History of Truth
the Truth About
God & Religions
(4)
Islam - The Divine Miracle
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Dr. Adel Elsaie, Ph.D. Aerospace Eng.

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To The God of the universe.

Thank You for showing me Your way.

Allah, I bear witness that there is no god but You.
Allah, all Praises are to You for Your Glory, Mercy and Bounty.
Allah, please accept this humble effort and forgive me for my shortcomings.
Allah, help me to disseminate this knowledge to those who need it.
Allah, help me to live as a Muslim and die as a believer.
Allah, bless anyone who seeks the truth and Your way.

My Lord! Bestow on them (my parents) Your Mercy as they did bring me up when I was young.

Amen.
The History of the Truth

By Al-Arshad about God and Religion

[Signature]
In the Name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful

AL - AZHAR

ISLAMIC RESEARCH ACADEMY

GENERAL DEPARTMENT

For Research, Writing & translation

Dr. Adel Mahmoud Elsaie

May Peace be upon you and the mercy and blessings of Allah.

Following your request for examining and reviewing your book:

“History of Truth, The Truth about God and Religions.”

We would like to inform you that this book follows Islamic beliefs and can be published at your expense.

Please ensure the utmost accuracy of the verses of the Quran and the Prophetic Sayings.

May Allah guide your steps.

May Peace be upon you and the mercy and blessings of Allah.

General Manager, Department of Research, Writing & translation.

Signed and stamped.
1. In the Name of Allah, the Most Beneficent, the Most Merciful.

2. All the praises and thanks be to Allah, the Lord of the ‘Alamin (mankind, jinns and all that exists).

3. The Most Beneficent, the Most Merciful.

4. The Only Owner (and the Only Ruling Judge) of the Day of Recompense (i.e. the Day of Resurrection)

5. You (Alone) we worship, and You (Alone) we ask for help (for each and everything).

6. Guide us to the Straight Way

7. The Way of those on whom You have bestowed Your Grace, not (the way) of those who earned Your Anger (such as the Jews), nor of those who went astray (such as the Christians).

(Quran 1:1-7)
Throughout time immemorial, man has been in search of the truth. The truth, relative to physical phenomena and spiritual experiences, has lead mankind to a winding course. Sometimes, confusion and disorientation of the principles of life, unfortunately, can taint this course. Religion and philosophy are the historical vehicles for the search of truth. While religion presents the Divine aspect of the purpose of life, philosophy is a human attempt to gain a higher intellectual knowledge of oneself, morality and the underlying meaning of life. The current tendency to separate science and religion imposes disgraceful restrictions on science to achieve even more prosperous horizon. This book incorporates theology, natural sciences and philosophy in an attempt to satisfy the eternal quest for the search of the ultimate truth.

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

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

- Why do humans suffer and how can one be happy?
- What is the purpose of this life?
- What will happen to us after death?
- Does God exist?
- Were we created or did we evolve from apes?
- Why do we have this huge universe?
When one asks these questions to anyone, one gets different answers such as:

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

Only a small percentage of people know why they exist and they are living their lives the way it is supposed to be. Those are the people who understand their priorities in life and act accordingly. Those are the people who appreciate human knowledge and know its limitation. Those are the people who realize the difference between science and reality. Einstein said “One thing I have learned in a long life - that all our science, measured against reality, is primitive and childlike... Science without religion is lame, religion without science is blind”, (1941).

In the present time, it seems that science and technology have an answer for everything. Consequently, many people may tend to think that they know everything. If you ask one of those persons about life and how it started, the answer will be quick and most likely will be: life started as an organic substance that came to earth through a comet that collided with earth billions of years ago. Life after that evolved according to Darwin, (1809 - 1882). Ask him again about human behavior and he will start referring to Freud, (1856 - 1939). Then, most people tend to think that we know all the answers about everything. The reality is that we know very little about few things. And if you don’t believe this statement, just ask a pharmacist how aspirin works, a brain surgeon how the brain works, or a psychoanalyst how we dream.

One of the top priorities of everyone in this life, regardless of one’s wealth or social status, is to make one’s house comfortable. The English language provides the word “home” to emphasize a feeling of comfort, security, peace and love in a house. Humans spend a lot of time and energy to change a house into a home. If someone plans to move to another house, he usually reserves his energy and money for the next house. However, everyone knows that all our homes are temporary and sooner or later everyone will move to another house or home called “the grave.” Should we not be wise and invest a little bit in making sure that this
grave is a home? Should we not make sure that this home will have “light and heat”? Would we not like to have this grave as a piece of paradise? "Ancient Egyptians dramatized this concept 5000 years ago. They did not just build graves; they built pyramids. The fourth dynasty pharaoh Khufu (also known as Cheops) built the great pyramid of Giza, one of the seven wonders of the ancient world, as his tomb. The pictures of this tomb do not do the pyramid any justice. This pyramid is much larger than anyone would think. It covers 13 acres and contains more than 2 million blocks of stone, (Lacovara & Millar, 2004, p. 40). This proves that what the ancient Egyptians experienced in their daily life was just as important as what awaited them beyond the death’s gate. They firmly believed in an afterlife that was not all that different from the normal life. This concept of ensuring comfort in the afterlife, although practiced by polytheists, had its root in the original monotheist religion, perhaps by Enoch (Prophet Idris in Arabic). Some scholars believe that Prophet Idris was the same as the ancient Egyptian god Osiris.

The questions, that everyone should ask, are:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

- **He did not say that.** This means that Matthew and Mark were not accurate and God did not inspire the Gospels because God would not allow any inaccuracies.

- **The man on the cross was not Jesus!** This may seem at first sight as an unreasonable idea. But if we know that the same sentence, word for word, exists in the songs of David, Psalm 22.1, one may be tempted to suggest that the man on the Cross was a Jew asking God for help from his Old Testament.

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

The three monotheistic religions Judaism, Christianity and Islam originated in the Middle East. Islam and Christianity share many common beliefs and history that no other two religions may claim to share: Oneness of God, Day of Judgment, resurrection from the dead, eternal afterlife and the moral values of peace, freedom and justice. While there are differences between Muslims and Christians about the nature of Jesus, (Pbuh i.e. Peace be upon him) there is no disagreement in the Middle East about the Name of God, or the status of many of the common prophets in Judaism, Christianity and Islam. Noah (Pbuh), Abraham (Pbuh), Moses (Pbuh) and Jesus (Pbuh), are also prophets in Islam. The Quran declares
Mary as the holiest woman ever (Chapter “Surah” 3, verse “Ayah” 42) - not Muhammad’s (Pbuh) mother, daughter, or wife. One complete chapter in the Quran is devoted to Mary with her name as the title of chapter 19. The Bible does not give Mary the same honor. The Quran mentions Jesus and Mary 34 times and Muhammad 4 times.

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

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

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

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

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

1. This book is for anyone, from any faith, who seeks the truth.
2. Not a single attempt was intended to offend any faith, or lack of, for that matter.
3. The search for knowledge should be approached with an open mind, heart and soul and that search should not decrease or stop.
4. Our logical approach is real and meaningful with no deception or arrogant ideas.
5. Divine Creation is not subjected to any or all the laws of physics.
In the present time, there are serious challenges to monotheism:
1. High-powered scientists armed with tremendous marketing tools, promoting atheistic concepts that a layman has no way of challenging.
2. Global education system that fails to stimulate a comprehensive thinking process, but rather introduces subjects such as history, physics and life sciences in a fabricated form to exclude God from our lives. Again, students have no way of challenging their teachers.
3. Overwhelming western culture that promotes fake images of success. Again the layman anywhere on earth has no chance but to accept the western image for success.

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

“I would be a coward if I saw that God’s truth is attacked and would remain silent without giving any sound.”

(Filson, 2006, p. 9)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

“I did not ignore the important questions about my origin and my destiny. I tried, I thought, I researched and this is the best within my capacity.”
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Years ago on a Christmas day, my granddaughter Dannah asked me a question: how can God be baby Jesus? Then she started laughing!!! This was the intuition of a 5 years-old girl. Since then, she has been asking me a lot of questions about God and religions.

May God bless my daughter, her husband Bilal, Telecommunication Engineer, M.Sc. in Telecommunication from SMU and my granddaughters: Dannah, Daliah, Deyalah and Denah who will be InShaa Allah the harbinger of Islam in the new age.

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May Allah (SWT) reward them all with the best in this life and in the Hereafter.

- To all who contributed – my undying gratitude.
- To all who seek the truth – my unfaltering encouragement.
Religion is a very serious business. Humans should not be fooled by the present day slogan: “All religions lead to one god.” Well, they do not. There is only one way to God and that is His Way. Choice of a religion should be the highest priory of any human being who believes in the Day of Judgment. This choice should be based upon the careful examination of the message and the messenger. In this chapter, an attempt will be presented to briefly summarize the main features of Islam and introduce its fundamentals to prove its compatibility with human nature and logic. In no way, may this be thought of as comprehensive teaching of the religion of Allah. This is because Islam comprises all aspects of life for the individual as well as the society. The interested readers may consult with Islamic bookstores or mosques to get more information. The Islamic library is replete with invaluable treasure of literature over fourteen centuries in most parts of the globe.

Islam is a true monotheistic religion that requires the belief in the Almighty God alone, without any partnership with any of His creations.
The ultimate purpose of humanity is to worship Allah alone, and to
achieve a religious order free from any corruption. The word Islam comes
from the Arabic root “SLM” which means, among other things, peace,
purity, submission and obedience. But as a religious term in the Quran,
it means, “to surrender to the will of God.” The relationship between
the original and religious meanings of the word is strong and obvious.
Only through submission to the will of God and by obedience to His Law
can one achieve true peace and enjoy a lasting purity. According to the
Quran, Islam is the eternal and universal religion, and even the universe
and nature themselves are Muslims, because they automatically obey the
laws of God. For humans and jinn, who possess free will, practicing Islam
does not involve automatically obeying but rather freely accepting the
religion of God. Islam is the religion of all prophets of Allah from Adam
to Jesus, completed finally by the mission of Muhammad.

Unlike all existing religions that associate the name of the religion
to its founder, the name “Islam” is associated with an action. Christianity
took its name from Christ, Judaism from Judah, Buddhism from Buddha,
and so on. In an attempt to cast public confusion on Islam, some call
Islam “Muhammadism” to imply a personal cult of Muhammad, which is
emphatically rejected in Islam. This mischief implies that Islam takes its
name from a mortal being, Muhammad, and that Islam is no more than
another “ism” like Judaism, Hinduism, Marxism, etc. Another implication
of this mischief is that some might think of Muslims as worshippers of
Muhammad, or as believers in him in the same way as Christians believe
in Jesus. The Quran is full of verses about Islam and submission to God,
such as:

“If then they (your false gods) answer not your (call), know ye that
this revelation is sent down (replete) with the knowledge of Allah,
and that there is no god but He! Will ye even then submit (to Islam)?”
(Surah 11, Ayah 14)

It is important to emphasize that different versions of the Bible
include the name “Islam” that means submit to God, humble or yield to
God.

“So Moses and Aaron went to Pharaoh and said. This is what the
LORD, the God of the Hebrews, says: How long will you refuse to
submit to me? Let my people go, so they can worship me”
(Exodus 10: 3)
“Do not be stubborn, as they were, but submit yourselves to the LORD”
(2 Chronicles 30: 8)

“Let Ethiopia bow in submission to God”
(Psalms 68:31)

“Utterly disgrace them until they submit to your name, O LORD”
(Psalms 83:16)

“You wives will submit to your husbands as you do to the Lord”
(Ephesians 5:22)

Islam is the fastest growing religion, due to the growth of the Muslim population, and the many converts to Islam. The Muslim world population is estimated at more than 1.5 billion. Islam has flourished in very diverse climatic, cultural, and ethnic regions. The world community of Islam includes the Arabs (North Africa and the Middle East); Turks and Turkish peoples (Turkey, parts of the former USSR, and Central Asia); Iranians; Afghans; the South Asians (Pakistan, India, and Bangladesh); Southeast Asians (Malaysia, Indonesia, and the Philippines); and a small percentage of Chinese. Islam is the second largest religion after Christianity in Europe, US and Canada.

ISLAMIC SOURCES

The two fundamental sources of Islamic doctrine and practice are the Quran and the Sunnah, or the exemplary conduct of Muhammad, the Messenger of Allah.

The Quran

Figure 1.1 - The Holy Quran
The Quran literally means “the recital.” Muslims regard the Quran as the authentic revelation of God to Muhammad, revealed in Arabic by Gabriel, the Angel of revelation to all the Messengers of Allah. This divine revelation of the Quran implies that the words are divinely given; so any text can be interpreted in the light of other texts. The Quran is the collection of the verses revealed to Muhammad during approximately 23 years of his prophetic life (610-32). It is divided into 114 chapters (Surah) of unequal length, the shortest containing only 3 short verses and the longest containing 286 verses. Both Islamic and non-Islamic scholars agree on the essential integrity of the text of the Quran throughout its history. Because of the distortion of all previous Books by humans, God kept his promise that He Himself will protect the Quran. The Quran is complete and authentic. Nothing of it is missing and no more of it is expected. Its authenticity is beyond any doubt and no serious scholar or thinker has ventured to question its genuineness. God made it incumbent upon Himself to protect it against distortion of any kind. Thus it is given to mankind as the standard or the criterion by which all other books are judged. Consequently, whatever agrees with the Quran is accepted as divine truth and whatever differs from the Quran is rejected. God says:

“We have, without doubt, sent down the Message; and We will assuredly guard it (from corruption)”

(Surah 15, Ayah 9)

The purity of the text of the Quran through fourteen centuries is a foretaste of the eternal care with which Allah’s Truth is guarded through all ages. Allah’s Pure and Holy Truth will never suffer eclipse in any time or in any place. Unlike the Bible, in the present day, millions of Muslims (Arabs and non-Arabs) memorize the whole Quran by heart. Some of them have been able to memorize the entire Quran by the age of ten. This is a simple and yet an overwhelming fact. Not only did God preserve the text of the Quran, but also the style of reciting the Quran by today’s Muslims is exactly the same style of recitation as that of Muhammad himself. Muslims, when reading verses of the Quran, stop where the Messenger of Allah stopped and continue where he continued. One may really wonder about the strength of God’s promise to preserve the Quran in writing as well as in reading. When one recites the Quran, one is reading the authentic Words of the Only God with the exact reading style of the greatest man ever lived. This is definitely an enormous spiritual experience.

From the very beginning of the revelation, the Messenger of Allah and the Muslims recited the Quran by heart and the scribes wrote it
down in his presence. The Quran therefore starts with two elements of authenticity that the Gospels do not have: true divine inspiration and immediate recording. This continued until the Messenger’s death. This memorization of the Quran by heart was crucial because not everyone could write, but everyone was able to recite. About thirty thousand companions of the Prophet memorized the whole Quran during his time. The Arabs at that time used to memorize very long poems. All these poems exist in the present Arabic literature. So it was not difficult for the Arabs to memorize a very long text by heart. Also the fact that millions of present day Muslims know the entire Quran by heart provides an assurance that it was done before. This memorization of the Quran provides a considerable advantage because of the double-checking that occurred when the definitive text was compiled.

The Angel Gabriel made the first Quranic revelation to Muhammad when he was in the cave of Hira in a mountain outside Mecca. He never worshipped any idols and he used to go to this cave every year on the month of Ramadan (the ninth Arabic month) to meditate and search for the truth. The first verses that were revealed to him were those of Surah 96, Ayah 1-5. The first revelation was as follows:

“Proclaim! (or read!) in the name of thy Lord and Cherisher, Who Created. Created man, out of a (mere) clot of congealed blood: Proclaim! And thy Lord is Most Bountiful, He Who taught (the use of) the pen, Taught man that which he knew not.”

In these first verses, the Quran praises reading, knowledge and using pens, which explains the Messenger’s concern for recording the Quran in writing. When the revelations became known, he was accused that the Quran was tales of the ancients which he has written down and they are dictated to him morning and afternoon, (Surah 25, Ayah 5). The unbelievers treated him as an impostor and they spread rumors that the established Jewish and Christian communities in Arabia dictated the stories to him! This is in spite of the fact that during many divine revelations he was with his family or his companions and those fictitious sources never revealed themselves.

All sources agree in stating that whenever a verse of the Quran was revealed, the Prophet called one of his literate companions and dictated it to him, indicating at the same time the exact position of the verse in the fabric of what had already been received. The Prophet Muhammad then asked the scribe to reread to him what had been dictated so that he could correct any inaccuracies. It is a known fact that there were 27 scribes in his following. The most famous of scribes, Zaid Ibn Thabit and Obayy Ibn
Kaab, have recorded their names in history. Another famous tradition tells how every year in the month of Ramadan, the Prophet would recite all the revealed Quran to Gabriel. Also in the month of Ramadan preceding the Prophet’s death, Gabriel had made him recite the Quran twice. It is a fact that millions of Muslims all over the world recite the Quran in its original Arabic language during the month of Ramadan, following the habit of the Prophet. The method of doubly preserving the text both in writing and by memorization proved to be extremely precious.

Not long after the Prophet’s death (632), his successor Abu Bakr, the first religious head of the Islamic state or Caliph, asked Muhammad’s former head scribe Zaid Ibn Thabit to assemble an official copy; this he did. On Omar’s initiative (the future second Caliph) Zaid Ibn Thabit consulted all the information (those who memorize the Quran, copies of the Book on various materials belonging to individuals) he could assemble, all with the objective of avoiding any possible errors in transcription. According to the instruction of Abu Bakr, a verse could be accepted only if it was presented at least in two manuscripts and should conform to the memorized version of the commission headed by Zaid Ibn Thabit. A parallel to this conscientious performance does not exist in the case of any other scripture in the history of the world. Thus an extremely faithful copy of the Quran was obtained. Truthful history states that Caliph Omar, Abu Bakr’s successor in 634, subsequently made a single volume that he preserved and gave on his death to his daughter Hafsah; the Prophet’s widow who was one of the few literate women of her time.

The third Caliph Othman, who held the Caliphate from 644 to 655, realized that copies of the Quran from the original text at Hafsah had to be available to different Islamic countries. Othman entrusted it once again to Zaid Ibn Thabit with the request that its copies should be prepared, compared and corrected for spelling mistakes. The commission consulted Muslims that knew the Quran by heart. The critical analysis of the authenticity of the text was carried out rigorously. The agreement of all the witnesses were deemed necessary, before the slightest verse containing debatable material was retained. Othman ordered that all the finished copies of the Quran should be read aloud, one by one, from the beginning to the end in the Prophet’s Mosque. The result was an authentic text containing an order of the Surah that reflects the order followed by the Prophet in his complete recital of the Quran during Ramadan. The Quran is classified as to the place of revelation, whether it is Mecca or Madinah. Some verses are doubted only regarding the place of revelation.
Othman sent a copy of the verified text to the centers of the Islamic Empire and that is why, copies attributed to Othman exist in Tashkent and Istanbul. About fifty photocopies of that of Tashkent exist in Cairo, London, Kabul and other cities. The oldest documents known to be present today are identical; the same is true for the documents preserved in Europe. The numerous ancient texts that are known to exist all agree except for very minor variations which do not change the general meaning of the text at all. The ancient writing was simpler than that of the present day, due to the absence of diacritical marks. This could make a verb either active or passive and in some instances, masculine or feminine. More often than not, this was hardly of any consequence, since the context indicated the meaning in many cases. The fact that is the Quran is memorized by heart throughout the years since its revelation, helped to eliminate any changes in the meaning. As an example, because of the different Arabic dialects, the Quran calls Mecca as Bakka. But every Muslim on Earth knows that Bakka is Mecca.

After having these several standard copies of the Quran prepared, Othman had all copies kept by different Companions burnt so that all copies of the Quran became uniform in terms of the script, incorporation of accepted readings and the order of chapters, leaving no room for any difference between them.

The entire Muslim communities acknowledged this achievement of Othman with admiration and the Companions supported him in this venture. Ali, the fourth Caliph and the cousin of the Prophet, says,

“Say nothing about Othman, unless it be in his favor because, by Allah, whatever he did in connection with the copies of the Quran was done in the presence of all of us and with our advice and counsel.”
As was mentioned above, the ancient writing did not include diacritical marks. Three stages of adding dots and developing diacritical marks are summarized as follows:

1. Dots were put as syntactical marks by Abu Al-Aswad Al Doaly (Ad-Duwali), during the time of Fifth Caliph Mu’awiya (661-680).
2. Letters were marked with a dotting system by Nasr Ibn Asem and Hayy ibn Ya’amor, during the time of Caliph Abd Al-Malek Ibn Marawan (685-705).
3. A complete system of diacritical marks (damma, fataha, kasra) was invented by Al Khaleel Ibn Ahmad Al Faruheedy (d. 786).

The father of classical Arabic, the Persian, Sibawayh (d. 796) whose book, known only as Al-Kitāb, is the most well-known book in classical Arabic. It is a four volume treatment of the language.

There are rules for interpreting the Quran. The basic rule is that the Quran interprets itself. This implies that the words are divinely inspired; so any text can be interpreted in the light of other texts where the same subject exists. Moreover, the statements of Muhammad interpreted many verses of the Quran. He was the living example of the teaching of the Quran.

A large number of descriptions, in the Quran, are mentioned in several places in the text, sometimes giving rise to repetitions. Very frequently, a verse will add details to a description that appears elsewhere in a compressed form. Verses associated with scientific facts, like many other subjects dealt with in the Quran were spread throughout the Book without any attempts of classification.

An author of a history book criticized the Quran as “disjointed.” He expected the Quran to be divided into chapters, with each chapter dealing with one subject. He expects the Quran to be like, for example, a physics book, where the first chapter deals with static and the second chapter deals with dynamics and so on. This author fails to understand that the Quran is a Book of Guidance to mankind. It is not a history book; it is not a science book. It is a Book for the soul that is designed with absolute perfection to handle spiritual issues and materialistic subjects. This point will be dealt with in chapter 3.

Finally, two points have to be mentioned about the Quran:
- **First**, any Arabic speaking layperson realizes the obvious differences in style between the Quran and the sayings of the Prophet. The style of the Quran is obviously heavenly, while the style of Muhammad is clearly human. This right away negates the ignorant idea that
the Quran was invented by Muhammad. Next, the Prophet was surrounded by thousands of his companions all of his 23 years of mission time. Therefore, there could not be a mysterious person that dictated the Quran to him in 23 years away from the eyes and ears of his companions.

- Second, the scientific verses in the Quran are overwhelming. They are mainly addressed to the unbelievers, because the true Muslim does not need further proof of the religion of Islam. The inconsistency of the Bible with scientific facts are numerous and well documented. For example, the controversial revelation 7.1 refers to “the four corners of the earth” and thereby indicates that the earth is a flat surface with four corners. There are also other verses in the Bible that convey the same idea; in Matthew 4:8 “Again, the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them.” Certainly, the spherical earth has no four corners and, if the earth were flat, standing atop “an exceedingly high mountain” would allow Jesus to see the whole earth, but there is no mountain tall enough to allow him to see the other side of a spherical earth. At most, one hemisphere would be seen, but not the other.

The Sunnah

The second authoritative source of Islam is the Sunnah, or examples of the Prophet’s way of life and his genuine statements known as “Hadith”. It represents a body of traditions based on what the Prophet said or did regarding various issues. There are some traditions that suggest that the Prophet gave orders not to record his sayings. This is because he wanted to give the highest priority to recording the Quran. However, some companions approached the Prophet for permission to write down the traditions. The permission was granted to Abdullah Ibn Amr, Anas Ibn Malik, Abu Hurayrah, Zaid Ibn Thabit and others. A large number of his companions checked their writing with the Prophet. The collection of the tradition included thousands of his sayings during his life. For example, Abu Hurayrah knew thousands of traditions by heart and the numerous volumes he compiled for his students are still intact. Moreover, his companions and followers followed all the religious practices of Muhammad (Pbuh).

During the time of Caliph Omar ibn Abdul Aziz, the formal documentation of the Sunnah was performed. There are those who claim that the Sunnah takes a secondary place in Islam, or may deny it completely. This is in spite of the clear order from Allah:
“O ye who believe, Obey Allah and obey the messenger, and those charged with authority among you. If ye differ in anything among yourselves, refer it to Allah and His messenger; if you do believe in Allah and the Last Day: That is best, and most suitable for final determination”,

(Surah 4, Ayah 59)

The Quran orders the Muslims to pray but does not detail the method and number of prayers. Then the prophet said: “Pray as you have seen me praying”, narrated by Malik, Sahih Al-Bukhary, Chapter 91, Number 352. Thus, all Muslims during the last fourteen centuries pray the same way Muhammad did. The authentic traditions are recorded in two main references collected by Albukhary and Muslim among others. Each contains about four thousands authentic saying of the prophet. These four thousands authentic sayings were chosen from a total of sixty thousands saying. Albukhary insisted on a chain of narration, a feature peculiar only to Muslims and practically unknown to others. Sometimes he started with three intermediate narrators, the maximum number being nine and culminated with the Prophet. Those authentic statements of the prophet are treated as part of the religion.

Islamic Law

Islamic law called the Shariah, spells out the moral goals of the community. In an Islamic society, therefore, the term law has a wider significance than it does in the modern secular West, because Islamic law includes both legal and moral imperatives. For the same reason, not all Islamic law can be stated as formal legal rule or enforced by the courts. Much of it depends on conscience alone.

Islamic law is based on four sources, or “roots of law.” The first two are the Quran and the Sunnah, or Hadith. The third source is called ijtihad (“responsible individual opinion”). It has been used when an issue is not covered by passages in the Quran or Sunnah. A Muslim jurist may then resolve the issue by using analogical reasoning (qiyas). Such reasoning was first employed when Islamic theologians and jurists, during the fast spread of Islam, were confronted with the need to integrate local customs and laws with the Quran and Sunnah. Later, Islamic authorities considered this original thinking a threat to the Quran and Sunnah and laid down strict rules limiting its use. Because of the profound changes in the Muslim world’s community during the last few decades, however, a renewed emphasis has been placed on the innovative thinking of ijtihad. The fourth source is the consensus (ijma) of the community, which is
reached by gradually discarding some opinions and accepting others. Because Islam has no official dogmatic authority, this is an informal process that often requires a long period of time.

Five main schools of law developed in Islam; four Sunnite and one Shiite. The four Sunnite schools emerged in the first two centuries of Islam: the Shafii, the Hanafi, the Maliki and the Hanbali. All use systematic reasoning to deal with areas of law not covered by the Quran or Sunnah. They differ primarily in their emphasis on textual authority or analogical reasoning, but each school recognizes the conclusions of the others as being perfectly legitimate and within the framework of orthodox Islam. Each school tends to predominate in certain areas: the Hanafi in the South and Central Asia, Turkey and to some extent in Egypt, Jordan, Syria, Iraq and Palestine; the Maliki in North Africa; the Shafii in Egypt and Southeast Asia; and the Hanbali in Saudi Arabia. The Shiite school (called the Jafari) prevails in Iran.

THE FIVE PILLARS OF ISLAM

Islam requires practices to be performed by Muslims. Five duties offered directly to God, known as the “pillars of Islam,” are regarded as fundamental in Islam and central to the life of the Islamic community. Each of these pillars of Islam is intended to constantly purify the soul and body of the Muslim.

Shahadah - Declaration of Faith

In accordance with Islam’s absolute commitment to monotheism, the first duty is the declaration of faith (the Shahadah): “I declare that there is no Deity but Allah and Muhammad is Messenger of Allah.” Every Muslim must make this profession publicly or at least in front of two or more witnesses, at least once in lifetime “by the tongue and with full consent from the heart”; it defines the membership of an individual in the Islamic community. This testimony is accepted as evidence of one converted to Islam. Muslims repeat it on the average of twenty times every day.

Salah – Prayer

The second duty is that of the five daily prayers. The first prayer (Fajr) is offered before sunrise, the second (Dhuhr) is in the very early afternoon, the third (Asr) is in the late afternoon, the fourth (Maghrib) is immediately after sunset and the fifth (Isha) is before retiring and before midnight. In prayers, all Muslims face the Kaabah (a small, cube-shaped structure) in
the courtyard of al-Haram (the “inviolate place”), the great mosque of Mecca. Kaabah is the first house of worship built on earth for the worship of Allah, the One True God. It was re-built (raised from the existing foundation) by Prophets Abraham and Ismael. The Kaabah is 40 feet long, 33 feet wide and 50 feet high. It is covered with a black cloth with verses from the Quran written in golden letters. A single unit of prayer consists of a standing posture, then a bow followed by two prostrations and finally a sitting posture. During these five prayers verses from the Quran are recited during the standing posture in Arabic, the language of the Revelation. During other postures supplications, glorifying and praising Allah, exalting and blessing Prophets Muhammad and Abraham and their followers are offered. Every Muslim on earth should know at least few Surahs in Arabic to perform the prayers.

All five prayers in Islam are congregational and are to be offered in a mosque, but they may be offered from any location such as: house, office, bus, airplane, car, wilderness, etc. A Muslim riding a bus, airplane or a car may pray in the direction of the vehicle and does not have to face Mecca during prayer. Before praying, the worshiper must perform ablution which is washing of at least the hands, face, arms up to elbows, rubbing head with water and washing feet up to ankles. There are certain concessions with regard to the timings of prayers. For example, when one travels, one may combine Dhuhr with Asr at any time from the beginning of the period of Dhuhr to the end of Asr prayer. One can also combine Maghrib with Isha at any time during the range for both prayers. Also, when there is a good reason that prevents a person from offering prayer, he may combine Dhuhr with Asr and Maghrib with Isha even in his hometown. Shortening prayers is another concession given to travelers after they have started their journey. Only Dhuhr, Asr and Isha can be shortened. Maghrib and Fajr remain as they are. The Messenger of God encouraged Muslims to offer voluntary prayers (Nafl) because Allah will reward Muslims for these added prayers that are over and above the religious duties that Allah has imposed, but He does not punish anyone for their omitting. Nafl is not obligatory. Before every congregational prayer, the muezzin (from azan, “call to prayer”) makes a formal public call to prayer from a minaret of the mosque. The call to prayer may also be offered inside the mosque in the prayer’s area of the Imam (leader of the prayer). In recent times the call has been made over a microphone so that those at some distance can hear it.

Special early afternoon prayers are offered on Fridays in congregation at mosques, preceded by a sermon by the Imam. On the two annual religious festival days called Eid (one immediately after the end of the
fasting month of Ramadan and the second during the pilgrimage to Mecca on the tenth day of the Islamic lunar month of Dhul-Hijjah), there are special prayers followed by sermons in the morning. These prayers are not held in mosques but in a wide space outside set apart for this purpose.

**Zakat – Almsgiving**

The third duty of a Muslim is to pay Zakat, primarily to help the poor. The word Zakat in Arabic means both “purification” and “growth.” This was the required charity ordered by Allah and collected by Muhammad (and later by Muslim states) from every Muslim who has at the end of the year in his or her possession certain minimum prescribed value called ‘Nisab.’ Zakat requires a minimum rate of two and half percent of Muslims’ wealth above the value of ‘Nisab.’ Islam teaches that humans own nothing in life. God gives everything they possess as a trust; they are trustees. Only when Zakat has been paid is the rest of a Muslim’s property considered purified and legitimate. In most Muslim states Zakat is no longer collected by the government and instead has become a voluntary charity, but it is still recognized as an essential duty by all Muslims. In a number of countries, strong demands have been made to reinstate Zakat as a tax.

**Sawm – Fasting**

The fourth duty is the fasting during the Islamic month of Ramadan. Because the Islamic calendar is lunar, fasting is not confined to any one season. Even during hot summers, most Muslims meticulously observe fasting. During fasting, one must refrain from eating, drinking, smoking and sexual intercourse from dawn until sunset. After sunset, all lawful in food, drink and sex are allowed. Throughout the month, one must abstain from all sinful thoughts and actions. If one is sick or on a journey that causes hardship, one needs not to fast but must compensate by fasting on subsequent days or feed poor people. The Messenger of God encouraged Muslims to offer voluntary fasting because Allah will reward Muslims for these added fasting. Fasting is a religious method of self-purification. By cutting oneself off from worldly comforts, even for a short time, a fasting person gains true sympathy with those who live daily lives without even the most basic necessities, food and drink. It is also intended as a time to grow one’s spirituality and Islamic values of love, honesty, devotion and generosity.
Hajj – Pilgrimage

Figure 1.4 - Kaabah During Hajj

The fifth duty is the pilgrimage to the Kaabah at Mecca. Every adult Muslim who is physically and economically able to do so must make this pilgrimage at least once in his or her lifetime. Hajj activities take place during six days (from the eighth to thirteenth) of the Islamic lunar month of Dhul-Hijjah. Every year, during pilgrimage, the world witnesses the wonderful spectacle of this international exhibition of Islam in leveling all distinctions of race, color and rank. Not only do the Americans, the Europeans, the Africans, the south Asians, the Arabs, the Chinese and all other nationals meet together in Mecca as members of one divine family, but they are all dressed in one dress, every person in two simple pieces of white seamless cloth, everyone chanting,

“Here am I, O God; at Thy command; Thou art One and the Only; here am I.”

Thus there remains nothing to differentiate the high from the low, the rich from the poor, the peasant from the king. The fact is: no religion in the world can show a parallel to what Islam has done towards the establishment of the principle of international unity and human brotherhood on such universal foundations.

During Pilgrimage, Muslims abstain from shedding blood and even cutting either hair or nails and avoid all forms of vulgarity. The main activities of the Hajj, which are of Abrahamic origin, include seven circumambulations of the Kaabah, walking fast between two mounds near the sanctuary seven times, marching three miles to the city of Mina, then proceeding six miles to the mountain of Arafat, staying the afternoon and listening to a sermon there, stoning of three pillars representing
Satan’s temptation of Abraham, his wife Hagar and his son Ismael, then marching back to Mecca, cutting the hair to symbolize the completion of Hajj, offering a sacrifice in the memory of Abraham’s attempted sacrifice of his son Ismael and once again circumambulating the Kaabah. During the tenth day of Dhul-Hijjah, Muslims worldwide gather for communal prayers.

During recent years, air travel has allowed Muslims from all parts of the world to perform the pilgrimage. On Nov. 16, 2010 United Press International (UPI) reported that Hajj attracted some three million Muslim pilgrims in 2010. Through the centuries, the Kaabah has played an important role as a meeting place of Islamic scholars for the exchange and diffusion of ideas. For the past two decades, the pilgrimage has also been used to promote political solidarity in the Muslim world.

Besides these five basic pillars, other important laws of Islam include the prohibition of alcohol consumption and of eating the flesh of swine. Besides the Kaabah, the central shrine of Islam, the most important centers of Islamic life are the Prophet’s mosque in Madinah and Al-Aqsa mosque in Jerusalem and all the mosques where daily prayers are offered and where the Friday service is held.

ARTICLES OF FAITH IN ISLAM

Faith is recognized in Islam as a higher step than practicing Islam. It is a matter of belief in one’s heart. Every faithful Muslim believes in the following articles of faith:

God

Monotheism is central to Islam—a belief in only One God, Unitary, Supreme and Eternal, Omnipotent and Mighty, Merciful and Compassionate. Belief in a plurality of gods or in the extension of God’s divinity to any person is emphatically rejected. Islam rejects the human attributes that the Jews and the Christians added to their doctrines such as God’s wrestling with his prophet or the incarnation of God. God created nature through a primordial act of mercy; otherwise there would be pure nothingness. God provided each element of his creation with its own proper nature, or laws governing its conduct, so that it follows a characteristic pattern. The result is a well ordered harmonious whole, a cosmos in which everything has its proper place and limitations.
Messengers of God

A Muslim has to believe in all the messengers of God without any distinction among them. Every known nation has at least one messenger from God. They were chosen by God to guide mankind and deliver His divine message that is submission to the Will and Laws of God. They were sent at different times and places. All prophets are human; they have no share in divinity, but they are the most perfect exemplars for humanity. The Quran mentions the names of twenty-five prophets and Muslims accept them all. All prophets are considered national or local messengers with the exception of Muhammad who is considered a prophet for all nations and all time. The message of all prophets was basically the same because it came from One God. Muhammad stands as the last messenger and the crowning glory of the foundation of the prophethood. This is not an arbitrary attitude, nor is it just a convenient belief. Thus, the Quran describes Muhammad as the “Seal of all Prophets.” From this arises the Islamic belief that prophethood was accomplished and finished with him and that the Quran is the final and authentic perfect revelation of God, consummating and superseding all earlier holy books. The Quran acknowledges the miracles of earlier prophets (Noah, Abraham, Moses, Jesus and others). Muhammad’s eternal miracle is the Quran, the like of which no human can reproduce.

Although right and wrong are inscribed in the human heart, the inability or refusal of many people to interpret that inscription has made prophetic guidance necessary. This guidance is universal; no one on earth has been left without it. Adam was the first prophet; after his expulsion from the Garden of Eden, God forgave him (for this reason Islam does not accept the doctrine of original sin). The messages of all prophets emanate from the same divine source. Religions are, therefore, basically one. They are all called for worshiping One God.

The Holy Books

As a result of believing in all the messengers of God, Muslims also have to believe in all the scriptures and revelations of God. In the Quran, a special reference is made to the books of Abraham, Moses, David and Jesus. However, long before the revelation of the Quran to Muhammad, all the holy books had been lost or altered. The Quran stands untainted for the past 14 centuries.
The Angels of God

Muslims believe in the Angels of God. They are purely spiritual and splendid beings, whose nature requires no food, drink or sleep. They have no physical desires of any kind nor material needs. They spend their whole time in the service of God. There are many of them and each one of them is charged with a specific duty. If we cannot see the Angels with our naked eyes, it does not necessarily deny their actual existence. There are many things in the world that are invisible to the eye or inaccessible to our senses and yet we believe in their existence (e.g. electricity and sound). Belief in the Angels originates from the Islamic principle that knowledge and truth are not entirely confined to the sensory knowledge or the sensory perception alone.

The Day of Judgment

The divine activities of creation, sustenance and guidance end with the final act of judgment. This world will come to an end some day and the dead will rise to stand for their final and fair trial. On the Day of Judgment, all humanity will be gathered and individuals will be judged solely according to their deeds. The “successful ones” will go to the Garden (heaven) and the “losers” or the evil will go to hell. Because God is merciful, He will forgive those who deserve forgiveness. Only God knows the real nature of heaven and hell and their exact descriptions.

If some people think that they are shrewd enough and can get away with their wrong doings in this life, they are wrong, for they will not be able to do so on the Day of Judgment. Also, if some pious people do good deeds to please God and seem to have no appreciation or acknowledgment in this temporary world, they will eventually receive their full reward on that day. Absolute justice will prevail for all.

Belief in the Day of Judgment is the final relieving answer to many complicated problems of our world. There are people who commit sins, neglect God and indulge in immoral activities, yet they seem to be “superficially” successful in business and prosperous in life. There are virtuous and God-minded people. Yet they seem to be getting fewer rewards and more suffering in this life. This may seem puzzling and incompatible with the Justice of God. If the guilty can escape the human laws unharmed and, in addition, be more prosperous, what is, then, left for the virtuous people? There must be some way to reward goodness and arrest evil. If this is not done here on earth and we know that it is not done regularly or immediately, it has to be done some day. That day is the Day of Judgment. This is not to ignore injustice or tolerate mischief.
in this world. This is not to sedate the deprived or comfort the exploiters. Rather, it is to warn the deviants from the right path and remind them that the Justice of God shall run its full course sooner or later.

Besides the Last Judgment, which will be on individuals, the Quran recognizes another form of divine judgment, which happens to nations, peoples and communities. Nations, like individuals, may be corrupted by wealth, power and arrogance, and, unless they reform, these nations are punished by being destroyed or subjugated by more virtuous nations. This has been evident all over the history of humanity.

**The Ultimate Plan**

Muslims believe in the timeless knowledge of God and in His Power to plan and execute His Plans. God is not indifferent to His world nor is He neutral to it. His knowledge and power are in action at all times to keep order in His vast domain and maintain full command over His creation. He is Wise and Loving and whatever He does must have a good motive and a meaningful purpose. If this is established in our minds, we should accept in good faith all that He does, although we may fail to understand it fully, or even think it is bad. We should have strong faith in Him and accept whatever He does because our knowledge is limited and our thinking is based upon individual or personal considerations, whereas His Knowledge is limitless and He plans on a universal as well as individual basis.

This does not in any way make man helpless. It simply draws the line between what is God’s concern and what is man’s responsibility. Because we are by nature finite and limited, we have a finite and limited degree of power and freedom. We cannot do everything and He graciously holds us responsible only for the things we do. The things that we cannot do, or things that He Himself does, are not in the realm of our responsibility. He is Just and has given us limited power to match our finite nature and limited responsibility. On the other hand, the timeless knowledge and power of God to execute His plans do not prevent us from making our own plans in our limited sphere of power. As a matter of fact, God encourages us to think, to plan and to make sound choices, but if things do not happen the way we wanted or planned, we should not loose faith or surrender ourselves to mental strains and shattering worries. We should try again and again and if the results are not still what we wanted, then we know that we tried our best and rest assured that we are not held responsible for the results. The important point is to try and then leave the results to God. The Muslims call this article of faith: the belief in “Qadaa” and “Qadar”, which simply means, in other words, that the Timeless knowledge of
God anticipates events and that events take place according to the exact knowledge of God.

THE PROPHET (PBUH)

Prophet Muhammad (Pbuh) was born in 570 A.D. in the city of Mecca, an important trading center in western Arabia. Muhammad was a descendant of Prophet Ismael, son of Abraham, through the lineage of his second son Kedar. Muhammad’s father, Abd Allah, died before he was born. His mother, Amina, died when he was six years old. His grandfather Abd al-Muttalib then raised him until the age of eight. After his grandfather’s death, Abu Talib, his uncle, raised him. Under the guardianship of Abu Talib, Muhammad began to earn a living as a businessman and a trader. At the age of twelve, he accompanied Abu Talib with merchant caravans as far as Syria. The Meccans popularly knew Muhammad as ‘Al-Ameen’ for his impeccable character. The title Al-Ameen means the honest, the reliable and the trustworthy and it signifies the highest standard of moral and public life. Upon hearing of Muhammad’s impressive credentials, Khadijah, a rich and noble widow, asked Muhammad to take some merchandise for trade to Syria. Soon after this trip when he was twenty-five, Khadijah proposed marriage to Muhammad. Muhammad accepted the proposal. At that time, Khadijah was twice widowed and forty years old.

Muhammad’s spiritual search had been long. At the age of 40, while in a cave on Mount Hira outside Mecca, he had a revelation in which he was called on to preach the message entrusted to him by God. Further revelations came to him intermittently over the remaining 23 years of his life and these revelations constitute the text of the Quran. At first in private and then publicly, Muhammad began to proclaim his message: that there is but One God and that Muhammad is his servant and messenger sent to remind people to submit to the Will of God and to warn them of the Judgment Day. The Meccans responded with hostility to Muhammad’s monotheism. Abu Talib protected him as long as he was alive. In 619, however, Abu Talib died and the new clan leader was unwilling to continue the protective arrangement. At about the same time Muhammad lost another faithful supporter, his wife Khadijah. In the face of persecution and curtailed freedom to preach, Muhammad and about 70 followers reached the decision to move to Madinah, a city about 400 km (250 mi.) to the north. This move, called the Hijra (Arabic: “emigration”), took place in 622, signified the first year of the Muslim calendar and the inauguration of the Islamic State. The prophet after nine day travelling
reached the outskirts of Madinah on 24 September 622. Islamic Calendar starts, however, with the first day of the Arab year in which the Hijra took place, namely, 16 July 622.

In Madinah an organized Muslim community gradually came into existence under Muhammad’s leadership. To guarantee the peace and serenity, the Prophet proposed a treaty defining terms of conduct for all inhabitants of Madinah. All Muslims, non-Muslim Arabs and Jews ratified the treaty. After his emigration to Madinah, the enemies of Islam increased their assault from all sides. The Battles of Badr, Uhud and Allies (Trench) were fought near or around Madinah. In these battles until the year 627, the nonbelievers with encouragement from Jews and other Arabian tribes attacked the Prophet and Muslim community. The Muslims lost many men while defending their city and religion. This condition resulted in many widowed Muslim women and numerous orphaned children. In these circumstances, Prophet Muhammad married several women during his fifty-sixth year up to the sixtieth year of his life. He did not contract any marriage in the last three years of his life, following the revelation limiting the number of wives up to a maximum of four. This is the first time in the history of revealed scriptures that a limit on the number of wives was imposed and the terms of conduct were specified. The Prophet was instructed not to divorce any of his wives after this revelation, (Surah 33, Ayah 5). All of the ladies he took as wives were either widowed or divorced, except Aishah, the daughter of Abu Bakr, his closest friend and the first Caliph.

In 632, he announced that God perfected and completed the religion of Islam. Three months later, he died. At the end of his mission, the Prophet was blessed with many hundred thousand followers (men and women) of Islam. Thousands of his friends memorized the full text of the Quran and prayed with him at the mosque and listened to his sermon. Hundreds of sincere Muslims would find every opportunity to be with him following five daily prayers and at other times. They used to seek his advice for their everyday problems and listened carefully to the interpretation and application of revealed verses to their situation. They followed the message of the Quran and the Messenger of Allah with utmost sincerity and supported him with everything they had.

By the time of his death, Muhammad had spread Islam on most of Arabia. His followers carried the message of Islam after the Prophet and within 100 years the light of Islam reached Spain, North Africa, the Caucasus, northwest China and India and Islam embraced more territory than did the Roman Empire. In no event, Islam was imposed by force on any population. This is evident because Muslims never attempted to
convert anyone according to the instruction of the Quran 2:256. Muslims ruled Spain and India and their people were never converted to Islam. Also the existence of non-Muslims in many Islamic countries attests to the fact that Islam did not spread by the sword.

However, “half the truth” Evangelists claim that, in contrast to Moses and Jesus, Muhammad was a man of war. They ignore the fact that Muhammad fought only a handful of battles in his lifetime, resulting in barely 1,000 casualties on all sides. This might be compared to Moses, who chastises his army for sparing the women and children of the defeated Midianites, (Numbers 31:15). Moses then commands his army to go back and slaughter the women and the boys. This also might be compared to David, who is praised in I Samuel 18 for killing his “tens of thousands,” famously earning the murderous jealousy of Saul who only killed his “thousands.”

To compare Muhammad to Moses or Jesus, or against some contemporary standard, is meaningless and obsolete. The world that Moses, Jesus and Muhammad lived in was lawless and violent, different from even the Roman dominated world in which Jesus lived. Strong vested interests opposed the monotheism each preached, genocide was commonplace, slavery was taken for granted and women had few rights.

In this context Muhammad and Moses and all the other Biblical figures sought to create a new society based on justice and on the belief in a Compassionate God. Their achievements in accomplishing this in lasting ways form the only relevant contemporary standard by which they can be truly judged.

Mahatma Gandhi published this statement in ‘Young India,’ 1924:

“I wanted to know the best of the life of one who holds today an undisputed sway over the hearts of millions of mankind. I became more than ever convinced that it was not the sword that won a place for Islam in those days in the scheme of life. It was the rigid simplicity, the utter self-effacement of the Prophet, the scrupulous regard for pledges, his intense devotion to his friends and followers, his intrepidity, his fearlessness, his absolute trust in God and in his own mission. These and not the sword carried everything before them and surmounted every obstacle. When I closed the second volume (of the Prophet’s biography), I was sorry there was not more for me to read of that great life.”

“If any religion had the chance of ruling over England, nay Europe within the next hundred years, it could be Islam.”

“I have studied him - the wonderful man and in my opinion far from being an anti-Christ, he must be called the Savior of Humanity.”

“I believe that if a man like him were to assume the dictatorship of the modern world he would succeed in solving its problems in a way that would bring it the much needed peace and happiness: I have prophesied about the faith of Muhammad that it would be acceptable to the Europe of tomorrow as it is beginning to be acceptable to the Europe of today.”

A historian once said a great man should be judged by three tests:
1. Did his contemporaries find him to be truthful?
2. Was he great enough to rise above the standards of his age?
3. Did he leave anything as permanent legacy to the world at large?

This list may be further extended but all these three tests of greatness are exceedingly satisfied to the highest degree in the case of Prophet Muhammad (Pbuh).

**Impeccable Character**

Authentic historical records show that all the contemporaries of Muhammad, both friends and foes before and after revelation, acknowledged his spotless honesty, noble virtues, absolute sincerity and absolute trustworthiness of the apostle of Islam. Before revelation, the tribes of Mecca accepted him as arbitrator in their personal disputes on account of his conscientious fairness. After revelation, some of those who did not believe in his message were forced to say: “O Muhammad, we do not call you a liar, but we deny Him who has given you a Book and inspired you with a message.” Some thought evil spirits possessed him. They tried violence to cure him. But the best of them saw that a new light had dawned on him and hastened to seek that enlightenment. It is a notable feature in the history of the Prophet of Islam that his nearest relation, his wife, his beloved cousin and his close friends, who knew him most intimately, were thoroughly inspired with the truth of his mission. If these men and women, noble, intelligent and certainly not less educated than the fishermen of Galilee, had perceived the slightest sign of earthiness, deception, or material motives, Muhammad’s hopes of moral regeneration and social reform would all have crumbled to dust in a moment.
On the contrary we find that the devotion of his followers was such that he was voluntarily acknowledged leader of their lives. They braved for his sake persecutions and danger. They believed, trusted, obeyed and honored him even in the most excruciating torture and severest mental agony even unto death. Would this have been so had they noticed the slightest backsliding in their leader?

To read the history of the early converts of Islam, every heart would melt at the sight of the brutal treatment of innocent men and women. Bilal, an innocent man was thrown on the hot sands with a huge stone on his chest. He was asked to denounce Muhammad and Islam. Instead he kept repeating, “God is One.” The torture in the heat of desert continued until Abu Bakr, the first Caliph, bought him and set him free. Another example is made with Khabbab Bin Adi who was put to death in a cruel manner by mutilation and cutting off his flesh piece by piece. In the middle of his tortures, he was asked whether he did wish Muhammad in his place? He cried out that he was gladly prepared to sacrifice himself, his family and his children and all to save Muhammad from the pierce of a thorn. Scores of heart-breaking incidents of this type may be narrated. But what do all these incidents show? Why was it that these sons and daughters of Islam not only surrendered to their Prophet their allegiance, but also made a gift of their bodies, hearts and souls? Is it not their intense faith and absolute conviction a sign of the noblest testimony to his sincerity?

