M. A. Thesis

Institute of Islamic Studies

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Montreal, Quebec

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27 November 1988

TITLE: A Study of the Quranic Prophet *ʿĪsā ibn Maryam*

ABSTRACT:

The place of Jesus in the Qur'ān can be truly appreciated only to the degree that it is considered within the Qur'ān's total conceptual context. The substance of that context, in turn, answers to the historic Jāhilī context addressed by the Qur'ān; and, accordingly, it is not to be understood in isolation from it. Of primary importance to any inquiry into Jesus' place in so layered a context are the Quranic conceptions of God, man and the human situation, including sin, salvation and suffering. It is these concepts which are studied in this thesis. They are considered, not only in relation to the broad thrust of Quranic teaching on Jesus, but also comparatively, in relation to their Biblical equivalents, as the often only apparent or formal similarity of Quranic concepts to their Biblical counterparts must be clarified in order to avoid

mistaken turns in the pursuit of a true understanding of the distinctively Quranic Jesus.

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Montréal, Quebec

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27 Novembre 1988

TITRE: Une Etude du Prophète coranique *ʿĪsā ibn Maryam*

Résumé:

La place de Jésus dans le Coran ne peut être véritablement appréciée que dans la mésure où elle est considérée dans la totalité du contexte conceptuel du Coran. A son tour, l'essence de ce contexte correspond au contexte Jāhilī historique addressé par le Coran, et en conséquence, elle ne doit être conçue à part de celui-ci. Les conceptions coraniques de Dieu, de l'homme et de la condition humaine, y compris le péché, le salut et la souffrance, sont d'une importance fondamentale pour toute enquête sur la place de Jésus dans un contexte si stratifié. Ce sont ces concepts qui sont étudiés dans cette thèse. Non seulement sont-ils considérés en relation avec le thème gènéral de la doctrine coranique concernant Jésus, mais aussi comparativement par rapport a leurs equivalents bibliques, parce que la resemblance des concepts coraniques

avec leurs contreparties bibliques, souvent seulement apparente ou formelle, doit être clarifiée pour éviter des tournures éronnées dans la poursuite d'une véritable compréhension du Jésus distinctement coranique.

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PREFACE

I wish to thank all of the members of the faculty, staff and students whose help and encouragement have contributed to the understandings represented by this study. Warmest thanks is also due those who read parts of this manuscript in the early stages of its development or otherwise gave assistance: Drs. Harvie M. Conn and Vern S. Poythress of Westminster Theological Seminary, Mr. Ernest Hahn, an alumnus of the Institute, and Dr. N. T. Wright, formerly of McGill's Department of Religious Studies. I am particularly indebted to my supervisor, Professor Charles J. Adams, for his tireless help and encouragement during the entire course of this work. My accountability to him has proved of incalculable worth throughout the preparation of this study.

Finally, I must acknowledge my family here. In one sense, the lion's share of the credit for this work belongs to my dear wife, Cathy, without whose support it would have been quite impossible to complete. Heartfelt appreciation is also due my children, Joel and Miriam, whose prayers have doubtless contributed significantly also.

The Egyptian ennumeration is followed for all Quranic references. Quotations from the various translations of the Qur'ān are identified simply by the translator's name (Arberry, Pickthall, etc.), under which name the complete bibliographical data on each are located in the

bibliography. Biblical quotations are similarly identified simply by the initials of the translation: AV, Authorized Version; NEB, New English Bible (1961, 1970); NIV, New International Version (1973, 1978, 1984); RSV, Revised Standard Version (1946, 1952, 1971). As well, entries in *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd edition, and *Shorter Encyclopaedia of Islam* are identified by their initials (*EI*² and *SEI*).

As for Arabic transliteration, the following symbols have been used:

Consonants

'	*hamza* (initial: unexpressed)		
ᶜ	*ᶜayn*	*n*	*nūn*
b	*bā'*	*q*	*qāf*
d	*dāl*	*r*	*rā'*
dh	*dhāl*	*s*	*sīn*
ḍ	*ḍāḍ*	*sh*	*shīn*
f	*fā'*	*ṣ*	*ṣād*
gh	*ghayn*	*t*	*tā'*
h	*hā'*	*th*	*thā'*
ḥ	*ḥā'*	*ṭ*	*ṭā'*
j	*jīm*	*w*	*waw*
k	*kāf*	*y*	*yā'*
kh	*khā'*	*z*	*zayn*
l	*lām*	*ẓ*	*ẓā'*
m	*mīm*		
t	*tā' marbūta* (in *idafa*)		

Vowels

ā	*alif mamdūda*	*a*	*fat.ḥa*
á	*alif maqṣūra*	*i*	*kasra*
ī	*yā'*	*u*	*ḍamma*
ū	*waw*		

I: INTRODUCTION

Since the emergence of Muḥammad and the subsequent bursting forth of the Muslim Arabs into the mainstream of Middle Eastern cultures, a truly voluminous literature has evolved--written by both Muslims and Christians--endeavouring to define both the person and the place of *ʿĪsā*, Jesus, in the Qur'ān. Over the course of its development, there has been much insight, but naturally there has also been much repetition. Further, there have all too frequently been mistaken assumptions which have resulted in both mistaken equations and oppositions of the Quranic with the Biblical Jesus.

W. Paul McLean addresses the Christian side of this situation incisively when he writes:

> Reading the Christian logos-doctrine into *kālimah* and *rūḥ*, Christian apologetes have for centuries declared Muḥammad to be a buffoon for denying that the Christ is the Eternal Son of God even while calling him God's "Spirit" and "Word."[34]
>
> The modern period has produced a new use for much of the old ammunition. Approaching Islamic traditions with a new "sympathy," Christian scholar-apologetes have sometimes gone to the extreme of converting Muḥammad into an "orthodox" Christian hero. Such an approach still rests on the very old practice of reading Christian theological concepts into the words of the Qur'ān. The sterile formalism of such a procedure reveals

itself in the fact that once the orthodox Christ is constructed, he fails to fit into the overall framework of the Qur'anic view of revelation in history.

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[34]See O'Shaughnessy, *Word of God*, pp. 60-66, for an interesting summary of Roman Catholic apologetics.[1]

Context, then, is what is all-important for the Christian who would soundly assess the Quranic Jesus. And, not only so, but it is important in a number of respects. First, and preliminary to our interpretive task, it is essential that one carefully excavate the foundations for one's reconstruction of the Quranic Jesus in the Quranic concepts of God, man, the human situation (with all that that involves of sin, salvation and suffering), prophethood --inclusive of revelation--and community. For, as McLean has suggested, one can be successful in this endeavour only to the degree that this Jesus is viewed in his total Quranic context. Further, it should go without saying that these

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[1]"Jesus in the Qur'ān and Ḥadīth Literature, His Roles in the Eschatology of Early Islam" (M.A. thesis, McGill University, 1970), p. 23. The older approach is exemplified by John of Damascus; see Daniel J. Sahas, *John of Damascus on Islam: The "Heresy of the Ishmaelites"* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1972). Geoffrey Parrinder's *Jesus in the Qur'ān* (London: Faber and Faber, 1965) and W. Montgomery Watt's "The Christianity Criticized in the Qur'ān," (*The Muslim World* 57 [July 1967]:197-201) are prime examples of the newly sympathetic approach.

A more strangely sympathetic Christian approach is that represented by Giulio Basetti-Sani; *The Koran in the Light of Christ: An Essay Towards a Christian Interpretation of the Sacred Book of Islam* (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1977). It may be described as an attempt at the wholesale 'Christianization' of the Qur'ān, naturally, almost entirely without regard for the historic context addressed by it.

concepts must be resolutely viewed in their historic (i.e. Muhammadan[2] and Jāhilī) contexts, apart from which their intelligibility is greatly reduced.

And, finally, as a negative definition may contribute as much to genuine understanding as a positive one--and this is particularly so in cases where confusion is to be expected--such a study of Jesus must be comparative, asking how the Quranic Jesus is like and how he is unlike his Biblical counterpart. And, in line with what was said above concerning the inseparability of meaning from the larger context, such comparison and contrast must extend to the total conceptual context of Jesus in both the Qur'ān and the Bible.

A task of such proportions is hardly to be undertaken in a paper such as this. Hence, as the superstructure must follow the foundation, this essay must be viewed as preliminary (and even in that regard only partial) to the investigation of the ninety-some verses explicitly referring to Jesus in the Qur'ān: this essay will devote itself in the main to a comparative study of the Quranic and Biblical concepts of (1) God, (2) man and (3) the human situation, all with reference to Jesus. The approach taken in this paper to the Biblical material will be from an evangelical and Reformed perspective.

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[2]The term "Muhammadan" here (and throughout this paper) means, simply, "of Muḥammad"; hence, it is equivalent to "Abrahamic," "Mosaic," "Pauline," etc. It is never in this paper used as a synonym for "Muslim" or "Islamic."

To illustrate our point above concerning the importance of context, we may briefly consider the following statements concerning the virgin-born[3] *Ibn Maryam* of the Qur'ān:

> Jesus is a prophet or messenger of the one true God. As such, he follows in the long line of Biblical prophets sent by God to show erring man, consigned to a situation of both frequent sin and suffering, the way of salvation.

On all of this, the two Scriptures may be said to be in 'perfect agreement.' However, when one scrutinizes, not just the bare words, but also their larger meanings in the total thought world of each Scripture, one is left with as many substantial differences as similarities. To begin, the nature of the "one true God" and of Jesus' relation to him are not at all the same. Then. too, the divine-human relation and the effects of sin on it are vitally different. These differences, in turn, yield two quite distinct understandings of the human 'problem,' religiously speaking, of the relationship of suffering to that 'problem,' and of its sole solution. (Integral to all of these differences, of course, is the uniqueness of each Scripture's view of both revelation and its communal effect. But, as the comparative investigation of revelation and community in the Qur'ān and the Bible belongs to a later stage in the study outlined above, our consideration of it here will be only allusive.)

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[3]For a discussion of the various Muslim positions on the virgin birth in the Qur'ān, see Parrinder, *Jesus in the Qur'ān*, pp. 69-74.

In terms of Muslim studies on the Quranic Jesus, if Muslim scholarship has not fallen into the same errors which have characterized Christian approaches generally, it has naturally been beset by its own contextual limitations. Again these relate to the larger issues--God, man, sin and so on--and especially to the restrictions of the various Muslim hermeneutics ("orthodox" Sunnī, both scholastic and mystical, "heterodox" Ṣūfī, "orthodox" Twelver Shīᶜī, etc.) on their interpretations. Of course, throughout its history, each given stream of Muslim thought has interacted apologetically, not only with non-Muslim (Christian, Jewish, etc.) approaches, but also with the approaches of opposing or alternative streams of Muslim thought. Inevitably, then, all of the various approaches of the Muslims manifest their given apologetic concerns in the kinds of questions--whether legitimate or not--they have put to their Scripture, on each of these issues. So, while in every instance one may well discern a genuine Quranic impulse,[4] other post-Quranic concerns have often played the decisive role in the reformulation of Quranic thought by the various Muslim groupings or by the Muslims, in general.

Of course, it is impossible that a study of this size could interact with the whole range of Muslim variations on each of our three contextual concerns. For the most part,

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[4]Of course, apologetics figure prominently in the Qur'ān also. The issues there, however, are entirely Ḥijāzī (and for the most part Jāhilī); hence, they are often very different from the post-Muhammadan issues.

then, this paper will only touch upon those Muslim interpretations deemed particularly relevant to its major points.

II: GOD, MAN AND THE HUMAN SITUATION, AS CONTEXT

The concern of this paper has been defined as the larger context of the Quranic Jesus, particularly Quranic perceptions of God, man and the human situation. As we have suggested, our first concern here must be with the Jāhilī context addressed by the Qur'ān. Hence, we will begin with a brief inquiry into the Jahīlī *Weltanschauung*, as being foundational to any true understanding of the Quranic response to the situation with which Muḥammad and his followers were confronted during the course of his prophetic career.

Besides the pagans, of course, there were Jewish and Christian communities to be found in Muḥammad's Ḥijāz. And, clearly, a significant number of Quranic passages specifically address these communities. Muḥammad presented himself as the last in the long line of prophets, most of whom were Biblical prophets, and that inevitably signified the opening of a dialogue between him and his Jewish and Christian neighbours. Furthermore, the vision of the Qur'ān almost until Muḥammad's radical break with the Jews in Medina was one which generally anticipated the full

participation of the Scriptuaries in the Muslims' iconoclastic program (and, so, extended the appropriate invitation to them).

It was that program, however, which proved to be the supreme passion of Muḥammad's prophetic career: the success of that program was what was all-important. Beside it, the cooperation and support of the Jews and Christians must assume an entirely secondary status.[1] Muḥammad's basic mandate is thus shown to be the restoration of his pagan tribesmen in Mecca (and, indeed, throughout the entire region) to the 'Abrahamic religion,' of which he believed God had appointed him the last prophetic mouthpiece. It was to this eradication of idolatry and its larger ethical effects that he devoted the greater part of his career; and, of course, it was here that he was so eminently successful.[2] Relative to the concerns of the People of the Book, then,

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[1]Muḥammad's single-mindedness here is, of course, abundantly evident from what is known of his ultimately severe dealings with the Jewish tribes in Medina and elsewhere and of his later approach to those Christian groups unwilling to submit to his (prophetic) leadership. On this, see, for example, W. Montgomery Watt, *Muhammad at Medina* (London: Clarendon Press, 1956), pp. 116-17, 192-220.

[2]At times optimistic about Muḥammad's prophetic acceptance by Ḥijāzī Jewish and Christian communities, the Qur'ān evidences neither the same extent nor the same urgency of appeal towards them as towards the pagans. The great exception to this occurred in the early Medinan period, when the Jews' tentative support of what was Quranically perceived as the common cause (i.e. to take Mecca in the name of God) was gradually replaced by their undermining dissent. But, as the outcome of those relations demonstrates, Muḥammad's original approach to the Jews was for the most part unsuccessful, and the Qur'ān replaces its urgent appeals to the Jews with its strong censure of them.

contextual priority must be given to the concerns of the paganism to which most of the Jāhilī Arabs adhered. The legitimacy of this point will, we believe, be evident continually throughout the course of our study here.

The Theology of Jāhiliyya

Everywhere assumed in the Qur'ān, the existence of God is never there argued. This follows from the fact that to none of the three basic groupings of Muḥammad's original audience--polytheistic idolaters, *ahl al-Kitāb*,[3] and Muslim

[3]This category was comprised of the only non-pagan communities in existence in Arabia prior to the hijra; that is, the Jewish and Christian communities. That the ḥanīfs are never addressed by the Qur'ān reflects their having no communal status. While the sameness of their thought and piety, broadly speaking, justifies our considering them a single grouping, their characteristic bent towards individualism kept them from achieving any organized momentum: only in Muḥammad's vision and dynamism did that religious tradition manifest itself in a religio-political community of any significance (at least in the Ḥijāz).

For a general introduction to the ḥanīfs, see *EI*², s.v. "Ḥanīf," by W. Montgomery Watt. What appears to us to be the excessive caution of Watt and other recent writers assessing the ḥanīfs is, however, to be corrected by the balanced approach of Toshihiko Izutsu in *God and Man in the Koran: Semantics of the Koranic Weltanschauung* (Tokyo: Keio Institute of Cultural and Linguistic Studies, 1964), pp. 112-18. The caution to which we refer may well be aimed at correcting the excesses of an earlier generation of Western orientalists who consistently sought to locate the "source of Muḥammad's religious thought" in the thought of another religious community (Jewish or Christian, etc.). To that end, the ḥanīfs were oftentimes employed as mere middlemen. The major examples of the causal approach are R. Bell's *The Origin of Islam in Its Christian Environment*, The Gunning Lectures, Edinburgh University, 1925 (London: Frank Cass & Co., 1968) and C. C. Torrey's *Jewish Foundation of Islam*, with an Introduction by Franz Rosenthal (New York: Ktav Publishing House, 1967).

So facile an approach is indicative of the reductionistic nature of such schemes. Muslims have charged that they fail miserably to appreciate the originality of

devotees--was God's existence ever in question.[4] What was in question, of course, was just how the Creator God was to be viewed. And this issue, welded inseparably together with the assertion of Muḥammad's prophethood, is the ultimate theological issue of Muhammadan preaching as we have it in the Qur'ān: clearly, the Qur'ān has as one of its two primary objectives the establishment of a true conception of God and his relationship to man and, conversely, the overthrow of all forms of *shirk* or "associationist"[5] thinking.

Quranic thought, despite its being--by its own admission--complementary to (indeed, even the continuation of) the earlier, Biblical revelations. And their criticism is to be heeded, so long as it allows for the truly historical nature of the Quranic message, a point which later Muslim understandings of *tanzīl* have often sought to suppress.

[4]The pagan's belief in the existence of God (*Allāh*) is amply documented both in the Qur'ān and in extra-Quranic sources. On this, see Izutsu, *God and Man*, pp. 100-05, 109-19.

[5]By "associationist," I refer particularly to that diminishing of the divine glory and uniqueness inherent in the Jāhilī ascription of 'associates' or 'peers' (*shurakā'*) to God. In the Qur'ān *shirk* covers anything short of a monotheistic or unitarian view of God, whether implicitly or explicitly polytheistic. Hence, "associationist" here bears no relation to the associationism of modern Western philosophy.

While it would be going too far to suggest that any sort of man-like representation of God is to be included here, it is arguable (as will become clear in the course of our discussion) that the seeds of this later Muslim conclusion are evident in the Quranic presentation of God. That there is in the Qur'ān no treatment of the Christian notion of incarnation will become evident throughout the course of the following discussions.

It goes without saying, of course, that there is evident in the Qur'ān no awareness of the finer points of Christian theology, by which God is conceived in trinitarian--and, hence, unitarian--terms (this use of "unitarian" comes from Ernest Hahn, "Christianity, Islam and the Mission of the Church," public lecture given at St.

Most significant in any consideration of the character of Quranic monotheism, with its quite unparalleled sense of the divine transcendence,[6] is some awareness of the sort of idolatrous polytheism into which Muḥammad's fellow tribesmen had generally fallen and which, in the concept of the now defiled Abrahamic Kaʿba, eventually gave the Muhammadan mission its cultic imperative.[7] Beyond their assumption of the existence of God as the primordial Source of creation--a common feature in animistic-polytheistic belief[8]--the Quraysh honoured God with the ascription, "Lord of the Kaʿba," giving him the place in their so-called

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Enoch Presbyterian Church, Hamilton, Ont., May 21, 1987). Accordingly, Yusuf Ali's translation of *thalātha* in 4:171 and 5:73 as "Trinity" is altogether unwarranted.

[6]See the discussion below, pp. 44-50.

[7]It should be borne in mind that the religious belief and practice found objectionable by the Qur'ān was the organized polytheism of the Kaʿba, and not animism-ancestor worship, which is probably to be viewed as the real home of Jāhilī popular religion and, accordingly, of which the former was doubtless to a large degree a mere cultic overlay. On this, see: Joseph Henninger, "Pre-Islamic Bedouin Religion," *Studies on Islam*, trans. and ed. Merlin L. Swartz (New York: Oxford University Press, 1981), p. 15. Since it is only that cultic overlay (or else, specifically, the promotion of the animistic *jinn* to the rank of deity, as in 34:41 and 37:158) which the Qur'ān views as a serious threat to sound religion (i.e. to its key issue of divine unity), the following inquiry omits further discussion of the animistic side of Ḥijāzī paganism. On this, see: H. A. R. Gibb, *Studies on the Civilization of Islam*, eds. William R. Polk and Stanford J. Shaw (Boston: Beacon Press, 1962), pp. 179-82, and Duncan Black MacDonald, *The Religious Attitude and Life in Islam* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1909; reprint ed., New York: AMS Press, 1970).

[8]For a discussion of the concept of the 'high god' commonly found in animistic and polytheistic belief, see *The Encyclopedia of Religion*, 1987 ed., s.v. "Supreme Beings," by Lawrence E. Sullivan.

pantheon[9] of 'absentee president,' a sort of *deus otiosus*, remote, indifferent to the needs and, more important, to the moral condition of man. Of primary significance was his role as the source and sharer of divinity, the progenitor of the gods with whom man had to do (since they, standing between man and God, were thought to have powers of mediation with God as their family or tribal head).[10]

In particular, *Allāh* was believed to have directly fathered the three major goddesses of the region, *al-Lāt*, *Manāt*, and *al-ᶜUzza*, who together with *Hubal* were the focal points in the worship of the Kaᶜba.[11] While *Manāt* was considered a goddess of Fate, her two sisters appear to have represented the morning and evening phases of the planet Venus. Joseph Henninger suggests that this astral association may signify a secondary development, but whether the primary development had been from the level of polydaemonistic *jinn* to that of polytheistic goddesses (by

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[9]Henninger doubts whether the chaotic picture presented by the mass of Jāhilī gods warrants the use of the term pantheon, with reference to Bedouin religion, at least; even the formation of an Arab national religion, following the adoption of a sedentary mode of life, was seemingly at such an early stage that the term may suggest far more of a religious integration than had yet occurred. "Pre-Islamic Bedouin Religion," p. 11.

[10]While there is no extra-Quranic documentation for this point, its major treatment in the Qur'ān makes it difficult to discount: not only does the Qur'ān repeatedly posit such a Jāhilī belief and practice, but the entire Quranic treatment of mediation-intercession becomes unintelligible without the actual existence of such an expression of piety.

[11]See the articles on *al-Lāt*, *Manāt*, *al-ᶜUzza*, *Hubal*, and Kaᶜba in both *SEI* and *EI²*.

virtue of their alleged divine descent) or directly to the level of goddesses (i.e. with no prior ancestor-*jinn* associations) cannot be said. In any case, their divine daughterhood elevated them above the numerous (merely) *jinn*-associated tribal gods. Others of the Qurayshī gods may have represented atmospheric deities, perhaps the hypostatized attributes of a creator god (discernible in *Quzaḥ*, for example, are the features of a storm god).[12]

In what was perhaps intended to have the appearance of a grand gesture of religious toleration, the business-minded Quraysh[13] had included all the gods worshipped by regional tribes, by present and perhaps even potential trading partners, in their Meccan shrine. Notable here was their inclusion of an image or icon of both Jesus, whose divine 'Sonship' would have placed him in the same class as the local goddesses (i.e. in pagan thinking) as the direct offspring of God, and Mary (*Maryam*), who would have been categorized by the Meccans as one of the 'wives' or 'consorts' of God.[14]

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[12]"Pre-Islamic Bedouin Religion," pp. 11-12.

[13]It was not coincidental, of course, that the pre-Islamic Meccan pilgrimage coincided with the regional trade fair also held there; in fact, the latter was only made possible by the observance of the sacred month (with its prohibition of killing). In any case, such 'double billing' is indicative of the extent to which religion functioned as a means to the end of economic expansion. M. J. Kister, *Studies in Jāhiliyya and Early Islam* (London: Variorum Reprints, 1980), pp. 76-77.

[14]*EI*², s.v. "Kaʿba," by A. J. Wensinck.

The most significant difference between Jesus and his mother on the one hand and the local representatives of the "family of the gods" on the other was precisely that of locality, for Jesus and Mary were obviously imported deities (43:57-58). And in all such polytheistic thinking locality (including tribal affiliation) is of the essence: in general, the goddesses of the region would have been thought effectively to preside over their given localities; beyond the home territory (i.e. the earthly seat of authority) of each, any contest between them might have been presumed a divine toss-up.

It is interesting to surmise whether there was among the prophets said to have been pictured in the Kaʿba any distinctive representative of the Jewish communities of the Ḥijāz and beyond. While there may be no evidence for it, it seems plausible that due to his prominence in post-exilic Judaism Ezra (*ʿUzayr*) was included there. This may help clarify the reference in 9:30 to the otherwise inexplicable Jewish ascription of divine sonship to him, in that it would allow for the option that such an ascription actually represented, not Jewish belief itself, but the popular Meccan understanding of it.

Yusuf Ali's explanation of the troublesome verse by asserting that Judaism made free use of the expression "sons of God" (*The Holy Qur'an: Translation and Commentary* [n.p.: American Trust Publications, 1977], p. 448, n. 1283; cf. p. 247, n. 718) obscures far more than it clarifies. Old Testament usage of the expression in the singular is quite different from that of the plural. Hence, it is highly unlikely that mainstream Jews, however poorly taught, could have confused the two. Perhaps the impossibility of such a position led Bayḍāwī to postulate the existence of a heretical sect of Jews who had thus exalted Ezra to the status of a deity (*Anwār al-Tanzīl wa-Asrār al-Ta'wīl*, on 9:30). There is, however, a complete absence of evidence for such a sect of Jews, whether in Arabia or elsewhere. (Of course, such a postulate is reminiscent of that commonly put forward to explain the Qur'ān's tritheistic vision of Christian belief [e.g. 5:116-18]. To this writer, neither postulate increases the credibility of the Qur'ān.)

No doubt, the god(s) of any of the major foreign powers would have had their appeal in the greatness of their imperial achievements. But, rooted in the fiercely independent pride of the Quraysh (as of the Ḥijāzī Arabs generally) and bound together with a multitude of animistic and litholatrous[15] practices, Meccan religious piety was not about to be swallowed up by the various foreign alternatives, Christian, Jewish and Persian. Of course, to have adopted any of them would have severely limited the economic prospects of the Quraysh in their lucrative role as middlemen on the luxury goods trade routes from India and Africa to the Byzantine and Sassanian worlds. For doubtless the continued (idolatrous) religious independence of the Quraysh would have been far preferable to either major buying partner than their affiliation with the religion or religions of the opposing empire.[16]

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[15]R. Dussaud's argument that the term 'litholatry' expresses a false idea "based on a total lack of understanding of the rites" in that "it is not to the stone itself that the worshipper gives his adoration, but to the god which it contains," i.e. as a dwelling place (quoted by Henninger, "Pre-Islamic Bedouin Religion," p. 8), seems to deny the real significance of the visible object of worship as, in some sense, representative of the invisible. The same argument may be made with reference to the term 'idolatry,' but again there to say, in its use, that idols are visibly worshipped is never to deny the idols their representative aspect; rather, that is quite obviously to be assumed in any proper use of the term.

[16]That the Sassanians officially encouraged, first, Judaism and, then, following the organization of the Sassanian-based Nestorian Church in 457 A.D., Nestorianism (along with their own Magian-Mazdean tradition, of course) as prophylactics against the religio-political appeal of Byzantine Christianity makes this point quite clear. Marshall G. S. Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam*, 3 vols.

Perhaps most vital to an understanding of the idolatry so strongly decried by the Qur'ān is the fact that pre-Islamic belief in a plurality of gods was firmly rooted in the presupposition that death was the final end of man's evanescent existence, that belief in a hereafter beyond the bounds of this present world was unthinkable. As Toshihiko Izutsu has pointed out, it was precisely this worldly-mindedness which issued in the "desperate sort of hedonism" so abhorred by the Qur'ān: since human existence was held to be essentially futile, voluptuous indulgence--wine, women and song--afforded the illusion of transcending one's insignificance and ephemerality[17] by merely dulling the pain, as it were. Besides such pleasure-seeking, belief in the vanity of man's existence showed itself in a general contempt for human life, as in the callous disposal of unwanted infant daughters and the abuse of orphans and others of society's disenfranchised.

Figuring largely in this conception of life as essentially futile, was the concept of Time or Fate (*Dahr*), an impersonal force pervading the universe as its real

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(Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974), I:130-31, and J. S. Trimingham, *Christianity Among the Arabs in Pre-Islamic Times* (London: Longman, 1979; Beirut: Librairie du Liban, 1979), p. 260.

Hence, Byzantine and heterodox (i.e. non-Byzantine) expressions of Christianity are to be viewed as functionally distinct religions, due of course to the givenness of the integration of religious and political structure (the marriage of Church and State--albeit a 'common law' one in the Sassanian case) in the thinking of all.

[17] *Ethico-Religious Concepts in the Qur'ān* (Montreal: McGill University Press, 1966), p. 53; see also pp. 45-54.

controller.[18] Doubtless this notion arose in response to two things. On the one hand, it was a reaction to idolatry's humanization of God--its belief in the general confusion and impotence of God's rule over the creation--affirming that absolute order did exist in the universe. Even more vital, on the other hand, the notion arose in response to the Jahīlī insistence on man's basic irresponsibility to God and the meaninglessness of man's life, for the universe's order is thus made external to God, in Fate's mechanistic inevitability. *Dahr* most often appears in pre-Islamic poetry, in connection with the essential unpredictability and vindictiveness of life, with man's smallness and futility, in general, and with the inflexibility of each person's appointment with death.[19]

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[18]Izutsu, *God and Man*, pp. 124-30; W. Montgomery Watt, *What is Islam?* Arab Background Series (London: Longmans Green & Co., 1968; Beirut: Librairie du Liban, 1968), pp. 25-31. Izutsu's conception of *Dahr* in pre-Islamic poetry as a "semi-personal Being" is probably to be questioned (p. 129, cf. p. 126). Watt's assessment of it as an impersonal force seems sounder. The literary convention of personifying Time or Fate should not be taken too literally; it appears to signify only the ascription of a terrifying malevolence and irrationality to the fixity of life's misfortunes and general inequity. Certainly, the Qur'ān's near omission of the concept would be inexplicable if *Dahr* in any way approximated the status of a deity.

[19]It is remarkable that this concept, which looms so large in pre-Islamic poetry, is specifically addressed by the Qur'ān only once (45:24-29); and this situation may be said to attest to the overall authenticity of that poetry. Rather than the notion of *Dahr* itself, it is its associates which are frequently addressed: life's futility and man's irresponsib lity, on the one hand, and idolatry's powerless, absentee *Allāh*, on the other.

Divine Immanence and Transcendence in Quranic Monotheism

Into the midst of such a religious environment came Muḥammad, urging faith in the absolute, immediate involvement and universal sovereignty of the Creator; faith, moreover, in the reality of the hereafter and in the moral culpability of man before a God who stands at the end of history, as Master of the Day of Doom. Precisely here, of course, lay the disturbing immediacy of Quranic monotheism. Such a God is infinitely aware of all that man does. He is always unquestionably in control of every aspect of the creation. And he is declared to be utterly exacting in his judgment of the careless and unbelieving.

Because of all this, Muḥammad urged his hearers to repent, fear God, and heed his messenger(s).[20] Since God here is not unheeding, and man--whose tenure on earth is but preliminary to the assignments of the Great Accounting--is responsible, the pivotal point in the Quranic message "lies decidedly in the hereafter."[21] Hence, the great eschatological emphasis of the Qur'ān, with its insistent call for belief in "God and the Last Day," is to be understood in terms of the Jāhilī 'package' of polytheism-pessimism-hedonism.

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[20]Unfortunately, the question of the continuing relevance of the Books (i.e. Scriptures) of the earlier prophets takes us beyond the scope of this present study.

[21]Izutsu, *Ethico-Religious Concepts*, p. 50.

Against a concept of God as remote, indifferent, uninvolved in the affairs of men, the Qur'ān is at great pains to present him as very near, indeed, sometimes as startlingly near,[22] immediately and intensely involved in the lives and destinies of men. To begin, God's involvement is manifested ontologically in two ways. First, as Sovereign Ruler of all, he embraces all things in his will: in God, absolute will and infinite power are perfectly united; hence, the entire created order is ever and always but the realization of the divine will.[23] With a simple word of command, he brings all things into being (6:73;

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[22]While passages like 50:16 and 56:83-87 were later interpreted to substantiate Ṣūfī claims concerning God's intimate nearness, the context of each makes plain that the divine nearness was spoken of in terms of a frightening intensity, rather than a comforting intimacy, of presence. That God is nearer than one's "jugular vein," for example, emphasizes the ease with which such a God can extinguish the life of the arrogant unbeliever of the preceding verses (50:5,12-14; cf. vv. 17-25); clearly, it posits no doctrine of man's essential oneness with God. The emphasis on the divine immanence as a threatening all-inclusiveness of knowledge, a fear striking intensity of presence, is a repeated one throughout the Qur'ān (see, for example, 2:115; 3:29; 17:60; 34:50-51; 58:7; cf. 65:12). The only clear exception to this is to be found in 2:186, where God is shown as responsively near to the one who calls (*daʿa*) on him, although the context here suggests that such responsiveness can only be expected in desperate situations (on this, see Izutsu, *God and Man*, pp. 193-97).

[23]Amazingly enough, in chaps. 9 and 10 of *God of Justice: A Study in the Ethical Doctrine of the Qur'ān* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1960), Daud Rahbar contends that the entire notion of foreordination represents a post-Quranic invention in the religious thought of the Arabs (i.e. that of the later theologians). As Izutsu has pointed out, such a position is untenable, for belief in foreordination can be shown to have been common among the pre-Islamic ḥanīfs, not to mention other Arabs also of a special religious tendency; *God and Man*, pp. 131-32.

16:40; 36:81-83), and by his word he rules and sustains all (10:3; 23:17-20; 30:25-26; 35:41; 67:19). Everything, then, evidences the immediate involvement of God in his creation (this, of course, being the significance of the *ayāt* or "signs" of God, in the broadest sense of the term).[24]

Second--and this second point is but an extension of the first--his sovereign lordship is clearly manifested in terms of his wise meting out of man's blessing and

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[24]While God may be said to be the First Cause of all that is, the Qur'ān gives no clear indication of there being any secondary causes; clearly, the reason for this is that the question of primary versus secondary causation is nowhere raised here. While the existence of divinely established natural laws may be inferred from passages such as 10:3-6 and 39:5-6, one often has the impression that creation is to be viewed as linear, an ongoing process, and not punctiliar only (e.g. 23:14). This, however, may result from the fact that "create" (*khalaqa*) is frequently used to mean simply "make," "mould" or "originate," as in the case of the conception and development of a child within the womb (e.g. 22:5; 23:12-14; 32:7-9; 39:6; 76:2), and not only in the sense of initial creation. Cf. Thomas J. O'Shaughnessy, *Creation and the Teaching of the Qur'ān*, Biblica et Orientalia, no. 40 (Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1985), p. 7.

