayer, and those who bow down, and for those who prostrate themselves there.

And when Abraham said, "My Lord make this city (Makkah) a safe place and provide its inhabitants with fruits, those of them who believe in Allah and the Last Day." He said, "And whoever disbelieves, I will leave him in enjoyment for a time, then I will consign him to the torment of the Fire, surely an evil destination.

And as Abraham and Ishmael were raising the foundation of the House (Ka'aba) they humbly prayed, "Our Lord accept this from us, surely you are the All-hearing, the All-knowing-

Our Lord lead us to submit to your will and raise from our offspring a nation which will submit to your will, and direct us to our ordinance for worship, and turn us from sin, indeed you are the Relenting, the Most Merciful-

Our Lord send to them a Messenger from among them who shall recite your Revelations to them and teach them the Book (Koran) and the Wisdom and purify them, surely you are Almighty, All-Wise."

And who rejects the Religion of Abraham but those who make fools of themselves? We have chosen him in this world, and in the Hereafter he will be among the righteous.

When His Lord said to him (Abraham), "Be Muslim" (Submit to My Will), he said, "I submit my will to the Lord of the Worlds."

And this was the advice of Abraham to his sons, and of Jacob, "O my sons, Allah has ordained the Religion for you, so hold fast to the Religion of Islam until

death comes to you.”

Or were you witnesses when death came to Jacob, when he said to his sons, “What will you worship after me?” They said, “We will worship your Allah, the Allah of your fathers, Abraham, Ishmael and Isaac. One Allah and to His will we submit.” (Al Baqara, 124-133).

Ishmael’s offspring soon increased and was multiplied like the stars in the sky. From the days of Prophet Ishmael to the advent of Prophet Muhammad, the Arabs of Hijaz, Yemen and others became independent and masters of their own countries. The Roman and Persian Empires were powerless to subdue the people of Ishmael. Even Esau the elder son of Isaac, left his father’s hearth for his younger brother Jacob and dwelt in Edom, where he became the chief of his people and soon got mixed with the Arab tribes of Ishmael who was both his uncle and father in law.

Abraham was reported in the Bible to have several other sons from Qitura and the concubines, to whom he gave presents and gifts and sent them towards the East. All these became large and strong tribes. Twelve sons of Ishmael were mentioned by name and described, each one to be a prince with his towns and camps or armies (Gen.xxv). So were the children from Qitura, and others, as well as those descended from Esau mentioned by their names.

When we behold the number of the family of Jacob when he went to Egypt, which hardly exceeded seventy heads, and when he was met by Esau with an escort of four hundred horsemen, and the mighty Arab tribes submitted to the twelve Emirs belonging to the family of Ishmael, and then when Muhammad the last messenger of Allah proclaimed the religion of Islam, all the Arab tribes unitedly acclaimed him and accepted his religion, and subdued all the lands promised to the children of Prophet Abraham, one must indeed be blind not to see that the Covenant was made with Ishmael and the promise accomplished in the person of Prophet Muhammad upon whom be peace (18).

The last book of the canonical Code of the Bible bears the name of “Malachi”. In this Bible the oracle was addressed to a people already settled in Jerusalem with the temple and its services. This oracle seemed to have been delivered by the Prophet Malachi in about the beginning of the fourth century before the Christian era. The Book of Malachi predicted a prophesy:

”Behold, I send My Messenger, and he shall prepare the way before Me; and suddenly shall come to his temple the Adon whom ye are seeking, and the Messenger of the Covenant whom ye desire. Behold, he cometh, says the Lord of Hosts.” (Mal.iii. 1).

All Christians will tell that the first Messenger mentioned in the text was John the Baptist, and the second Messenger was Jesus Christ!

John the Baptist was not the Messenger foretold by Malachi for he was not accredited with a sacred scripture. He neither founded a religion, nor reformed the old one. He did not abrogate one iota of the Law of Moses nor added to it a little. Prophet John left his parents and home while still a youth. He lived in the desert on honey and locust, and spent there his life until he was about thirty years old, when he showed

himself to the multitudes on the banks of the River Jordan, where he used to baptize people. And as to baptism, washing and ablution could not be considered a religion or a way to be followed before the advent of Jesus Christ.

In the third chapter of Mathew John the Baptist seemed to have also announced the approach of the Kingdom of Heaven and the advent of a Great Prophet of Allah who would baptize the believers not with water, “but with fire and with the Holy Spirit.” John the Baptist and the Apostles after him preached and announced this Kingdom to the Jews, inviting them to believe and repent in order to be admitted into it. If John the Baptist were the Messenger appointed by Allah to prepare the way before Jesus Christ, and if he were his herald and subordinate, there was no sense in John to go about baptizing the crowds in the waters of a river to occupy himself with half a dozen disciples. He ought to have immediately followed and adhered to Jesus when he had seen and known him, but he did nothing of the kind.

The religion of Allah, until Jesus Christ, was consigned chiefly to the people of Israel, it was more material and of a national character. Its lawyers, priests, and scribes had disfigured that religion with a gross and superstitious literature of their forefathers. Christ condemned those traditions, denounced the Jews and their leaders as “hypocrites” and the “children of the Devil.”

