

**THE WAY TO SALVATION**

**M.M. AKBAR**

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**NICHE OF TRUTH**

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English | Study | The Way to Salvation

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First Edition: November 1997

Second Edition: May 2000

Third Edition: December 2006

**Price: Rs. 25.00**

Publishers:

Niche of Truth | P.B. No:1981 | Vyttila | Kochi-19 | Kerala | India

[www.nicheoftruth.org](http://www.nicheoftruth.org) | Email: [islam@nicheoftruth.org](mailto:islam@nicheoftruth.org)

Distribution:

Da'wa Books | Salafi Cultural Complex | Vyttila | Kochi-19

Cover: Yoonus K.K

Type Setting: Creative Media

Printing: Screen Offset, Kochi-18

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*This universe has a Creator - a Most Merciful Creator, who, in providing life and facilitating water and air, has made the earth wonderfully conducive to life. The Creator has, moreover, taught us how it is that we are to live here and what our ultimate objective ever must be. For a surety, we will all have to render the accounts of our life before the Creator after our death. On that Day of Reckoning the doer of good shall receive his reward and the evil-doer, his punishment. The salvation of man lies, therefore, in following a life that is in accordance with the commandments of the Creator which was conveyed through His messengers.*

*The Quran forms the compendium of the commandments in which our Creator instructed us. He has conveyed that message to mankind through the prophet Muhammad (ﷺ). In our midst, today, we have with us those who are aware, and others who are unaware of this. It is the duty of those who are aware to communicate the message of the Creator to all in the world. It was with this objective that 'Niche of truth' was established.*

*Lord..... This is but a humble attempt at the propagation of the message of the true religion. A humble attempt at the fulfillment of the responsibility which Thou has entrusted to us. May this be accepted as a deed worthy of the right reward. (Ameen)*

**Director.**

**T**here is no end to the desires of man. Every one strives hard to fulfil his desires. Occasionally he succeeds, but then another desire invades his mind. This human trait is so universal that it can be regarded as one of the qualities that differentiate man from other beasts. In his endeavour to realise his dreams, man sweats his brow till the end of his life. When death comes, he bids farewell to life on earth. Death is an inevitable end to the life of every human being. No man will ever be able to control or conquer death and enjoy interminable life on earth. It is a rule of nature that all living things are to die one day or another. Man encounters death with beads of perspiration on his brow and unsatiated desires in his heart. God has styled man's life in a manner that all his main desires are not fulfilled during his life on earth. Scientists say that a man can live upto a maximum of 120 years. Even such a long span of life seems inadequate for a man to achieve all that he wishes for. So it is only natural for the human mind to seek for an extended existence or a life after death, where he will be able to fulfil all his desires. He hopes for an entirely different world realising that the present one lacks some unknown features needed for the realisation of his dreams.

### **THE DESIRE FOR A PERENNIAL EXISTENCE**

The yearning for eternal existence is a unique characteristic of the human species. No other creature in the universe can equal man in the variety of dimensions that he possesses. But it was only a few thousands of years ago that man attained the status of the noblest of creatures, while the creation and subsequent evolution of the universe dates back to billions of years. A small vibration of the earth can bring the curtains down on the existence of the entire human race. The elements that constitute the anatomy of human beings had existed on this earth even millions of years before man first came into being and they will continue to be here for ages even after the human species is wiped out from the face of the earth. Then is it not a paradox that the noblest of living creatures can live only to a maximum of 120 years? The human intellect finds it difficult to digest this idea. The belief that man is the noblest of creations can thus be justified only by a perennial existence.

### **DESIRE FOR AN EXTENDED EXISTENCE**

Man has an innate tendency to be good. He abhors sin. But he cannot always manage to distinguish between all kinds of sins and virtues. He finds instances of so many persons leading comfortable lives after committing numerous crimes while many others are subjected to tremendous sufferings in spite of their good deeds. It is an undeniable fact that there is no setup in this world which can truly reward man for all his virtues or punish him justly for each of his crimes. In the history of almost every nation, we are able to observe that many great men who set aside their lives for the service of humanity, were abused, derided and persecuted by their fellow beings. Very often, the services rendered by several such benefactors of mankind are recognised only after their deaths. Then is it not desirable that there should be a place where the services and sacrifices of these men are fairly rewarded?

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### **THE NEED FOR POETIC JUSTICE**

There is also an entirely different aspect to this matter. There had been so many men in the past who passed away comfortably lying in their soft, silky beds after having inflicted all sorts of sufferings on their countrymen. We are dismayed when we read the lurid descriptions of the atrocities committed by such persons on innocent human beings. Some of them have met with their ends in the midst of jubilations; even as they were laughing and dancing and proudly gloating over their misdeeds. If such crimes are to go unpunished, then is it reasonable to expect men to renounce sin and do good?

### **RETRIBUTION IS NOT TO BE IN THIS WORLD**

Even in the event of such cruel tyrants being caught and tried, which court of law in this world could have given them fitting punishments for the crimes they had committed on large masses of humanity? The maximum penalty that can be awarded to a person is capital punishment irrespective of whether he has murdered one human being or butchered thousands. In scores of similar situations, the laws of our world seem to be quite inadequate, unreasonable and unjust. A glance at these realities is enough to convince anyone that our law courts are totally insufficient to justly reward all the virtues of man or to punish him for all his crimes. Hence, man yearns for a place where the virtues and sins of men are justly judged and truly rewarded. When he learns that there is no place or setup on earth which can deliver true and fair justice, the realisation naturally dawns in his mind that retribution is not to be in this world.

### **THE NEED FOR ANOTHER EXISTENCE**

Permanence, or the eternal existence of self, is a dominant desire that pervades every human heart. But man is fully conscious of the momentary nature of his life on earth and therefore he strives to leave indelible marks through his achievements so that he shall continue

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to live in the hearts of men. The poor old peasant who plants a sapling, and the emperor who speaks from his death-bed about the monument to be erected in his memory, express almost a similar craving to outlive death and exist at least in the memories of others. Even materialists, who are of the firm opinion that death puts an end to all affairs of men, express their wish to live beyond death and exist forever in the hearts of men. 'Martyrs are immortal' is a slogan that is often chanted by these people to eulogise their comrades who laid down their lives in the course of their struggles. Hence, this desire for immortality is prevalent among all, irrespective of their creed or tenet.

### **LASTING CONSEQUENCES OF MAN'S DEEDS**

The results or effects of the toils of man sometimes last even for ages after his death. The consequences of the actions of all the other creatures of the world are destined to prevail only during their life-span; but the effects of the labours of man outlive his death. This distinguishing peculiarity of the actions of human beings produces multi-dimensional consequences depending on the nature of the deeds. The benefits of the invention of the radio continue to be enjoyed by human beings everywhere and the effects of the invention of the nuclear weapons pose a perennial threat to the very existence of mankind. If the results of the acts of man are so durable, then surely, he, too deserves a lasting existence, wherein he can receive the rewards for the results and effects of his deeds or misdeeds. Since the purpose of many of man's doings is to produce lasting results, he ought to be rewarded in a fitting manner for an endless period of time.

### **AN ETERNAL EXISTENCE**

The desire for a life after death is common among men. Various archeological excavations and investigations have revealed that almost similar beliefs in life after death existed among men from pre-historic times. Human virtues like honesty, charity and integrity would appear to be of no use or value if man's life is to end with his death. It will also be difficult to dissuade a person from indulging in various types of

worldly pleasures if we are not able to disprove his belief that life is brief or momentary. These facts tell us that it is quite necessary that there should be another world in which man is rightly rewarded for his virtues and aptly punished for his crimes. If it is not so, man's claim of being the supreme creature would sound hollow and vain. Moreover, the existence after death has to be everlasting so that all the desires of man can be realised there.

### **THIS LIFE IS JUST A PRELUDE**

If there is a life hereafter, the comforts and satisfaction that a man can achieve in that world will certainly be real comforts and satisfaction; the happiness he gets there will be genuine happiness; the sorrows and sufferings in that world will be his real sufferings. So the prime purpose of man's life in this world should be the salvation of his soul. The joys and sorrows of this life are momentary. In order to attain spiritual salvation, man should be ready to make a few sacrifices in order to fashion his life in a style that would ensure him happiness in the life hereafter. To a person who believes in life after death, this world should be like a farm-land in which he toils to produce magnificent fruits to be plucked and gathered in another world. Order and discipline comes naturally to the life of such a person and he begins to have an inclination to be virtuous and tries to avoid committing sinful deeds.

### **DOES SCIENCE GIVE AN ANSWER ?**

It is an undeniable fact that the human mind yearns for a life after death. Naturally, the question arises whether there is any proof for the existence of such a world. Will it be a fruitless enterprise if one renounces many of the worldly pleasures of this world in order to attain bliss in the world hereafter? Will it be meaningless to hope for such a permanent existence as long as we have not heard of a single human being who has returned to earth after being to that eternal world? It is quite natural to have many such doubts in this respect. The same norms that are applied to study about the constitution and nature of

matter cannot be followed in trying to learn about the existence of life after death. Is it sensible to use scientific methods to study about the existence of another world when scientific observations have failed even to give a clear definition as to what death is? Science and its principles have been developed by man to learn and understand about the lives and substances in this universe. It is common knowledge that science cannot be used to learn about things that are beyond the realm of the universe. This branch of knowledge has not been able to ascertain the facts about the source of life on earth. So, we cannot expect science to give us an answer in this matter. In that case how can we learn the truth about the existence of a life beyond this world?

