

Islam is the last chance for the world

By

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What is Islam?

Islam means submission to the will of Allah and obedience to His law i.e., becomes a Muslim. Submission to the good will of Allah, together with obedience to His beneficial Law, is the best safeguard for man's peace and harmony.

Everything and every phenomenon in the world other than man is administered totally by Allah-made laws, i.e. they are obedient to Allah and submissive to his laws and thus, they are in the State of Islam.

The Koran says:

The seven heavens and the earth, and whosoever in them is, extol Him; nothing is, that does not proclaim His praise, but you do not understand their extolling. Surely He is All-clement, All-forgiving (Al-Isra', 44).

Allah stated in the Koran that religion with Him has always been Islam.

“Truly, the religion with Allah is Islam.” (Al-Imran, 19).

Islam dates back to the age of Adam. Adam was the first Prophet to deliver the Message of Islam. After Adam, Allah has periodically chosen several Messengers to reveal His Message of Islam to humankind.

The Koran refers to Islam as the religion of Abraham, Jacob, Moses, Jesus, and all other prophets. The Koran clearly stated that all prophets who came before Muhammad were Muslims because they submitted to the will of Allah and worshipped Him alone.

Allah says in the Koran:

“People of the Book (Jews and Christians) why do you dispute concerning Abraham? The Torah was not sent down, neither the Gospel, but after him. What, have you no reason? Ha, you are the ones who dispute on what you know; why then dispute you touching a matter of which you know not. No; Abraham in truth was not a Jew, neither a Christian; but he was a Muslim and one of pure faith; certainly, he was never of the idolaters (Al-Imran, 65-67).

And this submission to Allah in Islam was enjoined by Abraham upon his sons.

And Abraham charged his sons and Jacob likewise: ‘my sons, Allah has chosen for you the religion; see that you die not save in the faith of Islam (Al-Baqarah, 132).

Prophet Jacob and his sons were Muslims.

"Or were you witnesses when death approached Ya'qub (Jacob)? When he said unto his sons, "What will you worship after me?" They said, "We shall worship your Ilâh (God - Allah), the Ilâh (God) of your fathers, Ibrahim (Abraham), Isma'il (Ishmael), Ishaq (Isaac), One Ilâh (God), and to Him we submit." (in Islam). (Al-Baqarah, 33).

Prophet Joseph was Muslim.

Joseph said: "O my Lord, thou hast given me to rule, and Thou hast taught me the interpretation of tales. O Thou, the Originator of the heavens and earth, Thou art my Protector in this world and the next. Cause me to die as a Muslim and join me with the righteous (Yusuf, 101).

Prophet Jesus and his disciples were Muslims.

"Then when 'Isa (Jesus) came to know of their disbelief, he said: "Who will be my helpers in Allah's Cause?" The disciples said: "We are the helpers of Allah; we believe in Allah, and bear witness that we are Muslims (Al-Imran, 52).

“And when I (Allah) revealed to the disciples to believe in Me and My Messenger (Jesus), they said: "We believe. And bear witness that we are Muslims." (Al-Maidah, 111).

The religion Muhammad brought to the world (Islam), is therefore the religion of all prophets. It is not a new religion but the culmination and fulfilment of the same basic truth that Allah (God) revealed through all His prophets to every people. Muhammad was chosen by the Creator to deliver the pure religion of all prophets sent by Allah throughout the ages. In other words, the messages of all previous prophets culminated in Islam and in Muhammed as the last

Prophet of Islam.

Islam includes obeying all of the Messengers until Muhammad who finalized their commission, thus closing all paths to Allah except through Muhammad. Therefore, after Allah sent Muhammad, whoever meets Allah following a path other than Muhammad's, it will not be accepted of him.

In the Koran, Allah asserts that on the Day of Resurrection the only religion He will accept from His servants is the religion of Islam.

“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).

The Islam, Muhammad peace be upon him brought, is therefore the final Message, which upholds the same essential beliefs that Allah sent to humanity through all of His messengers.

The Oneness of Allah known as *Tawhid* is the corner stone of Islam

The Oneness of Allah (strict monotheism) is the most important and foundational concept in Islam. Muslims believe in one God who created the universe and has power over everything within it. He is unique and exalted above everything He creates, and His greatness cannot be compared to His creation. Allah is the only one deserving of any worship and the ultimate purpose of all creation is to submit to Him.

The concept of monotheism permeates concepts, morals, manners, and all types of dealings among people in a truly Islamic community. The oneness of Allah known in Arabic as ‘Tawhid’, is the first principle of the Islamic concept and all other principles follow from it. Accepting the oneness of Allah is to accept that He is distinct from everything else. It would not suit Allah’s majesty and glory to associate the limited attributes of His creation to Him because He is not restricted in any way, while His creation is. He is the First with no beginning and the Last with no end. Everything in the universe was created by His will. He is not confined by space or time and He is the only One who is in control and provides for His creation.

Allah describes Himself in the Koran:

“He is Allah: there is no god other than Him. It is He who knows what is hidden as well as what is in the open; He is the Lord of Mercy, the Giver of Mercy. He

is Allah: there is no god other than Him, the Controller, the Holy One, Source of Peace, Granter of Security, Guardian over all, the Almighty, the Compeller, the Truly Great; Allah is far above anything they consider to be His partner. He is Allah: the Creator, the Originator, the Shaper. The best names belong to Him. Everything in the heavens and earth glorifies Him: He is the Al-Mighty, the Wise.” (Al-Hashr, 22-24).

Allah also describes himself in another verse:

“Allah there is no god but Him, the Living, the Everlasting. Neither slumber nor sleep overtakes Him. All that is in the heavens and in the earth belongs to Him. Who is there that can intercede with Him except by His leave? He knows what is before them and what is behind them, but they do not comprehend any of His knowledge except what He wills. His throne extends over the heavens and the earth; it does not weary Him to preserve them both. He is the All- High, the All-Glorious (Al-Baqarah, 255).

Islam teaches that all people should completely submit only to Allah as He is the only One worthy of their worship. He is the Creator and Sustainer of the universe and everything in it belongs to Him. The Koran points out the faulty thinking of those who worship other than Allah:

“How can you worship things you carve with your own hands, when it is Allah who has created you and all your handiwork?” (As-Saffat, 95-96).

Through the Message of Islam, Allah calls on each individual to lead a conscientious life by drawing close to Him and to remain cognizant of their final accountability in front of the One and only God, Allah.

“Has the time not come for those who have believed that their hearts should become humbly submissive at the remembrance of Allah and what has come down of the truth?” (Al-Hadîd, 16).

The Prophet Muhammad said:

“Faith is that which resides firmly in the heart and which is proved by actions.”

One of the striking effects of faith is a feeling of gratitude towards Allah. Believers love Allah and are grateful to Him for the blessings He gives them. They are aware of the fact that their good deeds will never be equal to His divine favours upon them so they are always striving to please Him.

Sincere believers in Allah accept that any hardships they face are part of the 'test of life.' They are patient through times of difficulty and turn to Allah for assistance. A beautiful characteristic of the believers is that they accept everything Allah wills and continuously remember Him in all aspects of life.

Anyone who denies the basic truth of the existence of Allah is considered ungrateful and a disbeliever. On many occasions in the Koran, Allah reminds humanity of the misguidance of the disbelievers and His complete power over everything:

"Surely, all who are in the heavens and on the earth belong to Him. And those who worship and invoke others besides Allah, they follow nothing but surmise, merely conjecturing." (Yunus, 66).

"It is Allah who has given you the night in which to rest and the day in which to see. Allah is truly bountiful to people, but most people do not give thanks. Such is Allah, your Lord, the Creator of all things: there is no god but Him. How can you be so deluded? (Ghafir, 61-62).

Belief or disbelief in Allah does not affect Allah in any way. Believing in Him, worshipping Him, and following His commands will only benefit us because we are in need of His blessings, favours and mercy. Allah does not need us because He is Self-Sufficient. However, it is never too late for a person to turn back to Allah, seeking His guidance and forgiveness by submitting to Him.

Allah says in His Holy Book:

Say: "O my Servants who have transgressed against their souls! Despair not of the Mercy of Allah for Allah forgives all sins. He is truly the Most Forgiving, Most Merciful. Turn to your Lord and submit to him before his scourge overtakes you, for then you shall not be helped." (Az-Zumar, 53-55).

Because Islam is Allah's only religion - the same religion that was imparted to all prophets before Muhammad - Muslims do not claim to have a religion peculiar to themselves. They believe that all religion is one, for the truth is one. It was the religion preached by all the earlier prophets. It was the truth taught by all the inspired Books. When the inspired Books were lost or corrupted throughout the years and the people went astray, and associated with Allah other false deities in worship, Allah sent Muhammad the seal of the prophets to revive the religion once again and for the last time. Allah sent with Muhammad the Koran, a Book unchangeable, and is guarded by Allah from corruption until the end of time, a Book to be followed because it is a road map to paradise.

Allah commands the Prophet in the Koran to say to the people:

Say: "We believe in Allah and that which has been sent down on us, and sent down on Abraham and Ishmael, Isaac and Jacob, and the Tribes, and in that which was given to Moses and Jesus, and the Prophets, of their Lord; we make no division between any of them, and to Him we surrender in Islam (Al-Imran, 84).

This is why Muslims believe also in all the authentic Messages that came before Muhammad peace be upon him.

Islam is a universal religion

Islam is the religion taught in its fundamentals by all the prophets. It is the religion, which the first human being was instructed to follow. It is the religion of Noah, Abraham, Moses, Jesus and Muhammad and all other prophets (peace be upon them all) throughout the existence of human beings.

Judaism claims special status for the Jews as the chosen people - a status which cannot be acquired except through birth, and which makes a Jew superior to any non-Jew (goyim) whatever their beliefs.

The theology of Judaism and religious texts describe a personal God who has conversations with important figures from ancient Judaism (Moses, Abraham, etc.) and forms relationships and covenants with the Jewish people.

In the Jewish framework, religion and ethnicity are difficult to separate. Judaism is a religion, with normative beliefs and practices. Jews who practice Judaism always belong to the ethnic group, the Jews.

Most branches of Judaism consider Jews to be the "chosen people" in the sense that they have special role to "preserve Allah's revelations. However, the view of the Jews as the chosen people is ethnocentric.

The Jews confined Allah to themselves and believe only in their prophets and do not believe in Jesus or Muhammad.

The Christianity of Jesus Christ is not meant to be a universal religion. Though as far as its fundamental message and teaching are concerned, the religion of Jesus is not different from Islam, yet it does not contain complete guidance for all aspects of human life and for all nations and ages. During the countless centuries of human history, when the different races of mankind were living in more or less complete isolation and there was no quick means of communication between one nation and another,

Allah has sent different prophets to different peoples. Jesus was one of these national prophets, because he was only sent to the lost sheep of the children of Israel.

Christianity believes in various doctrines, which form the foundations of what is distinctively 'Christian' such as believing in Jesus in order to be saved; Jesus died to atone for the sins of Mankind; Allah is a trinity etc. This doctrine did not develop until several hundred years after Christ, and so cannot possibly have applied to those before Jesus, nor to his early followers. In contrast to this, Islam has at its core, a simple message, which applies to all human beings before Muhammad and to all after his time.

Allah says in the Koran:

"...And they say: "None shall enter paradise unless he be a Jew or a Christian." Those are their (vain) desires. Say: "Produce your proof if you are truthful." Nay whoever submits his whole self to Allah (i.e. follows Allah's religion of Islamic monotheism) and is a doer of good, he will get his reward with his Lord; on such shall be no fear nor shall they grieve." (Al-Baqarah, 111).

Each nation having been separately guided to the truth by the national prophets, the time was ultimately ripe in the Plan of Allah to raise the World - Prophet and reveal the Universal Religion. And so, when the world was on the eve of becoming one. Allah raised the Prophet Muhammad to represent the essential message of all prophets, shorn of all that was of temporary and limited nature and purged of all the later adulterations and misinterpretations. He amalgamated the religious traditions of the different nations into a single universal Faith and culture and united the peoples of all nations and lands into a single worldwide brotherhood. He gave the world a complete code of life for the entire humanity.