And these men and women were not of low class or of inferior mental caliber. In the early days of Islam, his followers gathered what was the best and the noblest in Mecca, its flowers and cream. The first four Caliphs, with their towering personalities were among the converts of this early period. The success of the Prophet was not a mere accident. It was not a windfall. It was recognition of the fact that his contemporaries found him to be truthful. It was the result of his admirable and compelling personality. Most of all, God, the Omnipotent, willed the success of His messenger.

Standard for All Humans

What a dramatic succession of striking scenes? There was Muhammad, the prophet. There was Muhammad, the general. There was Muhammad, the businessman. There was Muhammad, the warrior. There was Muhammad, the preacher. There was Muhammad, the statesman. There was Muhammad, the protector of slaves. There was Muhammad, the liberator of women. There was Muhammad, the judge. There was Muhammad, the reformer. There was Muhammad, the saint. And above all, he was the highest example of modesty and humility.
Orphanhood is the extreme of helplessness and his life on Earth began with it. From an orphan boy, to a persecuted refugee, then to an overlord - spiritual as well as temporal - of a whole nation, he had stood the fire of the world and came out of it unscathed to serve as a model in every phase of life. His achievements were not limited to one aspect of life, but cover the entire fields of human activity. He is a role model for youths. He is a role model for kings and presidents. He is a role model for judges. He is a role model for any humans at any age, in any field, in any place and at any time.

• If greatness consists of purification of a nation immersed in moral darkness, then he who transformed an entire nation, sunken low as the Arabs were and made them torchbearers of civilizations, has every claim to that greatness.
• If greatness lies in unifying disharmonious elements of society by the ties of brotherhood and charity, the Prophet of the desert has got every title to that distinction.
• If greatness consists of uplifting those immersed in degrading superstition and destructive practices of every kind, the Prophet of Islam had wiped out superstitions and irrational fear from the hearts of millions.
• If a conqueror is a great man, Muhammad founded a nation that has survived fourteen centuries.
• If a devotion that a leader commands is a measure of greatness, the Prophet’s white dress, beard, style of recitation of Quran, what and how he ate, even his way of bathing are followed by millions of Muslims for fourteen centuries.
• If the number of followers of a role model is the criterion of greatness, the Prophet’s name even today exerts a magic charm in the hearts of over a billion of souls.

And the list goes on and on.

The Unlettered Prophet

Muhammad had not studied philosophy in the schools of Athens or Rome, Alexandria, India or China, yet he could proclaim the highest truths of eternal values to mankind. Born as an orphan and blessed with no worldly goods, yet he was loved by all. He had studied at no military academy, yet he could organize his forces against tremendous odds and gained victories through the moral forces that he marshaled. In the person
of the Prophet of Islam, the world has seen the most exceptional union of a prophet, organizer and leader. He was unlettered, yet he could speak with an eloquence and fervor that moved men to tears of ecstasy.

His supposed weakness (being unlettered) was his greatest miracle. He was among Arabs who considered the mastering of their language as important as their pride. When the Quran was revealed, the beauty of the language of the Quran overwhelmed the Arabs. They were astounded by the rhetorical miracle of the language. Allah challenged the Arabs to compose ten verses like the Quran. When the Arabs failed, He challenged them to compose only one verse. Once again, they failed. Like Moses’ and Jesus’ miracles, the miracle of Muhammad (the Quran) is in the subject that his people perfected, mastered and held in high regard.

Before the revelation, Muhammad was not known to be among those who mastered the language. It is a known fact that no one can master a language instantaneously at the age of forty. So when Muhammad started reciting the Quran to his people, they accused him of being possessed by evil spirits because they had not seen him talking this way. Any Arab-speaking students can differentiate right away between any verses in the Quran and a statement from the Prophet. None of the thousands verses in the Quran has any similarity in style to any of the thousands sayings of the Prophets. Because the Arabs did not see anything like the Quran, which was narrated by an unlettered man and they denied the message, they concluded that the Quran must have been from evil spirits. This is a classic case in all religions. It is the same old story:

- Pharaoh accused Moses with black magic and that Moses was possessed with evil spirits, Surah 20, Ayah 71.
- The Jews accused Jesus with black magic and that Jesus was possessed with evil spirits, Luke 11:15.
- The pagan Arabs accused Muhammad with black magic and that Muhammad was possessed with evil spirits.
- Now, some Christians and the Jews accuse Muhammad with black magic and that Muhammad was possessed with evil spirits in Sunday schools and by half the truth TV evangelists!

The Quran refers to the accusation of the pagan Arabs to Muhammad in many verses:

“Similarly, no apostle came to the Peoples before them, but they said (of him) in like manner, “A sorcerer, or one possessed”!”

(Surah 51, Ayah 52)
“And they say: ‘Tales of the ancients, which he has caused to be written: and they are dictated before him morning and evening’”

(Surah 25, Ayah 5)

The pagans spread the rumor that Muhammad, similar to all previous prophets, was a sorcerer, or one possessed with evil spirit. When the beauty and power of the Quran are pointed out and its miracle as coming from an unlettered man, the pagans hint that other men wrote them, though they could not produce any one who could write anything like the Quran.

**Pure and Humble**

After the fall of Mecca, more than one million square miles of land lay at his feet. The Lord of Arabia repaired his own shoes, fixed his woolen garments, milked the goats, swept the hearth and kindled the fire. The entire town of Madinah, where he lived, grew wealthy in the later days of his life. Everywhere gold and silver was in abundance and yet in those days of prosperity many weeks would pass without a fire being kindled in the hearth of his house, his food being water and dates or bread and vinegar. His family would go hungry many nights because they could not get anything to eat in the evening. He slept on rough bed, with a palm mat after a long busy day. He spent most of his nights in prayer, often bursting with tears before his Creator to grant him strength to continue his duties. As the reports go, his voice would get choked from weeping. The house that spread light to the whole world was in darkness because there was no oil in the lamp. He did not accept a salary from the state. He had to work to earn money, yet during his busy day the time to work was very little and his earning was very humble. On the day of his death, his only assets were a few coins, a part of which went to satisfy a debt and the rest were given to a needy person who came to his house for charity. He denied his family any inheritance from the Islamic State. The clothes in which he breathed his last breath had many patches.

Circumstances changed, but the Prophet of God did not. In victory or defeat, in power or hardship, in “prosperity” or poverty, he was the same man, disclosed the same character. He remained “Al-Ameen”, the truthful, the honest and the poor. That is why Muhammad was ranked number ONE in “THE 100 a ranking of the most influential persons in history” book by Michael Hart, (1978).
ISLAM AND COMMUNITY

The community (Ummah) in Islam is not founded on race, nationality, locality, occupation, kinship, or special interests. It does not take its name after the name of a leader or a founder or an event. It transcends national borders and political boundaries. The foundation of the community in Islam is the attitude that designates submission to the Will of Allah, obedience to His Law and commitment to His Cause. In short, an Islamic community is present only when it is nourished and fostered by Islam. Its foundation is the family.

The Islamic community has a historic mission far beyond mere survival, sheer power, breeding, or physiological continuity. Such a mission is described in the Quran as follows:

“Let there arise out of you a band of people inviting to all that is good, enjoining what is right, and forbidding what is wrong: They are the ones to attain felicity”

(Surah 3, Ayah 104)

“Ye are the best of peoples, evolved for mankind, enjoining what is right, forbidding what is wrong, and believing in Allah”

(Surah 3, Ayah 110)

The historic role of the Islamic community is to be the embodiment of the virtuous, the wholesome and the noble. A truly Islamic community is the alert guardian of virtue and the bitter enemy of evil. What is required from the community at large is likewise required from every individual member. This is because the whole community is an entity with every member accountable to Allah. The statement of the Prophet (Pbuh) best describes the role of the individual Muslim:

“Whoever among you sees an evil action, then let him change it with his hand [by taking action]; if he cannot, then with his tongue [by speaking out]; and if he cannot, then with his heart – and that is the weakest of faith”, narrated by Abu Sa’ed al-Khudri, Sahih Muslim.

As we see, this description is very significant and comprehensive. In this age of revolutionary media, no one in his right mind can underestimate the power of corrected actions or the power of communication by words, or the power of feelings.

The historic role of the Islamic community is further restated in the Quran:
“Thus, have We made of you an Ummah justly balanced, that ye might be witnesses over the nations, and the Messenger a witness over yourselves”

(Surah 2, Ayah 143)

Such a role of witnessing is both highly significant and extremely demanding. It means that the community of Islam must be exemplary. It must set the highest standard of morality and be the reference point of others. It must avoid excesses and extravagances and static rigidity. To strike a middle course of action, to be steadfast and consistent, to know what to accept and what to reject, to have morals and at the same time remain adaptable is probably the hardest test of human character and social viability. But this is the role of the Islamic community and the historic mission of Muslims. It is the very criterion that qualifies the Muslim as the best human community ever to evolve.

With regard to the continuity of the Islamic community, certain points are noteworthy. It is the duty of Muslims to do everything within their means to ensure that continuity. The rules of marriage and inheritance, the duties of charity and pilgrimage, the human rights and obligation of kin, the individual conscientiousness and social belongings - all these are oriented towards the healthy continuity of the community in Islam. On the other hand, God has pledged to protect this community in several ways.

1. He pledges to preserve and protect the Quran that is the source of all wisdom. This also means that there shall always be a community to follow the Quran; the Quran shall not be without followers even though there are followers of other books.

2. Islam itself is continuity. Whenever a nation deviated from the path of Allah, He restated His word, reaffirmed His Truth and commissioned new reformers to carry on.

3. Allah has issued a strong warning to the effect that if Muslims turned away from the right path, they would be the losers and Allah would replace them by righteous people, (Surah 47, Ayah 38).

4. Again, the believers are warned that if they neglect their faith, soon God will produce people whom He will love and they will love Him, humble towards the believers and strong against the unbelievers, fighting in the way of God and never afraid of reproaches, (Surah 5, Ayah 54).
The Family

There have been many definitions and descriptions of the family. For our purpose, I shall adopt the following simplified definition. The family is a human social group whose members are bound together by the bond of blood ties and/or marital relationship. This family bond entails mutual expectations of rights and obligations that are prescribed by religion, enforced by law and observed by the group members. Accordingly, the family members share certain mutual commitments. These relate to identity and provision, inheritance and council, affection for the young, security and respect for the elderly and maximization of effort to protect the family.

Islam recognizes the religious virtue, the social necessity and the moral advantage of marriage. The normal course of behavior for the Muslim individual is to be family oriented and to seek a family of his own. marriage and the family are central in the Islamic system. There are many verses in the Quran and the statements by the Prophet which goes as far as to say that when a Muslim marries, he has thereby perfected half of his religion; so let him be God-minded and careful with the other half. Muslim scholars have interpreted the Quran to mean that a marriage is a religious duty, a moral safeguard and a social commitment. As a religious duty, it must be fulfilled; but like all other duties in Islam, it is enjoined only upon those who are capable of meeting the responsibilities involved.

Marriage in Islam is regarded first and foremost as a righteous act. Sexual control is a moral triumph. The moral values and purposes of marriage would take on a special meaning and be reinforced if they are intertwined with the belief in God. This is the focal point of marriage in Islam.

“O mankind! reverence your Guardian-Lord, who created you from a single person, created, of like nature, His mate, and from them twain scattered (like seeds) countless men and women.”

(Surah 4, Ayah 1)

“It is He Who created you from a single person, and made his mate of like nature, in order that he might dwell with her (in love).”

(Surah 7, Ayah 189)

“And among His Signs is this, that He created for you mates from among yourselves, that ye may dwell in tranquility with them, and He has put love and mercy between your (hearts): verily in that are Signs for those who reflect.”

(Surah 30, Ayah 21)
Even at the most trying times of married life and in the midst of legal disputes and litigation, the Quran reminds the parties of God’s Law; it commands them to be kind to one another, truly charitable towards one another and above all dutiful to God.

It is noteworthy that the Islamic provisions of marriage apply to men and women equally, “except that men are a degree higher” because they are charged with the household expenditure. Women are not required to contribute in the house finances even if they are wealthy. Sexual fidelity is sternly demanded and proven adultery is punishable in some Islamic countries. The Quran also advocates measures that are intended to improve the conditions of women. The infanticide of girls, formerly prevalent among certain Arabic tribes, is forbidden; daughters are given a share of inheritances, although only half of that allotted to boys. The Quran grants to wives the right of divorce in case of maltreatment. The Quran approves polygamy, allowing as many as four wives, but also states,

“but if ye fear that ye shall not be able to deal justly (with them), then only one.”

(Surah 4, Ayah 3)

The polygamy is offered as an alternative for extra marital affairs and committing adultery. The abuse of polygamy has recently led to the enactment of reformed family laws in most Muslim countries.

Islam’s general approach to parent-child relationships may be summarized in a few principles:

• It is a divine command that no child may become the cause of harm to the parents, (Surah 2, Ayah 233).
• By implication, the parents should cause the child no harm either. The Quran recognizes very clearly that parents are not always immune from over protectiveness or negligence.
• One of the most inalienable rights of the child in Islam is the right to life and equal chances, (Surah 6, Ayah 151).
• Islam is strongly sensitive to the crucial dependence of the child on the parents. Their decisive role in forming the child’s personality is clearly recognized.

The Quran sums up the whole question of the parent-child relationship in the master concept of “ihsan,” which means what is right, good and beautiful. It also means to strive for perfection in performing Islamic duties. The practical implications of this concept of “ihsan” for the parents entail active understanding and patience, gratitude and compassion, respect for them and prayers for their souls, mercy and honoring them.
“Thy Lord hath decreed that ye worship none but Him, and that ye be kind (Ihsan) to parents. Whether one or both of them attain old age in thy life, say not to them a word of contempt, nor repel them, but address them in terms of honor. And, out of kindness, lower to them the wing of humility, and say: My Lord! Bestow on them thy Mercy even as they cherished me in childhood”

(Surah 17, Ayah 23-24)

Parents have the right to expect obedience from children if only in partial return for what the parents do for them. But if parents demand the wrong or ask the improper, such as forcing children to paganism, disobedience become not only justifiable, but also imperative.

Recognizing that the first priority of anyone is towards God, the second priority of children is towards their parents. This means that the children are responsible for the support and maintenance of parents. It is an absolute religious duty to provide for the parents in case of need and help them to make their lives as comfortable as possible, especially in their old ages.

In the above verse, there exists more than just simple gratitude to parents; it goes up into the highest spiritual level. Following God’s command to mankind to only worship him, children are commanded to treat their parent with the full meaning of “ihsan.” God ordains respect and mercy for parents. However, today, in the name of freedom, respect is replaced with rebellion and mercy is hardly existent.

THE DIVINE STANDARD

Throughout history, humans have adopted many standards. These standards range from social, cultural, political, to economic and juridical. Human standards or laws can sometimes be useful or beneficial if they adhere to the divine standards. As these standards get further away from the religious laws, they produce benefits only to limited special interest groups, with the public as a whole suffering or at least not benefiting from these laws. Most people judge situations or other people based upon certain preconceived ideas and rules that they accumulated in their past. Often times, these judgments may not be universally fair or righteous. Generally speaking, there are three different kinds of standards that humans follow when facing different issues:

1. **Divine Standard**: these are the set of laws, behaviors and actions that are prescribed by God upon all humans regardless of race, color,
wealth or gender. These laws are pathways to piety and absolute justice.

2. **Society standard**: the laws and the morals that specific societies impose upon themselves that are supposedly for the welfare of the whole society at that time. However, no society standard could include all the issues that affect its people. This leaves open issues that cause major differences in opinion. For example, the American society is almost evenly divided on major issues such as abortion and gun control with no side being able to convince the other.

3. **Individual standard**: This is the standard that an individual adopts to satisfy his own needs and desires regardless of its effect on others. Many people judge an event or action based upon their own standard that can be totally impious.

It will be shown that the Divine standards and values in Islam are far superior to any other societies or individual standards. One of the functions of a religion is to teach humans a set of rules and standards that are universally beneficial at all times. However, a liberal society or person may find the divine standard too restrictive and against human rights! Someone may condemn the Islamic laws of flogging or amputation of hands of criminals without entertaining the idea that these laws can protect the whole society. This is regardless of the fact that many social or human standards are always accused of being biased and unfair.

The multitude of the stories in the Holy Books is for a divine wisdom. For example, Moses (Pbuh) was a fascinating choice as a messenger of Allah. One of a prophet’s human qualifications is his ability to speak and convince people with the religion. However, Moses could not speak clearly, he used to stutter. So he asked God to make his brother Aaron a co-messenger to help him with the Egyptians. God accepted the plea of Moses. When Moses went to the pharaoh to deliver the message of God, he was accused that he could not speak clearly and would not be able to “sell” the message of God. By the human standard, a stuttered prophet may not do a good job in delivering the message. But by God’s standard, His mercy can be given to anyone regardless of his physical ability and he will succeed with the help of God. As a matter of fact, Moses is considered as one of the most recognized prophets in the three monotheistic religions and he miraculously achieved a great deal.

**Criminal Law**

Crime is rampant and prevalent in the United States of America (USA) as well as the Western World at large. The USA is the country that has the
highest number of churches on earth. At the same time, it is the country that has the most violent crimes. It is also the country that has the highest number of prisons on earth. The Federal Bureau of Investigation in USA in its 1987 annual statistical summary reported that a major crime occurs every 3 seconds and a murder every 27 minutes. National surveys conducted by universities and governmental agencies indicate that most citizens of the USA feel that the existing criminal justice system is too soft on criminals. The major problem as envisioned by social scientists is that the goal of the criminal justice system is not punishment but correction. Hence, the prisons are called “Corrective Facilities” and the prisoners to a large extent are pampered and spoiled. When judges and juries convict criminals, sometimes the punishment is sadly inadequate. For example, a life sentence for killing a person would be in a corrective facility and in most cases not for the remainder of the criminal’s life! A life sentence equates to merely a 33 years prison term, but the murderer may be set free after serving just one third of the sentence, or 11 years for good behavior. On the other side, if the murderer is sentenced to death, the method of execution varies from state to state in the same country; there is no standard for executing murderers. Execution can be performed by lethal injection, electrocution, gas chamber, firearms, or hanging. The different methods of execution are chosen based upon which one is easier and faster. Obviously it may well be that no one really knows the easiest way of killing murderers. The irony is that the justice system is trying supposedly to find the easiest way for execution whether or not the victim is killed in a violent or an easy way. Furthermore, Gangs’ crimes are raging in the USA. It was reported that in one city (Fort Worth, Texas), there were about 5000 gang members committing all kinds of crimes from shooting innocent people at random, to fighting against each other. Crimes committed by children in schools, teenagers’ suicide and pregnancy, drug overdose, killing for the adrenaline rush, etc., are quite common that psychologists, religious and government spokesmen have no clues for the reason of this phenomena.

And yet, the western person considers the Islamic Laws and traditions, dealing with criminal matters not only uncivilized but also barbaric. In a rather interesting book entitled “The Arabs”, by David Lamb, Random House, New York, 1987, the author reports of the tremendous disparity in the crime rates between the whole Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and city of Los Angeles during the calendar year 1982. Both Saudi Arabia and Los Angeles had a population of 7 Million and their respective crime statistics compares as follows:
Table 1.1 - Crime rates in Saudi Arabia and city of Los Angeles

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CRIME CATEGORY</th>
<th>LOS ANGELES</th>
<th>SAUDI ARABIA</th>
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<tr>
<td>All Crimes</td>
<td>499,499</td>
<td>14,200</td>
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<tr>
<td>Murders</td>
<td>1415</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suicides</td>
<td>1760</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

It is important to know that the 14200 total crimes in Saudi Arabia included 3124 offenses due to the use of alcohol. If alcohol use were to be an offense in Los Angeles, the total number of crimes would exceed several million! Also in Saudi Arabia, it is very common that jewelry, trading currency stores and all other stores can be left opened and unattended at any time with no fear of robbery. Can you imagine the sense of security that you have if you are able to do that?

At first glance, it can be assumed that this tremendous discrepancy in the crime rate that exist between Muslim societies, such as Saudi Arabia and the western countries such as the USA is due to the manner in which justice is rendered. The justice system in Saudi Arabia is based upon divine laws and standards as well as the prophetic teachings, whereas that in the western countries is generally based upon man-made laws inherited to a large degree from Romans.

In an attempt to clarify this point, we should perhaps first examine the criminal Islamic laws. It is appropriate to explain the basics of the overall features concerning these laws:

1. **First**, all crimes that injure or inflict wounds on other individuals are oppressive to humans and offensive to the Creator. Thus in all such crimes the right of God and the right of the individual are included. The criminal is an offender to both God and humanity. However, in some cases the right of the individual is dominant, while in others the right of God is governing. Thus, the commands in the Islamic Law in imposing punishment are based upon which right is governing.

2. **Second**, the Islamic criminal law, except for a few stated crimes, has not fixed any specific punishment but has left it to the discretion of the judges to determine according to the needs of the time, place and nature of each crime. It is also lawful for Islamic Government to determine a standard range of punishment for the entire state or to impose a limitation on the powers of the judges in accordance with the requirements of time and place.
Robbing and stealing are acts of taking other people’s property without any lawful claim to it. God and His Messenger Muhammad prescribed very severe punishment to this act.

“As to the thief, Male or female, cut off his or her hands: a punishment by way of example, from Allah, for their crime: and Allah is Exalted in power.”

(Surah 5, Ayah 38)

The extreme severity of this Islamic punishment is no doubt what westerners have in mind when they call the Muslims barbaric. This punishment can only be understood if one bears in mind the fundamental principle of the Islamic Law that no duty is ever imposed on man without him being granted a corresponding right and the duty also comprises, in this context, liability to punishment. Now, among the inalienable rights of every member of the Islamic society - Muslim as well as non-Muslim - is the right to protection (in every sense of the word) by the community as a whole. As is evident in many Quranic verses as well as the Prophetic authentic teachings, every citizen is entitled to a share in the community’s resources and, thus to the enjoyment of social security. In other words, every citizen must be assured of an equitable standard of living commensurate with the resources at the disposal of the community. Islam envisions and demands a society that provides for not only for the spiritual needs of man but also for his bodily and intellectual needs as well. It follows, therefore, that in order to have a truly Islamic state, the laws must be constituted such that every individual must enjoy a minimum of basic requirements of material rights and security. Without these basic requirements, there can be no human dignity, no real freedom and no spiritual progress. There can be no real happiness and strength in a society that permits some of its members to suffer from hunger while others have more than their needs. If certain groups of an Islamic society live in prosperity, while the majority is forced to use up their energies in search of their daily bread, poverty becomes the most dangerous enemy of the spiritual progress. Poverty may derive the entire community from being God-conscious and into the arms of soul-destroying materialism.

Consequently, the social legislation of Islam aims at a state of affairs in which every individual has:

• Enough to eat and wear.
• An adequate home.
• An ample security.
• Equal opportunities and facilities for education.
• Medical care in health and in sickness.

It is against the background of this social security system that Islam imposes the severe sentence of hand cutting as a deterrent punishment for robbery and stealing. Since, under the circumstances outlined above, temptation cannot be admitted as a justifiable excuse. In an Islamic State which neglects or is unable to provide complete social security for all its members, the temptation to enrich oneself by illegal means often becomes irresistible. In such a case, should one be inflicted by this harsh punishment? Should the society, which is unable to fulfill its obligations with regard to every citizen has the right to invoke the full sanction of the criminal law against the individual transgressor? Reason dictates otherwise and in fact during the time of the second Caliph Omar, the hand-cutting law was waived in a period of famine that afflicted Arabia for some time.

In addition to this exception, the majority of Islamic jurists hold that petty thefts are exempt from this punishment. The general opinion from the Bible is:

“If your hand or your foot causes you to sin, cut them off and cast it from you: it is better for you to enter into life halt or maimed, rather than having two hands or two feet to be cast into everlasting fire.”

(Matthew 18:8)

Also, during the time of Jesus, thieves were crucified according to the Roman law:

“Then were there two thieves crucified with him.”

(Matthew 27:38)

The above discussion makes it clear that those who accuse Islam of being uncivilized or barbaric do not know the full story behind this severe punishment and certainly they do not know the Bible as well. They do not know that Jesus decreed a much harder punishment than the Islamic law because Islam adopts hand cutting only for stealing while Jesus made it general for any sin caused by hand or foot. This verse of Matthew 18:8 is never mentioned by half the truth TV Evangelists, while the softer Quranic verse of hand cutting is always publicized.

Illegal intercourse (Zina in Arabic) is another issue in Islamic Law. This, in general includes four categories as understood in the western world and they are:
• Adultery: Sexual intercourse between a man and a woman; at least one of them is married to someone else.
• Fornication: Sexual intercourse between unmarried persons.
• Incest: Sexual intercourse between parent and child, any sibling pair, or between close blood relatives.
• Rape: sexual intercourse with a person against his or her will and through the use of threat of force or fear.

Following Islamic law, illegal intercourse is defined as that between a man and a woman without the legal relationship of husband and a wife. Historically, all social systems, that have been close to human nature have always considered illegal intercourse a serious crime and have prescribed severe punishment. However, with the deterioration in moral standards, the society has become more and more liberal. The first common lapse in this matter was caused by the absence of clear distinction between adultery and fornication. Fornication was taken as an ordinary offense while adultery was taken as a punishable crime. For many reasons, this distinction is a direct outcome of the erroneous conception formed by the Christians resulting from the incident of the Jews asking Jesus (Pbuh) to pronounce judgment on a case of adultery and his reply to them:

“He that is without a sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her.”

(John 8:7)

The above statement by Jesus could well mean that the accusers should be sinless and should start by themselves first before accusing someone else. Certainly, it does not mean that Jesus supported adultery.

According to the Christian interpretation, illegal intercourse between an unmarried man and unmarried woman is a sin, but not a punishable offense. But if either of them (or both) is married, it is adultery in which case it is treated as a crime. This is because unlawful intercourse is not the issue at hand but rather the vow of fidelity taken by each other before the priest or the pastor at the altar. Nevertheless, in this secular western society, there is no actual punishment even for adultery, except that the wife or the husband may sue each other and claim separation. Likewise in the Code of Criminal Procedure of the USA, it is not a punishable crime to commit adultery or fornication.

In Islamic law, in clear contrast, illegal intercourse is a punishable crime. This is not because of the violation of the oath of fidelity during the marriage ceremony nor because the marital rights of the other, but because the criminal resorts to an unlawful method when there exists a lawful method for satisfying sexual needs and desires. Furthermore, it is regarded as an abomination and an evil way as stated by Allah:
“Nor come nigh to adultery, for it is an indecent (deed) and an evil way.”

(Surah 17, Ayah 32)

Is punishment the solution? It certainly is, but as a last resort, Islam does rely on punitive law alone for saving humanity from the menace of illegal intercourse. It employs both reformatory and prohibitory measures on a larger scale. In fact, contrary to some of the western concepts on Islam, it is not the intent of Islam to flog people day and night. Its real aim is that people should not commit this crime at all. Also people should not put themselves in a position that may lead to this crime. Hence Islam endeavors to purify humans through prayers, fasting and charity. Moreover, Islam provides all possible facilities for a man to marry. In fact he may even marry four provided that he can treat them equally. Furthermore, in cases of dispute between the married couple, provisions exist for reconciliation or divorce. In addition, Islam puts an end to all factors that lure man and woman to illegal intercourse or provide the opportunity for it. For instance, Muslim women are commanded to cover themselves with their garments and the wives of the Prophet were given Quranic instruction to stay in their houses and not to display their adornment. Likewise, the free mixing of men and women is discouraged and they are both enjoined to restrain their gaze so that unrestricted feasting of the eyes should not lead to illegal love. Many of these admonishments were revealed in the Quran as well as taught by Muhammad.

Islamic Law states that the punishment of fornication is flogging each man and woman with a hundred stripes, while the adulterers, stoned to death. We find on examining the Old Testament in the Book of Leviticus 20:10.

“And the man that committeth adultery with another man’s wife, even he that committeth adultery with his neighbor’s wife, the adulterer and the adulteress shall surely be put to death.”

Furthermore, the Old Testament states in the Book of Deuteronomy 22: 23-24

“If a damsel that is a virgin be betrothed unto a husband, and a man find her in the city, and lie with her: Then ye shall bring them both out unto the gate of that city, and ye shall stone them with stones that they die.”

Therefore, the Quran was revealed to restore many of the original laws that were applied, before Christians abolished all the Mosaic laws.
There are many conditions, however, that must be applied for the illegal intercourse to be punishable. Some of these conditions are as follows:

- The burden of the proof is on the state and not the accused.
- Only an Islamic court in an Islamic state has the authority to punish the defendant. This applies to any punishment in Islamic Law. There is no place for vigilant justice.
- The Islamic Law does not make it obligatory that a person must confess his guilt of illegal intercourse, or that those who have knowledge of it must inform the Islamic authorities about it.
- The Islamic authority shall not take actions against anyone for illegal intercourse unless it is fully proved.
- Confession of the accused may be used against him and the Islamic Court must satisfy itself that the confession was voluntary and that at the time of the confession he was in the right sense.
- To prove an illegal intercourse, there should be at least four reliable eyewitnesses to prove the guilt.

Besides illegal intercourse, Islamic attitude towards slander is totally different from that in the western world. To begin with, slander is not a criminal offense in the West. It is a civil offense and the burden of proof is on the accuser. Furthermore, under the disguise of freedom of speech and press, especially in the USA, many slanderous statements are made on a daily basis published in all kinds of magazines and newspapers. In many cases, the reporting is correct; however, they still have the detrimental effect on society since they create an atmosphere of immorality that over the years becomes the norm of the society. For instance, several decades back, in a conservative and more religious USA, fornication was socially and morally unacceptable. Now, however, fornication is part and parcel in the American way of life, and, also bragging about it is every day sort of fun. Islam does not only forbid unlawful intercourse, but also discourages publicity of such. False accusation or slander is punishable in the most severe way. For example, false accusation against the chastity of a pure woman is punishable by eighty lashes, (Surah 24, Ayah 4).

Therefore, one can conclude that the law of slander prescribed the punishment for the person who accused another man or woman of illegal intercourse and could not produce four eyewitnesses to prove the charge. The question, however, arises as to what should a man do if he finds out that his own wife was involved in illegal intercourse, or vice versa. If he kills her, he will be guilty of murder and be punished. If he searches for witnesses, the offenders will no doubt escape. If he accuses his wife
without witnesses, he will be again punished for slander. If he divorces his wife, there will be no moral or physical punishment for his wife or her seducer and if the illegal intercourse results in pregnancy, he will have to suffer the burden of bringing up the child.

This problem was in fact raised as a practical case and actually there were such cases during the life of Muhammad (Pbuh). One particular incidence involved a man who presented the case of his wife whom he had himself witnessed her act of illegal intercourse. The Apostle of Allah said, “Bring your proof, otherwise you will have the prescribed punishment of slander inflicted upon you.” At this time the panic spread among the companions and the man replied “I swear by Allah who has sent you as a Prophet that I am speaking the truth; I have seen it with my eye and heard it with my ears. I am sure that Allah will send down a Command which will protect my back from punishment.” The traditions confirm that the following verses were revealed to the Prophet at that time:

“And for those who launch a charge against their wives, and have no evidence but their own, let one of them testify four times by Allah that he is of those who speak the truth. And the fifth oath (should be) that he solemnly invokes the curse of Allah on himself if he tells a lie. But it would avert the punishment from the wife, if she bears witness four times (with an oath) by Allah, that (her husband) is telling a lie. And the fifth oath should be that she solemnly invokes the wrath of Allah on herself if (her accuser) is telling the truth.”

(Surah 24, Ayah 6-9)

Who could ever come up with a solution like that? The divine solution is if the man’s word is against his wife’s word, each of them swears by Allah four times and the fifth oath they accept the curse and wrath of Allah if they are telling a lie. This may seem strange these days, since not very many people understand the significance of the wrath of God, which to the real believer, is much more than any kind of worldly punishment.

Economic Systems

Economic systems vary in several important regards. One of the most important issues is the question of who owns the capital or productive capacity. In some economies, capital is for the most part privately owned; in others it is mainly publicly owned; and in yet others it is a mix of public and private ownership.
Capitalism is one in which most of the capital is privately owned. Capital or productive capacity includes manufacturing plants, distribution systems, land, raw mineral and money can be converted into such items. Capital can be thought of as income-producing wealth: if you own something that produces income, you own capital. The larger the share of capital that is owned privately, the more capitalist an economy is said to be. In a purely capitalist system - an ideal type that does not exist in real life - all productive capacity would be privately owned. The USA is the most capitalist nation in the world. More of its productive capacity is privately owned than is the case in most other western nations - but it is not completely capitalist. Certain important economic functions (highway construction, mail and education) are performed predominantly by government-owned organizations. Although capitalism is primarily found in industrialized economies, countries of various stages of industrialization have adopted its basic characteristics.

Socialism, on the other hand, is a system in which capital is publicly owned. Sometimes, to emphasize the major role of government, this system is referred to as state socialism. Just as there is no such thing as a purely capitalist economy, so is there no purely socialist system. Some socialist countries permit farmers to have privately owned land and sell what they produce, as long as they meet production quotas for their collective farm or commune. Moreover, many socialist countries have black markets - illegal private sales of goods and services.

Communism, as defined by Karl Marx (1818-1883) as the “classless communist society,” was the final stage of economic evolution that could only come after capitalism and socialism, (Farley, 1990, p. 342). In communism, as predicted by Marx, capital would be controlled not by government, but by collectives of workers who would own and operate the establishments at which they work. The role of the government would fade away because the people would act collectively and democratically at the local level. Individuals would contribute according to their talent and abilities and receive according to their needs. Because people would control their work situation, they would be able to perform to their fullest potential. Marx’s utopian ideal has never been achieved.

Capitalism and socialism both reflect and produce dramatically different value systems. Capitalism depends on the norm of maximization that assumes that people will seek to get as much wealth and income as they can. One may think that this is human nature. In fact, it is not human nature. It only seems this way because the norm of maximization is so deeply engraved in the culture of capitalist societies.
Early capitalist economists such as Adam Smith (1776) believed that the norm of maximization would benefit all groups in a society, (Farley, 1990, p. 341). By rewarding greater efficiency with high profits, they argued that capitalism would improve overall productivity and thus make everyone’s life better. Smith wrote about individual capitalism. Modern corporate capitalism operates differently from what he envisioned. Corporate management systems, in its worst case, can produce an economy that is governed solely by the stock market. In this case, the owners of the capitals or the shareholders demand a quick return on their investment regardless of human sufferings, research and development, long term planning and even the interest of the society as a whole. Smith would probably no more recognize capitalism in the USA today than Marx would recognize communism in the Soviet Union before its collapse. Capitalist systems resulted in a society with chronic social diseases such as high rates of suicide, drug and alcohol abuse and homeless people and chronic economic diseases such as the control of big multinational corporations on the global economy and nearly everything we read, see and hear.

On the other hand, socialism is based upon a very different set of human standards than those that sustain capitalism. Central to socialism is the belief that nobody should become wealthy if someone else must do without necessities, such as food, shelter, clothing, health care or the opportunities for meaningful employment. Thus the first priority of a socialist economy is to meet the basic needs of the population, even if it means operating at a loss, using government subsidies, or maintaining unprofitable organizations. Rather than competing for wealth, the ideal value of socialist economies is the cooperation for the common goals of leaving nobody’s basic needs unmet. Socialist systems appealed to poor countries that were governed by dictators. It ended up with not a single class, but actually two classes where the “elite” governing class can have anything at their disposal, while the masses are deprived of their basic needs. Therefore, socialist economies are sometimes labeled as a mere capitalist system of the few. The masses in socialist systems are actually living on a dream, of general equality, that will never happen. The statement of Marx that religion is the opium of the people can actually be stated as socialism is the opium of people. This is because socialism in the late Soviet Union had produced a nation that worked by force in the morning and drank Vodka in the evening.

According to the Islamic system, man is encouraged to work, is free to enterprise and is entitled to earn and possess. However, the fact that he is a mere trustee provides the necessary measure to ensure proper
handling of his possessions, his trusts. God the Almighty is recognized as the absolute owner of every wealth and working to earn a living is a kind of worship. Therefore, work has to be performed with efficiency and honesty. Once the work is done, the employee is entitled to a fair wage. Failure of the employer to pay a fair wage is a punishable act according the Laws of God.

Business transactions enjoy a great deal of attention from Islam. Honest trade is permitted and blessed by God. This may be carried out through individuals, companies, agencies and the like. However, all business deals should be concluded with frankness and honesty. Cheating, hiding defects of merchandise, exploiting the needs of customers, monopolizing to force one’s own price are all sinful acts and punishable by Islamic Law. To combat cheating and exploitation, Islam demands honesty in business, warns the cheaters, encourages decent work and forbids usury or the taking of interest just in return for lending money to the needy. Lending money with interest is imposed by the capitalist system on the individuals as well as on other nations to the extent that it is becoming almost the global norm. However, Islamic countries like Saudi Arabia forbid interest on borrowing money.

Inheritance

Inheritance is a fascinating subject which in many cases the individual and sometimes the state standards contradict the Divine Standard. Inheritance is a very serious business in the life of a family. Many crimes are committed if the will of the deceased is not liked by his relatives. Parents are even murdered by their sons in order to get their inheritance faster. Relatives of the deceased sometimes argue about the distribution of the will even during a funeral. The greedy nature of some people may lead them to fight for money. Therefore, human wills may result in spreading hate or even killings. Islam realizes this issue and consequently, the principles of inheritance are laid down in broad outline in the Quran. The precise details have been worked out on the basis of the Prophet’s practice and the practice of his companions and by interpretation and analogy. Muslim jurists have collected a vast amount of learning on this subject and this body of law is enough by itself to form a long study. The Islamic law of inheritance covers every conceivable case of existence of the parents and the spouse of the deceased, the number of his sons, daughters, brothers, sisters, etc.

Chapter 4 in the Quran outlines the Divine Laws of inheritance. Before, detailing the rules of inheritance, special considerations by Allah are prescribed against injustice to orphans in the strongest way.
"Those who unjustly eat up the property of orphans, eat up a fire in their own bodies: they will soon be enduring a blazing fire."

(Surah 4, Ayah 10)

Once again, in this chapter of the Quran, strong emphasis is placed on the definition of properties where ultimately all property belongs to Allah. In this case, God, the Real Owner, is the one that has the right to distribute the property according to His Will and not according to any human desire. By realizing this simple fact, humans must surrender to the will of Allah and accept His Judgment.

**Success in Life**

In the present materialistic world, human’s measure of success in life is based upon:

- How much money does a person have?
- How much control does a person exercise over other humans?
- How much an image of success does a person project?
- How much knowledge does a person have?
- How much importance does a person have?

If someone has more money and control over another, then human standard judges the first is more successful than the later. Human nature tends to project one’s success if one is successful by human’s standards. That is why the old cliché of "dress for success and show to impress" is regarded with great care. Many years ago, IBM adopted a dress code for its salesmen that consisted of pinstriped dark suits, white shirts and red ties. This immediately became the standard of the business dress, regardless of the weather. Lately, IBM abolished this dress code, realizing that this dress code alone did not really help its bottom line.

It is also fascinating to watch a discussion between two persons. In many cases, you find that each one is implying that he is more successful, by human’s standard, than the other one. People like to talk about their houses and how big they are, about their cars and how luxurious they look, about their kids and how smart they are, about their knowledge and how useful it is for humanity, etc. Of course this discussion is not going to be conducted bluntly, but the implication is there for anyone to get the idea.

The Apostle of Allah recommended reading Surah 18 every Friday. This particular Surah has many stories that indicate the importance of humility, truth, patience and other virtues. One of the stories shows a simple story of the contrast between two men. One was arrogant and
forgot that what he had was from Allah, by way of a trust and a trial in this life. The other did not brag about what he possessed and his trust was in Allah. The two men began to compare notes. The arrogant one was bragging about his possessions, his income and his large family and thought in his self-satisfaction that it would last forever. The Quran states:

“(Abundant) was the produce this man had: he said to his companion, in the course of mutual argument: More wealth have I than you, and more honor and power in (my following of) men.”

(Surah 18, Ayah 34)

The worldly wealth of the first was destroyed and he had nothing left. The second was the happier in the end. This part of the above Ayah “More wealth have I than you, and more honor and power in men” is really very striking, because it reveals the standard of human materialistic life. One sees and hears this sentence many times every day and everywhere. It is not the wealth that ruined him, but the attitude of his mind. He was unjust, not so much to his companion, but to his own soul. In his love for material, he forgot and openly defied the spiritual. In his mind “better” means more wealth and more power, of the kind he was enjoying in his life. Although in reality, even what he had, rested on a shaky foundation and was doomed to perish and bring him down with it.

So what is the true and lasting standard of success in life? In one Ayah, Allah addresses all mankind and not only the Muslims about His Divine Standard:

“O mankind! We created you from a single (pair) of a male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes, that ye may know each other (not that ye may despise (each other). Verily the most honored of you in the sight of Allah is (he who is) the most righteous of you. And Allah has full knowledge and is well acquainted (with all things).”

(Surah 49, Ayah 13)

This Ayah defines clearly the Divine Standard of success; it is piety. Piety is not a matter of convenient claims and oral confessions. It is much more serious. According to the authentic tradition, when the Prophet was asked about piety, he said its place is in the heart. No person can claim having more piety than another. This is because there is no worldly measure of piety. Only Allah knows the degree of piety of everyone. Piety has nothing to do with wealth, color or race. The Prophet also once said that:
“Perhaps a dirty and dusty person, if he asks Allah anything, He will grant him his wish.”

Therefore, we do not know who is really better than who. An arrogant person may look down on another and in fact the later is much more successful than the former. The Quran, as our best source of knowledge, describes pious people as those who believe in the Unseen (which is taught by God), are steadfast in prayer and spend their money on charity; and who believe in the revelation sent to Muhammad and all the prophets before him. Piety demands a high degree of self-control over one’s anger and emotions, a moral capacity for forgiveness and patience and a conscious urge to make the sinner return to God in regret and repentance. Piety, righteousness and meaningful faith are interrelated and all pour in one channel. This leads to the formation of the true Muslim.

THE FASTEST GROWING RELIGION

Throughout history, Muhammad was accused of all kinds of fallacies from a false prophet to being crazy. Could a false man be the founder of a religion? Could a false man have over one billion followers? Could a false man establish spiritual, social and economic systems? But, perhaps, the greatest crime of Muhammad in the eyes of the Christians is that he did not allow himself to be killed by his enemies. He ably defended himself, his family and his followers and finally was the most successful man in history. His struggle and victory over the forces of evil and disbelief made the editors of Encyclopedia Britannica exclaim Muhammad as “The most successful of all religious personalities.”

How can the opponents of Islam account for Muhammad’s phenomenal success and achievements except to claim that he spread his religion at the point of the sword? In Islam at the crossroads, London 1923, by historian De lacy O’Leary, page 8, he said:

“History makes it clear however, that the legend of fanatical sweeping through the world and forcing Islam at the point of the sword upon conquered races is one of the most fantastically absurd myths that historian have ever repeated.”

The Muslims ruled Spain for 736 years. However, after eight centuries in Spain, the Muslims were totally eliminated from that country. If the Muslims had used force, military or economic, there would not have been any Christian left in Spain to fight the Muslims out. One cannot charge the Muslims of converting the Spaniards to Islam by the sword.
Also, the Muslims ruled the subcontinent of India from 1001 to 1858 A.D. They did not convert the Hindus or the Sikhs to Islam by force. This same argument is true for many countries like Egypt, Iran and Indonesia. Muslims converted by choice.

Today Islam is still growing and spreading all over the world and the Muslims have no sword! Islam has continued to win new converts, especially between Afro and white Americans as well as in Europe. One may argue that the Afro-American needs a religion that embraces equality of races, then what about the white Americans and European. How about the soldiers and engineers that went to the Gulf war and saw the real Islam in Saudi Arabia and Turkey and converted to Islam? There was no sword there. How can we explain the phenomenal increase in the number of Mosques in the US, Canada and Europe? There was no sword there. How about the famous rock star Cat Stevens who converted to Islam? There was no sword there. It was the search for true peace and tranquility of the soul. How about the French surgeon Bucaille who converted to Islam? There was no sword there. He narrates his encounter with the Quran:

“It is not the faith in Islam that first guided my steps, but simple research for the truth. This is how I see it today. It was mainly fact which, by the time I had finished my study, had led me to see in the Quran a text revealed to a prophet.”

But the critics of the religion will not stop charging that Islam with spreading by the sword. In 1840 when Carlyle defended Muhammad and refuted the allegation about the sword, there was no rich Arab country to bribe him. The whole Islamic world was under influence of the Christians, except for a few like Persia, Afghanistan and Turkey. Carlyle defended Islam when the Muslims were the underdogs.

That was yesterday and many yesterdays before, but what about today in our present time? During half a century from 1934 to 1984, according to the Reader’s Digest Almanac and Yearbook, 1983, Islam is the fastest growing religion in the world. The overall increase of all sects and denominations of Christianity was a staggering 138 % and the incredible increase in Islam was 235 %, (Baagil, 1997, p. 10). It is further affirmed that in Britain and US, Islam is the fastest growing faith. What, then, about the sword?

• It is the sword of Truth.
• It is the sword of intellect.
• It is the sword of real peace.
• It is the sword of security.
God promised to preserve the Quran. He did and He does. He also made another promise:

“It is He Who has sent His Messenger with Guidance and the Religion of Truth, to proclaim it over all religion: and enough is Allah for a Witness.”

(Surah 48, Ayah 2)

The destiny of Islam is spelt out here in the clearest terms. Submission to Allah will prevail, overcome and supersede every other faith, whether it is Hinduism, Buddhism, Judaism, or any other “ism.”

Islam shall prevail. It is the promise of God and His Promise is true. But how? Not with the sword. The Quran forbids the Muslims from using force as a means of converting. Allah said:

“Let there be no compulsion in religion.”

(Surah 2, Ayah 256)

How, then, would Islam be the most dominant of all religions? The triumph of its doctrine has already started and is gaining hold over religious ideology and doctrines of the various schools of thought in the world. Muslims never use organized missionaries, like Christians, to spread their faith. They are not using money, hospitals, or schools to spread Islam. The doctrines of Islam are being rapidly used into the various religious groups. Ask any theist, polytheist, or Trinitarian: How many Gods do you believe in? One will hesitate to say anything but ONE. This is the effect of the strict monotheism of Islam.

THE PROCESS OF ELIMINATION

I could stop right here. I have made my point that the Islam is the only universal monotheistic religion by a scientific approach called “process of elimination.” This procedure is used by many such as doctors and chemists among others. This process states the following:

“If you have different options to a fact and you exclude all the options except one, then this one is your right answer.”

We have only three monotheistic religions:

Judaism: is not universal. Jews do not accept anyone in their faith.

Christianity: universal religion that started as a monotheistic faith then reversed its direction through a human process of distortion and edition. Its main ideology promoter (Paul) is not the original founder of the faith.
and he compromised with the religion to attract more converts. The sources of the New Testament are unknown. The writers of the Gospels are unknown. Greek philosophy and the different Myths in the Middle East affected the fathers of the Church who shaped the doctrines of Christianity. These doctrines were formalized in human Ecumenical Councils that were affected by politics.

I proved all of the above. Using the process of elimination, Judaism and Christianity are excluded and Islam is the only universal and authentic religion.

However, I will go another step to introduce the eternal miracle of God, the Book of Guidance and the revealed authentic Words of Allah. This is for the reader to have an appreciation for the Quran. This is for the reader to examine the scientific miracle of the Quran. This is for the reader to examine the scientific verses and ask the following question:

Could an unlettered person narrate these verses in the seventh century? Or it has to be narrated by a Prophet of God?
In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful.

78. “Who has created me, and it is He Who guides me;
79. “And it is He Who feeds me and gives me to drink.
80. “And when I am ill, it is He who cures me;
81. “And Who will cause me to die, and then will bring me to life (again);
82. “And Who, I hope will forgive me my faults on the Day of Recompense, (the Day of Resurrection),”
83. My Lord! Bestow Hukman (religious knowledge, right judgement of the affairs and Prophethood) on me, and join me with the righteous;
84. And grant me an honourable mention in later generations;
85. And make me one of the inheritors of the Paradise of Delight;

(Quran 26:78-85)

I believe that Islam is the absolute truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth. I believe that Holy Book of Allah, the Quran, is the absolute truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth. Every verse and every word in the Holy Quran attests to a divine source. I also believe if one reads the Bible carefully, one would discover that the Bible is not wholly
the exact authentic words of God. On the other hand, if a non Muslims learn about Islam from Islamic sources, he/she would look favorably upon Islam.

Throughout the history, the Jews promoted the following concepts to reject Christianity:

- Abraham was Jewish, although everyone knows that Judaism came from Judah son of Jacob. The Quran states in Surah 3, Ayah 65: “Ye People of the Book, why dispute ye about Abraham, when the Torah and the Gospel were not revealed till after him. Have ye no understanding.”
- Jesus was an illegitimate son of Joseph or son of a Roman soldier.
- Jesus was crucified; therefore he is not the expected Messiah.

The Christians fell in this Jewish trap that Abraham was Jewish and that Jesus was crucified. Some Jews and Christians reject Islam for many different reasons. Their hate to the greatest man ever lived is based upon twisting the facts, misreading the history and simply wishful illusions. The unbelievers in Mecca called Muhammad all kind of names and accused him with many lies. According to the Quran, he was called crazy, a poet, as well as touched by the devils. He was also accused of collecting the old stories from the Jews and Christians and then rewriting them. Some Jews and Christians say the same things about the messenger of Allah and much more. The Jews accuse Jesus as the false Messiah, while the Jews and the Christians accuse Muhammad as a false prophet. It is the same old story.