#### **THE ONLY WAY TO LEARN ABOUT THE LIFE HEREAFTER**

If there is a life after death, there also has to be a Supreme Power to totally control the affairs of that world. This Supreme Being has to fully govern the life and systems of that domain. The final judgement on the acts of a person during his life on earth will be done by that Great, Sovereign Power. If there is a life after death, no one but this Supreme Being can give us any knowledge of that world. There is no other way by which man can learn about the world hereafter. Has man ever received any revelation from that Great Being about the life hereafter and about the Day of Judgement? We will be failing in our duty if we do not search for them. There is no doubt that man will be at a loss if he does not fulfill this duty.

#### **RELIGIONS AND LIFE AFTER DEATH**

The belief in life after death is common in all religions. Though there are differences in the details of their descriptions, the belief in a life hereafter was prevalent among all religious groups of the world. Studies about this aspect clearly reveal the fact that similar beliefs in life after death existed at the time of origin of all religions and that the differences in the details crept in only at later stages. The sayings of various religious propagators about what happens to a man after his death can be summed up as follows: 'A man's life does not end with his

death. An eternal existence awaits him in another world, where he shall be rewarded for each of his good deeds and aptly punished for his sins. The only means of attaining eternal happiness in the life hereafter is to follow the instructions sent to man by the Almighty Creator and Sustainer. The hopes, desires, dreams and ambitions of the true believers will be fulfilled in that world, whereas the unbelievers will be harshly punished.'

It has already been stated that the belief in life after death was one of the principles taught by all the prophets who have preached in this world. All the semitic prophets and Indian Rishis preached and taught in detail about the existence of a life hereafter. It is a fact that no prophet has failed in his duty to deliver the message that paradise awaits the true believers and that hell has been kept ready for the non-believers.

#### **THE BELIEF OF THE VEDIC PERIOD**

The oldest sacred writings of Hinduism incorporated in four collections called the Rig Veda, the Yajur Veda, the Sama Veda and the Atharva Veda contain various references about a life after death. The four vedas tell us that the Rishis of the period believed that men who led virtuous lives would attain heavenly bliss after death and that those who did evil deeds would have to undergo horrible sufferings in hell. The celebrated Vedic scholar Shree Rahul Samkrithyayan writes : "The Rishis of the Vedic period believed that there is another world beyond this one. It is to that world that all good men go after they die. They will be able to enjoy eternal bliss in that world. And in the netherworld there is a place called hell, which is surrounded by thick darkness." (*Universal Visions*, P. 552, Samskrithyayan).

#### **REINCARNATION - AN INTERPOLATION**

Contrary to the Vedic belief that people who do good deeds will enter paradise and that evil doers will be put in hell, the theory of reincarnation was propounded in the context of the evolving caste

system. The belief in reincarnation was a theory that was deliberately professed by the priests to impose the superiority of the high-castes on the down-trodden. The Sudras and Chandalas were made to believe that the sins committed by them in their previous births were the cause of all their hardships. This notion of rebirth is expressed very clearly in the following verse of *Chandagyopanished*

*Thadya iha ramaneeya charanaa abhyas  
hyahnhayathe ramaneeyam yoneem  
Aapadhyeran Brahmanayoneem Va  
Kshathriyayoneem va Vysysayoneem va,  
Adhya iha kapuyacharana abhyas  
hahayather kapuyam yoneem  
Aapadhyeran shyoyoneem va  
sukarayoneem va Chandala Yoneem Va.*

(Those among them who do good deeds will be born again in Brahmana vaginas, Kshatriya vaginas or Vysya vaginas. The evil doers will soon be born in the meanest of vaginas that of dogs, pigs or Chandalas) [Chandagyopanishad 5:10:7]

It is strongly argued in the above verse that the suffering of the dog, the swine and the Chandalas are caused by the sins they had committed in their previous births. This assumption of rebirth, which along with aims at placing the Chandalas in the same grade of dogs and pigs, is certainly the creation of the high-caste people who wanted to perpetuate their domination over the down-trodden.

### **LIFE AFTER DEATH IN HINDU SCRIPTURES**

It has already been stated that the Rishis of the Vedic period believed in life after death, heaven and hell. The influence of this belief which prevailed during the Vedic age can also be seen in some verses of the Upanishads. The following verses of the Upanishads speak of a

paradise, which is resplendent with joy and cheer, and of a gloomy and dismal netherworld flooded with miseries and hardships.

*Asurya naama the loka andhena thamasa vrithaha  
Thaam stheyprethyabhighatchandiyiye ke chath mahano  
janaha.*

(These sun-less worlds are engulfed in pitch darkness. Those who lack spirituality and lead a life seeking only material gains, forgetting about God, reach these gloomy worlds) [Easawasyoanishad-3]

*Sorghe lokey na bhayam kinjanasthi  
na thathrathwam na Jaraya bibhethy  
Ubhe, theerthwashanaya pipasay  
Shokathigo mothaathe swargha loka*

(Fear is unknown in paradise. Death does not exist there, you need not be afraid of graying or old age. Those who live there are beyond the reach of sufferings or sorrows, and they get all sorts of enjoyments) [Katopanishad 1:1:12]

### **THE ADVICE OF JESUS**

Jesus Christ (ﷺ) also advised men to renounce many of the worldly pleasures and material gains in order to attain salvation in the world hereafter. The following verses in the Bible unequivocally support this view.

“Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal; For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.” (Mathew 6:19-21)

“Rejoice, and be exceedingly glad for great is your reward



in heaven, for so persecuted they the prophets who were before you.” (Mathew 5:12)

“And if thy hand offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched: And if thy foot offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter crippled into life, than having two feet to be cast into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched: And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out: it is better for thee to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye, than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire. Where

‘Their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.’

For everyone shall be salted with fire, and every sacrifice shall be salted with salt.” (Mark 9:43-49)

### **THE HOLY QUR’AN ON LIFE AFTER DEATH**

The existence of a life after death and the need for man to strive to attain paradise are repeatedly and emphatically stated in several chapters of the Holy Qur’an. In fact, there is no other religious scripture in the world which gives so detailed a description about the life hereafter. Detailed references about the blissful experiences in paradise and about the sufferings in hell can be found in the Quran. Given below are a few verses related to this subject.

“Every soul will taste death, and ye will be paid on the Day of Resurrection only that which ye have fairly earned. Whosoever is removed from the Fire and made to enter paradise, he indeed is triumphant. The life of this world is but the comfort of illusion.” (Al-Imran - 185)

“But give glad tidings to those who believe and work righteousness, that their portion is Gardens, beneath which rivers

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flow, every time they are fed with fruits therefrom, they say: ‘Why, this is what we were fed with before’, for they are given things in similitude; and they have therein spouses purified; and they abide therein (forever).” (Al Baqara - 25)

“But those who reject Faith and belie Our Signs, they shall be Companions of the Fire; they shall abide therein.” (AlBaqara-39)

“(Here is) the description of the Garden which the righteous are promised: in it are rivers of water unstaling; Rivers of milk of which the taste never changes; rivers of wine, a joy to those who drink; and rivers of honey, pure and clear. In it there are for them all kinds of fruits; And forgiveness from their Lord. (Can those in such Bliss) be compared to such as shall dwell forever in the Fire, and be given, to drink, boiling water, so that it cuts up their bowels (to pieces)?” (Mohammed-15)

### **ALL PROPHETS SPOKE OF A LIFE AFTER DEATH**

We have come to understand that all religions in general have a similar perspective about the existence of a life hereafter, about heaven and hell. All prophets have stated that their references to the existence of a life after death were based on the messages that they received from God Almighty. Not a single prophet has claimed that his assertions on the existence of a life after death were based on his own observations or research. But the veracity of the statements of the prophets cannot be ascertained by any worldly tests. Then, is there any method to verify the truth behind these claims? This can be done only after understanding the greatness of the character of the prophets who have claimed to have received messages from God. We can reject their words outright or refuse to take them at face value if these men who claimed to be the messengers of God were in anyway selfish or conceited, liars or cheats. If it is not so, we shall have to endorse their views.

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## **THE GREAT MESSENGERS OF GOD**

After examining the distinguishing qualities of the lives of the prophets, who preached of the existence of a life hereafter and of the ultimate salvation attainable in that world, we arrive at the conclusion that it is not possible to believe that they could have lied to their people. Through their lives they have set the highest examples of purity, righteousness, honesty and morality. The people who abused and persecuted these prophets, or even those people who plotted to kill or chase them out of their lands, fully recognised the purity of their lives. The very fact that even the worst adversaries of the prophets were not able to detect any blemishes in their lives, vouch for their selflessness and integrity. It was only for the progress and well-being of mankind that they suffered all sorts of hardships. Most of them were rejected by their own family members, chased out of their native lands and some were even executed by their own fellowmen. They suffered such hardships without any desire for material gains. The sole purpose of their mission was the success and well-being of humanity. These men renounced crowns, beautiful wives, immense wealth and worldly pleasures to choose the paths of hardships and persecution. No sane person can believe that these men were selfish or ambitious. There is no instance in history of anyone of the prophets having cheated anyone in their society. All the prophets were honest and pure and were noted for their integrity. They approached the problems of mankind with sincerity and truthfulness and in a lofty manner which was above suspicion. They preached to men as to how they should conduct themselves in life and they translated their preachings into practice by leading commendable lives.