To establish the truth of his religion, the Prophet Muhammad did not resort to miracles, which may win over the few who witness them but fail to carry conviction to those of the subsequent generations. The appeal of his Religion is to the reason and the conscience of man. To carry the truth home to us, he draws our attention to the phenomena of nature, the lessons of history and the teachings and experiences of the prophets of various nations. There is nothing in Islam which is of interest or benefit only to the people of a particular region or age.

The Glorious Koran enjoins nothing, which is not uniformly inspiring, edifying

and practicable for peoples of all nations and times. The religious and moral teachings of Islam are of a universal nature.

In considering the proposition that Islam and not Judaism or Christianity is the universal Religion, the reader must bear in mind the following facts:

1. The mission of Jesus was only for the children of Israel, but the Prophet Muhammad came with a message for all nations of the earth. Jesus clearly stated:

"I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel." (Matthew 15:24).

He chose twelve special disciples to match the number of the tribes of Israel and he clearly told them:

"Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not: but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." (Matthew 10: 5,6).

On the other hand, the Prophet Muhammad from the very beginning of his ministry addressed himself to the entire humanity. It was revealed to him:

We have not sent thee (Muhammad) but as a mercy to all the nations (Al-Anbiya', 107).

Say (O Muhammad): 'O mankind! Lo! I am the Messenger of Allah to you all - the Messenger of Him unto Whom belongeth the sovereignty of the heavens and the earth. There is no god save Him.' (Al-A'raf, 158).

2. Christianity believes that the Israelites are a chosen people. Allah had sent His Revelations and prophets to them alone. The Christians acknowledge only the prophets of Israel. They regard all others as impostors. But Islam says that it would be a denial of the universal Providence of Allah to assert that prophets were raised only in one nation. According to the Glorious Koran, Allah is the Lord and Cherisher of all the worlds. He has made no discrimination between nations in sending His Revelations. He has raised prophets among all nations of the globe. The same religion was revealed to all prophets.

The noble Koran says:

Lo! We have sent thee with the Truth, a bearer of glad tidings and a warner; and there is not a nation but a warner hath passed among them (Fatir, 24).

Verily we sent messengers before thee (Muhammad), among them are those of whom we have told thee, and some of whom we have not told thee (Ghafir, 78).

The Prophet Muhammad had come to complete, not to destroy, the work of the earlier prophets. He told his followers to have faith in the prophets of all the nations:

(Say (O Muslims) We believe in Allah and that which is revealed unto us and that which was revealed unto Abraham, and Ishmael, and Isaac, and Jacob, and the tribes, and that which Moses and Jesus received, and that which the prophets (of each and every nation) received from their Lord. We make no distinction between any of them, and unto Him we have surrendered (Al-Baqarah, 136).

Islam is the consummation of all the religions. By accepting the prophets and scriptures of all nations, Islam affirms the Unity and universal Providence of Allah and the universality of religious experience, and seeks to bring together people of all races and creeds in a single all-embracing Faith and Brotherhood.

3. Islam, and not Christianity, gives complete guidance for all aspects and conditions of life, individual as well as social, national as well as international. Jesus Christ himself admitted that he had not come with the final or complete Divine message for humankind, for the time was not yet ripe for it (1).

"I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot hear them now. Howbeit, when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth."(John 16:12-13).

Five centuries after him the Spirit of truth appeared in the person of Prophet Muhammad to convey the whole truth to humankind. Allah revealed to him:

Today I have perfected your religion for you, and I have completed My blessing upon you, and I have approved Islam for your religion (Al-Maidah, 3).

The Koranic Message is relevant to every nation and era. It is a source of guidance, inspiration, wisdom and healing for all of humanity, Allah designed its message to transcend the bounds of time.

The Koran's divine message applies to all aspects of life and rises above the superficial differences among humans. Its teachings guide the spiritual, social

and intellectual needs of humanity. It encourages us to remember Allah often, to humble ourselves before Him, to fulfil our promises, to work together as a community and to remain patient and perseverant in times of hardship.

The Koranic stories teach us the importance of placing our trust in Allah, speaking the truth in the face of injustice and dealing with fellow humans with mercy.

In a world starved of love and compassion, the Koran's universal message provides the solution to the collective despair of the human condition.

Allah says:

“This is a blessed Book which We sent down to you [Muhammad], for people to ponder over its message, and for those with understanding to be reminded.” (Az-Zumar,29).

He also says”

“This is the Scripture in which there is no doubt, containing guidance for those who are mindful of Allah, who believe in the unseen...” (Al-Baqarah, 2-3).

The names Judaism and Christianity are invented names

It is particularly noteworthy that religions other than Islam are usually called after their respective tribal leader, founder or land of origin. For instance, Judaism is named after Judah the tribal head of the Children of Jacob, Christianity is named after Jesus Christ; Buddhism is named after Gautama Buddha; Hinduism is named after the land of Sindhu River (called “Hindu” by the Persians). In other words, Moses brought to the Children of Israel the religion of Islam and not Judaism. Likewise, Jesus brought to the lost sheep of Israel the religion of Islam and not Christianity. Christ never called himself a Christian, or called his followers Christians. The apostles never called each other Christians. They called themselves “brethren”, “disciples”, “apostles”, “servants”, believers”, “followers”, but never called themselves Christians.

Similarly, Gautama Buddha brought Islam to his people and not Buddhism. Thus, we can safely state that the Islamic concept is the only concept resting on the foundation of a complete and pure belief in the oneness of Allah, and that, among all the belief systems existing today, Islam is the only religion that can be characterized by this distinction.

Corruption of religions before Islam

The Message of Islam, which is submission to Allah alone by following the way prescribed by Him alone, receiving guidance in matters of faith and moral conduct from Him alone, purifying one's intention and worship for Him alone, and obeying His commandments and implementing His laws in human affairs as well as in worship, this Message of Islam (Islamic monotheism) became distorted by the influence of diverse beliefs and myths. Interpolations and deviations were introduced into the pure religion of Islam producing many impurities in the religion so that no belief has been left in its correct and pure form.

Humankind was one single nation characterized by common descent and occupying a definite territory. They increased in number and were scattered in various directions and became disunited in feeling and thought. There and then, Allah did send Prophets as a spectacle and a warning to all. Allah equipped the prophets with the Books of truth to guide the people to His right path of Islamic monotheism. Yet those who disputed the Books of Allah and His commands were the very same people who were given the Book (Jews and Christians).

The Koran says:

The people were one nation; then Allah sent forth the Prophets, good tidings to bear and warning, and He sent down with them the Book with the truth, that He might decide between the people touching their differences; and only those who had been given it were at variance upon it, after the clear signs had come to them, being insolent one to another; then Allah guided those who believed to the truth, touching which they were at variance, by His leave; and Allah guides whomsoever He will to a straight path (Al-Baqarah, 213).

The Jews and the Christians ignored their own Books or twisted and distorted them according to their own fancies.

The Koran teaches that not until the Jews and the Christians received divine discourse did they fall in dispute and set themselves at variance through mutual envy and ill will. The Jews and the Christians disbelieved after the clear

proofs (the Koran), had come to them out of insolence. Muhammad's Message was similar to the revelations, which the Jews and the Christians has already received but distorted it. When the Prophet invited them to Islam, they rejected his Message.

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

1- The corruption that happened in the Bible

A survey of the Bible leaves the honest seeker of truth lost. The Old Testament seems more concerned with laws and the history of early man and the Jewish people than with answering the vital question concerning humanity's creation. In Genesis, Allah creates the world, Adam, and Eve in six days and 'rests' from His work on the seventh. Adam and Eve disobey Allah and are punished and their son Cain kills their other son Abel and goes to live in the land of Nod. And Allah was 'sorry' that he had made man! Why are the answers not there in clear and unmistakable terms? Why is so much of the language symbolic, leaving the reader to guess at its meanings? For example, in Genesis 6:6 it is stated:

"When men began to multiply on the face of the ground, and daughters were born to them, the sons of God saw that the daughters of men were fair; and they took to wife such of them as they chose."

Who are these 'sons of God?' Each Jewish sect and each of the many Christian sects who followed them have their own explanations. Which is the correct interpretation? The truth is that the purpose of man's creation was taught by the prophets of old, however, some of their followers - in collusion with the devils - later changed the scriptures. The answers became vague and much of the revelation was hidden in symbolic language.

Speaking further about the distortion that happened in the Bible, the Bible is mostly filled with man-made laws and corruption!

Allah 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).

Here, we clearly see that the Jews had so much corrupted the Bible with their man-made cultural laws, that they had turned the Bible into a lie!

In Deuteronomy 31:25-29, Moses predicted the corruption/tampering of the Law (Bible) after his death.

The Book of Jeremiah, which came approximately 826 years after, did indeed confirm this corruption.

Judaism, the religion of the Children of Israel, was full of pagan concepts and was also greatly affected by their ethnic chauvinism.

Many Messengers of Allah had come to the Children of Israel, among them their ancestor Israel, that is Y'aqub (Jacob), who was the son of Ishaq (Isaac), the son of Ibrahim (Abraham), may Allah's peace be on them all. Israel was one of the earliest who brought the Message of the Oneness of Allah in the pure form taught to them by their ancestor Ibrahim. Then came the greatest of their Prophets, Musa (Moses), may Allah's peace be on him, who, together with the Message of the Oneness of Allah, brought the Mosaic Law based upon this belief. But, with the passage of time, the Israelites deviated, and descended to the level of idolaters in their concepts. In their religious books, even in the very heart of the Old Testament, they included tales and notions concerning Allah Most High that are no higher than the lowest concepts of the Greek and other idolatrous people who had never received any divinely-revealed book or message.

On the authority of the Koran, we know that their ancestor, Ibrahîm (Abraham) expounded to his children the belief in the Oneness of Allah in a pure, luminous, complete, and comprehensive form in contrast to the prevalent paganism of the times. Similarly, his grandson, Y'aqub, prior to his death, imparted to his children the same beliefs.

The Koran says:

And recite to them the tiding of Abraham when he said to his father and his people, 'What do you serve?' They said, 'We serve idols, and continue cleaving to them.' He said, 'Do they hear you when you call, or do they profit you, or

harm?' They said, 'Nay, but we found our fathers so doing.' He said, 'And have you considered what you have been serving, you and your fathers, the elders? They are an enemy to me, except the Lord of all Being who created me, and Himself guides me, and Himself gives me to eat and drink, and, whenever I am sick, heals me, who makes me to die, then gives me life, and who I am eager shall forgive me my offence on the day of Doom. My Lord, give me judgment, and join me with the righteous, and appoint me a tongue of truthfulness among the others. Make me one of the inheritors of the Garden of Bliss, and forgive my father, for he is one of those astray. Degrade me not upon the Day when they are raised up, the Day when neither wealth nor sons shall profit except for him who comes to Allah with a pure heart (Al-Shu 'ara, 70-89).

Allah also says in the Koran:

Who therefore shrinks from the religion of Ibrahîm , 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. When his Lord said to him, 'Surrender,' (in Islam), he said, 'I have surrendered me to the Lord of all being.'

And Ibrahîm charged his sons with this and Jacob likewise: 'My sons, Allah has chosen for you the religion; see that you die not save in Islam.' (strict monotheism).

Why, were you witnesses, when death came to Jacob? When he said to his sons, 'What will you serve after me?' They said, 'We will serve thy God and the God of thy fathers Ibrahîm, Ishmael and Isaac, one God, to Him we surrender (in Islam) (Al-baqarah 130-133).

But their descendants retrogressed from this pure concept of Oneness, this sublime faith, and this belief in the Hereafter. They remained in this state of retrogression until Prophet Musa (Moses) came to revive the pure faith. The Koran speaks of this creed brought by Musa to the Children of Israel and it also speaks of their deviating from it:

And recall when We made a covenant with the Children of Israel: "Worship no one except Allah and be good to parents and to near kinsman, and to orphans and to the needy, and speak kindly to people and establish worship and pay the poor-due." After that, all of you except a few turned back and swerved aside. And recall when We made a covenant with you: "Do not shed the blood of your people nor turn your people out of your dwellings." Then you affirmed this and you were witnesses thereto. Yet you are the ones who kill one another and drive out a party of your people from their home, assisting one another

against them by sin and oppression (Al-Baqarah, 83-85).