The Koran says about those who transgressed from the Children of Israel;

Humiliation cleaves to them wherever they are found, except when they are in a covenant of Allah and of the people, they have incurred the wrath of Allah and destitution cleaves to them. This is because they disbelieved in Allah’s revelations and killed the prophets in defiance of right; this is for their disobedience and aggression (Al Imran 112).

But for their breaking their covenant, We cursed them, and made their hearts hard. They are perverting words from their meaning, and they have forgotten a portion of what they were given of the Scriptures, and you will always find them treacherous in every way, except a few of them. So ignore them, and disregard their treason. Surely Allah loves the charitable (Al Maida 13).

Jesus Christ reformed the old religion; gave a new life and spirit to it, he explained more explicitly the immorality of the human soul, and the resurrection and the life in the next world. As mentioned in the Gospel of St. Barnabas, Jesus reprimanded the Jews who said that the Great Messenger whom they call “Messiah” would come down from the lineage of King David. Jesus told them plainly that he could not be the son of David, for David calls him “his Lord”, and then went on to explain how their fathers had altered the scriptures, and that the Covenant was made, not with Isaac, but with Ishmael, who was taken to be offered a sacrifice to Allah, and that the expression “thy only begotten son” meant Ishmael, and not Isaac.

Jesus then publicly announced to the Jews that the next Messiah whom the Jews were expecting was the son of Ishmael whose name was Ahmad, and that he would establish the Kingdom of Allah upon earth with the power of the Word of Allah (Koran) and with sword.

Jesus the son of Mary said to the Children of Israel that he was sent to them to corroborate their faith in the Torah which was set before him and to confirm what it foretold of whose turn he was to come. Jesus said to the Children of Israel that he came to comfort their hearts by announcing to them the joyful tidings of whose turn he was next to come, an apostle named Ahmad.

Jesus is reported to have said:

“Among them that are born of women there has not risen greater than John the Baptist, but the least in the Kingdom of Allah is greater than John” (Mathew 11/11), (Luke 7/28).

For centuries this saying had baffled Christian interpreters. But whatever the different interpretations were, it was impossible that Jesus had been referring to himself because the kingdom of Allah on earth did not materialize during his lifetime. Even if it did, he could not have been the least in it, because he would have been its founder. Without any ambiguity, Jesus said that the burden of carrying the divine Message, the Message of monotheism, was to be given to another nation (Mathew 21/43). He had prophesied that the “Son of Man” will be the Prophet who was to come from among their brethren as stated in Deuteronomy. Allah promised a Prophet like Moses:

“I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him. And it shall come to pass that whosoever will not hearken unto my words which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him.”
(Deuteronomy 18/18-19).

As previously mentioned, the Koran stated in chapter "Al-A'raf - verses 155-158 - that when the children of Israel worshipped the calf after guidance had come to them, Moses chose from the innocent among his people seventy persons to meet Allah in order to beseech Him to admit them into the realm of his Mercy. At the appointed time and place, fearful echoes thundered in their ears and the earth convulsed under their feet as an expression of strong divine reproach against those who worshipped the calf. There did Moses pray asking for Allah's forgiveness for his people. Allah responded by saying to Moses that He smites with His punishment whom He wills and His Mercy extends to all things. Allah further instructed that He will ordain His Mercy to those who are pious, and truly believe in His Signs, those who follow the Messenger, the unlettered Prophet whom the people of the Book find well described in their Torah (Deut, xviii, 15) and the Gospel (John xiv,16).

There also exists in the Torah and the gospel several other clear prophecies indicating the coming of Prophet Muhammad e.g. Deut. 18: 18,21: 21; Psl. 118: 22-23; Isa. 42: 1-13; Hab. 3: 2-4; Matt. 21: 42-43; Jn. 14: 12-17, 26-28, 16: 7-14.

The churches had always believed that the “Messenger of the way” was John the Baptist, and not Jesus. The Jews, however, accepted neither of the two. As the person foretold in the prophesy was one and the same, and not two, Prophet Jesus could not be that person. If Jesus was Allah, as he is now believed to be, then he could not be employed to prepare the way before the face of Allah. If Prophet Jesus was Allah who made this prophesy, then who was the other Allah before whose face the way was to

be prepared? If Jesus were a simple man and a prophet, and worshipper of the Lord of Hosts, then the claim falls to the ground. For Jesus as a simple human being and Prophet could not be the founder of the Trinitarian Churches.

It must be mentioned also that neither John the Baptist nor Jesus Christ did ever attempt to convert a single pagan nor succeeded in persuading the Jews to recognize their mission.

The person indicated in the prophesy had three qualifications, namely, the Messenger of Religion, the Lord Commander, and the Messenger of the Convent. He was also distinguished and described by three conditions, "he is suddenly coming to his mosque or temple, he is looked for and sought by men, and is greatly desired and coveted."

Surely this high Messenger of Allah was not coming to prepare the way for the benefit of a handful of Jews, but to establish a universal and an unchangeable religion for all men. Though the Jewish religion believe in one true Allah, still their conception of Him as a national Deity for Israel, their priesthood, sacrificial rites and ceremonies, and the non-existence of any positive articles concerning the resurrection of the dead, the last judgment, the eternal life in heaven or hell, and many other deficient points, make it absolutely unfit and insufficient for the peoples of diverse languages and races.