## **THE PROPHETS GUARANTEE THE FACT**

These extraordinary qualities which were manifest in the characters of the prophets guarantee the fact that their teachings can in no way be untrue. It is quite improbable that these persons who were free from falsehood, deception or selfishness should suffer

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all kinds of oppression in order to spread blatant lies. These prophets had claimed that they had received supreme messages from God Almighty and that their teachings were based on those messages. The chances are very remote that the prophets who possessed flawless personalities could have made such false and unfounded claims. The above mentioned facts are enough to convince anyone that the teachings of the prophets about the existence of a life after death are entirely truthful and are based on the messages they received from God.

## **THE SIGNS OF THE PROPHETS**

The prophets were sent to their people with clear and unequivocal signs to prove that they were the messengers of God Almighty. The superhuman signs they displayed were beyond the realm of human intelligence or knowledge of those periods. Each tribe was shown signs conforming to its period. The genius and competence of all contemporary societies yielded before these supernatural signs. All the magicians of the land of Pharaoh were humbled when Prophet Moses, obeying God's command, transfigured the staff in his hand into a deadly snake. The superhuman acts of Jesus Christ, like raising men from the dead, totally flabbergasted the physicians and healers of the period. The Rishis of India also might have performed superhuman feats to prove that they were the messengers of God. The signs evinced by each prophet were in conformity with the set up and intellectual capacity of the people amongst whom he preached. There were clear proofs to convince everyone that these holy men were the messengers of God and that their teachings were based on the messages they received from Almighty God.

## **WARNERS WERE SENT TO ALL COMMUNITIES**

Prophets have been sent to all nations and all peoples to preach the good news about heaven and warn them about the horrors of hell. Not a single community has passed off without a prophet

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being deputed by God to teach its people. Prophets have been raised from the Semitic, African and Indian communities and they have revealed to these peoples the truth about the existence of a life after death. The task assigned to these holy men was not limited to enlightening men about the life hereafter. They set excellent examples through their lives to show men the path that they should follow to avoid being sent to hell, the means to enter paradise and, thereby, to attain salvation in the life after death. The ideals that they upheld and the principles they propagated were basically the same. Their mission was to foster the qualities of honesty, benevolence and sincerity in the minds of men to enable them to escape from the sufferings of hell and to enjoy eternal happiness in heaven. The code of laws they promulgated and the acts they performed were all aimed at fulfilling this mission.

### PROPHECIES ABOUT THE LAST PROPHET

The mission of propagation of divine truth assigned to each prophet was limited to the society in which he lived. This was quite natural and most practical in the past ages when there were no means of contact or inter-action between various communities. It is also seen that several prophets lived and preached in various nations among different people at the same periods of time. Many of these messengers of God predicted about the coming of a great Prophet whose teachings would be acceptable to the whole world. Acknowledging that the scope of their mission was restricted to a particular nation or community, these prophets foresaw the emergence of a united world community through the inter-mingling of races. They prophesied the arrival of a great prophet at a critical juncture of human history to enable the whole world to know and accept one faith and one custom. In the Old and New Testaments of the Bible and in the Hindu Puranas, many such references to the expected arrival of a great prophet can be found. Look at what the great Rishi Vyasa says about the coming of that great prophet:

*‘Etha sminnanthere mletcha acharyena samanwitha*

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*Mahamatha ithikhyadha shishya shakha samanwitham’*

(Then a preacher by name Mahammad along with his followers will appear in a foreign land) [Bhavishya Purana 3:3:3:5]

The verses of *Bhavishya Puran* proceed to describe the characteristics and cultural identity of the followers of that great messenger of God. The description is as follows.

*‘Lingatchedhi sikha heena smasrudhri sadhushaka  
Utchalapee sarva bhakshee bhavishyathy janamom  
Vina kousalam chava syavastho shaa bhakshay mathaman  
Musailainava samskara kysyairy bhava viswathy. Thasmal  
musala vanthohyo jaathay dharm booshaka  
lthi paisyecha dharmatcha bhavishyathy mayakritha.’*

(His followers will perform circumcision. They will not tie their hair in a knot on their head. They will grow beards. They will be revolutionaries. Loud calls will be made by them to summon people to prayer. They will consume the meat of most animals except swine. They will purify themselves through their struggles. They will be called Musailanavas since they will fight against people who corrupt religion. These non-vegetarians will originate from me) [Bhavishya Purana 3:3:3:25:38]

Through prophet Moses (ﷺ), God promised the people of Israel the arrival of the last Prophet. This is described in the Old Testament of the Bible as follows:

“I will raise them up a prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him.

And it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not hearken unto my words which he shall speak in my name, I will requite it of

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him.” (Deuteronomy 18:18,19)

Jesus Christ (ﷺ) is also seen to have prophesied the coming of a great Prophet. Look at the following verses from the New Testament.

“Nevertheless I tell you the truth; 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 judgement.” (John 16:7,8)

“I have yet many things to say unto you, but you cannot bear them now. 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 show things to come” (John 16:12,13)

### THE ‘BLESSED ONE’ IN THE PURANAS

Some of the sages of ancient India also fostered this great expectation of the arrival of a great religious leader who would bring peace and tranquillity to the world by removing ignorance from the minds of the people. While *Bhavishya Purana* calls this great world teacher by name ‘Mahamad’, *Vishnu Purana* refers to him as god-incarnate *Kalki*. *Kunthapa Suktha* of *Atharva Veda* refers to him as the ‘Blessed-One’ born in a sandy island in Kaliyug as the son of Vishnu Bhagat (the slave of God) and Sumathy (the Trust worthy). *Kalki* is said to spread the light of knowledge to the world steeped in darkness. The ‘Blessed-One’ referred to in the *Atharva Veda*, comes from the land of camels, as the saviour of the world. It is a fact that several such references to a great personality, who would spread messages acceptable to the whole world, can be seen in various Hindu scriptures.

### ISRAELITES EXPECTED HIM

The Israelites, who were the followers of Moses (ﷺ) hoped

for the realisation of the prophetic words of the Old Testament and waited for the arrival of a prophet like Moses (ﷺ), a great prophet who would hail from amongst their brethren. It can be seen that many other seers also made similar prophecies about such a prophet. The words of Jeremiah are as follows:

“The prophet which prophesieth peace, when the word of the prophet shall come to pass, then shall the prophet be known, that the Lord hath truly sent him.” (Jeremiah 28:9)

The following verse from the Book of Genesis also speaks about the expected arrival of a prophet similar to Moses

“The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until shi-loh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be.” (Genesis 49:10)

The Israelites closely scrutinised the qualities and personality of each of the prophets that came after Moses (ﷺ). They realised that none of them deserved to be described as a ‘Prophet like Moses’. All the prophets from Moses (ﷺ) to Jeremiah were sons of Israel. None of them was from their brethren as prophesied in the Old Testament. None of them received any commandments from God like Moses (ﷺ). So the Israelites waited in anticipation for the coming of a prophet who would preach the message of peace and take away the sceptre of prophethood from Israel. It is quite evident that these people had prior knowledge about the arrival of Jesus (ﷺ) who was to be the last prophet sent to them and also about a great prophet who was later to be sent for the whole of humanity.

The Jews asked every prophet who came to them : ‘Are you Christ; are you that Prophet?’ This is quite evident from the conversation between the Jewish priests and John, the Baptist, who came before Jesus (ﷺ). They asked him ‘Are you Christ?’ He replied, ‘I am not Christ’. The priests asked John, the Baptist, ‘Then

who are you? Are you Eliya?’ When he answered in the negative, they continued, ‘Are you that prophet?’ ‘No’, replied John, the Baptist (John 1:20-23). Even after the arrival of Jesus (ﷺ), the Jews continued to wait for the coming of that prophet.

### JESUS WAS NOT LIKE MOSES

Jesus was that last of the prophets sent to the land of Judah. He was sent to preach only to the people of Israel. The following words of Jesus which appears in the New Testament gives clear proof that his mission was restricted to the people of Israel.

“He answered, ‘I was not sent but to the lost sheep of Israel.’”  
(Mathew 15:24)

Prophet Jesus (ﷺ) was not in anyway like Moses (ﷺ). Moses was born in the normal natural course, i.e. the physical association of man and woman. But Jesus was created by a special miracle. He was born without male intervention. Moses married and begot children, but Jesus (ﷺ) remained a bachelor throughout his life. Prophet Moses (ﷺ) was also the ruler of his people whereas Jesus was only a prophet who was rejected by the Israelites. Moses brought new laws and new regulations for his people. Moses gave not only the Ten Commandments to the Israelites, but also a very comprehensive body of laws for the guidance of his people. But Jesus came to the Israelites with no new laws or new regulations, he came only to fulfill the Old Law. Above all, Jesus was a prophet who arose from the ‘Children of Israel’ or from ‘among themselves,’ not from among ‘their brethren.’ Considering the above facts, it can be clearly seen that the prophecy found in the book of Deuteronomy about the coming of a prophet like Moses is not about Jesus.