And assuredly Musa (Moses) came to you with the clear signs, but even after that you took the Calf (for worship) after him and you became evildoers. And when We made a covenant with you and caused Mount Sinai to tower above you saying, "Hold fast to what We have given you and hearken unto it," they said, "We hear but we disobey," for their hearts were filled to overflowing with love of the calf because of their refusal to acknowledge the truth. Say, "Evil is the thing your faith bids you to, if indeed you are believers" (Al-Baqarah, 92-93).

Thus, their deviation began while Musa was yet among them when they worshiped the golden calf.

They even demanded Moses to fashion for them a god so they can worship it!

And We brought the Children of Israel across the sea. And they came upon a people who were devoted to their idols. They said, "O Musa! Fashion for us a god, even as they have gods." He said, "Truly, you are ignorant people. As for these people their way of life will be destroyed, and all they are doing is in vain" (Al-A'raf, 138-139).

The Koran talks a great deal about their deviations, their blasphemies in relation to Allah, their associating partners with Him, and their idolatry.

The Jews say, "Ezra is the son of God" (Al-Tawbah, 30).

The Jews say, "Allah's hand is fettered." Fettered are their hands, and they are cursed for what they have said. Nay, but His hands are outspread. He expends how He will. (Al-Ma'idah 5:64).

Allah has heard the saying of those who said, 'Surely Allah is poor, and we are rich.' We shall write down what they have said, and their slaying the prophets without right, and We shall say, 'Taste the chastisement of the burning (Al-Imran, 181).

And when you said, 'Moses, we will not believe thee till we see Allah openly'; and the thunderbolt took you while you were beholding (Al-Baqarah 2:55).

Their ethnic mania was such that they believed that God was their tribal deity! This god of theirs does not call them to account concerning their moral

behaviour except when they deal with each other. As far as non-Jews, are concerned, he does not hold them accountable for their shameful behaviour towards them.

And among the People of the Book is the person who, if you entrust him with a hoard of gold, will repay it, and among them is the one who, if you entrust him with a piece of gold, will not return it to you unless you keep standing over him. That is because they say, 'There is no way over us as to the common people.' They speak falsehood against Allah while they know it (Al-Imran, 75).

In their distorted scriptures, matters are attributed to their god, which are not much above what the Greeks in their paganism ascribed to their gods. In Chapter 3 of the Book of Genesis, after Adam had committed the sin of eating the forbidden tree, which according to the author of "Genesis" was the tree of good and evil, we read:

The man and his wife heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the Garden at the time of the evening breeze and they hid from the Lord God among the trees of the Garden. But the Lord called and said to him, "Where are you?" He replied, "I heard the sound as you were walking in the Garden and I was afraid, because I was naked and I hid myself" God answered, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree of which I forbade you?" ("Genesis" 3:8-11).

He said, "The man has become like one of us, knowing good and evil; what if he now reaches out his hand and takes fruit from the tree of life also, eats it, and lives forever?" So the Lord God drove him out of the garden of Eden to till the ground from which he had been taken. He cast him out, and to the east of the Garden of Eden he stationed the cherubim and a sword whirling and flashing to guard the way to the tree of life" ("Genesis" 3:22-24).

Again, in the "Book of Genesis," the reason for the Flood is described as follows:

When mankind began to increase and to spread all over the earth and daughters were born to them, the sons of the gods saw that the daughters of men were beautiful, so they took for themselves such women as they chose. But the Lord said, "My life-giving spirit shall not remain in man forever; he for his part is mortal flesh; he shall live for a hundred and twenty years." In those days, when the sons of gods had intercourse with the daughters of men and got children by them, the Nephilim (or giants) were on earth.

They were the heroes of old, men of renown. When the Lord saw that man had done much evil on earth and that his thoughts and inclinations were always evil, he was sorry that he had made man on earth and he was grieved at heart. He said, "This race of men whom I have created I will wipe off the face of the earth -man and beast, reptiles, and birds. I am sorry that I ever made them." But Noah had won the Lord's favour ("Genesis" 6: 1-8).

In chapter 11 of "Genesis," after a description of how the world was populated by the descendants of Noah, we read:

Once upon a time all the world spoke a single language and used the same words. As men journeyed in the east, they came upon a plain in the land of Shinar and settled there. They said to one another, "Come, let us make bricks and bake them hard." They used bricks for stone and bitumen for mortar. "Come," they said, "let us build ourselves a city and a tower with its top in the heavens, and make a name for ourselves; or we shall be dispersed all over the earth." Then the Lord came down to see the city and tower, which mortal men had built, and he said, "Here they are, one people with a single language, and now they have started to do this. Henceforward nothing they have a mind to do will be beyond their reach. Come, let us go down there and confuse their speech, so that they will not understand what they say to one another." So the Lord dispersed them from there all over the earth, and they left off building the city ("Genesis" 11:1-8).

In the second Book of Samuel, chapter 24, it is stated:

Then the angel stretched out his arm toward Jerusalem to destroy it; but the Lord repented of the evil and said to the angel who was destroying the people, "Enough! Stay your hand" (2 Samuel 24: 16).

Because of the breach of their covenant, Allah withdrew His overflowing grace from them. The withdrawal of grace made their hearts grew hard in two ways: (1) they were no longer protected from the assault of evil, and (2) they became impervious even to the message of forgiveness and mercy which is open to all Allah's creatures.

The Koran says:

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 thou wilt never cease to light upon some act of treachery on their part, except a few of them. Yet pardon them, and forgive; surely Allah loves the good-doers (Al-Maidah, 13).

2- The distortion that happened in the Gospel

Christianity was no better than Judaism, and, in fact, was even worse and more bitter. Christianity appeared when the Roman Empire was steeped in paganism and corruption. It spread quietly until Constantine ascended the throne in 305 A.C. The Roman Empire Subsequently adopted Christianity not in order to conform to it but to make Christianity conform to the dominant paganism. In this connection, the American author, Draper, in his book, History of the Conflict between Religion and Science, says:

“Place, power, profit-these were in view of whoever now joined the conquering sect. Crowds of worldly persons, who cared nothing about its religious ideas, became its warmest supporters. Pagans at heart, their influence was soon manifested in the paganization of Christianity that soon ensued. The Emperor, no better than they, did nothing to check their proceedings. But he did not personally conform to the ceremonial requirements of the Church until the close of his evil life in A.D. 337.

“Though the Christian party had proved itself sufficiently strong to give a master to the Empire, it was never sufficiently strong to destroy its antagonist, paganism. The issue of struggle between them was an amalgamation of the principles of both. In this, Christianity differed from Mohammedanism, which absolutely annihilated its antagonist and spread its own doctrines without adulteration.

“To the Emperor, an earthly man without any religious convictions, it appeared best for him self, best for the Empire, and best for the contending parties, Christian and pagan, to promote their union or amalgamation as much as possible. Even sincere Christians do not seem to have been averse to this; perhaps they believed that the new doctrines would diffuse most thoroughly by incorporating in themselves ideas borrowed from the old, the Truth would assert herself in the end, and the impurity be cast off.

“But the impurity was not cast off, as the sincere Christians had hoped, and the new religion continued to be enwrapped in pagan concepts and myths, political, ethnic, and sectarian controversies, and mythological and

philosophical speculations. Under all these bad influences its concept splintered into uncountable pieces. "Christ is a mere man," one sect stated. "The Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost are three persons in which God appears to mankind," another proclaimed. According to this sect, God, in the form of the Holy Ghost, descended into Mary and was born from her as Christ. Yet a third sect said, "The Son is not co-eternal with the Father, but was created before the creation of the universe, he is less than the Father and is subservient to Him.

"Another sect denied that the Holy Ghost was a part of the Trinity. In the Council of Nicaea, held in 325 A.C., it was decided by a majority vote that the Son and the Holy Ghost are equal with the Father in Divinity. As to the Son, he had been born since pre-eternity, while the Holy Ghost proceeds from the Son as well. The Eastern and the Western Churches differed on this point and continued on their separate ways. In the Latin Church, there were some sects that deified Mary as the "The Mother of God," as a consequence of deifying Jesus."

Dr. Alfred Butler in his book, *The Arab Conquest of Egypt*, says:

"This is not the place for a discussion upon either the facts for the sources of Egyptian history during the last two centuries of the Empire: but when that record comes to be fully written, it will prove a record of perpetual feud between Romans and Egyptians -a feud of race and a feud of religion -in which, however, the dominating motive was rather religious than racial. The key to the whole of this epoch is the antagonism between the Monophysites and the Melkites. The latter, as the name implies, were the imperial or the Court part in religion, holding the orthodox opinion about the two natures of Christ: but this opinion the Monophysite Copts, or native Egyptians, viewed with an abhorrence and combated with a frenzy difficult to understand in rational beings, not to say followers of the Gospel.

"The conception of the trinity in the new faith must have seemed to the Egyptians a mere duplication of their own triads... the most famous of which was, of course, the triad of Osiris, Isis, and Horus."

T. W. Arnold in his book, *The Preaching of Islam*, says the following:

"A hundred years before, Justinian had succeeded in giving some show of unity to the Roman Empire, but after his death, it rapidly fell asunder, and at this time, there was an entire want of common national feeling between the

provinces and the seat of government. Heraclius had made some partially successful efforts to attach Syria again to the central government, but unfortunately, the general methods of reconciliation, which he adopted had served only to increase dissension instead of allaying it.”

The Council of Chalcedon (451) had maintained that Christ was “to be acknowledged in two natures, without confusion, change, division, or separation; the difference of the natures being in no wise taken away by reason of their union, but rather the properties of each nature being preserved and concurring into one person and one substance, not as it was divided or separated into two persons, but one and the same Son and only begotten, God the Word.” This council was rejected by the Monophysites, who allowed only one nature in the person of Christ, who was said to be a composite person, having all attributes divine and human, but the substance bearing these attributes was no longer a duality, but a composite unity.

The controversy between the orthodox party and the Monophysites, who flourished particularly in Egypt and Syria and in countries outside the Byzantine Empire, had been hotly contested for nearly two centuries, when Heraclius sought to effect a reconciliation by means of the doctrine of Monotheism: while conceding the duality of the natures, it secured unity of the person in the actual life of Christ, by rejection of two series of activities in this one person; the one Christ and Son of God effectuates that which is human and that which is divine by one divine human agency, i.e. there is only one will in the Incarnate Word.

But Heraclius shared the fate of so many would-be-peace makers: for not only did controversy blaze up again all the more fiercely, but he himself, was stigmatized as a heretic and drew upon himself the wrath of both parties.

Paul in fact is the corrupter of Christianity. Christianity of today is largely the teaching of Paul and not Jesus! The liberty with which Paul proceeded to change the teachings of Jesus is indeed alarming. The resurrection and divinity of Jesus are among the major issues that were introduced by Paul. Other basic issues regarded as sacred by Jews were sadly discarded by Paul.

Consider the following:

“God said to Abraham, ‘You must agree to keep the covenant with me, both you and your descendants in future generations. You and your descendants must agree to circumcise every male among you..... every male who is not

circumcised will no longer be considered one of my people, because he has not kept the covenant with me.” (Genesis 17:9-14).

First, we find Paul speaking indifferently about circumcision, which is a sacred Jewish ritual:

“Whether or not a man is circumcised means nothing” (1 Corinthians 7:19).

Later, he went to the extent of openly condemning such practise:

“I, Paul, tell you that if you allow yourself to be circumcised, it means that Christ is of no use to you at all” (Galatians 5:2).

Historical accounts indicate that Jesus himself was circumcised!

It may be that Paul claimed to be an apostle and a man of God, yet some of his own words in fact portray him as a man of little integrity.

“I robbed other Churches, taking wages from them to minister to you.” (2 Corinthians 11:8).

“What I am saying now is not what the Lord would want me to say; in this manner of boasting I am really talking like a fool.” (2 Corinthians 11:17).

“For you gladly tolerate anyone who comes to you and preaches a different Jesus.” (2 Corinthians 11:4).

Sadly these are some of the words of a man after whom Christianity of today is largely based!

