

**Universal Myths
Mistaken As
Universal Realities**

By

G. A. Parwez

IDARA TOLU-E-ISLAM (REGD.)

25-B, Gulberg 2, Lahore—54660

PAKISTAN

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

Name of the Pamphlet: Universal Myths Mistaken
As Universal Realities
Author : (Late) Ghulam Ahmad Parwez
English Rendering by : Khalid M. Sayyed
Published by : Idara Tolu-e-Islam
25-B, Gulberg 2, Lahore-54660,
Pakistan.
Phone 92 42 571 4546.
Email: Idara@toluislam.com
Website: <http://www.toluislam.com>
Printed by : Yamani Printers, Lahore.

1st Edition : June 2007
Funded By : Bazm Tolu-e-Islam London
76-Park Road, Ilford, Essex, IG1 1SF,
UK.

Tel & Fax: 44 208 553 1896
Email: bazm.london@talktalk.net
Website: www.islam21.info

CONTENTS

TRANSLATOR'S NOTE	4
UNIVERSAL MYTHS MISTAKEN AS	
UNIVERSAL REALITIES	5
Myth 1: The oldest, original myth	5
Myth 2: The Status of Woman	9
Myth 3: Obedience to parents is obligatory	12
Myth 4: The Reality of the Universe	13
Myth 5: Human Nature	15
Myth 6: Human Conscience	17
Myth 7: Destiny	18
Myth 8: Capitalism	19
Myth 9: Religious Leadership (The Clergy)	21
Myth 10: The Distinction of Sharia and Tariqa	23
Myth 11: Spiritual power of the Dead	26
CONCLUSION	27
GLOSSARY	29
NOTES & REFERENCES	33
OTHER PUBLICATIONS	37
Islam a Challenge to Religion	
Quranic Laws	
Islamic Way of Living	
Reasons for the Decline of Muslims	
Letters to Tahira	
Exposition of the Holy Quran, Volume I	
THE TOLU-E-ISLAM MOVEMENT	43
Its Beliefs and Objectives	
Quranic Lectures (Dars-e-Quran in Urdu) Abroad	45
PAMPHLETS & BOOKLETS	47

THE TRANSLATOR'S NOTE

Universal Myths Universally Mistaken as Universal Realities is a translation of *Alamgeer Afsaaney Jinhein Haqeeqat Samajh Liya Gaya*, a brief essay written in Urdu by Chaudhri Ghulam Ahmad who wrote under the pen-name Parwez. He was the founder of the Tolu-e-Islam ('The New Dawn of Islam') Movement, and the Idara (central office) which operates from Lahore, Pakistan. Parwez was a highly controversial but intellectually unignorable figure, respected by men of knowledge in the field of Islamic research, especially, interpretation of The Quran.

In this essay, Parwez deals with about a dozen notions which Muslims have accepted as facts—and as articles of Faith—for centuries and exposes them as anti-Quranic. I have attempted to the best of my ability to represent the original essay accurately while making it more suitable for a Western readership.

References to the Quranic verses have mostly been given under Notes & References at the end of the document; in addition to the Sura (Chapter) name, I also give the numerical reference thus: the Sura number followed by the verse number; for example, 2: 219 means it is verse number 219 from the second Sura.

Translation rendered by:

Khalid M Sayyed

B Sc; B Ed; M A (Punjab), PGCE (London),

M Ed – Applied Linguistics (OU, UK).

UNIVERSAL MYTHS

MISTAKEN AS UNIVERSAL REALITIES.

(G.A. Parwez)

The human mind is a bewilderingly magical world. A child quickly gets bored of a factual narration but never tires of bedtime fairy tales night after night. However, the same child loses interest in fiction when it grows up. In a similar pattern, the human mind, in its 'childhood', found fiction more attractive than fact. But, the similarity between the development of the human mind at the individual and the group levels ends there and we notice a startling difference between the two. An individual ultimately grows out of taking fiction as fact, but mankind never does so, even after having had repeated logical explanations to the contrary. It not only continues to believe in the reality of certain myths but also, sadly, resents very strongly any academic and logical attempt to expose their falsehood. In this essay, I propose to discuss a few of those myths that have universally been mistaken as realities.