Further, while the Qur'ān does not speak of God's resting on the seventh day of creation, it does distinguish the six days of creation from the seventh day (and following) when his activity is more that of ruling and preserving the creation than of creating, in the sense of initiating (10:3; 57:4). It is a mistake, of course, to take statements such as those found in 46:33 and 50:15 (cf. 2:255) as a denial of the Biblical notion of the "sabbath rest" of God in creation (Gen. 2:1-3). Rather, as their respective contexts invariably indicate, they respond to pagan disbelief in God's omnipotence to raise the dead. As well, the mistaken reading credits the Qur'ān with a gross misunderstanding of the Biblical concept: in Genesis, it is the rest of nascent Israel's prescribed sabbath days and years--symbolic of individual and national rest on a number of levels--of which the divine rest speaks etiologically. Clearly, then, the two Scriptures are much closer on this matter than is often granted (cf. Isa. 40:28). (And certainly the question of secondary causation is no more a part of the Biblical agenda than it is of the Quranic.)

affliction, both in this life and in the life to come. Whereas the divine discrimination evidenced on the Day of Reckoning relates directly to the covenantal basis for man's responsibility before God, as will be seen, it is not so clear that blessing and affliction in the temporal sphere are equally tied to one's response to Covenant.[25] In any case, this life's prosperity and adversity alike are to be received as from God's hand, with deep gratitude (the lack of which is the unbeliever's downfall), with a quiet confidence in the inscrutable wisdom of God (which confidence, of course, is the exclusive right of believers),[26] and with reverential fear (or, alternately, terror).

This concept of divine sovereignty is in many ways similar to what we find in the Bible--both Old and New Testaments. The element of antinomy is, however, stronger in the Biblical treatment of theodicy, for there the evil "ordained" by God is at the same time the very moral cancer to which he is both emphatically and unalterably opposed; a point never made more clearly than in connection with the redemptive death of Christ, in which the evil that God ordains proves the very means by which evil is destroyed

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[25]This discussion is taken up below, pp. 111-13 and 146-57.

[26]At best, the Qur'ān offers unrepentant unbelievers only a solemn awareness of the divine wisdom here. But, of course, it is far from Quranic intention to advise the unrepentant on how to cope with their situation of unbelief.

(that notion being distinctly Biblical, of course).[27] In that Christ's death is to be viewed as paradigmatic of the meaning of history, it does afford a substantial lessening of the tension inherent in theodicy. Still, that tension may be thought to call for some logical qualification of God's ordaining of evil as "permissive" (for example, relating it to the "permissive" in contrast to the "perfect" or, better, "prescriptive" will of God; i.e. from the human perspective). But, like the Qur'ān, the Bible never views the tension as a problem. It simply assumes it to be inherent in the nature of reality.[28]

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[27]It is ultimately in this sense that evil proves to be its own destruction (e.g. Psa. 7:15-16; 57:6; cf. Gal. 6:7-8).

The Biblical concept here involves the total exhaustion of evil in that sea of purity and goodness which was Christ; in other words, it represents the swallowing up of evil by good. In Johanine terms, Christ's passion signifies that bold (but miscalculated) attempt on the part of darkness to extinguish the light of God, which attempt resulted in the exact opposite effect: the decisive moment in that displacement of darkness by perfect light which Christ came to inaugurate (John 1:4-9; 1 John 2:8; 3:7-8). Hence, evil's apparently unrestrained self-expression (in what was, in fact, its divinely ordained attempt to destroy Jesus) was both the full revelation of its inherent futility and the full revelation of God's glorious character (of the perfection, infinity, immutability and so on of his justice, mercy and humility).

The cross of Christ, then, is to be viewed as the enigma explaining all: in the external weakness and shame of his apparent victimization at the hands of sinful men, Jesus manifested definitively God's sovereign power, wisdom and glory. By his death, he thus vanquished death (and all that death signifies, Biblically, of evil's enslaving power over the race) and, so, effected in the race that divine transmutation of cursing into blessing which is Biblically termed 'redemption.'

[28]The wholistic and dynamic character of such theologizing, of course, runs directly counter to the more reductionistic approach of most of the Greek philosophers,

A second difference in emphasis here relates to God's exclusive election of some to salvation. While in the Qur'ān God is repeatedly called the Compassionate, there is alongside that emphasis an equally great one on the total involvement of God in the deception of the reprobate (the latter phenomenon being much more infrequent in the Biblical case). Then, too, the compassion of God is explicitly spoken of as universal only in connection with his providential care, and never in connection with his desire to see all included in his salvation or his 'anguish' over the lostness of the lost, as is true of the Biblical case (Luke 13:34; 2 Pet. 3:9; cf. Ezek. 18:23,32).[29]

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their thought being foundational to Western thought generally from the early centuries of the Christian era onwards.

On the Biblical approach to this antinomy, consult D. A. Carson's *Divine Sovereignty and Human Responsibility: Biblical Perspectives in Tension* (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1981).

[29]While there is some considerable indication of Muḥammad's concern for the reprobate, it is not really parallel to that of Christ in the Gospels, since the Gospels clearly mean for us to see Christ as the revelation of God himself, whereas that is far, far from Quranic intention concerning Muḥammad; further, Muḥammad's grieving here calls for divine rebuke (27:70-72; 58:22; cf. 4:88-89; 5:26; 7:93: 9:84; 11:36). Similarly, if it may be argued that there is a note of anguish in the divine queries, "Will you not listen?" "...see?" (28:71-72; cf. 32:26-27), it may as easily be argued that the tone is rather one of extreme exasperation (cf. e.g. 4:78 and 32:30).

This difference in emphasis points the reader away from predestination's formal aspect to its content (that is, to the character of the God whose sovereign power comprehends all things): of course, aside from the significant formal similarity between the Biblical and Quranic positions on the relationship between divine sovereignty and creaturely responsibility, there are major differences relative to what God has revealed concerning his character and the divine-human relationship which issues

Like the Bible, the Qur'ān continually emphasizes the uniqueness and exclusivity of the divine authority--that all human (but in representing the Biblical emphasis we would have to say "merely human")[30] exercise of authority can only be derived. This Quranic emphasis is particularly related to the prophetic and angelic roles, for it is there that the danger of confusion is most prominent. Anything that would impinge on the unique authority of God, that would elevate a mere man--prophet though he be--from the category of servant to that of Lord, thus blurring the inviolable Creator-creature distinction, to which we will come in a moment, must be stoutly rejected.

Of course, here the Biblical case must be qualified in that God in Jesus Christ is presented as having "violated" the (to us) inviolable Creator-creature distinction. That is, in becoming a man, he has exercised his unique authority, showing himself to be unbound even by that most basic categorical distinction.[31] But this Christological qualification finds no place whatsoever in the Qur'ān. It is neither opposed nor denied. Rather it is simply altogether absent.

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from it. These differences are considered in the discussion below (pp. 36-49).

[30]Due to the reality of God's humanity in Christ, Christ's authority is understood as being truly human, but also truly divine.

[31]Donald S. Tingle makes a similar point in *Islam and Christianity* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1985), pp. 9-10.

The statement found in 43:81--"If the All-merciful has a son, then I am the first to serve him" (Arberry)--may be thought to imply some awareness of (and if so, then, even openness to) the Christological qualification. But that is not the only and, indeed, seems not to be the most likely reading of the verse. The main source of the ambiguity here is the statement's initial *in*, which may be taken in two very different senses. It may be read either as a conditional (as Arberry has done) or as a negative, equivalent to *ma* (as in Pickthall's "The Beneficent One hath no son; I am the first among the worshippers"; cf. M. ʿAlī).

While the first of these possibilities is the choice of the majority of English translators, it is clearly a problematic one. Since it is the simple conditional *in* that is used here--and not *law*, which introduces an impossible or unrealizable condition (cf. 39:4)[32]--the statement initially appears to be positing at least the theoretical possibility of God's having a son. However, both what follows in the sūra (especially v. 82) and, likewise, what precedes it (vv. 15-20 and 58-60) run directly counter to the possible truth of pagan conceptions of divine offspring. This indicates either that such a supposition is, in fact, unthinkable--in which case the element of plausibility (*in...*) could only have been intended in mockery--or that, whatever else it may

[32]The significance of the use of *in* here, as opposed to *law*, was pointed out by Michael Reimer in "Jesus in the Qur'ān" (1983), pp. 5-6.

permit, such a possibility must be understood as altogether exclusive of pagan conceptions of sonship.

This latter reading may be considered conducive to the view that 43:81 represents an early gesture of conciliation to Christians, since it would indicate at least a temporary openness to some non-pagan concept of divine "Sonship." But, if the latter reading is correct, the passage would be exceptional, not only in terms of the breadth of openness expressed in it, but also in terms of its implicit acknowledgement of some (any) alternative to the pagan conception of divine sonship. For, elsewhere in the Qur'ān, divine sonship consistently signifies the pagan concept of 'offspring acquired by a process of procreation' (e.g. God's cohabiting with a human wife to produce a 'godling,' as in 6:100-01 and 72:3).[33]

In this connection it is significant that, with only two exceptions,[34] all Quranic references to divine sonship make use of the term *walad*, not *ibn*. Related to the verb *walada*, *walad* is clearly connotative of the physical

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[33]Even 5:18 is unexceptional in this regard. For it represents a rejection of the Biblical notion of man's covenantal 'sonship' to God (e.g. Exod. 4:22-23; Deut. 8:5; Heb. 12:5-13)--or else its Jewish and Christian distortion--in terms altogether compatible with the Quranic reading of the pagan notion of divine sonship. Hence, the basic objection to any sort of preferential immunity, implying peership with God, is coupled with the assertion that the Jews and Christians are mere mortals (which is to say, not 'sons of God').

[34]The exceptions are those cases where *ibn* is either employed in the standard *nasab* (son of -----) construction (5:18; 9:30) or coupled with its feminine form, *ibna* (e.g. 6:100; 37:149,153).

processes of conception, gestation and birth.[35] (Hence, use of *walad* in the context of Christ's Sonship would have been considered blasphemous and a denial of real trinity--i.e. of divine unity--by Arab Christians from the first.)[36] Such Quranic usage should probably be viewed as implying what the Qur'ān's explicit treatment of the Christian doctrine indicates consistently, namely, that the Quranic thought represents the Jāhilī (i.e. pagan) reading of Christian belief.[37] For, Quranically speaking, the rule is that divine sonship refers to immortal gods spawned by a quasi-physical act of generation and not to any doctrine either of eternal Sonship or of true incarnation, in the Biblical sense of the terms.

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[35]Reimer, "Jesus in the Qur'ān," pp. 5-6.

[36]Of course, to the non-Christian, such usage may have appeared to be the logical extension of the Christian expression "only begotten" (as in John 1:18 and 3:16), whereas Christians would have uniformly drawn a line between those two.

Unless one is to assume that for one reason or another, Muḥammad's Christian contacts did not bother to dispute the Qur'ān's use of *walad* here, it is hard not to see this usage as discounting the Christian distinction. (On the question of the nature of Muḥammad's direct contact with Christians, little can be said with certainty. The overall impression one gets from reading the Qur'ān is that there was relatively little theological discussion between Muḥammad and his Christian hearers, certainly nothing on the order of that sustained interaction with the Jews which is so evident in the Qur'ān's Medinan passages.)

[37]As was noted above (pp. 13-14), since the pagans included Jesus and Mary in their idolatrous Kaʿba, it is to be expected that they equated their relations to God in prevailing Christian belief (as 'Son of God' and 'mother of God' respectively) to that of their own 'daughters of God.'

Of course, such a reading of the matter does not exclude the possibility that the Qur'ān's choice of *walad* over *ibn* with reference to the Christian belief was also a deliberately derogatory one. For the same may hold true for any pagan belief in a 'son of God' as well: it seems likely that *walad* was a term unused in this context by the (religiously-minded) pagans also. Being a loftier term than *walad*, *ibn* would have been the likelier designation for an object of worship (even one actually believed to be conceived by a physical process).[38] In any case, since the word used in 43:81 is *walad*, it is difficult to see it as referring to a truly monotheistic concept of "Sonship." Thus, if one should want to take the *in* here as a conditional, the satirical reading of the verse would be the simpler one, even if it is difficult to conceive of this sort of divinely ordained mockery in such a case.

There does, however, appear to be good reason for choosing the second option mentioned above, by which *in* is taken to indicate negation. While the fact that such a reading neatly disposes of the problems caused by taking the *in* as a conditional may not in itself warrant abandoning its more normal sense of "if," the second clause of the verse clearly does so. Together with its equivalents "the first

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[38]There is normally a direct correspondence in terms of formality between the term chosen and the object or situation it designates. For an English example of this sort of thing: "child" would be a far more respectful term than the colloquial "kid" for use with reference to the offspring of royalty or high office.

of the believers" and "the first of those that surrender," the expression *'awwalu l-ʿābidīn* is consistently used in the Qur'ān to address the issue of the believer's openness to alternative loyalties with an emphatic declaration of unequivocal devotion to God.[39]

Accordingly, the second clause in 43:81 is most likely to be viewed as indicating that the *in* here negates what follows it. And, if that is the case, of course, the verse cannot be thought to indicate any openness to the Bible's Christological qualification, that God has

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[39]In each of its five other occurrences, the expression not only affirms the whole-heartedness--indeed, single-mindedness--of the speaker's commitment to the one true God, but it does so in a renunciative context in which the affirmation is contrasted with its alternatives. In this regard, 6:163 exactly parallels 43:81: the expression is similarly uttered on the heels of an explicit denial of divine peership.

And such an exclusion is also the point implicitly in 7:143 and 26:51 (cf. 7:142, which foreshadows Israel's idolatrous worship under Aaron (*Hārūn*), and 26:46-50 where it is the rival lordship of Pharaoh that is at issue). In the latter passage, the proximity of this affirmation from the mouths of Pharaoh's sorcerers to their conversion makes plain that the expression says nothing of the relative rank or merit of the speaker (or speakers) among the believers. Far from being a boast, as it appears in English translation, it is an emphatic declaration of one's (monotheistic) commitment. It may be broadly paraphrased: "my (our) loyalty to God is of the first degree, without the remotest possibility of compromise." Similarly, the command to be the first of those that surrender to God (6:14 and 39:12) is simply a call for unequivocal loyalty.

The notion also occurs twice in connection with the divine command to be "the first of those that surrender" (39:12, Arberry; cf. 6:14,163). And in both cases the renunciation of idolatry is in view; 39:12, for example, is to be set contrastively against v. 15a, the point of the declaration being that, regardless of the Meccans' position, idolatry simply was not an option for Muḥammad.

singularly demonstrated his absolute transcendence by becoming a man in Jesus Christ.

The primary significance of the Qur'ān's Creator-creature distinction relates, of course, to the Jāhilī belief in mediating gods, whose authority--to speak, to act, and perhaps most importantly to intercede with God--was divine and yet not God's.[40] Since the Quranic messages presented Muḥammad (and all of the other prophets also) as standing, not between a mere *jinn* or familiar spirit and men, but between God and men, the category of "immortal god" was the one to which his pagan hearers saw him assigning himself (as the closest available category). And the Jāhilī concept of mediation was not a case of God against himself--whether actually or only apparently[41]--but, rather, one of God's having to bargain with his creatures, who were thus made his peers. Such a concept could only be viewed as a blasphemous denial of God's unity, of his uniqueness. And, so, the line drawn between God and his creation was to be

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[40]While there seems to be considerable ambiguity in the Qur'ān on the question of intercession, it is very clear--and this seems to be the main point of Quranic teaching here--that none can intercede with God on his own initiative, none gains an audience here by barging into the divine presence, as it were, for such access would necessitate the equality of peership (10:3,18; 34:23).

[41]The central Biblical concept of mediation represents a case of God's appearing to be against himself. But such opposition is apparent only. As John R. W. Stott says, speaking of Christ's death: "The Father did not lay on the Son an ordeal he was reluctant to bear, nor did the Son extract from the Father a salvation he was reluctant to bestow"; *The Cross of Christ* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1986), p. 151.

made as heavy as possible. Since everything about the category of creature is contingent upon God (and, hence, derived), the needs of creaturely corporeality, of food or sleep--indeed, of anything whatsoever--categorically denied one the status of deity (2:255; 6:14; cf. 21:7-8).

The Qur'ān deals with the derived nature of creaturehood, again relative to human authority, in terms of an absolute Master-servant distinction. It is not that man, the servant, is given no authority, for just the opposite is the case. The point, rather, is that of none but God can it be said that he is not a servant; for, following the counsels of his own eternal will, he does the bidding of none and, of course, answers to none (18:26-27; 85:15-16). His servants, on the other hand, do everything "by the permission of God," and nothing at all apart from it (18:23-24; 76:30; cf. 8:17).[42]

Similarly, the Biblical writers present man as always exercising his earthly lordship as the servant of God, wayward or otherwise. There is also, however, the teaching that God reveals himself--and, indeed, that he reveals his absolute authority--most clearly when he assumes absolute servanthood in Christ's incarnation. But, as this point

[42]This basic ontological distinction is also Biblical, of course. The Biblical position is to be qualified, however, in that the God to whom all authority belongs demonstrates his eternal love by the outpouring of himself in voluntary service (each of the Persons of the trinity serving the others, for example); accordingly, God is eternally Servant (as well as Master, of course). As will be seen, the Biblical and Quranic concepts of the divine nature are strikingly dissimilar in this regard.

relates more directly to God's ethical than to his ontological aspect, further discussion of it will be reserved until later.

Besides the ontological aspect of the divine immanence--God's direct involvement in the governance of every aspect of his creation--which we have seen, there are also its communicative and ethical aspects.[43] The two elements composing the communicative aspect are, first, the non-verbal revelation of the creation's *ayāt* (and that would include any 'miraculous' display of God's power) and, second, the verbal revelation of prophetic guidance; and the greatly heightened pitch of the latter says something both about God and about man. On the divine side, the impassioned appeals of the prophets, and most notably of Muḥammad, speak volumes concerning the extent of the divine involvement with man. Man, and in particular man's ethical orientation, is obviously of great concern to God. (Since God is essentially ethical, his relation to man is essentially ethical also.)

The very fact of verbal revelation necessarily implies an analogical relationship between God and man. (For there to be genuine communication, genuine likeness is essential.)[44] And the corollary of this is that God is

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[43]This basic division is that followed by Izutsu in *God and Man*.

[44]Essential to all theistic religion, this matter of analogy is what makes the great fact of divine immanence at all bearable, in that, being truly like us, the Numinous is not utterly incomprehensible.

everywhere described by recourse to the same linguistic stock as is used of man. For example, most--if not all--Quranic verbs predicated of God ("create," "judge," "rule," etc.) are also predicable of man, and this makes the God-likeness of man referred to above impossible to miss.[45]

As for the ethical aspect of the divine immanence, this relates to the fact that God is ethically either pleased or angered by both man's belief and his behaviour, all of which has a strong ethical component. Clearly, this is at the heart of the Quranic concern, for the whole of religion is involved in and, indeed, dependent on man's

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This matter of analogy has been acknowledged by some few Muslim scholars in some sense. But on the whole Muslim scholarship has overwhelmingly avoided it, as something which dangerously impinges on the uniqueness of God; in particular, the majority of the *mutakallimūn* have been eager to deny the Biblical notion of man's creation in the "image of God." As a result, al-Kirmānī, for example, approaches the matter of revelation's necessitating divine-human analogy in his famous *Sharḥ al-Bukhārī*, but from the exact opposite direction; Kirmānī's point--really the reverse of ours--is that prerequisite to the divine act of revelation is the prophet's 'denaturalization' as a man (cited by Izutsu, *God and Man*, p. 167). The mystic al-Ghazālī is a notable exception here; but, of course, virtually all of the exceptions are from among the mystically or theosophically inclined.

[45]Quranic descriptives of God, far from being inaccessible in meaning--accessories of magical or mystical value only (as, for example, in *dhikr*)--make more explicit what the very fact of the revelation implies. That God is called the "most merciful of the merciful," "the best of forgivers" and the "justest of judges" (7:151,155, 12:64,92 and 95:8 Arberry) means quite simply that, while language may here be stretched to its limits, regular user meaning is intended. Analogy is not denied, but only qualified in that to God belongs the loftiest of likenesses (16:60; 30:27). In the larger context of divine otherness this seems akin to the rider of Christian theology that, despite its being true to the extent of man's capacity to comprehend, human language is ultimately inadequate when used of God.

ethical response to the revelation. And since, most basically, this implies that God, like man, is to be viewed as ethical in nature,[46] it underlines yet again the fact of analogy. As Izutsu puts it, each of the key concepts in the sphere of human ethics is "but a pale reflection--or a very imperfect imitation--of the divine nature itself."[47] Such a concept of moral likeness brings God very near, and it bears repeating that the urgency of man's ethical choice is the fact to which everything else in the Qur'ān points.[48]

The ethical polarity involved in that choice finds its source, then, in the moral character of God: because God is at once the God of Wrath, of terrible vengeance, and the God of Mercy, of grace and compassion--because of this, Paradise awaits the faithful and hell the unbelieving. While there is undoubtedly some overlapping of the two categories of wrath and mercy in the concept of divine justice,[49] it would seem fair to deal with the moral

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[46]Izutsu, *God and Man*, p. 230.

[47]Idem, *Ethico-Religious Concepts*, p. 18. As we shall see, the exception to this is that humility which is basic to all that the Qur'ān requires of man (see pp. 46-49 below).

[48]For further discussion of the question of the Qur'ān's appreciation of this analogy, see pp. 46-50 and also the treatment of man following (pp. 74-80).

[49]As will be seen below (see pp. 40-44), there may be some basis for viewing God as an ethical duality in the Quranic view. That, however, should not be allowed to obscure the fact that to a large degree the Qur'ān may also be seen as indicating the same sort of paradoxical oneness of justice and mercy as we find in the Bible (Deut. 10:13; 33:2-3; Prov. 3:3-4; John 1:17) in that the sinner is said to sin against himself primarily (2:54,231; 3:117; 4:110;

character of God in terms of justice, on the one hand, and mercy, on the other. It goes without saying that the following treatment of the two ethical poles in (or perhaps 'aspects of' would be more appropriate here) the divine nature can only be broadly suggestive.

On the side of justice, we are told that 1) God categorically does no wrong to anyone--and this is especially evident in that a) he holds each one accountable for his or her own sin, and b) he destroys none without warning (6:164; 17:15-16; 26:208-09; cf. 67:6-11), 2) he is unalterably opposed to the falsehood and injustice of the unbelieving and, accordingly, upholds the cause of the righteous oppressed (4:2,135; 6:153; 16:90; 22:40; cf. 7:181), 3) he will faithfully reward and punish on the basis of his most exact record, his full knowledge, of our deeds (4:40-42; 18:48-49), 4) he rules in wisdom according to his inscrutable decrees, which include his guiding the elect to

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7:160; 29:40). And similar to the Biblical equation of righteousness to 'wisdom' and unrighteousness to 'folly' found throughout the book of Proverbs (in particular Prov. 1:20-9:18), the Qur'ān refers to itself simultaneously as "a guidance [implying all the constraints of an external standard of righteousness, i.e. in God] and a mercy" (31:3; cf. 7:154). This means that the various expressions of the (apparently) harsh, forbidding aspect of the divine character, such things as Quranic prohibitions and prescriptions--and in one sense, even punishments--also are a mercy from God (in that they guide those who heed them to salvation). The comparison of the various manifestations of both divine justice and divine mercy which follows will further evidence this essential ethical oneness. So, while on the one hand the Quranic view of salvation may tend towards an ethical duality in God, on the other hand there is much also tending towards divine unity, ethically; hence, the notion of ethical polarity here must not be unduly stressed.

both temporal and eternal reward and leading the rebellious and insolent astray, and thereafter exercising his right of punishment toward them for their persistence in unbelief (6:39; 7:30; 14:4; 17:16; 30:25-27) and 5) he will (ultimately) make good to triumph over evil (21:18; 24:55; 37:171-73).

On the side of mercy, it is clear that 1) God extends to all both a) his providential bounty--as in the Biblical, "He makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust" (Matt. 5:45 RSV)--and b) the guidance of his prophetic warning and promise (2:243,251; 30:50-51; 76:3), 2) he especially cares for the believers (and for the oppressed), delivering them from their oppressors (2:257; 3:146-50; 93:6-8) 3) he extends to his elect, 'effectual guidance,' if we may call it that, bountiful forgiveness, purification, temporal reward, and the bliss of paradise (3:146-48; 24:21; 39:33-37). The primary emphases of the Qur'ān here are on the superabundance of God's providential goodness (which leaves man utterly indebted to him in both gratitude and service), and on the superabundance of God's pardon for believers (i.e. repentant sinners[50]) and, alternately, of his unfailing proffer of guidance, with its utterly reasonable moral requirements (e.g. 7:42).

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[50]The term "sinner" is used throughout this paper in its basic sense of "one who commits sin"; that usage which would confine it to those guilty of gross indecencies and criminal acts (or profligate living, generally) is not intended here.

It is in terms of this polarity within the ethical character of God that the problem of theodicy, touched on above, reaches its peak. Admittedly, there is tremendous tension for the modern (Western) reader between a God who is compassionate, can do no wrong, and who yet leads astray, consigning the non-elect both to their crime (i.e. the insolence of their unbelief) and to its eternal punishment.[51] But, as in the case of the tension between the absolute sovereignty of God and the reality of human decision-making (responsibility), this polarity is never at all dealt with in the Qur'ān.[52] Likely it is to be

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[51]But this is in no wise to be considered an exclusively modern problem, and it relates, not only to Western, but also to Westernized readers of the Qur'ān. Hence, it played a significant part in producing much of the *kalām* debate of the first centuries of Islamic history, to be viewed as formative of virtually all subsequent Sunnī theologizing. Predictably enough, given its rationalistic approach, the debate offered the two options of explaining away either the ontological or the ethical side of the dilemma of theodicy (rather than any sort of exulting in the paradox apparent there). The Muᶜtazila chose the former course, while--on a rational level, at least--the so-called "orthodox" *mutakallimūn* opted increasingly for a virtual agnosticism relative to the ethical (and ultimately all) descriptives of God; the point here being that a non-issue to the dynamic mind of the Qur'ān was instantly a great issue to that of the early Hellenized converts to Islam (cf. n. 28 above). Of course, a similar story is to be told of early Christian theological developments.

In the modern era again, the reaction of writers such as Fazlur Rahman to Sunnī orthodoxy's theological obscurantism is reviving much of the old debate in the spirit of the early Muᶜtazila; *Islam*, 2d ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979); see also Rahman's entry in *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 15th ed. (1985), s.v. "Islamic Theology"; cf. Daud Rahbar's *God of Justice*.

[52]Candid acknowledgement of this is a prerequisite to any profitable discussion of the issue: in order rightly to appreciate Quranic antinomy, the reader must remove the lens of Western reductionism (see n. 28 above). Failing here,

explained in terms of, first, the Qur'ān's implicitly viewing its revelation of divine truth as partial (given the limitations of the human mind) and, second, its working with a concept of God as the ultimate standard of goodness (goodness answers to him, and not vice-versa).[53]

Together with the other problems related to the concept of absolute sovereignty noted above, the arbitrariness commonly assumed to be involved in its exercise (i.e. assumed on the basis of an isolation of sovereignty from its Quranic counterpart of human responsibility) has caused some seriously to question the reality of divine holiness (along with justice and truth). The Qur'ān's distinct view of sin and of forgiveness and a host of other factors enter in here also. Even more basic is the fact that there is little counter-balancing of the strong Quranic emphasis on the divine 'misleading' of unbelievers with any significant teaching on God as a God of holiness and truth: only once is holiness attributed to God (62:1) and the context there does not specify whether it is ontological or ethical holiness which is in view. Similarly there is no clear statement to the effect that, ethically, God is Truth.[54]

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one finds false solutions by forcing the Quranic data into foreign categories of thought (i.e. foreign to the mind of the Qur'ān).

[53]While it is true that this latter issue, an essentially Greek one, is never addressed by the Qur'ān, it would be quite out of keeping with the basic thrust of Quranic theologizing to suppose that God should be made dependent on anyone or anything.

On the other hand, it is clear that he is true, is deeply concerned about the false beliefs and worship, the false values and morality, of the idolaters (e.g. 31:30). That he is committed to the overthrow of Jāhilī falsehood by truth, this being the cosmic battle in which Muḥammad and the *umma* are to see themselves engaged, is self-evident, despite its being expressly stated only once (21:18). Further, the general fixity of Quranic moral requirements[55] argues for the ethical holiness of God. And it must be said, finally, that it is the justice of God which is primarily in view here and which to a considerable extent replaces the great Biblical emphasis on the absolute holiness of God.

The Biblical concept of divine holiness does, however, take us beyond the concept of divine justice, for it roots the ethical character (including the goodness, mercy, and justice) of all God's dealings with man in the essential separateness of God from all evil. Couple such a

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[54]The translation of *al-ḥaqq* in 31:30 as "the True" (Pickthall) or "the (only) Reality" (Y. Ali) is preferable to Arberry's "the Truth"; for, as the context makes plain, it is truth, ontologically (and not ethically) which is in view here.

[55]The principle of abrogation (13:39; 16:101) leaves the bulk of (non-cultic) ethical standards intact; there is no suggestion that such prohibitions as that against usury, infanticide, indecency, adultery, the abuse of parents or orphans, etc. were in any wise alterable.

On the early *umma*'s restricting the notion of abrogation to the text of the Qur'ān (i.e. one Quranic revelation vis-a-vis a chronologically later one), see: Ernest Hahn, "Sir Sayyid Aḥmad Khān's *The Controversy over Abrogation (in the Qur'ān)*: An Annotated Translation," *The Muslim World* 64 (April 1974):124-33.

concept with the Biblical notion of divine-human analogy, and the holiness of God becomes the ground of moral obligation (Lev. 11:44-45; 19:2; 20:26); for man, created in God's likeness, is designed to image the very character of God. Again, this goes beyond the Quranic (and equally Biblical) motivation of reward, both positive and negative, involved in the concept of divine justice, since it bases man's obligation to conform to the will of an altogether just Judge on essential likeness.[56]

Beyond this, however, the larger issue to which this matter of holiness points is that of the self-revelation of God. Biblically, man's sin is an offense against the holiness of God and, so, consistently calls for the just judgment of God. From a theological point of view, then, it is this concept of holiness which gives rise to the central Biblical notion of sacrificial atonement.[57] The point here is that "the one thing God could not do in the face of human rebellion was nothing."[58] Because, Biblically speaking, "The holiness of God... is meaningless without judgment," writes P. T. Forsyth, God "...must either inflict punishment

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[56]This topic will be taken up in our consideration of Covenant below (see pp. 67-70).

[57]Of course, no Biblical reader needs convincing of the centrality of either sacrifice or sacrificial imagery in both Old and New Testaments. And, as the New Testament interprets it, the Old Testament's use of sacrificial imagery "has the intention of expressing the fact that Jesus died without sin in substitution for our sins"; Joachim Jeremias, *The Central Message of the New Testament* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1965), p. 36.

[58]Stott, *Cross of Christ*, p. 153.

or assume it... He chose the latter course, as honouring the law while saving the guilty. He took His own judgment."[59] There is, then, no forgiveness of sin without what Bonhoeffer has called "costly grace," the grace displayed in Christ's freely giving his life a ransom for sinful man.

Hence, Biblically understood, God's holiness may be viewed as the guarantor of all his 'communicable' (i.e. ethical) attributes, for it is that which assures us that his mercy does not arbitrarily "override" his justice in the forgiveness of sin. Divine holiness is what guarantees the ethical 'wholeness'--or, in other words, the unity--of God.

By contrast, the Qur'ān almost completely omits the notion of atonement. Admittedly, it is dimly echoed in the account of the sacrificial offering by Abraham (*Ibrāhīm*) of his son, as well as in its prescribed ritual commemoration by the community (37:99-111; 22:34-37), but altogether the Qur'ān assigns to sacrifice only a peripheral place in its view of salvation. Further, while the notion of sin's offensiveness to God must be viewed as implicit in the concept of divine wrath, the Qur'ān consistently avoids any explicit reference to sin as an offense to God. It does so, seemingly, in order to refuse its pagan hearers any sense of satisfaction in having personally offended God, as if such an admission might suggest a vulnerability in God (since the

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[59] *The Cruciality of the Cross* (London: Independent Press, 1909), p. 98.

sins of mere mortals might thus be thought to subject him to personal injury). But, whatever the case, the ground of this entire region of Quranic thought must be traversed by mere inference, nothing having been stated clearly. Hence, challenging neither the significance nor the centrality of sacrifice in both Old and New Testaments, the Qur'ān simply omits any real concept of atonement, setting forth instead its own minimal view of sacrifice, as if its assumption were that its treatment of sacrifice (and the related concepts of atonement, propitiation, etc.) should in no wise disturb or dismay adherents of the Biblical traditions.[60]

Although the Qur'ān enunciates relatively little concerning its doctrine of salvation,[61] it appears that from

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[60]This is not particularly remarkable in the case of the Jews, given that since the destruction of the temple in 70 A.D. Judaism had been unable to observe any of the Scriptural prescriptions related to sacrificial offerings (due, of course, to the fact that by then sacrifice had been strictly forbidden outside of a fully operational priestly service in Jerusalem's temple precincts).

In the case of the Christians, it doubtless underscores the fact that Muḥammad had little direct dealings with Christian communities, except with reference to his hegemonic religio-political concern to cleanse the Arabs of their idolatry.

[61]In terms of its broad concerns, of course, the Qur'ān's vision of salvation consists of the rescue of (idolatrous) man from the disastrous path he has taken and of his return to the "true path," that of submission to divinely revealed truth. Relative to the Biblical doctrine (with its major emphases on justification, sanctification, and union with Christ), however, the Qur'ān affords its reader very little data on the nature of salvation. Its entire focus is, rather, on the way of salvation--on true faith and practice--and on the prophetic (and eventually on the communal also) as the means by which man is returned from his ruinous error (that is, on the prophetic as the means of divine revelation and on the communal as the means by which its historical application is widely extended).

a theological perspective forgiveness requires only God's merciful "overlooking" (and removal) of one's sins, according to his sovereign election (and effectual guiding). But such a transaction is very problematic for, in the case of the elect, God's mercy disregards his justice.

With no concept of atonement--of God's mercy's meeting the demands of his holiness and justice--there appear to be three options here: first, God may be considered an ethical duality, with now mercy and now justice prevailing; second, one may conclude that when used of God "mercy" and "justice" are not to be given their normal meanings (which is to say that wherever they appear to suggest a duality in God they are to be effectively emptied of all content); third, one may assign the duality to mankind, devaluing the sins of the elect (unlike those of the non-elect), so that their forgiveness is not in contradiction to the divine justice.

While there are a number of anthropological points which might be viewed as supporting this last option, it is rather unlikely, generally speaking, due to the Quranic appreciation of the universal sameness of sin. Of course, Muslims have generally tended to opt for the unknowability of God here, and, regardless of which option is taken, the net effect is the same: a strong element of ambiguity, of

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Beyond the fact that man's sin necessitates both forgiveness and purification, there is virtually no elaboration of what is involved in salvation or of how it is accomplished, either on the divine or human side; what data is to be found is generally so fragmentary as almost to warrant one's saying that nothing of real substance is given here.

obscurity, is injected into the entire divine-human relationship (as being introduced into the Quranic concept of either God or man). In view of the Qur'ān's overall presentation of God, such ambiguity may well be in order.