Paul argued that it is not necessary for a person to obey the law given to Moses to be a good Christian, and that in fact, the only requirement for salvation is faith.

If that was the case, we may indeed wonder, why then did Jesus spend the best years of his life preaching what to do and what not to do in order to enter the Kingdom of Heaven? The naive idea that a mere belief in Jesus automatically guarantees one’s place in Heaven is in contradiction to the teachings of Jesus:

“Not everyone who calls me Lord will enter the Kingdom of Heaven, but only those who do what God in Heaven wants them to do.” (Mathew 7:21).

It also contradicts the teachings of the Old and New Testaments:

Old Testament:

“Also to you O Lord, belong mercy; for you render to each one according to his work.” (Psalms 62:12).

“And will he not render to each man according to his deeds?” (Proverbs 24:12).
“The righteousness of the righteous shall be upon himself, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon himself.”(Ezekiel 18:20).

New Testament:

“Each of us shall give an account of himself to God.” (Romans 14:12).
“Each one will receive his own reward according to his own labour.” (1 Corinthians 3:8).

All these verses testify that faith alone is not sufficient, but that the reward is also very much dependent on one’s “work”, “deeds”, “righteousness” and “labour”.

What is truly amazing is the fact that the last two verses, which are from Romans and Corinthian, are in fact the words of Paul himself. This illustrates how he not only contradicted the teachings of Jesus, but also contradicted himself!

Paul claimed that his teaching was directly revealed to him from Jesus through a vision. This immediately raises the following important questions:

- 1- Was the message and revelation delivered by Jesus incomplete? Did he have to complete it after his death through another?
- 2- Jesus lived all his life as a Jew and followed the law given to Moses, moreover he always maintained that he has not come to change the law: “Think not that I am come to destroy the law, I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil” (The Bible, Mathew 5:17-18).

On the other hand we find that Paul preached numerous concepts that were never taught by Jesus and that contradict the Law of Moses.

These two conflicting situations compel us to uphold only one of them. They cannot both be correct. Needless to say, the teachings of Jesus are surely to be upheld. Those who truly believe in Jesus will undoubtedly follow his teachings.

Due to this marked discrepancy between the divine message delivered by Jesus and the corrupt innovation brought about by Paul, there is justification in Paul being called by Heinz Zehrnt the “corrupter of the gospel of Jesus” (The Jesus Report, Johannes Lehman, p. 126), while Werde calls him “the second founder of Christianity” (Ibid. p.127).

In the Bible we read the following accusation against him:

“This man is trying to persuade people to worship God in a way that is against the law.” (The Acts 18:13).

This serious accusation cannot be ignored, bearing in mind what Jesus said:

“Think not that I am come to destroy the law, I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil”

Jesus lived all his life as a Jew, he often preached in synagogues, and early Christians were all using the synagogues. There is no evidence whatsoever in the Bible to indicate that Jesus thought of himself as the founder of a new religion.

The disciples preaching after Jesus’ death still maintained the Jewish law. We read for example that Simon Peter while preaching after Jesus’ death still called himself a Jew who followed the Jewish religion:

“I need not tell you that a Jew is forbidden by his religion to associate with one of another race.” (The Acts 10:28)

Later, after Jesus’ death, and when the new religion of Christianity was established and deviated from the original teachings of Jesus Christ, Paul, Barnabas and the gentiles were expelled from the synagogues as they were accused of blasphemy and pollution:

“But the Jews raised up persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and expelled them from their region.” (The Acts 13:50).

It is important to note that at that time Barnabas still travelled and preached with Paul. Later, when Paul deviated from the original gospel, the two men parted company.

The concept of ‘Resurrection’, being a new concept introduced by Paul, was immediately attacked in the synagogues:

“And they took him (Paul) to the Areopagus saying: May we know what this new doctrine is of which you speak?” (The Acts 17:19).

The word “new” in the verse is self-indicative.

As for the ‘Trinity’, this word does not exist in the Bible and was never taught by Jesus. With that in mind, it is quite incredible that such concept should become the foundation upon which Christianity is formed! If being a Christian means upholding the teachings of Jesus Christ, then upholding the concept of the ‘Trinity’, which Jesus never taught, cannot be coming from Jesus!

There is mention in the Bible of the Father, the son and the Holy Spirit as in the King James Bible which was authorised in 1611:

“For there are three that bear witness in Heaven, the Father, the Word and the Holy Spirit and those three are one. And there are three that bear witness on earth; the Spirit the water and the blood, and these three agree as one.” (First Epistle of John 5:7-8).

However, the phrase:

“For there are three that bear witness in Heaven, the Father, the Word and the Holy Spirit and those three are one.” has been expunged in the Revised Standard Version of 1952 and 1971 and in many other Bibles as it was an addition that had encroached on the original Greek text.

The same verse in other Bibles read:

“And it is the spirit who bears witness, because the spirit is truth. For there are three that bear witness, the spirit and the water and the blood, and the three are in agreement.” (The American Standard Bible, First Epistle of John 5:7-8).

In other Bibles the same verse reads:

“For there are three witness bearers, the spirit and the water and the blood, and the three are in agreement.” (New World Translation of the Holy Scripture, First Epistle of John 5:7-8).

The ‘Trinity’ offers a most irrational situation when it speaks of the Father as Creator, the Son as Redeemer and the Spirit as Sanctifier! This irrational arrangement, which will have us believe that God is a committee of three with distinct divided functions, is clearly in contradiction to the concept of the One Indivisible God.

The concept of the ‘Trinity’, was formulated by Athanasius (an Egyptian deacon from Alexandria) (The History of Christianity, a Lion Handbook, p.172-177). This was accepted by the council of Nicaea in 325 A. D., which was held three centuries after the death of Jesus! No doubt, Roman Paganism had an influence on this doctrine (the Triune God). Sabbath was shifted to Sunday. The birth of the Sun-God Mithra, being December the 25th, was introduced as Jesus’ birthday! Many Pagan customs were Christianised, for example the use of candles, incense and garlands. These customs were opposed by the early Church because they symbolised paganism, however these have become common place today.

Some other pagan customs that were also Christianised are in clear violation of the Bible. One such custom is the cutting down and decorating of trees for Christmas. On that subject the Bible says:

“For the customs of the people are in vain; for one cutteth a tree from the forestthey decorate it with silver and Gold.” (Jeremiah 10:2-5).

These are some of the concepts and customs introduced after the death of Jesus, mostly from Roman paganism, that have no origin whatsoever in the Bible.

The Church was not instituted by Jesus

Jesus never advocated a hierarchy of priests to act as mediators between God and man. Yet, the Church today teaches Christians that their salvation would be assured if they acted as the Church told them! From where did the Church derive this authority? The validity of such authority is today being rejected on a scale that has never been known before. One of the turning points occurred as far back as 1755 in the great Lisbon earthquake, in which hundreds of Christians died in Church while celebrating the Mass. Coinciding as it did with the 'Age of Reason', it caused the whole concept of salvation to come under a very severe hammering! (The Case against God, Gerald Priestly, page 16).

George Harrison of the Beatles summed it up very nicely with the following words:

“When you’re young you get taken to Church by your parents and you get pushed into religion at school. They’re trying to put something into your mind. Obviously because nobody goes to Church and nobody believes in God. Why? Because they haven’t interpreted the Bible as it was intended. You’re taught just to have faith, you don’t have to worry about it, just believe what we are telling you.” (Christianity on Trial, Colin Chapman, page 37).

With these words George Harrison was indeed bringing to attention a very serious phenomenon. Many people who turn their backs on the Church today and are disenchanted with religion do so because of the misinterpretations that George Harrison referred to rather than their denial of God.

In an attempt to analyse the reasons why the Church adopted the divinity of Jesus in those early days after the death of Jesus, when all the Scripture affirm his status as a prophet of God as we have seen, and more important when Jesus himself never claimed divinity, one may think of the following:

At that time, and unlike today, the Church had a double role. First, the Church was a constitution that provided spiritual guidance and a place of worship to people. Additionally, the Church was effectively involved in the ruling of the land. Religion and politics were inseparable. Anyone who dared oppose the Church was very severely punished.

The Church being all too aware of the history of the people of Israel, knew that many prophets have come and gone and then forgotten. The Church was also aware that since the heart of the faith was the figure of Jesus Christ, then to maintain that kind of authority the Church had to keep the faith in Jesus intact.

Effectively, the best insurance to guard against a forgotten Jesus figure, would be the creation of a divine Jesus figure, for if a prophet may be forgotten, a god will never be. Thus if Jesus was made into a god figure the Church would never forfeit its commanding authority.

The divinity of Jesus was adopted along with the 'Trinity' which was a reconciliation with Roman paganism. However, when asked to explain how can God be one and three simultaneously, or how can God be the Father and his own son at the same time, the Church clergy will often reply:

"Just have faith!" and "That is the mystery of it!"

It does not matter if it does not make any sense as long as you believe what they are telling you! But surely, any concept that is filled with irrational mysteries must harbour a defect in its core. The truth is never irrational.

Historically, the 'Trinity' is an encroachment on the Scripture, it is philosophically feeble and mathematically absurd.

The divinity of Jesus, a concept adopted by the Church and never taught by Jesus, also contributes greatly in turning Jews away from believing in Jesus the Messiah of whom their prophecies speak. In the Old Testament the Messiah and King of Jews is a prophet sent to the people of Israel. He is another prophet in a sequence of many prophets. The teachings of Jesus were on the same line as those before him. But sadly the corrupted version taught by the Church today, which is more the teachings of Paul than Jesus, has made Christianity become isolated from Jewish theology. The 'Trinity', the 'God Incarnate', the 'Resurrection', the 'Atonement', and other corrupt doctrines have alienated Christianity from the main stream of Jewish revelations.

The philosopher Sir Alfred Ayer had this to say:

"Christianity is based on the notion of vicarious atonement which shocks me not only intellectually but morally. If I have a child I don't punish his brother for what he did, and that is exactly what Christianity is based upon."

Sir Ayer proceeds to show distaste for God's massacre of the Jews throughout the Old Testament then he adds:

"Here you have your deity who did all this, and then he said suddenly, 'People

are behaving badly, I am going to transform myself into a human being and suffer vicariously. Sins have to be atoned for by a 'sacrificial lamb'. So Christ is supposed to atone for the sins that other people committed. The whole thing is not only intellectually contemptible but thoroughly outrageous." (The Case against God, Gerald Priestland, page 18).

It is not surprising, and due to the poor argumentative content of such doctrines, to find Christianity constantly changing to conform to current values!

T. S. Elliot put it very well when he said:

"Christianity is always adapting itself into something which can be believed." (The Myth of God Incarnate, edited by John Hick, page IX).

To conclude, it is quite apparent that the real Jesus of the Bible, also referred to as the historical Jesus, is quite different from the divine figure falsely portrayed by the Church. Nowhere in the Bible is Jesus portrayed as the earthly incarnation of God. There is no evidence in the Bible to support the 'Atonement' doctrine, neither is there any evidence that Jesus taught or believed in his own divinity (2).

Finally, it is apt to end with the words of Jesus which he directed at all those who idolised and worshipped him instead of worshipping God:

"Not everyone who calls me Lord will enter the Kingdom of Heaven, but only those who do what God in Heaven wants them to do. When Judgement Day comes many will say to me, 'Lord, Lord! In your name we spoke God's message' Then I will say to them, 'I never knew you, get away from me you wicked people.' " (Mathew 7:21-23).

3- Polytheism in Hinduism

The Indian religion is full of the mythologies, mysteries and metaphysical theosophies of the ancient world. Hinduism is characterized by idolatry and polytheism.

Hinduism acknowledges one Divine Being called Brahma, who alone is "existent" and who alone has the attributes of perfection, goodness, and

perpetuity. Apart from this One Existent and Real Being there is nothing, which is to say, this universe and whatever is in it is non-existent.

On the other hand, Hinduism also says that Brahma, the real Being, who is entirely Good, is incarnated or diffused into the "non-existent," which is entirely evil. Thus Brahma is diffused into every part of this universe, including man, and thus is a compound of being and non-being, good and evil, perfection and defect, and eternity and mortality.