With its obscure seven sacraments, its belief in original sin, the incarnation of a God unknown to all previous religious and mythological literature, and in a trinity of individual gods, Christianity had caused divisions and sects, all imbued with bitter feelings of hatred and rancor against each other.

Religion as determined by Allah is Islam. The Messenger, then, was commissioned with the establishing of the ancient religion of prophets Abraham and Ishmael and all other prophets who preached Islam and the Oneness of Allah. It was to be the shortest road to reach Allah; the simplest religion to worship Him, and the safest faith to remain ever pure and unadulterated with superstition and ambiguous dogmas. The Messenger was commissioned to prepare a road, a religion that will lead people to believe in and love the One Allah without having need of the leadership of hundreds of self-appointed guides and pretenders. And above all, the Messenger was to come suddenly to his temple, whether it is the one in Jerusalem or the one in Makkah; he was like his great grand father Abraham to root out all idolatry in the world, not only by the destruction of idols and images, but also inculcating in their former worshipers the faith in one true Allah. He was the Prophet that would construct a new path and introduce a universal religion that would cancel all mediators between Allah and man. He was the Prophet to re-establish the religion of his grand father Abraham, the religion of pure monotheism.

Say, "Allah has spoken the Truth, therefore follow the Religion of Abraham, a man of pure faith, and he was never of the polytheists." (Al Imran 96).

Who can then be this glorious man, this great benefactor of humanity, and this valiant Commander who rendered noble services in the cause of Allah and His religion other than Prophet Muhammad? Who then, in the long series of prophets could the "least" be other than Muhammad? He was definitely and indisputably the last of the prophets,

he was chronologically the youngest among them, yet he was the greatest compared to any one of them. He was the “Benjamin” of the prophets, yet he was their greatest, for the gigantic work accomplished by Muhammad was far greater than the work accomplished by all the prophets before him put together.

He brought to the world an unrivalled Sacred Book, the Koran, a most reasonable, simple, and beneficial religion of Islam, and had been the means of guidance and conversion of the heathen nations in all parts of the globe, and has transformed them into one universal and united brotherhood, thus forming the true “Kingdom of Allah” upon the earth as announced by Prophets Jesus and John the Baptist. Muhammad’s mission fulfilled the Covenant.

The Koran teaches that Allah Almighty took covenant of all prophets to believe in Muhammad if he appeared in their times and that they should announce the tidings of his advent:

And when Allah took covenant of the prophets, “Now that I have given you the Book and the Wisdom, then there will come to you a Messenger confirming what is with you, you will believe in him, and will help him.”

Allah said, “Will you be bound by this and take my Covenant as binding on you?” They said, “We will be so bound.” Allah said, “Then bear witness and I am with you of the witnesses.”

So if any turn away after this they have deviated from the right path (Al Imran 81,82).

The Sibylline Revelation, which was compiled after the collapse of Jerusalem in 70 CE, stated that the Son of Man will appear and destroy the Roman Empire and guide the believers to worship the One and Only Allah. This book was written at least eighty years after the death of Jesus. The Sibylline prophesy materialized six centuries later, with the advent of Muhammad the last of the prophets, the powerful Son of Man whose followers had indeed removed the Roman yoke from those who believed in the One and Only Allah. The Muslims had vindicated the Nazarenes, the early followers of Jesus, the believers of the One Allah, in the face of the artificial theology of the Pauline Church, the Nicene Creed, and other Ecumenical council creeds. Later, the final blow of the last of the Romans, the Byzantines, came in 1453 CE, with the fall of Constantinople to the Ottoman Muslims led by Muhammad the Conqueror (19).

Jeremiah was one of the greatest prophets of the children of Israel. He was the last prophet who came to the Jews before the advent of Jesus Christ. The Biblical critics consider that Jeremiah was the author, or a compiler of the Pentateuch called Deuteronomy. Jeremiah was a Levite and a priest as well as a Prophet. At the time of Jeremiah there were pseudo-prophets and impostors who conducted the divine services in the temple and pretended to deliver the oracles of Allah to the people. No prophet received at the hands of these impostors more of persecution than the prophet Jeremiah. Jeremiah distinguished between a genuine Prophet from a false prophet by introducing a fairly satisfactory answer, namely: “The Prophet who teaches Islam”. If we read Chapter xxviii of Jeremiah, we find that the ninth verse states:

”The prophet which foretells the Islam (Shalom), at the coming of the word of the Prophet, that prophet will be recognized to have been sent by Allah in truth”

The word “Shalom” and the Syriac “Shlama”, as well as the Arabic “Salaam” and “Islam”, are of one and the same Semitic root, “Shalam”, and means the same thing as admitted by all the scholars of the Semitic languages. The verb “Shalam” signifies to submit, resign oneself to, and then to make peace, and consequently to be safe, sound and tranquil. No religious system in the world had ever been qualified with a better and more comprehensive, dignified, and sublime name than that of Islam. The true religion of the true Allah cannot be named after the name of any of His worshippers, and much less after the name of a people or country.