### PROPHECIES OF JESUS

The prophecies of Jesus (ﷺ) about the coming of a prophet

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have already been mentioned earlier: “It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away: the Comforter will not come unto you.” This is how Jesus spoke about it. Here the word ‘Comforter’ is the translation of the Greek word *Paracletos*. Another word which sounds similar to this Greek word is *Periclytos*. We know that Jesus did not speak to his followers in Greek language. His words were recorded only after so many years subsequent to his departure. So there is no way by which we can ascertain whether the original utterance of Jesus denoted the meaning *Parecletos* or *Periclytos*. Christ might have used a word which either means *Paracletes* or *Periclytos* to speak of a prophet who is to come after him. *Paracletes* can be translated as ‘Helper’, ‘Comforter’ or ‘Master’ while the word *Periclytos* means ‘The Blessed One’.

Whatever maybe the original utterance of Jesus in this regard, it is quite evident that Jesus was making a prophecy about the coming of a prophet. It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you’. These words of Jesus unequivocally speak of a prophet to come after him. It is often misinterpreted that the Comforter is the Holy Ghost. This argument is utterly baseless. We are able to understand from several verses in the New Testament that the Holy Ghost existed before and during the time of Jesus. The Bible speaks of the Holy Ghost who descended from heaven in the bodily shape of a dove while Jesus was being baptized (Luke 3;21, 22). It can also be seen that the Holy Ghost made visitations to John, the Baptist (Luke 1:15), to Elizabeth (Luke 1:41), to Zacharias (Luke 1:67) and to Simeon (Luke 2:26).

It is not in any way possible that the ‘Spirit of truth’ of whom Jesus prophesied was about the Holy Ghost. It is certain that Jesus foresaw the arrival of a ‘Comforter’, a ‘Blessed One’ or a ‘Spirit of truth’, who would show men the path to the ultimate truth and warn them of sins, the Last Judgement and about Retribution. The followers of Jesus anxiously waited for the coming of that great prophet.

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## THE LAST MESSENGER OF GOD

The land of Arabia was fortunate to receive the last Messenger of God whom mankind badly needed. Mohammed (ﷺ) was born as the son of Abdullah and Aminah on the 29th of August of the 570<sup>th</sup> year of the Christian Era. It is to be particularly noted that the name ‘Abdullah’ means ‘the slave of God’ and ‘Aminah’ has the meaning, ‘the trustworthy’. How closely does the birth of Prophet Mohammed (ﷺ) correspond with the prophecy about the birth of Kalki, in a sandy island, as the son of ‘the slave of God’ (Vishnu Bhagath) and ‘the Trustworthy’ (Sumathy), as stated in the *Vishnu Purana*! Prophet Mohammed (ﷺ) was born in the sandy island of Arabia. How accurately has Vyasa, the great Rishi, named the last prophet as ‘Mahamad lthikayadaha’ (called Mohammed)! The term ‘Mahamad’ means ‘The Blessed One’, or ‘the Hallowed one’. The Kundhapa verse in *Atharva Veda* which speaks about a ‘Blessed One’ arising from the land of the camels and the prophecy by Jesus about the arrival of ‘Periclytos’ (the Blessed One) seems to have come true with the arrival of Prophet Mohammed (ﷺ). We are also able to see the fulfillment of the prophecy in the book of Deuteronomy which speaks of a ‘Prophet like Moses’ to be raised from among ‘the brethren’ of the Israelites. Ishmail and Issac were the sons of Abraham (ﷺ). The Jews are the descendants of Issac, the second son of Abraham while the Ishmaelites or the Arabs are the descendants of Ishmail, the first born of Abraham. And so, the children of Ishmail are the brethren of the children of Issac. Then who else but Mohammed (ﷺ) could be the prophet who arose from the brethren of the Israelites? In his birth, life and mission, Prophet Mohammed (ﷺ) was very much like Prophet Moses. Both these prophets brought new laws and new regulations for their people. The two prophets were born in the normal natural course and they became the rulers of their lands and could enforce the laws on their people. Prophet Moses and Prophet Mohammed (ﷺ) died of natural causes. The prophecy in the book of Genesis that the Israelites will be deprived of the sceptre of prophethood also became a reality with the coming of Prophet Mohammed (ﷺ).

## THE PROPHET OF ALL MEN

Prophet Mohammed (ﷺ) is to be the prophet of all men, to the last man to live on this earth. His private and public life is laid bare before us. The life of no other world leader has been recorded in so detailed a manner as has been done in the case of Prophet Mohammed (ﷺ). Had it been so, many great names would have lost the respectability that they enjoy at present. But when we observe the life of Prophet Mohammed (ﷺ), we see that all that he did are worthy of being emulated. We find in him a human being who had attained perfection. All the exemplary qualities of human nature shone in him with tremendous splendour. His contributions to humanity were not limited to speeches and sermons. His greatest success is that he practised what he preached and he was able to set the best examples for mankind through his own life.

Lamartine wrote: ‘Philosopher, orator, apostle, legislator, warrior, conqueror of ideas, restorer of rational dogmas, of a cult without images, the founder of twenty terrestrial empires and of one spiritual empire, that is Mohammed. As regards all standards by which human greatness maybe measured, we may well ask, is there any man greater than he?’ [Lamartine, *Histoire de la Turquie*, Paris 1854, Vol II, P.277]

His father having died before Mohammed’s birth, and with his mother passing away when he was only seven years of age, the young boy grew up very much like an orphan. He was deprived of the joys and the security which a growing child needs. Unable to obtain any kind of education, he remained an illiterate throughout his life. He spent his boyhood herding sheep with other boys and during his youth he became a tradesman. During this period he lived among ordinary Arabs who were a licentious, alcoholic, idolatrous and pugnacious lot. But he did not at any time indulge in any of these vices.

### AL-AMEEN - THE TRUSTWORTHY

Not even once in his life did Mohammed (ﷺ) bow his head

before an idol and not a word of falsehood or vulgarity ever escaped his lips. No one has ever accused him of having betrayed or cheated anybody. He has never been accused of having unjustly taken even a penny that belonged to another person. After he grew up, he never let his nakedness be seen by another person since he considered it as a violation of his modesty. His nature was such that he grieved when he saw the sorrows and sufferings of others. He was always in the forefront when it came to helping orphans and destitutes. He tried to learn about the problems of widows and made efforts to render assistance to them. He tried his best to give food to the hungry and was considerate and hospitable to the travellers of the desert. He strove to settle amicably the disputes and quarrels which were common among his folk. In a society vitiated by all human transgressions, he led a life of purity and integrity. Though steeped in immorality and depravity, the society in which he lived recognised his exemplary qualities. His trustworthiness was particularly appreciated by the people who came into contact with him. In recognition of his truthful nature, they used to call him 'Al-Ameen' (The Trustworthy).

### THE GREAT MISSION BEGINS

Mohammed (ﷺ) attained his prophethood at the age of forty. He loudly declared these cardinal messages of Supreme Truth: 'WORSHIP ONLY ALLAH, the Creator and Sustainer of the universe. I am the last of the prophets that He has sent unto you. Heed my words: Death, which puts an end to life in this world, is the beginning of another life. It is there that punishment or reward is distributed according to the performance in this world. Those men who have led virtuous lives in this world will attain eternal bliss in heaven and those who have depraved their lives are bound to suffer the (agonies of) hell. The prime goal of life in this world should be the attainment of salvation in the life hereafter. The means to attain this goal is to observe the body of traditional laws based on the words and acts of the messengers of God.' This is the gist of Prophet Mohammed's preachings to mankind.

### OBSTACLES IN THE PATH

Like all the prophets, who advised men to follow the path of Truth, prophet Muhammed (ﷺ) was also abused and persecuted by his people. But some people were attracted by the light of Truth. Seeing this, the fury of the worshippers of darkness rose and they intensified their methods of oppression. Many of the followers of the Prophet were murdered and others were subjected to unbearable torture. All these atrocities did not in any way affect their faith or allegiance to their leader. When the Prophet and his followers found that it was not safe to remain in Mecca any longer, they left their homes and belongings and fled to Madina, where they found refuge. But the guardians of untruth did not allow them to live in peace even in Madina. The Prophet and his followers were forced to resort to the sword for protecting the Religion of Truth. Battles after battles were fought causing immense agonies to the refugees of Madina. Hundreds of believers laid down their lives for the supreme cause. But victory was theirs in the end. Very soon, the whole of Arabia accepted the religion of Islam.