Observing some of the radical differences in emphasis between the Qur'ān (and more particularly, between 'orthodox' interpretations of it) and the Bible, many have denied that in the Qur'ān God is self-revealing, in any real sense of the term. It has sometimes been said, for example, that it is only his will and not himself that he reveals there. The implicit contradiction notwithstanding--there is some merit in such an assertion, for God is never presented in the Qur'ān as intimately self-revealing, and there is to be found there little of the divine intimacy everywhere evident in the Bible.[62] Rather, in the Qur'ān God is much farther from view,[63] in the sense that the abundant data

[62]In the historical event of his incarnation and its Old Testament foreshadowings, God, as Covenant Maker and Covenant Keeper, unrelentingly draws wayward man into a relationship of intimate friendship and personal communion, viewed as man's final goal and, hence, his purpose in creation (Jer. 31:33-34; John 17:3; Rev. 21:1-4).

[63]Accordingly, there is there considerably more ground for uncertainty in the interpretation of the great mass of data concerning God's person, character, etc. Consider, by way of contrast, the utter impossibility of a concept of God as unknowable--to man's intellect, at least--of a theology that is virtually propositionless and yet Biblically based.

Two things among a host of things which evoke the shape of Biblical theologizing tend to obscure, for the Western reader of the Qur'ān, God's remoteness in this sense. The first is the strong emphasis on the intense involvement of God with man, which has been discussed above. The second, and the corollary of this first point, is the very fact of the pronounced theocentricity of Quranic

concerning his being, character and works are not given in the context of a covenant relationship of mutual intimacy.[64]

To put the matter differently, both Scriptures are equally concerned with man's ethical response to the revelation; but, while the Bible conceives of that response as being within the context of God's intimate revelation of himself to man, as the God of covenant love (Exod. 19:3-6; Deut. 7:7-16; 10:12-11:32, etc.), the Qur'ān expressly defines its context almost exclusively in terms of the intimate revelation of man to God.[65] As will be seen, the covenant concept figures prominently in the Qur'ān, but the intimacy of knowledge involved in covenant here is decidedly one-sided, and this is so due to the absence of any appreciation of divine humility (and, conversely, of human

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thought. But, however unexpected such a combination may be to the Western reader, it is nonetheless true that while God is at the centre, he is in one sense necessarily 'out of focus.' (Clearly, however, in the sort of intellectual agnosticism relative to the person and character of God which we find in Ghazālī, this authentic Quranic impulse of divine obscurity or retreat removes God to a degree of [intellectual] unknowability far beyond that entertained by the Qur'ān; on this, see Fadlou Albert Shehadi's *Ghazālī's Unique Unknowable God: A Philosophical Critical Analysis of Some Problems Raised by Ghazālī's View of God as Utterly Unique and Unknowable* [Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1964].)

[64]Cornelius Van Til expresses the Biblical notion well when he speaks of the idea of covenant as "the idea of exhaustive personal relationship" in *Twentieth Century Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1955), s.v. "Covenant Theology."

To speak of man's knowledge of God in covenant as (potentially) exhaustive is to speak, not quantitatively, but rather qualitatively: man cannot know all there is to know of God, but he can know God perfectly to the full extent of his capacity.

[65]See pp. 18-20 above.

greatness in its divine likeness). That the divine-human relationship is fundamentally impersonal (in the non-technical sense of the term; i.e. non-intimate) constitutes what is the unique sense of divine otherness in the Qur'ān. By contrast, then, God here relates himself to man exclusively as Master-to-servant, whereas in the Biblical view he does not stop there, going on to relate himself to man as Father-to-son also, and even as Friend-to-friend.[66]

What is back of this one-sidedness, with its implicit element of theological ambiguity? Quite clearly--and this grasps the very root of the differences between Biblical and Quranic theologizing--it is the absence of any acknowledgement of divine humility. This, of course, is in sharp contrast to the Biblical emphasis, particularly in the New Testament, but also in the Old, on the humility of God.[67] Further, the concept of divine humility is vital to

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[66]This point is amplified below; see pp. 77-80 (n. 121, in particular).

Not all Muslims hold to so restricted a view of divine transcendence, of course. The Ṣūfīs and the Shīʿī *ʿarifūn* are exceptional in their appreciation of the intimacy of the approach of God to man, though they have departed very far from the Quranic view in this. On the *ʿarifūn*, see Henry Corbin's *En Islam iranien: Aspects spirituels et philosophiques*, vol. 1: *Le Shi'isme duodecimain* (Paris: Editions Gallimard, 1971), pp. 310-20.

[67]While there is no Biblical statement explicitly attributing humility to God, the doctrine, made visible in countless expressions of divine condescension (Deut. 7:7-11; Psa. 138:6; Hos. 11:1-4), is most clearly revealed in the primary act of divine humility, that of Christ's incarnation and passion (Psa. 45:4; Isa. 42:2-3; 52:13-53:12; John 13:1-17; Phil. 2:1-8; cf. John 1:18; 14:9). It is also implicit in man's being called to image God in holiness, spelled out in terms of perfect justice, mercy and humility (Mic. 6:8).

an understanding of the mutual incompatibility of the Quranic and Biblical views of Jesus, since in the Bible Jesus is the full revelation of God as Yahweh's humble servant.[68] And the notion of divine humility relates, likewise, to the Qur'ān's apparent reserve in dealing with the principle of divine-human analogy. For there, in contrast to the Biblical case, man's response of humility before God--to be viewed as the most basic of the Qur'ān's ethical requirements, the definitive factor in all genuine faith and piety--mirrors nothing in the character of God: God is unalterably Master, man unalterably servant.

The point here is not that, Biblically speaking, God is not immutably 'majestic in his nearness,' as is the case in the Qur'ān;[69] rather, it is that the divine authority and majesty are viewed as fully revealed only in the humility and voluntary submission of Jesus Christ, who is both Son of God and Son of Man. In contradistinction to this position, the Quranic understanding of the divine majesty evidences no recognition of the element of paradox or mystery here. And, while theistic belief inevitably presupposes divine condescension as an all-pervasive element (i.e. that every aspect of the divine-human relation--but particularly the communicative and ethical aspects--implies a grand-scale

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[68]Cf. n. 42 above.

[69]This phrase was suggested by Kenneth Cragg's "near in his majesty"; *Sandals at the Mosque: Christian Presence Amid Islam* (London: SCM Press, 1959), p. 75.

'stooping to man's weakness' on the part of God),[70] the Qur'ān, unlike the Bible, affords its readers no category for such an admission. Since condescension is inherent in the nature of all theistic belief (i.e. divine mercy inevitably presupposes divine condescension, as do all the positive tenets in any theistic doctrine of God) this may appear to be a matter of implicit versus explicit acknowledgement. The absoluteness of the Qur'ān's Master-servant distinction, however, tends strongly to exclude such a possibility.

Two things may be said here. First, the avoidance of any admission of humility in the character of God reflects the essentially non-religious appraisal of 'humility' and 'self-surrender' to be found in the Jāhiliyya, according to which these qualities

> "were considered something disgraceful, a manifestation of weak and ignoble character, whilst 'haughtiness' and 'refusal to obey' were, in the eyes of pre-Islamic Arabs, marks of noble nature."[71]

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[70] That God would, for example, take any notice of man, have any dealings with him, and especially establish a personal (i.e. covenant) relationship with him--all of this implies his gracious condescension. Further, the very concept of linguistic revelation requires humility on the part of God--that he, in Calvin's words, would "baby talk" with man, expressing his thoughts toward us through the medium of a human language (with all the historical limitations inherent in its culture specificity).

[71] Izutsu, *Ethico-Religious Concepts*, p. 22. Izutsu's statement, then, that "with the advent of Islam, the balance was completely overturned" must be qualified; for, while it is true that the former weakness became the highest virtue in terms of man's response to God, the Jāhilī appraisal of 'haughtiness' and 'refusal to submit' as marks of true nobility remained on in the Quranic doctrine of God (ibid.).

Second, from the point of view of motivation, the omission of any notion of divine condescension is doubtless to be understood in terms of the Qur'ān's absolute abhorrence of the sort of humiliation of God to be found in the 'theology' of Jāhiliyya;[72] quite clearly, then, there is no allowance for a divine humiliation which ultimately is divinely initiated (as is the case, Biblically)[73] or, on a more basic level, even for the sort of divine condescension which is necessary for any (theistic) doctrine of incarnation.

This brings us back to our introductory discussion, for there is evident throughout the Qur'ān a single-mindedness with reference to its corrective task which tends to limit its positive theologizing to that which was deemed vital to the undoing of Jāhilī misconceptions. Above all, Muḥammad called for faith in the uniqueness of God as God. Whatever our answer to the vexed question of the so-called "Satanic verses,"[74] it must be said that if they do, indeed,

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[72]See pp. 9-17 above.

[73]Of course, in Biblical terms, the divine condescension which culminates in the humiliation of Christ is divinely initiated throughout, even though unrighteous man often appears to be the initiator and furthermore, is held responsible for his part in the atrocities perpetrated (Isa. 53:10; John 10:17-18; Acts 2:23-26; 3:17-19; 13:27-30; Rev. 13:8). Because of the Bible's open admission of divine condescension, a fusion of divine lordship and servanthood (essential to any full acceptance of divine-human analogy) becomes possible. Quranically speaking, such a fusion is quite unthinkable, of course.

[74]By Muslim accounts, there were two or three polytheistic verses expunged from sūra 53, following verse 20. On this, see Richard Bell, *Bell's Introduction to the*

signify any polytheistic compromise of that very uniqueness, such a compromise would have been very temporary in nature. In any case, despite the greatness of the Quranic emphasis on the deity's numerical oneness, that was not what counted in Muhammadan preaching so much as the uniqueness of the nature of the deity. Over against belief in divine impotence, over against the Meccan's gross humanization--indeed, their humiliation--of God, the Qur'ān proclaims his Sovereign might, his untrammelled glory.

Two Views of Primordial Man

The anthropological obverse of this vision of peerless Lordship is, of course, to be found in the basic concept of man's rightful *islām*, his unconditional surrender of himself to the Divine Will. Whatever else man may be, he is first and foremost a "servant" or "slave" (*ʿabd*) of God. Hence, his primary and definitive (or all-inclusive) obligation is that of *islām*. And it is to the path of *islām* that all of the prophets point, for it is both the ideal for which man was created[75] and the sole route of recovery (of salvation) for lost man.

Qur'ān, completely revised and enlarged by W. Montgomery Watt, Islamic Surveys, no. 8 (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1977), pp. 55-56, 88, and Watt, *What is Islam?* pp. 42, 44-45.

[75]As will be seen momentarily, however, there is some possibility that the variant reading on man's beginning found in 33:72-73 indicates otherwise.

Of course, the *islām* to which we refer here is that existential act of voluntary self-surrender to God; on this, see Izutsu's *God and Man*, pp. 199-200. While it is not exclusive of, neither is it identical to, the reified Islam

Quranically understood, self-surrender involves attitudes before God of reverent fear, humility, rightful subservience and grateful dependence. As Izutsu has indicated, the Qur'ān's prescribing such an inner posture as the religious ideal amounted to an absolute ethical revaluation of humility and submission (at least in terms of a man's relationship to God, as was noted above).[76] Given the degree to which independence and a sort of eclectic individualism were prized by the pagans in all matters religious, it would be difficult to overestimate the shock such an ethical reversal was to the Qur'ān's original Meccan audiences. For one thing, all the great heroes of the Jāhiliyya as exemplified in pre-Islamic poetry were thus relegated to ignobility, being replaced by "mere" prophets (that is, in the eyes of the pagans), the greatest of whom were the most devoted "slaves" of God. But doubtless far more threatening to Muḥammad's pagan hearers was the fact

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of either the ideal religious system (in the mind of God) or of the community of Muslims (in history). For a discussion of the relations between these various usages, consult Wilfred Cantwell Smith's *The Meaning and End of Religion: A New Approach to the Religious Traditions of Mankind* (New York: Macmillan Co., 1963), ch. 4, "The Special Case of Islam."

[76]According to Izutsu, the Jāhilī concept of nobility was very much associated with *anafa*, "literally, 'high-nosed-ness'" and with *ibā'*, a noble man's proudly refusing to be in any way humbled, his "refusal to bow before any authority, be it human or divine" (*God and Man*, pp. 201-02; see also *Ethico-Religious Concepts*, p. 64). Submission was viewed as befitting of only the lowborn (of slaves, orphans, the blind, the lame, the poor, etc.). "Nothing," he says, "was so intolerable for... a 'noble' and 'free' man as to be in a position of servant (*ʿabd*) whose job was to serve his master obediently" (ibid., p. 65).

that their deceased fathers and grandfathers--and, hence, it must have appeared to them, their ancestry as a whole--were to be viewed as ignoble. Clearly, this cut right across the grain of all their fierce pride of descent (and all the more so in the case of the members of the Umayyad clan whose greater social prestige naturally seemed to justify their tribal pretensions).

But if servility suggests a degraded view of man, the opposite generally appears to be true of Quranic *islām*. For man is here presented within the framework of his unique--and not inglorious (at least, not in principle)--responsibility under God. Two distinct, yet vitally related elements combine to form that framework and, so, to balance the predominant theocentricity of the Qur'ān with a corresponding, subordinate anthropocentricity.[77] These are man's vicegerency under God and his covenantal relationship with God. Embedded in the primary narrative accounts of man's genesis,[78] both elements are, of course, absolutely

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[77]Of course, this man-centredness is clearly evident in the very fact of the Qur'ān: while there may be no sense in which the revelation is to be considered a true dialogue, still it is man who is singularly addressed by God, as the centre of his concern. (This non-dialogical reading of the Qur'ān, traditionally held by Muslims, may warrant further investigation; but, as such an inquiry would take us far beyond the scope of our present study, we will here accept the conclusions of Izutsu on the nature of the divine-human communicative relationship; *God and Man*, pp. 133-197.)

[78]There is no warrant for designating any one of the Quranic accounts as "primary"; rather there are a number of accounts which together yield the story of man's beginning. Primary among these are 2:30-35, 7:11-19, 15:26-50 and 20:115-119 (91, 87, 57 and 55, by Nöldeke's chronological ordering of the sūras). 33:72-73, which Nöldeke would rank

vital to any understanding of Quranic man (and, in particular, of man's fall).

Unlike the Biblical treatment, the Quranic treatment of man's creation is not specifically set in the context of the creation of all things.[79] The setting is, instead, the story of the fall of Satan (*Shayṭān*, also called Iblīs). At least three things result in its thus being inextricably joined to that fall. The first is that it is man's exaltation as vicegerent which proves to be the occasion of Satan's downfall and, so, in one sense, of man's own fall.[80] The second is that the fall of Adam obviously repeats the basic pattern of the fall of Iblīs: reasonable (divine) requirement, creaturely rebellion and retributive exile. And the third is that man's fall consequently represents the fruition of Satan's own fall in his reactionary attempt to "pervert" the race in Adam (7:16-17; 15:39-42; 38:82-83).[81]

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later than the others (103), should also be mentioned here; as will be seen, it presents primordial man from an entirely different perspective than the others take.

[79]Cf. Gen. 1-2.

[80]This may explain the stark pessimism of 33:72-73, to which we will come in a moment.

[81]In Satan's brazen boast and the divine response to it, we have the telescoping of human history in its entirety, together with a statement of the divine purpose in it. Not surprisingly, this extent of telescoping obscures all not directly contributing to the basic point that God has a purpose in his authorization of Satan's evil activity in the world. Ultimately, only the unbelievers are perverted by Satan and, so, in history Satan is granted authority over them alone. As will be seen, however, from another (fuller) perspective the entire race is perverted in Adam and, then, part of it restored to God's original plan.

Hence, while the Adam narratives obviously stand as a prelude to whatever Quranic history follows, there is a sense in which they may also be viewed as the beginning of an extended postlude to the earlier fall of Satan. They may yield two very different emphases, then, depending on which way they are read. And the ambiguity evident in this implicitly dual approach pervades the whole of Quranic man, the positive and the negative strands being interwoven throughout.

Two things follow from this. Firstly, one's saying that the Quranic outlook on man is overwhelmingly negative is no less true than another's saying the opposite, a point to which we will return later in this chapter. This means, secondly, that it is impossible to give a definitive answer to the key question, alluded to above, of what sort of servility under God the Qur'ān envisions for man. If it is arguable that the emphasis on man's creaturely greatness and dignity predominates in the accounts of man's genesis (that is, of his creation and his vocational and relational appointment), it is unlikely that the same can be maintained of Quranic man generally. Discussion of this point, however, is better reserved for the conclusion of our inquiry here, once we have a clearer notion of who man is, Quranically speaking, and of how he is to be related to the sin which so universally blights his story.

What we have seen thus far of the standard Quranic approach to primordial man (i.e. its deliberate rooting of

the Adam story in the fall of Satan) has shown the servitude for which man was made in a rather negative light. But moving beyond the Quranic presentation of the overall setting of the story, we shall observe that in terms of the focal points of the story--the divine preference and appointment of Adam, over the other orders of the creation, and over Iblis, in particular--quite the opposite is the case.

There is one clear exception to this, however. It is 33:72-73, where the tendency towards a degraded view of man --towards a diabolical image of man, if you will--moves from the setting to the focal position.[82] Such negativity as this indisputably points the reader away from any notion of noble servility.

In this passage, the personified heavens, earth, and mountains--all symbols of created immensity and durability or strength--refuse to undertake the upholding of "the trust," fearing (rightly, it would seem) that they are inadequate. It is important to notice that it is God who both agrees to give man the trust he had offered to the heavens and earth, etc. and rebukes man for his foolishly assuming such a responsibility:

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[82]Here, however, the reader is effectively given a focal point with virtually no sense of its larger setting, as a sort of exclamatory 'narrative fragment,' not uncommon to Quranic style.

This is the passage referred to above in connection with the question of whether or not *islām* is to be viewed as the ideal for which man was created.

> We offered the trust to the heavens and the earth, and to the mountains also, but they refused to carry it and shrank back from it; man, however, shouldered it. Signally unjust was he and ignorant! [To the end] that God might punish the hypocrites, whether men or women, and the associationists, whether men or women, and that he might turn towards the believers, both men and women. God is most merciful, all forgiving!

Admittedly, the indefiniteness of the key-word here, *al-amāna*, has given rise to numerous interpretations. Most of these, however, must be judged more appropriate to the commentators' time than to that of Muḥammad and the earliest *umma*.[83] While it is possible that "the trust" here refers to the Adamic covenant, it is more likely that it refers to the vicegerency, to which man was singularly appointed (2:30-35).[84] But, having said that, we must insist on the

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[83]For example, Bayḍāwī and others understand the trust to be man's "entire obedience to the law of GOD" (George Sale, *The Koran: Translated into English from the Original Arabic with Explanatory Notes from the Most Approved Commentators*, with an Introduction by Sir Edward Denison Ross [London: Frederick Warne (Publishers), n.d.], p. 418, n. 3). Throughout the Qur'ān, however, the emphasis on the Muslims' legal requirements (which must in Muḥammad's day be described as at an 'embryonic' stage, relative to the Sharīᶜa's later development) is consistently on their reasonableness, on their being well within man's reach and, so, on man's adequacy relative to their demands (2:185,233,286; cf. 62:5). Similarly, the explanations that *al-amāna* here refers on the one hand to man's rational faculty and on the other hand to the (Shīᶜī) imamate are patently anachronistic; M. M. Khatib cites the former of these views, but without naming the commentators (whether Muᶜtazilī or ᶜAsharī) espousing it; *The Bounteous Koran: A Translation of Meaning and Commentary*, (London: Macmillan Press, 1986), p. 561, n. 50; on the Shīᶜī view, see Mahmoud M. Ayoub's *Redemptive Suffering in Islam: A Study of the Devotional Aspects of ᶜĀshūrā' in Twelver Shīᶜsm*, Religion and Society, no. 10 (The Hague: Mouton Publishers, 1978), pp. 58-61.

[84]Rahman takes it in this sense also; *Islam*, p. 35.

relative irrelevance of our choice here: however the word is read, it must refer to some uniquely human responsibility, willingly accepted by man (and given by God) in the beginning. All of the various options given by the commentators fit this description. The vitally important elements in this pericope come in verse 73; that is, in the two comments which follow the figurative account.

Even if we are to accept Fazlur Rahman's suggestion, relative to the first of these, that it contains but a "sympathetic rebuke,"[85] it must be viewed as casting something of a dark shadow on the perfection of God's plan for man, in that that plan implicitly required an act of folly and of sin on Adam's part (i.e. in order that he might submit to God--as contradictory as that may be). Man's downfall here, remember, is not in his approaching the forbidden tree and, so, his compromising the vicegerency and violating the covenant. Rather, it consists in his acceptance of either or both of those appointments(!).[86]

On the topics of Adam's vicegerency and covenant, see pp. 67-69 below.

[85]Ibid. As will be seen, the force of these words, viewed in context, militates strongly against Rahman's reading of them in terms of a divine sigh, an expression of pathos far more than of righteous indignation.

[86]While these two--covenant and vicegerency--seem to be not quite identical in the Qur'ān, they are logically so closely related as to be considered inseparable. *Amāna* may, of course, have the sense of a covenant agreement, like *ʿahd*. Hence, al-Kisā'ī's 5th/11th c. *Qiṣaṣ al-Anbiyā'* identifies the *amāna* with the covenant: "It was that they would be rewarded for the doing of good and punished for the doing of evil."

Muslim scholarship has sometimes taken this first commentary to refer to man's later disobedience (approaching

Rahman's treatment of this passage seems to suggest that man's action here is not necessarily to be viewed as intentionally evil; rather his understanding seems to be more that of an unthinking blunder on the part of Adam.[87] But this can hardly be right, for both *zalūman* and *jahūlan* include the notion of willfulness. The former belonging "with that central concept of *ẓulm* and the latter with the

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the forbidden tree); hence, the folly and wrong mentioned here is equated, not with man's very acceptance of, but with his subsequent exercise of the trust; e.g. al-Kisā'ī in *A Reader on Islam: Passages from Standard Arabic Writings Illustrative of the Beliefs and Practices of Muslims*, ed. Arthur Jeffery ('s-Gravenhage, The Netherlands: Mouton & Co., 1962), p. 188; cf. Kenneth Cragg, *The Privilege of Man: A Theme in Judaism, Islam and Christianity* (London: Athlone Press for the University of London, 1968), p. 39. Although perhaps less problematic than the interpretation of Rahman, this reading must make two additions to the textual data as it is given to us. Hence, the statement effectively is made to read: "[But] [subsequently] signally unjust was he and ignorant." And, more importantly, interpreting the commentary in this way fails to do justice to the preceding context: *zalūman* and *jahūlan* do not need the importation of an additional context to explain them.

One may be justified in seeing man's later misuse of the trust as organically contained in the sort of presumption responsible for his bold marketing of himself as prime candidate for the exalted office of vicegerent. But, be that as it may, it is for his arrogant offer of himself and not his subsequent failure(s) in office that man is here castigated. Such a reading of the text may thus be taken as indicative of why God is just in making man's exaltation (i.e. self-exaltation) over the other created orders the indirect cause of his self-abasement in the fall (cf. pp. 53-54 above); ironically, it may also be thought to establish man's preeminence over Satan in the genesis narratives, since it is this fall of man which sets in motion the chain of events of which Satan's fall is the first link.

[87] *Islam*, p. 35.

To concede here that man's action was a blunder, that its consequences were both unintended and unexpected by him, cannot be thought to lessen the willfulness of the action *per se*; in this regard, it parallels Adam's later eating of the forbidden fruit.

Jahiliyyah that characterized the days before Islam," both derive from fertile and Quranically crucial roots.[88] Since, as was conclusively shown by Goldziher, the root *j-h-l* is to be opposed to *ḥ-l-m* (and not *ʿ-l-m*), *jahūlan* refers to a total lack of thoughtful, moral self-restraint;[89] hence, the comment indicates that man plunged on with his stunningly presumptuous self-nomination, totally ignoring the moral prudence of God's own nominees for the charge--those far better suited than man, mere mortal that he was. Understood in the context of the Quranic view of self-reliance, of that presumptuous *istighnā'* which was considered vital to the Jāhilī notion of nobility, man's virtual self-appointment to so sublime a responsibility can hardly be viewed as other than sinful. And this is especially so, given the Qur'ān's consistent opposition of *istighnā'*, as an implicit denial of creaturehood, to *islām*, viewed as (in one sense) the duty of the entire creation.

The second commentary explains the significance of what might be called man's "catastrophic obedience." The explanation given is that it is man's reckless acceptance of earth's vicegerency which sets in motion history's great examination of the race. So, beginning with the single covenant prohibition in the Garden and ultimately issuing in

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[88]Kenneth Cragg, *Privilege of Man*, p. 39.

[89]*Muslim Studies*, 2 vols., trans. C. R. Barber and S. M. Stern (London: Allen & Unwin, 1967-71), I:201-08; see also Toshihiko Izutsu's study of this question in chapter 8 of *God and Man*.

the salvation of the elect and the damnation of the non-elect,[90] that great process stems from one prior display of ignorance and arrogance (which God in his wisdom has permitted). In another sense, however, it stems from two. For, again, man's act of folly is not at all unlike that of his arch-rival: Adam, no less than Iblīs, brings about his own ruin by an act of ill thought out boldness, of headstrong over-confidence, by his basic failure to know and accept his place.[91]

One final point raised by this passage is that here (prior to the fall) man appears to be "fallen," in the sense of "hasty" (*ʿajul*; 17:11; cf. 21:37), blamably ignorant and self-wronging. If this is the case, then, either man is to be considered morally flawed from the time of his creation, or else this failure (and not that related to the prohibited tree) constitutes man's true "fall." But before wrestling too long with such a choice, one does well to remember that the entire thrust of this passage presents what in our view must be called the Qur'ān's "minority position" on man. Nowhere else is man's appointment to earth's vicegerency represented as his grand liability, the product of a

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[90]Though there may be no exact paradisical parallel to the statements in 7:179, 11:119 and 32:13 concerning God's intention to populate Hell with men and *jinn*, it is clear that the divine intention included the eventual filling of Paradise also (with men, at least, if not with *jinn*).

[91]Izutsu, *Ethico-Religious Concepts*, pp. 72-73. The basic thought back of this pericope is, then, similar to that of Jesus in Luke 14:7-11.

colossal blunder on his part. Admittedly, the angelic objection in 2:30 may well point in the direction of such pessimism, but nowhere is the negative view of man set in bolder relief than it is here.

While a number of candidates have been put forward here,[92] there are really only two other passages, 12:53 and 70:19-21, which appear directly to substantiate man's inherent proneness to impatience and folly. It should be noted, however, that neither of these rule out the possibility that such proneness to evil may not be originally inherent in him; that is, it may be inherent subsequent to his fall, rather than from his creation (i.e. in Adam).[93] For there are other statements presenting man as flawless in his creation (e.g. 32:7; 95:4). How the reader is to deal with the tension thus produced is a question which must eventually be faced, but for now it is sufficient that we alert ourselves to the two "poles" basic to the Quranic assessment of man.

We now turn our attention back to the "majority position." As was indicated above, this more positive view of man predominates in all the primary pericopes on man's creation and designation to vicegerency.[94] As is

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[92]Arberry's "weakling" brings out well the sense of *ḍaʿīf* in 4:28. At issue is man's physical capacity, not his tendency toward moral vacillation (see also 8:66; cf. 30:54; 31:14).

[93]Here we are up against the ambiguity basic to Quranic usage of the verb *khalaqa*. See n. 24 above, for our discussion of this.

characteristic of creation accounts generally, two of the main purposes of the Quranic treatment of man's creation are to relate man to the earth and the lower orders of creation and uniquely to honour him above the rest of creation (and in particular above the angels and *jinn* as, in some ways, higher beings).

In terms of the first of these, man is said to be made of "moulded clay" or "mud" and, alternatively, of "dust" (22:5; 15:28; 38:76).[95] Accordingly, as man's place of origin, the earth is man's place. The earth, then, is probably to be viewed as the setting for all of the pre-fall events related to Adam.[96] It is noteworthy here that the creation of Eve (*Hawwā'*)--so-named in the traditions, but unnamed by the Qur'ān--is not treated in any of the Quranic

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[94]See n. 78 above, for a listing of the majority position accounts.

[95]The verses which speak of man's having been made of a "blood-clot" or, alternately, of "mean water," a euphemism for semen (e.g. 22:5; 32:8; 77:20; 96:2; cf. 86:6) plainly refer to man's formation as infant in the womb and not to man's initial creation, in Adam (on this, cf. n. 24 above). Elsewhere man is said to be created of "water" (25:54), the thought there probably being that water is man's elemental basis, like that of the rest of animal life (cf. 21:30; 24:45) and unlike the invisible orders of angels and *jinn* (15:27; 55:15; cf. 38:76); the angels are probably to be grouped with the *jinn* here, or else--as the traditions have it--elevated above them, being made of light and not fire. Hence, it could be said that both semen and mud are implied by the other, both being water-based.

[96]Provided Satan's exile is viewed qualitatively rather than spatially--i.e. as banishment from the gracious presence of God (regardless of location) and not as the denial of access to a localized divine court in Paradise--such an understanding is likely less problematic than the prevailing view, locating Satan's fall (and man's creation) in Paradise.

accounts (although this lack was readily supplied by the ḥadīths).[97] In the Qur'ān, woman's creation is referred to only in the statement, suggestive of the Biblical account, that Adam's mate was created from him (4:1; 7:189; cf. Gen. 2:18-25).

Man's uniqueness, on the other hand, is dealt with in terms of at least four things. First, although the order of God's creative activity is not emphasized here as in the Biblical account (Gen. 1:1-2:3), it appears that man was the last of God's created works (15:26-29; cf. 2:30-33). This, perhaps, suggests that man's creation is to be viewed as the climax and crown of the entire work. Second, man is said to have been singularly shaped by God's own hand, as it were, and animated by his breath (7:11; 15:29; 32:9; 38:71-72, 75).[98] Third, Adam is distinctly preferred above the angels

[97]For a brief introduction to Eve as she appears in the Islamic traditions and generally in Islam, see *EI²*, s.v. "Hawwā'." On the Quranic view of woman, see Jane I. Smith's chapter on "Islam" in Arvind Sharma, ed. *Women in World Religions*, McGill Studies in the History of Religions, Introduction by Katherine K. Young (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1987), the relevant chapters in Ellison Banks Findly and Yvonne Yazbeck Haddad, eds., *Women, Religion, and Social Change* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1985), and Denise Lardner Carmody's *Women and World Religions* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1979), chapter 6.

While the reader is left to decide to what extent the woman shares in the honours bestowed on her husband (e.g. the vicegerency), elsewhere the Qur'ān leaves no doubt about the fact that she is equally responsible before God in the covenantal relationship, will be equally rewarded for her faithfulness or her disloyalty to the covenant. This matter is taken up by Yvonne Yazbeck Haddad and Jane Idleman Smith in *The Islamic Understanding of Death and Resurrection* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1981), appendix B, "The Special Case of Women and Children in the Afterlife," pp. 158-60.

(and *jinn*) in God's subjection of the earth (and perhaps, in some sense, the entire visible universe) to him as *khalīfa* or vicegerent (2:30; 14:32-33; 16:12-14; 45:12-13; cf. 38:36).[98] Fourth, he is called to live before God in a relationship of mutual commitment, as expressed by the covenant concept (20:115).

Set in the story of Satan's fall, the significance of man's vicegerency is vastly heightened by two other elements

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[98]As Thomas O'Shaughnessy has shown, the correct reading of *rūḥ* in 15:29 and 32:9 is "breath" (i.e. the animating life-force of God in creation) and not "Spirit," which, when associated with God (in the Qur'ān), always refers to the agent of his revelation, traditionally understood to be Gabriel (*Jibrīl*). Hence, the use of *rūḥ* here is very similar to that of *ruaḥ* in Job 33:4 and *neshamah* in Genesis 2:7. Occurring elsewhere only in connection with Jesus' miraculous conception in Mary's womb (21:91; 66:12; cf. 4:171 and 19:17), this usage of *rūḥ* signifies a "material force that puts Adam and Jesus in direct contact with Allah"; *The Development of the Meaning of Spirit in the Koran* (Rome: Pont. Institutum Orientalium Studiorum, 1953), pp. 26,30. Cf. *SEI*, s.v. "Nafs."

[99]On man's relationship to the *jinn* there is some ambiguity, for the two species are closely associated and even twice referred to as one company or assembly (*maᶜshar*, in 6:130 and 55:33; cf. 7:38; 41:25; 46:18). On the whole, the *jinn* appear to be midway between the angelic and human categories.

With reference to their relationship to God (relative to that of man), the *jinn* are, on the one hand, grouped together with man in terms of their probationary status of servanthood on earth and, hence, perhaps also in terms of their being covenantally related to God, with all that that signifies of moral culpability (6:130; 51:56). On the other hand, however, it is clear that man is singularly chosen for terrestrial vicegerency (2:30-34; cf. 18:50).

If man is thus meant to rule over the *jinn*, this is never made clear. It appears rather that, like men, earth's unseen inhabitants relate directly to God. The single exception here is the case of Solomon (*Sulaymān*), who alone is said to have attained mastery over the *jinn*, and that on account of his great wisdom (27:17; 34:12-13; 38:36-38). For a discussion of the *jinn*, see *EI*², s.v. "Djinn," section one by D. B. MacDonald, revised by H. Masse.

found there. The first is God's exclusively instructing him in the knowledge of "the names of all things" (2:31). Whether the indefinite "all things," which here could be displayed before the angels, represents the lower orders of animal life (as seems likely)[100] or any other of the creation's mysteries, such knowledge suggests comprehension empowering the knower to control or exercise dominion. This exclusive training, then, is intended, not merely to humiliate the angels for their presumption in questioning the wisdom of God's choice for the vicegerency (2:30-33), but primarily also to fit man for his glorious vocation as representative of the rule of God on earth.

The second element here underscoring man's privileged position is the divine call for the prostration of both the angels and Satan before him.[101] Of course, the irrevocability of that call occasioned Satan's fall, making it further suggestive of man's unrivalled preeminence in the created order.[102]

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[100]The whole point of the passage is to establish man's place in the hierarchy of created orders, and so it is likely that the lower animate orders were intended here. On man's dominion over the animals, see 16:5, 40:79 and 43:12-13.

[101]Satan here was likely either representative of the entire class of *jinn*, or else all of the *jinn* may here have been grouped together under the category of angel, just as they sometimes were grouped together with men (cf. n. 95 and n. 99 above).

On Satan in the Qur'ān, see *EI*², s.v. "Iblīs," by A. J. Wensinck, revised by L. Gardet.