Jeremiah was the only Prophet before Christ who used the word Shalom in the sense of a religion. He was the only Prophet who used this word with the object of proving the veracity of a Messenger of Allah. Jeremiah used the term “Shalom” in the sense of a tangible, concrete, and real religious system which Islam comprised. It is only the religion of Shalom, of Islam, that can testify to the character and the office of a true Prophet. Allah is One, and His religion is one. There is no other religion in the world like Islam, because it professes and defends this absolute Oneness of the Deity. No prophet could be genuine unless, as Jeremiah expressly said, he preached and propagated the religion of Islam. According to the Koranic revelation, prophets Abraham, Ishmael, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, and all the prophets were Muslims, and professed Islam as their religion. It is only the religion of “Shalom”, of “Islam” that can testify to the character and the office of a true Prophet. The term “Islam” and its equivalents, “Shalom” and “Shalam” were known to the Jews and Christians of Makkah and Medina when Prophet Muhammad appeared to perfect and universalize the religion of Islam.

Islam is therefore the Kingdom of Allah on earth; Allah completed, perfected, and established it under His Messenger Muhammad.

Muhammad’s name also appeared in Haggai 2:7 under the Hebrew word Mahmad, which means the highly praised. It is almost undoubtedly referring to the Arabic name of the Prophet “Muhammad”.

The Koran persistently reminds Muslims that Abraham and his sons and grand sons were the followers of Islam. They were neither Jews nor Christians. They preached the worship of the one Allah to all the peoples among whom they dwelt. The Jews and several other nations that descended from the other sons of Abraham were also Muslims, i.e. believers in Allah and resigned to his Will. There were also the people of Easu, the Edomites, the Medianetes, and numerous other peoples living in Arabia, who knew Allah and worshipped Him like the Israelites. These peoples had also their own prophets who came to remind them with the Oneness of Allah, like Job, Jethro- the father -in-law of Moses- balaam, Ad, Hud, and many others. But they, like the Jews had taken to idolatry until it was totally eradicated by Prophet Muhammad.

The religion of Islam existed among the Jews and Arabs of ancient times, sometimes more luminous, but mostly like a dim spark glimmering in a dark room. It was a religion professed by a people who soon forgot it, or neglected it, or transformed it into pagan practices.

It seemed that the Jews had no true conception of Allah. Whenever the people of Israel prospered and were successful in their wars, then Yahweh was acknowledged and worshipped; but in adverse circumstances He was abandoned and the deity of a more prosperous nation was adopted and its idol or image worshipped.

It was evident then that the true religion before Prophet Muhammad remained immature and undeveloped amongst the Hebrews, although it shone brilliantly in the life of the true worshippers of Yahweh.

The history of the Jews from the death of Joshua to the anointment of King Saul, covering a period of more than four centuries, was full of a series of scandalous relapses into idolatry. It was only after the close of the revelation and the Canon of their holy scriptures in the third century before Christ that the Jews ceased to worship idols, and have since remained monotheists. But their belief in the Oneness of Allah was not complete because they had stubbornly rejected both the persons and the revelations of prophets Jesus and Muhammad.

Because the Torah was lost and obliterated, the Jews, in about the fifth century B.C., produced the greater portion of their canonical books of the Old Testament, when the memories of the conquest of the land of Canaan by Joshua, the temple and Jerusalem of Solomon, were events buried in the past epochs of their wondrous history. A nationalistic and Judaist spirit of solicitude and seclusion reigned among the small remnant of Israel. The belief in the coming of a great savior to restore the lost throne and crown of David was regnant, and the old meaning of "Shalom" as the name of the religion of Abraham that was known to all tribes descended from him was no longer remembered. Muhammad-the last of the prophets-was the one who had to restore the old meaning "Shalom" or "Islam", the one and only religion of Allah since the beginning of creation and until He inherits the earth and what is upon it.

Judaism had been corrupted by distorting Allah's words in the Torah. Judaism as practiced by the majority of the Jews today is not the religion authorized by Allah in the Torah, but a newly formalized belief system based on man-made innovations recorded in the man-made Talmud. The Talmud is a vast compendium of Jewish law and lore, a sequel to the Hebrew Bible, and the basis of Jewish religious life. It consists of the Mishna and Gemara. The Mishna recorded the teachings, sayings and interpretations, and explanations of many rabbis. There are two Gemaras, the Palestinian Gemara, a product of the 3rd and 4th centuries AD, and the Babylonian Gemara, completed about 499, with some later additions. From the 5th century, the Babylonian Talmud was generally accepted as the authoritative source of law instead of the Book of Allah, the Torah. The Torah had been traded for the Talmud.

In the Koran, Allah's Final Testament, Allah teaches us:

"We have sent down the Torah, wherein is guidance and light. Ruling in accordance with it were the Jewish prophets, as well as the rabbis and priests, as dictated to them in Allah's scriptures, and as witnessed by them. So fear not men, but fear you me; and sell not My signs for a little price. Whoso judges not according to what Allah has sent down they are the unbelievers (Al Maida 44).

Similar corruptions by man-made books and laws can be seen in today's Christianity (e.g. Trinity, Christ is Allah or son of Allah).