When anyone speaks kindly about Muhammad, the greatest man that ever lived, the opponents of Islam give an immediate answer: either he was a fool or the Arabs bribed him!

- Michael H. Hart put Muhammad No. 1 in his list of the 100 most influential people in history and his own Lord and Savior Jesus Christ No. 3.
  1. William McNeil, US historian considers Muhammad as worthy of honor in his list of the first three names.
  3. James Masserman, Psychoanalyst and Professor, judges Muhammad No. 1 and his own Moses a close second.
- McNeil, Gavin and Masserman statements appeared in the Time magazine, July 15, 1974, in essays as to “What makes a great leader? Throughout history, who qualifies?”
Thomas Carlyle said that the Christian scholars’ lies about Muhammad are disgraceful. He said “These Arabs, the man Mahomet, and that one century, - is it not as if a spark had fallen, one spark, on a world of what proves explosive powder, blazes heaven-high from Delhi to Granada! I said, the Great man was always as lightning out of Heaven; the rest of men waited for him like fuel, and then they too would flame...” (188?, p. 20).

George Bernard Shaw said: “I have studied him - the wonderful man - and in my opinion far from being an anti-Christ, he must be called the savior of humanity.” He also said “If any religion had the chance of ruling over England, nay Europe within the next hundred years, it could be Islam” (Zainal Abidin, 2007, p. 1).

H. G. Wells said in 1925 in The outline of History “Islam prevailed because it was the best social and political order the time could offer. It prevailed because everywhere it found politically apathetic people robbed, oppressed, bullied, uneducated, and unorganized, and it found selfish and unsound governments out of touch with any people at all. It was the broadest, freshest, and cleanest political idea that had yet come into actual activity in the world.” He commented further “It was full of spirit of kindliness, generosity and brotherhood; it was simple and understandable religion; it was instinct with the chivalrous sentiment of the desert; and it made its appeal straight to the commonest instincts in the composition of ordinary men” (Zakaria, 2002, p. 111).

Napoleon Bonaparte Quoted in Christian Cherfils, ‘Bonaparte et Islam,’ “I hope the time is not far off when I shall be able to unite all the wise and educated men of all the countries and establish a uniform regime based on the principles of Qur’an which alone are true and which alone can lead men to happiness.” (Gandapur, 2009, p. 52)

Encyclopedia Britannica calls Muhammad the most successful of all religious personalities.

And the list goes on and on.

It is a fact that Muhammad, like all the Arabs, came from Ismael, the son of Abraham. Just like the Jews discredit Jesus, both the Jews and the Christians claim that Ismael was an illegitimate son of Abraham. Another insult added to the prophets of God. They are talking about Abraham, the father of all the prophets, the prophet that God honored in the three religions of Judaism, Christianity and Islam. They maintain that Isaac was superior to Ismael, but that is not what the Bible states:
“And the angel of the Lord said unto her (Hagar), I will multiply thy seed exceedingly, that it shall not be numbered for multitude.”

(Genesis 16:10)

“And as for Ismael, I have heard thee: Behold, I have blessed him, and will make him fruitful, and will multiply him exceedingly: twelve princes shall he beget, and I will make him a great nation.”

(Genesis 17:20)

We still see some verses in the Bible that escaped all the alterations and adaptations. The above verse states clearly that God blessed Ismael. Is it possible that God blessed an illegitimate child? Can God promise a mother that her illegitimate child would make a great nation? The Jewish and the Christian rebuttal would be as such: Yes, it is the will of God! Is it possible that the mighty prophet Abraham would have an illegal wife and a son out of wedlock? The Bible says:

“...And (Sarah) gave her (Hagar) to her husband to be his wife.”

(Genesis 16:3)

“And yet indeed she (Sarah) is my sister; she is the daughter of my father, but not the daughter of my mother, and she became my wife.”

(Genesis 20:12)

For the sake of honesty, the above two verses conclude that Hagar was a legitimate wife, while Sarah was not, because she was his “half sister”! Then for the sake of alterations and adaptations, Ismael was the legitimate child because his mother was his father’s wife and Isaac was illegitimate, God forbid, because his mother was his father’s sister! Islam does not advocate this nonsense. Both Sarah and Hagar were legal righteous wives and both Ismael and Isaac were legitimate sons and prophets. This is the noble way to think.

The name Ismael was chosen by God Himself:

“And the angel of the Lord said unto her (Hagar), Behold, thou art with child, and shalt bear a son, and shalt call his name Ismael.”

(Genesis 16:11)

What an honor to be named by God himself! Different versions of the Bible began adapting the story of Ismael. The RSV Bible added that Ismael would be a wild man; the Easy To Read Bible added that Ismael would be wild “like a wild donkey”! HOW SAD! Where is the reference to a wild donkey? This is a clear example of the adulteration and alteration of the “Holy Bible.” Any Christians who read this statement about Ismael
should research the origin of the wild donkey! Do you think that this is
Easy to Read Bible, or Easy to Manipulate Bible! Please recall the above
Genesis 17:20.

MUHAMMAD (PBUH) IN THE BIBLE BY NAME AND
DESCRIPTION

The reader should be convinced by now that the Bible has verses deleted,
added or altered to fit the desires of the scribes. On the other hand, the
Quran has preserved its authenticity by the promise of Allah in the
original Arabic text and the memorization of millions of Muslims of the
whole Quran since its revelation fourteen centuries ago.

The Quran states that Muhammad (Peace be upon him) the Prophet
of Islam is mentioned in the Bible.

“Those who follow the apostle, the unlettered Prophet, whom they
find mentioned in their own (scriptures), - in the law and the Gospel; -
for he commands them what is just and forbids them what is evil; he
allows them as lawful what is good (and pure) and prohibits them
from what is bad (and impure); He releases them from their heavy
burdens and from the yokes that are upon them. So it is those who
believe in him, honour him, help him and follow the light which is
sent down with him, - it is they who will prosper.”

(Surah 7 Ayah 157)

Because the name “Muhammad” was not discovered in the Bible,
Muslims attributed that to the corruption of the Bible. With the advent of
the Internet and the ability to examine the Bible in many languages and
the availability of online professional translators of many languages, the
name “Muhammad” was finally found in verse 16 of Chapter 5 in Shir
Hashirim (Song of Songs, Song of Solomon).

“Hebrew transliteration of Shir Hashirim is “Chikko mamtakeem,
v’chulo MUCHAMADIM, ze DODEE v’ze RA’EE, bano Yarushalaym.”

It is a woman discussing a man. Jews say it is discussing Solomon,
Christians say it is discussing Jesus. The name of man is the word in
question. However, this name is given in the original Hebrew text before
introducing vowels in the eighth century as:
Muhammad is a four letters word with no vowel.

Hebrew is a Semitic language, like Arabic, is written from right to left. The above four letters are pronounced as:


According to Hebrew / English Dictionary by Ben Yehuda, (1989), this word is pronounced Muhammad. Please notice that “im” is plural for respect, Like Elohim, which is God with added “im” for respect. Half of the Rabbis in Madinah converted to Islam during the time of the Prophet. Why now the Jews did not listen to their Hebrew Bible? A Rabbi replies that Jews did not even listen to Moses when he was among them.

Take this word to www.freetranslation.com, the professional translator, copy the Hebrew word directly from the Jewish site, paste the word at Enter text or webpage URL and choose to translate from Hebrew to English. You will find “Muhammad.” Even better, do the same steps with Google translate, you will get the same answer “Muhammad” and you can also listen to it.

There is much debate within Biblical scholars whether the whole Song of Solomon is allegorical or literal. Theodore of Mopsuestia (350-428) asserted in his commentary that the Song should be understood according to its plain and literal sense: as a love song in which Solomon celebrates his marriage. This view was considered so radical that even his student, Bishop Theodoret of Cyrus (393 – 457), considered Theodore’s literal interpretation “not even fitting in the mouth of a crazy woman.” In the commentary of Barnes’ Notes on the Bible, it was stated by Bishop Theodoret, applying the whole description to our Lord, interprets well its last term: “Why should I endeavor to express His beauty piecemeal when He is in Himself and altogether the One longed-for, drawing all to love, compelling all to love, and inspiring with a longing (for His company) not only those who see, but also those who hear?”

Therefore a better translation than the literal KJV and the allegorical interpretation of Theodoret could be:

“Why should I endeavor to express His beauty piecemeal: yea, he is MUHAMMAD. He is in Himself and altogether the One longed-for, drawing all to love, compelling all to love, and inspiring with a longing (for His company) not only those who see, but also those who hear?”

The interpretation of this verse requires further development by Jewish, Aramaic (not from Israel) and Muslim scholars. The conclusion is that there is no doubt that the name “MUHAMMAD” is in this verse.
Criterion of the Prophet

A criterion of the prophet is given by Jeremiah 28:9: “The prophet which prophesieth of peace, when the word of the prophet shall come to pass, then shall the prophet be known, that the Lord hath truly sent him.” The word Islam also signifies peace. Peace between the Creator and his creatures. This prophecy of Jeremiah cannot be applied to Jesus, as he himself stated that he did not come for peace:

“Do you suppose that I came to give peace on earth? I tell you, not at all, but rather division.” Why then during Christmas, is the slogan of “peace on Earth” related to Jesus if he said: Nay to peace on Earth! Muslims believe that Jesus came for “peace on Earth”, unlike Luke! (Luke 12:51).

Until Shiloh Come

The message of Jacob to his sons before he died as in Genesis 49:10:

“The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be.”

Shiloh is also a name of a town, but its real meaning is peace, i.e. Islam. It could never refer to a town here. It is referred to a person. It could be an alteration of the word “Shaluah”, which means a messenger of God. So the Israelite Prophethood in the lineage of Isaac would stop as soon as Shiloh comes. This corresponds with the Quran:

“Were ye witnesses when death appeared before Jacob? Behold, he said to his sons: “What will ye worship after me?” They said: “We shall worship Thy God and the God of thy fathers, of Abraham, Ismael and Isaac, - the One (True) God; To Him do we submit.”

(Surah 2, Ayah 133)

The shift of the Prophethood to another nation was threatened in Jeremiah 31:36:

“If those ordinances depart from before me, saith the Lord, then the seed of Israel also shall cease from being a nation before me forever.”

Also Jesus hinted about the same threat in Matthew 21:45:

“Therefore say I unto you, the kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof.”
Baca Is Mecca

According to the Islamic tradition, Abraham took Ismael and Hagar and made a new settlement in Mecca, called Paran (Arabia) in the Bible (Genesis 21:21), because of divine instruction given to him as part of God’s plan. When Abraham left, Hagar ran seven times between two hills, Safa and Marwa, looking for water. This became an Islamic ritual for the annual pilgrimage in Mecca by millions of Muslims from all over the world. The well of water mentioned in Genesis 21:19 is still present, now called Zamzam, one of the living miracles in Islam. Both Abraham and Ismael later built the holy house of God in Mecca, called Kaabah. The place where Abraham used to pray near the Kaabah is still present, now called Maqam Abrahim, i.e. the station of Abraham. The place where Ismael used to pray near the Kaabah is still present, now called Maqam Ismael, i.e. the station of Ismael. During the days of the pilgrimage, Pilgrims in Mecca and Muslims all over the world commemorate the ultimate test of obedience of Abraham and Ismael by sacrificing a lamb. The name Mecca is mentioned once in the Quran in Surah 48, Ayah 24. Another name for Mecca is Bakka, depending on the dialect of the tribe. This name is also mentioned once in the Quran:

“The first House (of worship) appointed for men was that at Bakka: Full of blessing and of guidance for all worlds.”

(Surah 3, Ayah 96)

Amazingly enough, this name Bakka is mentioned by Prophet David in his Psalm 84:6:

“Who passing through the valley of Baca make it a well; the rain also filleth the pools.”

The well here is the well-known well of Zamzam, close to the Kaabah.

Chariot of Asses and Chariot of Camels

The vision of Isaiah of the two riders was as follows, in Isaiah 21:7

“And he saw a chariot with a couple of horsemen, a chariot of asses, and a chariot of camels.”

Who was the rider upon an ass? Every Sunday school student will know him. That was Jesus, as in John 12:14:

“And Jesus, when he had found a young ass, sat upon it, as it is written.”
Who, then, is the promised rider on a camel? The readers of the Bible have overlooked this mighty prophet. This is the prophet Muhammad. If this is not applied to him, then the prophecy has yet to be fulfilled. That is why Isaiah mentioned further in the same chapter, in 21:13: “The burden upon Arabia.” Which means the responsibility of the Arab Muslims and of course now of all the Muslims, to spread the message of Islam.

“The inhabitants of the land of Tema brought water to him that was thirsty; they prevented with their bread him that fled” (Isaiah 21:14). Tema is probably Madinah where the prophet Muhammad and his companions fled. Each immigrant was brothered by one inhabitant of Madinah and was given food and shelter.

“For they fled from the swords, from the drawn sword, and from the bent bow, and from the grievousness of the war” (Isaiah 21:15). This was when the prophet Muhammad and his companions were persecuted and left Mecca to Madinah.

“For thus hath the Lord said unto me, within a year according to the years of an hireling, and all the glory of Kedar shall fail” (Isaiah 21:16). Exactly in the second year of immigration, the pagans were defeated in the first battle in Islam.

Finally Isaiah 21:17 concludes with: “...the mighty men of the children of Kedar, shall be diminished, for the Lord God of Israel hath spoken it.” Kedar is the second son of Ismael, (Genesis 25:13), from whom ultimately Muhammad came. In the beginning, the children of Kedar were attacking Islam and Muhammad. As many of them accepted Islam, the number of the children of Kedar who resisted Islam was diminished. In some verses in the Bible, Kedar is synonymous with Arab in general, as in Ezekiel 27:21: “Arabia, and all the Princes of Kedar...”

The Prophet Like Unto Moses

God addresses Moses in Deuteronomy 18:18: “I will raise them up a prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee (Moses), and will put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him.”

Brethren of the Israelites (descendant of Abraham through Isaac) are the Ishmaelite (descendant of Abraham through Ismael). Jesus should be excluded as he is an Israelite; otherwise the above verse should say:

“Prophet from among yourself.”

Is Muhammad not like unto Moses? If not accepted, then the promise has yet to be fulfilled. The table below is self-explanatory, (Badawi, 2005, p. 27)
### Table 2.1 - The Prophet Like Unto Moses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area of comparison</th>
<th>Moses</th>
<th>Muhammad</th>
<th>Jesus</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Birth</td>
<td>Usual</td>
<td>Usual</td>
<td>Unusual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family life</td>
<td>Married, children</td>
<td>Married, children</td>
<td>Not married</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Death</td>
<td>Usual</td>
<td>Usual</td>
<td>Unusual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career</td>
<td>Prophet/ Statesman</td>
<td>Prophet/ Statesman</td>
<td>Prophet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forced immigration</td>
<td>To Median</td>
<td>To Madinah</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encounter with enemy</td>
<td>Hot pursuit</td>
<td>Hot pursuit/ Battles</td>
<td>No similar encounter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Results of encounter</td>
<td>Moral / physical victory</td>
<td>Moral / physical victory</td>
<td>Moral victory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recording revelation</td>
<td>In his life (Torah)</td>
<td>In his life (Quran)</td>
<td>After him</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nature of teachings</td>
<td>Spiritual / legal</td>
<td>Spiritual / legal</td>
<td>Spiritual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acceptance by his people</td>
<td>Rejected then accepted</td>
<td>Rejected then accepted</td>
<td>Rejected by most Israelites</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In Deuteronomy 18:19: “And it shall come to pass that whosoever will not hearken my words which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him.”

In the Quran out of 114 chapters 113 starts with “In the name of Allah, most Gracious, most Merciful.” Also, in their daily work, Muslims start with this saying. Notice “in my name”, not in the name of God. God talks about His Personal Name that is Allah. As it is His Personal Name, it is not subject to gender, like god or goddess, or to plurality. Christians start with “In the name of the father, the son and the holy spirit.” Thus the above verse of Deuteronomy applies only to Muhammad.

**Art Thou That Prophet?**

The Jews are still expecting the fulfillment of the prophecy of “unto like Moses.” When Jesus said that he is the Messiah of the Jews, they began to inquire about Elias and the prophet. The Jews had a parallel prophecy that before the coming of the Messiah, Elias must come first in his second coming. Jesus confirms this Jewish belief:
“...Elias truly shall first come, and restore all things. But I say unto you, that Elias is come already, and they knew him not, then the disciples understood that he spake unto them of John the Baptist.”
(Matthew 17:11-13)

The Jews did not believe Jesus about Elias, so they sent priests and Levites to John the Baptist to ask who he really was:

“And he (John the Baptist) confessed and denied not; but confessed, I am not the Christ. And they asked him, what then, Art thou Elias? And he saith, I am not. Art thou that prophet? And he answered, No.”
(John 1:20-21)

Jesus said that Elias came and it was understood that he was John the Baptist. However, John the Baptist denied that. I will leave this discrepancy between John the Baptist and Jesus for the Christian scholars to solve!

The Jews were waiting for the fulfillment of three distinct prophecies:
1. The coming of Christ.
2. The coming of Elias.
3. The coming of that prophet.

And the crucial question here is “Art thou that prophet?” Who was then the long awaited prophet after the advent of John the Baptist and Jesus? Was it not the one like unto Moses, as described above, who was Muhammad?

**Another Comforter**

John is the only apostle to report the story of the last dialogue between Jesus and the apostles. It happened after the last supper and before Jesus’ arrest. It ends with a speech of four chapters long; John 14-17. It is interesting to note that the synoptic do not refer to this very long speech. Did the text initially exist in synoptic and then removed? If so, why? This adds to the long list of mysteries of the Bible. Nevertheless, these chapters present a futuristic outline with very important subject.

This farewell speech seemed like Jesus was addressing the entire humanity with his vision and recommendations. His main concern was to specify who would guide humanity after him. In John 14:16: “And I will pray the father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever.” We do not know exactly the original Aramaic word that Jesus used for the Comforter. Other Bibles use Consoler, Advocate, Helper and in Greek Bibles the word is Baraclete. There are
different explanations for the Comforter: the Holy Ghost, the Word, a person, etc. In John 14:18, Jesus said: “I will not leave you comfortless.” This means that he referred to himself as Comforter. However, in John 14:26, the Comforter is referred to as the Holy Ghost! And Christian preachers assure their audience that the comforter is the Holy Ghost, without any mention to the following references from John 15:26: “...he shall testify of me.”

“...It is expedient for you that I go away, for if I go not away, the comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment.”

(John 16:7-8)

“Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth, for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak, and he will shew you things to come. He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you.”

(John 16:13-14)

Does the above description fit the Holy Ghost, spirit or a person? The comforter is described as to be able to hear and speak; does this fit a spirit or a person? Did a deliberate adaptation of the Bible add a few words here and there to alter the intended meanings that predicted the advent of a prophet after Jesus? Was the Holy Ghost absent when Jesus was on Earth and it was waiting for him to depart, so it can guide the believers? Without any prejudice, one can honestly conclude that Jesus was talking about a prophet that will establish righteousness and Judgment. This is what Muhammad accomplished: righteousness and Judgment, faith and law.

Whatever the explanation is for the Comforter, we conclude that Jesus left unfinished work and that someone was coming to complete his mission.

If one puts together all the above-mentioned verses of the Bible about Shiloh (Islam), Baca, chariots of camels, Prophet like unto Moses, Art thou that Prophet and Comforter, one should conclude without any doubt that these verses relates to Muhammad. These verses escaped the human’s revision of the Bible. And we can only hope that these verses will not be expunged from the next revised version of the Bible!
12 PRINCIPLES OF ISLAMIC UNITY - ACTION ITEMS

Definitions: Orders and Facts in the Quran

The Quran, the authentic book of God, has many orders and facts. Allah gives orders to believers, such as:

“So Establish regular Prayer, give regular Charity, and hold fast to Allah! He is your Protector.” (22:78)

“And hold fast, all together, by the rope which Allah (stretches out for you), and be not divided among yourselves.” (3:103)

Devout Muslims take orders from Allah very seriously. When they listen to an order from Allah, they say “We hear, we obey” (2:286).

Allah States many facts in the Quran, such as:

“Verily, this Ummah of yours is a single Ummah, and I am your Lord and Cherisher, therefore, Serve me (and no other).” (21:92).

“And verily, this Ummah of yours is a single Ummah, and I am your Lord and Cherisher, therefore, Fear me (and no other)” (23:52).

Devout Muslims appreciate and respect the facts of the Quran and consider them as guidance in life.

When verses are repeated in the Quran, they carry much importance and emphasis.

The silent majority of Muslims believe in Unity of Muslim Ummah, but the chiefs are adamant about rejecting that for very obvious reasons.

Definition of Muslims

The definition of a Muslim can be understood according to the hadeeth of Jibreel AKA, more popularly known as the ‘Hadeeth of Jibreel’, as narrated by Umar Ibn Al Khattab, Sahih Muslim, when Jibreel asked the Messenger of Allah about Islam, he answered “Islam is that you witness that there is no god but Allah and that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah, and you establish the prayer, and you give the Zakat, and you fast in Ramadan, and you perform the Hajj of the House if you are able to take a way to it.”

All Muslims agree on principal matters in Islam. The foundation of Islam is Shahadah as a declaration of faith. Muslims have one Quran, one Kaabah and one last prophet. They accept all Messengers in the Quran.
They pray five times a day, fast in Ramadan, pay Zakat and perform Hajj when they can afford it. There are accepted Mazhabss (schools of thoughts) in Fiqh (jurisprudence). Every Muslim is free to follow any accepted Mazhabs. All Imams of accepted Mazhabs never rejected other Mazhabs. Allah made Islam simple, but unfortunately some Muslims make it hard and confusing.

**Unity of the Ummah**

Unity of Ummah is a primary and important goal that we must strive for and there is a serious warning from Allah for those who create division among Muslim:

“As for those who divide their religion and break up into sects, thou hast no part in them in the least” (6:159).

But our reality is we are divided into 57 nations and most of them are divided further into tribes. Allah says there are no sects in Islam, but we have Sunni and Shia sects. Against the orders of Allah, some Muslims believe their sect, country or tribe is more important than Islam.

The Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) is an international organization grouping 57 countries which attempt to pool their resources together, combine their efforts and speak with one voice to safeguard the interests and secure the progress and well-being of all Muslims in the world. OIC is a great first step, however representatives of OIC are from Muslim governments who do not necessarily agree on matters of vital importance.

There is also an urgent need for an effective association of Muslim scholars from all Muslim countries that should settle dividing religious issues between Muslims. In the absence of Khilafah, this association should strive to bring unity and harmony between Muslims. They should meet frequently because Muslims are facing many problems.

**Assume First That You Are Wrong**

When differences arise, assuming first that you, not your Muslim brother or sister, may be wrong and see how you can find the truth impartially. If you really want to find the truth, you can ask an Islamic scholar or read accepted books.
Manners for Disagreement

You should be as enthusiastic about listening to your brother’s evidence and argument as you are giving your evidence and argument and be pleasant and smiling even when the result is against you.

In those areas where differences may arise due to ijtihad, it is the right of the Khalifah to adopt an opinion which he believes to be correct and for the believers to obey. Two Fiqh principles exist which state:
1. Imam’s decree settles disputes.
2. Imam’s decree is obeyed openly and privately.

When the Prophet (SAW) passed away and the companions were busy appointing the first Khalifah, a suggestion was made to have two leaders, one from the Ansar and one from the Muhajireen. Abu Bakr (RA) replied by saying that this will cause divisions and infighting, as well as people making bidah and would cease to refer to the Prophet’s example in conducting their affairs. Abu Bakr (RA) had the insight to realize that without the one leader, problems would arise. So the many ‘problems’ that exist today are only the symptoms of the MAIN problem, that being the absence of a leader of the Muslim Ummah.

In the absence of Khilafah, there is a vital need for an organization of Islamic scholars from all Muslim countries, to examine Islamic issues important to Muslims.

Possibility of Multiple Correct Answers

Evidence for this is an incident in which the Prophet (SAW) witnessed the companions disputing, but did not rebuke them for doing so. The incident relates to the dispute regarding the Asr prayer on their way to Bani Qurayzah. The Prophet instructed the companions to go and fight the Jews. He said, “Do not pray until you get to Bani Qurayzah.” On route to Bani Qurayzah, the time for Asr was drawing to a close. A dispute ensued. One group understood the Prophet’s command metaphorically, thinking that the Prophet (SAW) meant hurry up. A party of the believers prayed there whilst the others prayed after Asr time when they arrived at Bani Qurayzah.

When they met the Prophet (SAW) they asked him who was right and who was wrong. It is important to note the response of our Prophet. Only one of them could have been right, but the Prophet (SAW) did not point out who that was, rather he said, “Whoever performs ijtihad and errs will receive one reward. Whoever performs ijtihad and arrives at the correct answer gets double the reward.”
Had it been *haram* to differ, the Prophet (SAW) would have rebuked those differing from the correct opinion and praised those who were right. This example teaches us to tolerate opposing Islamic opinions which are arrived at by those qualified to do so after performing *ijtihad*.

The scholars in the past recognized this; “The most learned amongst the people is also one who is most knowledgeable of the difference amongst the people” (Ghazali, Shawkani, Abu Zahrah)

Before performing *Ijtihad* it is a prerequisite for a scholar to be aware of all the differences on the issue at hand.

**Group Participation in Agreed Upon Matters**

Shahadah, praying, reading Quran, fasting Ramadan, performing Hajj and paying Zakat should be performed in a group. We all agree on prohibiting alcohol, adultery and gambling; we agree that honor and respect are due to Muslims; we agree on educating Muslims and raising children with the necessary spiritual and physical training. Muslims should also participate as groups in addressing many of the challenges that we face every day. In many cases, Muslims are working individually rather as a group against an influential campaign attacking our beliefs and the moderate and peaceful nature of Islam. There are few successful Islamic organizations, but we need much more efforts.

**Be Supportive to Converts to Islam**

Islam is the fastest growing religion. Converts to Islam have tremendous courage than many born-Muslims. They convert against many odds and face a tremendous pressure from family and society. In USA, we should think of the growing Latino and Afro-American brothers and sisters and include them in our activities and do not attempt to confuse them with our traditional disputes.

**Avoid Labeling Muslims**

A Muslim is a Muslim. This is the only name that is used in the Quran. However, there are Muslim groups who call themselves other names or attach other identities to the word Muslim. There are the good, the bad and the ugly. These labels include: Sunni, Shia, salafi, conservative, moderate, liberal, fundamentalist, radical, progressive, secular, pluralist, even homosexual Muslims. These labels are invented from within and imported from the worst part of western culture. The bad and ugly labels claim to be Muslims who want to impose their poisonous ideas as a way of reforming the Islamic Ummah to match the worst part of western culture.
Have Mercy and Do Not Kill or Torture Another Human Being

The record of human rights is the worst in Muslim countries among all nations on Earth. Can you believe a Muslim saying *In the name of Allah, the most compassionate, the most merciful, who kills or tortures another human being?* Can you believe the torture that is subjected to political adversaries and Islamic groups in Muslim countries? Can you believe the difference between the super rich and super poor in Muslim countries? Can you believe the number of unemployed Muslims in Muslim countries? May Allah be pleased with Umar, the second Khalifah, who was concerned about the well being of sheep in all the land of Islam.

Thinking of the Danger of the Blind Common Adversary

Muslims have many blind common adversaries. These are the people that attack the religion of Islam in the western Media and propagate verses in the Quran taken out of context. These are the people who publish hateful anti-Islam websites. There are even “Muslim Users groups” that are controlled by Christian missionaries and pluralist “Muslims.” These are the people that wrote their own version of Quran and claim its superiority on our Authentic Quran. These are the people that use WMD (Weapons of Missionary Deception) to convert uneducated poor, weak, or sick Muslims to Christianity. They have an estimated budget of $ 6.8 billion a year from donations, pledges to churches and United States Agency for International Development (USAID). These common adversaries do not work individually, but within organizations with a considerable budget.

Muslims should work together to expose their deception following the order of Allah:

> “Invite (all) to the Way of thy Lord with wisdom and beautiful preaching; and argue with them in ways that are best and most gracious” (16.125).

Sympathy for Those Who Do Not See the Light

The average non-Muslims do not see the light of Islam. They do not attack Islam and Muslims. Muslims should not be angry with them or expose their shortcomings. A Muslim should seek Allah’s help in making His message clearer to those who were listening.
**THE MONGOLS OF OUR TIME**

When I see the younger Muslim generation confused about the definition of a Muslim and rejecting acceptable Mazhabss, I get scared.

When I see the younger Muslim generation impressed by the western culture, neglecting the Islamic culture and ignoring Islamic education, I get scared.

When I see the younger Muslim generation having little or no respect for parents, elders and ignoring the strong commands of Allah to be kind and merciful to parents and elders, I get scared.

When I see the younger Muslim generation adopting the western culture of (I want, I want, I spend I spend, I enjoy I enjoy) and neglecting the Islamic traditions, I get scared.

When I see the younger Muslim generation guarding their mobile phone more than the Quran, I get scared.

When I see the younger Muslim generation using drugs that are rampant in the western culture, I get scared.

When I see the younger Muslim generation confused about simple Islamic teachings, I get scared.

When I see the younger Muslim generation belonging to feuding tribes and killing each other, I get scared.

When I see the younger Muslim generation killing innocent people, I get scared.

When I see the younger Muslim generation following questionable “sects” of Islam and questionable “Imams”, I get scared.

When I see the younger Muslim generation are not aware of what is happening in Palestine, Pakistan, Iraq, Afghanistan, Sudan, Somalia, Lebanon and do not at least feel for the plight of the Muslim Ummah, I get scared.

When I see Muslim girls convert FROM Islam, I get scared. I know 8 Muslim girls who converted FROM Islam:

1. An Arab father, who is very confused about the basics of Islam, had two girls who are also confused. Their father told them not to marry Muslims, but to marry Jews because Jews are good businessmen. They converted FROM Islam when they graduated from College.
2. A Pakistani father came to USA, impressed by the Western “freedom”, married an American lady who was still Christian. He does not pray and has visible alcohol in his house. His two girls are confused; they converted FROM Islam when they graduated from college.

3. A very morally loose Arabic family who did not pray - the mother colored her hair blond and did not wear Islamic dress. The daughter was brain washed by a college friend to convert FROM Islam.

4. Parents who have a girl that graduated from Islamic school. They thought the school was enough. Unfortunately, when the girl went to college, she loved a non-Muslim and converted FROM Islam.

5. An Arab father sent his daughter alone to USA to establish a business and become wealthy. She knew many Christians and ultimately married a Christian business associate and converted FROM Islam.

6. An Arab father sent his daughter to study in USA. She lived within American pop culture. She married a Jew and converted FROM Islam.

And this is not all. There are many other troubling things happening in our Ummah. They are the new Mongols who are far worse than the first ones because they destroy the Islamic identity of the Muslim youth.

When I see all of these, I wonder myself: “What will I say to Allah on the Day of Judgment?”

Figure 2.1 - Mongol Empire, c. 1294
Should we despair? Absolutely NOT. Islam is a religion of optimism and hope.

In the present time, the Islamic Identity may be shaken, but will NEVER be defeated.

During the whole history of Islam, we have seen great achievements and great calamities. Probably, the worst disaster ever faced by the Islamic Ummah was the Mongolian invasion which resulted in the destruction of most of the Islamic world.

Victory was ultimately achieved over the Mongol Empire by faithful Muslims. Similar victory was accomplished during the Caliphate of Umar in 636 A.D. - over both the Romans and the Persians during a span of only 7 months. The Byzantines made strong preparations to attack the Muslims and concentrated a very large army at Yermuk. Muslims won an astounding victory in six days in the Battle of Yermuk in May 636 A.D. Jerusalem surrendered without a fight. In November of the same year, Sa’d ibn Abi Waqqas marched to Qadisiyya. The Persian army collapsed in four days.

The Mongol Empire was the largest contiguous empire in human history. The 13th and 14th century, when the empire came to power is often called the “Age of the Mongols”. They controlled 22% of earth. The Mongol armies during that time were extremely well organized. The death toll (by battle, massacre, flooding and famine) of the Mongol wars of conquest is placed at about 40 million according to some sources. Mongols through a series of slaughtering attacks controlled lands from Korea up to Poland and Hungary and from the Indian Ocean up to Russian cities, including Moscow and Kiev.

Mongol invasion of the Middle East consisted of the destruction of Iraq, Iran, parts of Kuwait and eventually encroaching into Palestine. The Abbasid Caliph Al-Musta’sim reportedly defied the Mongols, saying God would punish them if they dared to attack him, yet he failed to even attempt a summon of loyal Muslims to the defense of Baghdad, nor did he strengthen the defenses of the City of Light’s (a reference to Baghdad). Under Hulagu, the Mongols captured and destroyed Baghdad in 1258. The slaughter and horrific atrocities committed by the Mongols at Baghdad have never been forgotten, nor did the country itself ever recover. The infrastructure system was destroyed and after the slaughter at Baghdad there were not enough people left alive to repair and maintain this system. Caliph Al-Musta’sim was executed by Hulagu Khan soon afterwards. The Mongols did not want to shed so-called “royal blood,” so
they wrapped him in a rug and crushed him to death with their horses. All of his sons but one was executed as well.

Sultan Saif ad-Din Qutuz of Egypt joined forces with a fellow Mamluk, Baibars, who wanted to defend Islam after the Mongols captured Damascus and most of Sham (greater Syria). Sultan Qutuz reigned Egypt from 1259 – 1260. This was 73 years after the Kurdish Sultan Salāh ad-Dīn Yūsuf Al-Ayyūbi defeated the Crusaders of the Kingdom of Jerusalem in the historical battle of Hattin that occurred on July 4, 1187. In this battle alone, the Crusader army was largely annihilated by the faithful army of Salāh ad-Dīn in what was a major disaster for the Crusaders and a turning point in the history of the Crusades.

During a span of only 73 years, strong faithful Kurdish and Egyptian Muslim Sultans destroyed the legacy of the Crusades and Mongols together. Subhana Allah.

The Mongols attempted to ally with the remnant of the Crusader Kingdom of Jerusalem, now centered on Acre, but Pope Alexander IV forbade this. While the Christians remained neutral, they believed it was only a matter of time until the Mongols destroyed them also and so while technically neutral, they agreed to allow the Egyptian army to cross their territories without incident and without reporting such movement to the Mongols. Believing that waiting for Hulagu Khan to return with his full army would be reckless, Qutuz decided to march north and confront Kitbuqa’s army. He believed destroying this force would not only protect the remaining Holy Places (Jerusalem, Mecca and Medina), but also strike a terrific blow against the so far invincible Mongols. He accomplished all his goals and more. The Mongols at that time were proceeding down the trade trails and probably were unaware that the Egyptian forces had marched north to confront them.

Both Muslim and Mongol armies encamped in the Holy Land in July 1260. They finally met at one of the greatest battle in Islam, Ain Jalut on September 3, 1260, with both sides numbering about 20,000 men. Muslim armies were clearly able to destroy the Mongols, something that no one had previously done. Berke Khan (Arabic Baraka Khan), khan of the Golden Horde, was one of the sons of Jochi, the eldest son of Genghis Khan. Muslims were supported by Berke Khan who allied himself with Mamluk after his cousin enraged him by destroying Baghdad. Berke and the Golden Horde converted to Islam and sent word to the Great Khan (Hulagu Khan) that he would “call him to account, for he has murdered the Caliph in Baghdad and killed all the faithful.”
And the name Khan became a familiar Muslim name. Subhana Allah.

It should also be noted that, in 1192, Turkish tribesmen from Central Asia invaded Muslim lands, then converted to Islam and set up sultanates in western Asia, thus giving Islam further vitality. They moved to present day Turkey and formed Ottoman caliphate after the collapse of the Abbasid caliphate.

**ISLAMIC IDENTITY**

A Good Muslim is a Good Human Being. This was a statement by a recognized Islamic scholar during Friday prayer.

Islamic identity is your utmost possession. It is the only identification that matters on the Day of Judgment. It is your faith, your religion, your moral values and your whole life. This identity is the one that makes you recognize Allah as the One and Only God of this universe. This identity is the one that makes you wake up before sunrise and pray to Allah. This identity is the one that makes you kind, sincere, responsible and thoughtful when you deal with people. This identity is the one that forbids you to kill, lie, cheat, steal, gamble and engage in any immoral behavior. This identity is the one that makes you realizes and understand that Islam is a way of life. This identity is the one that makes you good human being, because good Muslim is a good human being.

First, it is necessary to define what is meant by the term “Islamic identity.” Is it fulfilling the five pillars of Islam? Is it limited to clothes? Is it growing a beard or wearing of Hijab? Is it learning the Arabic language? Is it studying only Islam? Is it a tangible, visible feature or an internal construct? Indeed, there is so much more to the Islamic identity we should be seeking to develop as proud Muslims.

The Islamic Identity is taken to mean the way of life of the Muslim, a comprehensive set of beliefs, practices and ideologies as derived from the Quran and the example of Muhammad (PBUH). Islamic identity is that which separates us from non Muslims. Robust Islamic Identity is also what separates between strong and shaky Muslims.

There is no contradiction between Islamic Identity and Nationality. If your nationality is American, then USA is your home and you follow the rule of the land. There is no contradiction because the rule of the land does not force you to commit sins, cheat, lie, or use interest. This rule of the land does not obstruct your right to carry out your religious obligations, nor prevent you from being a good Muslim. Many people have different paper identifications. They have identifications, called passports, when they travel from one country to another. They have identifications, called
driver licenses, when they drive. They have identifications, called voting registrations, when they vote in an election. They have identifications, called citizenships, when they acquire nationality of countries and so on. These identifications are paper identifications. Islamic identity does not have paper identification, but it has identification through action.

There is an urgent need to have a support system in schools and colleges. This can be in the form of Muslim student associations in schools and colleges. If that is not feasible, small group of Muslim youth can form a group among themselves to support each other with the objective of becoming strong proud Muslims.

There are many other young Muslims in the West and, regrettably, in Muslim countries who are dissolved in Western Pop Culture. They do not realize that their Islamic Identity is their most valuable possession.

I was visiting a Christian friend who is very close to converting to Islam. He prays with me, but did not say Shahadah yet. He talked to me about corruption of religions. He said “The Jews, by modifying and omitting texts from the Torah, corrupted it. The same things have happened with the New Testament. Early Christians followed the Ecumenical Councils of Church - This changed Christianity from Monotheistic to polytheistic religion. Muslims could not corrupt the Quran, so they corrupt themselves. They seem to believe that because the Quran states that Islam is the only religion of God, they can do as they please - such as tyrant dictators oppressing people, something that is completely wrong and will be punished by Allah.”

We all need Islamic youth awakening and we all need to build a stronger Islamic Identity, if we want success in this life and in the hereafter.

**Education**

The education system is typically where the learning process starts, under the parent’s direction. Children are sent by their parents to schools with good intentions of an education and a chance for a better life. The children are placed in an environment where mixing of sexes is the norm through the placement of children in multi-gender classes and sporting teams. In the absence of parental Islamic guidance, these children grow up to believe such behavior is normal. This leads, in many cases, to considering the Islamic requirement of segregated sexes as ‘old fashioned’ or ‘backward’. After years in such an environment, it is no surprise that we see very many young Muslims with ‘boyfriends’ and ‘girlfriends’.

As early as in elementary schools in the West, boys and girls drink alcohol, use drugs and practice sex. Muslim countries are no more a safe haven. Some boys and girls go to the bathrooms together, with no
supervision from school administration. Most schools have no agenda for Hafiz Quran for kids. Islamic schools are criticized in the west and been called “Madrasah” to indicate that these schools are graduating so-called “terrorists.”

In Sexual Education in the West, children are being taught that being promiscuous is a ‘natural part of growing up’. They are supplied with contraceptive devices, giving them their tacit approval to commit adultery. These same classes teach that homosexuality is something in the genes and as such is a perfectly ‘normal’ kind of behavior.

In history classes, we see a Western view of the world in which the Christians are viewed as the only people worthy of any respect or any admiration. It is rare that mention is ever made of the great contribution made to the Western world from Muslims. It is even rarer that the names of the great Muslim scientists are mentioned. It is no wonder that many Muslim children end up with a sense of shame in being Muslim. This shame is often shown in their refusal to use their ‘Muslim names’, e.g. suddenly Muhammad becomes known as ‘Mike’.

Proper Islamic education should counter the lies and the corruption fed to the children in school. It should be presented in such a way as to stimulate a feeling of pride in Islam. Furthermore, it should cover Islamic history to offset the lies taught in History and Islamic law to offset the lies taught in legal studies. Parents must take responsibility for arming their students with correct belief and sound knowledge to defend themselves from the decline of the Islamic identity.

Next, how many parents encourage their kids to memorize the Quran? Being hafiz is an important part of the Islamic Identity. Islamic schools, used to teach Quran in many Muslim countries for kids in preschool were cancelled. Not because of the current Western allegation that Madrasah breed terrorists, but long before that by secular governments. In the West you see many non-Arab hafiz children and in rare occasions you may see an Arab kid who is a hafiz.

I honestly believe that investing time with children to get them to memorize Quran and teach them Islamic education at home should pay off in the long run, avoiding terrible family crises in the future.

Peer Pressure

Peer pressure is strong at all levels of schools and colleges. There are positive and negative peer pressures. Positive peer pressure is the influence of good Muslim friends who help strengthen our Îman (faith) and protect from committing sins. Peer pressure is a two way street. Someone may try to encourage you towards bad behavior and you counter back by
positive peer pressure to resist getting involved in bad or evil behavior and encourage good Islamic behavior. Negative Peer pressure is responsible to a large extent for smoking cigarettes, going to nightclubs, using drugs or alcohol. For the most part, this article deals with negative peer pressure.

As early as junior high school, the pressure is on to attend the school dances. OK, dancing is fairly clear-cut. It is not permitted in Islam. What about going to the football game and then going out to Pizza place afterwards with a bunch of friends? Innocent as this sort of evening sounds? Here you have to remember that the devil is a full-time worker. Peer pressure is at the core of what it means to exist among a group of friends. With non-Muslim friends (and regrettably even some Muslim friends), the pressure may come in the form or a simple offer to drive to the mall with several other boys and girls in one car, or to pair up in conversation with some one of the opposite gender, or to just try a sip of beer. With Muslim friends, the pressure may come in the form of sneaking out to movies, attending parties as a group as “long as we don’t drink,” wasting time at the mall. Not to mention the tremendous burden of freedom that comes with living on campus during the college years.

Peer pressure and Iman are inversely related. The more we give into peer pressure, the weaker our Iman becomes. Think about that for a minute. A Muslim’s Iman is strong as long as he or she seeks the pleasure of Allah in everything he or she does. So, we could either stay alone or keep good friends. Staying alone, we would have no one to blame but the evil whispering of our own souls. But the Prophet Muhammad PBUH teaches us that in being alone we are like sheep, easy prey for hungry wolves. Instead, we are encouraged to develop brotherhood and sisterhood and most of all, to be surrounded by those who submit wholeheartedly to Allah SWT. We are reminded by Allah, “O ye who believe! Be careful of your duty to Allah, and be with the truthful” (Surah At-Tawba, 9:119).

While dealing with peer pressure is not easy, it is also not impossible. First, take a moment to reflect on your friends and their personalities. Do you ever feel uncomfortable because of their habits, their character, their suggestions, or their outlook on life? I am not asking you to judge your friends, I am simply asking you to gauge the level of influence they have on you.

You must teach yourself how to minimize the negative effects of peer pressure. Do not ever feel that you are missing out or living a boring life just because you do not give into peer pressure. Study the Quran and Sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad PBUH. Learn what behavior is pleasing to Allah and what kind of lifestyle is discouraged in Islam. If you are not armed with knowledge about the halaal and haraam aspects
of daily life, you can never fully resist the temptation of peer pressure. Through knowledge, you will develop a better understanding of Islam and through pious and righteous friends, you will strengthen your Iman.

**Entertainment: TV, Movies and Music**

What is the purpose of entertainment? Some may say it is a source of amusement. Others may say it helps people rest and relax and yet others may say it is a source of distraction from the worrisome routine of daily life. A commonly expected outcome of being entertained is for the heart to find some rest. And yet, the way for the heart to find rest is clearly given in the Quran, when Allah states, “Verily, in the remembrance of Allah do hearts find rest” (Surah 13, Ayah 28).

So what about TV, movies and music? On the most part, the language, the images, the lyrics, the rhythms are all reflective of an outlook on life that is diametrically opposed to Islamic teachings.

Not only does the television serve as a window to the outside world, but for many parents it also serves as a full time baby-sitter for kids. Parents subject kids to scenes with violence, indecent acts or straight out fantasies just to get their kids off their back. TV shows kids that fun is always associated with sins. The moral bankruptcy of most shows on TV is evident and Muslims should use their understanding of Islam as a benchmark for determining the truth from falsehood.

TV serves to convince the Muslim viewers that what they are seeing is the social norm. A good example is the so-called love scene that forms such a crucial element in movie or TV show. They paint the picture that somehow in some sort of sick way that sex equates with love and is a natural behavior. It is only to be expected that after years of constant brain washing with this message that the initial disgust a Muslim feels subsides to acceptance.

Many shows also focus heavily on parental-child conflict and often attempt to paint this sort of behavior as a ‘normal’ part of growing up. Typically, the solution to this conflict is either to fight back or to run away. In either case, it teaches the children an Islamically inappropriate response to any conflict.

TV shows us how others live, or how others behave. It defines a standard for success, what qualities we see as admirable, what behavior we see as normal. Take for example the so-called lifestyle shows that feature so prominently on TV. We see expensive houses, lavishly decorated with all the accessories of this world and this is pushed onto us as the success ideal. If we are not strong in Islam then these TV-generated standards get adopted as our own. We will start to equate success with
owning an expensive car or living in a big house. We will start to think that beauty is dependent on how we look. We will start to forget about the paradise that Allah has promised those that believe and we will start trying to create a ‘paradise’ right here in this world. This is one of the major threats to our Islamic identity.

Movies and music have a lasting effect on our minds. Even after the images are gone, the words are finished and the rhythms have faded away, but the influence lingers on. We can no longer justify our actions by saying that we will turn away from a sexually explicit scene or fast forward the tape during a violence scene. Neither can we blame the American movies and music as un-Islamic and yet take the liberty of exposing ourselves and our families to the equally un-Islamic ethnic entertainment such as Arabic movies, Indian songs or Pakistani dramas. Yes, they may be some good in all of them, but the inevitable questions remain. Do any of the movies and songs help you to remember Allah? Do you increase your Islamic knowledge through these movies or the music?

**Islamic Identity**

Perhaps the most critical challenge facing Muslim youth is the development of strong Islamic identity. While there are so many beautiful young brothers and sisters who are living according to Islam, this question of an Islamic identity has not received its due attention.

Our role model, Prophet Muhammad PBUH has left for us powerful teachings and yet we surrender to compromising and acting as if we have no criteria to guide us! Look back at your life, your family, your community and ask yourself how often we all have acted first and then referred our actions to the Quran and the Sunnah. We can no longer afford to use this backward approach to Islam.

The older generation never successfully grappled with the notion of an Islamic identity. Rather than developing programs, activities and camps that could teach youth HOW to be Muslims, most of the time seems to have been spent on the DO’s and DON’Ts of Islam.

But the challenges for Muslim youth still remain: How can they develop, maintain and model their Islamic identity? How will they bring Islam to the non-Muslims unless they are confident of its teachings? Why will the non-Muslims give up their lifestyle and beliefs if Muslim youth present themselves as backward, unorganized, confused and most of all, unaware and uncomfortable of and with their own beliefs.

If the young generation remains steadfast to the Quran and Sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad PBUH, I have no doubt that the whole world will come to respect and admire us. Yes, there will be discrimination,
prejudice and even racism along the way, but our perseverance and not our compromise will be rewarded by Allah. The emerging Islamic identity will not only be consistent with the teachings of Islam, but it will also send a strong signal to non-Muslims that we prosper in spite of our beliefs in Islam.

We are witnessing a revival of Islam in its pure, pristine form. Void of cultural and national barriers, our identity is developing along paths more in line with the Quran and the Sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad PBUH. This is indeed a mercy from Allah.

Thriving as a Muslim youth must not be a passive ambition but rather an active goal. Peer pressure, movies, music and many other challenges will seem overwhelming at first. So let us make du’a that Allah protects our Iman and guides us all to develop a strong Islamic identity.

CONVERTS TO ISLAM

Islam is recognized as the fastest growing religion by the sheer number of converts to Islam. People convert from Christianity, Judaism, Buddhism, Hinduism, Sikhism, Agnosticism, Atheism, Paganism, Sabianism and Zoroastrianism to the only religion of God since the time of Adam. Missionaries, Priests, Pastors, Reverends, Ministers, Archbishops and Rabbis convert to Islam. It is the religion of all Biblical and Islamic Prophets. People convert to Islam for two reasons:

• Encountering a good knowledgeable Muslim.
• Reading on their own.

The videos on www.youtube.com show the staggering growth of converts to Islam. Two years ago, I was searching for converts of Islam; I found about 6,000. Last year, I found about 42,000. Recently, I found 126,000. They all converted with no sword!!!

The following are six inspiring stories of converts to Islam, representing the fast diversity of Muslim converts:

AMINAH ASSILMI: From a Southern Baptist preacher to the President of the International Union of Muslim Women.

Aminah Assilmi was a renowned female scholar of Islam. She traveled around the United States to give lectures; her personal story has admired hundreds of individuals. She was also President of International Union of Muslim Women, the organization that has many achievements under its belt.
“I am very glad that I am a Muslim. Islam is my life. Islam is the beat of my heart. Islam is the blood that courses through my veins. Islam is my strength. Islam is my life so wonderful and beautiful. Without Islam I am nothing and should Allah ever turn His magnificent face from me, I could not survive.” Aminah Assilmi.