[102]Of course, from the fall of Adam onward, man can hardly be said to be preeminent over all of the angels (e.g. *Jibrīl*) in terms of the nearness to the divine presence.

By his appointment to vicegerency, then, the earth is entrusted to man's care.[103] And central to that trust is the notion that the perfect justice of the divine rule should be extended to the earth by means of man's faithful discharge of this responsibility. The exclusivity of the divine choice here--all the more inexplicable because the angelic remonstrance has proven so tragically true (2:30; 5:27-30)--is what sets man apart as truly heroic in the ensuing drama of earth's history. And the transcendent wisdom on which this choice is founded is ultimately what underwrites the unequalled excellence of man's high status under his Creator.

Adam's position is further enhanced by the mutuality of the *ʿahd* or covenant God is said to have made with him (20:115). Characteristically Semitic, the Quranic notion of *ʿahd* (or elsewhere *mīthāq*) is basically the same as that of the Old Testament *berit*. In its primary theological usage, it is a formal expression of the sovereignly imposed

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However, their nearness relates to their function as divinely ordained intermediaries between God and his human prophets; hence, in one sense, even these angels are to be viewed as serving man according to the specific directives of God.

[103]That the vicegerency is given to Adam as our representative head (i.e. to the race in Adam) is, of course, inherent in the very fact of his being archetypal man. Accordingly, Islamic jurisprudence has long recognized the generic scope of Adam's appointment as the fundamental basis for man's judicial function.

Khalīfa is nowhere else used of man generically. The word does appear in both of its plural forms (*khala'īf* and *khulafā'*). But always the thought is primarily that of temporal succession, although representational responsibility or tenancy is in mind also (e.g. 6:165, 10:14,74 and 35:39); Cragg, *Privilege of Man*, pp. 30-32.

religious bond between God and men, having at its heart the idea of the mutual obligation of its parties.[104]

While the specific contents of the Adamic *ʿahd* referred to in 20:115 are never explicitly identified as such, the shape of a covenant is clearly discernible in God's communications to Adam prior to the fall. And, given that Adam's disobedience was in direct violation of this covenant (20:115), its identification with the divine discourse to Adam prior to the fall (2:35; 7:19; 20:117-119) can hardly be disputed. The covenantal discourse, then, began by warning Adam and his wife of Satan's evil intentions toward them and, hence, by alluding to the divine obligation to punish their sin with expulsion from the Garden (20:117). It specifically obligated the divine Sovereign to provide abundantly for all the needs of his subjects (20:118-119; cf. 2:35a; 7:19a) on the single condition that they obey him, shunning the contrary enticements of Satan, in the matter of the forbidden tree (2:35b; 7:19b).

Adam's being covenantally related to God signified two things, then. It signified (1) human responsibility to conform to the (revealed) will of God, (2) within a context of divine-human reciprocity,[105] a relationship of mutuality.

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[104]Izutsu, *Ethico-Religious Concepts*, p. 88. This notion of covenant's mutual obligation is evident in the words: "fulfill My covenant and I shall fulfill yours" (2:40 Arberry) or, as Pickthall puts it, "fulfil your (part of the) covenant, and I shall fulfill My (part of the) covenant."

On the human side, it was a call to *islām*--a call for man's commitment, entirely exclusive of rival loyalties--within the context of a clearly specified probationary situation. On the divine side, it involved a pledge of faithfulness either to execute judgment or to bestow divine favour or blessing, reciprocating loyalty for loyalty, rejection for rejection. Doubtless, such mutual loyalty must be deemed essential to man's truly representing God on earth. And the principle of divine requital involved in covenant--blessing and prosperity for obedience or faithfulness, cursing and destruction for infidelity--is, of course, basic to the Quranic notion of human responsibility. And, given the array of honours bestowed on him in the order of creation, one would expect the (unfallen) Adam's outlook to have been characterized by a humble confidence and optimism under God. Of course, when we come to consider Adam's fall, the great question will be if--or, indeed, how--that event has removed man from his natural position of humble confidence.

This covenantal reading of the human situation is unmistakably evident throughout the Qur'ān. The divine-human relationship is spoken of in terms of various

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[105]Our use of "reciprocity" and its cognates here and following must not be thought to convey any sense of (ontological) equality between God and man. Rather, such mutuality of action as is intended by it relates, not to the divine, but to the human perspective on man's situation (i.e. that by which human responsibility--as opposed to divine sovereignty--is seen to be the determining factor in man's actions, etc.). As well, of course, such inverse correspondence is built into the divine-human relationship by order of God alone.

covenants, which generally appear to have been mediated by the prophets (e.g. 2:63-84,124-33). In one passage, the race is taken from the loins of Adam's sons--whether or not literally--and then covenantally bound to serve God, as opposed to Satan (7:172).[106] The guidance of the prophetic Word is always understood as combined warning and good news, relating of course to man's choosing either covenantal cursing or blessing (e.g. 2:80-82, 3:76-77 and 13:20-25).[107] Quite clearly, there is little difference between this and the Biblical assessment of man's situation in this regard (for example, Deut. 30:15-20; 2 Chron. 26:5b,16; Heb. 12:18-29). Frequently the covenantal relationship is even spelled out in the Qur'ān in terms of reciprocal action--of a human and divine "forgetting" (9:67; 32:14; 45:34), "helping" (22:40; 47:7), "loving" (3:31-32), etc.--broadly reminiscent

[106]Of course, *banū Adām* may also be translated "the Children of Adam." But, whether it refers to the first generation of Adam's offspring or to a much later one (the Qur'ān does not specify the context here), it is obviously his male offspring which are in view, as the possessors of future generations' seed. The plural possessive endings on "loins" (*ẓuhūruhum*) and "seed" (*dhurrīyatuhum*) further underlines the fact that--contrary to the standard Muslim reading of it--it is, not Adam, but his "sons" who undergo this divine operation of momentary "seed" extraction.

[107]For an indication of (some of) the contents of various covenants, see 2:124-33 on the Abrahamic, 2:63-84 on the Mosaic and 13:20-25 on the Muhammadan. In one sense, however, the covenant mediated by a given prophet must be viewed as coextensive with the entire deposit of his revelatory messages, all of which presuppose the covenantal framework of divine blessing versus cursing. This is suggested by 20:86, where the covenant appears to be identified with the entire revelation Moses (*Mūsa*) received on Mount Sinai.

of Biblical descriptions (for example, 2 Chron. 15:2; 24:20b; Psa. 18:25-27; Prov. 3:33-35).

Another similarity between the Quranic "majority position" and Biblical accounts of man's beginning is evident in that man's covenantal vicegerency, viewed as the highest of creaturely honours, provides the interpretive framework for all subsequent developments in the divine-human relationship.[108] Thus, in both Scriptures man is viewed as the servant of God, the great call to submission (*islām*) to the will of his all-wise Maker being rooted in the nobility of regal representation and of mutual loyalty. As servant of God, man's greatness is bound up in the greatness of the One he serves: while man is infinitely inferior to God, ontologically speaking, to stress the greatness of God is *ipso facto* to speak of man's dignity and nobility as servant.

Thus--if we may momentarily dismiss the "minority position" on man's beginning--the Qur'ān takes what were complete opposites in the Jāhilī assessment of things, nobility and servility, joining them in its concept of *islām*. And here again there is much similarity to the Biblical treatment of man's nobility. Hence, aside from the negativity of the Quranic rooting of man's creation and

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[108]On this, see Harvie M. Conn, ed., *Theological Perspectives on Church Growth*, ed. Harvie M. Conn (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 1976), pp. 1-3; and Meredith G. Kline, *The Structure of Biblical Authority*, 2d ed. (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1978).

commissioning in Satan's fall (on which the Bible is silent), there is a basic congruity between the Biblical and (standard) Quranic accounts.

There are a number of not insubstantial differences, however. To begin, the Qur'ān never spells out man's "khalifal" responsibilities in positive terms, as is done in the cultural mandate of Genesis 1:28-29.[109] Hence, Quranically, vicegerency may have a somewhat negative aspect, as precursive of destruction only. Man's constructive contribution within that role is never treated, and this means that the primordial Garden may appear to have some suggestion of inactivity about it--of "ease without work," as opposed to the "easeful work" envisioned in the

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[109]Sometimes wrongly taken to be a warrant for endless physical reproduction, the command here to "be fruitful and increase; fill [i.e. populate] the earth and subjugate it..." (NEB) is to be understood primarily in terms of the extending of the cultivated "covenant territory, 'the garden of God' (Ezek. 28:13; 31:8-9) to the boundaries of the whole earth." Conn goes on to explain: "Hittite suzerainty covenants form the background for understanding the emphasis of Gen. 2:8-14 on the location of Eden. Covenant law incurred feudal obligations on the vassal who owned property since the property was regarded as the possession of the Great King (cf. Gen. 23:1-20). Adam's dwelling in the 'garden of God' placed him under covenant obligations to Jehovah, the Suzerain"; *Theological Perspectives*, p. 1. Since Eden represents God's "microscopic royal sanctuary, the dwelling place into which he received the God-like earthling to serve as princely gardener and priestly guardian" (Meredith G. Kline, *Structure* [Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1972], p. 87), such a mandate is to be related to the later promise of the earth's ultimately being "filled with the knowledge of the glory of Lord, as the waters cover the sea" (Isa. 11:9 AV); Conn, *Theological Perspectives*, p. 1.

Of course, the commission includes the thought of physical procreation, as essential to universal dominion.

Genesis account.[110] Likely, this omission is directly related to the Quranic approach to the concept of man's being made in God's likeness: the Qur'ān's emphatic commitment to the absolute sovereignty of God, without an equally emphatic statement of man's divine image-bearing, tends in the direction of man's having no conceivable constructive contribution to make.

This notion of the Garden's inactivity is abundantly confirmed by the picture we are given of that Garden which is to be the home of all believers in the hereafter.[111] For

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[110]It is quite mistaken to conclude from the curse which man's sin brings upon himself and upon the earth (Gen. 3:17-19) that man's labour is the direct result of the fall. Biblically speaking, rather, the fall makes what was meant to be man's joy (Gen. 1:28-29) a source of great frustration, of pain and exhaustion, due to the soil's greatly reduced productivity (cf. Gen. 5:28-29).

[111]In essence, the two Gardens bracketing human history are to be viewed as one, except that the final Garden probably represents the superlative of the primordial Garden. The final Garden's superabundance is evident from the fact that it is frequently spoken of in the plural; e.g. "Gardens of Eden" (*jannāt ʿAdn*; e.g. 9:72, 19:60-63 and 20:76). It is striking that it is the Garden of the final state, and not that of man's genesis, which is named Eden; but, far from implying separate locations, there is no reason to suppose that the eternal Garden will not also be located on the earth, following its recreation (21:104). Aside from its possibly implying that the latter Garden is more of an Eden than the former one, the fact that the second garden bears the name which would have been popularly associated with the Garden of the Adam narratives certainly identifies the two as essentially one. Indeed, the name is almost always used in the context of man's reacceptance with God (3:136; 9:72; 61:12), and his (re)admission to his Garden home (e.g. 16:31; 19:60-61; 61:12; cf. 89:28-30), but this time with no possibility of expulsion (18:107-08; 20:76; 98:8). 38:50 specifically states that Eden's gates will be opened for the godfearing, and this must be read against the backdrop of Adam's exclusion of the race from the primeval Eden of (Bible-related) popular mythology.

in the afterlife, the Garden is characteristically spoken of in terms of endless leisure, spent in the pursuit of largely physical and social enjoyment.[112] Hence, in the Qur'ān's image of the Garden, the full fruit of what is only visible in seed-form in the beginning is abundantly evident in the

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As might be expected, if there are problems with the terrestrial location of the restored Paradise, they relate to the intermediate state. For the martyr in *jihād*, the interval between death and arrival of the Last Day is problematic, for such heroes are said to gain immediate admission to their Lord's presence (3:169); and this is generally understood to mean in the Garden--although, in fact, the only passage supporting such a position, 47:4-6, is not time-specific (hence, the promise there is not necessarily identical to that of sūra 3 above). Only one verse directly places the Garden in the "Unseen"; it is 19:61. There are, however, a number of possible readings of "*bi l-ghayb*" here; on this, see the translation and note found in J. M. Rodwell's *The Koran* (London: J. M. Dent & Sons, Everyman's Library, 1979), p. 122. As for 81:11-13, which speaks of the Garden's being brought near (also 26:90 and 50:31; cf. 89:23), there is nothing to say that its approach might not involve the recreation of the earth, referred to above. But *uzlifa* here need not be given a woodenly literalistic interpretation either (i.e. of relocation), in which case it might even be thought to indicate something similar to the descent of the Biblical "New Jerusalem" from heaven to the earth (Rev. 21:1-2).

Two points are basic to our thinking here. First, man is made of earth and for the earth; hence, while his punishment may involve a deviation from the original plan, in that sense his reward should not be thought to do so. At the very least, the Qur'ān cannot be said to exclude such a possibility. Second, Quranic thought is not presented in a vacuum and, so, must be understood as assuming some familiarity on the part of its original hearers--even if it was a generally faulty familiarity--with the Judaeo-Christian tradition. (We may observe here that by nature the smaller, more external details of an alien tradition are incomparably easier to apprehend, retain, and make use of than the far more vital questions and answers with which that faith sets out to deal.) With no indication to the contrary, it is to be assumed that the Qur'ān's Adam narratives build upon the familiar notion that the primordial Garden was located on earth, rather than begin an entirely new construction.

[112]See appendix 1, on the Quranic vision of Paradise.

eschatological vision at the end of time.[113] By contrast, Biblically it is to a city, and not a garden, that believers are called (Heb. 11:8-10; 13:14; Rev. 21-22);[114] the urban image there signifying--in a trinity of divine-human community, productivity and celebration--the final fulfillment of God's original plan for the race (just as the Garden is that sort of fulfillment, Quranically).

This brings us to the next substantive point of dissimilarity between the Quranic and Biblical presentations: the Qur'ān's silence on the question of whether or not man is made in God's likeness or image, a concept which is made the focal point of the Biblical accounts (Gen. 1:26-27; cf. 5:1; 9:6). On the one hand, it must be clear that man's appointment as *khalīfa* makes impossible any genuine avoidance of his being made in God's likeness. For, just as man's mind is made to be the recipient of God's knowledge (i.e. God's knowledge of the names), so also it must be assumed that he is in every way perfectly fitted by God to fulfill his charge as (creaturely) representative of God and of his just rule on the earth (although, admittedly, the "minority position"

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[113]Between his fall (see the following section) and his eschatological restoration, of course, man has much to do; accordingly, embracing righteousness and opposing evil, he becomes God's 'helper' (22:40; 47:7; cf. 61:14).

[114]This point must not be over-emphasized, for the image of the city here is not to be viewed as exclusive of gardens; indeed, Revelation 22:2 might even warrant our calling the heavenly city a "garden-city." But in any case, the urban image is altogether absent from the Quranic concept of the final reward.

would indicate otherwise). Further, *imago Dei* is inherent in the covenant concept, with its basic principle of mutual obligation and of reciprocity. And, as we have already seen, everything about theistic religion--Quranic religion being no exception--implies divine-human analogy.[115]

On the other hand, however, the Qur'ān's wealth of implicit affirmation of divine-human analogy is made to appear somehow illegitimate in the larger context of the distinctly Quranic sense of God's otherness which we have seen. This was noted above in connection with the question of divine humility.[116] Hence, it is not remarkable that the point is left implicit here. Seemingly, any clear expression of it would have been judged as verging on a compromise of the unity and uniqueness of God, as being too close to the line between truth and error and, hence, as careless or irresponsible.[117] And if this assessment is

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[115]Apart from such (admittedly abundant) implicit teaching, the mystics have no Quranic basis for their acceptance of divine-human analogy and their referring to man as the "image of God"; e.g., see M. M. Khatib, *The Bounteous Koran* (London: Macmillan Press, 1986), p. 221, n. 43, and p. 619, n. 11.

J. W. Sweetman is mistaken when he suggests that the word *taqwīm* in 95:4 may be an indication of the *imago Dei* (*Islam and Christian Theology: A Study of the Interpretation of Theological Ideas in the Two Religions*, 2 parts with 2 vols. in each [London: Lutterworth Press, 1947], 1.2:184-85), for *taqwīm* refers simply to the fact that man is put together beautifully and harmoniously; Dirk Bakker, *Man in the Qur'ān* (Amsterdam: Drukkerij Holland N.V., 1965), p. 27.

[116]See pp. 46-49.

[117]Biblically, the concept of man's imaging God was boldly affirmed at the outset of a series of documents (Genesis through Deuteronomy) denying man's right to

accurate, then it may be observed that the Biblical concept of truth is much different, for there truth might be said to be the narrow line itself between two different kinds of error (or, really, between opposing errors).

Hence, this sort of risk-taking is altogether characteristic of Biblical revelation. The reason for it is that the concept of Adam as the image of God--or, as the New Testament calls him, the "son of God" (Luke 3:37)--is ultimately Christological. For, as the race in Adam "was designed to be the perfect vehicle for God's self-expression within his world,"[118a] so Jesus, who is the eternal Son of God incarnate, is also uniquely the "image of God" (Col. 1:15; 2 Cor. 4:4). Hence, Biblically, he is called the "last Adam" (1 Cor. 15:45), in that (unlike our first forefather) he perfectly obeyed and imaged God and, so, perfectly exercised the authority of man's vicegerency, throughout his life and even in his death. And, so doing, he became the prototype of the new humanity, which in him is more than restored to its pre-fallen glory.

The quotation above is taken from N. T. Wright's comment on Paul's Christological phrase in Colossians 1:15,

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idolatry (e.g. Exod. 20:1-6; Deut. 6:4). As G. C. Berkouwer has said, it was precisely because man was the image of God --exclusively, that is--that alternatives to that image were declared illegitimate in Exodus 20:4; *Man: The Image of God*, trans. Dirk W. Jellema (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1975), pp. 77-84.

[118a]N. T. Wright, *The Epistles of Paul to the Colossians and to Philemon: An Introduction and Commentary*, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Leicester, England: Inter-Varsity Press, 1986; Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1986), p. 70.

the "image of the invisible God" (NIV). As its larger context is equally helpful here, we quote the comment at length:

> From all eternity Jesus had, in his very nature, been the 'image of God,' reflecting perfectly the character and life of the Father. It was thus appropriate for him to be the 'image of God' as man: from all eternity he had held the same relation to the Father that humanity, from its creation, had been intended to bear. Humanity was designed to be the perfect vehicle for God's self-expression within his world, so that he could himself live appropriately among his people as one of themselves, could rule in love over creation as himself a creature. God made us for himself, as Augustine said with a different, though perhaps related, meaning. The doctrine of incarnation which flows from this cannot, by definition, squeeze either the 'divinity' or the 'humanity' out of shape. Indeed, it is only in Jesus Christ that we understand what 'divinity' and 'humanity' really mean... Paul's way of expressing the doctrine is to say, poetically, that the man Jesus fulfills the purposes which God had marked out *both* for himself *and* for humanity.[119]

Hence, from a Biblical point of view, it may be said that the Qur'ān's omission of the expression 'image of God' is foundational to its radically reduced view of Jesus, as also to the much diminished intimacy of its divine-human (i.e. covenant) relationship. Because of the remnants of the divine image in man (due to God's common grace), the New Testament must be understood as viewing all men as sons of God, albeit estranged outside of Christ--that is, as sons of Adam, the "son of God" (Luke 3:38; cf. Luke 15:11-32; Eph. 2:1-5; Col. 1:21). As Jeremias has shown in his excellent study entitled, "Abba," the New Testament makes the filial

[119]Ibid., pp. 70-71. Author's emphasis.

relationship central to its understanding of the divine-human relationship.[120] Because Christ is uniquely God's Son, man (in him) may be restored to divine sonship: in him, we are allowed a share in Christ's own intimacy with his Father.[121]

Nothing about the Quranic exposition of Adam's relationship to God suggests "non-professional" intimacy. That is to say, nowhere is there the suggestion of genuine friendship and communion between Adam and his Lord, as we have it in the Biblical notion of God's approaching the man and his wife "in the cool of the day" (Gen. 3:8 AV; cf. 5:21-24). Again unlike the Bible, the Qur'ān never designates man's intended home as the "garden of God" (or, alternately, the "mount of God"; Ezek. 28:13-16). Rather, man stands before his Maker in a purely professional relationship of exalted servant to Lord,[122] Again, it would

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[120]*Central Message*, ch. 1.

[121]Ibid., pp. 22-30. A few examples of the filial analogy are as follows: Hos. 11:1; Mal. 2:10; Matt. 6:6-14; 23:9; Gal. 4:6-7. Other equally propinquitous analogies employed with reference to the divine-human relationship include the relationships of friend to friend (John 15:14-15; cf. 14:23; Jas. 2:23), of marriage partners (Isa. 54:5; Jer. 3:14; Hos. 2:19-20; Eph. 5:22-33) and of co-workers (1 Cor. 3:9). It must be stressed that, Biblically, these do not replace, but rather supplement, the expressions of a less mutually intimate or propinquitous sort--for example, Master-servant, Judge-defendant, Suzerain-subject, Guide- or Instructor-pupil--which exert the controlling force in the Quranic assessment of the divine-human relationship.

[122]While the Host-guest analogy suggested by the expression "the hospitality of God" (3:198; 41:32) might be thought to imply companionship, this need not be so. Rather, the picture in mind here seems to be that of a

appear that such notions of mutuality, of companionship, would have been thought to compromise the radical ontological gulf between the Creator and creature. And, so, here the Quranic and Biblical notions of man's servility diverge sharply.

Quranic man is, perhaps, best likened to the vizier, the nobility of whose unrivalled position in the empire cannot alter the fact that he is merely a slave. Whereas, Biblically--the radical ontological gulf between Creator and creature notwithstanding--man's servanthood is in no wise discontinous with his imaging God. Rather, as obedient servant, man clothes himself in the same humility which characterizes God and, so, clothes himself in all the unrivalled majesty and splendour of the glory of God. Hence, Biblically, servanthood is not exclusive of sonship, as is the case Quranically.[123] And, indeed, it is in Christ that this is most clearly seen: his absolute humiliation (revealing, as it did, the perfection of his voluntary submission to God) revealed that hidden glory of God which inheres exclusively in the moral character of God, in the perfect oneness of his justice, mercy and humility.

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suzerain's banquet (3:198; cf. 18:102,107; see further, appendix 1 below).

[123]This point is made in connection with the Qur'ān's rejection of the Jewish and Christian claim to divine sonship (cf. n. 33): to be treated as a servant is to exclude all possibility of sonship (5:18). Likewise, the Qur'ān's stress on Jesus' servanthood as prophet represents the categorical denial of his divine Sonship, Quranically understood (4:171-72; 5:116-18; cf. 19:30). On the Quranic understanding of servanthood, see pp. 31 and 45-46 above.

This diminished stature is no doubt reflected in Adam's merely reciting what he had been taught by God, in his naming of the created orders (2:31). By contrast, the Biblical Adam was called upon simply to give the creatures their names;[124] that is, he was commanded actively to "think God's thoughts after him" and, so, to manifest intellectually his divine image-bearing. For, of the unfallen Adam, it may be said that his own nature "was revelational of the will of God,"[125] albeit finitely.

Adam's Fall: Its Nature and Scope

We now turn to the question of how man is affected by sin, how sin is related both to man and to his dire need of salvation. Having earlier seen the "minority position" on man's first act of folly and sin, we will here follow on with the "majority position" Adam narratives to investigate the Quranic fall of man, viewed as the result of Adam's transgressing in the matter of the prohibited tree.[126] From

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[124]David Shenk in Badru D. Kateregga and David W. Shenk, *Islam and Christianity: A Muslim and a Christian in Dialogue* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1981), p. 13.

[125]"But," continues Cornelius Van Til, "while thus revelational of the will of God, man's nature, even in paradise, was never meant to function by itself. It was at once supplemented by the supernatural, external and positive expression of God's will as its correlative"; *The Defense of the Faith*, 3d ed., rev. (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 1967), p. 53.

[126]Interestingly, Dirk Bakker also concludes that the Qur'ān presents man as sinful (by nature), but he does not see man's sinfulness there as in any way deriving from the fall of Adam; *Man in the Qur'ān*, pp. 23-26 and 183-84.

our consideration of the covenant concept above, it will have become evident that what Paul Ricoeur has said of sin in the Biblical case is equally true here: sin is "not the transgression of an abstract rule--of a value--but the violation of a personal bond."[127]

Although in each of its three occurrences (2:35-39, cf. vv. 40-46; 7:19-25, cf. vv. 26-36; 20:117-24, cf. vv. 125-27) the story is given different applications, its basic point is always the same: in spite of God's abundant care for him, Adam carelessly spurned God's directions to him, choosing rather to follow Satan, in defiance of God. This, from the point of view of the Qur'ān, is the stuff of which man is made. An additional point of the story is that the man and his wife receive two things from God subsequent to their sin, mercy (in the form of both guidance and forgiveness) and judgment. Quite clearly mercy here is altogether undeserved, while the exact opposite is true of judgment. And this must be taken as revelatory of God in some sense. But, further investigation of the divine response to man's sin must be reserved until we have a clearer picture of the sin which called for it.

Clearly, such a reading of the fall narratives takes the sin of Adam very seriously. This is quite obviously a

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[127] *The Symbolism of Evil*, trans. Emerson Buchanan (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1967) p. 52. Perhaps this point is back of the divine Lawgiver's designating as forbidden (and, so, evil) an action related to a mere object, an object which, conceivably, might equally well have been designated as permissible to man.

departure from standard Muslim interpretations of the story, which amount to a thoroughgoing deemphasization of it--the act of disobedience, Adam's culpability and the consequences of his sin for the race[128]--in an effort to adapt it to fit with that stream of Quranic thought tending markedly toward the exteriorization of human evil. But to view the Adamic fall (of the "majority position" narratives) as a mere mistake, the outcome of man's finitude,[129] or the weakness of a defective creation is altogether mistaken.

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[128]Doubtless, this deemphasization of Adam's sin is partly related to the Muslim theologians' conferring on Adam the honour of prophethood, which in its post-Quranic development had eventually come to include that most unquranic notion of prophetic impeccability (*ʿiṣma*). By its allowance of only minor faults, it could not help predetermining how seriously this and the sins of other prophets also were to be taken. On the doctrine of prophetic impeccability, see *EI*², s.v. "ʿIṣma," by W. Madelung.

Informed by Muslim commentary on the Qur'ān, Sayyid Aḥmad Khān's commentary on Genesis (Ghazeepore, India: By the author, 1862) evidences the much toned down version of the Quranic narrative accounts so typical of Muslim interpretations of them: "...although the acquisition of this knowledge by man was the origin of the sin that has fallen upon Adam and his posterity (among whom that knowledge is perpetuated), yet this act of disobedience of Adam and Eve could not be a reason either for theirs [sic] or their descendants' being held to be guilty or culpable" (pp. 160-61) quoted by Kenneth E. Nolin in his annotated translation of Muḥammad Kāmil Ḥusayn's "The Story of Adam," *The Muslim World* 54 (January 1964):8, n. 9.

On the place of Adam in the esoteric anthropology of early Ismaʿīlī thought, see Henry Corbin's *Cyclical Time and Ismaili Gnosis* (London: Kegan Paul International, 1983), pp. 42-50, 76-84.

[129]Gnostic conceptions of an inherently evil material creation are, of course, altogether foreign to Quranic thought. Furthermore, the perfection of the angels attests to the real possibility of the ethical creature's moral perfection (21:19-21; 66:6).

That the far weightier reading above is the intended one is borne out, firstly, by the fact that, once they had seen the error of their sin, Adam and his wife took it with the utmost seriousness (7:23). They acknowledged they had wronged themselves--a Quranic expression always associated with the moral folly of sin (cf. 2:54,231; 3:117; 10:44; 28:16; 65:1).[130] And they knew that without God's forgiveness and mercy they would be among "the lost" (*khāsirūn*, i.e. those condemned to damnation; cf. 20:124-27).[131]

The essential accuracy of their own reading of their situation is, to begin, confirmed implicitly by God's acceptance of it without dispute (7:24-25). But two other things make this reading of the story altogether inevitable: namely, the divine assessment of both their sin and its

[130]The word used here, *ẓalama*, must be viewed as a direct response to the *ẓālim* of 2:35, to which we will come momentarily. For an introduction to the key Quranic concept of *ẓulm*, from which *ẓālim* is derived, see Izutsu, *Ethico-Religious Concepts*, pp. 164-72, and Cragg, "The Meaning of Ẓulm in the Qur'ān," *The Muslim World* 49 (July 1959):196-212.

[131]The correctness of our contextual interpretation is borne out by the Qur'ān's consistent use of *khasira* and its cognates to refer to the damned on the Last Day (5:5; 8:37; 11:22; 16:109; 39:15; 42:45; cf. 22:11), to those lead astray by God (7:178), to the one whose "weigh-scales" are light (7:9), in short, of those whose alliance with Satan has altogether excluded them from the favour of God (4:119; cf. 58:19). In particular, the murderous son of Adam (5:30; named Cain, *Qābīl*, in the traditions), those "crying lies" to the prophet Shuʿayb (7:92), and the calf-worshipping Children of Israel (7:149) are all designated as *khāsirūn*. The last mentioned case is of special significance because the words of penitence uttered by the (formerly) idolatrous Hebrews follow those of Adam (in the passage under consideration) almost exactly.

consequences. The divine assessment of man's disobedience comes to the reader in the four words used to refer either to the act itself or to its effect on man. These are *nasiya, ghawá, ʿaṣá* and *ẓalīm*. Throughout the Qur'ān, each of these words is used consistently to depict human rebellion against God as both altogether willful (i.e. informed and free) and, from the human, as opposed to the divine, perspective, unnecessary (i.e. avoidable, but for man's stubborn determination to go astray).

First, Adam is said to have 'forgotten' the covenant God made with him (20:115). *Nasiya* is used again in the extended context of this sūra's account of the story in verse 126 where we read that, having forgotten God's signs which came to them, the damned will be forgotten in their misery on the Last Day. 32:14, speaking of the guilty in another context, is very similar, and 9:67-68 says much the same of the hypocrites: "they have forgotten God, and He has forgotten them... God has promised the hypocrites, men and women, and the unbelievers, the fire of Gehenna, therein to dwell forever. That is enough for them; God has cursed them; and there awaits them a lasting chastisement" (Arberry).

Many other examples could be given here, but we will limit ourselves to just three. In 25:18 the idolaters are said to have forgotten the Remembrance in their corruption. And 45:31-35 tells us that those who arrogantly disregard the signs recited to them, continuing on in their evildoing,

will be forgotten by God, since they have forgotten the encounter of the Last Day. In other words, blatant disregard for God's warnings and promises through the prophets is tantamount to a wholesale spurning of the covenantal realities of human responsibility and divine requital. 6:42-45 speaks of the stiff-necked nations whose people, deluded by Satan, "forgot what they were reminded of" (Arberry) and were suddenly seized and utterly destroyed. While it is clear that Adam's sin did not meet with exactly the same response from God as is described in this last passage, it is equally clear that his "forgetting" was otherwise not at all unlike that of the stiff-necked nations: repeatedly warned (that is, reminded) of the Whisperer's evil intentions, Adam willingly embraced his destructive delusions.

All of this points to the conclusion that, in its ethical and theological usage, *nasiya* never connotes mere weakness, the product of the finite human mind, as in the case of a simple lapse of memory. Rather, it is no less deliberate on the part of man than the reciprocal action of "forgetfulness" on the part of God. And, as the occasion of God's ultimately ceasing to care for man, man's forgetting God is characteristically viewed as an act of gross and deliberate carelessness, the product of that willful ignorance which is indifferent to both goodness and truth.

The same can be shown of *ghawá* (he erred) used of Adam's sin in 20:121. The thought is not that of a mere

"mistake," which connotes unintentionality or inadvertence. Rather this error is to be viewed as the most deliberate sort of deviation from the path. In spite of divine warnings, both explicit and repeated, Adam chose the delusions of the Grand Barmecide and, so, abandoned the path of goodness and truth for that of falsehood and error.

This sense of *ghawá* is confirmed by the fact that it, and indeed the entire story of man's fall as well, alludes to Satan's announced intention to pervert (*aghwá*, IVth form of the same verb) mankind from the path of devotion to God (15:39; 38:82; cf. 28:63; 37:32). The allusion becomes the more obvious when one realizes that this proud boast occurs in the account of Satan's fall, indisputably the Quranic prelude to Adam's temptation and fall (7:11-18; 15:26-44; 38:71-85).

Accordingly, Adam's act of "disobedience" (*ʿaṣá*, 20:121) represents his choosing to join Satan in his evil rebellion against God, for to disregard the divine prohibition concerning the tree was to become one of the "evildoers" (*ẓālim*, 2:35).[132] Hence, if human weakness is at all in view here, it is man's tendency towards moral

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[132]Needless to say, in all of their numerous Quranic occurrences (*ʿaṣá* x 30; *ẓālim* x 145), both words signify transgression, both deliberate and heinous. See, for example, 2:61,93, 49:7 and 71:21 on *ʿasa*.

On *ẓulm*, see the studies referred to above in n. 130. In the whole Quranic vocabulary, *ẓulm* is certainly one of the most formative and crucial of terms relating to evil and sin (Cragg, "Meaning of Zulm," p. 196). The lexicons define it in terms of "misplacing a thing," the implicit notion being that of (moral) deviation from the ordered plan of God for his creatures.

vacillation (20:115). Even in this the emphasis is, however, not on God's responsibility as Creator, but on man's as a deplorably ungrateful wretch. (And this point is emphasized for the reader in 7:189-190 where, immediately upon receipt of divine assistance in the birth of their first son--and having beforehand coupled their urgent request for help with a solemn pledge of their prolonged gratitude and devotion in return--the fallen Adam and his wife repeat their heedlessness, compounding it with the 'unpardonable' *shirk*.)[133]

From all of this, it is clear that the Quranic assessment of the first misstep of the race, in Adam, ranks it as a very serious (i.e. deliberate) deviation from the revealed will of God. To read it as a merely accidental failure on the part of Adam is, therefore, to mishandle the Quranic text. And this conclusion is also plainly borne out in the gravity of the consequences of Adam's sin: if the act of disobedience here represents a minor fault--perhaps much like the simple, carefree heedlessness of a child--then

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[133]In translating this passage, Yusuf Ali, Pickthall and other modern Muslim translators have obscured its pointed condemnation of Adam in a variety of ways, which variety may be seen as indicative of the text's unpliability. To any translator unconvinced of the Quranic basis for either or both of the doctrines at stake (Adam's necessary prophethood and the impeccability of prophets) its plain meaning is rendered easily (as Arberry, for example, has done). It is interesting to note that Bayḍāwī, considered the standard among classical Sunnī commentators, would have commended Arberry's interpretation of our passage; this may be partly explained by Bayḍāwī's chronological nearness, relatively speaking, to the development of the two doctrines concerned.

the divine punishment of it completely fails to reflect that fact.