**And when Jesus came with clear Signs he said, "I have come to you with Wisdom, and to make clear to you some of that on which you differ, so fear Allah and obey me-
Indeed Allah is my Lord and your Lord, so worship Him, this is the Right Path."
But the factions among them differed, so woe to those who were evildoers from the chastisement of a painful Day (Az Zkhruf 63-66).**

It is strange however that many Jewish and Christian scholars do not appreciate the fact that whatever truth remains in ancient Scriptures can only be identified and understood in the light of the Koran. Research had so far concentrated on studying Jewish and Christian Scriptures while for the most part ignoring the Koran, and therefore by necessity ending up with skepticism and bitterness. Scriptural contradictions and discrepancies can be reconciled only if one includes the Koran in his studies. Only then it is possible to sift the genuine from spurious and only then can Jewish and Christian Scriptures make sense in whatever truth remains in them, and only then will the true sayings of the prophets of the Children of Israel and those of Jesus fall in their proper perspective.

**And We gave Moses and Aaron the Criterion and a Light, and a Remembrance for the pious-those who fear Allah in the Unseen, and who tremble in awe of the Hour.
And this is a blessed Koran which We have revealed, do you then deny it? (Al Anbiyah 48-50).**

One cannot appreciate the value and importance of Islam as the unique bulwark against idolatry and polytheism unless the absolute Oneness of Allah is earnestly admitted. When it is fully realized that Allah is the same Allah whom Adam and Abraham knew, and whom Moses and Jesus worshipped, then there is no difficulty in accepting Islam as the only true religion and Prophet Muhammad as the Prophet of Islam. One cannot magnify the greatness of Allah by conceiving Him now as a "Father", now as a "Son", and now as a "Holy Ghost", or imagine Him as having three persons that can address each other with the three singular personal pronouns; I, thou, he. By so doing we lose all true conception of the Absolute Being, and cease to believe in the true Allah. In the same way we cannot add a single iota to the sanctity of the religion by the institution of some ambiguous sacraments or mysteries; nor can we derive any spiritual food for our spirits from feeding upon the corpse of a prophet or an incarnate deity; for by so doing we lose all idea of a true and real religion and fall into the abyss of polytheism.

The Koran as the divine doctrine of monotheism denies in several verses that Jesus is the son of Allah.

**All praise be to Allah who has sent down upon His servant the Book and has not assigned unto it any crookedness.
Upright, to warn of severe punishment from Him, and to give good tidings to the believers, who do righteous deeds, that they shall have a good reward-therein to abide forever.**

**And to warn those who say, “Allah has taken to Himself a son”.
They have no knowledge of it, they or their fathers; a monstrous word it is,
issuing out of their mouths; they say nothing but a lie (Al Kahf, 1-3).**

**And We never sent a Messenger before you except that We revealed to him
saying: “There is no Allah but I, so worship Me.”
And they say: “Allah most Gracious has begotten a son.” Glory be to Him, but
they are only honored servants;
They do not suggest anything from themselves, and only do what they have been
commanded.
He knows what is before them and what is behind them, and they do not
intercede except for him with whom he is well pleased, and they tremble for fear
of Him.
And whoever of them says: “I am Allah other than Him”, such a one We
recompense with Hell; thus do We recompense the evildoers (Al Anbya 25-29).**

The soul and the kernel of the Gospel of Jesus are contained in that famous clause in his prayer: **“Thy Kingdom come.”** This Christian anticipation of the coming of the Kingdom of Allah is of the same nature as the anticipation of Judaism for the coming of Messiah. Christians widely differ among themselves about the meaning of the Kingdom of Allah. A group thinks that it could be the church which will overcome and absorb all the other heretical churches. Others will harangue on the “millennium.” Salvationists or Quakers think that it will consist of the new-born and sinless Christians, washed and cleansed with the blood of the lamb; and so forth.

The Kingdom of Allah does not mean a triumphant Catholic Church, or a regenerated and sinless Puritan State. It is not a visionary “Royalty of the Millennium.” It is not a Kingdom composed of celestial beings, including the departed spirits of the prophets and the blessed believers, under the reign of a divine Lamb; with angels for its police and gendarmes; the cherubs for its governors and judges; the Seraphs for its officers and commanders; or the Archangels for its popes, patriarchs, Bishops, and evangelical preachers.

The Kingdom of Allah on earth is a Religion, a powerful society of believers in One Allah, equipped with faith and sword to fight for and maintain its existence and absolute independence against the Kingdom of Darkness, against all those who do not believe that Allah is One, or against those who believe that He has a son, a father or mother, associates and coevals.

The Koran says in this regard:

**And the Jews said, “Ezra is the son of Allah; the Christians say, “The Messiah is the son of Allah.” That is the utterance of their mouths, conforming to the unbelievers before them. Allah assails them! How they are perverted!
They have taken their rabbis and their monks as lords apart from Allah, and the Messiah, Mary’s son, and they were commanded to serve but one Allah; there is no Allah but He; glory be to Him, above that they associate (At Tawba, 30, 31).**

Most surely, the Messiah son of Mary was no more than a Messenger, many were the Messengers that have passed away before him, his mother was righteous,

**they both ate food, see! How we make Our signs clear to them, and again see!
How they lie (Al Maidah 75).**

And they say: “the most Merciful has taken unto Himself a son.”

You have indeed advanced something hideous!

Whereby the heavens are almost torn, and the earth is split asunder, and the mountains fall in ruins.