### MIRACULOUS TRANSFORMATION OF A PEOPLE

When we learn about the impact of the revolutionary changes brought about by the prophet in a span of twenty three years, we realise how flawless his ideals were. Let us take a quick glance at the situation that prevailed in Arabia before the coming of the prophet. The people were disorganised both politically and militarily. They were agriculturally backward due to lack of systematic farming methods and they were totally insignificant in the fields of education and medicine. Being superstitious, licentious, alcoholic and idolatrous, they led a life of extreme depravity. Brutal wars were frequently fought among themselves for the sake of clannish superiority. This is the picture that we get about the land of Arabia before the prophet's time. Let us see what happened to the people of Arabia after they accepted Islam. A new civilisation that could vie with any of the great civilisations of

the world arose in that desert land. Arabia became a greater centre of culture than Alexandria. They were even able to surpass the renowned Greeks in the field of scientific knowledge. They rocked the foundations of Roman and Persian political dominance which had lasted for centuries. The belligerent folk, who were used to fighting each other in the name of their clans, became the legions of unity. The people, who had been unable to distinguish between good and evil, became the propagators of the principles of truth and morality. Thus, the revolution that the prophet brought about was of a stupendous magnitude.

This revolution of Islam was able to transform a totally uncivilised tribe into an inspired lot competent to be the torch-bearers of a new and sublime culture. And when we consider the fact that all this happened within a period of twenty three years, we cannot but wonder whether there has ever been a greater revolution in the whole history of mankind.

### **TOTAL SUBMISSION TO GOD**

How did the Prophet bring about such a tremendous change among his people? It was by making them believe in the Oneness of God and in life after death that he was able to bring about these revolutionary changes. When they were convinced that the life in this world is just a prelude to another existence, they were eager to sacrifice everything in order to attain the eternal bliss of paradise. They showed readiness to totally submit to the Will of God Almighty. When they recognised the true Commandments of God and lived accordingly, the nature of their thoughts and deeds was elevated to lofty plains. Thus by totally submitting themselves to the Will of God, those people achieved the most prestigious place among men, they became Muslims. The word 'Islam' means 'Submission' or 'Peace'. It denotes the peace to be attained through total submission to God. In this context, it is worthwhile to have a look at the prophecy of Jeremiah in the Old Testament

“The Prophet which prophesieth 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 QUR'AN - THE MIRACLE OF MIRACLES**

The Holy Qur'an, which was revealed to the world through the last Prophet, is a miracle of miracles. Mohammed (ﷺ) started his life herding sheep with other boys and later became a tradesman. He was illiterate throughout his life. He had never shown any talent or taste for literature till he was forty years of age. But suddenly, he starts reciting beautiful and sublime verses in a style hitherto unheard of in Arabic language. He speaks out the greatest truths about the universe and its Creator and reveals to men messages of the highest order. The person, who has never seen a book of law, begins to spell out the best body of laws applicable to men of all times. The man, who has never come across another religious scripture, starts uttering the supreme codes of morality adoptable to any individual. Various historical events of the distant past are mentioned by the illiterate person, who has had no knowledge of history. These facts provide ample proofs to convince anyone of the miraculous revelation of the Qur'an. The verses of the Holy Qur'an were first recited by the illiterate prophet, but to his followers it was quite evident from the style and content of the verses that it could not have been composed by Prophet Mohammed (ﷺ). In that case, it must have been produced by someone else who had a good knowledge about science, history, literature and law. But the person who introduced the Holy Qur'an to the world is one who had never committed an act of falsehood during his life-time. Prophet Mohammed (ﷺ) never claimed the credit for having composed the verses of the Qur'an, which are of inimitable and unique quality. If the prophet had made such a claim, then he would immediately have been accepted as the greatest literary genius of Arabia, for the people of that land had always held poets and writers in high esteem. Yet, the prophet never claimed that the verses of the Holy Qur'an were composed by him. The great prophet, who had a high reputation of having never even once uttered a falsehood, declared that the verses



of the Qur'an were the revelations of the Omniscient Creator. The style and content of the Holy Qur'an also stands witness to the truth that its verses could in no way have been composed by a human being.

### **THE TRUE REVELATION**

Among the various religious scriptures that exists today, the Holy Qur'an is the only book that can be considered as the true revelation of God. The Qur'an is the only holy book which has not undergone any change since it was first revealed to man. No contradictions or dissimilar views can be seen in the Qur'an even though the verses were brought out during a long span of 23 years and that too under varied circumstances. The moral and ethical codes spelt out in the Holy Book are relevant for all times. The Qur'an provides invaluable and faultless directions to lead a life of virtue and piety. Such a perfect and comprehensive body of moral and ethical laws cannot be found in any other book. The historical references in the Qur'an are true and totally free from any distortions. At the same time, the Book tells us about a complete way of life which is quite practicable. No other of book had accomplished what the Quran did by transforming a race steeped in darkness to a highly cultured sect within a period of 23 years. No other book has ever been able to create such a great revolution as the Qur'an. The Qur'an cannot be anything but the true revelation of Almighty God. There is no other book like the Qur'an which can show the right path to discreet souls.

“This is the Book: In it is guidance sure, without doubt, To those who fear Allah.” (Al-Baqara:2)

### **THE UNIQUE SCRIPTURE**

The Qur'an is not just a holy book like other religious scriptures. It is a sign of super human nature presented before mankind so that they may recognise the last Prophet. The signs and miracles related to the previous prophets ceased to have any relevance

beyond their life time. But the Holy Qur'an which is the miracle of miracles and which is God's sign to identify the last Prophet, will always remain in this world to be witnessed by all people to come.

### **THE MIRACLE OF MIRACLES**

Why is the Holy Qur'an believed to be a super-human creation? The style, the content and the influence it has exerted on man's life and history, reveal the truth that the Book is not the creation of man, No other work of Arabic literature can vie with the literary style of the Qur'an which was revealed to humanity through an illiterate person. No other book has exerted such a tremendous influence on the thoughts of men. Its verses provide entire satisfaction to the intellect, serenity to the mind and they touch the heart of the reader. All the prophecies of the Qur'an are found to have come true. Not a single prophecy mentioned in the Book has failed to have been fulfilled.

### **THE QUR'AN & SCIENCE**

No one has been able to spot any contradictions or discrepancies in the whole of the Qur'an. The revolutionary changes that have come about in the field of science and technology have not in anyway disproved a single statement of the Qur'an which was revealed at a time when scientific knowledge was an absolute zero. When new and varied inventions are made by science, the unsurpassable and invincible nature of the Qur'an is all the more testified. The Holy Qur'an was revealed at a time when the world did not have even a basic knowledge about Astronomy, Geography, Oceanography or Embryology. But many of the modern principles related to these branches of human knowledge are in conformity with the various statements in the Qur'an. These are sufficient, conclusive evidences to prove the fact that the Qur'an is a revelation of the Omniscient Creator.

### **THE RELIGION OF ALL PROPHETS**

Prophet Mohammed (ﷺ) is not the founder of Islam and he

is not its only prophet. He is the last Prophet of Islam. He declared that he was the successor of all the previous prophets. He claimed that he was not only the successor of prophets like Abraham, Noah, Moses and Jesus, but also the follower of all the prophets who have preached among all the other communities of the world. The Qur'an says that no sect of people has passed off without a messenger of God having been sent to them.

“For we assuredly sent amongst every people a Messenger, (With the Command), ‘Serve Allah, and eschew evil.’” (Sura Nahl: 36)

“Verily We have sent thee in truth, as a bearer of glad tidings, and as a warner; And there never was a people, without a warner having lived amongst them.” (Sura Fatir: 24)

### THE LAST PROPHET

All the prophets of the world propagated the religion of Islam- total submission to Almighty God. The mission of the prophets was to show men how to put into practice this total submission to the Creator. It has been already mentioned that Prophet Mohammed (ﷺ) was the last link of the long chain of prophets. It was through him that the religion of Islam was perfected. Prophet Mohammed (ﷺ) showed us how one's life could be enriched by total submission of self to the Almighty. Every small detail related to the life of the prophet is seen to have been recorded. They will continue to remain as the best example for all human beings as long as man continues to walk on earth. Prophet Mohammed (ﷺ) taught the world how a man should conduct himself in the various walks of life. He set the best examples as an honest tradesman, a charitable social worker, a considerate neighbour, a responsible husband, and affectionate father, a just ruler and also as a social reformer who tried to save sinners although he abhorred sins. Thus, he taught us how we should lead ourselves in the various avenues of life. He showed us how the quality of our lives could be elevated to exalted plains by totally submitting ourselves to the Will

of Almighty God - by becoming true Muslims. The fact that Prophet Mohammed (ﷺ) was able to raise a community of the highest rank and excellence, distinguishes him from all the other great revolutionaries the world has seen.

### THE PRACTICAL PHILOSOPHY OF ISLAM

The principles propounded by any philosophy should be practical and flawless, if they have to be spoken of as perfect and worthy of reforming masses. It is quite easy to conceive excellent ideals, but it is extremely difficult to formulate principles that are flawless and practical. The basic creeds of Islam are classified under three heads; *Tauhid*, *Risalath* and *Akhirath*. *Tauhid* denotes the Islamic concept of God, the perfect form of monotheism, and the conviction that the Creator alone remain as the best example for all human beings as long as man continues and that He alone deserves to be worshipped. *Risalath* represents the faith in the divine messages (sent through many messengers) given for the right conduct of life. *Akhirath* signifies the belief in the existence of a life after death.