In the aftermath of Adam's rebellion, the two elements of divine judgment and divine mercy or grace are presented, not systematically, but rather very much intermingled, as if together they represented the total effect of his sin. And in one sense that may be true. But in another far more basic sense it is quite false: for, Quranically, sin can never be said to have effected divine mercy (as it has judgment, the judgment promised in God's sovereignly established covenant with man). Hence, we will endeavour to keep these two elements separate in the following inquiry.

Taking the element of judgment to be first (i.e. logically, if not altogether sequentially so), we will enquire into both the nature of the particular punishments meted out to Adam for his sin and whether Adam is to be viewed as representative head of the race in his sin and its consequences. Then, having seen the import of the judgment called for by Adam's sin, we will conclude our study of the majority position narratives with an inquiry into the effects of divine mercy on the post-fall situation, in particular asking how the paradigm of divine reciprocity has been affected by the fall. For such an inquiry to be effective, however, we will have to move beyond the fall narratives to some consideration of the broader Quranic view

of man (and what is to be considered the second Quranic picture of man, in particular).

With regard to the question of Adam's and his wife's punishment, then, the most immediate effect of their change of allegiance was two-fold. Externally, there was the public disgrace of their nakedness and, internally, a new sense of spiritual lostness. To begin, there is nothing to suggest that Adam and his wife's sense of shame over their nakedness (7:22,27; 20:121) is to be viewed as indicative of a loss of primal "innocence." It involved--not the psychological contamination of man's original and proper nakedness (i.e. its contamination with sin and its byproducts, guilt and shame and the selfward warping of the mind), as is Biblically the case--but, rather, the physical disrobing of one whom God had, from the first, clothed.[134] The point, then, is that of a loss of public honour (accompanied, of course, by a great sense of shame). Having first been exalted by God to a position of honour shared by

[134]Being the chronologically later of the two sūras dealing with this, sūra 7 speaks of Adam and his wife's loss of their "garments" (v. 27) at the precise moment of their eating the forbidden fruit (v. 22)--although it has no suggestion as to the real connection between the two events. Sūra 7 also appears to equate their shame with the state of human nakedness itself, for it was their "shame" (i.e. nakedness) which was either revealed to them or concealed (vv. 20-21, 26-27). Nothing in the sūra 20 passage conflicts with this; rather, sūra 7 represents its natural development within a specific (and related) contextual application, that of the propriety of modest dress in public worship (vv. 26-34). The earlier account does, seemingly, allude to man's being clothed prior to his sinning, but such allusion is in the context of the abundance of God's provision for him (20:118-19), and not of the shame to which his folly consigned him (20:121).

none of the other created orders, man (by his disobedience) unwittingly humiliates and degrades himself. (And it is fair to suppose that his dishonour here is to be understood as witnessed by all those before whom he had formerly been honoured.)[135]

While there is no mention of Adam and his wife's attempting to hide from God (as occurs in the Biblical account), it is evident from Adam's appeal for divine forgiveness and favour that their shame was coupled with a sense of moral defilement and, hence, also of spiritual lostness (7:23; cf. 20:123-24).[136] And, as is the case in

[135]The Quranic reading of (public) nakedness, as being essentially shameful, is plainly consonant with the Semitic reading of it; whereas, remarkably enough, the Genesis account's approach to man's pre-fallen nakedness, as indicative of both his completeness or perfection (as created by God; cf. Gen. 1:31) and his primal innocence (unpollutedness of mind and heart; Gen. 2:25), must be viewed as representing something of a reinterpretation of standard Semitic thinking here.

Although we are not told in what it consisted, we are informed of Satan's (self-)degradation, in connection with his rebellion and banishment; and the verse dealing with this (7:18) prefaces the amplified account of the uncovering of Adam and his wife, given in sūra 7 (see n. 134 above), in which considerable emphasis is given to the degradation involved in that event.

[136]Biblically, man's desire to hide from God related not to any change in his outer appearance, but only to his new sense of shame over his nakedness, clearly related to his new sense of moral defilement and the darkening of his mind (i.e. his inability to see and be seen as before, without morally contaminated thoughts and desires). Both effects, then, are properly understood as being interior to man. Alerting Adam and Eve to their real estrangement from God (as to the guilt and degradation of their new condition), their new knowledge instilled in them a cringing fear of the God whose holiness had formerly been their delight (Gen. 3:7-11).

The Quranic accounts, on the other hand, do not probe beneath the shame of public nakedness *per se* for any sin-

the Biblical account, such a sense of lostness must be viewed as including a cringing, servile fear before God (that is, servile in the negative sense of the term), fear of an altogether different sort than that reverential fear and awe which their first faith involved for them. They had previously committed themselves to be faithful to their munificent Lord; in disregarding the covenant, they compromised that simplicity of heart which had inhered in their single-minded devotion to him. Internally, then, man's sin spelled his immediate alienation both from his God and from himself. And this points to his new need of corrective guidance (2:37-38; 20:122; cf. 7:23), as vital to his restoration to divine "friendship" (i.e. a relationship of divine favour and blessing).

It is, however, important to note that, while God's extension of both forgiveness and guidance to his rebellious representatives on earth (in the "words" he gave to Adam) is to be viewed as initially restoring them to the "friendship" of God, it is not to be thought of as altogether undoing the fatal consequences of their disobedience (2:37). Rather, having acted willfully, Adam and his wife are treated as responsible adults, as it were, in God's just (if, mercifully, only partial) administration of the penalty incurred by their sin. Further, on at least two counts, it is evident that by that gross show of contempt for God which

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related cause; rather, they may only be said to view the action productive of such nakedness (and shame) as, in turn, the product of a sinful disregard for the goodness of God's provisions (which is to say, ingratitude).

their sin constituted the ground rules of their "friendship" with him in subsequent history have been permanently altered.

First, beyond the immediate spiritual and psychological alienation already noted, they were informed of a new social alienation: their interpersonal relationship is characteristically to be marred by an element of mutual hostility and conflict (2:36; 7:24; 20:123). Doubtless, this was the direct consequence of their primary spiritual lostness and self-alienation: having compromised their essential oneness with God and with themselves, it was inevitable that they had also forfeited their "communal" oneness. "Get [you pl.] down, each an enemy to the other" (*Ihbiṭū baᶜḍukum li-baᶜḍin ᶜadūw*) in 2:36 suggests that such conflict also encompasses the notion of Satan's continuing his great campaign of ambush and perversion (e.g. 7:16-17).[137] The greater import of Satan's inclusion here will become apparent later, in connection with the generic effects of the fall; suffice it here to say that, whether uttered in Mecca or Medina (Yathrib), such words must have had great contextual import, since both cities were for considerable stretches of time bitterly divided over the validity and authority of Muḥammad's revelations.

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[137]Likewise, there may be grounds for taking the *jamīᶜan* of 20:123 to refer to mankind (in Adam) and the *jinn* (as represented by Satan).

Even subsequent to their repentance, Adam and his wife are to be viewed as standing in a position of abandoned infidelity. Such a position was doubtless one of manifest weakness--weakness, both within (in terms of the loss of their spiritual and psychological integrity) and without (in terms of their loss of the real possibility of any sort of thoroughgoing societal solidarity). And it is from just such a position that they must now determindedly set themselves in opposition to all Satan's hostile force in the now escalating war of evil against good. So, it is not just that their failure in the probationary examination has made probation a permanent state of affairs for them. Far beyond that, the ground rules of the examination have been modified very significantly. The ideal conditions under which they were first tested are plainly both gone and (temporally) irretrievable.

This point is, of course, dramatically underscored in Adam's and his wife's alienation, finally, from their viceregal Garden-home, symbolic of the ease of all God's special favour toward them (2:36; 20:117,123). Quite naturally, such a loss is spoken of in terms of downward movement (2:36-38; 7:22,24-25; 20:117,123): barred from the heights[138] of earth's Garden estate, they are still to live

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[138]The notion of the "sublime" is linguistically joined to that of altitude or height in the Quranic word *ʿalā*, used in connection with the Gardens of Eden of the afterlife in 69:22 and 88:10. This compares with the Biblical identification of the primeval garden with the "mount" of God (Ezek. 28:13-16).

in the earth, only now under much less prosperous circumstances (20:117-19,123; cf. 2:35). This expulsion ties in with the effect of man's disrobing, for again here public humiliation is integral; and, just as man's loss of his resplendent inaugural (i.e. viceregal) attire was to be replaced with paltry leaf garments of his own making, so also his glorious paradisal home was lost to whatever hovel he might initially erect or find for himself.

The eviction of Adam and his wife should not, however, be taken to mean that their continuing tenure on earth is to be altogether miserable, for their temporal livelihood there is anticipated (2:36; 7:24). But such fulfilment is viewed as always bounded by human mortality, first mentioned here, and the stern prospect of the Great Judgment (7:25).[139] Prosperity does appear to be promised to the righteous in this life (i.e. not reserved exclusively for the afterlife; 20:123; cf. 2:38).[140] But as such it must be understood as meaning prosperity amidst the many hardships and sorrows of a thoroughgoing alienation, inclusive of a permanent exile from their intended home.

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[139]Of course, prior to the fall, future judgment was only a hypothetical reality.

[140]The promise to believers in 2:38, "no fear shall be on them, neither shall they sorrow," is set over against the threat of the Fire (v. 39); hence, its primary reference must be to the afterlife, and it is always in connection with the afterlife that this promise is issued elsewhere (*lā khawfun ʿalayhim wa-lā hum yaḥzanūn* occurs eleven other times; e.g. 2:62; 7:35; 46:13). The broader significance of the believers' promised prosperity in 20:123 is evident in that its alternative, promised to the unbelievers in v. 124, relates clearly to both this life and the afterlife.

(Undoubtedly, the total inhospitableness of the Meccan climate and physical landscape--whether for unbelievers or believers--set the Qur'ān's descriptions of the Garden in the sharpest of relief, in the minds of their first hearers.)

This brings us to the issue of the scope of sin's effects, one of capital importance from a comparative point of view. If the divine judgments considered above represent what came to Adam and his wife for their sin, how are those judgments related to their offspring? More specifically, does the Qur'ān allow for anything approaching the Biblical doctrine of original sin? In what follows, we will attempt to demonstrate that there is considerable Quranic support for the position that the effects of Adam's sin were generic.

Aside from the public degradation involved in his nakedness, we have seen three basic effects of Adam's fall, Quranically perceived. These represent three dimensions of human lostness or alienation: first, spiritual and psychological (Adam's alienation from God and from himself), second, social (his alienation from his wife, as representative of fellow man generally, and from Satan, his supposed partner and "friend") and, third, environmental (his separation from the Garden, signifying full access to the bounty of God's creation). We will open our case here by considering how the race compares with Adam relative to each of these.

First, the Qur'ān attests to the universality of sin and, especially, to the universality of man's critical need of forgiveness and salvific guidance. And, of course, nothing whatever suggests that believers are exempt here (1:6; 3:16; 29:69; 48:1-2; 57:20-21; 67:12), a point which will be of some significance in the discussion to follow. Man is repeatedly shown to be predisposed to unbelief and rebellion. He is said to be ungrateful, selfish and self-seeking, vain, conceited, deceitful, impatient and "hasty," or arrogant and spiritually irresponsible (7:10; 17:100; 70:19-21; 89:15-20; 96:6-16; 100:6-8).

Doubtless, it is this depravity in man which is productive of the tragic monotony of history, Quranically viewed. With one generation's succession to another, history is the story of widespread religious indifference and idolatry calling repeatedly for a new prophetic initiative. Such divine initiatives are then followed by the often virtually unanimous rejection of the prophet. The process invariably ends in hardened unbelief's inevitable consequence, tragic doom. And, even then, such judgment is almost universally unheeded by neighbouring cities and subsequent generations, so that there may be almost no time interval between the end of one dismal cycle and the start of the next (e.g. 22:42-48; 28:58-59; 50:12-14; 53:50-54; 69:4-12; 91:11-14). Such monotony as this attests plainly to the generic effect of the full range of Adam's alienation from God and from himself.

The only real alternative to this conclusion is that history's monotony evidences something--some limitation or flaw--inherent in man from the first.'[141] This, it is thought, allows for man's somehow being 'essentially' good, despite his chronic indulgence in evil and idolatry. But there are three basic problems with this sort of approach. Firstly, as we have seen, beyond the highly problematic "minority position" on primordial man, there is virtually no textual support for such a postulate, Quranically.[142] Secondly, by removing the source of man's ethical deficiencies to the sphere of his design in creation, it is God as Creator who is unintentionally impugned.

Finally, such an approach can hardly be said seriously to reckon with the urgent question voiced in 82:6-8:

> O Man! What deceived you concerning your generous Lord, who created you and shaped you and fashioned you in proper proportion and constituted you according to his intended design?

If man had originally been created prone to such sinful failure, the question would be reduced to divine mockery. Rather, since Adam was created perfectly and lacked nothing, the fault for his sin was entirely his. And of course this question is not a unique case; there are numerous other

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[141]This sort of view is espoused by non-mystical Sunnis, both traditional and modernist.

[142]Of course, the concept of *fiṭra*, belief in man's essential goodness at birth (attributing man's evil to environmental--specifically, parental--influences) is founded on a ḥadīth, not the Quranic occurrence of the term; see *EI*², s.v. "Fiṭra," by D. B. MacDonald.

divine queries like it, ones which demand an explanation for sin and unbelief from responsible man.

Usually the reasoning back of this position is that it was somehow inevitable that man should be imperfect by design; the scholastic *mutakallimūn* often viewed createdness as necessarily implying imperfection, whereas Sunnī modernists not uncommonly make the flaw inherent in man's free will. But it does not logically follow that freedom of will must necessarily translate into at least some inconstancy, some evil choices (indeed, such a will can hardly be said to be free!). As for the equation of creaturehood--or createdness generally--with imperfection, of course, in the absolute sense of the term perfection is attributable to God alone. In its relative sense, however, perfection must belong to all of God's created works (otherwise, he would not be a perfect Creator). And, to be sure, the perfection of God's entire creation is taught Quranically, perfection both in terms of the overall plan and specifically in terms of man's design (32:7; 54:49; 65:3, 82:7). Any attempt to explain the broad range of human depravity in terms of the impossibility of creaturely perfection, then, is both impracticable and false. Rather, as 95:4-5 states:

> "We indeed created Man in the fairest stature; then we restored him [i.e. in Adam's fall] the lowest of the low" (Arberry; interpolation mine).

Second, the Qur'ān views the rancour of Adam's social alienation as resident in the hearts of all men--again,

believers included (to be remedied only upon admittance into Paradise; 7:43; 15:47; cf. 59:10). Hence, the prophecy of 2:30 concerning man's pollution of the earth with bloodshed finds its initial fulfilment, not in any deed of Adam himself, but rather in his firstborn son's murder of his brother (5:27-31). And it is only in connection with the universal scope of this principle of social hostility that the fuller significance of the inclusion of Satan's continuing hostility here is to be seen: for the lost unity of the race issues in that diabolical opposition of unbelievers (and hypocrites) against true believers of which prophetic history can be said to consist. Thus, the continuing atmosphere of Satanic opposition to be endured by the race signifies, most importantly, a humanity rent by rebellion and unbelief. And, clearly, this situation is viewed as continuing until the Day of Judgment.

Finally, it is unavoidable that by Adam's act, the entire race effectively forfeited the liberality of the Garden. (And this is true, regardless of its location--terrestrial or otherwise.) For it was not just Adam and his wife, but also their progeny with them, who were consigned to all the barrenness and other hardships of the relatively untended earth beyond the Garden's boundaries: this punishment is undeniably ours, no less than theirs. Made of and for the earth, man is generically dispossessed of his true home on earth and, so, must ultimately look for his place of rest and security beyond the bounds of history, in

the restored Garden of the afterlife. (And surely the Qur'ān leaves no doubt that this state of exile defines the human situation from Adam to the Last Day.) At least to this degree, then, it must be acknowledged that in his sin Adam stood--not merely as a private individual--but rather as representative of the race.

Here, then, the implicit is made explicit: what appeared to be the generic import of the other two effects of the fall, is inevitably so in terms of the fact of man's banishment. It is reasonable, then, that the two other major elements in Adam's punishment--each being an essentially internal effect and, so, naturally less demonstrably related to its source--may equally well have come to us from him. And, certainly, it is more in keeping with Quranic teaching on the justice of God that, since the race is punished (banished, at the very least) for Adam's sin, Adam is to be viewed as representing the race in his rebellious choice. For, otherwise, God in effect punishes Adam's descendants for a sin to which they are entirely unrelated.

Also supporting this position is the fact that Adam clearly represented the race in his acceptance of earth's vicegerency (and inevitably also in the relationship of covenant reciprocity which went along with it).[143] Since

[143]Even if 7:172 is to be read literally, it may be taken simply in the sense of God's double-underscoring of the race's previously established servitude to him. In that the race was taken from the loins, not of Adam, but of his children, it possibly followed Cain's murder of Abel (*Hābīl*

God here designated one individual to represent all in matters largely determinative of their collective and individual futures, it cannot be said that representative action *per se* is unquranic. If Adam represented the race in his acceptance of the covenantal vicegerency, it should hardly be thought unlikely that he similarly represented the race in its violation and abuse. If his prior submission (in his acceptance of the covenantal vicegerency) ultimately brought blessing to the race, it should not be deemed unquranic that his rebellion should similarly affect the race, only negatively.

Contrary to non-mystical Sunnī belief, there is nothing in the Qur'ān which militates against this unique case of representative headship. Hypothetically speaking, the full application of divine judgment for their rebellion would have meant the end of the human race in the immediate consignment of its only members, original man and his wife, to the fires of Hell. Of course, divine mercy intervened. But our point here is that history and physical generation inevitably imply a certain measure of representation.[144]

Quite obviously, then, at this particular point in history (as at no other) two persons constituted the whole race. Since it is impossible that they were not in some

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in the traditions) and, so, is to be understood in terms of an emphatic divine reiteration of the covenant previously established with the race in Adam.

[144]By way of illustration, the actual representation of unborn generations by the present-day carriers of their genes is, of course, basic to the modern study of genetics (not to mention the entire evolutionary hypothesis).

sense representative of the entire human family to come from them, it should not be deemed unthinkable that God should singularly designate this as the moment of revelation and destiny for mankind, that Adam's fall represents the moment in which the stream of persons to issue from him was polluted at its source. After all, by definition Adam is primordial--that is, archetypical--man.[145] Accordingly, the twin emphases of the Qur'ān on the responsibility of the individual for his own doings and on the justice of God (his requiting the individual, again, only for what he has done) remain intact; for they specifically relate to the post-fall situation.[146] Man's 'original sin' is of another order, being--not within--but rather a part of history's interpretive framework.

Like the Biblical treatment of the fall, then, the Quranic treatment of the fall makes it an event of

[145]And surely if, as non-mystical Muslims imply, the Qur'ān sought to overturn and correct what they consider to be the gross misuse of the fall on the part of certain Biblical writers (especially, Paul), the Qur'ān's complete lack of any explicit statement to that effect, together with its acceptance of the two points treated above, points the reader in the direction of--and not away from--the Biblical position.

[146]The oft repeated statement "no soul laden bears the load of another" (e.g. 6:164 and 17:15 Arberry) relates to the individual's salvation or damnation on the Last Day. Hence, while (Quranically speaking) it may well exclude any notion of redemptive mediation, it is clearly not in opposition to Adam's having represented the race in his sin: no one is finally damned on account of Adam's representative sin *per se*. Rather, it is the probationary situation of the race (inclusive of man's internal state) which is radically altered by Adam's betrayal of his Lord's trust.

structural--as opposed to accidental--significance.[147] Admittedly, the Pauline development of this, in terms of universal guilt (whereby Adam is viewed as having incurred guilt upon the race as its representative head) and pollution, referred to by Luther as the "bondage of the will," is far more explicit, existing not by logical inference only, as is the case in its Quranic treatment. This explicitness naturally results in a much sharper focus in the Biblical presentation (Rom. 5-8; 1 Cor. 15:21-22; cf. Jer. 17:9; Matt. 7:18; Mark 7:20-23; Rom. 3:9-18). Admittedly also, the Quranic treatment of both guilt and pollution differs significantly from the Biblical. But certainly both concepts, guilt/innocence and inner pollution/purity, are to be found in the Qur'ān, and none of the differences relates specifically to the question of our Adamic representation.[148]

[147]Of course, just the opposite is true of the theologizing of non-mystical Muslims on this point. On this, see G. E. von Grunebaum's "Observations on the Muslim Concept of Evil," *Studia Islamica XXXI-XXXII*, ed. Wilferd Madelung (Chicago: Variorum Reprints, 1976), XXXI:120-21.

[148]Guilt may be said to have two aspects, Biblically, the one theological or objective (e.g. Lev. 5:17; Deut. 5:11; Josh. 7:10-15), the other psychological or subjective (e.g. Psa. 51:3,14; John 8:9; Heb. 10:22). This dual aspect follows from man's continued imaging of his Maker--however imperfectly--since the fall. Quranically, on the other hand, we find only the notion of objective guilt (visible, for example, in the basic concept of divine judgment based on an infallible record of the individual's sins). The notion of the sinner's subjective guilt is almost totally absent. No doubt this is due partly to the Qur'ān's very minimal emphasis on the absolute holiness of God, which we have already seen, partly to the remoteness of man's relationship to God generally (sin is only as internally unbearable as the personal bond it violates is intimate and,

The Biblical situation here differs categorically only in that the race is dealt with representatively in both Adam and Christ, the "last Adam"; of course, this means that Christ's accomplishments are structural also, his death-resurrection representing the undoing of what Satan accomplished in Adam's fall (e.g. Rom.5-8). But, like the Qur'ān, the Bible evidences the very same insistence on individual responsibility, apart from such unique cases of

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hence, wholistic) and partly to its marked tendency towards the exteriorization of evil. That tendency, to which we will eventually come in our study, relates to the Qur'ān's second picture of man; and the emphatically sociological orientation of that picture explains why the effect of sin in the individual is far more one of (public) shame than of guilt (particularly, subjective guilt).

On man's inner pollution, there is little definition Quranically, while Biblically we are told of both the darkening of man's mind and man's total inability in himself to please God or attain salvation (i.e. his free access to the requisite external revelation notwithstanding; Gen. 6:5,11-12; Isa. 64:6; John 12:40; Rom. 1:18-21; 3:9-20; 2 Cor. 4:4). Of course, Ghazālī and others have taken the view that Quranic statements stressing the utter impossibility of man's attaining salvation apart from the intervention of divine grace are to be understood in terms of both the objective light of revealed truth (e.g the Qur'ān) and subjective, inner 'sight' (without which the light is unperceived). The usual emphasis of the Qur'ān in such statements is, however, on the external guidance of prophetic revelation (e.g. 7:43); otherwise, one is only dealing with the sovereignty of God in individual salvation (e.g. 10:99; 24:35; 35:8; 42:8), viewing man's salvation entirely from the divine, as opposed to the human, perspective. By contrast, the human perspective on salvation stresses, not the absoluteness of God's grace there, but rather the necessity of man's self-preparation; that is, good works are viewed, not solely as the fruit of one's salvation (as is the case, Biblically), but rather as an essential contributor to the individual's salvation, since--for example--we are told of the impossibility of death-bed conversions (4:17-18; cf. e.g. 2:271; 4:31; 5:89; 7:156). Indeed, when the Qur'ān's teaching on salvation is considered in the total context of the Qur'ān on man, especially its second picture of man, Ghazālī's position here appears rather unlikely.

representative action (Ezek. 18:1-30; Matt. 12:36-37; Rom. 2:6; 14:11-12; 1 Cor. 3:8; Gal. 6:4-8).

Quranically conceived, then, man's fall and its universal effects are in large measure consonant with their Biblical counterparts. There are three very significant differences between the narratives in the two Scriptures, however. The first follows logically from what we have seen of Biblical and Quranic descriptions of the divine-human relationship. Before, no less than after the fall, the relationship is not characterized Quranically by any special degree of familial fellowship or mutual intimacy; and, so, the degree of man's alienation from God is reduced substantially.

The second major difference is that in the Quranic accounts death is never said to be sin's penalty. This has usually been taken to mean that death was a part of God's original plan for man.[149] But such a reading is not necessarily correct; for death is never given as a part of the picture prior to the fall either. What is indisputable here is that death is not viewed as an essential part of the judgment which is man's by his fall. Biblically, of course,

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[149]Seemingly, this would have to mean that death's gradual onset in the long and often painful process of physical deterioration and decline (through a variety of illnesses, etc.) is also a part of the original plan. Contrary to this, the Qur'ān pictures the ideal human situation in terms of a painless world, its eschatological alternate being a place of unthinkable physical torment. Of course, this presents a problem if one is to believe that man's primordial examination took place in a situation ideal to man.

the exact opposite is true: death is considered the primary consequence of the fall (Gen. 2:16-17; Rom. 5:12-19; 6:23). And this point is underscored by the fact that the specific alternative to the forbidden tree (which enslaved and disenfranchised by its pseudo-knowledge) was the "tree of life" (which had the power eternally to seal man in all the blessedness and freedom of his original union with God; Gen. 2:8-9; 3:22).[150]

This basic equation of sin and death (personal disintegration), of righteousness and life (personal wholeness), is clearly observable throughout the Bible (Gen. 6:12-21; 7:17-23; 18:16-25; Prov. 11:19; Ezek. 18:4-31; 33:7-11; John 8:21-24; Rom. 6:16-23; Rev. 20:11-15). We see it particularly in the great choice between covenant blessing and cursing, set before the Children of Israel by Moses (Deut. 28-30; see, especially, 30:15-20). Life and death are thus to be viewed as temporal states issuing in eternal states for the individual; and, relative to divine favour or blessing and wrath or cursing, this is the case Quranically also. Biblically speaking, then, physical death assumes--one might say--'metonymic' significance, as the visible representative of the full scope of sin's alienation.

While the notion of alienation is central in the Quranic view of the fall, the Qur'ān seldom if ever

[150]Of course, in the Qur'ān there is no mention of a specific alternative, and this perhaps gives a hint of inevitability to the story's negative outcome.

identifies it with death.[151] Characteristically, rather, death is presented there only as the finalization of life's great choice for man and as preliminary to his divine summons (in the resurrection) to face the judgment.

Quite clearly, this difference is one of profound Christological significance. With death as peripheral to the divine judgment on man's sin, it can hardly be central to the divine removal of that judgment. To eradicate evil (whether universally or individually) and undo the damage wreaked by it could quite conceivably have nothing whatever to do with death (or with resurrection, as salvation's triumphal bursting of sin's death-bonds on the race, as in the Biblical view). Biblically, sin and death are everywhere inextricably linked, "so that, Christ's victory over the latter signified his defeat of the former."[152]

And, in keeping with all this, sacrificial death bears none of the central significance in the Quranic thought world that it does in the Biblical. Quranically, sacrifice is prescribed; and this has been traditionally understood to be commemorative of Abraham's sacrifice of his son (e.g. 22:36-37; cf. 37:102-07). The broader significance of that patriarchal act of *islām* is never developed by the Qur'ān, however.[153]

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[151]It is unclear whether Quranic allusions to the second death (37:59; 44:35,56) signify the notion of eternal death, as in its Biblical usage (Rev. 2:11; 20:6,14; 21:8), but this is a possibility.

[152]Wright, *Colossians and Philemon*, p. 74.

Biblically, on the other hand, sacrifice represents that which provides for man's restoration to full fellowship with God by the covenant of redemptive grace. Hence, we find the expression "blood of the covenant," used in connection with both the Old Testament sacrificial system and its New Testament fulfillment in Christ's death (e.g. Exod. 24:8; Matt. 26:27-28; Mark 14:24; cf. Psa. 50:5; Heb. 8:1-10:18, especially, 9:22).

The third and final difference of significance between the Quranic and Biblical accounts of the fall is that the Qur'ān also nowhere specifically views the barrenness of the untended earth beyond the bounds of the Garden as the result of a sin-related curse. Biblically, this point is made very clear and is ultimately anticipatory of earth's eschatological recreation and the complete removal of sin's curse. The Quranic omission of such a curse suggests that the natural order's uncongeniality and unpredictability are part of God's original intention for the creation (in the same way that death may be viewed by the Qur'ān as original, as we have seen).

It may, however, be arguable that the earth's post-fall barrenness is in fact to be understood in terms of a

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[153]Mahmoud Ayoub's study of Shī^{c}ī applications of such Quranic materials in terms of the (later) death of Imām Ḥusayn in *Redemptive Suffering* effectively corroborates our point here (on Twelver interpretations of Abraham's sacrifice, for example, see pp. 32-34; cf. 235-36 and 246-47). Apart from citing 2:156 (a simple reference to the believers' suffering in *jihād*), Ayoub presents no Quranic basis for the Shī^{c}ī point of view on redemptive suffering (p. 15, n. 1).

sin-related curse on the earth. For it is unthinkable that man should have been limited to a sort of greenhouse existence in a world he and his descendants were intended to rule with ease. Surely no alternative takes full account of the twin facts of man's being created for the earth and his being entrusted with earth's care. (To have so irresponsibly abused his trust was bound to have entailed earth's permanent desolation.) And in support of this view, 21:104 may be taken to indicate a return to God's original design in the recreation of the earth and heavens (cf. 14:48).

Divine Mercy in a Fallen World

We conclude our study of the fall narratives with some consideration of the significance of God's mercy or grace extended to fallen man. This may be covered under two headings: universal or common grace and special grace. Grace, of course, signifies unmerited favour--in fact, favour bestowed on those worthy of just the opposite. By special grace we refer to that which is essential to salvation (in that it restores man to his intended relationship with God) and, so, is exclusively bestowed on the community of believers.[154]

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[154]Belonging to the much larger question of the Quranic understanding of community, the fascinating and vital question of whether or not the community of faith, as opposed to unbelievers, is viewed by the Qur'ān as including other than followers of Muḥammad--in particular, Jews (*Yahūd*) and Christians (*Naṣārá*)--is unfortunately beyond the scope of this essay.

Common grace, on the other hand, can be considered essential only to the continuation of man's probationary choice. That is to say, common grace allows for the real possibility of salvation, since the individual's salvation is, in one sense, entirely dependent on his or her historical response[155] to God's guidance, the primary component of special grace. Thus, in the inquiry to follow, we will begin with common grace, as being logically the first of this pair.

In both 2:36 and 7:24, God grants to Adam and his wife (representing the race) an indeterminate extension of time on the earth. Basic to this, of course, is the notion of deferred judgment: their home remains on the earth. It is not now to be in Hell, as their "high treason" against God should warrant. Hence, we may see an allusion to man's future judgment in the words "...from there [the earth] you shall be brought forth" (7:24 Arberry). Since Adam's situation is representative of that of mankind as a whole, this deferral means that in the course of subsequent history good and evil will very frequently (if not characteristically) go unrewarded in this life. If this were not so, the prophets would never have preached impending doom; nor would it ever have been said of the

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[155]In another sense, of course, it is entirely dependent on the sovereign election of God. On the relationship between human responsibility and divine sovereignty, see pp. 18-23 and 36-38 above.

believers: "their wage awaits them with their Lord" (2:274,277 Arberry; cf. 2:112,262).

Integral to this notion of an extended time frame is another notion which might well be termed the indiscriminateness of God's providential care. This is visible in that, in Adam, the race is promised a livelihood (*mataᶜ*) on the earth, implying at least some measure of professional productivity, overall enjoyment and, hence, divine blessing. Support for such a concept of universal blessing is certainly not wanting elsewhere in the Qur'ān. The bounty of God's creation is everywhere viewed as a clarion call to man's universal debt of gratitude to God. And this must be taken to imply the overwhelming goodness of God to man in the general course of events (e.g. 10:60; 12:38; 14:34; 27:73).

This means that in some respects the evil are generally blessed with the good in this life. And, indeed, this must be so if there is to be any genuine conflict between the communities of faith and unbelief. For the entire concept of *jihād fī sabīli- 'l-lāh* necessarily requires some measure of equality between unbelievers and believers temporally. The Quranic concept of *jihād* even allows for the (temporary) physical supremacy of unbelievers over believers, by the permission of God. The forced emmigration of Muḥammad and his band of followers to Medina, together with such setbacks as that suffered by the Muslim army in the Battle of Uḥud, clearly attests to this fact.

In the light of the concept of *ẓulm al-nafs*, this gracious deferral must be viewed as inclusive of some notion of the restraint of sin's powers of destruction, both within the individual and within society generally. For surely the alienation which sin represents generically--as the absolute denial of God,[156] the ground of all being--calls for divine restraint in its full extent (that is, on all levels). This aspect of common grace is never treated explicitly in the Qur'ān, however.

Of course, no aspect of the deferral involved here is to be viewed as in any wise contravening the real possibility of sin's immediate retribution. But, for all their importance in the Qur'ān's homiletic content, such in-breakings of divine wrath are to be seen as exceptional in Quranic history. That is, they are exceptional in the sense that they represent the occasional crises and, indeed, merely the climax points in unbelief's long history.[157]

Similarly, the deferral of faith's reward must never be taken to mean that reward does not and cannot come to the

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[156]As was seen, this is how Adam's sin is treated Quranically; see pp. 81-92 above.

[157]Perhaps such in-breakings of judgment into this age of common grace are to be viewed after the model of Biblical scholar Meredith G. Kline, as momentary intrusions of the eschatological Last Day into history (see his *Structure*, revised ed., pp. 154-58). But, if so, they differ from their Biblical counterparts in that they are not ultimately rooted in history, in any divine-human endeavour comparable to the incarnation-cross event. In a sense, also, the equalization of the Last Day has been underway since Christ's triumphant overthrow of evil, Biblically speaking; whereas the Qur'ān views such equalization as only assured at the end of time.

believer in this life; for much of the Qur'ān's emphasis in terms of special grace relates to the hope that God may indeed immediately and visibly demonstrate his favour towards the believers and, so, vindicate them in the face of their opponents. In one sense, the blessedness of believers in this life may be said to be presented by the Qur'ān in terms of a telling foretaste of their final reward in Paradise, even in spite of all their earthly lot also includes of struggle, privation, sacrifice and mistreatment. This tension between the concepts of deferred and immediate reward provides much of the dynamic of the Quranic concepts of *islām* and *imān* (faith).