That they ascribe a son to the Most Gracious.

And it is not befitting for the Most Gracious to beget a son.

There is none in the heavens and the earth but comes unto the Most Gracious as a servant.

He has indeed counted them, and He has numbered them exactly.

Every one of them shall come to Him upon the Day of Resurrection, all alone.

Surely those who believe (in the Oneness of Allah) and do deeds of righteousness unto them the All-Merciful shall assign love.

We have made the Koran easy in your tongue, that you may give glad tidings to the pious, and warn with it a people stubborn.

And how many a generation We destroyed before them! Do you find any trace of them, or hear from them a sound? (Maryam 88-98).

Chapter 7

Muhammad came to renew the faith of Allah - the Lord of the world

Muhammad - peace be upon him - came to the world to amend and reform the path of salvation which was covered with falsehood and drowned in darkness. The Prophet of Islam is Allah's chosen one to renew the faith. In summary, and based on the above, the seal of the prophets came for the following reasons:

1- Muhammad came with a universal Message to all mankind. Allah descended upon him the Koran, a Book which stands manifest of glory, knowledge and spiritual light. The Koran - the last divine Revelation - is a Book expressing the spirit of truth that guides those who believe in Allah and leads them to the path of rectitude. Its verses cannot be emulated; they are exact and precise, and expressed in proper words in their proper places. The Koran distinctly expresses the wisdom of creation, and the purpose of man's life, leaving nothing merely implied, and textually it expounds all the statutes decreed by Allah. The Koran confirms the scriptures that came before it and safeguards the Torah of Moses and the Bible of Jesus for it has preserved within it the authentic teachings of the former Books. It watches over these Books in the sense that it will not let the true teachings of the Torah and the Gospel to be lost. It stands as a witness because it bears testimony to the Word of Allah contained in these Books, and helps to sort it out from the interpretations and commentaries of the people which were mixed with it: what is confirmed by the Koran is the Word of Allah and what is against it in preceding Books is that of the people. The Koran testifies the truth that is in the former Books and falsifies the falsehood that was added to these Books. The Koran is trustworthy over every divine Book that preceded it, and the decision that is based on its precepts shall have to be accepted as final.

Allah says in this regard:

And We have sent down to thee the Book with the truth, confirming the Book (old Scriptures) that were before it and a witness over it. So judge between them according to what Allah has sent down, and do not follow their (Jews and Christians) caprices, to forsake the truth that has come to thee. To every one of you We have appointed a right way and an open road (Al-Maidah, 48)

2- Allah has sent Muhammad to guide people into all truth, and to proclaim the divine Book which states the appropriate features of faith and worship. The Koran serves as the Criterion and the Canon wherein providence is the guide. It aligns the course of action, of thought and of life of all concerned Muslims and non Muslims. This is because actually there is only one religion. The Message of Allah to His Messenger Muhammad is Islam, meaning in Arabic submission to the will of Allah. It was the religion preached by Moses and Jesus; it was the religion of Abraham, Noah, and all other prophets (8).

3- Muhammad came with the Koran to complete the chain of revelation that has been preached by the divinely inspired Prophets. The Koran is the fountain of mercy and wisdom, a warning to the heedless, a guide to the erring, and an assurance to those in doubt, a solace to the suffering, and a hope to those in despair. The Koran was

descended on Muhammad to be read and studied for all time. The Message of Muhammad was no mere esoteric doctrine to be grasped by a few in contemplation, fleeing from action; nor was it the practice of single or social monasticism, undisturbed by the whims or passions of life. The Prophet was asked to stand forth, to preach, to declare the One Universal God-Allah- and to lead men to the right and forbid wrong. The wrong that was common in his time and became an established tradition from pagan fathers; the selfish pride of birth; the massing of power and wealth in the hands of a few; the slaughter of female infants; the orgies of gambling and drunkenness; the frauds of temples and idols and priests; the feuds and arrogance of tribes and races; the separation of sacred and profane (8).

Allah says in the Koran:

A Book We have sent down to thee that thou mayest bring forth mankind from the shadows to the light by the leave of their Lord, to the path of the All-Mighty, the All-Laudable (Ibrahîm, 1)

4- Muhammad came to confirm for the last time the Oneness of Allah. Allah is only One God, and is high above any ideas of physical reproduction. Allah is the sole Creator of mankind, jinn, animals, plants, mountains, rivers, oceans, the skies and the earth. Therefore, whoever expects to meet His Lord must work righteousness and never to incorporate with his Creator other deities.

Allah says in the Koran:

This (Koran) is a Message for mankind that they may be warned by it, and that they may know that He is One God, and that men possessed of minds may remember (Ibrahîm, 52).

5- Muhammad came to warn people of the Day of Resurrection that is drawing near, when the hearts will be shocking the throats, and they can neither return their hearts to their chests nor can they throw them out. There will be neither friend, nor intercessor for the wrongdoers in that Day. The road to salvation is to relinquish worshipping idols and false deities and worship the One and only God, Allah.

6- Muhammad came to the Jews and Christians after a period of time intervening between him and his predecessor of the Apostles, to make clear to them the facts they concealed in their scriptures, and to help them abandon imagination which is always at war with reason so that they cannot later on claim innocence and say: "No one came to us in the capacity of spectacle and a warning."