Figure 2.2 - Aminah Assilmi
(Source: http://www.islamicity.com/articles/Articles.asp?ref=FM1003-4109)

It all started with a computer glitch
She was a Southern Baptist girl, a radical feminist and a broadcast journalist. She was a girl with an unusual caliber, who excelled in school, received scholarships, ran her own business and were competing with professionals and getting awards - all these while she was going to college. Then, one day a computer error happened that made her take up a mission as a devout Christian. Eventually, however, it resulted into something opposite and changed her life completely around.

It was 1975 when for the first time computer was used to pre-register for a class in her college. She was working on her degree on Recreation. She pre-registered for a class and then went to Oklahoma City to take care of a business. Her return was delayed and she came back to college two weeks into the class. Making up the missed work was no problem for her, but she was surprised to find that the computer mistakenly registered her for a Theatre class, a class where students would be required to perform in front of others. She was a very reticent girl and she was horrified to
think about performing in front of others. She could not drop the class for it was too late.

Failing the class was also not a choice, for she was receiving a scholarship that was paying for her tuition and receiving an ‘F’ would have jeopardized it.

Advised by her husband, she went to her teacher to work out some other alternative to performing, such as preparing costumes, etc. Assured by the teacher that he would try to help her, she went to the next class and was shocked by what she saw. The class was full of Arabs and “camel jockeys”. That was enough for her. She came back home and decided not to go back to the class anymore. It was not possible for her to be in the middle of Arabs. “There was no way I was going to sit in a room full of dirty heathens!”

Her husband was calm as usual. He pointed out to her that God has a reason for everything and that she should think about more before quitting. Besides, there was the scholarship that was paying her tuition. She went behind locked doors for two days to think about the class. When she came out, she decided to continue. She felt that God gave her a task to convert the Arabs into Christianity.

Thus she found herself with a mission to accomplish. Throughout the class, she would be discussing Christianity with her Arab classmates. “I proceeded to explain to them how they would burn in the fires of hell for all eternity, if they did not accept Jesus as their personal savior. They were very polite, but did not convert. Then, I explained how Jesus loved them and had died on the cross to save them from their sins. All they had to do was accept him into their hearts.” They still did not convert and so she decided to do something else: “I decided to read their own book to show to them that Islam was a false religion and Mohammed was a false Prophet”.

At her request, one student gave her a copy of the Qur’an and another book on Islam. With these two books she started on her research, which she was to continue for the next one and half years. She read the Qur’an fully and another fifteen books on Islam. Then she came back to the Qur’an and re-read it. During her research, she started taking notes that she found objectionable and which she would be able to use to prove that Islam was a false religion.

Unconsciously, however, she was changing from within which did not escape the attention of her husband. “I was changing, just in little ways but enough to bother him. We used to go to the bar every Friday and Saturday, or to a party and I no longer wanted to go. I was quieter and more distant.” She stopped drinking and eating pork. Her husband
suspected her of having an affair with another man, for “it was only for a man that a woman changes”. Ultimately, she was asked to leave and she soon found herself living in a separate apartment.

“When I first started to study Islam, I did not expect to find anything that I needed or wanted in my personal life. Little did I know that Islam would change my life. No human could have ever convinced me that I would finally be at peace and overflowing with love and joy because of Islam.”

Throughout these times, she continued studying Islam and although she was changing subtly from within, she remained a devout Christian. Then one day, there was a knock on her door. It was a man in traditional Muslim robe, who appeared to her as a “man in a long white night gown with a red and white checkered table cloth on his head”. His name was Abdul-Aziz Al-Sheik and he was accompanied by three other men in similar dress. She was very offended by Muslim men coming to her in nightgowns and pajamas. She was further shocked when Abdul-Aziz told her that he understood that she waited to be a Muslim. She replied that she was a Christian and she did not have any plans to become a Muslim. However, she had some questions to ask if they had the time.

At her invitation, they came inside. She now brought up the questions and objections that she noted down while she was researching. “I will never forget his name”, she said of Abdul-Aziz who proved to be a very patient and soft-mannered person. “He was very patient and discussed every question with me. He never made me feel silly or that a question was stupid.” Abdul-Aziz listened to every question and objection and explained it within the proper context. “He explained that Allah had told us to seek knowledge and questions were one of the ways to accomplish that. When he explained something, it was like watching a rose open - petal by petal, until it reached its full glory. When I told him that I did not agree with something and why, he always said I was correct up to a point. Then he would show me how to look deeper and from different directions to reach a fuller understanding.”

It would not be long before she would externally submit to what she had already been submitting to internally during the last one and half years. Later in that same day, this Southern Baptist girl would declare in front of Abdul-Aziz and his companions: “I bear witness that there is no god but God and Mohammed is His Messenger.” It was May 21, 1977.

Conversion to Islam or to any other religions for that matter, is not always a simple thing to do. Except for a few fortunate ones, a new Muslim usually faces consequences. The convert may face isolation from family and friends, if not pressure to go back to the family faith. Sometimes, a
convert may even face severe economic hardship, as in the case of those who are asked to leave the house because of converting to Islam. Some converts are fortunate to continue to be well respected by family and friends, but most of them face minor to severe hardship especially during the first few years after the conversion.

But the difficulty that Aminah Assilimi had to go through and the sacrifice that she had to make for the sake of her conviction and faith is almost unheard of. There are few who could rely so much on Allah as she did, standing firm and meeting the challenges, making sacrifices and yet maintaining a positive posture and influencing people around with the beauty of what she found and believed in.

She lost most of her friends, for she was “no fun anymore”. Her mother did not accept her becoming a Muslim and hoped that it was a temporary zeal and that she would soon grow out of it. Her “mental health expert” sister thought that she lost her mind. She attempted to put her in a mental health institution.

Her father was a calm and wise man. People would come to him for advice and he could comfort anyone in distress. But when he heard that his daughter became a Muslim, he loaded his double-barrel shotgun and started on his way to kill her. “It is better that she be dead rather than suffering in the deepest of Hell”, he said.

She was now without friends and without family
She soon started wearing Hijab. The day she put it on, she was denied her job. She was now without family, friends and job. But her greatest sacrifice was yet to come.

She and her husband both loved each other very much. But while she was studying Islam, her husband misunderstood her for her apparent changes. She became quieter and stopped going to the bar. Her changes were visible to him and he suspected her of having affair with another man, for whom she must have been changing. She could not explain to him what was happening. “There was no way to make him understand what was changing me because I did not know.” Eventually he asked her to leave and she started living separately.

After she openly accepted Islam, it went worse. A divorce was now inevitable. This was a time when Islam was little known, much less understood for what it is. She had two little children whom she loved dearly and whose custody should have rightfully been given to her. But in a grave violation of justice, she was denied their custody just because she became a Muslim. Before giving the formal verdict, the judge offered her a harsh choice: either renounce Islam and get custody of the children,
or keep Islam and leave the children. She was given 20 minutes to make a decision.

She loved her children very dearly. It is perhaps the worst nightmare that a mother can have: asked to willfully leave her child - not for one day, month, or year, but forever. On the other hand, how could she keep the Truth away from her children and live as a hypocrite? “It was the most painful 20 minutes in my life”, she said in an interview. Those of us who are mothers and fathers, especially of young children, little imagination is needed to feel the pain and torment that she must have passed every second in those 20 minutes. What added further to her pain was that according to doctors, she could never bear another child because of certain complications. “I prayed like I had never done before ... I knew that there was no safer place for my children to be than in the hands of Allah. If I denied Him, there would be no way in the future to show my children the wonders of being with Allah.”

She decided to retain Islam. Her two dear children - one little boy and one little girl - were taken away from her and given to her ex-husband.

For a mother, is there a sacrifice greater than this - a sacrifice that is done for no material reason but only for faith and conviction?

“I left the court knowing that life without my babies would be very difficult. My heart bled, even though I knew, inside, I had done the right thing”. She found comfort in the following verse of the Qur’an:

“There is no god but He,-the Living, the Self-subsisting, Eternal. No slumber can seize Him nor sleep. His are all things in the heavens and on earth. Who is there can intercede in His presence except as He permitteth? He knoweth what (appeareth to His creatures as) before or after or behind them. Nor shall they compass aught of His knowledge except as He willeth. His Throne doth extend over the heavens and the earth, and He feeleth no fatigue in guarding and preserving them for He is the Most High, the Supreme (in glory).”

(Quran 2: 255)

Perhaps the air of Colorado was too thin for justice. Perhaps there was a plan in Allah’s greater scheme of affairs. Aminah Assilimi later fought back and took her case to the media. Although she did not get custody of her children again, a change was made in the Colorado law that one cannot be denied child custody on the basis of his or her religion.

Indeed Allah’s love and mercy engulfed her so much that, as if, she has been granted the touchstone of Islam. Wherever she goes, people are touched by her beautiful words and Islamic manners and become Muslim.
By accepting Islam, she became a changed person and a much better person. So much so that her family, relatives and people around her started appreciating her mannerism and the faith that brought about such changes in her. Despite her family’s initial reaction, she remained in touch with them and addressed them with respect and humility, just as the Qur’an enjoins the Muslims to do. She would send cards to her parents on different occasions, but she would always write down a verse from the Qur’an or the Hadith without mentioning the source of such beautiful words of wisdom. It was not long before she started making a positive influence among her family members.

The first to become Muslim was her grandmother. She was over 100 years old. Soon after accepting Islam, she died. “The day she pronounced Shahadah, all her misdeeds had been erased, while her good deeds were preserved. She died so soon after accepting Islam that I knew her “book” was bound to be heavy on the good side. It fills me with such a joy!”

Next to become Muslim was her father, the one who wanted to kill her after she became Muslim. Thus he brought alive the story of Umar ibn Khattab. Umar was a companion of the Prophet who persecuted the early Muslims before he converted to Islam. When he heard one day that his sister became a Muslim, he went out with an open sword to kill her. But upon hearing some of the verses from the Qur’an that his sister was reciting, he recognized the truth and went straight to the Prophet and accepted Islam.

Two years after she (Assilmi) accepted Islam, her mother called and said that she appreciated her faith and hoped that she would keep it. Couple of years later, she called again and asked her about what one would need to do to become a Muslim. Assilmi replied that one had to believe that there is only One God and Muhammad was his Messenger. “Any fool knows that. But what do you have to do?” she asked again. She replied that if that is what she believed, then she was already a Muslim!

At this, her mother said, “Well ... OK. But let’s not tell your father just yet”.

She was not aware that her husband (Assilmi’s step father) had the same conversation with her a few weeks earlier. Thus the two lived together as Muslims for years in secret without knowing that the other was also a Muslim. Her sister who wanted to put her in mental institution accepted Islam as well. She must have realized that becoming Muslim is indeed the most healthy and sound thing to do.

Her son, upon becoming adult, accepted Islam. When he turned 21, he called her and said that he wanted to become a Muslim.
Sixteen years after the divorce, her ex-husband also accepted Islam. He said that he had been watching her for sixteen years and wanted his daughter to have the same religion that she had. He came to her and apologized for what he had done. He was a very nice gentlemen and Assilimi had forgiven him long ago.

Perhaps the greatest reward for her was yet to come. Assilmi later married another person and despite the doctors’ verdict that she could never conceive another child, Allah blessed her with a beautiful boy. If Allah SWT makes a gift to someone, who can prevent Him? It was truly a wonderful blessing from Allah SWT and so she named him “Barakah”.

The sacrifice that Assilmi made for the sake of Allah SWT was tremendous. So, Allah SWT turned in mercy to her and rewarded her with enormous blessings. Her family discarded her after she accepted Islam and now by Allah’s mercy, most of them are Muslim. She lost her friends because of Islam and now she is being loved by so many. “Friends who loved me came out of nowhere”, she said. Allah’s blessings came upon her so much that wherever she goes people are touched by the beauty of Islam and accept the Truth. Both Muslims and non-Muslims now come to her for advice and counseling.

She lost her job because of wearing Hijab and now she is the President of the International Union of Muslim Women. She delivers lectures nationwide and is on high demand. It was her organization that successfully lobbied for the “Eid Stamp” and had it approved by the United States Postal Service but it took many years of work.

She had tremendous trust on Allah’s love and mercy and she never loses faith on Him. She was once diagnosed with cancer some years ago. Doctors said that it was in an advanced stage and that she would live for another year. But her faith in Allah SWT remained strong. “We must all die. I was confident that the pain I was experiencing contained blessings.”

As a brilliant example of how much one can love Allah, she mentions about a friend of her named Kareem Al-Misawi who died of cancer when he was in his 20’s:

“Shortly before he died, he told me that Allah was truly Merciful. This man was in unbelievable anguish and was radiating with Allah’s love. He said: “Allah intends that I should enter heaven with a clean book.” His death experience gave me something to think about. He taught me of Allah’s love and mercy.”

Despite health issues, Sister Aminah maintained a rigorous schedule of speaking engagements around the nation and the world. Her current project included a Center for Muslim Women’s Studies that would serve
as a resource center for new Muslims and as a summer camp for Muslim children.

Aminah Assilmi, a national Muslim community activist, scholar, author and advocate for women’s rights who died on March 5th, 2010 in a car accident outside of Newport, Tenn. She was returning with her son from a speaking engagement in New York. Her son, who was injured in the accident, was taken to a hospital in Knoxville. She was 65.

MALCOLM X, EL-HAJJ MALIK AL-SHABAZZ - IN HIS OWN WORDS

“America needs to understand Islam, because this is one religion that erases from its society, the race problem!”


Malcolm X Timeline

May 19, 1925 - Born Malcolm Little in Omaha, Nebraska
1940 - Dropped out of school at age 15
1946 - Convicted of burglary and sent to prison
1949 - 1951 - Studied the Nation of Islam
1952 - Left prison, dedicated himself to Nation of Islam, changes name to Malcolm X
Dec. 4, 1963 - Suspended from the Nation of Islam
March 1964 - Left Nation of Islam and started the Muslim Mosque, Inc.
Apr. 22, 1964 - Made his Hajj and became El-Hajj Malik al-Shabazz
Jun. 28, 1964 - Formed the Organization of Afro-American Unity
Jul. 17, 1964 - Spoke at the Organization of African Unity in Cairo
Aug. 13, 1964 - U.S. State and Justice Departments took notice of his influence on African leaders at the U.N.

Early life
On May 19, 1925 in Omaha, Nebraska, Malcolm Little was born to Reverend Earl and Louise Little. Rev. Little, who believed in self-determination and worked for the unity of black people. Malcolm was raised in a background of ethnic awareness and dignity, but violence was sparked by white racists trying to stop black people such as Rev. Little from preaching the black cause.

The history of Malcolm’s dedication to black people, like that of his father, may have been motivated by a long history of oppression of his family. As a young child, Malcolm, his parents, brothers and sisters were shot at, burned out of their home, harassed and threatened. This culminated in the murder of his father by white racists when Malcolm was six.

Malcolm became a drop-out from school at the age of fifteen. Learning the ways of the streets, Malcolm became acquainted with hoodlums, thieves, dope peddlers and pimps. Convicted of burglary at twenty, he remained in prison until the age of twenty-seven. During his prison stay he attempted to educate himself. In addition, during his period in prison he learned about and joined the Nation of Islam, studying the teachings of Elijah Muhammad fully. He was released, a changed man, in 1952.

The nation of islam
Upon his release, Malcolm went to Detroit, joined the daily activities of the sect and was given instruction by Elijah Muhammad himself. Malcolm’s personal commitment helped build the organization nationwide, while making him an international figure. He was interviewed on major television programs and by magazines and spoke across the country at various universities and other forums. His power was in his words, which so vividly described the plight of blacks and vehemently
incriminated whites. When a white person referred to the fact that some southern universities had enrolled black freshmen without bayonets, Malcolm reacted with scorn:

When I “slipped,” the program host would leap on the bait: “Ahhh! Indeed, Mr. Malcolm X -- you can’t deny that’s an advance for your race!”

I’d jerk the pole then. “I can’t turn around without hearing about some ‘civil rights advance’! White people seem to think the black man ought to be shouting ‘hallelujah’! Four hundred years the white man has had his foot-long knife in the black man’s back -- and now the white man starts to wiggle the knife out, maybe six inches! The black man’s supposed to be grateful? Why, if the white man jerked the knife out, it’s still going to leave a scar!

Although Malcolm words often stung with the injustices against blacks in America, the equally racist views of the Nation of Islam kept him from accepting any whites as sincere or capable of helping the situation. For twelve years he preached that the white man was the devil and the “Honorable Elijah Muhammad” was God’s messenger. Unfortunately, most images of Malcolm today focus on this period of his life, although the transformation he was about to undergo would give him a completely different and more important, message for the American people.

The change to true islam
On March 12, 1964, impelled by internal jealousy within the Nation of Islam and revelations of Elijah Muhammad’s sexual immorality, Malcolm left the Nation of Islam with the intention of starting his own organization: I feel like a man who has been asleep somewhat and under someone else’s control. I feel what I’m thinking and saying now is for me. Before, it was for and by guidance of another, now I think with my own mind.

Malcolm was thirty-eight years old when he left Elijah Muhammad’s Nation of Islam. Reflecting on reflects that occurred prior to leaving, he said:

At one or another college or university, usually in the informal gatherings after I had spoken, perhaps a dozen generally white-complexioned people would come up to me, identifying themselves as Arabian, Middle Eastern or North African Muslims who happened to be visiting, studying, or living in the United States. They had said to me that, my white-indicting statements notwithstanding, they felt I was sincere in considering myself a Muslim -- and they felt if I was exposed to what they always called “true Islam,” I would “understand it and embrace it.” Automatically, as a follower of Elijah, I had bridled whenever this
was said. But in the privacy of my own thoughts after several of these experiences, I did question myself: if one was sincere in professing a religion, why should he balk at broadening his knowledge of that religion?

Those orthodox Muslims whom I had met, one after another, had urged me to meet and talk with a Dr. Mahmoud Youssef Shawarbi. . . . Then one day Dr. Shawarbi and I were introduced by a newspaperman. He was cordial. He said he had followed me in the press; I said I had been told of him, and we talked for fifteen or twenty minutes. We both had to leave to make appointments we had, when he dropped on me something whose logic never would get out of my head. He said, “No man has believed perfectly until he wishes for his brother what he wishes for himself.”

The effect of the pilgrimage
Malcolm further continues about the Hajj:

The pilgrimage to Mecca, known as the Hajj, is a religious obligation that every orthodox Muslim fulfills, if able, at least once in his or her lifetime.

The Holy Quran says it, “Pilgrimage to the House [of God built by the prophet Abraham] is a duty men owe to God; those who are able, make the journey” (3:97).

Allah said: “And proclaim the pilgrimage among men; they will come to you on foot and upon each lean camel, they will come from every deep ravine” (22:27).

Every one of the thousands at the airport, about to leave for Jeddah, was dressed this way. You could be a king or a peasant and no one would know. Some powerful personages, who were discreetly pointed out to me, had on the same thing I had on. Once thus dressed, we all had begun intermittently calling out “Labbayka! (Allahumma) Labbayka!” (Here I come, O Lord!) Packed in the plane were white, black, brown, red, and yellow people, blue eyes and blond hair, and my kinky red hair -- all together, brothers! All honoring the same God, all in turn giving equal honor to each other . . .

That is when I first began to reappraise the “white man.” It was when I first began to perceive that “white man,” as commonly used, means complexion only secondarily; primarily it described attitudes and actions. In America, “white man” meant specific attitudes and actions toward the black man, and toward all other non-white men. But in the Muslim world, I had seen that men with white complexions were more genuinely brotherly than anyone else had ever been. That morning was the start of a radical alteration in my whole outlook about “white” men.
There were tens of thousands of pilgrims, from all over the world. They were of all colors, from blue-eyed blonds to black-skinned Africans. But we were all participating in the same ritual displaying a spirit of unity and brotherhood that my experiences in America had led me to believe never could exist between the white and the non-white...America needs to understand Islam because this is the one religion that erases from its society the race problem. Throughout my travels in the Muslim world, I have met, talked to, and even eaten with people who in America would have been considered white -- but the “white” attitude was removed from their minds by the religion of Islam. I have never before seen sincere and true brotherhood practiced by all colors together, irrespective of their color.

Malcolm’s new vision of America
Malcolm continues:
Each hour here in the Holy Land enables me to have greater spiritual insights into what is happening in America between black and white. The American Negro never can be blamed for his racial animosities -- he is only reacting to four hundred years of the conscious racism of the American whites. But as racism leads America up the suicide path I do believe, from the experiences that I have had with them, that the whites of the younger generation, in the colleges and universities, will see the handwriting on the wall and many of them will turn to the spiritual path of truth -- the only way left to America to ward off the disaster that racism inevitably must lead to. . . .

I believe that God now is giving the world’s so-called ‘Christian’ white society its last opportunity to repent and atone for the crimes of exploiting and enslaving the world’s non-white peoples. It is exactly as when God gave Pharaoh a chance to repent. But Pharaoh persisted in his refusal to give justice to those who he oppressed. And, we know, God finally destroyed Pharaoh.

I will never forget the dinner at the Azzam home with Dr. Azzam. The more we talked, the more his vast reservoir of knowledge and its variety seemed unlimited. He spoke of the racial lineage of the descendants of Muhammad (PBUH) the Prophet, and he showed how they were both black and white. He also pointed out how color, and the problems of color which exist in the Muslim world, exist only where, and to the extent that, that area of the Muslim world has been influenced by the West. He said that if one encountered any differences based on attitude toward color, this directly reflected the degree of Western influence.
The oneness of man under one God
It was during his pilgrimage that he began to write some letters to his loyal assistants at the newly formed Muslim Mosque in Harlem. He asked that his letter be duplicated and distributed to the press:

Never have I witnessed such sincere hospitality and the overwhelming spirit of true brotherhood as is practiced by people of all colors and races here in this ancient Holy Land, the House of Abraham, Muhammad, and all the other Prophets of the Holy Scriptures. For the past week, I have been utterly speechless and spellbound by the graciousness I see displayed all around me by people of all colors. . . .

You may be shocked by these words coming from me. But on this pilgrimage, what I have seen, and experienced, has forced me to rearrange much of my thought-patterns previously held, and to toss aside some of my previous conclusions. This was not too difficult for me. Despite my firm convictions, I have always been a man who tries to face facts and to accept the reality of life as new experience and new knowledge unfolds it. I have always kept an open mind, which necessary to the flexibility that must go hand in hand with every form of intelligent search for truth.

During the past eleven days here in the Muslim world, I have eaten from the same plate, drunk from the same glass, and slept in the same bed (or on the same rug) -- while praying to the same God -- with fellow Muslims, whose eyes were the bluest of blue, whose hair was the blondest of blond, and whose skin was the whitest of white. And in the words and in the actions and in the deeds of the “white” Muslims, I felt the same sincerity that I felt among the black African Muslims of Nigeria, Sudan, and Ghana.

We were truly all the same (brothers) -- because their belief in one God had removed the “white” from their minds, the ‘white’ from their behavior, and the ‘white’ from their attitude.

I could see from this, that perhaps if white Americans could accept the Oneness of God, then perhaps, too, they could accept in reality the Oneness of Man -- and cease to measure, and hinder, and harm others in terms of their “differences” in color.

With racism plaguing America like an incurable cancer, the so-called “Christian” white American heart should be more receptive to a proven solution to such a destructive problem. Perhaps it could be in time to save America from imminent disaster -- the same destruction brought upon Germany by racism that eventually destroyed the Germans themselves.

They asked me what about the Hajj had impressed me the most. . . . I said, “The brotherhood! The people of all races, color, from all over the world coming together as one! It has proved to me the power of the One
History of Truth

All ate as one, and slept as one. Everything about the pilgrimage atmosphere accented the Oneness of Man under One God.”

Malcolm returned from the pilgrimage as El-Hajj Malik al-Shabazz. He was afire with new spiritual insight. For him, the struggle had evolved from the civil rights struggle of a nationalist to the human rights struggle of an internationalist and humanitarian.

After the pilgrimage

White reporters and others were eager to learn about El-Hajj Malik’s newly-formed opinions concerning themselves. They hardly believed that the man who had preached against them for so many years could suddenly turn around and call them brothers. To these people El-Hajj Malik had this to say:

“Didn’t you say that now you accept white men as brothers?” Well, my answer is that in the Muslim world, I saw, I felt, and I wrote home how my thinking was broadened! Just as I wrote, I shared true, brotherly love with many white-complexioned Muslims who never gave a single thought to the race, or to the complexion, of another Muslim.

My pilgrimage broadened my scope. It blessed me with a new insight. In two weeks in the Holy Land, I saw what I never had seen in thirty-nine years here in America. I saw all races, all colors, -- blue-eyed blonds to black-skinned Africans -- in true brotherhood! In unity! Living as one! Worshipping as one! No segregationists -- no liberals; they would not have known how to interpret the meaning of those words.

In the past, yes, I have made sweeping indictments of all white people. I will never be guilty of that again -- as I know now that some white people are truly sincere, that some truly are capable of being brotherly toward a black man. The true Islam has shown me that a blanket indictment of all white people is as wrong as when whites make blanket indictments against blacks.

To the blacks who increasingly looked to him as a leader, El-Hajj Malik preached a new message, quite the opposite of what he had been preaching as a minister in the Nation of Islam:

True Islam taught me that it takes all of the religious, political, economic, psychological, and racial ingredients, or characteristics, to make the Human Family and the Human Society complete.

Since I learned the truth in Mecca, my dearest friends have come to include all kinds -- some Christians, Jews, Buddhists, Hindus, agnostics,
and even atheists! I have friends who are called capitalists, Socialists, and Communists! Some of my friends are moderates, conservatives, extremists -- some are even Uncle Toms! My friends today are black, brown, red, yellow, and white!

I said to my Harlem street audiences that only when mankind would submit to the One God who created all -- only then would mankind even approach the “peace” of which so much talk could be heard...but toward which so little action was seen.

Too dangerous to last
El-Hajj Malik’s new universalistic message was the U.S. establishment’s worst nightmare. Not only was he appealing to the black masses, but also to intellectuals of all races and colors. Now he was consistently demonized by the press as “advocating violence” and being “militant,” although in actuality he and Dr. Martin Luther King were moving closer together in outlook:

The goal has always been the same, with the approaches to it as different as mine and Dr. Martin Luther King’s non-violent marching, that dramatizes the brutality and the evil of the white man against defenseless blacks. And in the racial climate of this country today, it is anybody’s guess which of the “extremes” in approach to the black man’s problems might personally meet a fatal catastrophe first -- “non-violent” Dr. King, or so-called “violent” me.

El-Hajj Malik knew full well that he was a target of many groups. In spite of this, he was never afraid to say what he had to say when he had to say it. As a sort of epitaph at the end of his autobiography, he says:

I know that societies often have killed the people who have helped to change those societies. And if I can die having brought any light, having exposed any meaningful truth that will help to destroy the racist cancer that is malignant in the body of America -- then, all of the credit is due to Allah. Only the mistakes have been mine.

The legacy of Malcolm X
Although El-Hajj Malik knew that he was a target for assassination, he accepted this fact without requesting police protection. On February 21, 1965, while preparing to give a speech at a New York hotel, he was shot by three black men. He was three months short of forty, the age of maturity according to the Qur’an. While it is clear that the Nation of Islam had something to do with the assassination, many people believe there was
more than one organization involved. The FBI, known for its anti-black movement tendency, has been suggested as an accomplice. We may never know for sure who was behind El-Hajj Malik’s murder, or, for that matter, the murder of other national leaders in the early 1960s.

Malcolm X’s life has affected Americans in many important ways. His conversion must have had an influence on Elijah Muhammad’s son, Wallace Muhammad, who, after his father’s death, led the Nation of Islam’s followers into orthodox Islam. African-Americans’ interest in their Islamic roots has flourished since El-Hajj Malik’s death. Alex Haley, who wrote Malcolm’s autobiography, later wrote the epic Roots about an African Muslim family’s experience with slavery. More and more African-Americans are becoming Muslim, adopting Muslim names, or exploring African culture. Interest in Malcolm X has seen a surge recently due to Spike Lee’s movie, Malcolm X. El-Hajj Malik is a source of pride for African-Americans, Muslims, and Americans in general. His message is simple and clear:

I am not a racist in any form whatever. I don’t believe in any form of racism. I don’t believe in any form of discrimination or segregation. I believe in Islam.

**YUSUF ESTES: From a Priest and Preacher in Christianity to a famous caller to Islam.**

![Figure 2.4 - Sheikh Yusuf Estes](http://www.islamtomorrow.com/yusuf.htm)
Many people ask me how a preacher or priest in Christianity can ever go to Islam, especially considering all the negative things that we hear about Islam and Muslims every day. Some people are simply curious, while others take a profound exception to my “conversion” to Islam. Some have asked how I could have turned my back on Jesus, or if I truly understood the Holy Ghost and some even questioned whether or not I considered myself as “born again” or had ever really been saved at all. These are good questions to which I will offer answers to at the end of this writing. I would like to thank everyone for their interest and offer my humble story, God Willing.

One very nice Christian gentleman asked me in email why and how I left Christianity for Islam. This is more or less a copy of the letter I sent to him.

Introduction
My name is Yusuf Estes now, but in years past my friends used to call me Skip. I have preached Christianity and worked in the entertainment and music industry since I was a boy in the 1950’s. My father and I have established music stores, TV and radio programs and outdoor entertainment for fun (and profit). I was a music minister and even used a pony ride and entertained the children as “Skippy the Clown.”

Once, I have served as Delegate to the United Nations Peace Conference for Religious Leaders. Now I am a retired former Muslim Chaplain for United States Bureau of Prisons, Washington, DC. and I join alongside many American Muslims, working with Muslim student and youth organizations as well as schools for Muslim children. As such, I travel around the entire world lecturing and sharing the message of the Christ of the Quran in Islam. We hold dialogs and discussion groups with all faiths and enjoy the opportunity to work alongside rabbis, ministers, preachers and priests everywhere. Some of our work is in the institutional area, military, universities and prisons. Primarily our goal is to educate and communicate the correct message of Islam and who the Muslims really are. Although Islam has grown now to nearly tie Christianity as the largest of religions on earth, we see many of those who claim Islam as Muslims, that do not correctly understand nor properly represent the message of “Peace, Surrender and Obedience to God” [Arabic = ‘Islam’] Dear me, I am afraid that I got a bit ahead of myself. I was trying to give a bit of background of our work perhaps to see if it would in any way benefit those who may being going through what I experienced while trying to resolve some of the issues of Christianity.
How it happened
This may seem quite strange, while we perhaps may share a few different perspectives and concepts of God, Jesus, prophethood, sin and salvation. But you see, at one time I was in the same boat as many folks are today. Really, I was. Let me explain.

Born a strong christian
I was born into a very strong Christian family in the Midwest. Our family and their ancestors not only built the churches and schools across this land, but actually were the same ones who came here in the first place. While I was still in elementary we relocated in Houston, Texas in 1949 (I’m old). We attended church regularly and I was baptized at the age of 12 in Pasadena, Texas. As a teenager, I wanted to visit other churches to learn more of their teachings and beliefs. The Baptists, Methodists, Episcopalians, Charismatic movements, Nazarene, Church of Christ, Church of God, Church of God in Christ, Full Gospel, Agape, Catholic, Presbyterian and many more. I developed quite a thirst for the “Gospel” or as we say; “Good News.” My research into religion did not stop with Christianity. Not at all. Hinduism, Judaism, Buddhism, Metaphysics, Native American beliefs were all a part of my studies. Just about the only one that I did not look into seriously was “Islam”. Why? Good question.

Music minister
Anyway, I became very interested in different types of music, especially Gospel and Classical, because my whole family was religious and musical which it followed that I too would begin my studies in both areas. All these set me for the logical position of Music Minister in many of the churches that I became affiliated with over the years. I started teaching keyboard instruments in 1960 and by 1963 owned my own studios in Laurel, Maryland, called “Estes Music Studios.”

Business projects in Texas, Oklahoma and Florida
Over the next 30 years my father and I worked together in many business projects. We had entertainment programs, shows and attractions. We opened piano and organ stores all the way from Texas and Oklahoma to Florida. We had earned millions of dollars during those years, but could not find the peace of mind that can only come through knowing the truth and finding the real plan of salvation. I’m sure you have asked yourself the question; “Why did God create me?” or “What is it that God wants me to do?” or “Exactly who is God, anyway?” “Why do we believe in ‘original sin?’” and “Why would the sons of Adam be forced to accept his
'sins' and then as a result be punished forever.” But if you asked anyone these questions, they would probably tell you that you have to believe without asking, or that it is a ‘mystery’ and you shouldn’t ask - “Just have faith, brother.”

Trinity concept
Strangely enough, the word “Trinity” is not in the Bible. It has been a concern for religious scholars as early as 200 years after Jesus was raised up by Almighty God. I would ask preachers or ministers to give me some sort of an idea how ‘one’ could figure out to become ‘three’ or how God Himself, Who can do anything He Wills to do, cannot just forgive people’s sins, but rather and had to become a man, come down on earth, be a human, and then take on the sins of all people; keeping in mind that all along He is still God of the whole universe and does as He Wills to do, both in and outside of the universe as we know it. They never seemed to be able to come up with anything other than opinions or strange analogies.

Father - ordained non-denominational minister
My father was very active in supporting church work, especially church school programs. He became an ordained minister in the 1970s. He and his wife (my stepmother) knew many of the TV evangelists and preachers and even visited Oral Roberts and helped in the building of the “Prayer Tower” in Tulsa, OK. They also were strong supporters of Jimmy Swaggart, Jim and Tammy Fay Bakker, Jerry Fallwell, John Haggi and the biggest enemy to Islam in America, Pat Robertson.

Distributing “praise” tapes for Jesus
During the early 1980’s my Dad and his wife worked together and were most active in recording “Praise” tapes and distributing them for free to people in retirement homes, hospitals and homes for the elderly. We were really “winning souls to the Lord - for Jesus” day after day.

Met a man from Egypt
It was early in 1991 when my father began doing business with a man from Egypt and told me that he wanted me to meet him. This idea appealed to me when I thought about the idea of having an international flavor. You know, the pyramids, sphinx, Nile River and all that.

He was a “Mozlem”
Hijackers; kidnappers; bombers, terrorists - and who knows what else?
Then my father mentioned that this man was a ‘Moslem.’ First, I hated the idea of meeting an “infidel, hijacker, kidnapper, bomber, terrorist, and non-believer.” Any normal person would be repulsed at the idea. I couldn’t believe my ears. A ‘Moslem?’ No way! I reminded my dad of the various different things that we had heard about these people.

**Lies against Muslims & Islam - they told us, Muslims:**

- They do not even believe in God
- They worship a black box in the desert.
- And they kiss the ground five times a day.

**No way! I did not want to meet him!**

I did not want to meet this ‘Moslem’ man. No way! My father insisted that I meet him and reassured me that he was a very nice person. This was too much for me. Especially since the evangelists that we used to travel around with all hated Muslims and Islam very much. They even said things that were not true to make people afraid of Islam. So, why would I want anything to do with these people?

**Idea - “change him to christian”**

Then an idea came to me, “We can change this man to Christian.” So, I gave in and agreed to the meeting, but on my terms.

**Met him with a bible, cross and cap with “Jesus is lord!” On it**

I agreed to meet him on a Sunday after church so we would be all prayed up and in good standing with the Lord. I would be carrying my Bible under my arm as usual. I would have my big shiny cross dangling and I would have on my cap which says: “Jesus is Lord” right across the front. My wife and two young daughters came along and we were ready for our first encounter with the ‘Moslems.’

**Where is he?**

When I came into the shop and asked my father where the ‘Moslem’ was, he pointed and said: “He’s right over there.”

I was confused. That could not be the Moslem. No way.

**Turban and beard?**

I’m looking for a huge man with flowing robes, a big turban on his head, a beard half way down his shirt and eyebrows that go all the way across his forehead with a sword or a bomb under his coat.
No turban - no beard - [no hair at all!]
This man had no beard. In fact, he did not even have any hair on his head at all. He was nearly bald. Best of all, he was very pleasant with a warm welcome and handshake. This did not make sense. I thought they are terrorists and bombers. What is this all about?

He needs Jesus
Never mind. I will get right to work on this guy. He needs to be ‘saved’ in the ‘Name of Jesus’ and me and the Lord are going to do it.

Introduction & interrogation
After a quick introduction, I asked him:
I asked : “Do you believe in God?”
He said : “Yes.” - (Good!)
Then I said : “Do you believe in Adam and Eve?”
He said : “Yes.” - (Very Good!)
I said : “What about Abraham? You believe in him and how he tried to sacrifice his son for God?”
He said : “Yes.” - (Even better!)
Again he said : “Yes.” - (Better still!)
Then : “What about the other prophets, David, Solomon and John the Baptist?”
He said : “Yes.” - (Great!)
I asked : “Do you believe in the Bible?”
Again, he said : “Yes.” - (OK!)

So, now it was time for the big question:
“Do you believe in Jesus? That he was the Messiah (Christ) of God?”
Again the said : “Yes.” - (Fantastic!)
Well now - “This was going to be easier than I had thought.”

He was just about ready to be baptized only he did not know it.
And I was just the one to do it, too.

Shocking knowledge - Muslims believe in the bible?
One day in the spring of 1991, I came to know that the Muslims believed in the Bible. I was shocked. How could this be? But that is not all, they believe in Jesus as:
• A true messenger of God;
• Prophet of God;
• Miracle birth without human intervention;
• He was the ‘Christ’ or Messiah as predicted in the Bible;
• He is with God now and most important;
• He will be coming back in the Last Days to lead the believers against the ‘Antichrist.’

After “winning souls to the Lord for Jesus” day after day, this would be a big achievement for me, to catch one of these ‘Moslems’ and ‘convert’ him to Christianity.

Cup of tea - discuss beliefs
I asked him if he liked tea and he said he did. So off we went to a little shop in the mall to sit and talk about my favorite subject: Beliefs. While we sat in that little coffee shop for hours talking (I did most of the talking) I came to know that he was very nice, quiet and even a bit shy. He listened attentively to every word that I had to say and did not interrupt even one time. I liked this man’s way and thought that he had definite potential to become a good Christian. Little did I know the course of events about to unravel in front of my eyes.

Agreed to do business
First of all, I agreed with my father that we should do business with this man and even encouraged the idea of him travelling along with me on my business trips across the northern part of Texas. Day after day, we would ride together and discuss various issues pertaining to different beliefs that people have. Along the way, I could of course interject some of my favorite radio programs of worship and praise to help bring the message to this poor individual. We talked about the concept of God; the meaning of life; the purpose of creation; the prophets and their mission and how God reveals His Will to mankind. We also shared a lot of personal experiences and ideas as well.

Moved to our home
One day I came to know that my friend Mohamed was going to move out of the home he have been sharing with a friend of his and was going to be living in the mosque for a time. I went to my dad and asked him if we could invite Mohamed to come out to our big home in the country and stay there with us. After all, he could share some of the work and some expenses and he would be right there when we were ready to go to out traveling around. My father agreed and Mohamed moved in.
Continued ministry & preaching
Of course I still would find time to visit my fellow preachers and evangelists around the state of Texas. One of them lived on the Texas-Mexico border and another lived near Oklahoma border. One preacher liked a huge wooden cross that was bigger than a car. He would carry it over his shoulder and drag the bottom on the ground and go down the road or freeway hauling these two beams formed in the shape of a cross. People would stop their cars and come over to him and ask him what was going on and he would give them pamphlets and booklets on Christianity.

Preacher has heart attack
One day my friend with the cross had a heart attack and had to go to the Veterans Hospital where he stayed for quite a long while. I used to visit him in the hospital several times a week and I would take Mohamed with me with the hopes that we could all share together in the subject of beliefs and religions. My friend was not very impressed and it was obvious that he did not want to know anything about Islam. Then, one day a man who was sharing the room with my friend came rolling into the room in his wheelchair. I went to him and asked him his name and he said that it didn’t matter and when I asked him where he was from he sa said he was from the planet Jupiter. I thought about what he said and then began to wonder if I was in the cardiac ward or the mental ward.

Man in wheelchair - needed the lord
I knew the man was lonely and depressed and needed someone in his life. So, I began to ‘witness’ to him about the Lord. I read to him out of the book of Jonah in the Old Testament. I shared the story of the prophet Jonah who had been sent by the Lord to call his people to the correct way. Jonah had left his people and escaped by boat to leave his city and head out to sea. A storm came up and the ship almost capsized and the people on board threw Jonah over the side of the ship. A whale came up to the surface and grabbed Jonah, swallowed him and then went down to the bottom of the sea, where he stayed for three days and three nights. Yet because of God’s Mercy, He caused the whale to rise to the surface and then spit Jonah out to return back home safely to his city of Nineveh. And the idea was that we cannot really run away from our problems because we always know what we have done. And what is more, God also always knows what we have done.
Catholic priest
After sharing this story with the man in the wheel chair, he looked up to me and apologized. He told me he was sorry for his rude behavior and that he had experienced some real serious problems recently. Then he said that he wanted to confess something to me. And I said that I was not a Catholic priest and I don’t handle confessions. He replied back to me that he knew that. In fact, he said: “I am a Catholic priest.”

I was shocked. Here I had been trying to preach Christianity to a priest. What in the world was happening here?

Priest in Latin America
The priest began to share his story of being a missionary for the church for over 12 years to south and Central America and Mexico and even in New York’s ‘Hell’s Kitchen.’ When he was released from the hospital he needed a place to go to recover and rather than let him go to stay with a Catholic family, I told my dad that we should invite him to come out and live with us in the country along with our families and Mohamed. It was agreed by all that he would so, he moved out right away.

Priests must study ISLAM? - YES!
During the trip out to our home, I talked with the priest about some of the concepts of beliefs in Islam and to my surprise he agreed and then shared even more about this with me. I was shocked when he told me that Catholic priests actually study Islam and some even carry doctor’s degrees in this subject. This was all very enlightening to me. But there was still a lot more to come.

Different versions of the bible
After settling in, we all began to gather around the kitchen table after dinner every night to discuss religion. My father would bring his King James Version of the Bible, I would bring out my Revised Standard Version of the Bible, my wife had another version of the Bible (maybe something like Jimmy Swaggart’s ‘Good News For Modern Man.’) The priest of course, had the Catholic Bible which has seven more books in it than the Protestant Bible. So we spent more time talking about which Bible was the right one or the most correct one, than we did trying to convince Mohamed about becoming a Christian.

Quran has only ONE version - in arabic - and still exists
At one point I recalled asking him about the Quran and how many versions of it there were in the last 1,400 years. He told me that there was
only ONE QURAN. And that it had never been changed. Yet he let me
know that the Quran had been memorized by hundreds of thousands of
people, in its entirety and were scattered about the earth in many different
countries. Over the centuries since the Quran was revealed millions have
memorized it completely and have taught it to others who have memorized
it completely, from cover to cover, letter perfect without mistakes. Today,
over nine million Muslims have memorized the entire Quran from cover
to cover.

How could this be?
This did not seem possible to me. After all, the original languages of
the Bible have all been dead languages for centuries and the documents
themselves have been lost in their originals for hundreds and thousands
of years. So, how could it be that something like this could be so easy to
preserve and to recite from cover to cover?

Priest goes to the mosque
Anyway, one day the priest asked Mohamed if he might accompany him
to the mosque to see what it was like there. They came back talking about
their experience there and we could not wait to ask the priest what it
was like and what all types of ceremonies they performed. He said they
did not really ‘do’ anything. They just came and prayed and left. I said:
“They left? without any speeches or singing?” He said that was right.

Priest enters Islam!
A few more days went by and the Catholic priest asked Mohamed if
he might join him again for a trip to the mosque which they did. But
this time it was different. They did not come back for a very long time.
It became dark and we worried that something might have happened
to them. Finally, they arrived and when they came in the door I
immediately recognized Mohamed, but who was this alongside of him?
Someone is wearing a white robe and a white cap. Hold on a minute!
It was the priest. I said to him: “Pete? -- Did you become a ‘Moslem?’”
He said that he had entered into Islam that very day. THE PRIEST
BECAME A MUSLIM!! What next? (You’ll see).

My wife announces her Islam!
So, I went upstairs to think things over a bit and began to talk to my wife
about the whole subject. She then told me that she too was going to enter
into Islam, because she knew it was the truth.
Shocked!
I was really shocked now. I went downstairs and woke Mohamed up and asked him to come outside with me for a discussion. We walked and talked that whole night through.

Truth had come!
By the time he was ready to pray Fajr (the morning prayer of the Muslims) I knew that the truth had come at last and now it was up to me to do my part. I went out back behind my father’s house and found an old piece of plywood lying under an overhang and right there I put my head down on the ground facing the direction that the Muslims pray five times a day.

Guide me! o God! guide me!
Now then in that position, with my body stretched out on the plywood and my head on the ground, I asked: “O God. If you are there, guide me, guide me.”

Sign inside of me
And then after a while I raised up my head and I noticed something. No, I didn’t see birds or angels coming out of the sky nor did I hear voices or music, nor did I see bright lights and flashes. What I did notice was a change inside of me. I was aware now more than ever before that it was time for me to stop any lying and doing anything sneaky. It was time that I really work at being an honest and upright man. I knew now what I had to do.

Wash away the “OLD”
So I went upstairs and took a shower with the distinct idea that I was ‘washing’ away the sinful old person that I had become over the years. And I was now coming into a new, fresh life. A life based on truth and proof.

And become new!
Around 11:00 A.M. that morning, I stood before two witnesses, one the ex-priest, formerly known as Father Peter Jacob’s, and the other Mohamed Abel Rehman and announced my ‘Shahadah’ (open testimony to the Oneness of God and the prophethood of Muhammad, peace be upon him).

“I bear witness, there is no deity to worship, except Almighty Allah, alone and He has no partners and I bear witness that Mohammad is His messenger and servant.”
My wife was next
A few minutes later, my wife followed along and gave the same testimony. But hers was in front of three witnesses (me being the third).

Then my father
My father was a bit more reserved on the subject and waited a few more months before he made his Shahadah (public testimony). But he did finally commit to Islam and began offering prayers right along with me and the other Muslims in the local Masjid (mosque).

Children too!
The children were taken out of the Christian school and placed in Muslim schools. And now ten years later, they are memorizing much of the Quran and the teachings of Islam.

Father’s wife (stepmother) next
My father’s wife finally acknowledged, before she died, that Jesus could not be a son of God and that he must have been a mighty prophet of God, but not God. She passed away within a few months of this statement at age 86. May Allah accept her statement of faith, Ameen.

Houseful of new Muslims - what is next?
Now stop and think. A whole entire household of people from varying backgrounds and ethnic groups coming together in truth to learn how to know and worship the Creator and Sustainer of the Universe. Think. A Catholic priest; a minister of music and preacher of the Gospel; an ordained minister and builder of Christian schools; and the children, even a great-grandmother - they all come into Islam!

His mercy and guidance
Only by His Mercy were we all guided to see the real truth of Islam, by removing the coverings over our ears and the blinders on our eyes, no longer having seals over our hearts - He was guiding us now.

Amazing story - family and friends entering Islam - from one man
If I were to stop right here, I am sure that you would have to admit that at least, this is an amazing story, right? After all, three religious leaders of three separate denominations all going into one very opposite belief at the same time and then soon after the rest of the household.
More? - yes! Baptist seminary student reads Quran - accepts Islam
But that is not all. There is more! The same year, while I was in Grand Prairie, Texas (near Dallas) I met a Baptist seminary student from Tennessee named Joe, who also came to Islam after reading the Holy Quran while in BAPTIST SEMINARY COLLEGE!

More? yes. Catholic priest loves Islam - but needs his job!
There are others as well. I recall the case of the Catholic priest in a college town who talked about the good things in Islam so much that I was forced to ask him why he didn’t enter Islam. He replied: “What? And lose my job?” - His name is Father John and we still pray for Allah to guide Him.

Another Catholic priest makes Shahadah
The very next year I met a former Catholic priest who had been a missionary for eight years in Africa. He learned about Islam while he was there and entered into Islam. He then changed his name to Omar and moved to Dallas Texas.

Anymore? again - yes! orthodox arch bishop leaves church for Islam
Two years later, while in San Antonio, Texas I was introduced to a former Arch Bishop of the Orthodox Church of Russia who learned about Islam and gave up his position to enter Islam.

Daughter of Hindu pundit (religious leader) - accepts Islam - helping thousands to Islam
I met a woman in New York who wanted to make our CDs about “What Is Islam?” After giving her permission several years ago, I have learned she has produced and distributed over 600 thousand of these to the non-Muslims in America. May Allah reward her and keep her strong in her efforts, Ameen.

Hundreds - thousands - still coming
And since my own entrance into Islam and becoming a chaplain to the Muslims throughout the country and around the world, I have encountered many more individuals who were leaders, teachers and scholars in other religions who learned about Islam and entered into it. They came from Hindus, Jews, Catholics, Protestants, Jehovah’s Witnesses, Greek and Russian Orthodox, Coptic Christians from Egypt, non-denominational churches and even scientists who had been atheists.
Why? good question
The combination always seems to be the same; people are sincerely seeking the truth and are willing to put their different prejudices and biases out of their minds and begin to ask God for His Guidance in their lives.

So, now you have the introduction to the story of my coming into Islam and becoming Muslim. There is more on the Internet about this story and there are more pictures there as well. Please take the time to visit it and then please take the time to email me and let us come together to share in all truths based on proofs for understanding our origins and our purpose and goals in this life and the Next Life.

9 Steps to Purify the Heart

May I suggest to the seeker of truth do the following NINE STEPS to purification of the heart?
1. Clean - your mind, your heart & soul - remove all prejudices & biases.
2. Thank God - for what you have - every moment of every day.
3. Read - a good translation of the meaning of the Holy Quran in a language that they can understand best. (http://islamtomorrow.com/downloads/)
4. Reflect on the meanings & consider the bounties of your Lord.
5. Seek - Forgiveness from God & Learn to forgive others.
6. Ask - in your heart for Guidance from Above.
7. Open - your heart and mind.
8. Continue - to do this up for a few months. And be regular in it.
9. Avoid - the poison of evil while your heart is opening for the “rebirth of your soul.”