A believing Hindu, therefore, must continually strive to separate the existence, the perfection, the goodness, and the eternity in his makeup from the non-existence, imperfection, evil, and mortality, in order to free "the being" that is incarnate in his body. This is called "Nirvana" or becoming free of mortality and non-being and returning to the status of pure being, Brahma.

We note that Brahma is not the Creator of this world, which is non-existent, evil, and imperfect, but he is diffused in it. Moreover, He does not administer or manage the affairs of this universe, which have become manifest because of the diffusion of Brahma into nonexistence.

Again, beyond this Oneness, and apart from this diffusion, Hinduism also has a "Trinity": Lord "Brahma" the Creator; Lord "Vishnu," the Giver of life; and Lord "Shiva," the Destroyer.

Over and above the universe and the gods rules "Karma" or "Fate." It is karma which determines the cycles of birth and rebirth and which creates and repeats cycles of Universes. Clearly, with the Hindu pantheon and the theory of impersonal karma ruling over gods as well as the world, including human beings, the concept of the Oneness of God is completely lost.

Looking at Hinduism further, we realize that the Hindu scriptures teach that there are many gods, incarnations of gods, persons of God and that everything is God, Brahman. In spite of the belief that the self (atman) of all living beings is actually Brahman, an oppressive caste system evolved in which the Brahmans, the priestly caste, possess spiritual supremacy by birth. They are the teachers of the Vedas and represent the ideal of ritual purity and social prestige. On the other hand, the Sudra caste are excluded from religious status and their sole duty in life is "to serve meekly" the other three castes and their thousands of sub castes.

According to Hindu monist philosophers, humankind's purpose is the realization of their divinity and -following a path (marga) to emancipation (moksha) from the wheel of rebirth - the re-absorption of the human soul (atman) into the ultimate reality, Brahman. For those following the bhakti path, the purpose is to love God because God created humankind to "enjoy a relationship - as a father enjoys his children" (Srimad Bhagwatam). For the ordinary Hindu, the main aim of worldly life lies in conforming to social and ritual duties, to the traditional rules of conduct for one's caste - the karma path.

Although most of the religion of the Vedic texts, which revolves around rituals of fire sacrifice, has been eclipsed by Hindu doctrines and practices found in other texts, the absolute authority and sacredness of the Veda remains a central tenet of virtually all Hindu sects and traditions. The Veda is composed of four collections, the oldest of which is the Rigveda ("Wisdom of the Verses"). In these texts, God is described in the most confusing terms. The religion reflected in the Rigveda is a polytheism mainly concerned with appeasing deities associated with the sky and the atmosphere, the most important of which were Indra (god of the heavens and rain), Baruna (guardian of the cosmic order), Agni (the sacrificial fire), and Surya (the Sun). In later Vedic texts, interest in the early Rigvedic gods declines, and polytheism begins to be replaced by a sacrificial pantheism to Prajapati ("Lord of Creatures"), who is the All. In the Upanishads (secret teachings concerning cosmic equations), Prajapati merges with the concept of Brahman, the supreme reality and substance of the universe, replacing any specific personification, thus transforming the mythology into abstract philosophy. If the contents of these scriptures were all that human beings had to choose from for guidance, one would have to conclude that God hid both Himself and the purpose of creation from humankind.

Allah is not the author of confusion, nor does He wish difficulty for mankind. Consequently, when He revealed His final communication to humankind one thousand four hundred years ago, He ensured that it was perfectly preserved for all of the generations of human beings to come. In that final scripture, the Koran, Allah revealed His purpose for creating mankind and,

through His last prophet, He clarified all of the details which man could comprehend (3).

The condition of the world before the advent of Muhammad the - Prophet of Islam

At the advent of Islam, there were in the world huge quantities of beliefs, concepts, philosophies, myths, superstitions, traditions, and Customs in which falsehood was mixed with truth, wrong with right, nonsense with religion, and mythology with philosophy. Under the burden of this rubbish, the conscience of man was groping in obscurities and speculations without finding any certainty. The life of humankind, under the influence of this welter of confusion, was characterized by corruption and chaos, tyranny and oppression, and hardship and misery. It was a life unfit for human beings, unfit even for a herd of cattle!

Life was a trackless wilderness without a guide, devoid of guidance and light, and devoid of rest and certainty. Man was groping helplessly and hopelessly to understand his God and God's attributes, man's relationship with the universe, the ultimate purpose of his existence, the way to attain this purpose, and in particular, the connection between God and man. As a consequence of being lost in this wilderness and drowned in intellectual rubbish, man's life and systems were full of evils and injustices.

From Nuh (Noah) to 'Isa (Jesus), the Messengers of Allah imparted to people the correct knowledge of their Creator, and elucidated for them the position of man and the purpose of his existence. But in every case, deviations from their teachings, due to political circumstances and lusts and passions and other human weaknesses, obscured the truth, burying it under the garbage heaps of false concepts and ideas, and led mankind astray from the straight path.

It would not have been possible to remove the rubbish from the minds of people except through a new messenger, a messenger who would cut through the rubbish, dispel the darkness, and blaze a path through this wilderness, by proclaiming the truths of the Islamic concept in its purest form and by building a society on the firm foundation of this sound belief. Those people who were entrenched in their deviant beliefs and corrupt practices would not have abandoned them, nor would they have separated themselves from the conditions prevailing among them, except through this Message and through the Messenger.

Allah Most High proclaimed the truth in saying:

Never would the unbelievers from among the People of the book and the polytheists have abandoned their ways until there came to them the clear evidence: a Messenger from Allah reciting from purified pages (Al-Bayyinah 98: 1-2).

The Christians by worshipping Jesus as God or the son of God have deviated much from the concept of Allah's unity and oneness. They entered into the circle of polytheism, and idolatry. Associating partners with Allah in worship is an unforgivable sin.

Allah warns in the Koran:

Allah forgives not that partners (Jesus, Mary, cross, Holy Ghost) would be set up with Him (in worship), but He forgives except that (anything else) to whom He wills; and whoever sets up partners with Allah in worship, he had indeed invented a tremendous sin (Al-Nisa', 48).

The Koran mentions some of these deviations, calling upon the People of the Book (Jews and Christians) to desist from them and to rectify their beliefs. It also describes the original teachings of Jesus as revealed to him by Allah before distortion and deviation entered into them.

They are unbelievers who say, 'God is the Third of Three. No god is there but One God. If they refrain not from what they say, there shall afflict those of them that disbelieve a painful chastisement. Will they not then turn to Allah and seek forgiveness of Him? For Allah is Forgiving, Merciful. The Messiah, son of Mary, was nothing other than a messenger. Before him, other messengers had passed away, and his mother was a saintly woman. Both of them ate food like mortals. See how We make clear for them the signs, and then see how they are turned away! Say, "Do you worship instead of Allah what can neither harm nor benefit? Allah is the All-Hearing, the All-Knowing. Say "People of the Book, do not go beyond the bounds of truth in your religion, and do not follow the errors of a people who went astray in earlier times and who led many others astray and who have deviated from the straight path (Al-Maidah, 73-77).

And the Jews say, "Ezra is the son of God," and the Christians say, "The

Messiah is the Son of God." That is the utterance of their mouths in imitation of the unbelievers who disbelieved before them. May Allah assail them! How perverse are they! (Al-Tawbah, 30).

And when Allah said, 'O Jesus, son of Mary, did you say unto men, 'Take me and my mother as gods, besides Allah?' He said, "Glory to You! It is not mine to say what I have no right to say. If I indeed said it, You know it, knowing what is within my mind, and I know not what is within Your mind. You, only You, are the Knower of the things unseen. I said to them only what You commanded me: 'Worship Allah, my Lord and your Lord.' And I was a witness over them while I dwelt among them; but when you took me, You were Yourself the watcher over them. You are witness of everything. If You chasten them, they are Your servants. And if You forgive them, You are the Mighty, the Wise" (Al-Maidah, 116- 118).

Thus, we see that the deviations, which entered the teachings of Jesus increased due to historical circumstances with the passage of time until Christianity incorporated many pagan mythological concepts, and for centuries the Christian peoples went through cycles of theological controversies and subsequent massacres.

The Koran says:

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 up among them enmity and hatred, till the Day of Resurrection; and Allah will assuredly tell them of the things they wrought (Al-Maidah, 14).

The Jewish belief today is that they are the chosen people, or treasured people, and the Christians of today feel that the superiority, nobility and the good belong to them exclusively – a distorting feeling of glaring arrogance and racism!

This was the condition of the Jews and the Christians before the advent of Muhammad peace be upon him. In addition to these distorted forms of the teachings of Moses and Jesus, known as Judaism and Christianity, there were other blasphemous concepts carried there from the intellectual trash of Persia.

As for the condition of the people in the Arabian Peninsula, the Arabs had also their own brand of paganism. They were completely oblivious of the true religion of Ibrahîm, because they had grossly distorted it. The Prophet Ibrahîm

taught the Oneness of Allah and surrender to Him, but the Arabs were steeped in gross idol worship.

Although hating to have daughters themselves, they held that angels are daughters of God. They worshipped angels or the idols representing them, believing that they had influence with Allah and their intercession would not be rejected by Him.

The Koran mentioned this:

Yet they have assigned to him a part of His own servants! Man is clearly unthankful. Or has He taken to Himself, from among His creation, daughters, and favoured you with sons? And when one of them is given the news of the birth of what he has likened to the Merciful, his face is darkened, and he chokes inwardly. Is the one who is brought up amid trinkets and is unable to reach clarity in a discussion to be likened to Allah? And they have made the angels, who are themselves servants of the All-Merciful, females. What, did they witness their creation? Their testimony will be recorded and they shall be questioned. They say, "Had the Most Merciful so willed, we would not have worshipped them." They have no knowledge of that, they are only conjecturing (Al- Zukhruf, 15-20).

Surely, the pure religion is for Allah alone. Those who choose protectors besides Him (say), "We worship them only so that they may bring us near to Allah." Assuredly, Allah will judge between them concerning their differences. Truly, Allah does not guide the person who is a liar, an ingrate. Had Allah desired to take to Himself a son, He would have chosen whatever He willed of what He has created. Be He glorified! He is Allah, the One, the Absolute (Al-Zumar, 3-6).

They worship, apart from Allah what neither harms nor benefits them, and they say, "These are our intercessors with Allah." Say, "Are you informing Allah of what He does not know in the heavens or in the earth?" Glory be to Him! High be He exalted above all that they associate with him"(Yunus, 10).

They also believed that the Jinn had relations with Allah, that He had taken a wife from them and the angels are His children from this wife. Thus, they worshipped the Jinn too.

Concerning this myth, the Koran says:

Now ask them 'Has your Lord daughters while they have sons?' Or did we create the angels female while they were present? Is it not assuredly from their inventions that they say, "Allah has begotten?" Truly they are liars. He has chosen daughters rather than sons? What ails you? How do you judge? Will you not then reflect? Or have you a clear proof? Then produce your divinely-revealed Book, if you are truthful. And they imagine kinship between Him and the Jinn, whereas the Jinn know very well that they will be brought before (Him). Glorified be Allah from what they attribute (unto Him)! (Al-Saffat, 149-159).

On the day when He will gather them all together, He will say to the angels, "Did these worship you?" They will reply, "Glory be to You! You are our protector from them. Nay, but they worshipped the Jinn. Most of them were believers in them" (Saba', 40-41).

Idol worship proliferated among them, some of the idols representing angels, others their ancestors, and yet others imaginary deities.

The Ka 'bah, which had been built solely for the worship of Allah, was filled with idols, their number reaching three hundred and sixty. In addition, there were major idols of other kinds. Among them were Al-Lat, Al-'Uzza, and Manat, which are mentioned in the Qur'an, and Hubal, on whose behalf Abu Sufyan, on the day of Uhud, shouted, "May Hubal be exalted!"