The special or saving grace of God is to be defined in terms of the guidance he offers to man, whose own rebellion has led him astray. This concept of guidance is treated explicitly in two of the Quranic accounts of the fall, both passages indicating that God's guidance is sinful man's only means of salvation (2:38-39; 20:123-27). At issue here, of course, is the fact that there can be no recovery for man without his sincerely returning to God and to his absolute Lordship. By willfully defecting to Satan's cause, man has denied God his rightful *islām* (and also, implicitly, his creaturely dependence on God). Without man's gratefully submitting again to God there can be no salvation for him.

Integral to man's wholehearted return to *islām*, then, is the notion of his genuine repentance. Viewed as the

individual's thoroughgoing reorientation--from a position of (attempted) autonomous self-will, to the will of God--this involves both humble confession and abandonment of wrong. Also involved is the individual's acknowledgment of absolute dependence on God, particularly in terms of his or her desperate need of special grace, of forgiveness. In Adam's case, both the confession of sin and the plea for divine mercy are to be seen in 7:23.

Hence, the guidance here serves as the divinely appointed touchstone for man, the historic means by which his religious orientation (either towards or away from God) is eternally sealed.

The specific contents of God's guidance to Adam (20:122) are never described by the Qur'ān. The reader is told of Adam's receiving "words" from his Lord (2:37). And certainly everything about the larger Quranic context suggests that the guidance of 20:122 is to be identified with those words; that this guidance--like that promised to mankind generally (2:38; 20:123)--signifies verbal revelation, primarily.[158a]

Some Muslim commentators have suggested that the words Adam received are none other than the words of the

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[158a]While divine guidance is by no means an exclusively verbal phenomenon in the Qur'ān--for example, in 3:96 the Meccan sanctuary is designated a guidance and, of course, all of creation attests to God's unrivalled might and majesty--it may be considered primarily verbal, given that the Quranic concept of revelation inevitably underpins the whole of the Qur'ān. On this, see Izutsu's treatment of the Quranic concept of revelation; *God and Man*, pp. 133-93.

prayer (given in 7:23) by which he found acceptance with God.[159] This interpretation is not to be considered impossible. On the one hand, the larger Quranic context does not forbid the notion of divinely prescribed prayers (as is found in the opening sūra, for example), given as one of the means of God's saving grace to man. But, on the other hand, as was noted earlier, the Qur'ān does allow for spontaneous prayer (*duᶜā'*) in exceptional and, especially, desperate situations. And desperation certainly was not wanting in Adam's case.

This suggests that the simple identification of the "words" of 2:37 with the prayer provides too tidy a solution to the puzzle. In any case, those "words" should not likely be limited to those of a ritual prayer. Again here the larger Quranic context suggests that the guidance was far more than this, that Adam stood in need of far more than merely the appropriate prayer formula. And, of course, in ascribing ten 'Books' of revealed scripture to Adam's prophethood,[160] tradition has plainly demonstrated its

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[159]Others have used 2:37 and 7:23 to put either the *Fātiḥa* or else long, elaborate (extra-Quranic) prayers in the mouth of Adam, often for clearly theological purposes; Mahmoud Ayoub gives an example of this in *The Qur'an and Its Interpreters*, one vol. to date (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1984) 1:84-85.

[160]Belonging to a fuller investigation of the concept of prophethood than this present study allows, the discussion concerning Adam's alleged prophethood must be bypassed here. The Muslim Adam was first designated a prophet, not by the Qur'ān, but rather in that genre of literature known as *qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā'*. Of course, that is a distinction he shares with many others; Adam's uniqueness here relates to the fact that, among all those so named as

recognition of Adam's and his family's immensity of need before God (even if such revelations should be considered somewhat later than the particular "words" under consideration).

Looking at the broad lines of the Quranic concept of salvation, we may safely say that the renewed possibility of divine blessing for covenant obedience must have been central in God's guidance to Adam. Sinful though the race has become, God extends his mercy to the elect in that he chooses, nurtures, shelters and blesses them.[161] Clearly, the ultimate realization of God's plan to bless the elect is reserved for the afterlife (2:38) and, so, the believer is given the hope of misery's final end, which is what the resurrection (7:25) is to signify to him or her.

One thing God's blessing must represent temporally is the believer's removal from that sphere of human life characterized by the dominance of Satanic authority (15:42; 16:99-100; 17:65).[162] Whereas the non-elect are consigned

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prophets (i.e. extra-Quranically), he is the only one whom later theologians found needful.

[161]In terms of Adam's personal standing before God, the Qur'ān shows him to be among the elect, for God is said to have chosen him, relented towards him and guided him (20:122). Hence, in his case, God's guidance is efficacious, or at least it appears to be efficacious for a time. Quranically, then, he may be said to typify both the unbeliever (in his sinful turning away from God) and the believer (in his submissive return). Perhaps in his later departure from faith he is also typical of the *munāfiq* (hypocrite), professing gratitude while committing *shirk*. See p. 87 above, on Adam's later backsliding.

[162]This is very similar to what is illustrated by the Biblical narrative of Job; Biblically also, Satan's

to the destructive authority of Satan, Satan's opposition to believers is both limited and ideally accrues yet more divine blessing to their account (through their perseverence in faith's testing). So, in effect it is an inverted form of blessing, although that is certainly far, far from Satan's intention. (This matter of reversal is of considerable significance, and so we must return to it once we have gained some sense of the larger Quranic picture of man.)

It follows, then, that there can be no ultimate triumphing of the unbelievers over the believers. For the unbelievers' successes over the believers are divinely authorized, even if their implementation is, in another sense, quite obviously Satanic in origin. Hence, the triumph of unbelief represented by the killing of a *shāhid* --be he a common believer or *rasūl*[163]--must be viewed as an apparent triumph only and one of necessarily limited duration, to be righted on the Last Day, if not before (e.g. 2:154; 3:157-58,169-71; 22:58-59).

It should be clear from our discussion of God's grace at work in the human situation that there is much general agreement between this and the Biblical reading of the post-fall situation. Divine grace in response to human sin has affected what we earlier called the paradigm of covenant

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authority over the believer is both limited and situational (see Job 1:6-12 and 2:1-6).

[163]On the killing of God's prophets and messengers, see: 2:91; 3:112,181-83; 4:155.

reciprocity quite similarly: the same tension between God's covenant faithfulness and his temporary staying of rewards (through common grace) produces a similar dynamic in which faith and obedience, submission to the perfect will of God in a fallen world, are to operate. All of the evils and injustices perpetrated against believers in the path of godly submission are similarly "worked together" for their good (Rom. 8:28).

Notwithstanding this basic agreement, there are also a number of major differences, particularly in terms of the operation of special grace. Briefly stated, these relate to 1) the nature of saving grace, 2) the incarnation of Christ --and, in particular, his death and resurrection--as the point at which this grace is made available to the race and 3) the nature of the guidance by which man is redeemed from his state of lostness. The point throughout is the same: Biblically speaking, special grace (indeed, all grace) is altogether impossible (and, hence, inexplicable) apart from Jesus Christ and the triumph of his crucifixion on our behalf.

Some of these differences are discernible in the fall narratives, but it is only in the larger Quranic context that they become fully apparent. Hence, we will set aside the fall narratives at this point, returning to their data from time to time in the course of our larger discussion of the human situation and the nature of salvation.

That discussion will initially require our reassessment of the nature of man in the Qur'ān, for here it must be frankly acknowledged that the picture of man given by the fall narratives does not constitute the whole description of Quranic man, even in embryo. There is also, rather, much evidence in the Qur'ān for a quite different view of man. This results in a situation where the interpretive framework for man does not really accommodate the major structures which logically should have been built into it. But, since the second picture is both equally Quranic and the standard view of virtually all non-mystical Muslim interpreters, its significance is not to be minimized.

The Religio-Sociological Perspective on Sin and Salvation--An Alternate View

What sharply distinguishes the second picture from the first is its essentially external assessment of sin. That is, unlike the fall-related picture, there are also in the Qur'ān innumerable data suggesting that evil is (after, and so also before, the fall) only exterior to man--or, at the very least, to believing man--as that which only attaches itself to him from without. This, in turn, means that the nature of man must be viewed as morally unchanged, whether his nature is to be understood in terms of an essential neutrality or of a predisposition to the righteousness of *islām*.[164]

The second view of human nature presents itself to the reader in a number of ways. Most obviously, it is strongly implied by the Quranic treatment of the continuing sinfulness of believers. Rather than presenting the true path as a titanic struggle between the forces of good and evil, fought upon the battlefield of the human soul, the Qur'ān sees that struggle in almost exclusively communal (i.e. religio-political) terms. The most cursory study of *jahada* in the concordance makes plain that Quranic *jihād* is primarily to be taken in this sense, for it is virtually always associated with *islām* (or *imān*), as the great communal watershed, and with its communal consequences: such things as persecution, emigration, the military campaign to retake Mecca for the true religion and the resultant need for communal solidarity (e.g. 8:74-75; 16:110).

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[164]See n. 142 above, on the *fiṭra* concept. In some regards, this functions similarly to the Biblical notion of man *qua imago Dei* (i.e. despite his being fallen, he is essentially both a knower and a servant of God as long as he remains man; e.g. Rom. 1:18-23).

As was observed above, a number of things have characteristically been done by Muslim interpreters to adjust the fall to fit with the second picture of man found in the Qur'ān. First, Adam's sin is viewed as a mere mistake and, so, is rendered of no great consequence. Second, it is treated as somehow inadvertent, the product of his weakness or incapacity (e.g. inherent in man's finitude). And, finally, as the single consequence of the fall which is inescapably of universal scope in its application, man's exile from the Garden is made far less significant by treating it in strictly local (geographic or, mistakenly, cosmological) terms. Both the sin and its consequences have thus been fairly uniformly minimized.

It is not, Quranically, that the Muslim believer ever appears to be sinless. For rank and file believers and exalted prophets both commit sins, we are told (e.g. 3:31; 11:47; 28:14-17; 37:139-44; 38:21-26; 71:28). But quite clearly the Muslim believer is never depicted as 'sinful' (i.e. inherently wayward) either. Even if one were to assume that the believer is so afflicted, it is indisputable that this continuing sinfulness is simply never treated with any of the passion with which the sinfulness of the non-Muslim is treated. If the inner root of human depravity, so dominant in unbelievers, is still productive of sinful thoughts and behaviour in believers, here serious attention is given only to the elimination of its more "deadly" (i.e. communally visible) fruits.[165] Here the pollution of man's inner spring, so to speak, is almost altogether out of view.

Even if one assumes that the Adam narratives are to be reckoned with here, such inner contamination appears to

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[165]No doubt this relates to the emphasis in Muslim ethics on communal propriety as of greater importance than personal holiness *per se*. Hence, in spite of the Qur'ān's prohibition of both outward and inward sins (6:120,151; 7:33), Ghazālī advises that private sins are more tolerable than public sins, that adultery or any other sin committed in secrecy is less evil than the same sin indulged in with public (communal) knowledge. Such a categorical appraisal suggests that the individual's deceit in attempting to hide his or her sin either cannot spring from evil motives or else that, relative to the moral tone of the community, questions of one's motive before God are of relatively little consequence. (In any case, the issue of "inner sins" is not the same as that of inner sinfulness.)

The word *fāḥisha* is used in two of the three verses dealing with the necessary avoidance of both inner and outer sin; and the notion of Jāhilī excess seems to be the thought in all three.

present no real problem to either man's reconciliation to God or the believer's capacity to please God. Strong communal allegiance, *ṣalāt* and the other prescribed expressions of faith are apparently held to be quite sufficient to remedy or at least effect the containing and covering of the believer's sin necessary until sin and Satan are dealt with decisively on the Last Day. All of the passages cited above in connection with the human bent towards evil address the sins of unbelievers.[166] Hence, it would appear that sin's penetration of the believer's heart --as opposed to that of the unbeliever--is shallow. (But, then, it must be recognized that for the most part treatment of these questions is oblique, suggesting their low priority on the communally-oriented Quranic agenda.)

The reason for this is that a given sin's treatment in the Qur'ān is generally commensurate with its overtness. Accordingly, pride's grosser manifestations--the unbeliever's arrogant refusal to submit to Muḥammad's prophetic authority and identify with the Muslim *umma*, for example--are condemned in the strongest terms possible. Of pride's more covert manifestations (pride of one's piety, for example), of pride's seemingly 'pleasanter' side, virtually nothing is said. The same is true of the Qur'ān's treatment of hypocrisy: the treachery of deliberate, religio-political (treasonous) deception occupies the Qur'ān's entire focus here, while nothing whatever is said

[166]See p. 97.

of that duplicity of heart with which even the best of believers are afflicted. Naturally, this treatment of sin tends markedly toward a rather less insidious view of evil than one would expect, given the strong Quranic emphasis on the deceitfulness of sin and of Satan (e.g. 3:14; 6:43; 15:39; 40:37).

All of this, of course, relates directly to the Qur'ān's preoccupation with the "watershed sins"; that is, with those sins which push the sinner across the boundary between faith and unbelief, between the communally-defined causes of good and evil, covenant blessing and cursing. Hence, sins are significant Quranically to the degree that they relate to the communal concern for good and the overthrow of evil, again communally defined.[167] The net effect of this is a thoroughgoing social dichotomy, and, in the nature of the Qur'ān's apologetic thrust, the frequent idealization of both believers and unbelievers.

It is true of course, that the believer's potential to commit serious sin is implicit in the Quranic treatment of the so-called *ḥadd*[168] or "boundary" punishments (5:33-39), but the Qur'ān nowhere documents the actualization of that potential in the grievous misconduct of the faithful within the pristine *umma*. The legal materials found in the

[167]For a brief discussion of the Qur'ān's ethical orientation, see appendix 2. This question is also treated extensively, but from another perspective, in Izutsu's *Ethico-Religious Concepts* (pp. 203-49, in particular).

[168]See *EI*², s.v. "Ḥadd," section one by B. Carra de Vaux, revised by J. Schacht.

Qur'ān never deal with their ultimate necessity, whether it lies in man's refusal to adhere to the divinely ordained boundaries or in man's simple ignorance of those bounds. But on the whole such in-house guidance is rather optimistic in tone; and that, in sharp contrast to the vast Quranic offensive against unbelievers.

This communal aspect points to a rather significant omission in the Qur'ān's treatment of sin. It is that there is to be found there no challenging of the Jāhilī concept of morality, according to which good and evil are viewed as external to the individual, residing instead in the tribe--either in its noble or its ignoble heritage.[169] Given the Jāhilī context of the Qur'ān, this fact cannot possibly be taken as other than a tacit endorsement of the tribal rooting of moral value, especially when so much of the Quranic treatment of history (particularly its numerous denunciations of idolaters and its prophetic panegyrics) is remarkably reminiscent of the pre-Islamic poetry of tribal apologetics. (And, of course, it was doubtless that poetry which served so to entrench this concept of morality in Arab thinking.)

Of course, the basic change introduced by the Qur'ān here relates to the fact that, instead of ethnicity, piety--

[169]Of the Jāhilī approach to man's ethical qualities, Professor Izutsu writes: "all the noble qualities were considered to reside not so much in the individual members of the tribe as in the tribe itself." And, again: "moral virtues were rather a precious communal possession inherited from fathers and forefathers." *Ethico-Religious Concepts*, p. 62.

the heart's ethico-religious allegiance--was made the determining factor in the great supertribal contest outlined in the Quranic history of the race.[170] But, otherwise, the old Arab conception of tribal nobility appears to have been transposed intact into this new conception of a supertribal dichotomy: good and evil appear to reside in the 'families' of faith and unbelief respectively. And, hence, one would initially gain access to the rich heritage of the 'family' of faith, represented by the prophetic heroes, by the simple act of his familial (that is, his supertribal) affiliation and allegiance. This sort of communal orientation to questions of morality naturally excluded much possibility of treating seriously either the sins of believers or their continuing depravity (according to the Adam-related view of man).

On the other side of the line, the perhaps related issue of individual non-responsibility was a point of direct confrontation with the Jāhilī view. But even there the Jāhilī Arab was urged (implicitly, at least) to actualize personally the nobility of his tribe (as opposed to demonstrating the despicable character of rival tribes).[171] Likewise, as a rule, the Qur'ān exhorts members of the supertribal community of Islam positively to emulate Abraham and other noble prophets of the community of faith's earlier

[170]Ibid., pp. 58-61.

[171]The Jāhilī Arab "felt himself charged with the sacred duty of transmitting [his tribal honour] unharmed, or even greatly increased, to his posterity"; ibid., pp. 62-63.

generations, all the while warning of the sad alternative in its not infrequent denigrations of those refusing to submit to God and yield their allegiance to the prophets.[172]

Hence, the issue of individual responsibility was partly a matter of emphasis. Some Jāhilī Arabs would have emphasized the simple fact of their allegiance to the (right) tribe, with all it signified of inherent nobility, while, for others, tribal allegiance primarily represented the necessity of striving to conform to the tribal ideal of nobility. (Indeed, a given Arab may at times have emphasized the one and at times the other.) And these same two emphases, but of course with respect to the Muslim supertribe, appear to be equally present in the Quranic treatment of morality.

If there were any real point of conflict between individual responsibility and communal moral value--whether Jāhilī or Quranic--it would conceivably be at the points of either conversion or backsliding. But the one who reverts is Quranically considered to have been an unbeliever in disguise all along. And, so, in such a case both his or her conversion and its later undoing are apparent only. In the case of a true believer's conversion, Jāhilī tribalism allowed for the possibility of a tribe's inclusion of alien individuals (or groups) who thus assumed a "client" or *mawlā*

[172]This is why the Qur'ān is so generally ambivalent in its attitude to the People of the Book: at times and in certain respects these quasi-supporters of the Muslim cause demonstrated true Islamic nobility and at times and in other respects just its opposite.

status and, so, counted as the people to whom they belonged.[173] In other words, since a change of tribal allegiance was possible, the prophetic call for the pagan's conversion to the Muslim *umma* would have had the force of calling the alien to join the truly noble supertribe of Islam.

Presumably the very fact of such a conversion demonstrated the essential 'mistakenness' of the convert's previous alienness. And the reverse of this appears to be true also: as we have just indicated, those Muslims of wavering loyalty were categorized as "hypocrites" or, at the very least, they were warned of the grave danger of so proving to have all along been false believers (2:8-20; 3:167-68; 4:137-46; 29:10-11; 61:2-3). As for the true believer, in one sense, he or she is essentially good; while, in another, one's true guarantee of goodness is in the Muslim *umma* and one's whole-hearted allegiance to it.

Then, too, however much the formation of the first Muslim *umma* depended on conversion, the nature of that initial crisis experience, like birth, tended to be forgotten in the life which followed; and, particularly so as one generation of Muslims succeeded another. This, of course, was as it should have been: surely, few aspects of the crisis of conversion were ever to be taken as providing the communal norm for life thereafter. On some level, then, we are here taking issue with the emphasis of Izutsu on the

[173]See *SEI*, s.v. "Mawla."

Qur'ān's rejection of tribal for individual responsibility.[174] The Quranic stress on the utter meaningless of tribal affiliation on the Last Day is to be read specifically in the context of the conversion-aimed preaching in which it occurs (e.g. 80:33-37).

Two points may be made here. First, of course, it is only ethnically-defined tribalism which is in view. The Qur'ān's ethico-religious redefinition of tribalism, in terms of the great sociologically definite contest of faith and unbelief, is not at all under fire. (For, as we have seen, the model in such matters as conversion and reversion had to be that of Jāhilī tribalism.) And, second, even such ethnically-defined tribal responsibility may be explicitly denied in one sense, while it is implicitly affirmed in another. It is only the employment of tribalism as a barricade against Quranic calls to conversion which is flatly condemned.[175]

Another factor consistent with the second view's minimization of evil is the absence of any thoroughgoing concept of sacrificial atonement or expiation, noted

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[174]Izutsu, *Ethico-Religious Concepts*, pp. 59-62; cf. W. Montgomery Watt, *Muhammad at Mecca* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1953), pp. 19, 25.

[175]The limited nature of even such condemnation must be clear from the fact that the ethnically-defined tribe's expressing a 'group decision' to give its allegiance to the Muslim cause was readily acceptable to Muḥammad: as a facilitator of conversion, tribal responsibility was allowed (it was only disallowed as a barrier to conversion). So, we might say that the Qur'ān employs individualism only to offset the abuse of tribalism. We are not looking at any sort of wholesale exchange.

earlier. Further, central to Quranic soteriology, the concept of prophethood, relates most basically to man's need of guidance and only secondarily to his need of forgiveness and inner cleansing. And consonant with the Qur'ān's minimization of sacrifice is its implicit exclusion of any notion of priesthood: sacrifice is so occasional an event as to require--indeed, as to be able to sustain--no distinct priestly office.

It is not remarkable, then, that Muslim interpreters --some of the mystics excepted--have viewed man's moral deficiency in terms of a simple lack of knowledge, not primarily in terms of forgiveness (the removal of guilt) and the remedy of his radical perversion of will. As we have seen, this deficiency of knowledge has often been related to man's finitude. And, since all such deficiency has been assumed to have been met both simply and efficiently (but, seemingly, only temporarily--at least, until the giving of the Qur'ān)[176] by means of the divine guidance of special revelation through prophetic utterance, man appears to be morally neutral, neither willfully blind to the truth about himself and God, nor basically perverse with respect to following after the good.[177] Hence, aside from his need of

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[176]Properly belonging to the Quranic concept of prophetic revelation, the question of the historical permanence of the effect of Quranic revelation is one which can only be touched on here (see n. 189 below).

[177]If such blindness and perversity are thought to figure at all in man's (or, at least, the believer's) sin, then it must be said that they are secondary here, by-products of his (or her) severe epistemological limitations.

forgiveness (which may, from this point of view, be considered essentially cosmetic, since the sins were committed through simple ignorance), he needs only to respond to the prophetic word with his unmeasured submission.

Furthermore, God's mercy is believed easily to overlook and ultimately to dispense with the believer's moral faults (i.e. including all of the smaller sins), as one "forgives" a child's incapacity to think or behave in an adult manner.[178] Unlike the more serious sins, the smaller sins are not viewed as in any sense denying one's allegiance to the Muslim *umma*. Hence, we read:

> If you avoid the heinous sins that are forbidden you, We will acquit you of your evil deeds, and admit you by the gate of honour. (4:31 Arberry)

And, again, believers are described negatively as "those who avoid the heinous sins and indecencies..." (42:37 Arberry; cf. 53:32). Hence, the Muslim reader concludes, not unjustifiably, that "God will pardon or overlook men's [i.e. the believers'] lapses, provided their overall performance is good" (see 39:33-35). So, while the record of human history given by the Qur'ān (of the unbelievers' rejection of the former prophets, etc.) is plainly pessimistic, the

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[178]It will at once be recognized that such an estimate of man's ethical capacity is entirely consistent with what was seen of the apparent Quranic reserve in dealing with man's imaging of God and the resultant restriction of the relationship in non-propinquitous terms (e.g. of a categorical Master-servant disjunction).

Qur'ān may be said to be markedly "optimistic with regard to the sequel of human endeavour [i.e. in the Muslim *umma*]."[179]

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[179]Fazlur Rahman, *Major Themes of the Qur'ān* (Minneapolis: Bibliotheca Islamica, 1980), p. 30. Hence, Rahman is both right and wrong in saying that the Qur'ān possesses nothing of Paul's "attitude of self-torment and moral frenzy" (ibid.). He is right in the sense that there is nothing there akin to Paul's moral scrupulousness as evidenced in Romans 7; this relates to the predominantly communal orientation of Quranic ethics, as opposed to the predominantly personal (or existential) orientation of Biblical ethics (on this, see n. 148 above).

Here we might almost say that the two Quranic categories of sin, watershed sins and lesser offenses, are different in their basic orientation. For, ultimately, unbelievers are isolated individuals (i.e. not a 'community' in God's eyes) and, so, their disqualifying sins are very much an existential reality; i.e. direct offenses against God. The picture is different, however, for the Muslim. On the one hand, the believer's major sins violate the nobility of the community, on the other hand, his or her lesser offenses are 'ameliorated' by his or her active participation in the life of the community by good deeds and also (apparently) by the simple fact of his or her identification with the noble *umma*.

Rahman is, however, unfair to Paul in his referring only to the apostle's statement of the believer's moral dilemma, without bothering to make any mention of his statement of the dilemma's solution in the following chapter (Rom. 8). Such treatment of Paul falsely suggests that "self-torment" and "moral frenzy" are to be the order of the day for Christian believers, as if they related, not to the Bible's diagnosis, but to its cure.

Given the central importance of their communal concerns, it is natural that Muslims focus primarily on the second Quranic picture. And (like the Qur'ān itself) they characteristically make no effort to achieve any sort of thoroughgoing integration of the two pictures, treating man's real depravity only in connection with those resisting the God-ordained goals of the *umma*. In a sense, then, it may be said that the Muslim community has faithfully maintained the spirit of the Qur'ān in its socially dichotomized view of man, relative to the two basic responses to the message of the Qur'ān: the believers' response demonstrates that they are not basically askew in their spiritual orientation, whereas the response of the unbelievers (hypocrites included) demonstrates that the opposite is true of them.

The traditions deal with this dichotomy by saying, on the one hand, that the response of faith-submission is the essentially human one (on *fiṭra*, see nn. 142 and 164 above)

The vital issue in this is that of faith versus unbelief. At this point, Dirk Bakker's over-concern for the chronological sequence of the sūras (and for developments in Muḥammad's psychological state over the course of his prophetic career) has done him disservice. He qualifies Tor Andrae's statement concerning the predominantly pessimistic nature of the Quranic view of man, saying that it is applicable to the oldest parts of the Qur'ān, but not to the later ones. He writes:

> In the progressive development of Muḥammad's preaching... the pessimistic tendency falls more and more into the background and vanishes entirely. So one might sooner say that for the most part the Qur'ān is far from pessimistic, indeed even optimistic.[180]

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and, on the other, that Satan's evil 'touch' contaminates every newborn entering the world; interestingly, only Mary and Jesus are believed to be exceptions to this (see Parrinder on 3:36--given as 3:31/35--*Jesus in the Qur'ān*, p. 62). Satan's touch, then, appears to make some people very susceptible to the appeal of anti-Islamic influences (notably, the influence of their unbelieving parents) and, so, we might say, *fiṭra* does not 'take' in their case. Thus, the traditions have attempted to accommodate man's potential for both good and evil. In the case of the believer, the effect of Satan's defilement is communally confined to expression in the lesser offenses; whereas, in that of the unbeliever, his or her self-exclusion from the *umma* effectively denies the more basic *fiṭra*. (Of course, as we have seen, conversion and backsliding may reverse this situation, demonstrating what is truly essential to a given individual's ethico-religious orientation.)

[180]*Man in the Qur'ān*, p. 53; Andrae *Der Ursprung des Islams und das Christentum* (Stockholm-Uppsala: Kyrkohistorick Arsskrift, 1926), p. 88.

In his primary concern for Muḥammad's prophetic experience and its issue in his encounter with the pagans, etc., Andrae's marked tendency is to focus on the Qur'ān's unbeliever-related view of man, to the exclusion of its second picture. By contrast, Bakker explains what he views as the Qur'ān's radical change in outlook and tone simply in terms of Muḥammad's mood, the reflection of his sense of positive achievement (pp. 53-54).

This overstates the case, for the Medinan material is similarly pessimistic when it addresses the treacherous (or simply unresponsive) Scriptuaries (e.g. 2:83-103; 3:176-84; 22:42-48). Whenever the Qur'ān confronts those professors of faith who determinedly set themselves in opposition to the will of God as revealed by Muḥammad's revelations and through his prophetic rule, it reverts to the pessimism of its Adam- and unbeliever-related view of man. Should such persons (re-)capitulate to Muḥammad's prophetic authority, we may assume that they would immediately be viewed by him through the Qur'ān's believer-related lens.

This is suggested by the fact that the heinous sins of the believer's pre-conversion (i.e. pagan) days are all effectively erased by the very fact of the conversion: conversion effectively designates such sins as 'unreal,' since they belong to the (now annulled) state of one's former alienness to the Muslim *umma*. Nothing else can account for Muḥammad's forgiveness, his unqualified acceptance, of almost all those Meccans previously so vehemently--and with such apparent finality--condemned by the Qur'ān for their arrogance and polytheistic idolatry (that is, of course, his acceptance of them when Mecca finally submitted to his prophetic rule). It also explains why the Qur'ān lays no real emphasis on the necessity of God's effecting in man any sort of deep cleansing work, due to sin's inner pollution.[181]

Quite clearly, the anthropological duality implicit in such an approach is in diametric opposition to the Biblical assessment of man's situation.[182] Biblically, sin's effect on man is far-reaching, polluting man's heart, viewed as the inner spring of his thoughts, motives, attitudes and, so, of their externalization in word and deed (Gen. 6:5; Prov. 4:23; Jer. 17:9; Matt. 12:34; 15:10-20; Mark 7:21-23). Thus, man stands guilty and polluted before God and altogether unable to effect his release from sin's hold on him (Rom. 5:6-8; Eph. 2:1-3; Tit. 3:3).

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[181]As we have noted, in a number of places the believer is shown to be in need of inner purification (e.g. 7:43; 15:47; 59:10), but this is clearly peripheral next to the major salvific emphases of the Qur'ān on the necessity of revelatory guidance and on communal submission to God's prophet, through active faith and good deeds, as the means of one's salvation.

[182]In one sense, of course, this duality approximates the Biblical doctrine of justification, whereby God exchanges the perfect righteousness of Christ with the believer's sins. Having credited Christ with the latter (in his death), God credits the believer with Christ's righteousness at the moment of his or her conversion. This means the believer is granted full access to God's presence, full restoration to his fellowship, because of who he or she is "in Christ." But such a reality does not alter the fact that, apart from his or her being "in Christ," the believer is still very much a sinner in need of what might be called the gracious perseverance of God in taking one so thoroughly polluted right through to the moment of glorification (God's total eradication of the believer's evil in the hereafter).

The Qur'ān replaces Christ with the *umma*, then; for, as long as he or she remains committed to what it stands for, the Muslim is heir to all its unequalled nobility. And, of course, the Qur'ān says little concerning the believer's continuing need of inner transformation (although one might argue that the call to practical realization of the *umma*'s nobility is there implicitly, at least). Explicitly, however, there is nothing comparable to the Bible's marked emphasis on the believer's continuing quest for Christ, his or her need of being remade into the image of Christ, in mystical union with him.

Corresponding to such a view, the Biblical concept of salvation is equally great. Since God's holiness cannot be compromised, he has determined that his overlooking of sin's guilt and pollution requires atonement. The work of atonement is divinely accomplished from beginning to end, through the voluntary self-sacrifice of God incarnate, through Jesus the Christ. The perfect righteousness of Christ is then credited to the sinner, and the deep inner cleansing needed to restore man to unbroken fellowship with God is initiated through God the Spirit's work of regeneration, issuing in his gradual restoration of the divine image within. The Holy Spirit accomplishes this work of sanctification by his application of the liberating truth of Scripture to the individual life, for it is the Spirit that reveals Christ through the word of Scripture (John 3:3-8; 8:31-32; 16:7-14; 17:17; Rom. 3:19-26; 5:1-5; Eph. 2:1-10; Col. 1:13-14). All of this salvation, then, comes to man via the workings of God's freely offered sovereign grace. For it is the special grace of God which alone effectually releases him from his bondage to sin, enabling him to choose the good and removing his blindness in the true knowledge of God and of himself (John 8:34-36; 10:26-30; Acts 18:27; Rom. 11:5-6; 2 Cor. 3:17-18; 4:4-6; Gal. 1:6, cf. vv. 15-16; Tit. 3:4-7).

From a Quranic point of view, much of this is excessive, if not against the justice of God. While there is no room left, Biblically, for any view of salvation which

allows for its being the joint product of divine and human effort,[183] the Quranic picture is different. It is true that all of the various prophetic initiatives are (in one sense) altogether divine in origin, but it is not clear Quranically that the human response to the prophetic guidance is similarly exterior to man in the selfsame special grace of God. Of course, certain individuals are sovereignly constituted "Muslim" (and, so, demonstrate their inherent 'nobility' by their allegiance to the prophetic *umma* and by their active participation in its life). It is, however, equally obvious that there is nothing in the Qur'ān akin to the Biblical concern for safeguarding the grace of God against any sort of synergistic claims. There is nothing conveying the notion that man's salvation cannot possibly be "earned" by his faith and good works in combination with God's grace; indeed, the question is never even addressed.[184]

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[183]That is to say, the Biblical model of uniquely divine and human intervention in the incarnation of Christ, rules out all possibility that God is throwing out to man a mere lifeline--however sturdy--by which man is to save himself. Biblically, rather, Christ is pictured as the Shepherd who himself carries the lost sheep back to the fold, as the unique Reconciler of estranged sinners to their God; so, such synergism as the Qur'ān allows is precluded by the Bible (Luke 15:4-7, cf. 19:10; John 10:11-16; Rom. 5:1,6-10; Col. 1:19-22; Heb. 10:1-18).

[184]Pickthall's translation of 11:114--"Lo! good deeds annul ill deeds" (cf. Dawood)--is unfortunate. The verse should not be made implicitly to frame such a question. Arberry's "surely good deeds will drive away the evil deeds" is much better (cf. Rodwell). Similar statements appear in 13:22 and 28:54.

Consistent with the complete absence of this question in the Qur'ān is the fact that Muslim belief allows the

Biblically, man is in no position to contribute anything to his salvation: all such notions of salvific "partnership" are excluded by the Bible's staunch refusal to compromise in the matter of the absolute holiness of God. Doubtless, this is the point of the Genesis mention of God's providing "tunics of skins" (Gen. 3:21 NEB) to replace the leaf garments and, so, to cover the shame of the fallen Adam and Eve: salvation is the work of God's sovereign grace from beginning to end.[185] And, by contrast, it is unexceptionable that the Quranic accounts of the fall omit any reference to the leaf garments' inadequacy. For,

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greatest latitude possible in terms of the vital Biblical question of whether or not fallen men and women may be viewed as contributors to their salvation. (Given the only very slight grounds for Ghazālī's spiritualized reading of the Qur'ān, any sort of sectarian split over such an issue would have been unwarranted.)

The Qur'ān does speak of the expiation (*kaffāra*) of sin exclusively in terms of the believer's acts of charity, fasting, etc. (5:45,89,95); see *EI²*, s.v. "Kaffāra," by J. Chelhod. Accordingly, Mahmoud Ayoub's comment that such *tafkīr* must be accomplished by the individual him- or herself (i.e. for him- or herself) is consistent with what is said of it (although, interestingly, Ayoub's understanding of Quranic *shafā'a*, intercession--an understanding which we would question--suggests that *per se* representative action is not excluded even from the Quranic concept of salvation); "The Idea of Redemption in Christianity and Islam," in *Mormons and Muslims*, ed. Spencer J. Palmer (Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 1983), p. 111.