7- Muhammad came to invite the rival sects of the Jews and the Christians to Islam, and to explain to them most of the matters in which they differ. About many of their doctrines they had bitter disputes, which were settled by the Koran. The Koran supplemented and perfected the Law of Moses and the Gospel of Jesus. The Koran also explained clearly the attributes of Allah and the nature of Revelation, and the doctrine of the Hereafter. The dispute between rival sects can only be settled by the Decree of Allah: 1) in the form of a Revelation, as was done by the Koran, or 2) the Decree of Judgment in the Hereafter, when all warring sects will at length see their errors, and Allah will judge between them on the Day of Judgment with justice and

equity. The Prophet's responsibility was to preach and show the way. The Prophet however, was not responsible for the obstinacy and perversity of men who turned away from Allah's Signs and rejected the Truth. He will not be able to make his voice reach the worthless who counsel deaf when they turn back in retreat. He can only influence those who listen to the Koran and give credence to Allah's divine Signs, and have submitted themselves to Allah in Islam as Muslims (8).

8- Muhammad came to warn of the torment that is laid upon the ungodly and the impious, and announces joyful tidings and a distinguished reward to the believers in whose hearts reign piety. Those who exercise humility when standing before Allah in their prayers; who refrain from idle talk, gossip and slander; who perform the religious duty of giving alms with the sympathetic feeling toward the poor and their due; who abstain from sex except with those joined to them in the marriage bond; who faithfully observe their trust and covenants; who strictly observe their prayers and all it entails. Such like-persons are the inheritors of Allah's mercy and blessings here and hereafter. They shall inherit paradise where they enjoy the surpassing beauty and supreme bliss: they will dwell therein forever. But whoever seeks beyond that, those then are the transgressors.

9- The warning Muhammad brought is not only directed to those denying Allah or His Message, but also for those whose false ideas of Allah degrade religion in supposing that Allah has begotten a son, for Allah is One, and is High beyond any ideas of physical reproduction. The false claim that Allah has begotten a son is considered in Islam as an unforgivable sin. The Koran teaches that never shall Allah forgive setting up partners in worship with Him but less than that He forgives to whomsoever He will. Whoso associates with Allah anything has gone astray into far error. The claim that Allah has begotten a son is not even a dogma that is reasoned out or can be explained in any way that is consistent with the sublime attributes of Allah. A sect of the Jews called Ozair (Ezra) who allegedly dictated from memory the whole Jewish law which was lost during captivity, a son of Allah. They considered him as fully worthy to have been the law giver if Moses did not precede him. The Christians called the Messiah, son of Mary, the son of Allah. In this they but imitate what the unbelievers of old used to say. The Christians further considered Jesus as their lord, yet they were commanded to worship none but Allah alone. Now there is no excuse for such blasphemies after the Prophet of Allah had clearly explained the true relation to Allah (pure monotheism) than in the times of primitive ignorance and superstition.

The Koran says:

The Jews say, 'Ezra is the son of Allah'; the Christians say, 'The Messiah is the son of Allah'. That is the utterance of their mouths, conforming with the unbelievers before them. Allah assails them! How they are perverted (At-Tawba, 30).

They say, 'Allah has taken to himself a son.' Glory be to Him! He is All-Sufficient; to Him belongs all that is in the heavens and in the earth; you have no authority for this. What, do you say concerning Allah that you know not? (Yunus, 68).

Say: ' those who forge against Allah falsehood shall not prosper.' (Yunus, 69).

Some enjoyment in this world; then unto Us they shall return, then We shall let them taste the terrible chastisement, for that they were unbelievers (Yunus, 70).

10- The Jews and the Christians also took their rabbis and their monks as their lords in derogation of Allah. Their wish is to put out the light of Truth, but Allah perfected His Light by sending the Koran – the last of His Revelations – albeit this is hateful to those who incorporate with Allah other deities and refuse to admit the truth.

The Koran says:

They have taken their rabbis and their monks as lords apart from Allah, and the Messiah, Mary's son – and they were commanded to serve but One God; there is no God but He; glory be to Him above that they associate (At-Tawba, 31).

They want to extinguish with their mouths Allah's Light; and Allah refuses but to perfect His light, though the unbelievers be averse (At-Tawba, 32).

11- In falsehood rabbis and monks devoured the wealth of people. This was strikingly exemplified in the history of Mediaeval Europe. Priests got rich by issuing indulgences and dispensations; they made their office a stepping stone to worldly power and possessions. Even the monastic orders, which took vows of poverty for individuals grew rich with corporate property, until their wealth became a scandal, even among their own nations. Muhammad came to say to the rabbis and monks do not devour the wealth of men in falsehood, and obstruct the way to the path of Allah. Those rabbis and monks who treasure up gold and silver and do spend it not in the way of Allah, there awaits them a grievous penalty. On the Day when gold and silver be melted by the heat of the fire of hell and with it will be branded their foreheads, their sides, and their backs. Allah in the Hereafter will say to them, "This is the treasure which you hoarded for yourselves, taste you then, the evil of what you were treasuring."