Have you considered Al-Lat and Al-'Uzza, and Manat, the third, the other? Are yours the males and His the females? That was truly an unfair division. They are but names, which you have named, you and your forefathers, for which Allah has revealed no authority. They follow but conjecture and what they themselves desire. And now the guidance from their Lord has come to them - or shall man have whatever he covets? But to Allah belongs the latter and the former. And there are many angels in the heavens, whose intercession is of no avail except after Allah has given leave for whom He wills and is pleased with. Surely it is those who do not believe in the Hereafter who call the angels by feminine names, and they have no knowledge of it, merely following conjecture, and conjecture can never take the place of truth (Al-Najm, 19-28).

Idol worship degenerated to the extent that they worshipped any stone. Al-Bukhari has reported that Abu Rija Al-'Utaradi said, "We worshipped stones. When we found a better stone than the one we had, we picked it up and threw away the old one. If we could not find a stone, we gathered a handful of dirt,

milked a goat over it, and then worshipped it."

Al-Kalabi says, "When a traveller halted at a place, he collected four stones. He worshipped the most beautiful of them and used the other three to place his cooking pot on. When he left the place, he left the stones behind."

They also worshipped planets and stars as the Persians also did. The tribe of Hamir worshipped the sun, Kananah the moon, and Tamim Aldebaran, Lakhm, and Judham worshipped Jupiter, Tayy the Dog-star, Qays, Sirius, and Asad, Mercury."

Allah says concerning this:

Do not prostrate to the sun or to the moon, but prostrate to Allah who created them, if you worship him (Fussilat, 41:37).

He it is who is Lord of Sirius (Al-Najm, 49).

Polytheistic beliefs permeated their lives. Many of their nonsensical customs pointed out in the Koran were based on such beliefs, such as consecrating some produce and some new-born animals to their gods, with no share for Allah, making the eating of some animals taboo for themselves or for women but not for men, or making it taboo to ride on or slaughter certain animals. Sometimes they even sacrificed their sons to propitiate their deities.

In this regard, Allah says in the Koran:

They set aside for Allah a share in what He has produced, such as crops and livestock, and they say, 'This is for Allah' – so they claim! – and 'this is for our associate-gods? Their associate gods' share does not reach Allah, whereas Allah's share reaches their associate-gods. How ill they judge.

And in like manner, their associate gods have made killing their children seem fair to many pagans, so that they may ruin them and cause confusion in their religion. Had Allah pleased, they would not have done so; so leave them to their false inventions.

They also say, 'These animals and these crops are forbidden. None may eat them except those we permit.' So they claim! There are some animals they exempt from labour and some over which they do not pronounce Allah's name, thus committing a sin against Him. He will assuredly recompense them for what they were forging.

And they say, 'What is within the bellies of these cattle is reserved for our

males and forbidden to our spouses; but if it be dead, then they shall be partners in it.' He will assuredly recompense them for their describing; surely, He is All-Wise, All-Knowing.

Looser indeed are they who kill their children foolishly and without knowledge and Have forbidden what Allah has provided them, forging against Allah; they have gone astray, and are not right-guided. (Al-An'am, 136-140).

Such people are far removed from the real requirements of religion. Every day, they go beyond the limits fixed by Allah, and strictly observe rules about irrelevant matters of minor importance. This is one of Satan's complex strategies. He alienates people from the real religion by introducing unrelated matters among them in the name of religion.

The idea of the absolute Oneness of Allah was foreign to the pagans of Arabia, as were also the ideas of revelation and resurrection. Although they believed in Allah, the Creator of the heavens and the earth and whatever is between them, they did not want to acknowledge the consequences of this belief. They did not want to admit that the decision concerning their ways of living and moral behaviour belongs to Allah alone, that what is prohibited and what is permissible must be taken from Him alone, that all their affairs pertaining both to this world and the hereafter return to Him alone.

The Koran mentions their strong objections to these truths:

Now they marvel that a warner has come to them from among them; and the unbelievers say, 'This is a lying sorcerer.' What, has he made the gods One God? This is indeed a marvellous thing.'

And the council of them depart, saying, 'Go! Be steadfast to your gods; this is a thing to be desired. We have not heard of this in the last religion (Christianity); this is surely an invention.

What, has the remembrance been sent down on him out of us all?' Nay, but they are in doubt of My remembrance; nay, they have not yet tasted my chastisement. (Sad, 3- 8).

Allah also states:

The unbelievers say, 'Shall we show you a man who will tell you that, when you have been utterly dispersed in the dust, you will be put together again in a new creation? Has he invented a lie about Allah, or there in him a madness?' Not so. It is those who do not believe in the Hereafter who will suffer torment, for

they have strayed far into error (Saba', 7-8).

Such was the repulsive collection of concepts in the Arabian Peninsula. We may pile this refuse on top of the distorted beliefs remaining from the Divinely-revealed religions to form some idea of the enormity of the conceptual rubbish heaps that were present in the East and the West at the time of the advent of Islam. Everywhere on earth the conscience of man was weighed down under these heavy loads, and on such concepts were based the systems, manners, customs, and morals of peoples (4).

Islam is the last Message to the world and Muhammad is the seal of all the prophets

Muhammad - compared the relationship between himself and the previous prophets to a building missing a single brick. In Sahih al-Bukhari it is reported by Abu Hurayrah that the Prophet said,

"My similitude in comparison with the prophets before me is that of a man who has built a house nicely and beautifully, except for a place of one brick in a corner. The people go about it and wonder at its beauty, but say: 'Would that this brick be put in its place!' So I am that brick, and I am the seal of the prophets"

In Mu'jam al-Awsat, at-Tabarani narrated a variant wording of the hadith with the last statement being, "So I am that [brick], I am the seal of the prophets, there is no prophet after me"

Ibn Hibban also has a variant ending with "I was the place of that brick, with me concluded the [line of] messengers"

In another hadith, Muhammad prophesized the appearance of a number of false prophets before the day of judgement, while asserting his status as the seal of the prophets.

Thawban ibn Bajdad reported that Muhammad said, "The Hour will not be established until tribes of my ummah (community) unite with the idolaters, and until they worship idols. And in my ummah there will be thirty liars, each of whom will claim to be a prophet, (but) I am the seal of the prophets, there is no prophet after me."

The advent of Muhammad was foretold in the Torah of Moses and the Gospel of Jesus. According to the Bible, Allah said to Moses, on whom be peace:

“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.” (The Holy Bible, New International Version, Deuteronomy chapter 18, verse 18).

The prophet described in the above verse must have the following three characteristics:

1. He will be like Moses.
2. He will come from the brothers of the Israelites, i.e. the Ishmaelites.
3. Allah will put His words in the mouth of that prophet and he will declare what Allah commanded him.

Let us see which Prophet Allah was speaking of.

1. The prophet like Moses

Some people feel that this prophecy refers to the prophet Jesus, on whom be peace. But, although Jesus was truly a prophet of Allah, he is not the prophet spoken of here. He was born miraculously, and, finally, Allah raised him up miraculously. On the other hand, Muhammad is more like Moses; both were born in a natural way and both died natural deaths.

2. From among the Ishmaelites

Abraham had two sons, Ishmael and Isaac (Genesis, chapter 21). Ishmael became the grandfather of the Arab nation, and Isaac became the grandfather of the Jewish nation. The prophet spoken of was to come not from among the Jews themselves, but from among their brothers, the Ishmaelites. Muhammad is a descendant of Ishmael.

3. Allah will put His words in his mouth

“Neither the content of the revelation, nor its form, were of Mohammad’s devising. Both were given by the angel, and Mohammad’s task was only to repeat what he heard.”(World Religions from Ancient History to the Present, by Geoffrey Parrinder, p. 472).

Allah sent the angel Gabriel to teach Muhammad the exact words that he should repeat to the people. The words are therefore not his own; they did not come from his own thoughts, but were put into his mouth by the angel. These are written down in the Koran, word for word exactly as they came from Allah.

The distinctive approach of the Koran is that its spiritual message includes practical injunctions aimed at the general welfare of individuals, society

and the environment in which we live. The Koran's message is eternal and universal, transcending our differences in race, colour, ethnicity and nationality. It provides guidance on every facet of human life – from economics and the ethics of trade to marriage, divorce, parenting, gender issues and inheritance.

Monotheism is a prominent theme of the Koran, affirming that Allah is One without any partners. In a concisely-worded Koranic chapter, Allah commands, "Say, 'He is Allah the One, Allah the eternal. He begot no one nor was He begotten. No one is comparable to Him'" Al-Ikhlâs, 1-4).

A foundational message in the Koran is its emphasis on righteous conduct built on firm belief and love for Allah. The Koran acknowledges human desires while reminding individuals to cultivate their souls. In addition, Allah calls on humans to use their intellect and reflect on the world around them. The Koran encourages humankind to recognize the signs of Allah's existence in the precise order of the universe and the careful placement of every object in the total scheme of creation.

All people must obey Muhammad because according to the Bible Allah says: "I will punish anyone who refuses to obey him" (Good News Bible, Deut. 18:19).

Since Muslims believe in all the Prophets equally, what is the special position of the Holy Prophet Muhammad?

All Prophets were equally from Allah, and equally true, but the scope of their missions varied. The Divine messengers before the Holy Prophet Muhammad were given teachings limited to their respective nations, because in those times a nation did not have much to do with other nations. Furthermore, the teachings of each Prophet applied for a limited period of time only, after which Allah would raise another Prophet to guide people astray to the right path. But time has come to unite all the nations upon a single religion so that mankind may live in peace as one nation. For this purpose, Muhammad was sent to unite all people under one religion for all time to come.

This is supported by the fact that while followers of previous religions believe that Allah's revelation and guidance was given only to some particular nation or land, Islam teaches that guidance from Allah had come to every nation and it requires Muslims to believe in all the previous national Prophets. So the Holy Prophet Muhammad is the one who confirmed and established the truth of the Prophets of all the various

nations, and laid the basis for peace between them. He is thus the World-Prophet. It is a recognized fact that, while the original teachings of previous Prophets are largely lost, the sources of Islam (the Holy Koran and details of the Holy Prophet's life) are available to us fully and accurately. This shows that Islam is the religion for all time.

Sending Muhammad with Islam is a mercy from Allah to the world. Allah could have stopped at Jesus, thus not sending a prophet after him, but it was Allah's mercy that his true and only religion be revived for the benefit of His servants who went astray. Allah willed that His servants get another chance to repent amend, and reform, and to follow the right path, from which they deviated.

Allah has been gracious when He sent to his servants a Messenger who recited to them His revelations, and acquainted their hearts with wisdom, notwithstanding that they were once lost in the maze of error and liberally swam in immoral pleasure.

We read in the Koran:

Truly, Allah was gracious to the believers when He raised up among them a Messenger from themselves, to recite to them His signs and to purify them, and to teach them the Book and the wisdom, though before they were in manifest error (Al-Imran, 164).

Islam was perfected with the Revelations of the Noble Koran as Allah says:

"...This day have I perfected your religion for you, completed My favour upon you, and have chosen for you Islam as your religion (Al-Maidah, 3).

As an act of mercy from Allah, the Jews and the Christians were invited to join Islam the pure religion.

Allah says to His Prophet in the Koran:

Say: 'People of the Book (Jews and Christians), Come now to a word common between us and you, that we serve none but Allah, and that we associate no partners with Him, and do not some of us take others as lords, apart from Allah.' And if they turn their backs, say: 'Bear witness that we are Muslims (Al-Imran, 64).

You who have been given the Book (Torah and Gospel), believe in what We have sent down (the Koran), confirming what is with you, before We

obliterate faces, and turn them upon their backs, or curse them as We cursed the Sabbath-men. Allah's command is done (Al-Nisa', 47).

Allah instructed the Prophet to invite all people with wise, graceful and appropriate inducements, to open the ears of their hearts and the eyes of their minds, and reason with them in a logical, peaceable and gracious manner.

“Invite to the way of your Lord with wisdom and good admonition, and dispute with them in the better way. Surely, thy Lord knows very well those who have gone astray from His way, and He knows very well those who are guided (An-Nahl, 125).

In Islam, Allah forgives all sins even if they are repeated - except associating partners (Jesus, idols, priests, bishops, cross, tree, animal, fire, nature...etc) in worship with Him.

Verily, Allah forgives not that partners should be set up with Him (in worship), but He forgives except that (anything else) to whom He wills; and whoever sets up partners with Allah in worship, he has indeed invented a tremendous sin (An-Nisa', 48).