[185]The offering of garden produce (whether leaves, as here, or fruit, as in Gen. 4:3-7) is to be viewed as symbolic of man's futile endeavours to achieve his own salvation. Whereas, in the larger context of the Biblical revelation, animal sacrifice (implied here and clearly specified in Genesis 4) should be taken to represent salvation which is entirely the work of God on man's behalf.

Another image, that of the salvific 'rock' which is "cut out of a mountain, but not by human hands," similarly represents the exclusively divine origin of salvation (Dan. 2:34,44-45 NIV; cf. Deut. 27:5-6).

Quranically, human efforts to cover one's sins are in no wise to be deemed entirely inefficacious from God's point of view. Rather, as we have seen, at the point of the sinner's conversion to Islam, his radical sinfulness (as a former unbeliever) ceases to be the disqualifying factor it had been up until then.

Biblically, sin and salvation are dealt with much differently. For, as we have seen, the Biblical view also entails the structural undoing of the historical evil of the fall. By his defection to Satan's cause, the first vicegerent is viewed as having wrongly submitted the earth to Satan's dominion; as a result, not just man, but the earth also is divinely cursed and in need of liberation (Gen. 3:17-19). Again, such release is of necessity (i.e. according to the divine plan) accomplished historically by man--that is by Jesus Christ, the Perfect Man. But the full application or realization of Christ's salvation is reserved for the consummation. All those who, putting their faith in him, are called to enter into his salvation, will then see their full release from sin's dominion. With it will also come the release of the created order, in the full restoration of the heavens and the earth at the time of Christ's return (Rom. 8:22-23; 2 Pet. 3:12-13).

So, as the fall was man's forfeiture to Satan of both himself and the earth entrusted to him, so in Jesus, the "last Adam," it is man who undoes the deed, reopening the way for both mankind and the earth to enjoy the full

blessing of man's perfect submission to the rule of God. As John Scotus Eriugena put it so beautifully, man's redemption was accomplished by Christ *profundissima vallis historiae*, "deep down in the valley of history."[186] While the final application of Christ's salvation is not to occur until the consummation, Christ is viewed as having inaugurated the great reversal of the Last Day within history; but he has done so paradoxically, through the overthrow of (evil's) apparent strength by (good's) apparent weakness. Man's lost authority and dominion have thus 'een restored to Christ and, so, to all of his people (Dan. 2:34,44-45; Matt. 13:31-33; 25:31-34; 28:18-20; Acts 2:16-21; 2 Cor. 10:4-5; 2 Tim. 4:1; Rev. 11:17-18).[187] Thus, the "kingdom" or rule of God is to increase, extending the benefits of Christ's death to every people until Christ returns to usher in the Great Judgment. At that time, of course, the earth is to be cleansed by fire and restored to the original plan (Rom. 8:22-23; 2 Pet. 3:13).

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[186]Cited by G. E. von Grunebaum in his stimulating article "Islam: Experience of the Holy and Concept of Man," in *Studia Islamica XXXI-XXXII*; ed. Wilferd Madelung (Chicago: Variorum Reprints, 1976), XXXII:15.

[187]The Biblical concepts of both the Last Day (with its marked element of reversal) and the kingdom of God (i.e. his earthly rule through human vicegerents, as opposed to his sovereign control of all things) are to be understood in two senses: both as realities which have come in Christ and, so, are presently effective in history and also as events which will not find their culmination until the apocalyptic Last Day, when Christ returns as undisputed king. Thus, the kingdom of God is to be viewed as both 'already' and 'not yet' present in our world.

There is virtually no Quranic affinity to this sort of cosmic drama. To be sure, the Qur'ān does envision an age-long battle between Satan (and his "friends") and the "friends" of God since the fall, but at no point does that battle involve any change in the basic structure of the human situation. Hence, as von Grunebaum says,

> The role of the prophets is all-important, the significance of Muḥammad as their Seal exceeds description; and yet they remain "accidental" figures, repeatable bearers of repeatable functions.[188a]

Even if we are to grant the universality and finality of the Muhammadan (or Islamic) mission's scope, what there is of such a retaking of the race (and, hence, the planet) for God is either not "structural," but "accidental" only, or else not historical, confined to the Last Day, identified Quranically with the final judgment and consummation only (when Satan is to be finally overthrown).

Unless somehow we are to give the Quranic statement "this day I have perfected your religion for you" (5:3) its broadest possible meaning--unless we are to assume that the effectiveness of that deposit of truth conveyed by Muḥammad can no longer be lost (as seems to have been normative of all prior revelations)--history's failures and successes are

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[188a]Of course, here "accidental" is not meant to convey any sense of unintentionality; rather, thus used, the term opposes "structural." To state the matter differently, none of the events of Muḥammad's prophethood are representative of the race--none (structurally) alters the subsequent human situation--in the sense that Adam's fall does. Only in the extra-Quranic notion of *Nūr Muḥammadī* is Muḥammad elevated to the level of the structural; von Grunebaum, "Observations," XXXI:120-21.

superficial, relatively speaking.[189] And altogether consistent with this is the Qur'ān's omission in its accounts of Adam's fall of anything comparable to the Genesis account's promise of the crushing of the serpent's head, of Satan's historical defeat in his fatal encounter with the woman's offspring (Gen. 3:14-15), ultimately signifying the virgin-born Jesus.[190]

As might be expected, the Qur'ān's non-structural concept of salvation answers to its believer-related view of man, which view does not reckon seriously with the structural effects of Adam's fall, according to the Qur'ān's unbeliever-related view of man. And, since salvation is, perhaps, the central concept in Quranic thought, such compatibility would seem to argue for the primary significance of the second picture of man, the believer-related view, over its Quranic opposite.

Thus, on the one hand, leaning away from any structural change, the human situation is made to appear relatively static. On the other hand, however, the Qur'ān

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[189]Clearly, the immediacy of the Last Day in Quranic preaching (particularly the Meccan passages) did not allow for any explicit treatment of the long-range effectiveness of the Quranic deposit of truth. Doubtless, the modern interpretation of the verse, taking it to refer to the completion of the revelation of the required rites and observances of Islamic religion *qua* "piety," is the correct one (see Smith, *Meaning and End*, p. 296, n. 102).

[190]Of course, as we have indicated (n. 187), Satan's overthrow is to be viewed as both a present reality (because of Christ's death) and a future event, representing the final application of Christ's historic triumph (Rom. 16:20; 1 Cor. 15:24-25; Jude 6; Rev. 20:1-3, 7-10).

may be said clearly to envision two basic changes in the structure of the human situation. But, whereas the first of these, that of the fall, is rooted historically in the failure of the primordial Adam, there is no historical basis for the second change, that of the introduction of divine grace, both common and special, into man's situation.

Inevitably, as was noted above, this grace must be viewed as altering the basic covenant paradigm of reciprocal action in two ways. First, there is the principle of deferral, of that divine withholding of reward and punishment necessary for there to be the sort of equality which enables genuine conflict, both social and Satanic, to occur. Of course, this alteration is amply borne out in the Quranic record of subsequent history, even as it was determinative of what might be called the Muhammadan (or prophetic) crucible; that is, the fiery trial through which the early *umma* under Muḥammad passed and which, accordingly, historically occasioned the delivery of the Quranic message.

In one sense, this deferral of divine judgment is the basis of all subsequent history, for without it Adam's sin would have immediately ushered in the Last Day. Divine mercy, then, may be said to be basic to the meaning of history. But equally basic is the Quranic sense of divine justice. For the deferral of man's judgment is seemingly subsumed under the larger deferral of Satan's judgment, resulting in his malicious campaign for the overthrow of true religion and of good among men (which is to say, his

attempted overthrow of the race). In that context, Satan is granted divine authority to effect the overthrow of all but the elect among men and *jinn*. And the Quranic treatment of prophethood generally suggests that the historical clash of the two sides is viewed as something of a stalemate, the accent alternating between the success of good and that of its opposite.

The second alteration in the covenant structure relates to the possibility of not only the deferral, but also the ultimate overlooking of judgment in the case of true believers. Again, as we noted above, this is not presented Quranically as a case of God's removal of the (sinful) believer's pollution and penalty by his (that is, God's) satisfying the demands of his justice in some other way. In particular, as we have seen, there is no awareness of the Biblical sense of the divine provision of another 'Adam,'[191] a second representative, one whose sinless offering of himself on behalf of sinners enables God to show mercy without abandoning his justice, his holy hatred of their sin). Neither is there any Quranic substitute for this. Rather, the pardoning of the guilty and the cleansing

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[191] In 3:59, Jesus is singularly likened to Adam, but only in the sense that both men were originated by the creative fiat of God (i.e. without any of the natural processes involved in normal human conception; cf. 3:45-47). There is no inquiry into the deeper meaning of this similarity and no thought that, like Adam, Jesus also uniquely represented the race (only in its recovery from the primordial fall).

of the polluted appear to be 'easy' things for God[192] and matters calling for no explanation whatever.

Here, again, we are dealing with the Qur'ān's radical Master-servant distinction: the submissive servant seeks no self-revelation on the part of the master beyond that required for his strict fulfilment of his master's stated

[192]While there may be no Quranic statement to this effect, the pardoning of some and the punishment of others is related to the sovereign decree of God (2:284; 3:129; 5:18,40; 48:14; cf. 5:118), and the ease with which God effects what he has decreed is stated a number of times (35:11; 57:22). The point here is that God is far above having to "satisfy" his justice in order to bestow mercy on those deserving of wrath. That God should have to pay an exacting "price" in order to redeem sinners is apparently unthinkable, from the Quranic point of view: rather, as Supreme Master, God may do altogether as he pleases in every situation. For his mercy's circumventing of his justice, he owes answers to none; and, so, such knowledge is altogether beyond the scope of the divine self-revelation in the Qur'ān. As we have seen, from a Biblical point of view, such an approach to the sovereignty of God pays an intolerably high toll in that it ultimately loses the knowledge of God in the inscrutability of his divine decrees; either that, or it reduces him to a duality of now justice and now mercy (see the discussion above, pp. 43-46).

Biblically, a quite different approach to God and man has been taken. Similarities there are: again the knowledge of God is dispensed entirely by his sovereign initiative; none may successfully peer beyond its boundaries as he has set them (e.g. Rom. 9:19-24). God comes to man altogether on his own terms in both Qur'ān and Bible. But it is when one deals with the terms of God's coming to man that the two Scriptures stand in opposition. For, Biblically, God has purposed a (mutually intimate) friendship between himself and man; in that context, God has revealed himself to man and has revealed himself as altogether dependable, as an absolute Unity of will and purpose. Biblical monotheism, then, freely admits the surpassing greatness of God in the trinity (with its apparent 'denial' of divine unity), but it insists on both the unity and knowability of the divine character. Indeed, the immutability of God's revelation of himself to man is presented as the whole basis of his covenant relationship with man (Exod. 34:6-7; Deut. 7:6-12; 32:4; Isa. 11:5; 49:7; 1 Cor. 1:9; 1 Thes. 5:23-24; 2 Tim. 2:12-13; 1 John 1:9; cf. Psa. 89:24; 119:90; Rev. 19:11).

will (in a sense, then, the goal of the relationship may be said to be 'artificial conformity,' for the thoroughgoing unity of intimate friendship is not in view). Biblically, by contrast, man's ordained servitude includes the notion of friendship with God, of an intimacy with his Creator from which man has excluded himself (in Adam), but one into which God would again freely draw him (in Christ).

The Biblical diagnosis of the human problem may thus be said to consist in man's continued self-exclusion, his rebelling against his divine Master in at least three ways: 1) by an abhorrence of his servitude's essential dependency, 2) by an assertion of the inaccuracy of God's assessment of his situation and 3) by a failure to comprehend the larger dimensions of his servitude (in true friendship and moral likeness to his Maker). The Quranic diagnosis compares only in terms of the first two of these points. Relative to the third, it would only suggest that rebel man has grossly misunderstood that he can only hurt himself by attempting to oppose the will of his Creator and Master, and that man must discipline himself gratefully to dwell on the positive, as opposed to the negative, in God's ordering of the universe. Strictly speaking, then, there are no 'larger dimensions' to man's servitude under God, Quranically understood. And, as to why man should dwell on the positive and (gratefully) accept the negative in his situation, the answer must simply be that unquestioning gratitude is befitting of servants. It cannot be said that the whole of his life, positive and

negative together, has been infused with meaning in the coming of another 'Adam.'

Theological Reflections on Human Suffering

With regard to the significance of suffering in general, no comprehensive answer is given by the Qur'ān. Of course, there is the understanding that the believer's suffering is designed as a trial, to elicit the response of either faith or unbelief and, so, to make him or her more the child of either Paradise or Hell (in accordance with God's sovereign will; 3:141,154). Unjust suffering[193] born of the conflict of good and evil has further significance as man's participation in the divine suppression of historical evil (22:39-44), by which historically truth may at times be said to overthrow evil, and so be analogous to the ultimate (post-historical) overthrow of Satan and of evil.

It is of note here that the *islām* in the face of suffering to which the Qur'ān calls believers is a voluntary response (of course, *islām* is under every circumstance voluntary). And that is true whether the suffering be general, as in the case of disease or other natural calamities, or of the prophetic sort, as in the call to strategic privation and the heroic faith-declaration of the *shāhid*.[194] Of course, such submission is at bottom an

[193] That is, "unjust" from a human and not from the divine perspective, for God cannot be considered unjust in his permitting it.

acknowledgement of the infinite superiority of divine over human wisdom.

Strictly speaking, then, the call to *islām* is not to embrace suffering as such, but rather to embrace the perfect will of God, in the awareness that--in an imperfect and devil-infested world--such submission must be expected to include both kinds of suffering. In the first place, believers are not exempt from the pains and sorrows of humanity's common exclusion from the Garden. And, secondly, the prophetic cause is invariably inclusive of unjust suffering, according to the will of God (e.g. 7:94; 2:214).

But, of course, the Muslim believer's certainty of suffering and sacrifice in the great war against Satan is not to be viewed apart from his or her also being promised prosperity. And such prosperity is not only to await him or her on the Last Day, but is to be given in some measure temporally also (e.g. 16:122; 65:4).[195] For the believer, then, each temporal blessing is to be viewed as both a

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[194]In the case of the martyr, however, his submission at the point of his death is both active (that is, not passive) and physically aggressive in its opposition of such evil (e.g. 22:40-42). By contrast, Muḥammad's response to the unbelieving prior to his flight to Medina did not involve physical aggression. Further, there was a later period of total restraint in his military opposition of the Meccans (i.e. represented by the treaty of al-Hudaybiya, doubtless entered into for strategic purposes; on this, see Watt, *Muhammad at Medina*, pp. 46-52).

Judging from this, it is inevitable that the aggressiveness of the Muslim believer's opposition to pagans and other opponents of Islam is to be viewed as a situational matter, with strategy and the strategic expense of Muslim energies being the deciding factor.

[195]Cf. p. 95 above.

(partial) reward for faithful endurance and a sheer gift of divine mercy and favour. Hence, it is a token of the prosperity and protection, the vindication and triumph, to be given in full on the Last Day (23:111).

Quranically speaking, however, it does not follow that the measure of one's temporal prosperity and success is the measure of one's acceptance with God, for (as we have seen) the delay of the reward is a common Quranic theme--one clearly implying the limitations of such temporal reward. And what has already been seen of the suffering of the righteous should indicate that the true measure of one's acceptance with God is to be seen in nothing else than the measure of his or her grateful submission to the perfect will of God in whatever of good or ill, of success or apparent failure, he has sovereignly ordained in each given case.[196]

The sole alternative to such whole-hearted surrender to God in the cosmic struggle against evil is to oppose and, so, to be opposed by God (e.g. 2:278-79). In cases where God does not will the temporal redressing of wrongs committed, the evildoer's doom is not thus to be viewed as in any sense less sure. Rather, the reward of his evil will be meted out to him in full, whether both in this life and the hereafter or in the afterlife exclusively.

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[196]There is, for example, no suggestion that the less prosperous Muḥammad of the Meccan period was therefore less righteous than the later, victorious Muḥammad, or that Muslim martyrs in *jihād* were somehow less righteous than their surviving brethren.

This points, then, to a third sort of suffering. Beside the general suffering involved in the Adamic curse (understood in terms of mankind's expulsion from Paradise, the principle of social hostility, etc.) and the heroic (unjust) suffering of prophets and believers in their opposition of evil, there is also that suffering which one brings upon oneself by sinning (42:30). As such, it is always to be viewed as judgment, although in the case of the elect it must be distinguished as being in some sense disciplinary (i.e. ultimately redemptive) in nature (3:154); whereas in the case of the reprobate it is but a foretaste of the endless damnation to follow on the Last Day (e.g. 2:85,114; 16:26-29; cf. 9:68).

Obviously, this approach to suffering has many points in common with the Biblical approach, but there are vital differences also. The first relates to what we saw earlier of the Bible's unequivocal assessment of death as the direct result of man's disobedience. While, on the one hand, this may appear to be implicit in the Quranic view,[197] on the other hand, the almost complete absence of allusion to death with reference to the content of God's punishment of sin in the Qur'ān makes such a reading of the Quranic fall narratives highly unlikely.[198] Instead death may be assumed

[197]The fact that the Garden of the afterlife is shown to be a place from which man is never to be expelled (see n. 111 above) may suggest that the primordial Garden also would have been his permanent home had he not sinned (cf. pp. 100-01 above).

to relate directly to man's creaturely finitude in the plan of God. Further, the fear, grief, and other suffering associated with death contribute like other of life's hardships to that testing deemed essential to man's servanthood, revealing and confirming either the faithfulness or faithlessness of his heart. In that sense, death represents the enlargement of man's pre-fall examination (the other post-fall hardships differing only in that they are directly attributable to the fall).

While, Biblically, death (and all the related forms of suffering) similarly represents a heightening of the conditions under which man is examined, it is clearly viewed as foremost among the hardships directly resulting from the fall. As the consequence of man's choice, both informed and free, death everywhere represents the administration of divine justice to man's case. And, accordingly, the removal of the curse by means of the atoning sacrifice of Christ is to be viewed as the gracious administration of divine justice, not to the sinner, but to the One sinned against (in the person of Jesus Christ), since he alone is able to effect the reversal needed for man's salvation. Since death is central to man's fall (in Adam), so, death is also central to his overthrow of Satan (in Christ) and to man's full restoration to divine favour.

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[198]Three times the Qur'ān speaks of the first death (37:59; 44:35,56). As was suggested above (n. 151), this may imply something similar to the Biblical notion of the second death as the full realization of death's separation of man from God.

Christ's death and resurrection, then, represent not only the structural remedying of man's condition, but also the historical basis for the radical alteration of the covenant paradigm by means of the divine superimposition of a model of reversal, the reversal essential to the meaning of grace, Biblically understood. This alteration goes far beyond the gracious delay or deferral of divine judgment (i.e. of covenant requital--although, as we saw earlier, that, too, must ultimately imply an element of reversal).[199] Here grace signifies the rewarding of good in the sinlessness of Christ, not with divine blessing and favour, but with its opposite, the utter forsakenness of divine cursing in death (Matt. 27:45-46; Isa. 53:5-12).

As we have said, this total reversal was freely and voluntarily accomplished by God (i.e. with the total involvement of each of the members of the Godhead) to the end that another reversal might be accomplished. That reversal consists in God's gracious pardoning of (sinful) men and women, his releasing them from sin's tyranny (in union with Christ) and his removing them from the threat of eternal cursing and forsakenness to the promise of

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[199]See pp. 111-12 and 117-19 above.
The point here is that nowhere, except in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, is either that reversal which is implicit in the believer's unjust suffering or, on another level, that which is involved in the deferral of judgment in general dealt with structurally. Furthermore, some form of reversal, rather than reciprocity, must inevitably be the basis of sinful man's pardon and reconciliation, his restored covenant relationship to God, whether in the Bible or Qur'ān.

blessedness and everlasting fellowship with God.[200] In judicial terms, then, the perfect righteousness of Christ is credited to the account of the sinner in whose place Christ voluntarily stood, condemned for the sinner's sin (Rom. 5:6-21; 2 Cor. 5:21). Once the sinner has been accepted by God, this new relationship issues in the gradual restoration of the divine image within (that is, in his or her purification from sin) in the company of God's people, the Church (Rom. 8:29; 12:1-2; Eph. 2:20-22).

All of the blessings of this salvation, of this covenant of grace, are apprehended by faith alone. That faith, of course, implies the sinner's voluntary surrender of himself to active participation in the will of God. But, as the faith and its issue are sovereignly bestowed, there can be no hint of synergism here: as we have seen, man's salvation is the work of God from beginning to end.

Having said that, however, it is of note that the will of God for the believer includes his or her bearing "the reproach of Christ," (Heb. 11:26 AV; i.e. suffering with God's covenant people, for righteousness' sake; Matt. 5:10-12; 1 Pet. 2:19-23). This gives another meaning to the inequity of present rewards, the apparent blessing of the

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[200]Such a reversal is to be viewed, not as a contravention of divine justice, but rather as its unique fulfillment, for God has sovereignly ordained that the demands of his justice against our offenses might be carried out in the substitutionary sacrifice of Christ. Indeed, Biblically, there can be no other way for God to be both a God of justice and the One who pardons man's sin (Rom. 3:25-26).

wicked at the expense of the righteous, for the sanctifying restoration of the image of God within the believer is to be understood in terms of his or her being remade in the likeness or image of Christ. And such conformity is always simultaneously met with the two contrary responses from one's fellowmen of blessing and acceptance, on the one hand, and of cursing and hostility, on the other (John 15:20; 1 Cor. 16:9; 2 Cor. 2:14-16; cf. Luke 2:34; John 9:39; 1 Pet. 2:6-8). All of this, of course, is according to the sovereign working of God, to the end that, as the believer follows in the path of Christ's voluntary resistance of evil with good, cursing might again be swallowed up in blessing. For it is thus that Christ's triumph over Satan and sin is further effected, both within the believer and within his given historical situation (Acts 26:16-18; Col. 1:24).[201]

While the Qur'ān deals similarly with suffering for righteousness' sake in terms of the faith's ongoing trial, as was seen above, the paradigm for such reversal, the prophetic paradigm, is never really joined to the structure of reality in terms of the gracious redemption of the race by vicarious atonement. Biblically speaking, such atonement is essential to the restored divine-human relation, which alone stands within the new covenant of God's grace. No such new covenant exists in the Qur'ān. There the mercy of God to sinners in his sovereign bestowal of blessing and forgiveness has no definitive historical basis. Whatever

[201]See Wright, *Colossians and Philemon*, pp. 87-91.

else this may be thought to suggest, it is indisputable that at this point the Quranic reading of the human situation is distinctly non-Biblical: it neither accepts nor assumes a Biblical view of salvation. And this point is one which cannot be stated too emphatically, for it is vital to all of the major differences between the two Scriptures.

Neither from the Quranic nor the Biblical point of view, was God's creation of creatures who could rebel against him in contradiction of his wisdom. Quranically, the angelic complaint of 2:30 was dismissed, not on the basis of its being judged erroneous, but rather its being only partial: the answer must be reserved for a higher wisdom and a higher Mind than the merely creaturely. The purposefulness of man's creation is stressed against the pagan notion that life is meaningless, a "divine joke" (21:16-17; 23:115; 44:38-39). But aside from the fact that man's life is designed as a test, to see whether he will embrace or reject God's truth, will keep or violate God's covenant, there is no real answer given to the implicit charge of divine irresponsibility in terms of life's evil and injustice (11:7; 67:2). Man's significance ultimately is to fulfil the inscrutable divine purposes for which he was made. These must be understood as involving God's revelation of his will to man, resulting in the glory of God in some way (e.g. 17:44; 24:36,41; 48:9). Perhaps the clearest statement here is found in God's declared intention

to fill Hell (and, implicitly, Paradise also) with men and *jinn* (38:85; cf. 7:179; 11:119).

Although similar in a number of respects, the Biblical picture here is significantly different also. As in the Qur'ān, man exists for the glory of God, and in all that he does he inscrutably fulfils the purposes of God for his life and, so, glorifies God, whether manifesting or (ineffectually) denying his purpose in creation. But, as we have said, that purpose is openly declared to be the imaging of God. And therein lies the great difference between the Biblical and Quranic views of man.

Biblically, then, it is man's attempted perversion of the divine image within which calls for judgment, that judgment in itself being the revelation of God's holy abhorrence of evil. Likewise, the new Jerusalem represents the consummation of the divine purpose for those in whom the divine image is, in this life, being restored. Quite simply, it is to be understood in terms of man's being restored to the perfect intimacy with his divine Lover for which he was created in his image. So, basic to man's meaning in creation is the love of God, both for and in him. And because the intended relationship of mutual intimacy between God and man involved Adam's free agency, which in the foreknowledge of God would tragically issue in man's fall, calling for Christ's redemptive offering of himself to God, there is no sense in which either Christ's death or the election of believing sinners to salvation in Christ is to

be counted a divine afterthought (Matt. 25:34; Eph. 1:4; Rev. 13:8).

It is in this sense that Christ and particularly his hour of "glorification" (i.e. of most intimate self-revelation)[202] on the cross is at the heart of man's ultimate significance. Writing of God's making mankind in his image, N. T. Wright puts it this way:

> The creation of such beings entailed the possibility that they would rebel against him. Such rebellion could not baffle or perplex him, nor confound his purposes: it would evoke that quality above all others of which he had no lack, namely, the generous love expressed on the cross.[203]

Man was created to be the expression of that divine love--its justice, mercy and humility. Adam's fall rendered man's original purpose in creation a total impossibility. But, in Jesus Christ, the grace of God intervened on our behalf. In becoming a man, Christ, the eternal expression or image of God, restored the divine image to the race. And by his death and resurrection, he effected the gracious reversal signified by the new covenant (Luke 22:20; 1 Cor. 11:25; cf. Mark 14:24). This covenant is 'inscribed' by the Spirit of God in the hearts of all who sincerely submit to God's full revelation of himself to us in Christ (Jer. 31:33-34; 2 Cor. 3:3), which revelation is necessarily both perfect and

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[202]The point in John's frequent use of the motif of "glory" is that the divine splendour inheres in all that God is, and particularly in his holy character. See John 12:23-33; 13:31-32; 17:1; cf. 1:14.

[203]*Colossians and Philemon*, p. 78.

unrepeatable. Hence, from a Biblical point of view, any additions to the revelation of God in Christ, as given to us by the Biblical witness, can only detract from his absolute clarity as the Word of God.[204]

Minus so immense an appreciation of Jesus and his salvific accomplishment, the Qur'ān, by contrast, does not hesitate to view his mission as precursory to that of Muḥammad. Accordingly, the historical benefits of Jesus' prophetic ministry are generally to be considered temporary, as are those of all the earlier pre-Muhammadan prophets. Quranically speaking, the evidence for this may be said to be visible in two prominent characteristics of the community Jesus founded. The first is the sectarian division of the Christians. And the second, which is to be viewed as the product of the first, is the relative ineffectiveness of the Christians encountered in Muhammadan Arabia; that is, their ineffectiveness to restrain the evil in the world around them, particularly the evils of idolatrous worship, excess and injustice which characterized Jāhilī society. What we have seen elsewhere is true here also: it is that dual concern for true religion and for a just and moral society which guides and informs all Quranic thought.

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[204]This, of course, is implicit in the statements found in John 1:1-18 and Heb. 1:1-3 concerning Jesus as the divine *logos*. On John's use of that term, consult Leon Morris, *The Gospel According to John* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1971), pp. 115-26.

III: CONCLUSION

We have seen that in many respects the Quranic conception of *Allāh* represents a reversal of the Jāhilī conception. To begin, the God of the Qur'ān is neither remote from nor indifferent to the human situation. He is, instead, directly involved and very much concerned about the ethico-religious response of every individual to his revelatory *ayāt*: his wisdom and majesty, his goodness and severity, are evident throughout the whole created order and call for attitudes of dependence, gratitude, reverent fear and voluntary submission. He is also a God who speaks through his messengers, the prophets, and to whom all mankind is obligated covenantally. Through his prophets, he declares that he is totally involved in the human situation --its so very prevalent suffering and inequity notwithstanding. And he promises guidance and eternal blessing (i.e. the ultimate improvement of the human condition) to those who submit to his will as revealed by his prophets and realized socially by the prophetic *umma*.

God, then, is to be viewed as no mere 'absentee president,' manipulated by an entire tribe of

(in-)subordinate gods, who thus deserve more honour and attention than he. Rather, he stands exalted, as peerless "Lord of the worlds." None can in any wise resist his will. And, so, to him alone is all glory. Practically, this means that, as in the Biblical case, man is in no wise allowed to enter into any 'negotiation of terms' with God. But, unlike the Biblical view, neither is the covenant relationship to be conceived of as in any real sense dialogical: only in exceptional cases is it expected that man should engage in prayer as normal communication with God (*duʿā'*). Anything which might be thought to suggest an equality or peership to God, either directly or mediatorially (through the gods), must be rejected.

Here, then, is where the transcendence of God is manifested Quranically. Despite the fact that communication (albeit only one-way communication, in the strict sense of the term) is essential to the divine-human relationship, or that the Quranic concept of covenant consists in a relationship of divine-human "reciprocity" (although not at all in the sense of equality)--despite the fact that divine-human analogy is everywhere essential to Quranic monotheism --there is never any open embrace of such analogy in the Qur'ān. Rather the Biblical teaching concerning man's imaging of God seems--and, indeed, Muslims have characteristically taken it so--to be categorically excluded here. So, also, apart from certain exceptional cases (the designation of prophet Abraham as the "friend" of God, for

example), virtually all propinquity is excluded from descriptives of man's relationship to God. As vicegerent of God on earth, man is preeminently the servant or slave of God.

As Master, God is not to be viewed as in any wise tyrannical or abusive of his authority, for he is said to be both just and compassionate. His Lordship does not, however, brook any notion of humility or of self-revelatory intimacy with the generality of mankind--or even of the faithful, for that matter. Hence, the goal of all of man's piety is not that he is to be like God (although, as we have seen, this is unavoidably implicit throughout the Qur'ān). Rather, the goal is simply that he is to conform to the verbally revealed will of God for his life (the acceptance of his limitations, as mere man, being vital here).[1] Granted, man's servanthood includes centrally the notion of his vicegerency on earth, and many aspects of that calling are distinctly positive. But, for all the grandeur of that professional appointment, man remains, one might say, a 'noble slave.' There is, then, considerable tension between the explicit and the implicit teaching of the Qur'ān on the relation man bears to God; that is, much of the Qur'ān's

[1]In terms of prophetic revelation, typically it is the 'what,' and not the larger 'why' or 'how,' of God's will for man which the prophets are commissioned to reveal. And, seemingly, implicit in this is the thought that to man is given the capacity to obey, but not really to comprehend in any significant measure.

explicit teaching here appears to oppose that divine-human analogy which is of its essence.

Biblically, by contrast, man is designated, not only God's 'slave,' but also his 'son,' his 'friend' and his 'co-worker,' to name only a few of the terms connoting the divinely ordained propinquity of man's relationship to God. So, while man is separated from his Creator by an impassable ontological gulf (as mere creature), he is also openly said to have been created 'in God's likeness,' to be understood in terms of the totality of man's being. As is Quranically the case, man's entire obligation is submission to the revealed will of God. Biblically, however, man's submission has much larger dimensions; for, in submitting to God, man is created to reflect the glory of God and, thus--in intimate union with him--to enjoy him forever.

Analogy and intimacy, then, are the heart and soul of the Biblical understanding of the divine-human relationship. Believing man is thus invited to engage in a relationship of dialogue with God, the fruit of which is two-fold: both the believer's inner restoration to the divine image, in the context of a broken and hurting world, and his actual participation in the divine reshaping of that world according to the divine plan.[2]

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[2]The Biblical conception of the covenant relationship in terms of genuine friendship makes two-way communication essential to it. In that sense, then, the relationship is dialogical. The Biblical conception of prayer in a fallen world consists largely in the notion of God's having invited man to call him to covenant faithfulness in a world all too frequently appearing to deny that faithfulness. Essential

In view of the tension inherent in the Quranic concept of man, it is to be expected that the Quranic assessment of man's sin is similarly characterized by very significant tension. Here the tension relates specifically to the nature of sin and of man's relationship to sin. While the minority position on Adam appears to suggest a sinfulness inherent in man by creation, the majority narratives present him as both altogether responsible for his primordial sin and prone to rebellion and unbelief only subsequent to that event; further, there are considerable data elsewhere in the Qur'ān confirming this latter view.

But this is not the whole of the Quranic tension in respect to man's sin, for there is also a second (i.e. a non-Adamic) picture of man given to us. And that picture suggests that sin is essentially exterior to believers, residing exclusively, rather, in the supertribe of *kufr* or of *shirk*. Conversely, true piety (as the new--that is, the Quranic--basis of such a transposition of the old Jāhilī conception of tribal nobility) is believed to reside in the supertribe of Islam, to be individually actualized by each Muslim in his or her active conformity to the revealed Muslim ideal. In terms of the two different views of man, then, there is ambiguity concerning the question--a question nowhere raised by the Qur'ān--of whether the righteousness which may be said to earn an individual's salvation issues

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to that invitation, of course, is the thought that in such a relationship man should gradually be transformed into the likeness of the perfect justice, mercy and humility he seeks in God.

from his or her inherent excellence or is more external, deriving from his or her share in the nobility of the family of faith.

It is primarily to the second view of man that the Quranic concept of salvation answers. For salvation relates primarily to the prophetic setting forth of the Muslim ideal of nobility. Relatively little attention is given to either the need for or the nature of the divine work of salvation's inner cleansing of the believer. Rather, almost the entire focus is on the way of salvation, inclusive of the whole matter of communal struggle in the great war of good against evil. The believer's (at the very least, occasional) endurance of unjust suffering in that context, is to be viewed as necessary both for the testing of faith and for the overthrow of the various historic manifestations of evil in the world; further, such testing brings great reward to the believer who perseveres in faith (martyrdom bringing the greatest reward, naturally).

We have said that salvation answers to the second view of man for the most part. Obviously, however, it is to the Adam-related view of man that its larger basis--in what we have termed 'common grace'--corresponds. As was seen, a gracious reprieve was granted to the race in Adam, whose sin should otherwise have warranted immediate, absolute retribution. And this notion of the partial deferral of rewards allows for all of the human expressions of both good and evil in subsequent history. Accordingly, it provides

the basis both for the sociological conflict of these two and for faith's continued trial in such an environment.