As we read in the Koran:

O believers, many of the rabbis and monks indeed devour the wealth of the people in falsehood and bar from Allah's way. Those who treasure up gold, and silver, and do not expend them in the way of Allah – give them the good tiding of a painful chastisement.

On the Day when that shall be heated in the Fire of Gehenna (Hell) and with this will be branded their foreheads, their flanks, and their backs, (and it will be said unto them); 'This is the thing you have treasured up for yourselves; therefore taste you now what you were treasuring (At-Tawba 34, 35).

12- Muhammad came to say to the warring sects of the Jews and the Christians that he is not a part of them nor will he be responsible for the way they conduct themselves in life. Their account rests with Allah; He will tell them in the Day of Judgment of all that they perpetrated of wrong doings.

Allah says in the Koran:

Those who have made divisions in their religion and become sects, thou art not of them in anything; their affair is unto Allah, then He will tell them what they have been doing (Al-An'am, 159).

13- Muhammad came to say that he whom Allah wills to guide to His path of rectitude, he opens his breast to Islam; and he whom Allah wills to send astray, He makes his breast close and constricted, a feeling similar to that he experiences if he were climbing to high altitudes where the pressure is reduced and the oxygen gets less and less that he can hardly breathe. Thus Allah put the wrath on those who refuse to believe.

The Koran says:

Whomsoever Allah desires to guide, He expands his breast to Islam; whomsoever He desires to lead astray, He makes his breast narrow, tight, as if he were climbing to heaven. So Allah lays abomination upon those who believe not (Al-An'am, 15)

14- The advent of Muhammad was foretold in the Torah of Moses, and in the Gospel of Jesus.

The Koran says:

Those who follow the Apostle, the unlettered prophet, whom they find mentioned in their own Scriptures, in the Torah and the Gospel... (Al-A'raf, 157).

Abraham and his son Ishmael while building the Ka'ba also prayed to Allah asking Him to send a Prophet to the Arabs in order to teach them the Book and wisdom. Muhammad came as a fulfillment of such prophecies.

The Koran says:

Our Lord! Send amongst them a Messenger of their own, who shall recite to them Your Signs, and teach them the Book and the wisdom, and purify them; You are the All-Mighty, the All-Wise (Al-Baqara, 129).

15- The Torah and the Gospel were mentioned in the Koran as two sacred Books that were sent down to Moses and Jesus, respectively. The two books were primarily directed to the Children of Israel. After nearly 600 years from the descent of the Gospel, the Koran was sent down to Muhammad as a light from Allah to all mankind and not just a group of people as in the case of Moses and Jesus. Allah made the Torah the standard of judgment and the canon law by which the prophets who conformed to Islam, as defined by Allah (bowing in Islam to Allah's will), would administer righteousness and justice between the Jews. And so would the rabbis and the priests who came after the Prophets, for to them was entrusted the protection of the Torah. They were living witnesses to the truth of Scripture, and could testify that they had made it known to the people. In their footsteps, Allah sent Jesus the son of Mary with the Gospel confirming the Torah that had come before him. The Gospel

was a light and guidance for the pious and admonition to the Children of Israel, but the Jews violated the laws of the Torah to serve their worldly interests, and the Christians invented the concept of trinity, thus associating with Allah other partners. Muhammad came to explain to them most of the matters in which they differ. He came to warn against the breaching of the Covenant of the Jews and the Christians with Allah, and to re-establish the Oneness of Allah on earth.

In the Koran Allah emphasizes His Oneness:

Say: 'He is Allah (the) One. Allah the Everlasting Refuge (the Self-Sufficient Master Whom all creatures need – He neither eats nor drinks). He begets not, nor was He begotten, and equal to Him is not anyone (Al-Ikhlâs, 1-4).

16- The Koran has come to all people, and he who chooses to follow the path of rectitude shall only profit his own soul, and he who chooses to stray shall only harm his own soul, the Prophet is not to watch over their folly.

The Koran states:

Say: ' O men, the truth has come to you from your Lord. Whosoever is guided is guided only to his own gain, and whosoever goes astray, it is only to his own loss. I am not a guardian over you (Yunus, 10).

17- The Prophet of Allah is sent to teach and direct people on the way. He is not sent to force their will, or to punish them, except insofar as he may receive authority to do so. But he who turns away and disbelieves then Allah will punish him with the greatest punishment, and in Hell will he forever be detained. Unto Allah shall be their return; and their Judgment will be His concern,

As we read in the Koran:

Then remind them. Thou art only a reminder; thou art not charged to oversee them. But he who turns his back, and disbelieves, Allah shall chastise him with the greatest chastisement. Truly, to Us is their return; then upon Us shall rest their reckoning (Al-Ghāshiyah, 21-26).

18- As the seal of the prophets Muhammad came to say to the whole world that the truth must prevail over all. Every religion which commends itself widely to human beings and lasts through some space of time has a glimpse of truth in it. But Islam being the perfect light of truth is bound to prevail. As the greater light, through its own strength, outshines all lesser lights, so will Islam outshine all else, albeit this is hateful to those who incorporate with Allah other deities (8).

Allah Almighty says in the Koran:

It is He who has sent His Messenger with the guidance and the religion of truth, that He may uplift it above every religion, though the unbelievers be averse (At-Tawbah, 33).

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