Remember: Clean; Thank; Read; Reflect - then:

“Seek and ye shall find. Ask, and it shall be given thee. Knock and it shall be opened.” Then: Continue & Avoid

The rest is between you and the Almighty Lord of the Universe. If you truly love Him, then He already Knows it and He will deal with each of us according to our hearts.

Answers to Questions
Now as I promised here are the answers to the questions many have asked me connected with my choice of Islam:
1. “How could you have turned your back on the perfect plan of salvation of Jesus Christ on the cross for your sins?”

**Answer:** Your question implies you have not considered the similarities and teachings of the Bible and the Quran.

“ISLAM” means - “Surrender, submit and obey your Lord in sincerity and peace.” Whoever is trying to do this, is a “MUSLIM.” If someone believes in Almighty God as One God and One Lord and wants to commit their life to serving Him and obeying His Commandments, then that person will be in the right way and they will be “saved” according to God’s Mercy. No one can take the sins of another and the guilty must stand accused for what they have done. It will be up to Almighty God to Forgive or Punish according to His Judgment on that Day.

According to the remains of the translations of the Bible [see: “Bible, A Closer Look”] Jesus, peace be upon him, did not preach a message of salvation by worshipping him. This was something added later by Saul (who later became Paul). We find clear statements indicating salvation would come only through acknowledging Almighty God as One God and worshipping Him with all the heart, mind and strength. Jesus, peace be upon him, taught his followers to worship “My God and your God, My Lord and your Lord.”

Again, according to the remains of the English translation of the Bible, we see the one on the cross crying out a very blasphemous statement, “Eli! Eli! Lama sabachthani?” (Which being translated means, “My God! My God! Why have you forsaken me?”) This statement on the cross clearly indicates the one on the cross is not pleased with the situation nor does he consider it right or just. Therefore, one would have to conclude this was not something Jesus approved of nor did he accept, or someone else was on the cross in his place. Either way you look at it, the one on the cross did not accept this as a plan of salvation.

The Quran is absolutely in agreement with these teachings and Muslims do worship the same God and Lord of Jesus, Moses, Abraham and Adam, peace be upon them all. The Quran states in many places, no one will be taken to task for the sins of another, nor can anyone carry the burden of another. We will all be on our own on that Day. And I ask Allah to have Mercy and forgiveness for all those who believe in Him, Ameen.

I consider that I have not left the teachings of Jesus Christ, peace be upon him. On the contrary, I feel much closer to Jesus,
peace be upon him, and I look forward to His return on earth more than ever before. Now I am worshipping the same God he worships and I serve the same Lord he serves, in the very same way he does. Jesus prayed to Almighty God and taught his followers to do the same. I am simply doing what he commanded to the best of my ability and ask Almighty God to accept it.

2. “Do you consider you were really “saved” and that you had in fact, been “born again?”

**Answer:** The Baptists have a statement, “Once saved, always saved.” I asked one of them about this and he agreed it was true. Then I mentioned at one time I had become a Baptist (in my teen years) but now I was a Muslim. I had also been “saved” and baptized at the age of 12. I had accepted the very statement of Jesus being the way, the light and the truth and no man coming on to the Father except by him. I understood these statements to mean I must follow Jesus and his teachings. Therefore, I read the Bible for myself and did not let others tell me what to think about what I was reading.

The Bible states that Jesus prayed for salvation for himself in the garden of Gethsemane in this way, *“Let this cup pass from me, even so, Thy Will be done.”* This prayer was repeated by Jesus, peace be upon him, a number of times and it is mentioned in more than one Gospel. Yet, according to Biblical accounts, the cup did not pass from him and his prayers were NOT ANSWERED. Islam teaches us his prayers were answered and he did not have to endure the cruel treatment and death on the cross, but rather he was taken up while still alive and is with Almighty God even now and ready to return in the Last Days to bring victory to the believers.

Additionally, we find Jesus, peace be upon him, teaching his disciples to pray like this, *“Our Father in Heaven, Hallowed be Thy Name, Thy Kingdom come, Thy Will be done on earth as it is in Heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from all evil. For Thine is the Kingdom and the Power and Glory, forever and ever, ameen.”* Every Muslim I have met accepts every single word of this pray with the exception of calling “Allah” our “Father.” Muslims consider it better to call on Almighty God by His Names, which we do consider to be “Hallowed.”
3. “How did your family respond to your conversion?”

**Answer:** This is always difficult for families to adjust to and it usually takes time. My family was no exception. Although my wife, children entered into Islam and eventually my father came to declare Islam to be the way of salvation for himself, still my own mother and many others in my family resented our going to Islam at first. Eventually, things became more normalized and we do stay in touch, although they are all still very much involved in Christianity.

Allah promises to test those who declare their faith in Him with many types of difficulties and family is one of those mentioned as a test in the Quran. I do pray for them and ask Allah to guide them to the very best in this life and the very best in the Next Life. But it is up to Allah if He wants them to be in Submission to Him (Islam means, submission to Allah) or not.

4. “How about your congregation? What did they say?”

**Answer:** I never had my own church. I was a music minister in the Church of God (Anderson, Indiana branch) in Texas and did my preaching to businessmen and informal gatherings. Those who knew me for the most part did not object and some even came to Islam, but there were a few who felt very upset and accused me of “Turning my back on Jesus, peace be upon him.” No matter what I tried to say or do, these particular individuals would not listen nor did they want to learn anything about Islam.

5. “Did you experience a lot of difficulties in changing religions?”

**Answer:** Certainly anyone who wants to consider Islam in these times, just as in times gone by, will have to recognize there will be certain difficulties and tests along the way. The followers of Jesus, peace be upon him, were highly criticized and persecuted even until death (read what Paul said he used to do to them in the Bible; Book of Acts of the Apostles). Those who followed Muhammad, peace be upon him, suffered at the hands of their very own tribes, yet they were determined to continue to worship Almighty God Alone, without partners and submit to His Will.

The biggest problem with non-Muslims is their lack of understanding and lack of knowledge as to what Islam is really all about and who the Muslims are supposed to be. I pray for them all and ask Allah to forgive the Muslims for not showing a better picture to everyone.
6. “Who was responsible for converting you?”

**Answer:** As Muslims we believe that it is only Allah who guides the people and whoever He guides will not be misguided and whomever He lets go astray none will be able to guide them. As such, it means we do not believe anyone really can “convert” someone else.

Also, we accept that all children are born in the natural state of submission to Almighty God and as such that means they are Muslims. Should a child die, he or she would go to Heaven as they are not responsible for what they do not understand.

7. “Do not you ever think about coming back to being a Christian?”

**Answer:** “Christian” indicates a follower of Christ. When Jesus, peace be upon him, returns to earth in the Last Days, all the Muslims will be obliged to follow him. But we would not call ourselves “Christians” anymore than he would. He never called himself or his companions “Christians.” The Bible tells us they were never even called “Christians” until Paul was preaching his message in Antioch.

8. “Doesn’t it bother you to have left the way of peace, justice and love for a religion of hatred, violence and oppression toward women and others?”

**Answer:** All the prophets, peace be upon them all, called the people to worship Almighty God as One God and One Lord. As such, those who did not want to submit to Almighty God would combat them and treat them with hostilities, even unto death, as Paul had done while still being a Pharisee. The prophets, peace be upon them all, did encourage their followers to live in peace and deal with people in justice and certainly love is the highest form of emotion a human can have for another human being.

Yet at the same time, believers have to defend themselves, their families and the religion itself, lest those who are not believers should remove belief from the very face of the earth. Islam, like Christianity preaches a message of peace and tolerance - to a point. But when this is no longer possible without totally compromising and loosing one’s way of life and belief system, then there is no alternative except to engage in open combat against those who are combating against the believers.

Jesus called upon his followers to sell their coats and buy swords. He explained that he did not come with peace, but rather a sword. He and his companions were engaged in mortal combat with
their enemies, the Pharisees when one of the priest’s slaves had his ear cut by the sword. Jesus then told them to put down their swords. This is mentioned in the Bible.

The word “sword” appears over 200 times in the Bible - but even though the Arabic language has more than a dozen words for sword, there is not a single occurrence of any of these words anywhere in the Quran.

Combat is ordered in the Quran, only under very specific and limited conditions and it is nothing more than what we would today call “The War on Terrorism.” Fighting against all acts of organized aggression, oppression, persecution and terrorism is an obligation on all believers. But it certainly has limits and women, children, elderly and any innocents are not to killed or injured during such occasions. Treatment of prisoners is not to be humiliating or torture of any kind. Even the dead of the enemy are to be buried with dignity and respect. Now since writing my story and publishing here on the internet many other websites have picked up this story and it had become a famous example of how “Priest and Preachers Are Coming to Islam.”

Again, I thank you for visiting. And I thank our Christian friend for his email. If he had not sent it, I probably would still not have completed this task of putting down the story once and for all of how my family, friends and I all came to Islam.

Please feel free to share this story with others. You should print it out and make copies for everyone. Give them our links, add our story to your website or blog page, and send out emails to everyone you know. Maybe it could make a difference for others like us, God Willing.

May Allah guide you on your journey to all truth. Ameen and may He open your heart and your mind to the reality of this world and the purpose of this life, ameen.

Peace to you and Guidance from Allah the One Almighty God, Creator and Sustainer of all that exists. Your friend,

Yusuf Estes
Chaplain Yusuf Estes
I spent a lot of time looking at art, the year before I became a Muslim. Completing a degree in Philosophy and Fine Arts, I sat for hours in darkened classrooms where my professors projected pictures of great works of Western art on the wall. I worked in the archives for the Fine Arts department, preparing and cataloging slides. I gathered stacks of thick art history books every time I studied in the university library. I went to art museums in Toronto, Montreal and Chicago. That summer in Paris, “the summer I met Muslims” as I always think of it, I spent a whole day (the free day) each week in the Louvre.

What was I seeking in such an intense engagement with visual art? Perhaps some of the transcendence I felt as a child in the cool darkness of the Catholic Church I loved. In high school, I had lost my natural faith in God, and rarely thought about religion after that. In college, philosophy had brought me from Plato, through Descartes only to end at Existentialism—a barren outcome. At least art was productive—there was a tangible result at the end of the process. But in the end, I found even the strongest reaction to a work of art isolating. Of course I felt some connection to the artist, appreciation for another human perspective. But each time the aesthetic response flared up, then died down. It left no basis for action.
Then I met people who did not construct statues or sensual paintings of gods, great men and beautiful women. Yet they knew about God, they honored their leaders, and they praised the productive work of women. They did not try to depict the causes; they traced the effects. Soon after I met my husband, he told me about a woman he greatly admired. He spoke of her intelligence, her eloquence and her generosity. This woman, he told me, tutored her many children in traditional and modern learning. With warm approval, he spoke of her frequent arduous trips to refugee camps and orphanages to help relief efforts. With profound respect, he told me of her religious knowledge, which she imparted to other women in regular lectures. And he told me of the meals she had sent to him, when she knew he was too engaged in his work with the refugees to see to his own needs. When I finally met this woman I found that she was covered, head to toe, in traditional Islamic dress. I realized with some amazement that my husband had never seen her. He had never seen her face. Yet he knew her. He knew her by her actions, by the effects she left on other people.

Western civilization has a long tradition of visual representation. It no longer need more from such art than a moment of shared vision with an artist alive or dead, I can appreciate it once more. But popular culture has made representation simultaneously omnipresent and anonymous. We seem to make the mistake of thinking that seeing means knowing, and that the more exposed a person is, the more important they are.

Islamic civilization chose not to embrace visual representation as a significant means of remembering and honoring God and people. Allah is The Hidden, veiled in glorious light from the eyes of any living person. But people of true vision can know God by contemplating the effects of his creative power:

_Do they not look to the birds above them,  
Spreading their wings and folding them back?  
None can uphold them except for The Merciful.  
Truly He is watchful over all things (Qur’an, 67:19)_

If God transcends his creation, it is beyond the capacity of any human to depict him. Indeed, in Islamic tradition, any attempt to depict God with pictures is an act of blasphemy. Rather, a Muslim evokes God, employing only those words that God has used to describe himself in his revelation. Among these descriptive titles are the so-called “99 Names of God,” attributes that are recited melodiously throughout the Muslim world: The Merciful, the Compassionate, the Forbearing, the Forgiving, the Living, the Holy, the Near, the Tender, the Wise.... Written in beautiful script on lamps,
walls, and pendants, each of these linguistic signs provokes a profoundly personal, intellectual and spiritual response with each new reading. Deeply wary of idolatry, early Muslims with few exceptions declined to glorify not only God, but even human beings through visual representation. Historians, accustomed to illustrating accounts of great leaders with their images captured in painting, sculpture and coin have no reliable visual representations of the Prophet Muhammad. What we find, instead, is the Prophet’s name, *Muhammad*, written in curving Arabic letters on those architectural and illustrative spaces where the sacred is invoked. Along with the names of God and verses of the Qur’an, the name *Muhammad*, read audibly or silently, leads the believer into a reflective state about the divine message and the legacy of this extraordinary, yet profoundly human messenger of God.

Words, written and oral are the primary medium by which the lives of the Prophet and his example have been transmitted across the generations. His biography, the *seerah*, has been told in verse and prose in many languages. Even more important than this chronological account of the Prophet’s life are the thousands of individual reports of his utterances and actions, collected in the *Hadith* literature. These reports were transmitted by early Muslims wishing to pass on Muhammad’s tradition and mindful of the Qur’an’s words: “Indeed in the Messenger of God you have a good example to follow for one who desires God and the Last Day” (Qur’an, 33:21). Eager to follow his divinely inspired actions, his close companions paid attention not only to his style of worship, but also to all aspects of his comportment—everything from his personal hygiene to his interaction with children and neighbors. The Prophet’s way of doing things, his *Sunnah*, has formed the basis for Muslim piety in all societies where Islam spread. The result was that as Muslims young and old, male and female, rich and poor, adopted the Prophet’s *Sunnah* as a model for their lives, they became the best visual representations of the Prophet’s character and life. In other words, the Muslim who implements the *Sunnah* is an actor on the human stage who internalizes and, without artifice, reenacts the behavior of the Prophet. This performance of the *Sunnah* by living Muslims is the archive of the Prophet’s life and a truly sacred art of Muslim culture.

I first realized the profound physical impact of the Prophet’s *Sunnah* on generations of Muslims as I sat in the mosque one day, watching my nine year old son pray beside his Qur’an teacher. Ubayda sat straight, still and erect beside the young teacher from Saudi Arabia who, with his gentle manners and beautiful recitation, had earned my son’s deep respect and affection. Like the teacher, Ubayda was wearing a loose-
fitting white robe that modestly covered his body. Before coming to the mosque, he had taken a shower and rubbed fragrant musk across his head and chin. With each movement of prayer, he glanced over at his teacher, to ensure that his hands and feet were positioned in precisely the same manner. Reflecting on this transformation of my son, who had abandoned his normal grubbiness and impulsivity for cleanliness and composure, I thought to myself, “thank God he found a good role model to imitate.”

In my son’s imitation of his teacher, however, it occurred to me that there was a greater significance, for his teacher was also imitating someone. Indeed, this young man was keen in every aspect of his life to follow the Sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad. His modest dress was in imitation of the Prophet’s physical modesty. His scrupulous cleanliness and love of fragrant oils was modeled after the Prophet’s example. At each stage of the ritual prayer he adopted the positions he was convinced originated with the Prophet. He could trace the way he recited the Qur’an back through generations of teachers to the Prophet himself. My son, by imitating his teacher, had now become part of the living legacy of the Prophet Muhammad. Among Muslims throughout the world, there are many sincere pious men and women; there are also criminals and hypocrites. Some people are deeply affected by religious norms, others are influenced more by culture—whether traditional or popular culture. Some aspects of the Prophet’s behavior: his slowness to anger, his abhorrence of oath taking, his gentleness with women, sadly seem to have little affected the dominant culture in some Muslim societies. Other aspects of his behavior, his generosity, his hospitality, his physical modesty, seem to have taken firm root in many Muslim lands. But everywhere that Muslims are found, more often than not they will trace the best aspects of their culture to the example of the Prophet Muhammad. He was, in the words of one of his companions, “the best of all people in behavior.”

Living in America, my son’s role model might have been an actor, a rap singer or an athlete. We say that children are “impressionable,” meaning that it is easy for strong personalities to influence the formation of their identity. We all look for good influences on our children. It was their excellent behavior that attracted me to the first Muslims I met, poor West African students living on the margins of Paris. They embodied many aspects of the Prophet’s Sunnah, although I did not know it at the time. What I recognized was that, among their other wonderful qualities, they were the most naturally generous people I had ever known. There was always room for one more person around the platter of rice and beans they shared each day. Over the years, in my travels across the Muslim world, I have witnessed the same eagerness to share, the same deep belief
that it is not self-denial, but a blessing to give away a little more to others. The Prophet Muhammad said, “The food of two is enough for three, and the food of three is enough for four.” During the recent attacks on Kosovo, there were reports of Albanian Muslims filling their houses with refugees; one man cooked daily for twenty people domiciled in his modest home.

The Prophet Muhammad said, “When you see one who has more, look to one who has less.” When I was married in Pakistan, my husband and I, as refugee workers, did not have much money. Returning to the refugee camp a few days after our wedding, the Afghan women eagerly asked to see the many dresses and gold bracelets, rings and necklaces my husband must have presented to me, as is customary throughout the Muslim world. I showed them my simple gold ring and told them we had borrowed a dress for the wedding. The women’s faces fell and they looked at me with profound sadness and sympathy. The next week, sitting in a tent in that dusty hot camp, the same women—women who had been driven out of their homes and country, women who had lost their husbands and children, women who had sold their own personal belongings to buy food for their families—presented me with a wedding outfit. Bright blue satin pants stitched with gold embroidery, a red velveteen dress decorated with colorful pom-poms and a matching blue scarf trimmed with what I could only think of as a lampshade fringe. It was the most extraordinary gift I have ever received—not just the outfit, but the lesson in pure empathy that is one of the sweetest fruits of real faith.

An accurate representation of the Prophet is to be found, first and foremost, on the faces and bodies of his sincere followers: in the smile that he called “an act of charity,” in the slim build of one who fasts regularly, in the solitary prostrations of the one who prays when all others are asleep. The Prophet’s most profound legacy is found in the best behavior of his followers. Look to his people, and you will find the Prophet.

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Dr. Mattson earned her Ph.D. in Islamic Studies from the University of Chicago in 1999. Her research is focused on Islamic law and society; among her articles are studies on slavery, poverty and Islamic legal theory.

Dr. Mattson was born in Canada, where she studied Philosophy at the University of Waterloo, Ontario (B.A. ’87). From 1987-1988 she lived in Pakistan where she worked with Afghan refugee women.

In 2001 Dr. Ingrid Mattson was elected Vice-President of ISNA and in 2006 she was elected President of the organization. Dr. Mattson is the first convert to Islam and the first female to lead the Islamic Society of North America (ISNA), the largest Islamic Society of North America.
Dr. Ingrid Mattson wrote in her website (http://macdonald.hartsem.edu/mattson.htm)

“In the summer of 1987, I was riding the train out to British Columbia to start a tree-planting job in the mountains. I had just finished my undergraduate degree in Philosophy and had only recently begun my personal study of Islam. I came across Fazlur Rahman’s Islam in a bookstore a few days before my trip. Reading that book as I traveled across the Canadian prairies, I made the decision to apply to graduate school in Islamic Studies. His book sparked in me a keen desire to study the classical heritage of Islamic theology and law. Going a step further, I wrote a letter to Rahman (this was before we all used email) describing my situation and inquiring if I might be able to study with him. I dropped the letter in a post box somewhere in the Rockies and forgot about it until I returned east in August. There I found a hand-written note from him, inviting me to come to the University of Chicago to study with him. Rahman died before I arrived in Chicago, but it was his book and his encouragement that inspired me to start on the path to scholarship that I have found so rewarding.”

JUAN JOSE GALVAN, “Finding Allah in Texas”

![Image](http://www.usislam.org/latinos/converts/juan.htm)

Figure 2.6 - Juan Jose Galvan

A Mexican-American finds answers to many questions about life and faith.

In high school, I received a jolt to my long-held belief when a Christian friend told me that the Holy Trinity was not true and that Jesus was not God. “He’s wrong,” I told myself. Jesus had to be God because God and humanity were disconnected by the sin committed by Adam and
Eve. God, I reasoned to myself, had sent His only ‘begotten’ son to die because He loved us so much. And because only God forgives, Jesus had to be God. I even had the Bible quotes to prove it! Indeed, being a devout Roman Catholic, I had read almost the entire Bible. In high school, I was a lecturer, usher, Eucharistic minister, Sunday school teacher, and the godfather for a nephew and a niece. The idea that Jesus was God made sense. I am a Mexican-American who comes from a modest background. I spent my adolescent and teenage years in such small Texas Panhandle towns as Quitaque, Turkey, Lakeview, and Memphis. None of them has a mall, a movie theater, or a McDonald’s. Memphis, TX, population 2,300, proudly proclaims itself “The Cotton Capital of the World.” In Memphis, if you hear a fire truck or police car, either your neighbor’s house is on fire or your neighbor is being arrested. Growing up in small communities gave me much appreciation for the simplicity in God’s creation. I graduated from Memphis High School (1994), enrolled in Texas Tech University in Lubbock, and graduated with a BA in management information systems from the University of Texas at Austin (2001). Not bad for a kid who hoed cotton most of his junior high and high school summers to buy clothes and school supplies! My dad was a cotton ginner. Now, he is a custodian at a high school in Pampa, TX. I had eight siblings, but in 2000 my 17-year-old sister died in a car wreck.

I have always respected other religions. I often attended other Christian churches and joined interfaith Bible study groups. While in one such group, when I told my friend Chris that I was Catholic, he blatantly told me that it was “a false doctrine.” As you can imagine, I defended my religion. Chris accused me of worshipping Mary, saints, and the Pope, and I argued that we only revere them. Around this time, I happened to see a man praying. His knees, hands, and forehead were touching the ground, and he was barefoot. After he finished, I introduced myself to him. He said his name was Armando, and that he was Muslim. I thought to myself: “OK, freaky, you’re Muslim. You can’t be Muslim. What’s this Hispanic guy doing praying to Allah?” He later told me that Spain was Muslim for over 700 years and that thousands of Spanish words have Arabic roots. The ruins of mosques with Qur’anic inscriptions have been found in Cuba, Mexico, Texas, and Nevada. Most importantly, Armando told me about Islam. I began to realize that my reverence for Mary and saints was much more than mere reverence. Chris was right. However, we were both worshipping Jesus! Armando said that Jesus was only a prophet and that no one or thing is worthy of worship but Allah.
Many of my questions were answered! What is the purpose of life? How can the Father be the Son? Why cannot God just forgive anyone He wants? What happens to babies who die before baptism? In Qur’an 5:83, Allah states: “When they (who call themselves Christian) listen to what has been sent down to the Messenger, you see their eyes overflowing with tears because of the truth they have recognized. They say: ‘Our Lord! We believe; so write us down among the witnesses.’” Indeed, my eyes overflowed with tears as I read that verse. Yet I did not embrace Islam until three years after meeting Armando because I did not want to change. A struggle occurs within everyone, everyday, and everywhere. We struggle to attain what is most important for us. By embracing Islam, we tell Allah that He is most important and that we are prepared to struggle to do what is right and to avoid what is wrong.

Juan is one of the developers of latino american dawah organization LADO: http://www.latinodawah.org/
Juan Galvan, the President of LADO-TX and Vice-President of LADO-USA, is currently coauthoring What’s Old is New Again: Latinos Revert to Islam with Samantha Sanchez. He is a member of ISNA’s Latino Coordinating Committee. He works within the Literature and National Outreach subcommittees.

ZAINAB OÑEZ - Discovered Islam While Training To Be a Nun

Few days ago, I had a chat with Brother Jibril Aqil Ali. He introduced himself as a Latino Muslim. I was so happy to chat with him.
On the same day, I had another chat with Sister Zainab. She told me that she is a converted Muslim from Philippine. Again, I was extremely happy. Two converted Muslim in one day chatting with me. Subhana Allah. Can you imagine how I felt? Can our Westernized Muslim youth look at her story and see how a Christian becomes a committed Muslim. Sister Zainab should be an inspiration to Muslim Youth. I truly believe that converts to Islam are one of the few bright spots in our Islamic Ummah.

I asked Sister Zainab to send me her story. She graciously accepted, and here is her story:

Dear Dr. Adel Elsaie;
Assalamu alaikum waramatullahi wa barakatuhu!
I am Zainab Oñez; I am 24 years old and never been married. I graduated with a Bachelor of Science in Commerce, majoring in Marketing at Holy Cross of Davao College Inc in the Philippines. I was a former Roman Catholic and was one of the working scholars in SVD or Society Verbini Divini, a religious congregation in the Catholic religion, for 6 years. Previously, my plan was to become a nun. When I was at the young age of 14, I used to ask myself why many people have debates about the Christian religion. I realized maybe God has given one religion to all mankind. When I reached the age of 20, I started to research on the internet and I read about how ISLAM IS A WAY OF LIFE. I was shocked, why was Catholicism not a way of life? I started to research more about Islam because it was the first time I heard about Islam.

I printed all the Islamic researches that I had found from the internet and showed them to our professor. He was getting angry with me asking why I was studying Islam; Muslims are terrorists; Muslims are bad people; Muslims worship another God. I considered this as a challenge and was encouraged to study more about Islam. After two years of studying about Islam I decided to embrace Islam last February 21, 2006.

Alhamduillah, I am only one Muslim among our family and I am now working as a volunteer in Dawah for Islamic propagation in Davao city. All my Christian friends were against me in my new Islamic way of life. I do not care what other people say. The most important thing is that this is my decision and I know that this is the true religion of Allah SWT given to all mankind. Allah said in Surah al Imram 3:19 “INNAD DEENA IND ALLAH ISLAM - TRULY THE RELIGION WITH ALLAH IS ISLAM.”

And in Surah al-Imram 3: 85 “thoseover seek a religion other than Islam it will never be accepted of him, and in the hereafter he will be one of the losers.”
That is why I spend my life in Dawah for Muslim and non-Muslim area because this is the true religion of Allah that has been given to all mankind. The first big jihad for me was wearing of Hijab and abaya but alhamdulillah with the help of Allah I got my self-confidence of wearing in proper attire. Most of Christian friends say, what happened to you Zainab, you look like a ghost but I smile at them, and say you do not understand what you are talking about and it is better for you to study your Bible because even the Bible is very strict for the woman:
1 Corinthians 11:5-6 says

“But any woman who prays or prophesies with her head unveiled disgraces her head—it is one and the same thing as having her head shaved. For if a woman will not veil herself, then she should cut off her hair; but if it is disgraceful for a woman to have her hair cut off or to be shaved, she should wear a veil.”

If Christians read their Bible carefully and understand their Bible, all of them will become Muslims.

I now enjoy making my comparative study of religions and inshaAllah I am hoping to be like Ahmad Deedat, a good daeyah or preacher in our Islamic religion. Now, I am always hoping to focus on study in Arabic education inshaAllah if Allah gives me an opportunity to study in Saudi Arabia inshaAllah.

Please try to correct my English grammar. I hope that you can understand because I am not really good in English grammar.

Jazakallahu khairan.
Sister Zainab
Philippine

I received this email about Sister Zainab, above. It is one of many.

Salam Sir

I just read the story of sister Zainab. It was really a moving story and I have tears in my eyes while writing this. She is really a great Muslimah. I felt so bad when I came to know that how some of the Muslim brothers treated her. Such bros are dark spots of our society and sister should not care about them. She has done sabar over all that people have done to her. I do not know what to write...........actually I am so confused on what to say and what not..............I am sorry for this stupid mail.....

Just pray for me to have Emaan like her...
I am such a bad Muslim that I cannot grow even beard while this great sister of mine is observing full Hijab in a non-Muslim society....

This is my reply:

This is what Islamic youth awakening is all about. Converts are already awake. All converts whom I know are much better Muslims than most born Muslims. For example, when I need help in my website, most born Muslims offer many talks and no actions. AlHmad le Allah, I get all the help from converts.

I need your help. Spread the word.

Dr. Adel Elsaie

PRIESTS, RABBIS AND MISSIONARIES CONVERTS TO ISLAM

Source: http://www.usislam.org/converts/converts.htm

This is by no means a full list of priests, rabbis and missionaries converts to Islam:

- Prof. Abdul Ahad Dawud, Former Bishop of Uramiah, Formerly the Reverend David Benjamin Keldani, B.D.
- Abdullah al-Faruq - Formerly Kenneth L. Jenkins, minister and elder of the Pentecostal Church.
- Abu Ishaq, Coptic Cardinal accepted Islam.
- Anonymous Female Missionary - Former Catholic missionary.
- Anselm Tormeeda - 14th century CE scholar and priest.
- Dr. Gary Miller (Abdul-Ahad Omar) - Former missionary.
- George Anthony - Former Catholic priest.
- Ibrahim Khalil - Former Egyptian Coptic priest.
- Dr. Jerald F. Dirks - Former minister (deacon) of the United Methodist Church.
- Khadijah 'Sue' Watson - Former pastor, missionary, professor. Master's degree in Divinity.
- Martin John Mwaipopo - Former Lutheran Archbishop.
- Muslima, The Former Catholic Missionary (Burundi) I understood that the church was being deceitful.
- Rabbi Moisha Krivitsky of Makhachkala synagogue. ‘I live in the mosque’.
• Selma A. Cook, Australian Missionary’s Journey to Allah.
• S.M. SULAYMAN, (Former Baptist Church Minister), U.S.A.
• Viacheslav Polosin - Former Archpriest of the Russian Orthodox Church.
• Dr. Yahya A.R. Lehmann, Doctor of Theology, (Former Roman Catholic Priest Germany).

FAMOUS CONVERTS TO ISLAM

This is by no means a full list of famous converts to Islam:

From Christianity
• Abdul-Karim al-Jabbar (Sharmon Shah) - former NFL football player.
• Abu Tammam - 9th century Arab poet born to Christian parents.
• Abu Usamah - controversial American-born Imam of Green Lane Masjid in Birmingham, UK.
• Ahmad Rashād - Emmy award-winning sportscaster (mostly with NBC Sports) and former American football wide receiver.
• Ahmed Santos - Filipino, fugitive, founder of the Rajah Solaiman Movement.
• Ahmad Thomson - British barrister and writer and also a member of the Murabitun movement.
• Akhenaton - French rapper and producer of French hip hop.
• Alexander Litvinenko - former Russian spy converted to Islam on his deathbed.
• André Carson - former Baptist, second Muslim to serve the United States Congress.
• Anthony Green or Abdul Raheem Green, Converted from Catholicism to Islam and is now an Islamic lecturer.
• Art Blakey - American Jazz musician.
• Aukai Collins - fought in Chechnya, paid FBI informant, author of an autobiographical book.
• Benjamin Chavis - controversial former head of the NAACP; joined the Nation of Islam, which is not connected with traditional Islam in anyway.
• Bernard Hopkins - American boxer.
• Betty Shabazz - wife of Malcolm X; former Methodist.
• Bilal Philips - Islamic scholar and author.
• Bruno Metsu - French coach of the Senegal team at the 2002 FIFA World Cup.
• Cat Stevens the English singer of Greek ancestry.
• Count Cassius- Visigothic aristocrat who founded the Banu Qasi dynasty of Muladi rulers.
• Chris Eubank - British boxer.
• Chauncey Hawkins (Loon) Famous Singer.
• Claude Alexandre de Bonneval or Humbaracı Ahmet Paşa is 18th century French nobleman.
• Daniel Moore - poet.
• Danny Thompson - English double bass player converted from Catholicism.
• Danny Williams - British boxer.
• David Belfield - American, fled to Iran after assassinating Ali Akbar Tabatabai, an Iranian dissident.
• David Chappelle - comedian and television star.
• Dawud Wharnsby Ali (David Wharnsby) - Canadian singer/poet.
• Éric Abidal (changed his name to Bilal) - French football player, converted to Islam after marriage.
• Everlast - Rapper from the Irish-American hip-hop group House of Pain, converted From Catholicism.
• Lady Evelyn Zeinab Cobbold, I have always been a Muslim.
• Franck Ribéry- a French football player. His name after he converted to Islam is Bilal.
• Gabriele Torsello - Italian freelance photojournalist based in London who was abducted in Helmand Province, Afghanistan.
• George XI of Kartli - Saffavid commander.
• Germaine Lindsay - participated and died in the 7 July 2005 London bombings.
• Hamza Yusuf - American convert from Greek Orthodox; head of the Zaytuna Institute.
• Hedley Churchward - English painter.
• Hülya Kandemir, German Pop Singer Finds Destination in Islam.
• Ian Dallas - Shaykh Dr. Abdulqadir as-Sufi - Sufi sheikh of Scottish origins.
• Ibrahim Muteferrika (original name not known) - From Unitarian Christianity, an early example of a Muslim publisher and printer.
• Ilie II Rareş - prince of Moldavia.
• Isabelle Eberhardt - from Lutheran Christianity, 19th century explorer & writer
• Ivan Aguéli (Johan Agelii) - famous Swedish painter.
• Iyasu V - Ethiopian emperor.
• C. Jack Ellis - Mayor of Macon, Georgia.
• Jacques-Francois Menou - French general under Napoleon I of France.
• James Yee - previously Lutheran and former U.S. Army Muslim chaplain.
• Jean de Béthencourt - French explorer who led an expedition to the Canary Islands
• Jean-Louis Michon a French traditionalist scholar and translator.
• Jeffrey Lang, a mathematics professor in USA.
• Jermaine Jackson (Muhammad Abdul Aziz) - former member of The Jackson 5 and brother of pop stars Michael and Janet Jackson.
• Jérôme Courtailler - one of two French brothers convicted by French authorities in 2004 for abetting terrorists.
• Jill Courtney an Australian.
• Jimmy Cliff - Jamaican reggae musician.
• Joe Tex - soul singer and recording artist.
• Johann von Leers or Omar Amin was a German professor that worked with the Nazi Germany then Egypt.
• Johann Wolfgang Von Goethe, the greatest writer of the German tradition.
• St. John Philby - Arabist, explorer, writer and British colonial office intelligence operative; converted from Anglicanism.
• John Walker Lindh - the "American Taliban" converted From Catholicism.
• John Whitehead - an American singer, songwriter and record producer.
• John Nelson - first recorded Englishman to become a Muslim.
• Jonathan Birt, Jonathan Birt, the son of Lord Birt, former director-general of the BBC and Emma Clark, the granddaughter of former liberal prime minister Herbert Asquith.
• Jorvan Vieira (born May 24, 1953 in Duque de Caxias, Rio de Janeiro state, Brazil) is a Luso-Brazilian football manager.
• Joseph Thomas - Australian convert, acquitted of terrorism charges, placed under a control order under the Australian Anti-Terrorism Act 2005, currently pending retrial.
• Judar Pasha - conqueror of the Songhai Empire.
• Kareem Abdul-Jabbar (Lew Alcindor) - retired basketball player & the NBA's all-time leading scorer
• Keith Ellison - American, Representative from Minnesota's 5th congressional district, first Muslim to be elected to the United States Congress, converted From Catholicism.
• Kevin Barrett - university lecturer and member of scholars for 9/11 Truth.
• Khalid Yasin - Executive Director of the Islamic Teaching Institute and a Sheikh currently residing in Australia.
• Knud Holmboe - Danish journalist and explorer converted From Catholicism.
• Prof. Keith L. Moore, professor emeritus in the division of anatomy (department of surgery), former Chair of anatomy from 1974 to 1984 and associate dean for Basic Medical Sciences (Faculty of Medicine) at the University of Toronto, Ontario, Canada.
• Kristiane Backer, Former Christian & MTV Host Kristiane Backer, TV presenter and journalist based in London.
• Dolores "LaLa" Brooks - American musician.
• Lauren Booth, Tony Blair's sister-in-law converts to Islam after a 'holy experience' in Iran.
• Leo Tolstoy, A confession by the Russian giant in the world of literature.
• Mahmoud Abdul-Rauf (Chris Jackson) - retired basketball player.
• Malcolm X - American, from Christianity to Nation of Islam to Sunni Islam, African-American civil rights leader.
• Marmaduke Pickthall - famous translator of the Quran.
• Mario Scialoja - Italian ambassador and President of the World Muslim League.
• Dr. Maurice Bucaille, Author of "The Bible, The Qur'an and Science",
• Myriam Francois-Cerrah, British actress enchanted by Prophet's life.
• Matthew Saad Muhammad (formerly Matthew Franklin) - former boxer, converted From Catholicism.
• Michael Muhammad Knight - American novelist, writer and journalist.
• Michael Wolfe the American director.
• Miheana Turcitul - was a Prince (Voivode) of Walachia. Converted from Eastern Orthodox Christianity. Mohammad Yousuf - Pakistani cricketer. Known for holding the world record for the most Test runs in a single calendar year, converted From Catholicism.
• Mohammed Zakariya - an American master of Arabic calligraphy, best known for his work on the popular Eid U.S. postage stamp.
• Muhammad Abd-al-Rahman Barker (Philip Barker) - professor of Urdu, former chair of the University of Minnesota's Department of South Asian studies and creator of the Tékumel fantasy world.
• Muhammad Ali (formerly Cassius Clay), from Baptist to The Nation of Islam to Sunni Islam. Famous boxer.
• Muhammed al-Ahari born January 6, 1965 as Ray Allen Rudder is an American essayist, scholar and writer on the topics of American Islam, Black Nationalist groups, heterodox Islamic groups and modern occultism.
• Murad Wilfred Hofmann - NATO official, converted from Catholicism.
• Muriel Degauque a Belgian citizen
• Michael Jackson-officially said to have converted to Islam at a ceremony at Los Angels from Jehova's witness on 21st November.
• Nicolas Anelka - French football player.
• Nuh Ha Mim Keller - from Catholicism to agnosticism to Sufism, Islamic scholar.
• Queen Noor of Jordan (formerly Lisa Najeeb Halaby).
• Olu Dara (born Charles Jones III in Natchez, Mississippi on 12 January 1941) is an American cornetist, guitarist and singer.
• Omar Bongo - Gabonese, President of Gabon.
• Omar Pasha - Ottoman general. Converted from Serbian Orthodoxy.
• Omar Sharif – International Movie star, Best Actor, born Michael Demitri Shalhoub, converted From Catholicism.
• Peter Murphy - vocalist of the goth/rock group Bauhaus, converted From Catholicism.
• Poncke Princen - Dutch soldier, later human rights activist, converted From Catholicism.
• Preacher Moss - Former Baptist, American comedian and comedy writer.
• Radu cel Frumos - was the younger brother of Vlad Țepeș (Dracula) and prince of the principality of Wallachia, converted From Catholicism.
• René Guénon - French Author in the field of metaphysics, converted From Catholicism.
• Richard Colvin Reid - shoe bomber (convicted terrorist).
• Richard Thompson - British musician, best known for his guitar playing and songwriting.
• Robert D. Crane is the former adviser to the late President Richard Nixon and is former Deputy Director (for Planning) of the U.S. National Security Council.
• Robin Padilla - Filipino actor.
• Roger Garaudy - French philosopher, converted from Catholicism.
• Ronald Bell or Khalis Bayyan (born 1 November 1951, Youngstown, Ohio) is an American singer, composer and saxophonist.
• Rowland Allanson-Winn, 5th Baron Headley - British soldier and peer.
• Rudolf Carl von Slatin - Anglo-Austrian soldier and administrator in the Sudan.
• Rustie Lee - British television chef and celebrity.
• Ruqatiiyyah Waris Maqsood - British author, converted from Protestantism.
• Ryan G. Anderson - former Lutheran, convicted of charges of espionage.
• Ryan Harris - football player for the Denver Broncos.
• A.R. Rahman - Indian Composer and Musician from Tamil Nadu.
• Ron Brownz, rapper.
• Salman the Persian, a convert from Christianity who was previously Zoroastrian. In search for truth, he traveled to Syria to follow Christianity. Upon the death of his teachers, he was directed to head to Arabia, where he was told the final Prophet will rise. He later converted to Islam and became one of Muhammad's first companions.
• Sana al-Sayegh, dean of the Science and Technology Faculty at Palestine International University, converted to Islam in August 2007. Fatah has accused its political rival Hamas of forcing the professor to convert from Christianity, a charge Hamas denies.
• Sarah Joseph - commentator on women's issues and founder of emel magazine, converted from Catholicism.
• Brad Terrence Jordan ("Scarface") - American rapper.
• Silma Ihram - formerly a born again Baptist who is an Australian pioneer of Muslim education in the West, founder and former school Principal of the 'Noor Al Houda Islamic College', campaigner for racial tolerance and author.
• Siraj Wahaj - Former Baptist. African-American Imam, noted for his efforts to eliminate Brooklyn's drug problems.
• Sheila Musaji - founder of The American Muslim magazine.
• Suhaib Webb - American Islamic activist and speaker.
• Suleiman Pasha - French-born Egyptian commander.
• Tariq Abdul-Wahad (Olivier Saint-Jean) - originally from France, former basketball player for the Mavericks and Kings.
• Tawana Brawley (changed her name to Maryam Muhammad) - African American woman noted for claiming to have been raped by several white men, a claim determined to be a fabrication by a grand jury. Later in life she converted to Islam.
• Tekuder - Mongol leader of the Ilkhan empire who was formerly a Nestorian Christian.
• Thomas J. Abercrombie – photographer.
• Timothy Winter - prominent British Islamic thinker and scholar and a lecturer in Islamic studies in the Faculty of Divinity at the University of Cambridge.
• Top Topham - rock guitarist from England.
• Torquato Cardilli - Italian ambassador, converted From Catholicism.
• Vincenzo Luvineri - American rapper and the lyricist behind the Philadelphia underground hip-hop group Jedi Mind Tricks, converted From Catholicism.
• Wadih el-Hage born to a Maronite Christian family in Sidon, Lebanon, a former al-Qaeda member.
• William Abdullah Quilliam - 19th century British poet, ambassador and journalist.
• Willie Brigitte - French convert to Islam who associated with al-Qaeda in Pakistan and was possibly involved in a plot to conduct a terrorist operation in Australia.
• Yahiya Emerick - American Muslim scholar, President of the Islamic Foundation of North America, converted from Protestantism.
• Yasin Abu Bakr (Lennox Philip) - of Trinidad and Tobago, under trial for an attempted coup as of 9 March 2006.
• Yusuf Estes - Former preacher and federal prison chaplain, converted from Protestantism.
• Yvonne Ridley - British journalist, from Anglicanism. She converted after being kidnapped and released by the Taliban.
• Zaid Shakir - African-American Muslim speaker and intellectual in the United States.
• Zaganos Pasha - one of the prominent military commanders of Mehmet II (Mehmet the Conqueror) and a lala, at once an advisor, mentor, tutor, councilor, protector, for the sultan.
Islamic Strong Faith

From Judaism

- Abdullah ibn Salam - 7th century sahabi said to have been a rabbi of aristocratic stock.
- Ali ibn Sahl Rabban al-Tabari - 9th century Persian scholar physician (a hakim), who produced the first encyclopedia of medicine.
- Ali ibn Sahl Rabban al-Tabari - a well-known Jewish convert to Islam doctor, belonging to the famous medical school of Tabaristan or Hyrcania & a tutor of medicine to Abu Bakr Muhammad ibn Zakariyya al-Razi (known to the West as Rhazes).
- Hibat Allah Abu'l-Barakat al-Baghdadi - influential physicist, philosopher and scientist who wrote a critique of Aristotelian philosophy and Aristotelian physics.
- Ibn Kammina or was a 13th century physician (ophthalmologist) and philosopher who lived in Baghdad.
- Ibn Yahyā al-Maghribī al-Samaw'al was an Arab Muslim mathematician and astronomer of Jewish descent. His father was a Jewish Rabbi from Morocco, but al-Samaw'al converted to Islam.
- Jacob Querido - 17th century successor of the self-proclaimed Jewish Messiah Sabbatai Zevi.
- Jemima Goldsmith - daughter of the billionaire Sir James, that was married to Imran Khan.
- Leila Mourad - Egyptian singer and actress who rose to fame in the 1940s and 1950s.
- Lev Nussimbaum - prolific author on the topics of Middle East and Russian history; the Nazi propaganda ministry included his works on their list of "excellent books for German minds" before discovering he was an ethnic Jew.
- Mohammed Yusuf - a Jewish convert to Islam that fought in Bosnia.
- Muhammad Asad (Leopold Weiss) - Viennese journalist who became Pakistani ambassador to the United Nations, his son Talal Asad is an anthropologist at the City University of New York.
- Ibn Yahyā al-Maghribī al-Samaw'al - mathematician and astronomer who wrote critical works on Judaism, his former faith.
- Rashid al-Din - 13th century Persian physician.
- Sarmad - 17th century mystical poet and sufi saint, arrived from Persia to India, beheaded for assumed heresy by Aurungzebe.
- Suleyman Ahmad - an American journalist and author.
- Sultan Rafi Sharif Bey (Yale Singer) - a pioneer in the development of Islamic culture in the United States.
- Yaqub ibn Killis - 10th century Egyptian vizier under the Fatimids.
From Hinduism
- Parameswara - Malay prince of Palembang Hindu descent from Srivijaya that founded the Sultanate of Malacca around 1402.
- Dhiren Barot - convicted terrorist, who confessed to planning "to detonate a dirty bomb and launch an attack on London's Tube".
- Malik Kafur - Indian military general.
- Abdul Wahid Pedersen - Danish cleric.
- Sahaj Ram Sapru - the grandfather of the British-Indian Muslim Philosopher, Sir Dr. Muhammad Iqbal, who was an official in Kashmir during the administration of the Afghan Governor Azim Khan.
- Kamala Suraiyya (formerly Kamala Das) - Anglo-Malayalam writer.
- Sharmila Tagore - Bollywood film actress.
- Allah Rakha Rahman - Bollywood music director, Singer.

From Sikhism
- Ubaidullah Sindhi - religious leader and political activist.

From Paganism
- Berke - grandson of Genghis Khan and leader of the Golden Horde who was the first Mongol ruler to establish Islam in a Mongol state.
- David Myatt - from Paganism, former Neo-Nazi-activist.
- Negudar - Mongol general and noyan.
- Nogai Khan - Mongol general and great-grandson of Genghis Khan.
- Samori Ture - founder of the Wassoulou Empire who resisted French rule in West Africa.
- Sultan Satuq Bughra Khan - 9th century Uyghur ruler who was one of the first Turks to convert to Islam.
- Tuda Mengu - Mongol leader of the Golden Horde.

From Zoroastrianism
- Abdullah Ibn al-Muqaffa - author and translator of Kalīla wa Dimna from Middle Persian.
- Naubakht - Pahlavi translator of the Abassid court.
- Fadl ibn Sahl - Persian vizier of the Abassid era.
- Rattanbai Petit - second wife of Muhammad Ali Jinnah, the founder of Pakistan.
• Saman Khuda - founder of the Samanid dynasty, one of the first native Persian dynasties in the Middle East and Central Asia after the collapse of the Sassanids.

From Atheism
• A. R. Rahman (Initially raised Hindu, but was atheist as a teenager until conversion to Islam) - famous Indian music composer.
• Zhang Chengzhi - contemporary Hui Chinese author; raised as an atheist.
• Charles le Gai Eaton - British diplomat and writer.
• Yusuf Islam (Cat Stevens) - British musician and singer (had a nominally Christian upbringing, but never was a believer).
• Jeffrey Lang - American, Professor in the Department of Mathematics at the University of Kansas. (Raised Catholic, but atheist from age 18 to conversion).
• Martin Lings - a widely acclaimed British scholar. He was raised as a Protestant, became an atheist and later converted to Islam.
• Mos Def - American rapper and actor.