### THE SEARCH FOR A REASON

Everything in the universe has a reason for its existence. This statement is applicable to all objects from the minutest of atoms to the colossal galaxies. When we have found a reason for the existence of one, we are inclined to go beyond that and search for a reason for the cause. This search is not endless, for we soon arrive at the realisation of a Supreme Power, which did not require a greater power responsible for Its being. Every search in this direction decisively ends with the realisation of the existence of this Sovereign Entity. Not a single phenomenon of the universe can be found to be lacking for want of a reason for its occurrence. So the Supreme Entity, which required not a reason, has to be beyond the realm of the universe and devoid of any material form. Islam calls the Omnipotent, who is the reason for all the small and big substances

and all the phenomena of the universe, by the name ‘Allah’.

### THE PUREST FORM OF MONOTHEISM

Islam does not teach that God is a mere power or a configuration of energy without material form. The scope of man’s knowledge is limited to affairs regarding the world of matter. Hence it is beyond the power of human intelligence to give a description of the Supreme Being. It is only through His revelations that we are able to learn about the nature of His Entity. Qur’an teaches us that Allah is the Sovereign and Paramount Power who pervades the universe and beyond. There is nothing like Him in this universe. He is Omnipotent, and Omniscient. He is the Supreme Power, the Sovereign and the Almighty. He is the most Gracious and the Most Merciful. He is the Most Glorious, without beginning or end and is the Sole Creator of the universe. The following verse from the Holy Qur’an delineates the Islamic concept of God.

“Allah! There is no god but He, - the Living, the Self-subsisting, Supporter of all no slumber can seize Him nor sleep. His are all things in the heavens and on earth. Who is there who can intercede in his presence except as he permitteth? He knoweth what (appeareth to his creatures as) Before or After 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).” (Al-Baqara: 255)

### ALLAH - THE GOD OF ALL MEN

Allah, who is Omnipotent, and the Omniscient, is the Creator of all small and big objects. He is the Creator as well as Sustainer. Allah is not the name of a diety of a particular clan or tribe. It is the name of the God of all men belonging to all races, nations and of people speaking different languages. It can be seen that varied names

are given to the Creator and Sustainer by people speaking different languages, The Upanishads, which are in Sanskrit refer to the Almighty God as *Para Brahma*, *Paramatma*, etc. The Old Testament calls God by several names like Yehova, Yah, Adonais, El-Elyon, El-Saddhai, Eli, Elohim etc. Ecclesiastical scholars are of the firm opinion that Jesus addressed God as ‘Elohi’. The Qur’an uses the word ‘Allah’ to signify the Almighty. The word ‘Allah’ implies the meaning: ‘One Who truly deserves all worship’. The Qur’an describes ‘Allah’ not as the God of a particular group of people, but as the One True God of all men.

The Holy Qur’an establishes the fact about the existence of the Creator by pointing out the miraculous nature of the Creations and the various phenomena of the universe.

“Do they not look at the Camels, How they are made? And at the Sky, How it is raised high? And at the Mountains, How they are fixed firm? And at the Earth, How it is spread out?” (Al-Ghashiya: 17-20)

### THE ONE TRUE GOD

The Qur’an tells men to look around and comprehend the wonders of the systematic set-up of the universe and thereby realise the existence of the Supreme Power that guides these matters. The Holy Qur’an refers to the rhythmic scheme of the things of nature and convinces us that it is utterly foolish to associate any partners with God.

“No son did God beget, nor is there any god along with Him: (if there were many gods), behold, each god would have taken away what he had created, and some would have Lorded it over others! Glory to God! (He is free) from the (Sort of) things they attribute to Him!” (Mu’minun: 91)

The composition of an atom, with its minute components

like the electrons, protons, neutrons, mezones and positrons, reveals a marvellous pattern of the creation of substances. This amazing pattern is also akin to the scheme of things in the universe. The uniform features discernible in all things, from the minutest atoms to the colossal stars, point to the fact that all these were created by one creator. If the various phenomena are the creations of different gods, how can such a uniform rhythmic pattern and harmony exist in the universe? Every system of the human body is related to each other. Animals and plants depend on each other for their survival. The life on earth is devised in such a way that plants cannot exist without animals and animals depend on plants for their existence. Some plants depend on others of their kind and likewise some animals need other animals for their survival. If different gods had created these varied species of living beings, the kind of mutual dependence, as described above, would never have been there. Both animal and plant life would have become extinct if different forces directed their ways of life. We can find numerous such signs around us to convince ourselves of the fact that the universe was created by the One True God. How true are the following words of the Qur'an!

“If there were, in the heavens and the earth, other gods besides God, there would have been confusion in both! But glory to God, the Lord of the Throne: (High is He) above what they attribute to Him!” (Ambiyaa: 22)

#### **ALLAH - THE GOD OF ALL MEN**

All the prophets who came to the world preached the same cardinal message that the Creator, the Sustainer and the Destroyer are the different attributes of the One True God. This is the reason why most of the scriptures speak of the Oneness of God. Even in the religious books which speak of numerous gods, we are also able to find references to a Supreme Power which guides and directs the other gods. From this, we can assume that the prophets who were raised from these peoples had actually preached only about the existence of the One True God. It will not be wrong to infer that

these communities later deviated from the faith of monotheism and started worshipping various gods.

#### **MONOTHEISM IN HINDU SCRIPTURES**

Let us have a look at the concept of God expressed in the various Hindu scriptures. In *Rig Veda*, the number of gods mentioned are as high as three hundred and thirty three and among them the principal deities are Indra, Mithra, Vanma, Agni and Vishnu. Each of them are said to handle a certain field or department of life or of nature. But the same Scripture, which deploys various duties to these gods, also speaks of the God who is the Lord of the universe. He is referred to as Hiranyagarbha, Viswakarma and Prajapathi. The following verses of the Rig Veda clearly and emphatically say that the Creator alone deserves to be worshipped.

*“Hiranyagarbha samavartha thaagray  
Bhoothsya jaatha paritheka aasith  
Sathadara prithiveem, dyhaamu theymam  
Kasmay dhevaaya havisha vidheyama.”*

(In the beginning, there was only Hiranyagarbha. He is Lord of the world. He placed the earth and the heavens in their positions. Everything originated from Him. The Whole world obeys His commands. Therefore bow only unto Him) [Rigveda 10:121:1]

The same messages are conveyed through many verses in the other Vedas also. The Vedas mainly describe the rites and rituals that prevailed among the Aryans during the vedic period. The Upanishads are believed to contain the gist of the Hindu philosophy. There are altogether one hundred and eight Upanishads. The descriptions of numerous deities and the methods of invoking and appeasing them can be found in these scriptures. At the same time, there are many verses in the Upanishads which unequivocally proclaim the ideals of monotheism. It is not difficult to understand that the concept of the

Oneness of God found in these verses is the result of the influence of the teaching of prophets who preached in this land. Given below are some verses of the Upanishads.

*‘Ya eko jaalavaaneesatha leassa neebhi  
Sarvaan loakaaneesatha easa neebhi  
Ya evaika udhbhavay sambhavay cha  
Ya ekadhvidhura mrithasthay bhavanthi.’*

(The one and only *Paramatma* created this universe and He rules over it with His supreme commands. This world and the whole universe obey His commands. Great and immortal are those who are able to comprehend the Brahma who is the cause for the beginning and evolution of the universe.) [Swethasatharopanishad 3:1]

*“Apaani Paadho javanogrihedtha  
Pasyathya chaksha sa sryonothya karna  
Savethy vedhyam na cha thasyaasthy vettha  
Thamahuragryam Purusham mahamtham.”*

(The *Paramatma* comprehends everything and moves fast though He has neither hands nor legs. He sees everything though He has no eyes and He hears everything though He is without ears. He knows everything that He ought to know. But no one knows Him. Sages call Him the Great and First Being.) [Swethasatharopanishad 3:19]

*“Na thasya karyam karanam cha vidhyathay  
Na thasya samaschabhyadhikash cha dhrisyathay  
Parasya saktir vividhaiva srooyathay  
Swabhavikee njana bala kriyaa cha.”*

(The *Paramatma* has no body nor senses like other creatures. There is none greater than Him nor is there anyone similar to Him. Various attributes are given to His Powers. Acts of authority and knowledge are natural for Him.) [Swethasatharopanishad 6:4]

*“Na thasya kaschith pathir asthi loakay  
Na chesitha naiva chathasya lingam  
Na karanam karanaadhi paadhipoa  
Na chaasya kaschith Janitha na chaadhipa.”*

(There is none equal to Him in this world. There is none who can command unto him. No sign of him is visible to us. He is the cause of everything, but He Himself does not have a cause. He is neither begotten nor is there anyone superior to Him.) [Swethasatharopanishad 6:5]

*“Na thathra suryo bhathi na chandra tharakam  
nema vidhytho bhandhi kutha yamagni  
Thameva bhandham anubhathi sarvm  
Thasya bhasa sarvorn idham vidhathy.”*

(The sun, the moon or the stars do not shine in the presence of the Para Brahma. Even the lightning loses its gleam in His presence. Then where doth this fire stand? Everything shines because of His light which shines by itself. The light of everything is His light.) [Mandakopanishad2:2:11]

*“Asareeram Sarereshwana vasthesai vasthitham  
Mahantham Vibhumathmanam mathwa dheero nasochathy  
Nay a mathmaapravachanena labhya nabahunaasruthene  
Yamovaisha vrinuthay thena labhya!”*

(The *Paramatma* is Omnipresent, He is a bodyless entity, He is great, steadfast and invincible. One who knows him, will never have cause to be sad. The *Paramatma* is beyond the realms of our words, hearing or intelligence. One who is the recipient of His mercy, is fortunate because it is in the form of mercy that He appears to men.) [Katopanishad 1:2:22,23]

### CONCEPT OF GOD IN THE BIBLE.

In all the thirty nine chapters of the Old Testament, (from

Genesis to Malachi) we are able to see that all the prophets mentioned in it believed in the One True God. The following verses of the Old Testament bears testimony to this truth.