The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) was ordered in the Koran to tell the people that Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful. (Al-Hijr, 49). We are told in the Koran that Allah's mercy is even near unto the doers of good. (Al-Araf, 56).

Another aspect of Allah's mercy is that He sent Prophet Muhammad as a mercy to the worlds. (Al-Anbiya', 107). The same holds true for Muslims' belief in Prophet Jesus (peace be upon him) who was a reflection of Allah's mercy to his people. (Maryam, 21).

The Prophet Muhammad said, “The Merciful (God) shows mercy to those who are merciful.” (At-Tirmidhi).

Islam teaches that Allah's mercy covers both Muslims and non-Muslims. But in the Hereafter, Allah's mercy will be bestowed on those who followed Allah's path. Whatever mercy we feel in this world is only one portion of Allah's mercy. The remaining ninety nine portions are reserved for the faithful in the hereafter.

The prophet is reported to have said: “Allah created a hundred portions of mercy. He placed one portion between His creations due to which they have compassion on each other. Allah has stored the remaining ninety nine portions for Judgment Day to grace His slaves.”

A very important aspect of Allah's mercy is that when a non-Muslim makes up his mind and decides to embrace Islam out of complete conviction, Allah will forgive all his past sins, and he will become as newly born.

Of the many aspects of Allah's mercy is that we are held accountable for the things we do willingly. If we are forced to do something bad against our will, Allah forgives this bad thing.

Out of Allah's mercy, parents love their children and care for them. Out of Allah's mercy, we have hearts that beat, eyes that see, ears that hear, and tongues that taste. Out of Allah's mercy is that He has brought us to this life and we were before mere dust, He gave us a life that we never asked from Him.

As for worldly calamities, they are meant to test people's faith and how they will respond to the challenges they face. Allah has wisdom in everything in this universe, but due to our shortcomings, we cannot grasp the wisdom behind the sufferings.

If believers show thankfulness when good things happen to them, Allah will reward them abundantly. When they show patience and steadfastness when bad things happen to them, Allah will also reward them abundantly. If they fail the test of afflictions, they will face bad consequences.

Sufferings are not meant to a certain category of people. The Koran teaches that even the prophets and messengers had gone through tests and trials. When people are tested with bad things, we should be content and satisfied with whatever is given to us.

We must have firm belief and trust in Allah and His mercy though the wisdom of the sufferings is beyond our comprehension and reason. We must know that Allah always wants the best for us.

Allah wants to purify our souls and to reward us for our losses and the pains we go through.

Allah's mercy is all-embracing and all-inclusive; nothing falls out of it.

Allah says about His mercy in the Koran:

"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 Prophet who can neither read or write (Muhammad) whom they find written with them in the Torah (Deut, xvii, 15) and the injeel (Gospel) (John xiv 16), bidding them to honour and forbidding

them dishonour, 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 succour him, and help him, and follow the light (the Koran) that has been sent down with him – they are the prosperous (Al-A'raf, 156-157).

The Koran is a revelation described in the Koran by four characteristics: (1) it is most honourable and confers great favours on those who receive it, (2) it is well guarded, and well preserved in its purity, (3) none but the clean shall touch it – clean in mind, thought, intention and soul; only such can achieve real contact with its full meaning, (4) it is a revelation from the Lord of the worlds, and therefore universal for all.

The purity of the text of the Koran through fourteen centuries is a proof of the eternal care with which Allah's truth is guarded through all ages. All corruptions, inventions,, and accretions pass away, but Allah's pure and holy truth will never suffer eclipse even though the whole world mocked at it and was bent on destroying it (5).

Allah says in the Koran:

This is an honourable Koran. In a protected book. None can grasp it except the sincere. A revelation from the Lord of the universe. (Al-waqi'ah, 77-80).

Nay, but it is a glorious Koran, in a guarded tablet (Al-Burûj, 21-22).

As previously mentioned, the purpose of life in Islam is to know Allah, to believe in Him and to worship Him according to how He wants to be worshipped., this includes that we live our lives according to His commands. In the Koran, Allah tells us that since the messages of all prophets before the Prophet Muhammad have been distorted, none of these objectives could be achieved correctly except through His last and final Message, and therefore He will judge people on the Day of Judgment based on whether they believed and followed Islam or not.

Allah says:

Indeed, the religion in the sight of Allah is Islam. (I-Imran, 19).

In the same chapter Allah declares:

And whoever desires other than Islam as religion - never will it be accepted from him, and he, in the Hereafter, will be among the losers (in the Hellfire). (Al-Imran, 85).

Muslims believe that the present life is a trial in preparation for the next realm of existence. Muslims know that man was not created merely for this worldly life; rather this world was created for man. The believer lives to worship Allah.

the Koran says that "If there were no Resurrection, Creation would be futile." And again it says:

"Do you suppose that we have created you in vain?" (Al-Mu'minun, 115).

Thus, in Islam everything revolves round the axis of Allah, including the goal in the mission of prophets and individuals' goal of life.

Abraham the father of the prophets said in his prayers to Allah:

"I have devoted my worship to Him who has created heaven and earth, and I am not a pagan." (Al-An'am, 79).

Allah commanded the Prophet to tell his people:

"My prayer, worship, life and death are for Allah, who is the Lord of the Universe . " (Al-An'am,162).

The purpose for man's creation then is to worship the Creator. The Islamic understanding of worship allows the whole of one's life to be an act of worship, as long as the objective of that life is the pleasure of Allah, which is achieved by doing good and refraining from evil. A person can turn everyday activities into acts of worship by purifying his or her intention and sincerely seeking Allah's pleasure through these activities.

Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said:

"Greeting a person is charity. Acting justly is charity. Helping a man with his steed is charity. A good word is charity. Every step taken on the way to performing prayers is charity. Removing an obstacle from the road is charity."

Worship provides the believers with many benefits that contribute to both their spiritual and worldly well-being. The human body needs material

resources for its existence, like food, drink, and a means of reproduction. As for the soul, it needs faith and obedience, which can only be achieved through worship.

Allah should be worshipped in times of hardship and in times of prosperity, and only through worship can man find inner peace.

Allah says in the Koran:

We truly know how your heart is distressed by what they say. So celebrate the praises of your Lord and be of those who prostrate themselves and worship your Lord until there comes unto you the certainty (death). (Al-Hijr, 99).

Those who believed and whose hearts find peace in the remembrance of Allah - truly it is in the remembrance of Allah that hearts find peace (Ar-Ra'd, 28).

Allah further states that He made this life in order to test man so that every person may be recompensed after death for what he has earned:

He created death and life to test you [as to] which of you is best in deed - and He is the Exalted in Might, the Forgiving (Al-Mulk, 2).

The purpose for man's creation then is to worship Allah, the Creator without associates or partners. This was exactly the same Message Allah sent to all Prophets before Prophet Muhammad. The Message Muhammad brought was the characteristic of all the previous divinely-revealed religions.

Guided by irrefutable Word of Allah in the Holy Koran and numerous Hadith, with the coming of Muhammad the chain of prophet hood has come to an end. According to this fundamental belief, anyone who now claims to be a Prophet of Allah should be viewed as an impostor, whose claim is contrary to the teachings of Islam.

Allah says in the Koran:

It is those who believe not in the signs of Allah that forge falsehood: It is they who lie (An-Nahl, 105).

Close to one hundred verses of the holy Koran, directly or indirectly, support the doctrine of the Finality of Muhammad's Prophet hood.

The following verse highlights this fact:

Muhammad is not the father of any one of your men, but the Messenger of Allah, and the Seal of the Prophets; Allah has knowledge of everything (Al-Ahzâb, 40).

Numerous verses of the Koran indicate that the teachings of Islam have been completed, perfected, and preserved and have been meant universally for all the Worlds. Such statements eliminate every reason for which a new prophet may need to be commissioned to humanity.

We read in the Koran the following verses:

And We have not sent you (O Muhammad) save as a bringer of good tidings and a warner unto all mankind; but most of mankind do not know (Saba', 28).

Say: "O men! I am sent unto you all, as the Messenger of Allah, to whom belongs the dominions of the heavens and the earth: There is no god but He: It is He that gives both life and death. So believe in Allah and His Messenger, the unlettered Prophet, who believes in Allah and His words: follow Him that (so) ye may be guided (A—A'raf, 158).

If anyone desires a religion other than Islam (full submission to Allah), never will it be accepted from him; and in the Hereafter he will be in the ranks of those who have lost (all spiritual good) (Al-Imran, 85).

Allah testifies in the Koran that no Apostle with new instructions will ever need to be sent to the humankind:

This day have I perfected your religion for you, completed my favour upon you and have chosen for you Islam as your religion (Al-Maidah, 3).

The following verses of the Holy Koran indicate the qualities of the individuals, who will benefit from the Koran, and have been given an assurance of salvation.

That is the Book, wherein there is no doubt, a guidance to the god-fearing who believe in the Unseen, and perform the prayer, and expend of that We have provided tem; who believe in what had been sent down to thee and what had

been sent down before thee, and have faith in the Hereafter; those are upon guidance from their Lord, those are the ones who prosper (Al-Baqarah, 2-5).

The following teachings of Prophet Muhammad deal with the issue of Finality of Prophet-hood:

The Prophet said:

My position in relation to the prophets who came before me can be explained by the following example: A man erected a building and adorned this edifice with great beauty, but he left an empty niche, in the corner where just one brick was missing. People looked around the building and marvelled at its beauty, but wondered why a brick was missing from that niche? I am like unto that one missing brick and I am the last in the line of the prophets (Bukhari, Tirmizi, Muslim).

The last of the prophets said:

“Allah has bestowed upon me six favours which the former prophets did not enjoy:

- I have been endowed with the gift of pithy and perfect speech.
- I was granted victory owing to my awe.
- The spoils of war were made lawful unto me.
- The whole world has been made the place of worship for me and it has become the means of purification for me. In other words, in my religion, offering of prayers is not confined to certain specified places of worship. Prayers can be offered at any place over the earth. And in case water is not available, it is lawful for my people to perform ablutions with earth (tayammum) and to cleanse themselves with the soil, if water for bathing was scarce.
- I have been sent by Allah to carry His divine Message to the world.
- And the line of prophets has come to its final end in me.

The Prophet also said:

“I am Muhammad, I am Ahmad, I am the effacer and infidelity shall be erased through me; I am the assembler. People shall be assembled on Doomsday after my time. And I am the last in the sense that no prophet shall succeed me.”

“I am Muhammad, the unlettered prophet of Allah. I am Muhammad, the unlettered prophet of Allah. I am Muhammad the unlettered prophet of Allah. There will be no prophet after me.” (Musnad Ahmad).

The advent of Muhammad with the Koran leaves no ground for any person for excuse or ignorance on the Day of Judgement.

We read in the Koran:

(We sent all) Prophets as heralds of glad tidings and as warners, so that men might have no excuse before Allah after the coming of these Prophets; and Allah is indeed Almighty, Wise. (Al-Nisa', 65).

People of the Book (Jews and Christians), now there has come to you Our Messenger, making things clear to you, upon an interval between the Messengers lest you should say, “There has not come to us any bearer of good tidings, neither any warner.” Indeed, there has come to you a bearer of good tidings and a warner; Allah is powerful over everything (Al-Maidah, 19).

From these two Koranic verses, it becomes clear that the real purpose and objective of the advent of Allah’s Messengers has been to establish conclusively and finally man’s responsibility to follow His guidance in this life, and to leave no scope for excuses on the Day of Judgement. All excuses offered by man for his misdemeanour will be lame and of no avail.

As mentioned before, the previous scriptures had been physically corrupted by those who were charged with safeguarding them. The truth in the old scriptures was falsified, and erroneous dogmas were added. As a result, people went astray, by abandoning the original message of monotheism, and drowning in immoral behaviour.