Undetermined former religion
• Nur al-Anwar al-Jerrahi (born Lex Hixon) - syncretist, Sufi convert and co-founder of the Nur Ashki Jerrahi Sufi Order in the United States.
• Abd al Malik - birth name Régis Fayette-Mikano - French rapper of Congolese origins.
• Mumia Abu-Jamal - journalist, Black Panther, political activist and although widely disputed, a convicted murderer.
• B.G. Knocc Out - American west coast rapper.
• Hasan Akbar (born Mark Fidel Kools) - American sentenced to death for the murder of two fellow soldiers during the 2003 U.S. invasion of Iraq.
• Maurice Béjart - French choreographer.
• Robert "Kool" Bell - musician.
• Ronald Bell - musician.
• Mohammed Knut Bernström - Swedish ambassador.
• Khaled Edward Blair - British barrister, later married Princess Badiya bint El Hassan of Jordan.
• Charles Brooks, Jr. - converted while serving a sentence for murder; first person to be executed by lethal injection in the United States.
• H. Rap Brown - civil rights activist.
- Titus Burckhardt - Swiss writer and scholar.
- Amir Butler - author, engineer and Islamic activist.
- Kérim Chatty - Swedish bodybuilding stuntman who was once suspected of attempted hijacking. The preliminary inquiry was dropped.
- Common - American rapper.
- Jill Courtney - Australian, girlfriend of convicted killer and drug trafficker Hassan Kalache, arrested on 26 March 2006 for attempted murder of unnamed people.
- Robert D. Crane - former Presidential advisor and ambassador.
- Ice Cube - Gangsta rapper and actor.
- Bob Denard - French mercenary.
- Jeffrey Mark Deskovic - served 15-year wrongful imprisonment sentence.
- Isabelle Eberhardt - explorer and writer.
- Baron omar Rolf von Ehrenfels - Austrian anthropologist and orientalist.
- Everlast - Irish-American rapper and singer-songwriter.
- Alys Faiz - human rights and peace activist; converted at the time of her marriage to Urdu poet Faiz Ahmed Faiz.
- Jeff Fort - former Chicago gang leader, co-founder of the Black P. Stones gang and founder of its El Rukn faction. He was convicted in 1987 of conspiring with Libya to perform acts of domestic terrorism.
- Philippe Fragione - French rapper and producer of French hip hop.
- Christian Ganczarski - Head of "al Qaeda in Europe".
- Philippe Grenier - (1865–1944) French doctor, first and only Muslim MP in France.
- Gigi Gryce - American saxophonist, flutist, clarinetist, composer, arranger and educator.
- Walt Hazzard - former NBA player.
- David Hicks - convicted Australian terrorist.
- Lim Yew Hock - Singapore’s second Chief Minister from 1956 to 1959.
- Craig Hodges - former NBA player.
- Ibrahim Hooper (Douglas Hooper) - Islamic activist, spokesman for the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR).
- Abdulllah Ibrahim - South African Jazz musician.
- Umar Islam - one of the suspects arrested in the UK in connection to the 2006 transatlantic aircraft terrorist plot in the United Kingdom.
- Malik ul Salih - established the first Muslim state of Samudera Pasai.
- Tiara Jacquelina - Malaysian actress.
- Ahmad Jamal - Jazz pianist.
- Jan Janszoon - Dutch pirate.
- Larry Johnson - retired American professional basketball player.
- Gustave-Henri Jossot - French caricaturist, illustrator and Orientalist painter.
- Vladimir Khodov - leader of the Beslan school hostage crisis-converted in prison.
- Abd al Haqq Kielan - Swedish cleric.
- Ghostface Killah - member of the Wu-Tang Clan.
- Begum Om Habibeh Aga Khan - born Yvette Blanche Labrousse, Miss France 1930, wife of Aga Khan III.
- Yusef Lateef - American Jazz musician.
- Johann von Leers - advisor to Muhammad Naguib known for his anti-Semitic polemics.
- Gary Legenhausen - American philosopher and writer.
- Brandon Mayfield - American attorney-at-law was erroneously linked to the 2004 Madrid train bombings.
- MC Ren - American rapper and hip-hop producer.
- Idris Muhammad - American jazz musician.
- John Allen Muhammad - convicted serial killer, known as the Beltway Sniper.
- Anthony Mundine - Australian Boxer.
- Abdul Alim Musa - Muslim activist and director of Masjid Al-Islam in Washington, D.C.
- Susanne Osthoff - German archaeologist who had worked in Iraq since 1991 and had been taken captive there for three weeks.
- José Padilla - the respondent in Rumsfeld v. Padilla currently on trial as an alleged al-Qaida operative, converted while in prison for aggravated assault.
- Sokollu Mehmet Paşa - Grand Vizier of Suleiman the Magnificent.
- Christopher Paul (aka Paul Kenyatta Laws aka Abdulmalek Kenyatta) - American citizen, alleged member of al-Qaeda.
- Charles John Pelham (Abdul Mateen), 8th Earl of Yarborough.
- Q-Tip - North American hip-hop emcee, actor and hip hop producer who was the leader of the critically acclaimed group a tribe Called Quest.
- Dwight Muhammad Qawi - former boxing world heavyweight champion.
- Jack Roche - convicted of involvement in an al-Qaeda plot to blow up the Israeli embassy in Canberra.
• Ilich Ramírez Sánchez - aka "Carlos the Jackal", convicted murderer and terrorist, currently in prison in France.
• Ibrahim Savant - one of the suspects arrested in the UK in connection to the 2006 transatlantic aircraft terrorist plot in the United Kingdom.
• Frithjof Schuon - metaphysician, poet, painter, philosopher (in the original and Platonic sense of this term) and a leading figure of the perennialist school.
• Stephen Schwartz - American journalist, columnist and author.
• Derrick Shareef - charged in a plot to set off four hand grenades in garbage cans 22 December at the CherryVale Mall in Rockford, Illinois during the Christmas rush.
• Sahib Shihab - jazz saxophonist and flautist.
• Divine Styler - American hip-hop musician.
• Nahshid Sulaiman - alternative hip hop artist.
• Apisai Tora - Fijian politician.
• Mike Tyson (Malik Abdul Aziz) - former heavyweight boxing champion of the world. Converted while in prison after being convicted of rape.
• Abdul Waheed (Don Stewart-Whyte) - accused of participating in the 2006 transatlantic aircraft plot.
• Jason Walters - of the Netherlands, member of the Hofstad Network, convicted on charges of terrorism.
• John Ward - (changed name to Yusuf Reis) British corsair and pirate.
• Rakan Ben Williams - suspected member of Al-Qaeda terrorist.
• Michael Wolfe - American poet, author and the President and Executive Producer of Unity Productions Foundation.
• Michael X - civil rights activist in the United Kingdom.
• Yusuf Chambers - U.K. based Da'ee of international fame. Yusuf Chambers is a young preacher from London, has greatly involved himself in many organizations in U.K. and outside like Peace TV, Islam Channel, Al-Jumuah magazine, Unity TV etc.
In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful.

164. Verily! In the creation of the heavens and the earth, and in the alternation of night and day, and the ships which sail through the sea with that which is of use to mankind, and the water (rain) which Allah sends down from the sky and makes the earth alive therewith after its death, and the moving (living) creatures of all kinds that He has scattered therein, and in the veering of winds and clouds which are held between the sky and the earth, are indeed Ayat (proofs, evidences, signs, etc.) for people of understanding.

(Quran 2:164)

There are over seven hundred Ayat in the Quran that deal with scientific facts. In the present time, we understand many of those Ayat. Other Ayat imply different meanings and we do not have enough information to interpret their meaning correctly. This subject of the scientific miracle of the Quran is becoming increasingly fascinating. The available amount of work is so voluminous and some of the studies are so scientifically detailed. It is very difficult to cover this huge subject in one book, let alone a chapter in a book. However, an attempt will be presented to introduce some of the recent advances in this subject.

The scientific verses in the Quran represent serious challenge to the atheists as well as the Christians. This challenge in no way represents a negative process, but a positive one that keeps humanity reflecting on the many miraculous signs of God as stated in the Quran. How else
can anyone explain that an unlettered Arab in the seventh century stated scientific facts that became known after fourteen centuries? Can there be any reasonable explanation except that the Creator of all realities revealed these facts to him? These verses also serve the purpose of providing Muslims with yet another proof of the Divinity of the Quran.

The history of the scientific miracles of the Quran goes back to the time of the revelation to Muhammad PBUH. The Prophet and his companions had interpreted some verses according to human perception at that time. Also, the Hadith of the Prophet include many statements that deal with life sciences. The accuracy of those scientific statements is quite astounding considering the fact that he was unlettered. Dr. Abdel Razik Nofal wrote one on the pioneering books on this subject in Arabic with the title “Allah and Modern Science.” The book was an original attempt to explain the following Ayah:

“Verily, all things have we created in proportion and measure (perfection).”

(Surah 54, Ayah 49)

The author concentrated on the proportions that relate to life on earth and how they represent a perfect balance provided by Allah. For example, the amount of oxygen in the air is perfect; if it is less, humans will not be able to breathe; if it is more, fires could start everywhere. Also the distance of the earth from the sun is perfect; if it is less, we will burn from the heat of the sun; if it is more, we will freeze. Potentially deadly radiation is kept at bay by the terrestrial atmosphere. Carbon dioxide and water vapor help warm the surface, but there is no runaway effect because both are perfectly recycled in various ways. On earth, complex life forms exist consisting of human, vegetable and animal life, from microscopic bacteria to huge elephants and from minute viruses to giant trees. Although the earth possesses a dense core surrounded by an outer crust and an atmosphere, it has this unique difference - life. During the twentieth century, it has become clear that life exists on earth only because conditions are perfect. Moreover, the chemical and biochemical environments are in perfect balance, to ensure not only the existence of living things but also their continuity.

During the last decades, the number of books and papers that deal with this subject, from Muslims and non-Muslims alike, increased tremendously. Many Muslims understood the orders from Allah to “read”, “look” and “think” as a call for a better appreciation of the Power of God. Also, Islamic institutions exist in countries such as Saudi Arabia, Pakistan and Egypt that focus on the scientific miracle in the Quran.
Before presenting some of the scientific miracles of the Quran, the following three points are emphasized:

This is not an attempt to prove that the Quran is authentic and scientifically correct because it includes physical facts that conform to some modern theories. However, it is inevitable that the Muslim scholars become enthusiastic when modern scientific theories conform to the Quran that was revealed fourteen centuries ago. Thus, some Muslim scientists may rush to judgment and attempt to authenticate the Quran to new theories. It should be understood that this process could be extremely dangerous because theories are changed or modified. The Quran does not need science to prove its correctness or authenticity. It is a Book of religion, worship and a way of life. But Allah in His great wisdom knows that a time will come when some people will raise the slogan that the time of religion has passed and the time of science has started. Therefore, the Quran has included over 700 Ayat that have direct connection with science that should be considered as a miracle from the Creator of science. The Quran proves that the present time of science and technology achieved facts that were revealed to an unlettered Prophet for all generations after him. It has Ayat that are incredibly accurate with broad spectrums of knowledge from embryology to cosmology that were only recently discovered. It should be understood that the Quran is the standard by which facts or theories are judged and not vice versa.

The second point deals with the interpretation of the Quran. All scientific Ayat in the Quran were not interpreted in detail fourteen centuries ago. There are two reasons for this:

• It would have not been understood because human capabilities were limited. There was not enough accumulated knowledge to explain; for example, the Big Bang.

• Humans can benefit from many things without knowing their details. For example, humans benefit from the rotation of the earth whether they know it or not. Most people benefit from TV, radios, lamps, remote controls, or cars without knowing how they work. Babies are born every second without any knowledge of embryology. Therefore, the scientific signs in the Quran are useful to mankind whether they were understood or not.

The third point is that, in most scientific verses, Allah addresses the unbelievers as a real challenge to them. These verses usually start by “Don’t the unbelievers see that….” The level of scientific knowledge in the seventh century is incomparable with that of our present time. What would be an honest explanation for an unlettered man, such as the Prophet
Muhammad, to include such scientific facts in the seventh century, when they only began to surface ten to fourteen centuries later? There are two possible explanations; he was either a scientific genius or the words were not his - making him only a messenger to spread the divine message. The Prophet Muhammad was never known to be a scientific genius. For the Muslim, the scientific miracle of the Quran is very comforting. It does not initiate faith, but it emphasizes it. Abraham, the father of the prophets had a similar experience narrated in Surah 2, Ayah 260. Abraham had complete faith in Allah’s power, but he wanted, with Allah’s permission, to authenticate his faith and soothe his mind and heart. Abraham wanted to see the process of resurrection, so Allah asked Abraham to cut four birds into pieces and mix them together. Abraham divided the pieces into four equal portions and put each portion on the top of a mountain. Allah asked Abraham to call upon the birds. With the permission of God, the birds came flying. Similarly, the scientific miracles in the Quran comfort the Muslim’s heart. However, to the unbelievers, it is a tremendous challenge that they will never be able to explain.

**Translation of the Quran**

The translated Quran is not the Quran and is not translated through inspiration from God. The translated Quran is not a substitute for the original Arabic Quran. It is only an attempt to help those who are trying to learn to read the Arabic text, since it is as close to the written text as possible. Translating the meanings of the whole Quran is a tremendous task. The Arabic language of the Quran is like an intimate symphony, the very sounds of which move people to tears and ecstasy. The rhetoric and rhythm of the Arabic of the Quran are so characteristic, so powerful and so highly touching that any human translation is bound to be an imperfect copy of the glittering splendor and the radiant beauty of the original text. Most Muslims believe that the Quran cannot be translated properly.

The attitude of the early Muslim community on the translation of the Arabic text of the Quran was ambivalent. Muslims were concerned that the translation of the Quran might be viewed as an exact translation of the authentic Words of God. During the rapid expansion era of Islam, many non-Arabs, who embraced Islam, believed truly in this great religion and felt the need to know and master the language of the Quran. Others knew just enough to perform the five daily prayers that have to be performed in Arabic. Muslims were also hesitant that translating the Quran might give new linguistic orientations to the contents of the revelation as, for example, what happened in the case of the New Testament. This could
lead to unforeseeable and adverse developments within the body of the Islamic religion itself.

The Muslim need for translating the Quran into English arose mainly out of the desire to resist the missionary effort. Following a long controversial tradition, part of whose goal was also the production of an erroneous and confusing European version of the Muslim scripture, Christian missionaries started their major offense against a politically humiliated Islam in the eighteenth century by advancing their own translations of the Quran.

Christian missionaries have been the most active non-Muslim translators of the Quran. Their goal was to introduce confusing translations with a hostile commentary of its own. Small wonder, then that these ventures are far from being a just translation, replete as they are with frequent transpositions, omissions, unaccountable liberties and unforgivable errors.

The first translation of the Quran into a western language was made by the English scholar Robert of Ketton in the twelfth century. It was completed in 1143 and enjoyed a considerable distribution in manuscript. It was developed during the time of the Crusades and just two years before the second expedition headed by Louis VII, 1145-47. This translation had numerous inaccuracies, confusions and misunderstandings and was inspired by hostile intentions. This translation served as the foundation of the later translations in European languages.

In 1647 Andre du Ryer of France published a French translation, Alcoran of Mahomet, the Prophet of the Turks. Two years later an English version of this was published by Alexander Ross, a chaplain of King Charles I. His intention was: “I thought good to bring it to their colors, that so viewing thine enemies in their full body, thou must the better prepare to encounter...his Alcoran.” Thomas Jefferson owned this translation. It is believed that this translation may have inspired Thomas Jefferson to write; “We hold these truths to be sacred and undeniable, that all men are created equal.”

In the same fanatical anti-Islamic vein are the two appendices in this work entitled as:

1. “A Needful Caveat or Admonition, for them if they desire to know what use may be made of or if there be danger in reading the Alcoran” (pp. 406).
2. “The Life and Death of Mahomet: the Prophet of the Turks and author of the Alcoran” (pp. 395-405).
George Sale, a lawyer brought out his The Koran commonly called The Al Koran of Mohammed, London, 1734, which has been the most popular English translation. Sale’s exhaustive “Preliminary Discourse,” dealing mainly with life of Muhammad and the Quran, reveals his deep hostility towards Islam and his missionary intent in that he suggests the rules to be observed for “the conversion of Mohammedans.” As to the translation itself, it exhibits numerous instances of omission, distortion and interpolations.

Dissatisfied with Sale’s work, J.M. Rodwell, Rector of St. Ethelberga, London, produced his translation entitled The Koran, London, 1861. Apart from hurling all sorts of wild and nasty allegations against the Prophet and the Quran in the preface, Rodwell introduced a “Bible-colored view” of the Quran Chronological order of the Quranic chapters that took preference over the Quranic order and inspiration. Moreover, his translation was full of grave mistakes and projects his own fanciful interpretations in his notes.

E.H. Palmer, a Cambridge scholar, was entrusted with the preparation of a new translation of the Quran for Max Muller’s Sacred Books of the East series. Accordingly, his translation, The Quran, appeared in London in 1880. As to the worth of Palmer’s translation, reference may be made to A. R. Nykl’s article, “Notes on E.H. Palmer’s The Quran”, published in the Journal of the American Oriental Society, 56 (1936) pp. 77-84 in which no less than 65 instances of omission and mistranslation in Palmer’s work have been pointed out.

Richard Bell, Reader of Arabic, University of Edinburgh and an acknowledged Orientalist produced a translation of the Quran with special reference to its Surah order, as is evident from the title of his work, The Quran translated with a critical rearrangement of the Surahs, Edinburgh, 1937-39. In addition to describing the Prophet as the author of the Quran, Bell also believes that the Quran in its present form was “actually written by Muhammad himself”. In rearranging the Surahs order of the Quran, Bell, in fact, made a thorough mess of the traditional arrangement and tried to point out “alterations substitutions and derangements in the text.”

A.J. Arberry, a renowned Orientalist and Professor of Arabic at the Universities of London and Cambridge, has been, so far, the latest non-Muslim translator of the Quran. Arberry’s The Koran Interpreted, London, 1957, no doubt stands out above the other English renderings by non-Muslims in terms of both its approach and quality. Nonetheless, it is not altogether free from mistakes of omission and mistranslation, such as in Al’ Imran III: 43, Nisa’ IV: 72, 147 and 157, Ma’ida V: 55 and 71,

N.J. Dawood is perhaps the only Jew to have translated the Quran into English. Available in the Penguin edition, Dawood’s translation, The Koran, London, 1956, is perhaps the most widely circulated non-Muslim English translation of the Quran. The author’s bias against Islam is readily observable in the Introduction. Apart from adopting an unusual Surahs order in his translation, Dawood is blameworthy also of having mistranslated the Quran in places such as Baqara II: 9 and A’raf VII: 31, etc.

No doubt, the circumstances which brought the Quran into contact with the English language have left their imprint on the non-Muslim as well as the Muslim bid to translate it. Unlike, for instance, major Muslim languages such as Persian, Turkish and Urdu, which have thoroughly exhausted indigenous linguistic and literary resources to meet the scholarly and emotional demands of the task, the abundant resources of the English language have not been fully employed in the service of the Quran.

The same rationale of the missionaries, however, applies to sectarian movements within Islam or even to renegade groups outside the mainstream of Islam, such as the Qadiyanis. This group was founded by Mirza Ghulam Ahmad Qadiyani in Punjab, India in 1880 AD, who declared himself a prophet of Islam and the promised messiah. He began to spread his heretical thoughts one year after the British invaded India. It is clear that it was encouraged by the British and rapidly spread by British spies with British money to destroy Islam from within. The Qadiyanis considerable translational activities are motivated by the urge to proclaim their ideological uniqueness.

The Qadiyanis, though having abandoned Islam, have been actively engaged in translating the Quran. Apart from English, their translations are available in several European and African languages. Muhammad Ali’s The Holy Quran: English Translation, Lahore, 1917, marks the beginning of this effort. This Qadiyani translator is blameworthy of misinterpreting several Quranic verses, particularly those related to the promised messiah, his miracles and the Quranic angelology. Similar distortions ruin another Qadiyani translation by Sher Ali, The Holy Quran: Arabic Text with English Translation, Rabwah, 1955. Published under the auspices of Mirza Bashiruddin Mahmud Ahmad, second successor of the “promised messiah” and head of the Qadiyanis, this oft-reprinted work represents the official Qadiyani version of the Quran. Unapologizingly, Sher Ali refers to Mirza Ghulam Ahmad as the
“promised messiah” and mistranslates and misinterprets a number of Quranic verses. Zafarullah Khan’s The Quran: Arabic Text and English Translation, London, 1970, ranks as another notable Qadiyani venture in this field. Like other Qadiyanis, Zafarullah too twists the Quranic verses to preach that the door of prophethood was not closed with the Prophet Muhammad. The projection of similar obnoxious views upon the Quranic text is found in the following Qadiyani translations, too:


Another cult was introduced by Rashad Khalifa, who also proclaimed himself as a prophet of Islam and formed a group called United Submitters International in Tucson, Arizona, whose belief rejects Hadith, “Saying of Prophet Muhammad.” He claimed to have discovered intricate numerical patterns in the Quran involving the number 19. He published The Quran: The Final Scripture, Authorized English Version, Tucson, 1978. In view of his blasphemous statements, no reputable Islamic Institution authorized his English Version!

In the present time, the “apparent” knowledge of TV Evangelists and Christian missionaries is credited to anyone of the above translation of the Holy Quran. These translations constitute the principal source of informed Western knowledge of Islam. This knowledge is not used to develop the relationship between the two faiths and emphasize their common heritage, but instead, is selectively deployed by TV Evangelists and Christian missionaries in their unreasonable assault against Islam.

Obviously, Muslims could not allow the missionary and heretical effort to go unopposed and unchecked. Hence, the Muslim decision to present a faithful translation of the Quranic text as well as an authentic summary of its teaching to the European world. Later, the Muslim translations were meant to serve even those Muslims whose only access to the Quranic revelation was through the European languages. Naturally, English was deemed the most important language for the Muslim purpose, not least because of the existence of the British Empire which after the Ottomans had the largest number of Muslim subjects.

Although there is a spate of volumes on the multi-faceted dimensions of the Quran, no substantial work has so far been done to critically examine the mass of existing English translations of the Quran. Even bibliographical material on this subject was quite scant before the fairly
recent appearance of World Bibliography of the Translations of the Meanings of the Holy Quran (Istanbul, OIC Research Centre, 1986), which provides authoritative publication details of the translations of the Quran in 65 languages. The late Indian Prof. Muhammad Hamidullah published in Paris a bibliography of Quran translations in 120 languages of the world, along with translations of the first chapter. He also did a comparative study of all three of the earliest copies of the Quran found in the world. One in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, another in Istanbul, Turkey and one in India Office Library, London, UK. All three have been traced back to the time of third Caliph Othman. Dr. Hamidullah stated that all three were written on a similar type of skin and look authentic for that period. He also said, after seeing bloodstains on the Turkish copy, that this was what Othman was studying from when he was killed.

Appended to the Cambridge History of Arabic Literature Volume 1, Arabic Literature to the End of the Umayyad Period, Cambridge university Press, 1983, is a bibliography of the Quran translations into European languages, prepared by J.D. Pearson, as is the latter’s article in the Encyclopedia of Islam. It is, however, of not much use to the Muslim.

Since none of the above-mentioned works is annotated, the reader gets no idea about the translator’s mental make-up, his dogmatic presuppositions and his approach to the Quran as well as the quality of the translation.

Similarly, the small chapter entitled ‘The Quran and Occidental Scholarship’ in Bell and Watt’s Introduction to the Quran (Edinburgh, 1970, pp. 173-86), although useful in providing background information to Orientalists’ efforts in Quranic studies and translations, more or less for the same reasons, is of little value to general Muslim readers. Thus, studies which focus on those aspects of each translation of the Quran are urgently needed lest Western scholars misguide the unsuspecting non-Arabic speaking readers of the Quran. An effort has been made in this survey to bring out the hallmarks and shortcomings of the major complete translations of the Quran.

The early English translations of the Quran by Muslims started mainly by the pious enthusiasm on their part to refute the allegations leveled by the Christian missionaries against Islam in general and the Quran in particular. Illustrative of this trend are the following translations:

1. Mohammad Abdul Hakim Khan, The Holy Quran: ‘with short notes based on the Holy Quran or the authentic traditions of the Prophet, or and New Testaments or scientific truth. All fictitious romance, questionable history and disputed theories have been carefully avoided’ (Patiala, 1905).
2. Hairat Dehlawi, The Koran Prepared, by various Oriental learned scholars and edited by Mirza Hairat Dehlawi. Intended as ‘a complete and exhaustive reply to the manifold criticisms of the Koran by various Christian authors such as Drs. Sale, Rodwell, Palmer and Sir W. Muir’ (Delhi, 1912); and Mirzal Abu’l Fadl, Quran, Arabic Text and English Translation Arranged Chronologically with an Abstract (Allahabad, 1912).

Since none of these early translations was by a reputed Islamic scholar, both the quality of the translation and level of scholarship are not very high and these works are of mere historical interest. Later works, however, reflect a more mature and scholarly effort.

Muhammad Marmaduke William Pickthall, an English man of letters who embraced Islam, holds the distinction of bringing out a first-rate rendering of the Quran in English, The Meaning of the Glorious Quran (London, 1930). It keeps scrupulously close to the original in elegant, though now somewhat archaic English. Although it is one of the most widely used English translations, it provides scant explanatory notes and background information. This obviously restricts its usefulness for an uninitiated reader of the Quran.

Abdullah Yusuf Ali’s The Holy Quran: Translation and Commentary (Lahore, 1934-37), perhaps the most popular translation, stands as another major achievement in this field. A civil servant by vocation, Yusuf Ali was not a scholar in the classical Muslim tradition. Small wonder, then, that some of his numerous notes, particularly on hell and heaven, angels, jinn and polygamy, etc. are informed with the pseudo-rationalist spirit of his times, as for instance in the works of S. Ahmad and S. Ameer Ali. His overemphasis on things spiritual also distorts the Quranic worldview. Against this is the fact that Yusuf Ali, doubtless, was one of the few Muslims who enjoyed an excellent command over the English language. It is fully reflected in his translation. Though his is more of a paraphrase than a literal translation, yet it faithfully represents the sense of the original.

Abdul Majid Daryabadi’s The Holy Quran: with English Translation and Commentary (Lahore, 1941-57) is, however, fully cognate with the traditional Muslim viewpoint. Like Pickthall’s earlier attempt, it is a faithful rendering, supplemented with useful notes on historical, geographical and eschatological issues, particularly the illuminating discussions on comparative religion. Though the notes are not always very exhaustive, they help to dispel the doubts in the minds of Westernized
readers. However, it too contains inadequate background information about the Surahs and some of his notes need updating.

The Meaning of the Quran (Lahore, 1967), the English version of Sayyid Abul A’la Mawdud’i’s masterwork, the Urdu “Tafhim al-Quran” is an interpretative rendering of the Quran which remarkably succeeds in recapturing some of the majesty of the original text. Since Mawdudi, a great thinker, enjoyed rare mastery over both classical and modern scholarship, his work helps one develop an understanding of the Quran as a source of guidance. Apart from setting the verses/Surahs in the circumstances of its time, the author constantly relates, though exhaustive notes, the universal message of the Quran to his own time and its specific problems. His logical line of argument, generous sensibility, judicious use of classical Muslim scholarship and practical solutions to the problems of the day combine to show Islam as a complete way of life and as the Right Path for the whole of mankind. Since the translation of this invaluable work done by Muhammad Akbar is pitiably poor and uninspiring, the much-needed new English translation of the entire work is in progress under the auspices of the Islamic Foundation, Leicester.

The Message of the Quran by Muhammad Asad (Gibraltar, 1980) represents a notable addition to the body of English translations couched in chaste English. This work is nonetheless vitiated by deviation from the viewpoint of the Muslim orthodoxy on many counts. Averse to take some Quranic statements literally, Asad denies the occurrence of such events as the throwing of Abraham into the fire, Jesus speaking in the cradle, etc. He also regards Luqman, Khizr and Zulqarnain as ‘mythical figures.’ Apart from these flaws, this highly readable translation contains useful, though sometimes unreliable background information about the Quranic Surahs and even provides exhaustive notes on various Quranic themes.

The fairly recent translations The Quran: The First American Version (Vermont, 1985) by another native Muslim speaker of English, T.B. Irving, marks the appearance of the latest major English translation. Apart from the detestable title, the work is deprived of textual and explanatory notes. Although modern and forceful English has been used, it is not altogether free of instances of mistranslation and loose expressions. With American readers in mind, particularly the youth, Irving has employed many American English idioms, which, in places, are not befitting of the dignity of the Quranic diction and style.

Some highly useful work in the translation of the Quran had been done earlier by Professor Hamidullah, whose contribution in this field includes his translation of the Quran in French, “Le Saint Coran”. It is

In addition to the above, there are also a number of other English translations by Muslims, which, however, do not rank as significant ventures in this field. They may be listed as:

- Mahmud Y. Zayid, The Quran: An English Translation of the Meaning of the Quran (checked and revised in collaboration with a committee of Muslim scholars) (Beirut, 1980).

It is important to use a translation that has been approved by Reputed Islamic Organization. Islamic Research Academy, General Department For Research, Writing & translation of the Al-Azhar, Cairo Egypt and The ministry of Islamic affairs, Endowments, Call and Guidance of Saudi Arabia recommend the following English translations:

However, the introductions of these translations warn the reader that human translation of the Quran cannot escape the defects and drawbacks that are inherent in every human endeavor and request the reader to furnish King Fahd Complex with any mistakes, omission or addition that he or she may find in the translation.

Translating the whole Quran is a tremendous task. It requires scholars who are fluent in the Arabic language and the language to which the Quran is being translated. It also requires knowledge of the grammar of the two languages. If the translation is intended for those who are blessed with faith or for those who seek the basics of Islam, then the existing translations are a great dose of faith and spiritual guidance. May Allah rewards the translators of the Quran for their efforts in spreading the Words of God. If, on the other hand, the translation is intended to address the scientific miracles, the knowledge and mastering of the Arabic language is crucial as indicated in the case of the French surgeon Maurice Bucaille. He studied the Quran with an open mind for ten years. The purpose of his study was to form an opinion about contradictions in the Quran. He studied the Arabic language. Then after ten years of research, he declared in his books that he did not find one single scientific contradiction in the Quran. Another approach for the scientific translation of the Quran is to have an organization consisting of specialists of all branches of science such as cosmology, medicine, geology, anatomy and engineering, as well as Islamic studies.

Some non-Muslims scholars claim that the “translated” Quran contradicts scientific known facts. There are many reasons for that. First, there may exist a conflict of theological interest. Second, the lack of knowledge of the Arabic language and its grammar can mislead the meaning of some verses. Also, the translation of the Quran to other languages may be, in some verses, difficult, thus not conveying the Arabic meaning of short sentences. Allah is the only Author of the Quran and there are no contradictions in the Quran. Translations of the Quran are nevertheless the work of highly eminent Arabists. It is well known fact, that a translator, however an expert, is liable to make human mistakes in the translation of a highly specialized scientific Ayah, unless he happens to be a specialist in the discipline in question.

An example of translating scientific verses in the Quran deals with the definition of the building block of all matters. Atoms were assumed to be the smallest unseen part of matter. Neither the atom nor its components can be seen. However, each atom has a weight and scientists discovered the constituents of the atom. In one such Ayah, Allah addresses the unbelievers with a challenge about the weight and components of atoms:
“The unbelievers say’ ‘never for us will come the Hour (Day of Judgment): say, Nay. But most surely, by my Lord, it will come upon you by Him who knows the unseen. From Whom is not hidden the weight of an atom in the heavens or on earth: nor is there anything less than that or greater, but is in the Record Perspicuous’”

(Surah 34, Ayah 3)

The available translation refers to the above Arabic words “the weight of an atom” as “the least little atom,” and the word “weight” is taken out. This demonstrates the difficulty in translating the Quran. Thank God, anyone can refer to the original Arabic text and get better translation. From the above Ayah, one can state the following:

- The atom is unseen.
- The atom is not the smallest thing in the universe.
- The atom has a weight.

Ancient commentators considered the weight of the atom to be equal to the weight of an ant! They believed this because the ant is the smallest thing that can be seen with the human eye. However, this is not correct because the Ayah clearly refers to the unseen not the seen ant. When the fourth Caliph, Ali, the cousin of the Prophet, was asked about the meaning of the atom, he said:

“If we look inside the atom, any atom, we will see a sun in its core.”

This statement, showing the spiritual vision of Ali, was never understood until the twentieth century. But it clearly simulates the atomic structure with that of the solar system.

In my attempt to address the subject of the scientific miracles of the Quran, I tried to use the existing English translations. In many places, I found difficulty in using these translations. The following are some examples:

1. Stars are translated as planets and planets are translated as stars.
2. The basic rules of the conjunctions in the Arabic language are not translated correctly. For example, existing translations do not address the difference between Arabic conjunctions “fâ” and “thumma”. The first implies immediate succession, while the second implies succession after a delay in time and this can make a big difference in some branches of science such as cosmology and embryology.
3. Some translators do not reflect the actual Arabic meaning or are unable to grasp the scientific meaning. For example, God states that He is expanding the universe; this is translated as the universe is “so
expanse, to make wider, more spacious, to extend, to expand, we give generously.”

Finally, there are rules for interpreting the Quran. The basic rule is that the Quran interprets itself. This implies that the words are divinely inspired; so any text can be interpreted in the light of other texts where the same word exists. Moreover, the statements of Muhammad interpreted many verses of the Quran. He was the living example of the teaching of the Quran.

THE DIVINE BIG BANG

History of the universe is divided into three distinct phases: the start, the expansion and the end. The Quran deals with these phases in astounding descriptions. The Quran refers to the start of the Big Bang in two short Ayat, presenting an accurate summary to the conditions that led to creating the universe:

“Do not the unbelievers see that the heavens and the earth were joined together (as one unit of creation) before We clove them asunder?.”

(Surah 21, Ayah 30)

“Then He turned to the sky and it had been (as) smoke.”

(Surah 41, Ayah 1)

In the first Ayah, Allah declares clearly that the universe (the skies and the earth) was joined together and then Allah caused it to explode. There is a very important choice of words in the original Arabic text whose
translation is given above. The Arabic word *ratq* translated as “joined together” means “mixed in each, blended” in Arabic dictionaries. It is used to refer to two different substances that make up a whole. The phrase “We clove them asunder” is the verb *fataqa* in Arabic and implies that something comes into being by tearing apart or destroying the structure of *ratq*. In this Ayah, skies and earth are at first subject to the status of *ratq* and then they exploded. Intriguingly, cosmologists speak of a “cosmic egg” that consisted of all the matter in the universe prior to the Big Bang. In other words, all the heavens and earth were included in this egg in a condition of *ratq*. This cosmic egg exploded violently causing its matter to *fataqa* and in the process created the structure of the whole universe.

The accuracy of the Arabic words of such divine description of starting the universe is well beyond comprehension. A cosmic fact was revealed to an unlettered Arab that took humanity one thousand and four hundred years to discover. This Ayah addresses the unbelievers with an overwhelming challenge. No one can claim that Muhammad had knowledge of spectroscopic observations or he had instruments to measure cosmic background radiation. Also, he was not a genius mathematician. This Ayah, as with many of the scientific miracles in the Quran, addresses the unbelievers in a strong challenge. If they could not use their inherent intuition to figure out the existence and the uniqueness of One Creator, then they can listen to an unlettered Arab explaining the creation of the universe.

![Figure 3.2 - The Horsehead Nebula is a dark nebula located in Orion. It is visible only because it lies above a lighter background.](image)

[Figure 3.2 - The Horsehead Nebula is a dark nebula located in Orion. It is visible only because it lies above a lighter background.]
In the second Ayah, Allah describes the sky, after the explosion, as a smoke, not a cloud or fog, but smoke. To emphasize the importance of the smoke, the title of this Surah is “The Smoke.” In the past, cosmologists used to describe the gaseous state of the young universe as a cloud or fog. Only recently, has the word “smoke” been coined, because it is closely descriptive of the initial gaseous state. The definition of smoke is a suspension of particles in a hot gaseous medium. This is truly the perfection of the Quran in choosing the closest words to describe an event. The word smoke could indicate that just after the Big Bang, the formation of planets and stars took different directions from the start. Planets were formed from the suspended particles of the smoke, while the stars were formed from the hot gases. This is quite possible since the structure of stars is different from that of the planets. The sun for example consists of 73.5 percent hydrogen and 25 percent helium, (Ronan, 1991). These gases were formed in the first few minutes after the Big Bang and the rest of which is the product of the nuclear reactions in the sun. There are also traces of heavier atoms such as oxygen, carbon, iron, magnesium and so on. None of these traces of elements account for even 1 percent of the weight of the sun. On the other hand, the earth is made up of over a hundred elements with a nickel-iron core. Oxygen, hydrogen, nitrogen, carbon and other elements that exist in earth and its atmosphere were all united as compound particles that existed in the original phase of the smoke. When the earth changed from the smoke phase to liquid phase during the cooling process of the universe, the compound particles reserved their composition in a melted state and inert gases escaped from the earth. The atmosphere with its water vapor was formed from the gases produced during the cooling process of the Earth’s crust. The earlier assumption that the Earth evolved from the sun is no longer accepted.

Allah again challenges the unbelievers by adding some details to the creation sequence as follows:

“Say: Is it that ye deny Him Who created the earth in two days? And do ye join equals with Him? He is the Lord of (all) the Worlds. He set on the (earth) mountains standing firm, high above it and bestowed blessings on the earth and measured therein its sustenance in four days, alike for (all) who ask. Then He turned to the sky and it had been (as) smoke. He said to it and to the earth: come ye together, willingly or unwillingly. They said: we do come together in willing obedience. So He completed them as seven firmaments in two days and He assigned to each heaven its duty and command.”

(Surah 41, Ayah 9-120)
The above Ayat begin by addressing the unbelievers by giving them a difficult passage, describing the primal creation of the earth and the skies around us. If we count two days for the creation of the earth, four days for stabilizing, blessing and providing its sustenance, two days for making the seven skies, we get a total of eight days, while in all other verses of the Quran, creation is stated clearly in six days. This is a fascinating example of verses that may have a different interpretation. Some commentators understand the four days of providing the earth with its needs to include the two days of creating the earth. This could be reasonable because the process of completing the earth forms a chain of events. In the first step it is the creation of the formless earth; in the second step it is the gradual evolution of the form of the earth, its mountains and seas and its animal and vegetable life with a perfect balance. In the above Surah 21, Ayah 30, the Quran states that the earth and the skies exploded together from a compressed state. In Surah 11, Ayah 9-12, the creation of the earth and its development are mentioned first; and the making of the sky into seven firmaments is mentioned last. The two statements are not inconsistent because it is stated that when the sky was made into seven firmaments, it had existed previously as smoke: “Then He turned to the sky and it had been (as) smoke.” Non-Muslim critics who claim that this Ayah contradicts the known six-day period of creation misinterpret this part of the Ayah. They claim that the creation period in this Ayah adds up to eight days and therefore the Quran contradicts itself. They simply choose to ignore the statement that God turned to the sky and He ordered the sky and the earth to obey His Laws. How can He turn to the sky and order it to obey His Laws if it did not exist yet? Again, the miracle of these Ayat is that Allah addresses the unbelievers who search for anything to confuse the issue of God as the Creator of this universe.

Therefore the development of the Big Bang could have taken the following sequence:

- Explosion of a fantastically dense and fantastically hot matter.
- Planets and skies existed as smoke. The earth existed as a formless state and the sky existed as a gas. This process took two days.
- Providing the earth with mountains, seas, blessing and its sustenance took another two days. Thus completing the creation and readiness of the earth in four days.
- God ordered the earth and the sky to obey His physical laws.
- The sky was made into seven firmaments in two days.
And Allah knows the best.
Who told Muhammad that? How could anyone explain the fact that Muhammad said these words in the seventh century? It was a revelation from the Mighty Creator.

**THE EXISTING UNIVERSE IN THE QURAN**

The Quran is full of reflections on the heavens. Instead of a continuous narration, there are verses scattered all over the entire Book which deal with certain aspects of creation and provide information on the successive events marking its development with varying degrees of details. To gain a clear idea of how these events are presented, the scattered verses must all be examined together. This is quite easy now, since there are dictionaries for all the words in the Quran and one can obtain all the Ayat that deal with a particular subject. Again, it is extremely important to keep in mind that the Quran is a Divine Book and not a science book. These verses are scattered in many chapters to serve the purpose of reflection on the Glory of the Almighty in many places and in many times. Occasionally, one listens to the Quran without grasping the divine meaning of the verse. When one is ready to receive and feel the meaning of a certain Ayah, then this becomes a great spiritual experience.

**The Expansion**

![Figure 3.3 - SuperNova / Acceleration Probe (SNAP) will measure the rate of expansion of the universe by looking at distant supernovae as they recede.](image-url)
Expansion of the universe is one of the most awesome discoveries of the twentieth century. The evidence for expansion of the universe are so powerful to the extent that it is considered a fact. The discussions of cosmologists are focusing now on the mechanism and the factors that affect this expansion.

Allah refers to the expanding universe in the following verse:

“We have built the firmaments with might and we indeed have vast power.”

(Surah 51, Ayah 4)

The above translation does not reflect the actual meaning of the Ayah. Any Arab speaking person will translate the above verse as follows:

“We have built the skies with might and we indeed are expanding (them)”.

The Arabic verb used means continually expanding and refers to the previous noun that is the skies. Other translations of this verb include “width and generosity” and “to make them wider.” One of the translations called “The choice” or in Arabic “Montakhab”, stated clearly its meaning that the universe is expanding.

The fact is that Allah described the expansion of the universe in a short sentence. Muhammad stated this fact that took humanity ages to discover and measure. Who told him that? This fact could not be envisioned in the seventh century and authored by an unlettered Arab when he had no previous knowledge about cosmology. It must have been a divine inspiration!

**Interstellar Material**

Throughout the Quran, Allah refers to the skies and the earth and what is between them:

“We created not the heavens, the earth, and all that in between them, but for just ends.”

(Surah 15, Ayah 85)

“We created the heavens and the earth and all between them in six days, nor any sense of weariness touch us.”

(Surah 50, Ayah 38)
What is in between the skies and the earth? The creation of the universe occurred by condensing the material of the primary nebula followed by its division into fragments that constituted the primary Protogalaxies, the first celestial bodies. The latter split up into galaxies, stars and planets. The concept of having some form of interstellar material was recently introduced to account for the huge missing mass of the universe. Does this interstellar material consist of cosmic strings that, if they exist, have tremendously dense matter and energy? Does this interstellar material consist of neutrinos or black holes? Here we are in the twenty-first century and we just do not know what this ghost matter is. Their more scientific name is “interstellar material” There is no doubt now that interstellar material exists and it can be imagined as bridges of material between or inside galaxies.

Figure 3.4 - Interstellar Material

Until recently, no one ever dreamt of a matter of such magnitude and weight existed. Yet an unlettered Arab in the seventh century spoke of this very same interstellar material. If he were the author of the Quran, how did he come up with such a concept that was only discovered recently? The exact nature of this interstellar material is still unknown. These findings should further stimulate an attempt to understand and dissect each word of the Quran very carefully, thus shedding light on what we still do not know. And God Knows the Best.
The Black Holes

Figure 3.5 - Space-time diagrams of the sun, white dwarf, Neutron star and black hole. Space-time diagrams for a white dwarf, a neutron star, a black hole. Space-time diagrams for a white dwarf, a neutron star, a black hole.

In Surah 81, Ayah 15-16 Allah states in 5 Arabic words:

“So verily I call to witness the planets (stars) that recede. Go straight, or hide”

A literal translation of the above Ayat could be stated as follows:

“So verily I swear by the hidden stars that move and vacuum”

These Ayat refer to stars that recede and become hidden. This type of stars was not known until recently. Only in the last decades, Muslim scientists started examining these Ayat and concluded that these objects are the black holes. Black holes are objects with gravitational pulls so intense that light cannot escape from them. This is why such objects are now called black holes. One Muslim scientist defined the black hole as a super giant vacuum cleaner. Some astrophysicists believe that minute black holes could have been formed from very dense matter crushed together at an early stage of the Big Bang. But black holes of larger masses probably exist in the central region of spiral and elliptical galaxies. Others suggest that black holes formed after the catastrophic collapse of very large stars. God Knows the Best.
The Conquest of Space

Some people believe that mentioning the subject of jinn is unscientific and superstitious. Their usual argument is that if something exists, then we should be able to measure, analyze and examine it. It should also conform to our known laws of physics, as if we have discovered every law in the universe. These idle ideas represent a severe limitation to the vision and imagination of mankind. Yet, if one approaches this subject with an open mind, the existence of jinn can solve many of the unresolved mysteries or phenomena that we dare to explain without any evidence.

For the conquest of space, five Ayat in the Quran in two Surat should command our full attention. The first expresses, without any trace of ambiguity, what jinn and men collectively should and will achieve in this field:

“O ye assembly of Jinns and men! If it be ye can pass beyond the zones of the heavens and the earth, pass ye! Not without authority shall ye be able to pass! Then which of the favors of your Lord will ye deny? On you will be sent (O ye evil ones twain!) a flame of fire (to burn) and a smoke (to choke): no defense will ye have.”

(Surah 55, Ayah 33-35)

The translation given here requires some explanatory comments:

1. The condition in the first sentence is for the achievable hypothesis (Arabic, “in”), which clearly means that conquest of space is achievable with power. The Quran therefore suggests the material
possibility of this concrete realization. This subtle linguistic distinction formally rules out the mystic interpretation that some have accepted. This mystic interpretation suggests that evil things, such as fire and molten brass, will punish the evil spirits.

2. God is addressing the jinn and mankind and not allegorical figures, as some may suggest.

3. The Arabic literal word for “to pass” in the above Ayat is “to penetrate” which means to “to pass right through and come out of the other end.” It therefore suggests a deep penetration and emergence at the other end of the regions in questions.

4. The power that jinn and man will use to achieve their goal would seem to come from the Lord, since the following sentence is an invitation to recognize the Lord’s blessing. That power could well be the science that Allah taught us.

5. If jinn or man penetrate deep in space beyond certain limits, God will send a flame of fire or molten brass on them.

We know that jinn have more power of motion than man does. They may have attempted to cross certain limits and were returned back by flames of fire. The reference to molten brass may refer to some metallic meteors that come from all direction of space. There can be no doubt that these Ayat indicate that humans will travel deep in space and not just in the immediate atmosphere of the earth.

In the second Surah, God is speaking of the unbelievers in Mecca, as follows:

“Even if we opened out to them a gate from heaven and they were to continue (all day) ascending therein, they would only say: Our eyes have been intoxicated: Nay, we have been bewitched by sorcery.”

(Surah 15, Ayah 14-15)

The conditional “if” in above Ayat is an unachievable hypothesis for the unbelievers of Mecca. These Ayat express astonishment at a remarkable spectacle, different from anything man could imagine.

The Quran presents two passages when addressing the conquest of space

• One of them refers to what will one day become a reality, thanks to the powers of intelligence and ingenuity that God gave to jinn and man.

• And the other describes an event that the unbelievers of Mecca will never witness; hence its character is a condition that will never be realized by them. Others will however see the event, as referred
to in the above first Surah. It describes the human reaction to the unexpected spectacle that space travelers will see: their confused sight as in drunkenness and the feeling of seeing magic.

The second Surah expresses exactly how astronauts have experienced this remarkable adventure since the first human space flight around the earth in 1961. It is a known fact now that once a human is above the earth’s atmosphere, the skies no longer have the azure appearance we see from earth. This is due to the phenomena of absorption of the sun’s light into the layers of the atmosphere. The sun’s light consists of different frequencies. Human eyes can detect a certain range of these frequencies that are translated by the brain in the known spectrum of light: red, orange, yellow, green, blue, and purple. Red color has long wavelength and can penetrate easily through the earth’s atmosphere. Blue color has short wavelength and cannot penetrate the earth’s atmosphere. Therefore, blue color tends to disperse and reflect on the small particles that exist in space. We, on earth, see the reflection of that blue color in the sky. But the human observer in space above the earth’s atmosphere sees a black sky and the earth seems to be surrounded by a halo of bluish color due to the same phenomena of absorption of light by the earth’s atmosphere. The moon has no atmosphere however and therefore appears in its true color against the black background of the sky. It is a completely new spectacle that human observers in space are not accustomed to. Now the photographs of this spectacle have become well known and famous to the present-day man.

Here again, it is extremely difficult not to be impressed, when comparing the text of the Quran to the data of modern science, by statements that simply cannot be ascribed to the thought of an unlettered Arab who lived more than fourteen centuries ago.

THE END OF THE UNIVERSE IN THE QURAN

Allah stated the facts about the Big Bang and the expansion of the universe. This is simply because He is the Creator of the Big Bang and the cause of the expansion. These two facts were stated in the Quran in short Ayat.

In any direction they look, astronomers see galaxies moving away from us. It may be assumed that this expansion will continue forever, with galaxies becoming more and more thinly dispersed. However, the theory of relativity and physics of the cosmos derived from it predicts that the end of the universe can follow only three possibilities:
1. The universe may expand to a maximum, before converging again. This is called the Big Crunch.
2. The galaxies may spread apart with the radius of the universe reaching infinity after infinite time.
3. The radius of the universe reaches a certain value (not infinite) and finally stops expanding after infinite time.

An attempt to resolve this mystery is based upon whether or not the universe is surrounded by a huge boundary. Depending upon the location and the properties of this boundary, the universe may reverse to the Big Crunch if the boundary is extremely solid. This is like throwing a ball on a rigid wall. The name for this event, according to cosmologists, is the Big Bounce that will be followed by the Big Crunch. If the boundary of the universe is not strong enough, the impact of the expanding universe will overcome the boundary and the universe will increase its radius forever or reach a certain radius and stop after infinite time. However, there are many problems with this model. Where is this boundary? And what exists on the other side of the boundary?

Prediction of the future of the universe represents fascinating intellectual problems, the answer of which may not be in the realm of human capabilities. However, the summary of our present situation can be stated as follows: “What we really have is local events, based upon limited measurements that are not precise and we are trying to extrapolate those local events to solve global universal events.” The following examples represent some analogies from our daily life of what we are trying to achieve.
From our observations of the weather in a small place on earth during a limited time, we are trying to predict the weather on earth until eternity.

By studying an earthquake in one city on earth that happened at a certain time in the past, we are trying to establish a complete picture of all the future earthquakes in all places at all times. In the above two examples, it seems that we have all the information that we need to establish an accurate prediction of the weather or earthquakes. We live on earth. We know the rules of movement of cold and warm fronts. We have good foundations in aerodynamics. We can get the properties of the earth. We know how an earthquake starts. And above all, we have a long history of information on weather and earthquakes. So, why cannot we predict weather or earthquakes precisely? The answer is that these two problems are very complicated and we just do not know how to solve them.

Studying life and death of the stars is a very difficult process, because cosmologists cannot examine the development of stars from life to death. This cycle is estimated to take billions of years. Besides, all information received from a star comes from the surface and not its core. Then, we use the information from the surface to predict what happened inside the core. Allah refers to death of stars as follows:

"Then when the stars become dim."
(Surah 77, Ayah 8)

"When the stars fall, losing their luster."
(Surah 81, Ayah 2)

The above two Ayat state that all stars, including our sun will become faint and fade away. What kind of stunning statements are those in the Quran!

As stars and planets have different structures and different birth processes, they also have different ends.

"When the stars (planets) are scattered."
(Surah 82, Ayah 2)

"When the earth is shaken to her (utmost) convulsion, And the earth throws up her burdens (from within), And man cries (distressed): ‘What is the matter with her?.’"
(Surah 99, Ayah 1-3)
The above Ayat describe the death of planets and the earth by huge earthquakes, accompanied by volcanic eruptions, throwing away enormous boulders and lava from beneath the crust of the earth. They are thrown up as if they were a burden to the earth personified. So in the great and final convulsion, the dead who had been buried and forgotten will rise and will be crying in distress about what is happening.

The end of the universe as a whole is referred to in the Quran in many verses, as follows:

“The Day that We roll up the heavens like a scroll rolled up for books. Even as we produced the first creation, so shall we produce a new one.”

(Surah 21, Ayah 10)

“And the sun and moon are joined together.”