“The LORD appeared to Abraham, and said unto him, I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect.” (Genesis 17:1)

“And the LORD passed by before him, and proclaimed, the LORD, THE LORD GOD, merciful and gracious, long suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth. Keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children’s children, unto the third and to the fourth generation.” (Exodus 34:6,7)

“Is not He thy Father that hath bought thee? Hath He not made thee, and established thee?” (Deuteronomy 32:6)

“The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament showeth His handiwork.” (Psalms 19:1)

“Hear, O Israel : The LORD, our God, is one LORD: And thou shalt love the LORD, thy God, with all thine heart, with all thy soul, and with all thy might.”(Deuteronomy 6:4,5)

“Praise ye the LORD. Praise ye the LORD from the heavens, praise him in the heights. Praise ye him, all his angels. Praise ye him, all His hosts. Praise ye him, sun and moon, praise him, all ye stars of light. Praise Him, ye heaven of heavens and ye waters that be above the heavens. Let them praise the name of the LORD, for He commanded, and they were created. He hath also established them for ever and ever: he hath made a decree which shall not pass.” (Psalms 148:1-6)

Jesus Christ, who was the successor of the prophets mentioned in the Old Testament, also preached that God is the

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Creator and Sustainer of the universe and of all living things. Various verses of the New Testament clearly indicate that Jesus propagated the message of pure monotheism. Take a look at the answer that Jesus gave to a scribe who wanted to know which is the greatest commandment of all.

“‘The most important one’, answered Jesus, ‘is this: “Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.”’” (Mark 12:29,30)

The following verse clearly shows that Jesus told his people that he was only a prophet sent by Almighty God.

“Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent. I have brought you glory on earth by completing the work you gave me to do.” (John 17:3,4)

In this context, it is relevant to state the fact that the quaint theory of Trinity, which is accepted by various factions of Christian ecclesiastia, is contrary to the monotheistic teachings of Jesus Christ. The concept of God, according to the propounders of the theory of Trinity, is that the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost are the three different personalities of God. This belief is inconceivable to the human mind or reason. How can the Father, the Son and Holy Ghost, who have independent entities and personalities unite to form one God? There is not a single verse in the Old or New Testaments to prove this strange theory. Hence it is clear that the theory of Trinity was not preached either by Jesus Christ or his apostles.

### **PUREST FORM OF MONOTHEISM**

*Tauhid* in Islam is not confined to the belief in the One and Only God, who is the Creator and Sustainer of the universe. It also

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insists that He alone should be worshipped. The basic principle of Islam, *La ilaha Illa Allah* clearly conveys the message that there is no god but God. Idols, stones, trees, tombs, plants, demons, angels, saints or prophets do not deserve worship. The basic tenet of Islam is that none but Almighty God merits worship.

### MAN - THE NOBLEST OF CREATIONS

The Holy Qur'an says that man is the noblest of all the creations of God: "We have, indeed, created man in the best of moulds." (Teen: 4)

The unique entity of Allah is more sublime than all his creations. Man is able to perceive that many things inside the human body and also many matters around him are beyond the realm of human intelligence or control. The movements of the earth and the sun and the existence of the atmosphere, which are essential for life, are not controlled by man. It is not possible for a man to control his heart beat or the circulation of blood which are vital for the existence of his own life. Man cannot control even the complex activities of the human brain which differentiate man from beast. This awareness induces man to plead for help to a Supreme Power, who is much more powerful than any of the creations. This plea for help made to the Almighty is the true meaning of prayer. An appeal made by a labourer to his master, or by a patient to his physician cannot be termed as a prayer. These requests are made on the basis of desires for material or earthly benefits.

An earnest prayer goes beyond the limits of requests for material and earthly gains. This type of prayer is the meaning of true worship. Prayer is the soul of worship. Worship which is devoid of prayer becomes a mere ritual. The spirit of prayer should reside in the mind of the person who prays. However melodious and sweet a prayer may be, it will be just like any other song, unless it comes from within the heart of the man who prays. The term prayer attains its true meaning only when the appeal comes from the heart of the

person. The various acts of worship will be vivified only if every such act is accompanied by sincere prayers.

### WORSHIP THE CREATOR - NOT THE CREATIONS

Who deserves the worship of man? Whom should we pray to? Common sense dictates that the One, who is all powerful, has all knowledge and knows what is in the mind of man, alone deserves to be worshipped. Islam asserts that Allah, Who is the Creator and Sustainer of the universe, alone should be worshipped. This pure form of monotheism, which is one of the basic tenets of Islam, insists that Allah alone should be worshipped. The Holy Qur'an says that Allah created man so that he worships the Creator.

"I have only created Jinns and men, that they may serve Me. No sustenance do I require of them, nor do I require that they should feed me. For God is He Who gives (all) Sustenance, Lord of Power, Steadfast (for ever)." (Zariat:56-58)

"Allah (Himself) is witness that there is no god but He. And the angels and the men of learning (Too are witness) maintaining his creation in justice there is no god save Him, the Almighty, the Wise." (Al-i-Imran: 18)

It is true that prayers to many gods can be found in the Upanishads. But various verses of the Upanishads clearly state the greatness of worshipping the One True God and the futility of praying to many gods. The following verse of *Easavasyopanishad* hints that men should worship the One True God who has neither beginning nor end.

*Andham thamapravisanthiye  
Sambhoothy mupaasathay  
Thatho bhooya iva thay thamo  
Yausambhoothyaam ratha.*

(Those who worship the mortal gods and elders are an

ignorant lot and they fall into pitch darkness. Those who pride themselves of knowing Him fully also fall into utter darkness.) [Easavasyopanishad: 12:50]

The Ten Commandments that Moses (ﷺ) received from God also warns men against worshipping anyone other than God. The following verse in the Old Testament, is believed to be the words spoken by God to Moses.

“I am the Lord, thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. Thou shalt have no other gods before me. Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me.” (Exodus 20:2-5)

Jesus Christ (ﷺ), who was the last in the line of succession of the prophets of Israel also preached to his people that they should only worship the One True Lord. Even to the Satan, who tried to tempt him with all kinds of dazzling material affluence, Jesus said that He, who creates and sustains everything including himself, alone deserves to be worshipped.

“Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, thou shalt worship the lord thy lord, and him only shalt thou serve.” (Matthew 4:10)

### **THE HIGHEST FORM OF WORSHIP**

Arrogance and bitterness disappears from the mind of a person who worships the Most Merciful Creator. According to Marxism and Western Humanism, man is the supreme creature among all beings and there is none to control him nor is there any being more sublime than him. This belief naturally tends to create

arrogance in a man’s mind. This ultimately results in moral degradation and ruin. The objects of worship of some religious groups are stones, trees, beasts, tombs and saints. When worship is diverted to objects which have neither sight nor hearing and which are inferior to human beings, it is only natural that a sense of meanness creeps into the minds of these worshippers. This state of mind induces them to run from one ‘god’ to another and so on. Islam, with its firm assertion that the Creator alone should be worshipped, takes a middle path between the arrogance developed by the denial of the existence of God and the meanness fostered by worshipping the creations of God. This highest form of worship makes man more dignified and at the same time makes him modest and humble.

### **THE FAITH THAT FREES**

Monotheism provides strength to man to free himself from the shackles created by polytheism or pantheism. It frees him from the bondage strapped on him by the dependence on various gods and their middle men. The belief in the One True God encourages man to think and act freely. The belief that the heavenly bodies are dieties, often obstructed man’s will to learn more about them. But, when a man, who believes that every object and phenomenon in the universe is the creation of God, tries to learn about these things; it can be considered only as an effort made to know about the amazing magnificence of God’s work. This accounts for the reason why the Holy Qur’an encourages man to observe and learn about the world around him.

### **GOD IS JUST A PRAYER AWAY**

People who worship tombs and saints usually claim that they are also monotheists and that they have accepted these objects as middlemen through whom they pray to the Almighty. Islam does not approve of this argument. The Omniscient Creator, Who knows even about the faintest thoughts and emotions which arise deep inside the human mind, does not need any middle men to convey our prayers



to Him. The Holy Qur'an teaches us that He is very close to each of us and that all prayers should be directed only to Him.