Beyond this necessary correspondence between the Quranic concepts of salvation and common grace, there is also the fact that salvation must in some sense relate to the basic need for it. But, if there is a direct relationship between Adam as the primordial 'darkener' of the race and the prophets as the bearers of God's renewed revelation, the line is in other respects an oblique one. Barring the standard Muslim discountings of the majority position on Adam--which discountings see his sin as only demonstrative of, not determinative of, a much reduced sin principle in man--there is a sense in which special grace relates to the needs of believers (and potential believers) as the elect among the 'children of Adam,' since it is the entire race which stands in need of radical spiritual reorientation towards God (that is, in need of guidance).[3]

But that being so, it is of far more significance Quranically that salvation relates finally, not to the generality of mankind, but only to the elect, conceived of in terms of the Jāhilī notion of the tribal rooting of

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[3]Of course, if we follow the route of most Muslim interpreters, i.e., if we begin with the preeminence of the second view of man and then significantly adjust Adam's fall to fit with it, we reduce the tension by attempting at least a partial integration of the two views of man: here one at least achieves two distinct sociological groupings, the salvation or damnation of which flows from the essential inner orientation of its members (either towards or away from God), which orientation is probably to be understood as inherent in their respective natures.

nobility versus servility. There is, then, a basic similarity between the Biblical and Quranic concepts of salvation in terms of the particularity of the divine intention in salvation. But there is radical disparity between the two when it comes to the manner in which the sovereign grace of God in salvation operates. Quranically, special grace appears to activate the essential nobility of the believer (which nobility is his or hers by divine election also, of course); whereas, Biblically, the believer is neither more nor less essentially noble than the unbeliever, and saving grace is dealt with in terms of the restoration, in the individual united with Christ, of that divine likeness which common grace retains in some measure universally.

The question of the effective cause of an individual Muslim's salvation (whether it is the reward of one's faith and works or whether it is all of God's grace) is a question never directly addressed by the Qur'ān. On the one hand, God's sovereign foreordination of all things may be said to suggest that salvation is all of God's grace; whereas, on the other hand, the common Quranic emphasis on the believer's attaining salvation through both faith and good deeds appears to suggest a synergistic scheme. Quite obviously, however, the question's total absence from the Quranic agenda is indicative of a very different ordering of priorities from that of the Biblical presentation. Here is a clear case, then, where the contrast is of an even more

basic sort than that between two radically different answers to the same or similar questions: here the essential incongruity is between the very questions asked. While the Biblical concern is quite simply 'how can an individual, both morally polluted and justly condemned, stand before a holy and a righteous God?' the fundamental Quranic concern here is, rather, 'how does one demonstrate one's essential nobility as a believer?'

There is a sense in which this latter question may be likened to the Biblical emphasis on 'making one's calling and election sure,' on demonstrating by one's volitional and practical response to God that one has indeed been divinely called to salvation. But the Biblical emphasis here is held firmly within the context of a view of man which makes sin internal to believer as well as unbeliever and, consequently, a view of salvation which explicitly makes altogether external to the believer, not only the ontological source of his or her salvation (in the sovereign electing grace of God), but also the historical ground of that choice in the plentitude of divine grace extended to sinners in Jesus Christ.

The Biblical concept of sin relates fairly closely to the Quranic majority position on Adam: man's depravity appears to be both total and universal and the direct result of Adam's fall. Similarly, also, the divine deferral represented by common grace forms the basis of subsequent history, with both its possibility of salvation for fallen

man and its (generally speaking) sociologically equal manifestations of good and evil, productive of the 'prophetic crucible' of faith.

Since it consistently answers to the Biblical notion of depravity, the Biblical doctrine of salvation is both grossly oversized and misshapen from a Quranic point of view (i.e. relative to the Quranic doctrine of salvation). Unlike the Quranic focus, the Biblical focus here is not to be confined to salvation ethics, as the way of salvation, and to prophethood, as the means by which the necessary directives are issued. Rather, the concept of prophet assumes superlative proportions in the person and work of Jesus Christ--viewed as, himself, the way of salvation. Of course, such a notion of prophethood includes that of Christ's priestly (i.e. mediatorial) role. By his holy life and, especially, his voluntary submission to the will of his Father in sacrificial death, Jesus is fallen humanity's only route of access back to the God: those justified or declared righteous by Christ's substitutionary sacrifice of himself are gradually sanctified in vital, corporate union with him (i.e. as a member of his Body, the Church).

Hence, the redemptive revelation of God is not Scriptural only. Rather, it may be said primarily to consist in Christ himself and in his perfect offering of himself to God on our behalf. This is not at all to minimize the importance of Scripture from a Biblical point of view, but only to say that the importance of Scriptural

revelation lies in its constant pointing of the reader to Christ himself, who is the ultimate revelation of God to mankind.

Biblically, also, Jesus' sufferings represent the definitive interpretation of unjust suffering (particularly that of believers in the historic conflict of good and evil), as that which manifests the total supremacy of the glorious character of God, over evil. That character was perfectly manifested by Jesus--in his justice, mercy and humility--in the face of the absolute injustice, callous indifference and unyielding arrogance of man. Of course, Jesus accomplished this definitively in his historical life and death.

From a Biblical point of view, then, the cross is viewed as a total success, the confounding of apparent strength by the deployment of a far greater strength, but one clothed in the apparent weakness of divine humility. It is also to be seen as an event requiring (indeed, allowing) no repetition, except derivatively, in the believer's personal out-living of its benefits in a world still host to Satan and his evil schemes.

So, in his total submission to the will of God (equally in his life and death), Jesus represents the perfect rule of God--lost in Adam's fall--now again restored to the race; that is, to all those included in his new humanity, which, like Jesus, is to be characterized by faith in and absolute submission to God, as Father. Biblically,

in Christ, then, the light has dawned and the divine Word been uttered, inaugurating the great reversal of the Last Day in history. And, as both the total depravity of man and the direct and personal involvement of God in man's redemption suggest, so great a salvation must from beginning to end be the sole work of God's sovereign grace.

Integral to such a view of salvation, of course, are the twin concepts of trinity-in-unity and real incarnation, both of which fit into the larger Biblical understanding of revelation as God's intimate self-disclosure to man. Neither of these concepts has any acknowledged place in the Qur'ān. Indeed, the Biblical doctrines of trinity and incarnation are never at all treated by the Qur'ān. There we encounter, instead, denials of only the Jāhilī perceptions of them.

And, while the Quranic concept of revelation logically requires God's self-disclosure, such a notion (together with divine-human analogy) is nowhere openly embraced by the Qur'ān. For, Quranically, God is ever and always the Master in his dealings with man: however benevolent a master may be, the inviolability of the master-servant distinction in the Quranic thought world must confine his guidance to that which is especially pertinent to the (servile) situation and needs of his subordinate; that is, to an absolute minimum of personal self-disclosure. The Biblical notion of God's intimate revelation of himself to the generality of his people, then, is nowhere in view in

the Qur'ān. Rather, the divine humility which such a notion requires would have to be ruled out, Quranically, as a dangerous and impossible reduction of the divine majesty and glory. And this points to what is possibly the most basic conceptual difference between the two Scriptures, Bible and Qur'ān: the nature of truth--is it paradoxical or apparent?

In line with what we have seen of the Quranic reserve on the matter of God's revelation of himself to man, the Qur'ān treats salvation almost exclusively from the human perspective. That is, salvation is viewed from the perspective of the human prerequisites to salvation, in the believer's reversal of him- or herself through a life of faith, good deeds and loyalty to the prophet, etc. The divine perspective on salvation, how the Deity may 'reverse himself,' as it were, in the overlooking of guilt, is never disclosed. For the believer's disavowal of his or her past sin gives its guilt and pollution--if not its other historical effects--an apparently phantom existence.

This points, finally, to what is undoubtedly the simplest handle by which to grasp the opposing orientations of the Quranic and Biblical Scriptures. It is none other than their respective models of revelation: Quranic *tanzīl* versus Biblical incarnation. As with the Quranic view of its own revelation, so also its view of salvation involves no really visible or humanly comprehensible divine involvement. Salvation in the Qur'ān, the divine overlooking of guilt, the cleansing of freely chosen

pollution, descends on man--he knows not how--from above. Neither mutual divine-human comprehensibility nor real divine-human oneness is in view here.[4] Biblically, by contrast, the revelation is explicitly divine self-revelation, and salvation is explicitly the work of God alone. Precisely because of this it involves God's actual incarnation and, so, the unique union of the divine and human in the person of Jesus Christ, who is thus to be understood as fully God and fully man. This, of course, is consistent with the Biblical view of revealed scripture as that which is simultaneously (and supernaturally, of course) the product of two authors, the one human, the other divine.

All of this relates to the very different assessments of the chief end of man according to the Bible and the Qur'ān, the one seeing a genuine (although not an ontological) union of God with his people through his Son, and the other seeing the divine Host's blessing, vindicating and honouring his "friends" (or allies), but without taking them into any relationship of genuine intimacy or fellowship with himself.

Concerning the statements on Jesus with which we began our inquiry·[5] there can be no doubt that Quranically they are to be read in a quite different sense than we would read them Biblically. As no statement is intelligible without reference to the context by which it is defined, so

[4]See pp. 18-50 above.

[5]See p. 4 above.

the Quranic Jesus cannot be truly understood except in the light of his entire Quranic context. And, relative to his context in the Biblical revelation, his Quranic context represents a radically different world of thought, many of the more radical differences of which are all the more elusive for their being so apparently alike. As Professor Charles J. Adams has observed:

> To the extent that similar doctrines or positions prevent us from seeing the more far-reaching differences inherent in the way in which doctrines and concepts combine into an integrated whole to form a perception of man, of God and of their relations with one another--to precisely this extent such similarities obstruct understanding.[1]

. . .

How, then, are we to understand the Quranic Jesus? Briefly, we may at least take our bearings on the subject by considering how the four major statements given by the Qur'ān on Jesus relate to the contextual issues examined above. Two of these are affirmations: 1) Jesus is shown to be a great prophet and 2) he is said to have predicted the prophetic ministry of Muḥammad. And the remaining two are denials, 3) the one relating to his alleged divinity and 4) the other responding to allegations concerning his crucifixion. Of course, the first and last of these four statements aim to combat the exclusivity of the Jews.

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[1] "Islam and Christianity: The Opposition of Similarities," in *Logos Islamikos: Studia Islamica in Honorem Georgii Michaelis Wickens*, Papers in Mediaeval Studies, no. 6, eds. Roger M. Savory and Dionisius A. Agius (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1984), p. 306

Whereas, the second and third of them seeks to deal with Christian misconception and exclusiveness.

We will begin here with the denials. In the first place, it is denied that Jesus is either a god (which, as we have seen, is what the denial that he is either God's "son" or "begotten" of God signifies) or that he is worthy of any share in the worship which is God's alone. From the Quranic point of view, then, there can be no confusion of Jesus (or any other prophet, for that matter) with God. To accommodate such a position would be the height of blasphemy. It would represent a failure to distinguish between the Creator and his creature, between Master and slave.

To underscore our point here, it must be clearly stated that the Qur'ān evidences absolutely no conception of the Biblical understanding of God, as a unity in trinity. Rather, the trinity is here understood in terms of pagan categories of thought. Hence, the Christian conception of Jesus as the 'only begotten Son of God' appears here to signify that Jesus is God's only male offspring (i.e. godling), the product of the physical union of God and Mary --an understanding as blasphemous to Christians as it is to Muslims.

This means, of course, that the Biblical notion of the trinity is only implicitly disallowed by the Qur'ān, for the reason that it falls between the categories explicitly allowed by the Qur'ān here. Simply stated, there is

implicitly no room Quranically for an acceptance of Jesus' manhood which also includes his deity (since that would make Jesus eligible for man's worship). And, on that particular point, the Qur'ān is quite explicit: Jesus (together with his mother) is clearly denied any share in the worship which belongs to God alone (5:116). On the one hand, then, when this is translated from Quranic to Biblical categories of thought, it must be taken as an implicit denial of both the trinity and the incarnation. But, on the other hand, it is actually seeking to combat tritheistic conceptions of Jesus: the Biblical notions of trinity and incarnation *per se* are nowhere in view in the Qur'ān.

As for the second denial, the proneness of Muslim exegetes to disagreement and difference of opinion on the meaning of a number of key phrases in 4:157-58 clearly demonstrates that it is an extremely obscure passage. Making no attempt here to enter into the detailed sort of exegetical study such a text requires,[7] we will simply pass on to the larger questions related to our inquiry into the Quranic view of suffering.

Two basic points may be made in this connection. On the one hand, it must be said that nothing in the larger context precludes the possibility of the death of Christ,

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[7]Benjamin T. Lawson provides that sort of investigation in his "The Crucifixion of Jesus in the Qur'ān and Quranic Commentary: An Historical Survey" (M.A. thesis, McGill University, 1980); cf. Mahmoud M. Ayoub, "Towards an Islamic Christology, II: The Death of Jesus, Reality or Delusion," *The Muslim World* 70 (April 1980):91-121.

either as prophet or messenger: the concept of martyrdom--even prophetic martyrdom--is very much at home in the Qur'ān. To be sure, as God's seeming abandonment of the believer or prophet in question, martyrdom does represent a grand anomaly in the plan of God. But the glory of the martyr's magnificent entrance into Paradise--the reward for his (or her) *islamic* nobility to the point of death--must be thought, Quranically, to more than compensate for the shame of such a death.

On the other hand, if 4:157-58 is taken to allow the real death of Christ on the cross, then, absolutely no special salvific significance is to be attached to his death. It is, rather, to be viewed as a simple martyrdom, meritorious only on his own behalf, as a demonstration of his strength of submission to God in *jihād* (that is, it is in no wise mediatorial). So, while the Qur'ān may allow for his real death by crucifixion, such a death is not to be viewed as of any structural (i.e. representative or mediatorial) significance. But, like the first denial of Biblical doctrine treated above, this denial is implicit only. And, surely, the Qur'ān's avoidance of all confrontation with Christians on this issue[a] is very strange, if one is to assume that Quranic perceptions of the

[a]It should be noted that, as the only passage explicitly dealing with the cross, 4:157-58 addresses, not Christian, but Jewish ignorance and misbelief concerning what actually happened in the event of Christ's death.

Biblical (or, for that matter, the Arab Christian) appreciation of Christ's cross are accurate.[9]

The Qur'ān has much to say on Jesus' excellence as a prophet. Against Jewish sentiment, which doubtless sought to exclude Jesus from among God's prophets, there is the Quranic insistence that God alone determines who is and who is not a prophet: that differentiation between prophets which the Qur'ān cannot tolerate is, of course, the denial that one or more of those it has named prophets are, in fact, prophets (4:150-52; cf. 2:136,285; 3:84).[10] There is

[9]Perhaps this is to be explained by saying that, since (from a Quranic point of view) the most salient obstacle to Muḥammad's acceptance of Christian belief was its deification of Jesus, the Christian enlargement-distortion of the significance of Jesus' historic martyrdom was viewed as somehow bound up in that larger error.

It should be said, however, that there is nothing at all in the Qur'ān suggesting that its (implicit) rejection of the Biblical conceptions of either the propinquity of the ideal divine-human relationship, or the vital necessity of sacrificial atonement--rooted as it is in both the immutable (ethical) holiness of God and the universality of man's total depravity--to man's restoration to intimate friendship with God was either deliberate or conscious. This is not surprising, when one considers that there appears to be little awareness, in the Qur'ān, of those key Biblical doctrines of divine holiness and human depravity. Hence, however the Quranic mind may have conceived of itself as "confirming" the Book which was before it (5:48), there can be no doubt that its only debate was with what it perceived to be gross distortions of the Torah and Injīl, and not with those Scriptures themselves; in that sense, it viewed the Quranic revelation as the "guardian" or "protector" of the earlier revelations.

[10]The nature of the case is that to God alone belongs the right ultimately to designate who is and who is not a prophet. Conversely, man's responsibility is to recognize those God has designated; for to reject a God-commissioned prophet is *ipso facto* to usurp the place of God and, so, to become an unbeliever.

As is evident from 2:253 (cf. 17:55), this disclaimer does not disallow the ranking of prophets according to their

much also said positively of Jesus' greatness: the nobility of his mother, his miraculous conception, his having been given a Book of revealed scripture, his ministry of miraculous healing (including the raising of the dead), his exemplary submission to God (3:35,42-47; 5:110; 19:27-34; 21:91; 66:12). And, to these substantial affirmations, a number of honorifics are added: "Messiah," "a word from [or, implicitly, of] God" and "a spirit from" (or, implicitly, "of") God, etc. (e.g. 3:45; 4:171).

Among all of God's servants, there can be no question that Jesus is shown to be one of the greatest. But, again, in line with what has been seen of the Qur'ān's radical Master-servant distinction, this can only mean that Jesus is to be viewed as a man, however exalted a man he may be:

> The Messiah, Jesus son of Mary, was only the Messenger of God... The Messiah will not disdain to be a servant of God, neither the angels who are near stationed to Him. (4:171-72 Arberry)

Surely, in such a context as this, the word "only" cannot be taken as other than a denial--albeit an implicit one--of Jesus' deity, Biblically proclaimed.

Furthermore, the Quranic concept of prophethood allows for no structural remedying of the human situation.

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relative greatness, but it is as a class that the prophets are "preferred above all beings" (6:86 Arberry; cf. 6:83-87). Hence, 4:150-52 relates to the illegitimacy of the Scriptuaries' calling into question the prophetic qualifications of any of those God had designated prophets, whether Shuʿayb and the other non-Biblical (Arab) prophets or Jesus (in the case of the Jews). Implicitly, of course, it also addresses the larger issue of the Jewish (and, to a lesser extent, Christian) refusal to accept Muḥammad's prophetic authority.

So, Jesus' prophethood cannot possibly be thought to signify that he is the Saviour of the world, despite his being named the Messiah. Only in the limited sense of their bearing the revelatory messages of God can the prophets be thought of as 'saviours,' although this is not Quranic terminology: no Quranic prophet is Saviour in the sense that, in himself, he accomplishes, for all mankind, the reversal signified by the covenant of grace. Hence, Jesus is not himself viewed as the revelation of God, but--like Muḥammad--only as the transmitter of it.

In this context, the second major Quranic affirmation on Jesus, that he predicted the coming of Muḥammad, as his prophetic successor, is altogether reasonable (61:6). The tendency among Western scholars in recent years has been to reject the Muslim identification of *aḥmadu* here with Muḥammad, on historical grounds.[11] As the discussion is far too large for us to enter into here, we limit ourselves to saying that there is nothing in the larger Quranic context which casts doubt on the possibility that Jesus is said to have predicted Muḥammad's coming. Muḥammad, as "the prophet of the common folk," is said to have been mentioned in both the Torah and Injīl (7:157). And, furthermore, there is nothing to suggest that Jesus is to be excepted from among those admitted to prophethood on condition that they pledge their allegiance to Muḥammad's (ultimate) prophethood

[11]W. Montgomery Watt, "His Name is Aḥmad," *The Muslim World* 43 (April 1953):110-17; *EI²*, s.v. "Aḥmad," by J. Schacht; Parrinder, *Jesus in the Qur'ān*, pp. 96-100.

(3:81). By contrast, Parrinder's suggestion that *aḥmadu* refers, rather, to the Holy Spirit (whose coming Jesus foretold in John 15:26-16:15) evidences either very little appreciation of the Quranic usage of *rūḥ* or else the assignment of a much higher priority to the hermeneutics of inter-Scriptural harmonization, over the larger Quranic context on such questions.[12]

It follows that Jesus is to be viewed as in some sense subordinate to Muḥammad as the ultimate prophet--ultimate in both senses of the term. Relative to Muḥammad, Jesus is altogether like all of his own precursors. For he is viewed as only a temporary and partial bearer of the light of God's revelation. (And, while the Qur'ān may not explicitly assert the enduring effectiveness and universal applicability of its own message, its ultimacy--again, in both senses of the term--it clearly has nothing to say of its being like any of the earlier revelations in terms of their incompleteness or limited effect.) On the one hand, Jesus may be said to be inferior to the Seal of the Prophets. But, on the other hand, in one sense, it may be his penultimate position, his being chosen immediately to

[12]Ibid.; Parrinder mistakenly assumes that the Quranic *rūḥ* may be quite similar to the Holy Spirit, Biblically conceived (pp. 48-50). His greater error, however, is his assumption that the Quranic revelations are actually engaged in a sort of dialogue with the text of the Bible, in much the same sense that the New Testament might be said to be in constant dialogue with the Old (on this, cf. n. 9 above). On the Quranic use of *rūḥ*, see O'Shaughnessy's thorough investigation of this subject in *The Development of the Meaning of Spirit in the Koran* (cited in ch. II, n. 98 above).

herald the coming of Muḥammad, which most significantly increases Jesus' prophetic stature in the Qur'ān.[13]

Finally, if there is one conclusion that may be drawn from the whole of our study here, it is that the real *sitz im leben* of the Qur'ān is none other than the Jāhiliyya. Quranic monotheism is to be understood as responding primarily to the challenge of pagan worship, and only secondarily to that of the uncooperative among the *ahl al-Kitāb*. Hence, Quranic materials related to Muḥammad's dealings with Jews and Christians--and, naturally, most of what is said of *ʿĪsā ibn Maryam* belongs there--are best understood in terms of a 'sub-plot.' For, as the significance of the sub-plot derives from the plot, and not vice versa, so these materials are not really comprehensible without reference to the larger dramatic whole to which they contribute. To recognize this hermeneutic principle is to avoid countless false leads in one's apprehension of the place of Jesus in the Qur'ān. To employ it consistently is more nearly to appreciate the Muslim Scripture on its own terms.

[13]The parallel between this and the statement of Jesus in Matthew 11:9-11a, concerning the prophetic greatness of John the Baptist, will be apparent.

APPENDIX 1: The Final State

We have seen that the Garden of the afterlife is to be taken as the restored earthly Paradise, lost due to Adam's sin.[1] Quranic descriptions of Paradise must have appealed to Muḥammad's original audience no less than Quranic descriptions of Hell might be considered universally to repel. At least two reasons may be given for this. To begin, the lush, well-watered Garden atmosphere (e.g. 3:15; 20:76; 44:52; 54:54) must have meant far more to desert dwellers than to many present-day readers, inhabitants of arable lands. And, more importantly, the Paradise described represents a religious recasting of the Jāhilī concept of attaining 'immortality' through a superabundant indulgence in luxury and sensual pleasure.[2]

Having said that, we hasten to add that the vision is, however, authentically religious on a number of counts. First, it appears there is an added spiritual dimension in the possibility, at least, of glimpsing "the face of God," a reward reserved for those favoured ones who are "brought

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[1] See n. 111 above; cf. p. 62.

[2] On this, see p. 16 above.

near" to his divine presence (2:272; 13:22; 30:38-39; cf. 3:14-15; 75:22-23; 83:24,28). The image here appears to be that of a great king's hosting an immense banquet, with only certain of his guests near enough even to see him (56:11; 83:24,28; cf. 3:198; 54:55;55:54). Being "brought near," then, is far more a question of the honour of one's being seated near enough to glimpse the glory of his or her munificent Host--and this relates it directly to the vision of God--than it is one of personal communion, the intimacy of close friends. Whatever "nearness" here signifies, the Quranic sense of the Master-servant distinction would hardly allow for any thought of genuine divine-human intimacy or fellowship.[3]

Second, and contrary to the usual Western interpretations of the more sensual descriptions in terms of orgiastic revelry, moral purity is integral to the Quranic vision of faith's final rewards. Beyond its obvious sexual appeal to the men of Muḥammad's generation, the virginal purity of the *ḥawrā'* (pl. *ḥūr*; 56:22-24,35-38; cf. 44:54; 52:20; 55:56,70-74) argues for one's viewing her as a sort of fantastic concubine (i.e. fantastic in the original sense of the term) and as one who has been created specifically for this purpose.[4] And, of course, the Qur'ān viewed

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[3]On this, see pp. 44-49 above.

[4]While moral purity is integral to the Quranic vision of Paradise, the later, Sūfī tendency towards spiritualization of the sexual content here is unwarranted, since the vision was to motivate both Ḥijāzī Arabs recently converted from paganism and (secondarily) pagans to the most

concubinage as an entirely moral and commendable practice, establishing a man's sexual rights over his female slaves (while obliging him to them in other respects; 33:50-52; 70:29-30; cf. 4:3). The moral purity of the Garden's indulgence is further evident in the divine removal of unwanted effects, such as wine's powers of intoxication (52:23; 56:18-19, 25-26; cf. 47:15; 56:25-26); hence, such indulgence is to be viewed as having been rendered both altogether unhurtful and supremely simple.[5]

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radical sort of allegiance and self-surrender. Given the Jāhilī context, it is unthinkable that any of Muḥammad's original hearers would have taken such descriptions allegorically, without the Qur'ān's explicitly indicating that they should do so. Hence, to say that such physical delights (representing the participation of the whole person--body as well as soul--in the bliss of Paradise) imply the essential goodness of all God-ordained sexual behaviour, is far closer to the Quranic intent than Yusuf Ali's spiritualizing assertion that physical "sex has no place in heaven" (*The Holy Qur'an: Translation and Commentary*, appendix xii, p. 1467).

Cf. chapter 7 of Abdelwahab Bouhdiba's *Sexuality in Islam*, translated by Alan Sheridan (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1985), pp. 72-87.

[5]Cf. Jane D. McAuliffe, "The Wines of Earth and Paradise: Quranic Proscriptions and Promises," in *Logos Islamikos: Studia Islamica in Honorem Georgii Michaelis Wickens*, Papers in Mediaeval Studies, no. 6, eds. Roger M. Savory and Dionisius A. Agius (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1984), pp. 167-73.

Hence, the normal temporal effect of (superabundant) sexual activity, the fathering of children, is nowhere mentioned in connection with Paradise. The thought here seems to be that of altogether easeful indulgence in pleasure without many of the temporal constraints of normal consequence and responsibility (for children are a trial in the present life; 8:28; 64:15). Obviously, this directly relates the believer's reward in Paradise to the Jahili concept of attaining 'immortality': the old ideal is not rejected, but it is completely divorced from the arrogance and irresponsibility which made it so damnable to the pagans in the present life. Hence, Paradise primarily consists in the enjoyment of superabundant sensual (and social) pleasures--the very things which had been disallowed the

Under the ideal, paradisical dispensation, then, all the luxuries of the fabulously wealthy--an abundance of concubines, of food and drink (56:17-21), handsome servants (52:24; 56:17; 76:19), brocade-lined couches (55:54), garments of green silk and brocade (76:21), etc.--are bestowed upon the devout Muslim believer, but as gifts of God and without any loss of his essential purity and piety before God. Another image given is that of fabulous fraternal feasting, again conveying the notion of all the finer things of life, together with that of human friendship (e.g. 52:17-28; 56:12-38; cf. 15:47).

Integral to this vision is the believers' realization of perfect rest, both physical (15:48) and spiritual or psychological; as was noted earlier, *lā khawfun ᶜalayhim wa-lā hum yaḥzanūn* is stated categorically some twelve times (e.g. 2:38,62; 7:35; 46:13). Integral also is their attainment of universal brotherhood and harmony (made possible only by the removal of rancour from the hearts of believers, as was noted earlier; 7:43; 15:47; cf. 59:10).

The Quranic vision of Gehenna (*Jahannum*) or the Fire (*al-Nār*) is no less physical--both visual and tactile--in its depiction of torment and degradation than is its opposite, *al-Janna*, of bliss. Hell's inhabitants are, for

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Muslim community, either explicitly, by Quranic proscription, or else simply by the ascetic constraints of *jihād*--but now lawfully; that is, under 'ideal' conditions, without the temporal constraints which made such responsible indulgence impossible to the Muslims before. (Of course, Quranically, adulterous, homosexual and other forms of aberrant or indecent behaviour are not included in the paradisal rewards.)

example, made to drink oozing pus and boiling water; they are roasted alive, with liquid pitch on their faces and with no possibility of escaping through death; and they must forever endure fatigue, anxiety and the absence of all social harmony there (14:16-17; 38:56-58; 56:42-44; 69:30-37; 88:2-7).

And, as with divine nearness in Hell's opposite, the remoteness of God (or, more exactly, of his favour) from Hell's populace is related primarily to physical sensation--here pain, as opposed to pleasure. That is not to say that, as with the Biblical heaven and hell, such descriptives do not point to higher realities than the merely physical. But, unlike the Biblical pictures, that nearness or remoteness does not represent, first and foremost, the enjoyment or loss of intimate fellowship with God.[6]

One other point of contrast might be mentioned here. It is that, for its much greater length, the Bible evidences relatively little of the Qur'ān's multiplication of images in its descriptions of hell. Biblically, hell is shown to be a place of utter futility and endless torment: a lake of fire, weeping, wailing and gnashing of teeth, in company with all of the worst of society's abusers of themselves and others. There is much basic similarity in terms of the nature of Hell's punishments. But, without meaning to imply that the Biblical descriptions here are any less horrific,

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[6]For further discussion of the Quranic conceptions of both the Garden and the Fire, see Haddad and Smith, *Death and Resurrection*, pp. 83-97.

it seems clear that even in similarly homiletic contexts (e.g. Jesus in Mark 9:42-48) there is more restraint in the Biblical descriptives and less compounding of images. The same might be said of the two Scriptures' descriptions of Paradise also.[7]

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[7]The Quranic descriptions seem to be motivated by the concern to catch the popular imagination. In this regard, then, early *tafsīr* proved its faithful heir, even further multiplying concrete details. It also reflected the dominating tendency of the ḥadīth's amplification of such Quranic passages: "a literalness which emphasizes the reality and detail of sensual pleasure" or pain (*EI*², s.v. "Djanna," by L. Gardet).

Some notes on the Biblical descriptions of heaven are given in the body of this paper; see above, pp. 74-78, 144-45 and 155-56.

APPENDIX 2: Ethical Orientation of the Qur'ān

In order to describe the Quranic orientation to the issues of sin and righteousness, one should begin by asking, What are the major ethical concerns to be found in the Qur'ān? The great mass of ethical data in the Qur'ān (all of which is relevant to our question) may perhaps be made manageable by viewing sin, on the one hand, and righteousness, on the other, in terms of six inter-related aspects. They are as follows: 1) prophetic and 2) communal; 3) theological and 4) cultic; 5) social and 6) ascetic.[1]

The prophetic aspect is concerned with the displacement of unwarranted 'individualism' by unquestioning

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[1]Properly understood, these aspects may be further reduced to three basic perspectives: normative, existential and situational (the three pairs above corresponding to these in the order in which they are given). While it may be argued that in some sense the theological and social aspects are primary, the ordering above reflects the fact that in another sense it was the normative issue which was fundamental to all else. But that issue takes us beyond the scope of this present study.

This three-perspective approach comes from John M. Frame, *The Doctrine of the Knowledge of God: A Theology of Lordship* (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 1987), part 3: "Methods of Knowledge," pp. 169-346.

allegiance to Muḥammad's absolute authority, as prophet. Hence, the contemporary prophetic (in this case, Muhammadan) interpretation of anything relevant to the spiritual, military and socio-economic situation of the *umma* was generally speaking to be taken as 'inspired'--although not in the sense that the revealed Books were.[2] (This, of course, must have included Muḥammad's interpretation of various Biblical accounts and doctrines.) The communal aspect is concerned with the displacement of factionalism and disloyalty by cohesion and commitment to the interests of the emergent *umma*. Most prominently, this involves the issue of unswerving loyalty in *jihād* (as does the prophetic also), but on another level it involves such things as the sanctity of family relationships within the *umma*.

The theological or religious aspect is concerned with the displacement of *shirk* by true belief in and worship of God. The cultic or sacral aspect is concerned with the displacement of (tribal) secularity by supertribal sanctity or sacredness. It involves the observation of revealed taboos and directives; such things, for example, as the prohibitions concerning pork and the sacred enclaves, the

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[2]After Muḥammad's death, of course, popular devotion vastly extended his 'inspiration' to cover really every aspect of his life and behaviour. The enormous ḥadīth literature, conveying the *sunna* (normative practice) of the Prophet, grew up as the expression of such devotion. In time, the traditions were sifted and 'canonized' in great collections, such as Bukhārī's. In Sunnī Islam, this process culminated in the jurisprudents' ascribing priority to the prophetic *sunna* (over the Qur'ān itself), among the four constitutive bases of the Sharīᶜa.

re-orientation of the *qibla* and the prescription of the Ramadan fast.

The social aspect is concerned with the displacement of oppression by justice for the socially disadvantaged. This includes the prescription of *zakāt* and the prohibition of usury, infanticide and the abuse of orphans and widows, etc. The ascetic aspect is concerned with the displacement of Jāhilī excess and license by personal restraint and communal discipline; examples of this are the prohibition of alcohol, indecency and nakedness, etc. And, underpinning all of the ethics above, of course, is the Qur'ān's reassessment of this world in the light of the ultimate realities of the world to come: here we do not have a simple case of substitution--other-worldliness for this-worldliness--but rather a redefinition of the present world in terms of the future world.

From this, a complex of sins emerges, including pride, arrogance, disobedience, unbelief, impatience, ingratitude, spiritual indifference, *shirk*, falsehood, sectarianism, greed, injustice and the self-centredness and lack of moral restraint for which the Jāhiliyya was renowned. In terms of the ground-swell of Quranic attention, most of the major sins relate directly to the joint denial of God and his prophet (the denial of God was *ipso facto* the denial of his prophet, and vice-versa). There are also specific listings of 'heinous sins and indecencies,' including adultery, fornication, public

nudity, etc. (e.g. 42:37; 53:32); the implicit thought seems to be that such sins remained a real threat to the believers. (By definition, *shirk*, pride, arrogance, greed and injustice should not have posed any threat at all to genuine believers; hence, the concern of the Qur'ān here is with altogether breaking the stranglehold of old Jāhilī habits in the lives of converted pagans, of whom virtually the entire *umma* under Muḥammad was composed.) Such acts of indiscipline were thus effectively made to signify apostasy in the practical rejection of the rule of God and his prophet and the denial of one's communal allegiance.

In any case, the point to be emphasized is that the great bulk of Quranic attention is given to those sins which, in themselves, signify the individual's self-exclusion from the community of faith. So, for example, while falsehood is frequently condemned, most of its condemnation relates to the studied deceit of the hypocrites, those would-be saboteurs of the Muslim cause. There is relatively little emphasis on the necessity of truth-telling at all times[3] and none at all on the believer's need for "truth in the inward parts" (i.e. 'moral integrity,' including that God-given degree of honesty with oneself without which, Biblically, none can find release from his or her domination by sin; Psa. 51:6 AV). As a whole, then, the ethical focus of the Qur'ān may be said to

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[3]Hence, Ghazālī and other Muslim theologians would eventually attempt to standardize and define the occasions in which lying was to be considered permissible.

be on those sins comprising the great communal watershed of faith and unbelief.

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