(Surah 75, Ayah 9)

In the first Ayah, Allah states that before the Day of Judgment, the heavens will be rolled up as the scrolls are rolled up. And in the second Ayah, He stated that the sun and the moon will be joined together. This can be a reference to stopping the expansion of the universe, and collapsing it all. Most likely, this is a reference to the recent theory of the Big Crunch. And Allah knows the best.

Scientists tell us the end of the universe is going to happen after billions of years. The cosmic model that they are using is missing a great deal of information, the least of which is the mass of the universe. This concept introduces in the human mind that the Day of Judgment is far away and we have nothing to be concerned about. No one really knows when the end will come. The Creator of all the physical laws can certainly stop these laws, or create another set of laws that fit the Big Crunch. Another possibility is that the existing cosmos has phantom interstellar objects and that the Big Crunch may happen at any time. The Creator of this whole universe said:

“And Our Command is but a single Word, like the twinkling of an eye.”

(Surah 54, Ayah 50)

In this Ayah, Allah tells us that the execution of His Command, any Command, is like the twinkling of an eye, which is the shortest time a simple human can imagine: the closing of the eyelids and their reopening are all almost like a simultaneous act. In Allah’s Command,
the word “Be” includes everything, without the intervention of, or the
dependence upon any other being or thing whatsoever. An earthquake,
a tornado, or any other earthly event can happen at any time and in any
place. It seems incomprehensible that we live on this earth and we have
the means to measure and the theories to predict many of things and yet
we cannot predict accurately one earthly earthquake. With our theoretical
background, our huge and extremely fast computers and our records of
the past earthly events, we fail miserably to save lives if a catastrophe
were to happen.

The Smoke

Figure 3.8 - The Horsehead Nebula is a dark nebula located in Orion. It
is visible only because it lies above a lighter background.

In the above Surah 21, Ayah 104, there is an obvious reference that Allah
will end the universe as he started it. This Ayah states that Allah created
all these worlds that we know a very small part of them out of nothing by
His order “Be.” This Ayah may also be a reference to The Big Crunch,
since it presents the analogy of expanding and collapsing the universe to
the opening and closing scrolls.

As mentioned before, there was smoke at the beginning of the
universe, Surah 41, Ayah 11. Then the Quran states that:

“Then watch thou for the Day that the sky will bring forth a kind of
smoke, plainly visible. Enveloping the people: This is a chastisement
Grievous. (They will say): Our Lord! Remove the chastisement from
us, for we do really believe!.”

(Surah 44, Ayah 10 –12)
The significance of the smoke is demonstrated by Surah 44, which has “The Smoke” as its title. As a matter of fact, the smoke is one of the major signs of the imminence of the Day of Judgment, as narrated by the Prophet. Some commentators associate the smoke of Surah 44 with a severe famine in Mecca. However, in the context of using verses of the Quran to explain other verse, if we put Surah 21, Ayah 104, with these verses, it may be that Allah refers to the literal word “smoke” and not to the famine. Accordingly, smoke is one of the signs of the starting and ending of the universe. And God Knows the Best.

SOLAR SYSTEM IN THE QURAN

Figure 3.9 - Solar System

Many references exist in the Quran about the difference in nature between stars, as generating light and planets, as reflecting light.

“Blessed is He Who made constellations in the skies, and placed therein a lamp, and a moon giving light.”

(Surah 25, Ayah 61)

“And (He) made the moon a light in their midst, and made the sun as a (glorious) lamp.”

(Surah 71, Ayah 16)
The Quran makes clear a distinction between the sun and the moon. The sun is referred to in many verses as a lamp, which is a device that generates light, heat and radiation. The Quranic choice of the word “lamp” is an incredibly accurate representation of the sun, regardless of the difference in the light producing process. The moon is referred to as an object in the sky that is lighted up, but it does not generate light by itself.

In a reference to the planets, Allah says:

“Allah is the Light of heavens and the earth. The parable of His Light is as if there were a niche and within it a lamp. The lamp enclosed in glass: the glass as it were a brilliant star (planet).”

(Surah 24, Ayah 35)

The actual Arabic word in the above Ayah is planet; however the English translation refers to the planet as star. The glass by itself does not shine. However, when the light comes into it, it reflects the light and shines like a brilliant star. This glorious parable of the Light of Allah contains layer upon layer of transcendent truth of spiritual mysteries. No statements can do adequate justice to its full meaning. The physical light is but a reflection of the true Light in the world of Reality and that true Light is Allah. We can only think of Allah in terms of our own phenomenal experience and the phenomenal world; light is the purest thing we know.

**Equilibrium and Orbits**

![Figure 3.10 - Orbits of Planets](image_url)
The equilibrium of the universe is referred to in the following short Ayat:

“The sun and the moon follow courses (exactly) computed; And the star and the trees - both (alike) bow in adoration. And the Firmament has He raised high, and He has set up the Balance (of Justice).”

(Surah 55, Ayah 5-7)

In the great mathematical universe, there are great mathematical laws that require calculations. We now understand that these Ayat refer to the laws discovered by Kepler and Newton. These laws bear witness to Allah’s Wisdom and also His favors to His creatures. We all benefit from the energy and light, the seasons and the numerous changes in the tides and the atmosphere. Quranic commentators interpret the balance in the above Ayah as one of the following:

• Balance of Justice between humans.
• The heavens themselves are sustained by Divine equilibrium.
• The sun enters the Constellation Libra (the balance) at the middle of the zodiacal year.

The divine equilibrium of the skies discovered by Newton in 1687 had not been realized in the seventh century. Yet the Creator of equilibrium revealed one of His favors to humanity.

The equilibrium of the stars and planets requires an orbital motion that each should follow. Therefore, in other Chapters in the Quran, a clear mention of the orbital motion is presented:

“It is He Who created the night and the day, and the sun and the moon: All (celestial bodies) swim along, each in its rounded course (orbit).”

(Surah 21, Ayah 33)

“It is not permitted to the sun to catch up the moon, nor the night outstrips the day: Each (just) swims along in (its own) orbit (according to Law).”

(Surah 36, Ayah 40)

The orbital motion of all celestial objects is repeated twice in the above Ayat for emphasis. These orbital motions of stars and planets are described as “swimming” through space with perfectly smooth motion. Swimming is “the action of propelling oneself by means of the movements of the body.” This perfect description of celestial motion by the action of swimming indicates that heavenly objects have two motions: one is
moving forward and a second motion of the body around itself. This second motion is the rotation of the stars and planets about an internal axis. It is quite impossible that someone in the seventh century, even if he had all the knowledge of his time, to use such an expression “swim in orbits” to describe the motion of stars and planets. Who told him that? It is the Only One that Knows. It is Allah Himself, the Creator of orbits.

**Julian and Lunar Calendars**

The Muslim calendar is based upon the moon, which revolves around the earth in periods of about 29 days. The Islamic calendar was established by the second Caliph Omar in 639 AD to begin with the new moon of the first Arabic month (Muharram) of the year in which the migration of Muhammad from Mecca to Madinah took place. That first day was 16 June 622 of the Julian calendar.

Nearly fourteen centuries ago, the Quran was revealed to the Arabs in the deserts of the Arabian Peninsula, who were used to the lunar system. It was correct to address them in the only language they could understand and not to upset their habits. It is known how well versed men living in the desert are in the observation of the sky; they navigated according to the stars and told time according to the motion of the sun and the moon. This was the simplest and the most reliable system available for them.

Most people are unaware of the perfect correlation between the Julian and the lunar calendar: 235 lunar months corresponds exactly to 19 Julian years of 365 1/4 days, (228 months). The length of our year of 365 days is not perfect because it has to be rectified every four years (with a leap year). With the lunar calendar, the same phenomena occur every 19 Julian years. The Quran refers to this relationship between the lunar and the Julian systems as follows:

“So they stayed in their cave three hundred years, and nine (more).”

(Surah 18, Ayah 25)

The literal translation of the above Ayah replaces “and nine” by “increased by nine.” This suggests that one has to be careful about each word or letter in the Quran. The latest calculation of the lunar month is 29.53059 days. Therefore, the lunar year is 12 x 29.53059 = 354.36708 days. This means that 300 Julian year (300x365.25= 109575 days) is equivalent to 309 lunar years (354.36708x309= 109499.43). This is a miraculous accuracy. Therefore the above Ayah can be explained as “So they stayed in their cave three hundred solar years and increased by nine
lunar years”. This is just an amazing revelation from the Creator of time. Only Allah knows the exact time of any event in any reference of time.

“Say: Allah knows best how long they stayed.”

(Surah 18, Ayah 26)

THE EARTH IN THE QURAN

The earth is mentioned in the Quran about 450 times! The Quran devotes many verses to the signs of God on the earth, because we live on this planet and we are supposed to look for signs of its Creator. Also, scientists know about our beautiful planets more than any other objects in the universe. They are on hand to experiment directly, to interpret the evidences and to draw conclusions. The verses of the Quran that describe the earth are quite astounding. As in the case of any other scientific miracles, these verses are scattered throughout the Quran. They are presented in the context of spiritual enlightening for someone who looks around for the signs of Allah.

Mountains

Mountains affect life on earth in many ways. Apart from the obvious mineral, forest, agricultural and recreational resource values, they have a significant influence on climate, economy and history. Humans enjoy the glorious scenery of mountains and many sometimes feel humbled in front of these gigantic structures. How and when did they form? What are they for? What is the mechanism of keeping them on the earth’s crust, in spite of their huge weight?
The first question is answered by geologists, who presented three ways of forming mountains:

- By crustal uplift, that is, folding, faulting, or arching of the earth’s crust.
- By differential erosion or land sculpturing.
- By volcanic activities.

The Creator of the mountains reveals:

“Have we not made the earth as a wide expanse, and the mountains as pegs?”

(Surah 78, Ayah 6-7)

Allah states that the mountains are similar to pegs or wedges. A peg is used to fasten things so they cannot move, like the peg that is used to fix the ropes of a tent. Or, you can imagine the crust of the earth as a carpet and the mountains as the nails that hold the carpet in place. It is now known that the crust of the earth is much deeper under the mountains, which indicate the existence of a root system under high mountains. According to recent measurements, the depth of a mountain’s roots can reach 40 miles underground, (Popular Mechanics, 1958. p. 244), while the highest known mountain, Mount Everest, reaches only 5.6 miles above ground, (Clark, 2007, p. 6).

The similarity between mountains and pegs is quite obvious. Pegs sink underground by the force of a hammer, while mountains sink underground by the force of gravity. Pegs hold and fix the tent. Mountains hold and fix the earth’s crust. The thickness of the fabric of a tent is small compared to its size. The crust of the earth is no more than one percent of the radius of the earth. Therefore, one can conclude that describing the mountains as pegs is a perfect description. Muhammad used to worship Allah in a cave in a mountain near Mecca, but he certainly did not take measuring instruments to get information about the underground structure of the mountains. There is just no way that Muhammad could have established this description on his own. No one can explain the mountains with such accuracy except the Designer and Creator of the mountains themselves.

The balance and the stability of mountains are also explained in the Quran as follows:

“And He has set up on the earth mountains standing firm, lest it should shake with you.”

(Surah 16, Ayah 15)
“And We have set on earth mountains standing firm, lest it should shake with them.”

(Surah 21, Ayah 31)

Think about the similarity of the above verses! Other verses in the Quran also give the same meaning (Surah 31, Ayah 10; Surah 79, Ayah 32). When the meaning of a verse is repeated like that, then this is an invitation to mankind to take these words and examine them carefully. It should be also an invitation to scientists to examine each verb, each noun and each letter in the scientific verses of the Quran, since that could well direct them to an explanation to an existing fact. The Arabic verb that describes the standing of the mountains indicates stability of ships in the sea as they dock alongside a pier. Ships in this case do not go down because of the upward buoyant force that acts upon the ship. This upward buoyant force is equal to the downward gravitational force; hence the ship stays in equilibrium. The choice of the Arabic verb that indicates the stability of mountains and its similarity to docking ships, is just beyond human comprehension.

In another Ayah, Allah states that the mountains move:

“Thou see the mountains and think them firmly fixed, but they shall pass away as the clouds pass away. (Such is) the artistry of Allah, who disposes of all things in perfect order: for he is well acquainted with all that ye do.”

(Surah 27, Ayah 88)

In the above Ayah, Allah states clearly that mountains move like clouds. However, people think that mountains are firmly fixed to the earth. So if the mountains move, so does the earth. This is an obvious reference to the motion of the Earth and this information was not available in the seventh century.

What do you think of Muhammad’s knowledge about mountains, ships, Archimedes’ principle, density of the earth, density of mountains and motion of mountains and earth? If you think that he knew about any of these subjects, then he must have been a great geologist. But if you think that he had no information about these subjects, then it must be considered factual that the Quran is the authentic Words of God.
Earthquakes

Humans stand helpless in front of a devastating earthquake. All the wealth and power of a human cannot help avoid the consequences of any natural catastrophe. In this case, all people are equal and earthquakes do not differentiate between poor or rich, powerful or humble, or sick or healthy. A violent earthquake is a terrifying experience in its suddenness and its power of destruction to shake or uproot the strongest buildings. With all our amazing technologies and power to solve complicated equations, yet no scientist is capable of predicting the place and time of the next earthquake.

The immediate cause of earthquakes is fracturing of crustal rocks. The earthquake map of the earth shows a strong concentration around the whole Pacific Ocean, in the middle of Atlantic Ocean, south of Europe in the Mediterranean Sea and in the middle of the Indian Ocean. Statistics show the extent of destruction and consequences of major earthquakes in highly populated areas. In most cases earthquakes last from few seconds to one minute and half. But the suddenness of the earthquakes and their short time still represents a major puzzle to seismologists.

The Glorious Quran addresses the subject of earthquakes in many places and one chapter has the earthquake as its title, Surah 99:

“When the earth is shaken to her utmost convulsion (earthquake), and the earth throws her burden (weights) from within.”

(Surah 99, Ayah 1-2)

The above Surah refers to the tremendous earthquake and the uprooting that will take place when the present order of the world is
dissolved and the new world of Justice and Truth takes its place. The sign used is that of an earthquake which will shake our present material and phenomenal world to its very foundation. This overwhelming event, before the Day of the Judgment, will be a bigger and more far-reaching convulsion than any earthquake we have ever known.

Will humans remember the frightful events of the Day of Judgment? Will they continue to neglect the purpose of their creation? How long will they persist in discrediting God and attach human attributes to Him? How long are they going to keep arguing about His Existence and His Unlimited Power? How long are they going to ignore the Quran and the message of Muhammad? Cannot we look at earthquakes and other natural catastrophes in their right prospective? Read what Allah says:

"O mankind! Fear your Lord! For the convulsion (earthquake) of the Hour (of Judgment) will be a terrible thing."

(Surah 22, Ayah 1)

The Spherical Earth

At a time when it was held that the earth was fixed at the center of the world and that the sun moved around the earth, the Quran approached the motion of the earth by the above-mentioned Ayat of mountains and by the following Ayat about day and night:

Figure 3.14 - The Spherical Earth – Image from Apollo 17
“Seest thou not that Allah merges Night into Day and he merges Day into Night.”

(Surah 31, Ayah 29)

“He created the heavens and the earth in true (proportions). He makes the night overlap the day and the day overlap the night.”

(Surah 39, Ayah 5)

The above two Ayat provide interesting material on the process of interpretation and especially on winding the night upon the day and the day upon the night in the second Ayah. The literal Arabic text for the verb “to overlap” above is “to make a sphere.” This is an astounding use of this verb that refers to the earth as a sphere.

Astronauts have seen and photographed what happens from their space ships especially at great distances from the earth. They saw how the sun permanently lights up (except in the case of an eclipse) half of the earth’s surface that faces the sun, while the other half is in darkness. The earth then turns on its axis and the light from the sun stays the same, so that an area of another half a sphere is subjected to light. The light makes one revolution around the earth’s surface in twenty-four hours. This perpetual rotation of night and day is quite clearly described in the above Ayah. It is easy to grasp this notion in the present time and age, because we know the solar system and the orbit of the earth.

Further to the above reflection on the sequence of night and day, one must also mention, with quotation of some Ayat from the Quran, the idea that there is more than one east and one west. For example, God refers to Himself as:

“Lord of Easts and Wests”

(Surah 70, Ayah 40)

“No I do call to witness the Lord of the two Easts and the two Wests.”

(Surah 55, Ayah 17)

Anyone who carefully watches the sunrise and sunset knows that the sun rises at different points in the east and sets at different points in the west, according to the season. Each of the points of the east and the west are limited between two extreme points for the east and the west. The two extreme points of the east and the west are those that are referred to in the above second Ayah. Allah swears by the Lord of the two easts and the two wests. He swears by His Creation and whatever He swears with represents
an object of great significance. That is why keeping all the points of the east and the west between two limits represent one marvelous Creation of the Lord of everything.

The Earth’s Atmosphere

In addition to many Ayat specifically related to the sky, the Quran contains many passages dealing with phenomena that occur in the atmosphere. The comparison between these Ayat and the present scientific data proves without any shadow of doubt that the Quran is the authentic Words of God.

It is a known fact that discomfort is experienced by man in high altitude, which increases the higher one climbs. As altitude is increased, the atmospheric density and pressure decrease. Humans cannot survive, or at least be comfortable, for a long period of time in atmospheric conditions higher than 8,000 feet. It has been also established that most humans could not survive atmospheric conditions equivalent to altitude of about 40,000 feet for more than a very short period of time. This experience is expressed in the Quran as follows:

“Those whom Allah willeth to guide, He open their chests to Islam: Those whom He willeth to leave straying, He make their chests close and constricted as if they had to climb up in the skies.”

(Surah 6, Ayah 125)

Some commentators explain the above Ayah as related to the will of God to guide one to the Truth. The above Ayah also means that in spiritual and physical worlds, there are laws of justice, mercy, grace, penalty, etc., which work surely as anything we know. If a man refuses the guidance of God and becomes a rebel, then with each step he goes further and further astray and his pace will be accelerated. He will scarcely be able to take a spiritual breath and his recovery, in spite of Allah’s mercy that he rejected, will be difficult as if he had to climb up to the skies.

Electricity and Lightning

Electricity in the atmosphere is a result of lightning and hails as referred to in the following Ayat:

“Soest thou not that Allah makes the clouds move gently, then joins them together, then makes them into a heap? - Then wilt thou see rain issue forth from their midst. And He sends down from the sky mountain masses (of clouds) wherein is hail: He strikes therewith
whom He pleases and He turns it away from whom He pleases, the vivid flash of His lightning well-nigh blinds the sight.”

(Surah 24, Ayah 43)

“It is He Who doth show you the lightning, by way both of fear and of hope: It is He Who doth raise up the clouds, heavy with (fertilizing) rain! Nay, thunder repeateth His praises, and so do the angels, with awe: He flingeth the loud-voiced thunder-bolts, and therewith He striketh whomsoever He will. Yet these (are the men) who (dare to) dispute about Allah, with the strength of His power (supreme)!"

(Surah 13, Ayah 12-13)

Figure 3.15 - Lightning

Clouds form from existing water vapors in the atmosphere. As the height of the clouds increases, water vapors are then condensed into raindrops, hail, and freezing rain, due to the motion of air currents inside the clouds. Small raindrops move up and down in the cloud, until they become bigger and heavier. When their weights exceed the aerodynamic forces, rain falls down. Some clouds exceed high mountains reaching a height of 6,500 feet. They look dark and usually produce rain, hail, or freezing rain.

The verb “join” in the above first Ayah indicates assembling or overcoming repulsion due to the different electrostatic charges that exist in these high clouds. It is not known exactly how electrostatic charges form in the clouds because some clouds may have positive charges at the top, negative charges in the middle and positives charge at the bottom. With these different charges, the significance of the word “join” can be seen in spite of the repulsive forces between positive and negative charges.
The description of high and heavy clouds in the first Ayah is accurate. This Ayah also shows a relationship between forming hailstorms and lightning. Moreover, it indicates that hail is quite a local phenomenon. You see hail on one street while on the neighboring one, there is no sign of it! Sparks between positive and negative charges cause lightning. The temperature at the spark may reach 1,000 degrees and that expands the air rapidly causing the air to explode as in a thunderstorm.

Heavy thunderstorms and hailstorms are quite frightening. There is no telling of what may happen to any person or any property during these storms. It may be that someone may remember his Creator during these frightening moments. It fascinating that thunder, that sends shivers to our hearts due to its suddenness, praises the glory of Allah, while some people deny His existence!

LIFE AND DEATH IN THE QURAN

Figure 3.16 - Ramses 2 Mummy in Cairo Museum studied by Professor Maurice Bucaille

No other subjects have caused so much turmoil throughout history than that of life and death. Philosophers and scientists approached life and death with so many concepts and assumptions. Any discussions on life and death without considering the Creator in this process are just a waste of time. This is like a group of laymen gathering around an engineer to
discuss his invention and their conclusion is that they understand the invention more than the inventor himself. This is the kind of scientific joke that some scientists and their followers are publicizing in the name of fighting superstitions. But death is unseen; no one ever died for a long period of time and returned back to tell the world what happens after death. And since death is unseen, then any discussion about it is pure guesswork. Consequently death is subject to imagination and guesswork because no one can prove otherwise. This subject of guesswork is stated in the Quran as follows:

“I called them not to witness the creation of the heavens and earth, not (even) their creation, nor is it for me to take as helpers such as Lead (men) astray.”

(Surah 18, Ayah 51)

So, Allah tells us that people will come and present ideas and hypotheses about the creation of the universe and life and those people were not helping God in His Grand Design. Their arrogant ideas served the purpose of confusing the average person. The above Ayah is one of the prophecies of the Quran and we can see the result of this prophecy very vividly in our present time. The theory of evolution and the self behaving universe are mere human guesswork and assumptions that cannot be proved.

It is a known fact that a living human body consists of water, many chemicals and a soul. But what is the soul? Is it in the brain that thinks? Is it in the heart that pulses? Is it in the hands or feet? Where is it and what is it? What does it look like? Scientists attempted to weigh a body before and after death to know if the soul has weight. They found a minute decrease in the weight. Who knows if the scale is exact enough? Who knows if some chemical phenomena happen at the moment of death and reduced the weight?

No one knows about the soul except its Creator. Maybe this is just one of the eternal divine challenges a human will never face. And if we don’t know about something inside our bodies, how then can we claim we know all the secrets of this entire universe? We are supposed to search, study, examine and observe; but if we come to a limit or a wall then we have to realize that there are many things beyond our comprehension and in the end we are limited creatures. The human brain is limited but it has a very serious function. Its main purpose is supplying us with a choice to select alternatives and to differentiate between the good and evil. But this brain is designed to acknowledge the unseen, which only can be told to
us by God. Thus if we want to know the unseen, then our only choice is to learn from the Creator of the unseen. This is our only way to know any unseen matter whether it is the soul, the Angels, or life and death.

**Water and Origin of life**

![Figure 3.17 - Water and Origin of life](image)

The Quran refers to the origin of life in a very concrete statement as follows:

“Do not the unbelievers see that the heavens and earth were joined together (as one unit of creation) before We clove them asunder? And We made from water every living thing. Will they not then believe?.”

(Surah 21, Ayah 30)

The Quran states that every living thing is made of water (as its essential component) or that every living thing originated in water. These two possible meanings are strictly according to our present knowledge. About 70 percent of the surface of earth is still covered with water. This shows the predominance of water on our globe. Apart from the fact that protoplasm, the building block of living matter, is a liquid or semi-liquid, there is the fact that man and animals show, in their embryological development, organs indicating the watery origin of their original habitat. The protoplasm consists of about 80 to 85 percent water. Also chemical compounds necessary for life such as protein, fat and DNA consist of 25 percent water.

There is no life without water. We look for water on other planets as a tool in determining the possibility of life. We now know that earth is the only planet in our known solar system that has water. This is due to its
appropriate distance from the sun that allows water to exist as a liquid. If we were closer to the sun, water would evaporate and if we were further away from the sun, water would turn into ice. It is also known that water vapor originated from volcanic action in the early history of the earth. That water vapor condensed into huge clouds that surrounded the earth and then caused huge amounts of rain to fall. This in turn caused flooding engulfing the earth for millions of years yielding huge pits that became the oceans.

The Vegetable Kingdom

There are many Ayat in the Quran that refer to the rain that makes vegetation grow. Fruits and vegetables are mentioned in the Quran as a sign of creation for the believers:

“It is He Who sendeth down rain from the skies: with it We produce vegetation of all kinds: from some We produce green (crops), out of which We produce grain, heaped up (at harvest); out of the date-palm and its sheaths (or spathes) (come) clusters of dates hanging low and near: and (then there are) gardens of grapes, and olives, and pomegranates, each similar (in kind) yet different (in variety): when they begin to bear fruit, feast your eyes with the fruit and the ripeness thereof. Behold! in these things there are signs for people who believe.”

(Surah 6, Ayah 99)

Each fruit - whether it is grape, olive or pomegranate - varies in flavor, shape and size. Believing in God implies both understanding and
spiritual feeling. Understanding is a higher faculty than knowledge and believing is a higher faculty than understanding. Allah asks us to look at the fruits, as they are signs for the believers. Unbelievers eat fruit without thinking, while the believers eat the same fruit and praise God for His favors and thank Him for His bounty. Our Creator will ask everyone on the Day of Judgment whether we gave thanks for the many glorious gifts He bestowed upon us throughout our lives.

The Quran also details the reproduction in the vegetable kingdom that can be either sexual or asexual. Only the former can be termed “reproduction”, because this defines a biological process that results in a new individual identical to the one that gave it birth. Asexual reproduction is quite simply a multiplication process. It is the result of the fragmentation of an organism that has separated from the main plant and developed in such a way as to resemble the parent plant. A simple example of this is a cutting taken away from a plant and placed in suitably watered soil can be regenerated by growing new roots.

Sexual reproduction in the vegetable kingdom is carried out by the unifying of male and female parts on a same plant or one located on another plant. This is the form that is mentioned in the Quran:

“...and (God) has sent down water from the sky.” With it have We produced diverse pairs of plants each separate from the others.”

(Surah 20, Ayah 53)

“Glory to Allah, Who created in pairs all things that the earth produces, as well as their own (human) kind and (other) things of which they have no knowledge.”

(Surah 36, Ayah 36)

“And of every thing We have created pairs, that ye may reflect.”

(Surah 51, Ayah 49)

The pairs or couples mentioned in the above Ayat and many others, mean two accompanying each other like married couples. Fruit is the end product of the reproduction process of superior plants that have the most highly developed and complex organization. The stage preceding the fruit is the flower, which has male and female organs (stamens and ovules). Fruits therefore imply the existence of male and female organs. This emphasizes the meaning of the above Ayat in the Quran.

These Ayat and many others, emphasize the importance of the concept of pairs through all creation - in man, in animals, in plants and also in things not yet discovered.
The Animal Kingdom

Many Ayat describe the creation of certain species of the animal kingdom with the purpose of making man reflect upon the divine Beneficence extended to him. These Ayat are quoted basically to provide an example of the way in which the Quran describes the harmonious adaptation of creation to man’s needs; it relates in particular to the case of people who live in rural and desert areas.

Figure 3.19 - Save the Animals

The reference in the Quran to the reproduction in the animal kingdom is given as a general statement:

“That He did create the pairs, - male and female, From a sperm-drop when lodged (in its place).”

(Surah 53, Ayah 45-46)

The “pair” in the above Ayah is the same as that expressed above in the Ayat that deal with reproduction in the vegetable kingdom. Here the sexes are given. The detail that is absolutely remarkable is the precision with which it is stated that a small quantity of liquid is required for reproduction. The word itself signifying “sperm” is used for man, which will be presented when discussing embryology.

Allah states that animals and birds exist in communities like human communities:

“There is not an animal (that lives) on the earth, nor a being that flies on its wings, but (forms part of) communities like you. Nothing
have we omitted from the Book, and they (all) shall be gathered to their Lord in the end."

(Surah 6, Ayah 38)

The above Ayah states that animals and birds form communities like those of the human beings. They also will be resurrected in the Day of Judgment. The Justice of Allah will prevail over all living creatures including animals and birds. The animals will be judged and then turned to ashes again. There are no statements in the Quran about the extent of judgment of animals in the Hereafter. Why? That is God’s business.

Animal behavior has been closely investigated in recent decades with the result that genuine animal and bird communities have been shown to exist. It has only been recently shown that the mechanisms that preside over this kind of organization have been discovered for certain species. The most studied and best-known case is undoubtedly that of bees.

When neurological biologists wish to provide striking examples of the extraordinary organization directing animal behavior, the most likely referred to animals are the bees and the birds (especially migratory birds). Whatever the case, there is no doubt that these groups constitute a model of highly evolved organization. In the Quran, bees are the subjects of long Ayat:

“And thy Lord taught the Bee to build its cells in hills, on trees, and in (men’s) habitations; Then to eat of all the produce (of the earth), and find with skill the spacious paths of its Lord: there issues from within their bodies a drink of varying colors, wherein is healing for men: verily in this is a Sign for those who give thought.”

(Surah 16, Ayah 68-69)

Allah refers to the bees as following His way in humility, like all other creation, such as the stars, the earth, the trees, etc. All His creations follow His way with the exception of those consumed by excessive arrogance, as is the case with some humans and jinn.

The bee’s instinct is due to Allah’s teaching. Bees have remarkable nervous organization that supports their behavior. It is known that the pattern of the bee’s dance is a means of communication with other bees; in this way, bees are able to convey to their own species the direction and the distance of flowers from which nectar is to be gathered.

Allah states that Prophet Solomon, son of Prophet David, has been taught the language of birds and ants.
“At length, when they came to a (lowly) valley of ants, one of the ants said: “O ye ants, get into your habitations, lest Solomon and his hosts crush you (under foot) without knowing it.” So he smiled, amused at her speech; and he said: “O my Lord! so order me that I may be grateful for Thy favors, which thou hast bestowed on me and on my parents, and that I may work the righteousness that will please Thee: And admit me, by Thy Grace, to the ranks of Thy righteous Servants.”

(Surah 27, Ayah 18-19)

In the grand scheme of the world, the ant may be neglected or even crushed by people who mean no harm. Yet, by its wisdom it carries on its own life within its own atmosphere and makes its own contributions in the balance of life on earth. So there is room for the humblest people to contribute in the spiritual world.

Birds are frequently mentioned in the Quran. They appear in the life’s story of Abraham, Joseph, David, Solomon and Jesus. Two other Ayat highlight the bird’s strict submission to the Will of Allah:

“Do they not look at the birds, held poised in the midst of (the air and) the sky? Nothing holds them up but (the power of) Allah.”

(Surah 16, Ayah 79)

“Do they not observe the birds above them, spreading their wings and folding them in? None can uphold them except (Allah) Most Gracious.”

(Surah 67, Ayah 19)

The above Ayat stress the extremely close dependence of the bird’s behavior on the Divine Will of God. The degree of perfection attained by certain species of birds with regard to coordinating their movements is mind-boggling. The curvature of the bird’s wing provides the upward lift required to overcome the downward pull of gravity. The design of airplane wings has benefited over the years from studying of the wings of birds.

There is no explanation of instinct in many birds and animals. How is it possible for such complicated instinctive knowledge to develop and be passed from one generation to the others? Their intelligence comes from the Utmost Intelligence and their wisdom came from the Utmost Wisdom of Allah.

There is one Ayah in the Quran that addresses the source and the constituents of cattle milk.
“And verily in the cattle (too) will you find an instructive sign. From what is within their bodies, between excretions and blood, We produce, for your drink, milk, pure and agreeable to those who drink it.”

(Surah 16, Ayah 66)

Milk is a secretion (making and giving off useful chemical compounds) in the female body, like other secretions but more specialized. Is it not wonderful that the same food, eaten by males and females, produces in the latter the wholesome and complete food called milk? Then, when cattle are tamed and specially bred for milk, the supply of milk is vastly greater than the need of their young and lasts for a longer time than during the period of breast-feeding. Cattle milk is also a wholesome and agreeable diet for man. Yet it is a secretion like other secretions, between the excretions (removal of waste) that the body rejects and the precious bloodstream that circulates within the body.

The way this Ayah has been translated and interpreted is personal, because even modern translation or Arabic interpretation does not reflect the true scientific miracle of this Ayah. It is well known fact however, that a translator, however expert, is liable to make human mistakes in the translation of a highly specialized scientific Ayah, unless he happens to be a specialist in the discipline in question.

A literal translation to the above Ayah may be as follows:

“And verily in the cattle there is a lesson for you. We give you to drink of what is inside their bellies, coming from a conjunction between the contents of the intestine and the blood, a milk pure and pleasant for those who drink it.”

(Surah 16, Ayah 66)

This translation is very close to the one given in the Muntakhab, 1973, edited by the Supreme Council of Islamic Affairs, Cairo, which relies on its support on modern physiology. From a scientific point of view, physiological notions must be called upon to grasp the meaning of this Ayah.

The substances that ensure the general nutrition of the body come from chemical transformations that occur along the length of the digestive tract. These substances come from the contents of the intestine. Most digestion takes place in the small intestine. Once digestion is complete, the process of absorption begins. The digested food leaves the small intestine and enters the bloodstream to reach each cell in the body. The
The small intestine is a very long coiled tube that takes up very little space. Its inner lining has many tiny folds. Both the length and the folds increase the surface area of the small intestine. Thus there are more places where the digested food can be absorbed. The constituents of milk are secreted by the mammary glands. The products of food digestion, carried by the blood stream, nourish the mammary glands. Blood therefore plays the role of collector and conductor of what has been extracted from food and it brings nutrition to the mammary glands, the producers of milk, as it does to any other organ.

Here the initial process, which sets everything else in motion, is the bringing together of the contents of the intestine and the blood at the level of the intestinal wall itself. This very precise concept is the result of discovery made in the chemistry and physiology of the digestive system.

Yet, in one short statement in the above Ayah, a precise description of the source and constituents of milk is presented. No one can dare to think that this knowledge was available to an unlettered Arab in the desert in the seventh century. So, again, how did he know that? Who told him that? The only logical answer is the Creator of the milk and the digestive system. All the Praise and Glory be to Allah.

**Life before Adam**

The Quran refers to life forms before Adam’s creation in a fascinating discussion between Allah and His Angel, as follow:

“Behold, thy Lord said to the angels: “I will create a vicegerent on earth.” They said: “Wilt Thou place therein one who will make mischief and shed blood? Whilst we celebrate Thy praise and glorify Thy holy (name)?” He said: “I know what you know not.”

(Surah 2, Ayah 30)

Allah informed the Angels that He will create man on earth. They wondered and referred to a previous creation that had shed blood. This was not an objection to God’s Will. It was a surprise that Allah would create man with free will, which may ultimately lead to mischief on earth. It would seem that the Angels, though holy and pure and endued with power from Allah, represented only one side of the purpose of Creation. We may imagine them without passion or emotion. If man was to be endued with emotions, these emotions could elate him or destroy him. The power of will or choosing is dominated by emotions, such that man may steer his own course. We may assume the Angels had no independent will of their own. Their perfection, in other words, reflected Allah’s
perfection, but could not elevate them to the dignity of vicegerency. The utmost vicegerent is he who has the power of initiative himself, but whose independent action always reflects precisely the will of God.

The Angels in their one-sidedness saw only the consequence of mischief and blood shedding by this new creation. In humility and true devotion to Allah, they were surprised. One must not imagine the least trace of jealousy, as they are without emotions. We know that the Angels have no way of foreseeing the future, which only belongs to God. So the question arises: How were they able to reference the acts of mischief and bloodshed? It must be from their previous or present knowledge, but not from knowledge of the future. Their statement could only mean one thing. They were referring to animals or other creatures on earth that existed before Adam that were killing each other. Their reference to these creatures before the creation of man coincides with our knowledge of the fossil record. And God knows the Best.

**Death**

Philosophers and scientists have many concepts of life and death. A vast amount of superstition as well as imaginative and psychological literature has grown about life and death. But the simplest and the truest religious concept are stated here in few words. And, there is only one fact about death that is stated in the Quran as follows:

"He Who created death and life, that He may try which of you is best in deed."

(Surah 67, Ayah 2)

Death and life are both creations of God as a means of testing human deeds. Death is put before life and is, therefore, not merely a negative state to life. Death, then, is the state before true life begins and is the state in which life as we know it ceases to exist. Creation of death and life, like any other creation, is not without purpose with respect to man. We can barely understand the states before or after our present life. But our present life is clearly given to enable us to strive by good deeds to reach a more noble state.

As one studies the Quran, one feels that Allah gives answers to many questions that linger in one’s mind. He gives examples to make a difficult concept of the unseen closer to human grasp. For example, resurrection is made analogous to a land that seems dead in the winter and as rain falls in the spring, it is brought back to life:
“And We send down from the sky rain charged with blessing, and We produce therewith gardens and grain for harvest. And the tall (and stately) Palm-trees, with shoots of fruit-stalks, piled one over another. As sustenance for (Allah’s) servants; And We give (new) life therewith to land that is dead: thus will be the resurrection.”

(Surah 50, Ayah 9-11)

This similarity between the resurrection and the process of bringing life out of dead land is repeated in many other verses. But how many people notice the tiny plants when they are returned to life and start turning green? How many people relate this process to the resurrection and the Day of Judgment? How many people watch this resurrection of the plants with humility and reflection? Humans see resurrection at least once every year and most are idle to this miraculous process.

Death is also treated in the same fashion. Some people claim that there are no facts in this life except what we can see when we are awake. Yet, these same people die and return to life every day. They move from one state, with its governing laws, to a different state, with completely different laws each day without knowing or thinking about it. Allah Says:

“It is Allah that takes the soul (of men) at death; And those that die not (He takes) during their sleep: those on whom He has passed the decree of death, He keeps back (from returning to life), but the rest He sends (to their bodies) for a term appointed. Verily in this are signs for those who reflect.”

(Surah 39, Ayah 42)

The similarity between death and sleep is made obvious in this Ayah. When man is awake, he sees physical things in our space and time. But when he sleeps, he moves to another world not subject to any known laws. He moves beyond space, time and gravity. He does not feel the passing of time. He may sleep in the dark and see the sunlight, or sleep during the day and see the dark night in his dream. He does not even know the duration of time that he slept.

During sleep, man is completely isolated and separated from the physical world. He sees with his eyes closed! He walks and runs with his feet in bed! He falls down from a mountain, yet there is not a single injury to his body. He cries with tears and laughs without noise during his dreams. He travels in an airplane, crosses continents and oceans in few seconds. This movement from a physical state to a spiritual state is a Mercy from the Merciful. He graced us with the perception that when we
sleep, we move to a spiritual world; and when we wake, He returns our souls back to our bodies.

Why? For man to understand death; for man to become familiar with his next state; for man to know that the physical laws are not the only laws in the world; for man to believe in his Creator. And all that happens every night. So, we see death every night as we see resurrection every spring. Yet, there are those who deny these obvious facts.

The real mystery of life and death, sleep and dream is a fascinating puzzle, but, then again, Allah gave us pieces to this puzzle. His Mercy brings many abstract religious concepts to human level and comprehension:

- Sleeping is a vivid example of death.
- Bringing life to the land in the spring is a vivid example of resurrection.
- The best life on earth is a vivid example of heaven.
- Earthly fire is a vivid example of hellfire.

What is sleep? As far as human life is concerned, it is the cessation of the working of the nervous system. Yet, other human functions, such as digestion, growth and the circulation of blood, continue, possibly at a different pace. The mental processes are also suspended in sleep except those that deal with recollections, which are present vividly in our subconscious. But there are other kinds of dreams in which the dreamer sees things as they actually happen, backwards or forwards in time, or in which gifted individuals see spiritual truths otherwise invisible to them.

How can we explain this? It is stated in the above Ayah that our souls go to a plane of spiritual existence analogous to physical death. In poetic imagery, “Sleep is the twin brother of Death.”

During sleep or “minideath”, our souls are, for a period of time, released from the bondage of flesh. Allah reclaims them during this time. If, as some do, we are to die peacefully in sleep, our souls do not come back to the physical body that, then, decays and dies. If our time to die has not yet dawned allowing us to fulfill our lives according to God’s Will, our souls return to our bodies and we resume our functions in life.

If we are to contemplate these concepts, we can clearly see many spiritual truths:

- That life and death are not the only elements of our existence.
- That in our bodily life, we may be dead in the spiritual world and our bodily death may be our awakening to the spiritual world.
- That death is only a short visit to the grave.
The Scientific Miracle

- That our nightly sleep, besides performing the function of rest in our physical life, gives us a foretaste of what we call death, which does not cease our personality.
- That the resurrection is very similar to our daily rising from sleep.
- That sleep is analogous to death.
- That this life is not the true eternal life. It will end by death.
- That death is not an eternal process. It will end by the resurrection. Allah calls every living human in this world dead, i.e. man is destined to death. For that, Allah addresses the Prophet by saying:

   "Truly thou wilt die (one day), and truly they (too) will die (one day)." The literal translation of this Aya is "Truly you are dead, and truly they (too) are dead."

   (Surah 39, Ayah 30)

The above Ayah was intended for the Prophet and his companions, who were alive during the time of the revelation. So why did Allah refer to them as dead? He is reminding humanity of their destiny. The above Ayah is unfathomable to anyone who assumes that he is still alive. When a human is born, the arrow of death is released simultaneously. This arrow searches for the human throughout his life. In one instance, the search is over, the arrow of death finds its companion and the human dies.

Why should death be an important aspect of our life? Because human life is based, wrongly, on greed, which is the continuous passion for seeking an increase in wealth, position, the number of followers or supporters, mass production and mass organization. This greed affects most people as it affects entire societies or nations. The greed in man’s nature may be limitless if not controlled; the more we receive, the more we want. This obsession distracts us from the true purpose of life. People’s rivalry in such things aggravates the situation. To a certain point, it may be good and necessary. But when it becomes an obsession and a competition for the gain of more materialistic things, it leaves no time for higher and noble planes of existence. And most humans, when they are engulfed in this piling up process, deny that they have reached a critical state and always justify their actions. And this ugly case of greed is justified as a means for achieving a noble purpose for humanity!

The piling up scenario continues until one lays down for a long nap in the grave, forgetting exactly just what he fought for. The true reality will then be clear before you. And Who can explain this better than Allah:
“The mutual rivalry for pilling up (the good things of the world) diverts you (from the more serious business). Until you visit the graves.”

(Surah 102, Ayah 1-2)

EMBRYOLOGY IN THE QURAN

This section is based on an article entitled “Highlights of Human Embryology in the Koran and Hadith” by Dr. Keith Moore, Professor of Anatomy and Chairman of the department, Faculty of Medicine, at the University of Toronto, Toronto, Canada, 1982.

Human beings have always been intrigued by questions such as: Where they came from? How they developed before birth? We know from the earliest records that primitive peoples realized that the birth of a baby was the result of sexual union or intercourse. However, for many centuries the idea of human prenatal development was based on speculation and mysticism. Aristotle wrote the first embryology book in the fourth century BC. In it he recorded some observations on comparative embryology, especially on the general progress of the developing chick. He promoted, however, the incorrect idea that the human embryo developed from a formless mass that resulted from the union of semen with menstrual blood.

Scientific knowledge of embryology did not progress significantly for nearly 2000 years. It was not until near the end of the 17th century, when the microscope was invented, that the early stages of human development could be effectively studied. After it was possible to examine cells under the microscope, it was reasoned in the 18th century that embryonic development resulted from the growth and differentiation of embryonic cells.

The realization that the embryo develops in stages in the uterus was not discussed or proven until the 15th century, although Galen mentioned the placenta and fetal membranes in his book “On the Formation of the Fetus” written in the second century AD. Galen must have known about the uterus. After the microscope was developed in the 17th century, descriptions of the early stages of the developing chick were made as observed with simple lenses. The staging of human embryos was not proposed until the 1942 by Streeter and the stages as we know them now were not adopted worldwide until a few decades ago. The Glorious Quran refers to the embryonic stages and the uterus as follows:
“...He creates you in the wombs of your mothers in stages, one after another, in three veils of darkness. Such is Allah, your Lord and Cherisher. To Him belongs (all) dominion. There is no God but He: Then how are ye turned away (from your true Lord)?.”

(Surah 39, Ayah 6)

Figure 3.20 - 2 months fetus

Drawing of a sagittal section of a female’s abdomen and pelvis showing a fetus in utero. The “three veils of darkness” are: (1) the anterior abdominal wall; (2) the uterine wall and (3) the amniochorionic membrane.

It is realistic to interpret the three veils of darkness in the above Ayah as follows:

1. The mother’s abdominal wall.
2. The uterus wall.
3. The surroundings of the fetus (placenta, embryonic membranes, amniotic fluid).

The above three anatomical layers protect the embryo from external injury. The above Ayah refers to the stages of embryonic development without giving any details about these stages.

Before proceeding in describing the embryonic stages as narrated in the Quran, it is important to define the following Arabic words that are used in the Quran:
**Nutfah**: a drop of sperm; zygote.

**Alakah**: something that clings; leech-like structure; blood clot.

**Mudgah**: piece of flesh; bead-like segmental masses of flesh; like chewed gum with teeth marks.

It is interesting to note that B. Sproul translates “Nutfah” into “moist germ” in his book “Primal Myths”! This distorted translation implicates that the Holy Quran fades in its validity.

A human being develops from a single cell, the zygote, which forms when an ovum (Latin for egg) is fertilized by a sperm (Greek for seed). The Quran refers to this process as follows:

“*And made his progeny from the quintessence of a despised liquid.*”
(Surah 32, Ayah 8)

“*Was he (Man) not a drop of sperm emitted (in lowly form)?*”
(Surah 75, Ayah 37)

“*Verily We created Man from a drop of mingled sperm.*”
(Surah 76, Ayah 2)

The above Ayat make it clear that the sperms are derived from a very small part of the fluid or the semen that is ejaculated from the penis. They are expelled from the urethra via the same route followed by the urine that is sometimes referred to as a “despised fluid.” There are other references in the Quran to the origin of man from a small quantity of “mingled fluids”, undoubtedly the male and female sexual secretions. The resulting mixture (drop) composed of the ovum and the penetrating sperm, becomes a zygote.

A popular idea in the 17th century among scientists was that sperm contained a miniature human being that simply enlarged inside the sperm. Another equally strong idea was that the ovum contained a miniature human being that was stimulated to grow by the semen. It was not until the 18th century that Spallanzani experimentally demonstrated that the initiation of development required sex products from male and female. From his experiments, including artificial insemination in dogs, he concluded that sperm was the fertilizing agent. The mixture of the male and female fluids was discovered recently though it was known in the Quran for fourteen centuries. There are some theories that the female fluid acts as an agent to prevent the rejection of the sperms, which are foreign bodies in the uterus.
In the following Ayah, more details are given about the staging process:

“Man We did create from a quintessence (of clay), (Arabic, sulalah); Then We placed him as (a drop of) sperm (Arabic, nutfah) in a place of rest, firmly fixed; Then We made the sperm into a clot of congealed blood (Arabic, alakah); then of that clot We made a (fetus) lump (Arabic, mudgah); then we made out of that lump bones and clothed the bones with flesh; then we developed out of it another creature. So blessed be Allah, the best to create!”

(Surah 23, Ayah 12-14)

This Ayah states that God made human from a drop into a thing that clings in the mother’s womb, then to a leech-like form that soon changed to a shape that looks like a piece of chewed gum. The “mudgah” then took the shape of bone and was clothed with flesh.
Figure 3.22 - Top, a drawing of a 28 day-old human embryo showing several bead-like somites which resemble the teeth marks in the model shown below.

During the embryonic period, the embryo acquires distinctive human characteristics as bones and muscles begin to form. By the end of the embryonic period, the blossoming of all the main organ systems is established. The external appearance of the embryo is greatly affected by the formation of the brain, heart, liver, bones, limbs, ears, nose and eyes. As these structures develop, they affect the appearance of the embryo as unquestionably human.

The second major stage of prenatal development is the fetus stage. This is a period of rapid growth and differentiation. At that time the fetus is capable of survival if born prematurely.

The idea that development results from a genetic plan contained in the chromosomes of the zygote was not discovered until the end of the 19th century. The Quran states:

“From a sperm-drop, He has created him (man), then (right away) mouldeth him in due proportions.”

(Surah 80, Ayah 19)
This Ayah from the Quran clearly implies that the “nutfah” contained the blueprint for the future characteristics and the features of the developing human being. It is reasonable to interpret the drop (Arabic, nutfah) as the small sample of sperms which are extracted from the ejaculated semen because it is well established that only a few hundred of the several million sperms in the semen are able to pass through the uterus and surround the ovum in the uterine tube. The Arabic conjunction used to join the two sentences in the above Ayah is “fā” which means a rapid succession. So, immediately after insemination, the genetic future is determined. The realization that sex is determined at the moment of fertilization was established about 60 years ago when the sex chromosomes were discovered.

The blastocyst, or the early embryo implant, subsides in the uterus about ten days after fertilization. The embryo assumes human appearance during the eighth week, i.e. 40 to 50 nights after its implantation in the uterus. Before that, there is no difference between human and animal embryos. The Prophet said:

“When the drop of (semen) remains in the womb for forty or fifty (days) or forty nights, the angel comes and says: My Lord, will he be good or evil? And both these things would be written.”

(Narrated by Huzaifa ibn Usaid, Sahih Muslim)

The Prophet did not study embryology; he was unlettered! He did not have a microscope to examine the embryo. He did not conduct experiments on chicks or animals of other sorts. Yet, he said the above Hadith that is recorded in the authentic Hadith’s book. The similarity of the leech and the human embryo at 24 days is astounding. A human embryo at 28 days shows pairs of bead-like segmental masses that make the appearance of the embryo similar to the chewed gum with teeth marks! Another reference to this stage is given as:

“O mankind! If you have a doubt about resurrection, (consider) that We created you out of dust, then out of sperms (Arabic nutfah), then out of leech-like clot (Arabic, alakah), then out of morsel of flesh (Arabic, mudgah) partly formed (differentiated) and partly unformed (undifferentiated)…..”