“When my servants ask thee concerning Me, I am indeed close (to them): I listen to the prayer of every suppliant when he calleth on me : Let them also, with a will, listen to My call, and Believe in Me: that they may walk, in the right way.” (Al-Baqara: 186)

### **THE RIGHT WAY TO PRAY**

Some people argue that they make use of idols in order to attain complete concentration during prayers because the human mind, cannot comprehend the image of Almighty God. This argument is absolutely hollow. It is meaningless to say that a prayer will be complete only if the picture of God is visualised in the mind. It is not the image but the consciousness of the Power of God that should prevail in the mind during prayer. Worship should not be an effort to visualise an image of God; it should be a prayer to Almighty God appealing for help. So a complete awareness about the power of God should be developed instead of trying to create the picture of God in mind. When people pray with idols in front of them, the picture or shape of the idols immediately form the concept of God's image in their minds. The qualities and capabilities of the gods these people conceive are the same as those of the idols they have in front of them. The prayer songs of idolaters usually laud the qualities of the individual whom the idol represents. Therefore, it is quite illogical and unjustifiable to consider idol worshippers as monotheists.

### **THE BEST FORM OF WORSHIP**

Islam does not agree with the view that everyone can follow methods of worship according to his fancy. Some tribals are said to tear of the limbs of corpses amidst their frenzied dances in a bid to invoke their gods. Another primitive form of trying to appease gods was by licking clean the blood and liquor poured over the idols

shaped in the form of human sexual organs. If the view that anyone can follow any method of worship is to be accepted, then the savage forms of worship as mentioned above will also have to be approved of. There are ever so many varieties of such disgusting forms of worship. But the people who indulge in them believe that theirs is the right form of worship. The fact that we do not accept their views is a different matter. We cannot even agree with the suggestion that those people should be allowed to continue their own primitive forms of worship. From this, we understand that methods of worship according to one's own liking is not to be followed. Everyone should try to approach God through systematic methods of worship which God Himself has ordained or instructed us. To learn about the right ways of worshipping the Almighty, we have to rely on authentic sources which convey the messages of the Most Gracious Lord. We know that only one such source of divine knowledge, with full perfection and authenticity, exists today. No doubt, it is the Holy Qur'an. Thus we are able to realise the significance and relevance of the Islamic principle that worship is to be done only according to the ways mentioned in the Holy Qur'an and in the manner in which Prophet Mohammed (ﷺ) put them into practice.

### **WORSHIP IN ISLAM**

By sincerely putting into practice the forms of worship taught by Islam, the individual is able to purge and purify himself and thereby glorify his family, society and nation. Doing *Salat* five times a day is the compulsory duty of a Muslim. The day of a Muslim starts with the early morning *Salat*, which is to be done before sunrise. It is impossible for a man to tread the paths forsaken by God if he starts his day by standing before God chanting praises unto Him and pleading for His blessing to enable him to lead a life free from vices. Even before the gleam of the purity of soul achieved by the morning prayer fades, the time for the mid-day prayer arrives. With bowed heads and folded hands, the Muslim prays to the Creator to give him strength to ward off sins and to keep to the right path. The

time for the evening prayer comes when the memory of the mid-day prayer still lingers in the mind. Here again, the Muslim vows to keep away from sins and follow the instructions given by God. When the sense of piety evoked by the evening prayer begins to fade from the mind and at the time when the mind could possibly be tempted by the lures of worldly pleasures, it is time for the late evening prayer. Then during night, at the time when there are more possibilities for the human mind to waver, the Muslim engages himself in the night-time prayer and pledges again to be virtuous and to obey the Almighty. In the course of these five prayers, he prostrates himself and touches his forehead on the ground 34 times to show his utmost humility in the presence of the Almighty Creator. The mind of a person who prays five times a day will never be free from the pious thoughts about the greatness of God. Where then can a person, who sincerely prays to God five times a day, find time to commit sins knowing that God has knowledge about all public and private matters? How true are the following words of the Holy Qur'an

“Recite what is sent of the Book by inspiration to thee, and establish regular Prayer: for Prayer restrains from shameful and unjust deeds; and remembrance of God is the greatest (thing in life) without doubt. And God knows the (deeds) that ye do.” (Al-Anakabut:45)

### **CHARITY : A FORM OF WORSHIP**

*Zakath* or compulsory charity is the next important form of worship after *Salat*. *Zakat* purifies the wealth of the owner.

It is a form of worship in Islam, which facilitates the society to help the people who are economically weak and to find solutions for their hardships. It is the duty of everyone to give *Zakat* on the earning, savings, livestock, crops etc. at the stipulated rates. The Holy Qur'an speaks of *Zakat* as the right of poor and not as a concession given to them by the affluent people. *Zakat* is to be collected from the rich by governments or responsible institutions

of the community and then distributed to the people who deserve it. Greed for wealth is very often the basic reason which prompts men to commit heinous crimes. By giving *Zakat*, a man sacrifices a portion of his wealth in the way of God. *Zakat* is the part of a socio-economic system which makes men pure and virtuous by promoting a sense of generosity and sacrifice. If *Zakat* is collected and distributed universally as per God's command, poverty can be completely eradicated from the world.

### **FASTING PROVIDES RECTITUDE**

Fasting is another important form of worship which is compulsory for every Muslim. It implies total renunciation of food, water and desires of passion from dawn to dusk. There is no doubt that self discipline, piety and goodness will be promoted in a person who controls his passions, hunger and thirst in strict adherence to this command of God. It is the knowledge that he is always under the surveillance of the Creator that prompts a Muslim to obey this directive from the Almighty. It is compulsory for every Muslim to fast for a month every year. Fasting continuously for such a long period will surely foster prudence and piety in him and he will be prepared to ward off evil throughout his life. Along with the development of the sense of service, sacrifice and submission in the person, fasting creates in him the awareness about the equality of human beings and about his duties to the society. The Muslim who fasts, experiences the pangs of hunger and this helps in developing compassion in his mind towards the starving. Fasting can turn any miser into a generous person who shows concern for the poor. Thus fasting is a powerful device which can discipline and purify the individual as well as unite the rich and the poor of the society.

### **HAJJ - A SYMBOL OF THE BROTHERHOOD OF MAN**

The last form of worship in Islam, the *Hajj*, is intended to establish a firm bond between man and his Creator. It is mandatory for a Muslim to perform Hajj once in his life time, if he has the

health and means required for the purpose. *Hajj* pilgrimage has no relation whatsoever with polytheism. Most of the observance of *Hajj* are performed in memory of Prophet Abraham (ﷺ) who was persecuted by his own family and his people for preaching the ideals of monotheism. Any person who has performed the *Hajj* becomes repentant and desires to keep away from sinful deeds. He is able to fully imbibe the spirit of the brotherhood of man which is preached by Islam. A person performing *Hajj* identifies himself as one among the millions who have arrived from the different corners of the world. Dressed alike and chanting the same verses in praising the Almighty, those pilgrims perform *Hajj*. Blacks and Whites, Arabs and non-Arabs, labourers and lords alike perform *Hajj* together without any feeling of being superior or inferior to one another and forgetting about the barriers of nationality, race or region that would have otherwise divided them. *Hajj* brings to focus the great Islamic principles of the Oneness of God and the brotherhood of man.

### **ISLAM REJECTS PRIESTHOOD**

Islamic philosophy aims at inducing men to put into practice the ideals of monotheism in its pure and perfect form. Not only tombs, idols and fake gods, but also priests who claim to be the middle men between men and God are targeted by this basic principle of Islam which instructs men that the Creator alone is to be worshipped. Islam introduces God as One who is nearer to man than his own jugular vein. Islam teaches man that there is no need for middlemen between man and his Creator. Islam does not allow priesthood of any nature. Thus, Islam tries to save mankind from the clutches of the priests who have been exploiting men in the name of religion.

### **FRATERNITY OF MANKIND**

Monotheism frees man from all kinds of narrow-minded thoughts. The belief, that the peoples belonging to different races, sects, nations, creeds and clans are created and sustained by God

Almighty, rids a man's mind of all kinds of petty and mean thoughts of discrimination. When these people bow only to the Almighty and Most Gracious God, every barrier that separates them vanishes. The arrogance of the groups who claim to be superior to others dissipates when they begin to realise that all human beings are equal in front of God Almighty. It is easy for those who have learned history to understand that the Arabs, who were eternally fighting against each other in order to establish the superiority of their clans, were transformed into a unified community by the declaration of Islam that all human beings are the creations of God and are the descendants of the same parents. The declaration of the Qur'an, which completely shatters all notions of false prestige based on colour, language, nationality and race, is as follows:

“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 honoured of you in the sight of God is (he who is) the most righteous of you. And God has full knowledge and is well acquainted (With all things).”

Prophet Mohammed (ﷺ) spoke the following words in this regard:

“An Arab is none too superior than a non-Arab, and a non-Arab over an Arab nor is a white better than a black or the black better than the white except in the matter of righteousness.

It is certain that our God is the One True God and that we are all begotten of the same father; and Adam was created from mud.” (Muslim, Abu Davood)

### **THE ONLY PATH TO SALVATION**

Monotheism is the soul of Islam. A man can conduct his life totally according to God's Will only if he worships none other than

Allah. Only then can a man submit himself completely to God and thereby become a Muslim. We know that Islam is the religion that all prophets preached. We are also able to understand that most of the religious observances that we see today, including the worship of various gods, were introduced by priests for achieving their selfish motives. So the only path before a man who seeks salvation in the life hereafter, is to accept the teachings of the great messengers of God and lead life in a way in which he submits himself wholly to God Almighty.

May the Most Gracious God help us all in finding and accepting the Truth, *Aameen*.

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