Mohammad was then sent to all beings with the Koran to revive the only religion of Allah – Islam. The Jews say: “We will not be tortured because we are the chosen people.” The Christians say: “We will not be tortured because we are the sons of Allah and His beloved.” Considering any community as a favourite community of Allah is an absolutely meaningless thought. Before Allah, the reckoning is individual to individual and not community to community. Everybody will get his reward before Allah according to his deeds. In the eyes of Allah, every man is a human being irrespective of his belonging to this community or that. Every man’s future will be decided on the basis of his performance

in this world of test and trial. Paradise is not the native place of any community; nor is Hell the prison for any particular community.

Muhammad came as a herald of glad tidings and a warner of the torment of a Mighty Day, the Day of Accountability. Muhammad came to make intelligible to all people the facts and to help them abandon imagination and superstitions, which are often at war with reason so they cannot later on claim innocence and say: "No one came to us in the capacity of a Messenger and a warner.

Except for the theme of monotheism, the Koran speaks more of the Resurrection and the Day of Judgment, Day of Gathering, and the Great Announcement - than of any other topic. "Confessing the Shahadah - "There is no god but Allah, and Muhammad is the Prophet of Allah" - and believing in the accountability of all humans before Allah are the cement which holds Islam together.

Prophet Muhammad came to warn all people of a time when truth would be known, when the thoughts and intentions of the heart would be revealed. He earnestly proclaimed as inevitable a day when accounts would be settled and when scales would be balanced.

Muhammad announced that the Judgment Day is the Hour when every human will be shaken into a unique and unprecedented self-awareness of his deeds; he will squarely and starkly face his own doings, and accept the judgment upon them.

After the Prophet established the religion of Islam in the Arabian Peninsula, people were left to believe or not to believe. Muhammad is just a warner and a reminder. His task is only to preach, he is not a warden over the people.

The Holy Koran bears this out:

And so, (O Prophet) exhort them; your task is only to exhort, you cannot compel them (to believe). (Al-Ghashia, 21, 22).

The vocation of Prophet hood, according to the Koran, is bearing witness to the Truth before men, in this world as well as in the world-to-come.

The following Koranic verse substantiates it fully:

Strive hard for Allah as His due: He has chosen you and placed no hardship in your religion, the faith of your forefather Abraham. Allah has

called you Muslims – both in the past and in this [message] – so that the Messenger can bear witness about you and so that you can bear witness about other people. So keep up the prayer, give the prescribed alms, and seek refuge in Allah: He is your protector – an excellent protector and an excellent helper (Al-Hajj, 78).

The addressees of this verse were directly the companions of the Prophet Muhammad and indirectly all the believers in Muhammad and his Koran. Allah chose this group for the special task of making all nations aware of the true and eternal religion of Allah. The task of bearing witness was performed by the Prophet Muhammad for the people of his own times, and his followers were required to perform this same task for their contemporaries up till Doomsday, so that the Prophet give evidence in the Court of the Hereafter as to which of his addressees accepted the Message of Truth, and which did not.

It is the prophet's mission to make people aware of the realities of life and inform them about heaven and hell. On this basis only, and through preaching, admonition, advice, and warning, the purpose of Muhammad's mission is to prove that religious truth has been completely clarified to the people and was made available to them,. They therefore, have no excuse to deny it before Allah on the Day of Judgment.

This means that man shall have only that for which he strives; and the fruit of his striving shall soon be seen, and in the end, he will be repaid for it in full. He who strives in the cause of Allah, simply strives to save his own soul. Allah is All-Independent of all His creation, He stands not in need of all His created beings. Those who strive in Allah's cause shall be the recipients of His mercy and blessings. Allah will guide them to His paths.

Allah says in the Noble Koran:

And that a man shall have to his account only as he has laboured (An-Najm, 39).

Whosoever struggles, struggles only to his own gain; surely Allah is All-sufficient nor needs any being (Al-Ankabut, 6).

But those who struggle in Our cause, surely We shall guide them in Our ways; and God is with the good-doers (Al-Ankabut, 69).

Like all other prophets and messengers of Allah, Prophet Muhammad was also a preacher, a moral and spiritual mentor, a teacher, a warner, a

bearer of glad tidings and a witness of Truth. Even though each prophet of Allah had his own mark of distinction with regard to one or the other of these numerous aspects of the prophetic call, the loftiest and most distinguished position among all the prophets is occupied by Prophet Muhammad. With regard to his position as the last and the final Messenger of Allah, the splendour and magnificence of the prophetic mission of Prophet Muhammad is particularly distinct and unique.

The Koran says:

O Prophet, We have sent you as a witness, a bearer of good news and a warner, and as one who calls people to Allah by His leave, and guides them as a shining light (Al-Ahzab, 45-46).

Allah has only one Book, a Book of a single entity containing the original and basic teachings of His only religion – Islam. This Book has been revealed to all prophets with some changes in respect of language and order of commandments. As regards the outward in which the realities of religion are presented, there are differences in the teachings of the various prophets. The reason is not that the former revelations were less developed or imperfect, or that they required further development. The truth is that with any considerable passage of time, the internal reality of religion is lost and public rituals and ceremonies borrowed from ancient pagan civilizations became as real worship. That is why Allah sent prophets and Messengers from time to time to correct the path and show the right way, so that nothing other than Allah should become the center of one's attention.

It should be emphasized in this respect that the Koran and the other divine Scriptures are not separate Books. They are the different editions of a single Book of Allah. All editions of the Book revealed by Allah were one and the same as regards content. However, a repeated often, the bearers of the previous Scriptures could not in the later periods preserve them in their original form. Therefore, Allah out of His mercy, revealed His Book the Koran, reflecting the authentic expression of His will, - a touchstone which reveals which section of the other Scriptures retained their original form and which have been changed (6).

After the corruption of the old generations, the Koran came to confirm the true and original Message and to guard it, or act as a check to its interpretation.

Allah says in the Koran:

And We have sent down to thee the Book with the truth, confirming the Book that was before it, and *Muhaymin* [final authority over them, umpire of all preceding Books] so judge between them according to what Allah has sent down, and do not follow their caprices to forsake the truth that has come to thee (Al-Maidah, 48).

The Arabic word *Muhaymin* is very comprehensive in meaning. It means one who safeguards, watches over, stands witness, preserves and upholds. The Koran safeguards the 'Book', for it has preserved within it the teachings of the former Books. It watched over these Books in the sense that it corroborates the Word of Allah, which has remained intact in them. It stands as a witness because it bears testimony to the Word of Allah contained in them, 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 is that of the people (5).

Allah has announced His firm resolve to Keep His religion completely safe till Doomsday. When people of old fell into ways of neglect and worldliness, and changed His words to suit their evil desires, Allah decided to send the final Prophet, and through him create such conditions that the religion of Allah should remain safe in its original form forever. This task – the greatest in the history of prophet hood – was achieved through the Prophet Muhammad.

With the advent of Muhammad and the sending of the Koran, Allah rejected all the previous corrupted religions and established the religion revealed by Prophet Muhammad as the sole authentic edition of His religion, which would remain valid until Doomsday.

The candle lit by Allah in the shape of Islam has never been dimmed or extinguished. It is there in its entirety before the world, maintaining its ideological superiority over other religions.

Allah ascertained this in the Koran:

It is He who has sent his Messenger with the guidance and the religion of truth, that He may make it superior over all religions, though the unbelievers be averse (Al-Tawbah, 33).

The punishment of the disbelievers in Allah's oneness and in the Day of Accountability

The unbelievers known in Arabic as 'kafirs', though they are given respite in the present life in order that they may repent, they will not be left without punishment. Hell is their destined abode. They will remain therein for ages. They will taste neither coolness for relief nor a drink to quench their thirst, but only boiling water, and their rotten discharges, a fitting recompense for them.

These Kafirs never believed they would be judged, and they charged Allah's revelations with falsehood, and belied His signs that which Prophet Muhammad brought.

In Hell they will be told: "Now taste the outcome of your deeds. No increase shall We give you, except in torment."

On the Day of Judgment the rejecter of Allah and His signs will find himself in a world of absolute reality, in which he will never live or die.

The Koran says:

Whosoever comes into his Lord a sinner, for him awaits Gehenna (Fire) wherein he shall neither die nor live (Taha, 74).

The Kafir will wish that he could be reduced to nothingness, to dust, but even that would not be possible.

Allah says in His noble Book the Koran:

Surely Hell lies in wait, a home for the transgressors, where they shall remain for ages, and where they will taste neither coolness nor any drink save boiling water and pus for a suitable recompense, for they never expected to be called to account, and they cried loud lies to Our signs, and everything We have numbered in a Book. Taste then [the fruit of your evil doings]. We shall increase you not save in chastisement. We have warned you of a chastisement which is near at hand, on the Day when man shall see what his hands have forwarded, and the Kafir shall say, 'O, would that I were dust (Al-Naba', 21-30 & 40).

Those who deny the truth (Islam) shall be sternly punished in this world and the world to come: there shall be none to help them.

As for the unbelievers (the kafirs), I will chastise them with a terrible chastisement in this world and the next; they shall have no helpers (Al-Imran, 56).

Those who deny Allah and death claims them in the state of disbelief, shall have committed an unforgivable sin. They will not be saved from the severe torment even if they offer as ransom enough gold to fill the entire earth. Painful punishment is in store for them and they will have no supporters.

Surely those who disbelieve, and die disbelieving, there shall not be accepted from any one of them the whole earth full of gold, if he would ransom himself thereby; for them awaits a painful chastisement, and they shall have no helpers (Al-Imran, 91).

Those who denied Allah and His signs were born to be losers; neither their wealth nor their progeny shall profit them or afford them help against Allah. They are in fact the inmates of Hell. The example of whatever they spend in this world in pursuit of the pleasures of life, is like a biting frosty blast, which smites the harvest of a people who have wronged themselves, and destroys it. Allah is not unjust to them but it was they who wronged themselves.

As for the unbelievers, their riches shall not avail them, neither their children, against Allah; those are the inhabitants of the Fire, therein dwelling forever.

The likeness of that they expend in the present life is as the likeness of a freezing blast that smites the tillage of a people who wronged themselves, and destroys it; Allah wronged them not, but themselves they wronged (Al-Imran, 116-117).

The believers in Islamic monotheism, and in Muhammad and his Sunna, are the best of peoples ever raised up for humankind. Before Islam, people were fettered in chains of ignorance until they embraced Islam, and thereby saved from the eternal punishment in Hell-Fire.

The infidels ,the Kafirs, the unbelievers, must not think that the respite Allah grants them is for their own good. Allah simply gives them plenty of rope to allow them free action in order that they may commit themselves further to the evil line of conduct, but in the Hereafter, there awaits them a humiliating punishment.

The Koran says:

And let not the unbelievers suppose that the indulgent We grant them is better for them; We grant them indulgence only that they may increase in sin; and there awaits them a humbling chastisement (Al-Imran, 178).

We also read in the Koran:

Let it not delude you, that the unbelievers go to and fro in the land; a little enjoyment, then their refuge is Gehenna (Hell) - an evil cradling (Al-Imran, 196-197).

Muhammad has completed his message of Islamic monotheism to all the people of the world. He called upon people to bow to the will of the Lord in order to win His pleasure. He kept this up continually with patience, wisdom and well wishing.

If the people accept guidance, it is not as they confer favours on Muhammad. Muhammad suffered unselfishly for us, in order that we may be guided for our own good. If we reject the guidance he brought to us, it is our own loss. Man has a certain amount of free will, and the responsibility to believe or not believe is ours and cannot be shifted to Muhammad the seal of the prophets.

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 has not been sent to watch over their folly. Islam is the last chance to the world. No one can then say that he or she did not know.

Allah says in the Koran:

“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, 108).

On the other hand, for those who fear Allah, are Gardens with rivers flowing beneath. They will abide therein forever, a reward from Allah, the Most Compassionate, the Most Merciful.

But those who fear their Lord – for them shall be gardens underneath which rivers flow, therein dwelling forever – a hospitality Allah Himself

offers; and that which is with Allah is better for the pious (Al-Imran, 198).

The Koran is a divinely inspired Message sent from Allah to His Prophet to use as a warning to the whole and to spread it to the wide circle of the all, so they may hopefully realize that Allah is only One God – no one has the right to be worshipped but Him, and that men of understanding may take heed. Blessed are those who treasured this truth in their souls while living this temporary life of testing.

Allah says in the Koran:

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

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