(Surah 22, Ayah 5)

Allah addresses mankind and their doubts about life, death and resurrection by providing a simple and logical answer; He is the Creator of all mankind. Then, Allah proceeds by stating overwhelming facts
about their physical growth from lifeless matter, to seed, fertilized ovum, embryo, fetus, child, youth, old age and then death! How can there be any doubt about the Author of all these wonderful stages of life? How can there be any doubt about the ability of the Creator of life to create another life and cause resurrection of all mankind?

In the above Ayah, Allah states that during the chewed stage, the embryo has both differentiated and undifferentiated parts. It is now well established that the brain and the heart are only partially differentiated at the end of the fourth week when the embryo resembles a chewed substance. After the chewed-like appearance, bones develop, which are soon clothed with muscles. The bones begin to form in the sixth week and muscles attach to them shortly thereafter. By the beginning of the seventh week, the bones give human shape to the embryo’s body. The ears and the eyes begin to form in the fourth week and are clearly visible at the sixth week, 42 days after the zygote or “nutfah” forms. Sex is not distinguishable at this stage. The Prophet said:

“After 42 nights of forming the zygote “nutfah” God sends an angel to it to make its features, hearing, vision, skin, flesh, and bones. ‘Oh God’, the angel asks, “male or female.”

(Narrated by Huzaifa ibn Usaid, Sahih Muslim)

In the above Surah 80, Ayah 19, the sex of the child is determined immediately after insemination. The inquiry of the Angel about the sexual differentiation of the embryo indicates that Angels do not know the future. Because the Angel is shaping the organs of the zygote and all that is common between male and female, he asks Allah about the sex to form the sex organs. The external genitalia are not distinctly male or female until the 12th week.

There are many other Ayat and sayings in the Hadith about embryology. Some Ayat we understand now and others we may understand in the future, God’s willing. The meaning, of some of the Ayat that we understand, became clear to us only few decades ago. These Ayat are an overwhelming challenge from God to those who do not believe in Him and to the non-Muslims. There is no other holy book that has such information about embryology. There is no other explanation except that the Quran is a revelation from God to the Prophet. All the above-mentioned Ayat are stated not as stand-alone scientific facts, but rather in context of encouraging mankind to think and to believe in The Creator.
PHYSICS IN THE QURAN

As stated before, any repetitions in the Quran of an Ayah require special attention. Also we mentioned before, that the Quran includes over 700 verses that deal with scientific miracles. In our present time, some of these verses are understood and some are not. This is because the Quran is a challenge for humanity throughout the generations until the end of the physical world. This challenge in no way represents a negative process, but a positive one that keeps humanity reflecting on the many miraculous signs of God.

Vibration and Earth

There are two Ayat, with almost the same words, that relate the earth to rain and oscillation. Translations and commentaries of the Quran do not exactly explain this relationship. However, we will attempt to explore this link. The following argument may shed some light on the exact meaning of this relationship and Allah knows the best.

Vibrations occur regularly in our surroundings. These are motions that repeat themselves. There are oscillating guitar strings, bells, diaphragms in telephones and speaker systems and quartz crystals in wristwatches. Less obvious are the oscillations of the molecules of the air that transmit the sensation of sound, of the atoms in a solid that convey the sensation of temperature and of the electrons in the antenna of radio and TV transmitters.

Vibration is divided into free and forced vibration. A person swinging in a swing without any other help is an example of free vibration. If a friend keeps on pulling or pushing the swing periodically, we have a forced vibration. Free vibration happens if the friend pulls or pushes once and then the swing is left to oscillate freely.

One important property of oscillatory motion is its natural frequency, or the number of oscillations that are completed in one second. Any system has one or more natural frequencies of vibration depending upon its mass and how stiff it is. Resonance happens when a system is excited at one of its natural frequencies. The amplification of the sound from a radio is a case of resonance. When you move the station selector to get a certain station, you are actually bringing the frequency of the circuit in the radio in balance with the signal frequency of the selected station. When that happens, you get the maximum amplification of the sound. When you move the station selector, i.e. changing the circuit frequency from the input frequency, the sound decreases and then disappear.
Allah defined precisely this case of forced vibration where an input with driving frequency causes plants to grow as follows:

“...And (further) you see the earth barren and lifeless, but when We pour down rain on it, it is stirred (to life), (oscillates), it swells and it puts forth every kind of beautiful growth (in pairs).”

(Surah 22, Ayah 5)

“And among His Signs in this: thou seest the earth barren and desolate; but when We send down rain to it, it is stirred to life (oscillates) and yields increase. Truly, He Who gives life to the (dead) earth can surely give life to (men) who are dead. For He has power over all things.”

(Surah 41, Ayah 39)

The existing translation refers to the Arabic word “oscillate” as “it is stirred” which does not reflect the actual Arabic word. A possible explanation of the above phenomenon is that when rain drops on the dead ground, particles of earth oscillate and grow. If there are seeds in the ground, rain causes them to grow or germinate. The exact mechanism of the effect of rain on germination may not be fully understood. However, this may be left to specialists in the field of botany to examine from the point of view of vibration.

Regardless of discovering the exact mechanism of the above phenomenon, the above Ayat clearly describe a case of vibration. Understanding this phenomenon of vibration is undoubtedly a knowledge that was not available in the seventh century and may not be fully understood in our present time. No one can claim that Muhammad was a master dynamist and knew about vibration. Where did he get this information? It is from the Master and Only Creator of vibration.

The Relativity of the Time

There is absolutely no ambiguity whatsoever in the Biblical description of the Creation in six days followed by a day of rest, the Sabbath, analogous to the days of the earthly week. This clearly shows the interjection of human concepts to a divine action. The word “day”, in the Bible, means the interval of time between two successive sunrises or sunsets for an inhabitant of the earth. When defined this way, the day is conditioned to the rotation of the earth on its own axis. It is obvious that, logically speaking, there can be no such definition of “days” as explained in the Bible, if the mechanism that caused them to appear - the existence of the earth and the sun - had not already been created.
On the other hand, we read in the Quran in many Ayat, the Creation process in six days without any analogy to the earthly days. To understand what the Quran means by a day, one should put all the verses in which the word “day” is mentioned and then attempt to extract a common meaning.

“Your Guardian-Lord is Allah, Who created the heavens and the earth in six days.”
(Surah 7, Ayah 54)

“He directs the affairs from heavens to the earth; then it ascends unto Him on a day, the measure of which is (as) a thousand years of your reckoning.”
(Surah 32, Ayah 5)

“The angels and the Spirit (Gabriel) ascend unto Him in a day, the measure whereof is (as) fifty thousand years.”
(Surah 70, Ayah 4)

How could the immense mystery of time be enforced in our minds better than that? A day in the standard of Allah may be one day, or 1,000 years or 50,000 years, depending on the event, relative to the human standard of time!

According to the theory of relativity, the time change of a fast moving object is very real and has nothing to do with any mechanical changes that take place in a clock because of its motion. An example to understand this time change is to imagine an astronaut travelling in space at a speed close to the speed of light. It would appear to him that he traveled an incredibly large distance in a very short time. On his return back to earth, he would find that thousands of earthly years had passed and many generations had been born and died during this time expansion, while he might still be middle aged!

The relativity theory postulates that the maximum speed attainable is that of the speed of light. But who would say that this is really a fact that can be applied on all conditions? What if the speed of light represents a singularity or a barrier between two classes of realities? Our physical reality goes from zero speed to the speed of light. And beyond this barrier, there may be another reality that has speed range from the speed of light to, perhaps, a much faster speed.

During a dream one can travel enormous distances in a very short period of time, may be at a speed faster than the speed of light. So, the above Ayat describe that on a spiritual level something that takes one day, according to the Divine Standard, could take a thousand or fifty thousand
years according to the human standard. Therefore, the day in the Quran signifies a period of time and may not be equal to the earthly 24 hours. Modern commentators of the Quran, such as Yusuf Ali (1934) stressed the importance of taking the word “day” to mean in reality “very long period, or Ages, or Eons.”

How were the different events in the Quran described in different time frames? Who told Muhammad that time has a relativistic property? It is the Creator of time itself.
Throughout history religion has been abused and misunderstood. Some people use it as a means of exploitation and suppression, as a pretext for prejudice and persecution. Others use it as a source of power and domination over the elite and masses alike. In the name of religion, unjustifiable wars have been launched, freedom of thought and expression has been oppressed, science has been persecuted, the right of the individual to maturity has been denied and man’s dignity and honor have been flagrantly violated. And in the name of religion injustice has been inflicted upon humanity with the result that religion itself has suffered many losses.

These are historical facts that no one can deny. But is this the proper function of religion or the right approach to religion? Could this be the purpose of religion? The indisputable answer is an emphatic NO. There are many religions and sects of religions and each one claims to be the one and only true religion. Each religion is supposed to have come from the One God for the right guidance of mankind. But these

In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful.

3. ... This day, I have perfected your religion for you, completed My Favour upon you, and have chosen for you Islam as your religion. But as for him who is forced by severe hunger, with no inclination to sin (such can eat these above-mentioned meats), then surely, Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.

(Quran 5:3)
claims contradict each other and have caused dissension among people and intense reactions to religion - instead of bonding mankind into one universal brotherhood under the One Universal Benevolent God. This situation makes any neutral observer confused and perhaps reluctant to all kinds of organized religion.

The Islamic concept of religion is unique in the broadest sense of the word. It is true that genuine religion must come from God for the right guidance of man. And it is equally true that human nature and major human needs are basically the same at all times. This concept leads to only one conclusion and that is:

There is only one true religion revealed from the One and the Same God. This religion is ISLAM. Because Islam means to surrender to the Will of God, it should be kept in mind that Islam was not taught by Muhammad alone. On the contrary, all the prophets before Muhammad had taught humans to surrender to the Will of God. The true followers of Abraham, Moses, Jesus and the rest of the prophets were all called Muslims. So, Islam has been and will continue to be, the true universal religion of God because God is One and Changeless and because human nature and major human needs are fundamentally the same, irrespective of time and place, of race and age and of any other considerations.

Bearing this in mind, the Islamic concept maintains that religion is not only a spiritual and intellectual necessity, but also a social and universal need. It is not to confuse man but to guide him. It is not to humble man but to elevate his moral nature. It is not to deprive him of anything useful, or to burden him, or to oppress his quality, but to open for him inexhaustible treasures of sound thinking and right action. It is not to confine him to narrow limits, but to launch him into wide horizon of truth and goodness. It improves his knowledge of God - the Highest Truth in the universe - and of himself. It teaches him about the secrets of life, about good and evil and about right and wrong. It purifies the soul from evil, clears the mind from doubts, strengthens the character and corrects the thinking and convictions of man. All this can be achieved only when man faithfully observes the spiritual duties and physical regulation introduced by religion.

True religion educates man and trains him in hope and patience, in truthfulness and honesty, in love for the right and good, in courage and endurance, all of which are required for the mastery of the great art of living. Moreover, true religion insures man against fear and spiritual losses and assures him of God’s help and unbreakable alliance. It provides man with peace and security and makes his life meaningful.
That is what a true religion can do for humanity and that is the concept of religion in Islam. Any religions that fail to bear these fruits are not Islam or, rather, are not a religion at all. Any men who fail to draw these benefits from religion is not devout or God-minded. God is absolutely Truthful when He says in the Holy Quran:

“The Religion before Allah is Islam (submission to His Will).”

(Surah 3, Ayah 19)

This is what Islam and the original Christianity and Judaism are all about. Islam is a solid religion based upon unshakable foundation. The critics of Islam present their own distorted version of Islam in the Western Media. Only the arrogant or the ignorant of Islam denies the fact that out of the desert came a revelation that inspired social, scientific and economic achievements. The critics of Islam strive to publicize half the truth about all religions. Most of those who attack Islam never read anything about it from Islamic sources or read one complete verse from the Quran for that matter. One frequent tactic by half the truth TV Evangelists is to present half a verse from the Quran, such as Surah 2 Ayah 191. The first half of this verse says “And slays them wherever ye catch them.” This part of the verse is publicized to convince the audience with the violent nature of Islam. However, in the same verse the Quran says, “If they fight you, slay them.” And this part is never mentioned. This whole verse is about self-defense and sacred rights of humans who were subjected to persecution and oppression.

Another Ayah that is frequently publicized is Surah 5 Ayah 51: “O ye who you believe, take not the Jews and the Christians for your friends.” This Ayah is marketed to warn Jews and Christians against Muslims who are claimed to be hostile against non-Muslims. This is far away from the truth and that is not what the Quran advocates. The exact Arabic word of the above translation of friends is “Awliyaa.” This Arabic word is repeated in the Quran over 70 times. The root of this word has a few meanings: guardian, protector, friend or one who holds public authority or religious authority. The singular of this Arabic word is “Wali,” and this is one of the names of Allah who is the ultimate religious Authority. Therefore, the meaning of the above Ayah is: “O who you believe, take not the Jews and the Christians as an authority in religious matters.” And this is what the Christians and Jews do. They do not consider followers of other religions as their religious authority. There are other Ayat in the Quran that command the Muslims to be fair to everyone and treat everyone with justice. History shows this fact. As a matter of fact, Jews and Christians
History of Truth

thrive during the Islamic Caliphates. The Quran calls the Christians and Jews as “People of the Book” which is a much respected title.

Furthermore, half the truth Evangelists claims that Muhammad was a man of war in contrast to Moses or Jesus. They conveniently ignore history books and their Bible too. This is a part of their long history of unjustified anti-Islamic bias. But may be Muhammad and the Muslims are guilty in their eyes because Muslims do not follow their lead. Muslims respect Muhammad and do not accept any insult to their beloved Prophet, while some Christians insult Jesus in their books and movies. Muslims take their religion seriously even if they do not practice Islam, while some Christians treat Christianity as a big show business. Muslims respect their true monotheistic religion, while Christians promote Santa Claus as another god beside the trinity. In summary Muslims treat Islam as a religion, while TV Evangelists treat Christianity as a show business.

However, defense of Islam against this hatred always comes from many sources. The first and the most authoritative source is God Himself who promised to protect this religion until the end of time. This can be clearly seen by the thousands of non-Muslims that convert to Islam through their own rational approach and not by force. The Mongols who crushed the Islamic Caliphate in Baghdad converted to Islam in Turkestan and in Syria and the name Khan became an Islamic name. This is the only case in history where the invaders followed the religion of the country that they defeated. Muhammad Ali, (1942-), the first boxer to become world heavyweight champion three times, originally named Cassius Marcellus Clay, Jr., converted to Islam and assumed an Islamic name. Cat Stevens, one of the top singers during the 1970’s, converted to Islam in 1977 and assumed the Islamic name of Yusuf Islam. He preaches Islam in Europe, the US and the Middle East. This man who used to be a glamorous singer, now projects an aura of humility and serenity. Another example is the French surgeon Maurice Bucaille who was struck by the existence of the Muslim piety and the scientific revelation in the Quran that is impossible to be known from an unlettered Arab in the desert. His book, The Bible, The Quran and Science, was translated to English, Arabic, Turkish and Indonesian. In this book, he mentioned that another source that came to the defense of Islam is the Vatican. The Office for the Non-Christian Affairs at the Vatican published a document under the title “Orientations for a Dialogue between Christians and Muslims.” It is a very important document because it shows the new position of the Vatican towards Islam. In the third edition of this study (1970), this new position calls for “a revision of our attitude towards it (Islam) and a critical examination of our prejudices” ... “We should first set about progressively changing
the way our Christian brothers see it. This is the most important of all” ...
“We must clear the way the out-dated image inherited from the past, or
distorted by prejudice and slander” ...
“and recognize the past injustice
towards the Muslims for which the west, with its Christian education, is
to blame.” The Vatican document is nearly 150 pages long. In the same
document, the authors address the following suggestions to the Christians:
“Here also, we must surrender to a deep purification of our attitude. In
particular, what is meant by this are certain ‘set judgments’ that are all
too often and too lightly made about Islam. It is essential not to cultivate
in the secret of our hearts views such as these, too easily or arbitrarily
arrived at, and which the Muslim finds confusing.”

One extremely important view is the attitude that leads people
to repeatedly use the name Allah to mean the God of Muslims, as if
the Muslims believe in a God who was different from the God of the
Christians. The same document stresses this fundamental point in the
following terms:
“It would seem pointless to maintain that Allah is not real God, as do
certain people in the west!” The Conciliatory document has put the above
assertion in its proper place. There is no better way of illustrating Islamic
faith in God than by quoting the following extracts from Lumen Gentium,
produced by the second Vatican Council (1962-1965):

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

This book dealt with the most important issue of man’s life, that is,
the existence of God. One may think that this issue is not that important,
but in reality it is the most crucial and the highest priority issue in man’s
life if true happiness is the objective of life. It is the most fundamental
question and answer in this whole universe. Some people are blessed with
faith in their hearts and they do not need proof. This is the simple intuition
of faith that everyone is born with. Others are polluted with the notion
and slogan of “modern serious science” that seeing is believing and they
attempt to apply human approach to the spiritual world.

God does not show Himself to us because we are limited creatures
and cannot comprehend the Unlimited Being. But, because of His mercy,
He shows us His signs everywhere, if we care to look. He shows us what
we need to see and what we can comprehend.

• We see His Greatness in the vast universe that we are trying to
understand.
• We see His Creation and Ingenuity in the perfection of the cell and its components.
• We see the resurrection every spring when plants in dead land come to life.
• We see sleeping as a foretaste of death.
• We see spiritually different laws applied to everyone during sleeping and dreaming.
• We see paradise as the ultimate dream of every human where true peace and happiness exist.
• We see hell in the earthly fire.
• We see His system of reward and punishment applies in many courts on earth.

Indeed, Praise be to Allah, we have all what we need to believe in Him. Thank you God, for showing us your way. If one does not see that now, one will certainly be convinced at the Day of Judgment.

However, the real threat to monotheistic religions is the high tide of atheism that advocates the theory of evolution and unsubstantiated scientific theories. In USA, where freedom of speech and expression is protected by the constitution, some have concluded that their freedom should not have any limits. They can voice their atheistic views. Atheists claim that science, the Big Bang, the theory of relativity and human evolution point to energy and not to Almighty Creator. They have no clues of who or how this energy started. They simply state their ignorance about the origin of this energy. These atheistic views contribute to the lack of serious understanding of the concept of faith. The USA is the country that has the most churches on earth. Simultaneously, it is the country that has the most violent crimes. It is also the country that has the largest number of prisons on earth.

So, God exists and his name is not father, son, Holy Ghost, Buddha, Yahweh, or Jehovah. His name in Arabic is Allah. This Name still exists in the Arabic Bibles and was taken away from the non-Arabic Bibles.

For the Muslims:
• God is adequate for guidance, happiness and salvation.
• There is no original sin. God forgave Adam’s mistake that drove him out of heavens. Adam achieved forgiveness by imploring God for few short words of repentance. Satan’s rebellion towards God, has established him as God’s eternal adversary.
Conclusions

• The Quran is the authentic Word of God. It includes the Divine Standards that humans should follow, if they seek happiness in this world and in the hereafter.
• All Prophets were Muslims. They all surrendered to the Will of God.

And for our Christian friends:

• God alone is not enough for happiness and salvation.
• They needed Jesus to die on the cross to save humanity from the original sin.
• They needed the Holy Ghost to provide humanity with faith.

And for the atheists:

• They reject the Christian concept of the original sin and the belief that humans were expelled from paradise!
• They believe that God is in everything and everywhere. God is in the trees, in the cows, in the rocks and in the computers!
• They believe in many gods that may represent one deity, who may be male and female!
• Modern scientific atheism refers all phenomena to energy!

As has been demonstrated, the whole Bible is full of contradictions, politics, tribal feud and human perceptions. The Bible itself admits its own distortion by the lying pens of the scribes. Biblical theologians when confronted with the many problems in the Bible, their usual answer is that these contradictions are from the liberal mind, not the conservative one. This answer is usually followed by a request to just have faith in Jesus and you will be saved. However, this faith has to be a validated faith. No one should accept Buddhism on the grounds of having faith in Buddha. No one should accept Hinduism with its many gods on the grounds of having faith. No one should accept atheism on the grounds of having faith in energy. Faith has to be validated and convincing.

The concepts of the son of god, savior, crucifixion and resurrection were not new in old civilizations and certainly were not new during and after the time of Jesus. Graves mentioned sixteen crucified saviors before Christ, (1876). This makes one suspicious about the true origin of existing Christianity and its doctrine. The “death” and resurrection of Jesus Christ, as told in the gospels, retells the ancient myth of the death and rebirth of the previous human-gods. The difference was that no pagan had seen his mythical god, but the early Christian missionaries had seen and talked to their Lord Jesus. They emphasized that Jesus was real while pagan gods
might not be real. Christianity presents its followers with a horrendous scare tactic: everyone is a sinner. Thus everyone is committed to Hellfire. Then offers a tremendous way out: a real God is crucified; believe in Jesus and you are saved.

Islam recognizes Jesus as one of the great prophets of God and as the Messiah. Outside the Christian Church, no other religious community has given Jesus so much honor, respect, esteem and love as Muslims have. Thousands of Muslims are proud and believe that they are blessed to have the name “Eesa” or “Maryam” which are the Arabic names for Jesus and Mary. Islam recognizes the miraculous birth of Jesus by the Virgin Mary. However, Muslims and Christians do interpret this birth differently. Christians see it as an incarnation of God on earth of the son of god. Muslims see it as a special miracle. Every prophet has a special miracle that suits the needs and the challenges of his time. Since Jesus contemporaries used to deny the existence of spirit, they were shown the presence and the power of the divine spirit by this miraculous birth. The message of Jesus was basically the same as the message of all the prophets of God. He was sent to invite people to the worship of One God, to do the righteous deeds and to be kind and loving to others. He reminded his people to pay attention not only to the letter of the laws but also to the spirit of the laws.

The Quran states that Jesus was mistreated, denied and rejected by his people just as other prophets were also mistreated. Some of his contemporaries opposed him and tried to crucify him. Jesus, however, prayed to God to save him from them and to “take this cup (death) away” from him, Luke 22:42. God accepted his prayer and saved him from crucifixion. The generally accepted Muslim view is that Jesus was lifted up to heaven and he still lives in his body in heaven:

“That they said (in boast), “We killed Christ Jesus the son of Mary, the Messenger of Allah; - but they killed him not, nor crucified him, but so it was made to appear to them, and those who differ therein are full of doubts, with no (certain) knowledge, but only conjecture to follow, for of a surety they killed him not: - Nay, Allah raised him up unto Himself; and Allah is Exalted in Power, Wise.”

(Surah 4, Ayah 157-158)

Jesus has yet to fulfill his Messianic role. Muslims, like Christians, believe that Jesus is the Messiah and that he will come back to earth before the end of time and restore peace and order, fight the Anti-Christ and demonic forces and bring victory for truth and righteousness. The
true followers of Jesus will prevail over those who deny him and refuse to surrender to the Will of God.

It is obvious that our present time systems, with its contradicting human standards, have failed in most important aspects that affect the necessities of human life on earth:

- Failure in the global economic systems, whether it is a socialist or capitalist system.
- Failure in the fields of freedom, security and peace for most people on earth.
- Failure in the moral and spiritual levels that lead to an increase in crimes.
- Failure in the political systems, where corruption is the norm and not the exception.
- Failure in the education systems that exclude God and constraint the thinking process.
- Failure in the legal systems that ignore the rights of both the victims and suspects.
- Failure in basic human relationships, especially those at the family level.

All these failures can only be attributed to one basic phenomenon: the conflicting human standards to reach the ultimate human goals for happiness and peace. The solution is provided in the only authentic User’s Manual for the individual and the society: the Quran, where the Divine standard is clearly and simply presented. It has been shown throughout the history of humanity:

- Humans are happy when they adhere to the true guidance of the Creator.
- Humans are miserable when they forget the true guidance of the Creator.

Therefore, Islam and the Quran are the only solutions to all human illnesses. As for the Muslims, they need to have strong faith and not just an elementary knowledge of this glorious religion. They need to go back to the basics of Islam and quit chasing the fake western image of success. They need to regard the authentic Word of God as their guidance in life. They need to “feel” and not just “know” the following Ayah:

“Verily, this Ummah of yours is a single Ummah, and I am your Lord and Cherisher; therefore, Serve me (and no other).”

(Surah 21, Ayah 92)
The meaning of the above Aya is repeated in the following Ayah:

“And verily, this Ummah of yours is a single Ummah, and I am your Lord and Cherisher, therefore, Fear me (and no other).”

(Surah 23, Ayah 52)

In the above short Ayat, Allah states that the Islamic nation is one nation, with Him as the Lord and the Muslims are given a command to worship and serve Him. Any conscientious Muslim should take these Ayat very seriously. Allah states a fact, followed by a command to worship and serve Him. And when Muslims are given a command from the Almighty, should anyone ignore it? Or should they treat this command with the proper respect it deserves? The response of the Muslims to the above Ayat should be “we hear, we obey.” Muslims are responsible for reestablishing the Word of Allah. They are entrusted by the most significant sentence in this Universe: “No God but Allah.” Muslims should exert much effort to establish one nation, worshipping One God, following one Book, following one last Messenger, praying towards one Kaabah for the true peace on earth.

THE RELIGION CRITERIA

Humanity searches for truth and freedom. Chaos and turmoil will be happened if everyone is practicing freedom without limits. However, when it comes to freedom of religion, one has to be prudent and objective. Humans can make choices, but no one can guarantee the consequences. That is what I attempted to achieve throughout this work. In volume 1, I established criteria for a religion and for a Holy Book. Since, I am only addressing monotheistic religions; I will confine the following analysis to Judaism, Christianity and Islam.

Universality

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

This condition automatically excludes Judaism unless we accept the notion that God prefers the Jews and only the Jews to the rest of humanity. In this case, this contradicts one of God’s attributes: Justice.
Jews do not have missionaries and they do not invite any one to join them. Moreover, if someone wants to convert to Judaism, which is supposed to be a religion of God, he will encounter difficulties with that conversion. It is a fact that the Jews in Israel do not accept offspring from a Jewish father. According to the Jewish law in Israel, only the mother determines religion. Therefore, if someone manages to be converted by a Jewish organization outside Israel, the Jewish establishment in Israel will not recognize the conversion.

Therefore, this criterion of universality applies only to Christianity and Islam.

Simplicity

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

The doctrine of the trinity has never been understood for two thousand years, since the beginning of the Byzantine arguments until the present time. The Christian creed that Jesus and the Holy Ghost are made from the “same substance” as that of God is an eternal puzzle. Tyler Roberts, a lecturer at Harvard University, said: “A lot of my students express questions about the troubled Jesus near the end of his life, when he felt he was being forsaken by God. To some this means he couldn’t be the Son of God, because why would he, God, do that?” Life, December 1994.

On the other hand, as we have seen, Islam is an extremely simple religion, that advocates Truly One God for all Creations.

Therefore, the criterion of simplicity applies only to Islam.

Uniqueness

The Holy Scriptures should be unique and only the original version should be used. There should not be multiple versions that are revised and revised again by humans and if a translation of the original version exists, it should be accompanied by the original text as a protection against incorrect human translation. The basic Christian doctrines of the son of god and trinity exist only in the King James Version and these doctrines are deleted from later versions. This represents a serious problem to the Christian faith.

In the present time, the category of niche Bibles, as the publishing industry calls them is exploding. These are Bibles in well-known
translations, such as King James or the New International versions, tailored and marketed to a person’s interests. Of those on the market today, The Promise (by Nelson) features pastel heavenly skies. The Women’s Devotional Bible (by Zondervan) is pink with flower illustrations. The Eager Reader Bible (by Tyndale) for the kids bears a cartoon of Noah on the front. The language has turned contemporary as well. Because the Bible is a best seller, the “Word of God” is now a marketing item.

Then there is The New Testament and Psalms: An Inclusive Version (Oxford University Press). In this latest revision of the Scriptures, the editors’ “politically correct” purposes and processes are outlined in the front: “replace or rephrase all gender-specific language not referring to particular historical individuals, all pejorative references to race, color or religions” through the use of acceptable means of conforming the language of the work to an inclusive idea. Inclusive mainly means ridding the text, as much as possible, of masculinity, both in syntax and in metaphor. Since the Bible refers to God as He or Himself and the Almighty has no gender, the editors replaced all reference of “He” by “The Great One” or “The Mighty One.”

This is what is happening to the Word of God in Christianity. Some people believe that they can write a revision of the Bible better than God Himself. God only knows the number of versions and revisions of the Bible. But with the Quran, there is only one unique Arabic text for all times in all places.

Therefore, the criterion of uniqueness applies only to Islam.

Openness

Following the above condition of simplicity, a religion should be opened with all its aspects. The exact history should be presented. The evolution of doctrine, if any, should be known and accessible to the public. The honest preachers should not attempt to keep their congregations in the dark about any subject relating to religion. It is nice for a religion to emphasize good morals, but should this be the only criterion of accepting a religion? Many times when a Muslim discusses religion with a Christian and presents him with historical facts, the Christian’s usual answer is: I did not know that. The average Christian is not aware of the evolution of Christianity as a religion in four phases as demonstrated earlier in Chapter 4, Volume 2. The average Christian is not aware of any contradictions in the Bible. Christian preachers do not volunteer most of what is presented in this book. They only emphasize good morals in Christianity and avoid any controversial subject in the Scriptures. The whole truth is not presented and only the positive side is preached.
Conclusions

With the Quran or Islamic preaching, everything is in the open for anyone. Allah said in the Quran:

“...and (He) has imposed no difficulties on you in religion.”

(Surah 22, Ayah 78)

Islam gives freedom and full play to man’s faculty of every kind. Islam imposes no restrictions on knowledge or acquiring any information from the highest to the lowest level. Anything can be discussed in Islam, except, of course, the nature of God, which is beyond human comprehension.

Therefore, the criterion of openness applies only to Islam.

Authenticity

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

As was demonstrated, the Bible is a collection of the Word of God, the sayings of the prophets and the human perception of events. All intertwined to the extent that it is impossible to separate them. It was also shown that the human input to the Bible leads to many contradictions. If there are few contradictions in the New Testament, one might attempt to find a reasonable interpretation, or blame it on our human limitation. But the contradictions are so many and they exist in serious events. As such, one should question any event in the New Testament that does not conform to the previous religious history.

It should by now be very clear, that the authors of the Gospels are actually not confirmed as the true writers of the Gospels. Also the dates and places of writing the Bible are unknown.

With the Quran, all the information about the Revelation and its authenticity is documented in the Islamic library. The entire Quran has been memorized from the time of the Prophet until our present time by millions of Muslims. Not even a comma or full stop was added or deleted from the original Arabic text of the Quran. Even the way of reciting the Quran by hundreds of millions of Muslims is traceable with a chain of narrations to the exact recitation of the Prophet himself. This is the promise of Allah to guard the Quran, not only in writing but also in recitation. Islamic scholars record the sayings of the Prophet. Each saying
is associated with a chain of narration, with the level of trustworthiness of each narrator. This makes the Hadith better reserved than the entire Bible.

The Christian and Jewish libraries are full of books with titles like “Who wrote the Old Testament,” “Who wrote the New Testament,” and “Who wrote the Bible”, etc. that raise serious questions about the authenticity of the entire Bible. The Islamic or non-Islamic libraries do not include books with titles like “Who wrote the Quran.” No serious scholar ever questions the authenticity of the Quran.

Therefore, the criterion of authenticity applies only to Islam.

Consistency

Because a Holy Book is revealed from God, then one should not find inconsistency or contradictions in the scriptures. There should not be any errors or even a claim of error associated with the Holy Books.

We have seen how the Bible was written; the Old Testament by J, P, E and D and the New Testament by A, B, C and Q. We have seen many inconsistencies in the Bible because authors based their material on their political background and tribal feud.

With the Quran, there is not a single inconsistency in the whole text. Even the Ayat that describe the scientific miracles of the Quran were shown to be accurate and explain the known facts of our present day precisely.

Therefore, the criterion of consistency applies only to Islam.

The Prophet

The character of the Prophet on whom the revelation was revealed should be impeccable before the revelation. His life should be documented before and after the revelation to confirm that he was honest and truthful. He should not have bowed to anyone else before God.

However, the Biblical views of the Jewish Prophets are extremely distorted. These Prophets are described as committing adultery, incest and worshipping idols. On the other hand, Islam holds high moral views for all the messengers of God.

Therefore, the criterion of the Prophet applies to Moses, Jesus and Muhammad.
The Holy Book

The Holy Book should have the following characteristics:

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

Only the Quran satisfies all of the above and more! The beauty and eloquence of the Quran resonates with the deepest aspirations of man to change his whole way of life. One feels that Allah authors every Ayah as it touches the heart and inspires the mind. The sensation of listening to the Quran is quite overwhelming. It feels that each Ayah descends from heaven with all the blessing of Allah to mankind and recitation of the Quran in the original recitation style of the Prophet himself adds reverence to this sensation.

Therefore, the criterion of The Holy Book applies only to the Quran.

After examining all the above religious criteria, the conclusion is:
Islam is the true and perfect religion. And that is what Allah states precisely about Islam:

“..That is the true religion, but most among mankind know not.”
(Surah 12, Ayah 40)

“..That is the true religion, but most among mankind know not.”
(Surah 30, Ayah 30)
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Allah: The name of God of all Muslims and Christians in the Middle East.

Asteroid: A small, rocky, airless body that orbits a star.

Astronomical unit: The average distance between the Earth and the Sun, and a unit useful in studies of the solar system. Its accepted value is 149,597,870 km.

Astronomy: The science of measuring the motion and position of stars, planets, and other astronomical bodies.

Atman: (Hindi) the sacred power of Brahman that each individual experiences within himself.

Atmosphere: A gaseous shell surrounding a planet or other body.

Atom: The smallest part of a chemical element that can take part in any chemical reaction and still retain its identity. All atoms consist of a nucleus and one or more orbiting electrons.

Avatar: In Hindu myth, the descent of a god to earth in human form. More generally used of a person who is believed to embody or incarnate the divine.

Ayah: (plural Ayat) (Arabic) Sign, parable. In the Quran, the manifestations of God in the world, or one verse in the Quran.

Big Bang: According to a widely accepted theory, the universe started 15 to 20 billion years ago, when the universe began expanding from a state of infinite density.

Binary star: A pair of stars in orbit around each other.

Black hole: A region of space-time in which there is such an immense concentration of material within a small volume that matter and energy cannot escape.

Brahman: (Hindi) The Hindu term for the sacred power that sustains all existing things; the inner meaning of existence.
**Carbohydrate**: An organic compound of carbon, hydrogen, and oxygen atoms. As sugars and starches, carbohydrates are the main sources of energy for most terrestrial organisms.

**Carbon**: A chemical compound found in all living matter on Earth and notable for its tendency to form multiple bonds.

**Cell**: A basic functional and structural unit of living matter. A cell is capable of growth, reproduction, and the excretion of wastes.

**Comet**: An asteroid-size body of dusty ice that travels in an elliptical orbit around the sun.

**Constellation**: A grouping of stars to form a shape or a pattern. This grouping into constellations does not imply any physical connection among them.

**Cosmic background radiation**: Microwave radiation peaking at a wavelength of 1 mm, which is visible at the same intensity all over the sky. It is taken to be the cooled remnant of the primeval fireball of the hot Big Bang that started the universe.

**Cosmic rays**: Atomic particles, mostly protons, of very high energy moving through space.

**Cosmology**: The study of the universe as a whole, including its large-scale structure and movements, origin, evolution, and ultimate fate.

**Cosmos**: The universe; also, a mathematical or scientific model of the universe.

**Chromosomes**: The chainlike structure within the nucleus of the cell that carries genes.

**Cytoplasm**: The liquid material found in the region outside a cell’s nucleus.

**Deuterium**: A form of hydrogen having one neutron and one proton in its nucleus. Also known as heavy hydrogen.

**Dogma**: (Greek) used by the Greek Christians to describe the hidden, secret traditions of the Church, which could only be understood mystically and expressed symbolically. In the west, dogma has come to mean a body of opinion, categorically and authoritatively stated.

**DNA** (Deoxyribonucleic acid): A complex organic compound found in all life on Earth and is responsible for the storage of genetic information.
A DNA molecule consists of two parallel chains on nucleotides. DNA is named for the sugar deoxyribose, which it contains.

**Doppler shift**: A change in wavelength caused by the motion of either the emitter or the observer.

**Double star**: Stars appearing as a pair because they are close to each other in the line of sight.

**El**: The high God of Canaan who seems also to have been the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

**Electron**: A negatively charged particle that normally orbits the nucleus of an atom, but may exist in isolation.

**Element**: One of just over 100 substances that cannot be reduced by chemical means to simpler substances.

**Elliptical galaxy**: A galaxy, ellipsoidal in shape, composed primarily of stars with little gas and dust.

**Energy**: The ability to do work, where work is defined as the ability to move mass through space. Life and machines require energy.

**Entropy**: A measure of the energy existing in a system that is unavailable for use. A physical system exhibits increasing entropy until it reaches equilibrium. Entropy is sometimes said to be a measure of disorder.

**Escape velocity**: The velocity that a body must reach if it is to escape into space from a celestial body. For the Earth it is 11.18 Km/sec, while for the Sun it is 617.3 km/sec.

**Eucaryote**: A cell containing a nucleus in which genetic material is stored.

**Evolution**: According to evolutionists, changes over generations in organism’s inheritable characteristics.

**Frequency**: The number of cycles per second. In electromagnetic radiation, frequency is obtained by dividing the speed of light by the wavelength. It is measured in Hertz, or simply Hz.

**Galaxy**: A celestial island of stars, dusts and gases.

**Gene**: A complete unit of biochemical information that specifies the series of amino acids needed to make up a particular type of peptide chain, which in turn form part of a protein.
**General relativity**: A theoretical account of the effects of acceleration and gravity on the motion of bodies and the observed structure of space and time.

**Gentile**: (Hebrew) One who is not Jewish.

**Goy**: (plural goyim) (Hebrew) Non-Jews or Gentiles.

**Grand unified theory (GUT)**: A theory that aims to unify the four basic forces of nature, i.e. strong, weak, electromagnetic, and gravity forces. At the Big Bang, these forces were unified.

**Gravity**: The mutual attraction of separate masses; fundamental force in nature.

**Graviton**: The messenger particles of gravity in theories of quantum mechanics.

**Halo**: A glowing ring around a celestial body such as the Sun and Moon. The term is also used to describe material around our galaxy.

**Hubble constant**: The ratio of speed of recession of galaxies to distance. At present, there is some doubt about its value, which is thought to be between 17 and 30 km/sec. per million light years.

**Hydrocarbon**: One of the large numbers of organic compound made up exclusively of carbon and hydrogen atoms. Seven types of hydrocarbons have been detected in space.

**Idolatry**: The worship of a human or man-made entity instead of the transcendent God.

**Incarnation**: The embodiment of God in human form.

**Inertia**: The resistance of a body to change velocity. The inertia of a body equals its gravitational force.

**Inflation**: According to theory, a sudden expansion in space that occurred 10E-35 seconds after the Big Bang.

**Infrared**: A band of electromagnetic radiation with a lower frequency and longer wavelength than red light. Most infrared radiation is absorbed by the Earth’s atmosphere, but certain wavelength can be detected from Earth.

**Inorganic**: A chemical compound that does not include both carbon and hydrogen atoms. Also may refer to matter that is not and never has been alive.
**Invertebrate**: An organism without a backbone.

**Ion**: An atom that has lost or gained one or more electrons. A neutral atom has an equal number of electrons and protons, giving it a zero net electrical charge.

**Ionosphere**: An ionized atmospheric layer. The Earth’s ionosphere occurs at altitude of 35 miles and higher.

**Islam**: (Arabic) Surrendering to the Will of God.

**Isotope**: One of two or more forms of a chemical element that have the same number of protons but a different number of neutrons in the nucleus.

**Kepler’s Laws**: Three laws governing the orbital motion of planets. The first law which states that planets move in elliptical orbits with the Sun at one focus of the ellipse.

**Kerygma**: (Greek) used by the Greek Christian to denote the public teaching of the Church, which can be expressed clearly and rationally, as opposed to its dogma (q.v.), which could not.

**Light year**: An astronomical distance unit equal to the distance light travels in a vacuum in a year, almost six trillion miles (6,000,000,000,000 miles).

**Logos**: Cosmic reason, used in ancient Greek philosophy, as the divine source of order and intelligibility.

**Magnetosphere**: The region around a planet in which its magnetic field is the dominant magnetic influence.

**Mammal**: A hairy, warm-blooded vertebrate animal that nurses its young. Almost all mammals bear their young alive, rather than in eggs.

**Markarian galaxy**: A galaxy that is bright and radiates most strongly at the blue end of the spectrum.

**Membrane**: A flexible structure that encloses a cell, organelles within a cell, or other tissue. A membrane consists primarily of layered protein and fats.

**Metabolism**: The biochemical processes that convert energy to a form useful for life.

**Meteoroid**: A small metallic or rocky body found in space. A meteoroid entering a planet’s atmosphere is called a meteor. Meteors often burn up in the atmosphere; those that reach the surface are called meteorites.
**Milky Way**: A hazy band of light crossing the entire sky in both northern and southern hemispheres. So named after its appearance, it is now known to be caused by myriad of stars as well as dust and gas. It is a spiral galaxy, and our solar system exists close to the tips of one of the arms of the spiral.

**Molecule**: The smallest unit of an element or compound that retains its properties. A molecule may consist of a single atom or, more commonly, two or more atoms bonded together.

**Monotheism**: The belief that the universe is created and governed by one God.

**Moon**: One of a planet’s natural satellites, generally no smaller than 10 miles in diameter. There are more than 50 known moons in the solar system.

**Mutation**: According to evolutionists, a random, inheritable change in the genetic pattern of an organism.

**Nebula**: A cloud of dust or gas in space. Nebulae can be dark or bright, diffuse or compact.

**Neuron**: A specialized cell that transmits information through electrochemical signals. Neurons are distributed throughout a body in a neural network.

**Neutron**: A constituent of many atomic nuclei that has no electric charge with a mass just a little greater than a proton.

**Neutron star**: A massive star near the end of its life. It degenerates to tightly packed neutrons.

**Nirvana**: (Hindi) literally “cooling off” or “going out” like a flame; extinction. Term used by Buddhists to denote the ultimate reality, the goal and the fulfillment of human life and the end of pain. It is impossible to define in rational terms but belongs to a different order of experience.

**Nous**: Mind or reason, used in ancient Greek philosophy, as the principle of divine reason.

**Nova**: Meaning “new”, this is an aging star which suddenly flares up in brightness- perhaps by 10,000 times- and so suddenly appears in the sky. The flare up lasts for days or weeks at the most, and then sinks back to its original brightness over months or years.
**Nucleic acid**: One of the complex organic molecules, including DNA and RNA that store and transmit genetic information.

**Nucleolus**: A small body within the cell’s nucleus. Its function is not clearly understood but may be related to the synthesis of RNA.

**Nucleotides**: One of the chemical units that makes up a nucleic acid such as DNA or RNA. A nucleotide consists of a phosphate, a sugar, and a base, all bonded together.

**Nucleus**: The massive center of an atom, composed of protons and neutrons and orbited by electrons. Also, a membrane-enclosed structure within a eucaryotic cell that contains genetic material.

**Open universe**: A universe that expands forever.

**Orbit**: The path of an object revolving around an astronomical body. Also, the path of an electron around the nucleus of an atom.

**Organic**: Pertaining to a compound made up of carbon and hydrogen and possibly other elements as well. All life contains organic compounds. The term may also refer to living or once-living material.

**Ozone**: A three-atom form of oxygen. Earth’s stratosphere includes an ozone layer that absorbs dangerous ultraviolet radiation.

**Phosphate**: A type of inorganic compound. Some phosphates join to sugars and bases to form nucleotides.

**Photoelectric effect**: The emission of electrons by certain metals, such as selenium, when exposed to electromagnetic radiation.

**Photon**: The quantum particle of light and the messenger particle of electromagnetic radiation.

**Photosynthesis**: The biochemical process that converts light to chemical energy and glucose. Photosynthesizing organisms typically consume carbon dioxide and hydrogen and release oxygen as a by-product.

**PH scale**: A measure of acidity or alkalinity, with values ranging from 0, for extremely acid, to 14, for extremely alkaline. A neutral compound has pH value of 7.

**Planck era**: Theoretically, the very brief time after the Big Bang and up to the Planck time. Conditions during the Planck era cannot be explained by the current physics.
**Planck’s constant:** A number whose value is important to the equations of quantum mechanics; equal to the ratio of a photon’s energy to its frequency.

**Planck time:** Theoretically, a time equal 10^{-43} second after the Big Bang, after which the universe would have followed the known physical laws.

**Planet:** A large, nonstellar body that orbits a star and shines only with reflected light.

**Plasma:** An ionized gas consisting of ions and electrons moving freely. Plasmas are affected by electric and magnetic fields, and are to be found in stars and interstellar gas.

**Primate:** The highest order within mammals, including apes and man.

**Prokaryote:** A cell without a nucleus.

**Protein:** One of a class of complex organic molecules necessary to life.

**Proton:** A positively charged particle with about 2,000 times the mass of electron; normally found in the nucleus of an atom.

**Pulsar:** An astronomical object that emits extremely regular pulses of radio or other energy at intervals of several seconds or less. Pulsars are thought to be spinning neutron stars.

**Quantum:** A fixed packet, or quantity, of some physical property such as mass or energy.

**Quantum mechanics:** A mathematical description of the rules by which subatomic particles interact, decay, and form atomic or nuclear objects. Classical mechanics does not apply on subatomic level.

**Quark:** The fundamental particle that forms all hadrons, or particles subject to the strong force. Six kinds are known. These are: “up”, “top”, and “charm” type with positive charges, and “down”, “bottom” and “strange” type with negative charges.

**Quasar:** Acronym for a quasi-stellar radio object. Quasars are starlike in appearance. They are now believed to be very distant objects, probably the cores of active galaxies.

**Radar:** A method of identifying the location or speed of a distant object by bouncing radio waves off its surface and measuring the interval before
they return; also, an instrument used for this purpose. The term is an acronym for “radio detection and ranging”.

**Radio**: The least energetic form of electromagnetic radiation, having the lowest frequency and the longest wavelength.

**Radio astronomy**: The observation and study of radio waves produced by astronomical phenomena.

**Red giants and supergiants**: Bright red stars of large size, 10 to 100 times the diameter of the sun.

**Relativity**: A set of theories that describe how measurements are affected by motion and gravity.

**Reptile**: A cold-blooded, vertebrate, nonamphibious animal such as turtle, lizard, snake, or a crocodile.

**Ribosome**: An organelle that synthesizes proteins.

**RNA** (Ribonucleic acid): A complex organic molecule named for the sugar ribose, which it contains. RNA consists of two classes: messenger RNA copies genetic information stored in DNA, and transfer RNA helps match amino acids to those genetic instructions.

**Ribosome**: An organelle that synthesizes proteins.

**Satellite**: A body that orbits another.

**Shiah**: (Arabic) The party of Ali; Muslims who believe that Ali ibn Abi Talib (son-in-law and cousin of the Prophet Muhammad), and his descendants should lead the Islamic nation.

**Silicon**: The second most common element, after oxygen, in the Earth’s crust. It also makes up 7% of the matters in the universe.

**Solar system**: The sun and its associated system of planets, asteroids, and other orbiting bodies; more generally, any star and the bodies that orbit it.

**Special relativity**: A theory showing that observers in uniform motion cannot perceive their motion and that all observers of such motion obtain the same value for the speed of light. From these two principles the theory concludes that measurement of distance, time, and mass will vary depending on the motion of an observer moving uniformly in relation to the item being measured.

**Species**: The basic category of biological classification, consisting of similar organisms capable of interbreeding.
**Spectrum:** The array of colors or wavelengths obtained by dispersing light from a star or other source, as through a prism. Spectra are often striped with emission or absorption lines, which can be interpreted to show the chemistry and motion of the light source.

**Star:** A self-radiating celestial body in which energy is generated in its central region by thermonuclear reactions.

**Sufi, Sufism:** The mystics and mystical spirituality of Islam. The term was derived from the early Sufis who preferred to wear a coarse garment of wool (Arabic, Suf), favored by Prophet Muhammad.

**Sugar:** A simple carbohydrate. The sugar ribose and deoxyribose are found in RNA and DNA, respectively.

**Sunnah:** (Arabic) practice. Those customs sanctioned by tradition to imitate the behavior and actions of the Prophet Muhammad.

**Sunni:** (Arabic) The term used to denote the majority of Muslims (over 95%) whose Islam is based upon the Quran and the Sunnah (q.v.).

**Superclusters:** A cluster of clusters of galaxies, some of which are as much as 360,000,000 light years in diameter.

**Supernatural:** That which is unexplainable in terms of the natural world or known facts.

**Supernova:** A star close to the end of its life that undergoes an explosion that ejects most of its material in space.

**Surah:** (Arabic) A chapter in the Quran.

**Symbiosis:** The close, interdependent relationship of two unlike organisms.

**Synapse:** A nerve cell connection point, through which electrochemical impulses are transmitted from one nerve cell to another.

**Tectonics:** The study of a planet’s crust, including its structure and processes.

**Ultraviolet:** A band of electromagnetic radiation that has higher frequency and shorter wavelength than visible blue light has. Most ultraviolet is absorbed by the Earth’s ozone layer.

**Van Allen belts:** Two regions in the Earth’s magnetic field or magnetosphere in which electrically charged atomic particles become trapped.
**Velocity**: The speed and direction of motion.

**Vertebrate**: An organism having a backbone.

**Wavelength**: The distance from crest to crest or trough to trough of an electromagnetic or other wave. Wavelengths are related to frequency; the longer the wavelength, the lower the frequency.

**X-rays**: Very short wavelength highly penetrating electromagnetic radiation. X-radiation from space is evidence of highly energetic reactions on celestial bodies.

**Yahweh**: The name of the God of Israel. Yahweh may originally have been the god of another people, and adopted by the Israelites.

**Yoga**: A discipline early evolved by the Indians, which “yokes” the powers of mind. By means of its techniques of concentration, the Yogi acquires an intense and heightened perception of reality, which seems to bring with it a sense of peace, bliss and tranquility.
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