Myth 1: The oldest, original myth

We accept the birth of a human child as a routine occurrence of everyday life. Everyone knows that a child is born of a pregnancy which is the result of sexual intercourse between a man and a woman. But the question of the birth of the very first human – or the original couple – is a complex one. The human mind, during its infancy, was unable to come up with a satisfactory answer to it. Perplexed, it sought refuge in a myth. The source of the

fictional story of the origin of Man is the Torah, the most sacred ancient text of Judaism.^[1]

The Creation of Man

The Torah states that, after having created the Earth, and populating it with the Plant and Animal Kingdoms,

‘the Lord God formed the man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being.’^[2]

That is to say that God created the first man by making the human form from dust and putting life into it. But a solitary human could not procreate; the woman was needed. She was created thus:

‘So the Lord caused the man to fall into a deep sleep; and while he was sleeping, he took one of the man’s ribs and closed up the place with flesh. Then the Lord God made a woman from the rib he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man. The man said, “This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called ‘woman’ for she was taken out of a man.”’^[3]

Thus was solved one of the greatest riddles of life! Fascinating as it was, this myth became universally popular as it satisfied the human mind in a big way. It is very difficult now to establish the original source of the story.

The Quranic view

This myth had established itself as a reality when, around 1500 years ago, the last divinely appointed prophet (Mohammed) appeared in Arabia. He announced through Revelation that the afore-mentioned concept of the origin of Man is a fabrication, being a figment of imagination by the human mind. Mankind is the latest link in the long chain of biological evolution on Earth. Briefly, according to

God's scheme of things, the first living cell came about as a result of interaction between inorganic matter and water (*teene laazib* in the Quran's terminology).^[4] As it grew, the original life-cell split into two parts having male and female sexual characteristics. Life evolved from cells to insects, to marine and then to land animals, and eventually to the species we call Man. Since this revelation by the Quran, the discoveries of Science have only gone to prove the Quranic view.

Still, the 'child' in the human mind clings to the ancient myth of creation of Man. Moreover – as it happens with all mythical stories – passing time has added colour to it. Even more amazingly, this kind of story-telling has become a part of the religious literature of Muslims in the face of their belief that the Quran is God's word. To make matters worse, such myths are attributed to the great personage of Mohammed who gave the world a glitteringly realistic book of knowledge and truth, the Quran.

Commentaries on the Quran

The commentary by Ibn Kathir^[5] holds a prominent and respected place in early Muslim religious literature. It states:

'Angels were created on Wednesday, animals on Thursday and Adam on Friday.'

About the creation of Adam it says:

Then smooth and good clay was taken for Adam (pbuh).^[6] After it had fermented, God created Adam (pbuh) with His own hand(s). He remained just a form for forty days. *Iblees* (the Devil) would come and kick it whereupon the form resounded as if it were hollow. He [*Iblees*] would enter the mouth and come out of the back opening, and vice versa. Later, when God breathed life into him [Adam], it travelled from the head downwards, creating blood

and flesh on the way. When the breath of life reached the navel, he was very pleased to see his body. He promptly tried to get up but failed because the lower body was still lifeless. When the entire body had been breathed alive, he sneezed and said, "All praise be to the Sustainer of all worlds." God responded: "God be kind with you."^[7]

Adam's wife:

The book goes on to state:

'He was all alone. One day, he was overtaken by sleep and Eve^[8] was created from his left rib. Waking up, he saw her and asked, "Who are you and why have you been created?" She replied, "I am a woman and have been created to keep you company and to please you."'

About Woman's creation from Man's rib, it comments:

The authentic Tradition [*Hadith*] has it that Woman has been created out of a rib. The top-most rib is the most bent. Therefore, if you try to straighten it, you will snap it. You can benefit from it only if you leave it a little bent.'^[9]

The myth was made more colourful thus:

'When Adam reached out to touch her, God's revelation arrived forbidding him to do so before he had paid her dower. Adam asked, "My Lord! What is her dower?" God replied, "It is to praise Mohammed and his family ten times." Adam did precisely that and the two were married with angels standing as witnesses. Towards the end of that Friday, angels were instructed to decoratively clothe and make Eve up in genuine diamonds and pearls and enter both in Paradise.'

The story of Man narrated by the Quran refers not to an individual, or a couple, but to mankind. The term 'Adam' appears in only one other location in the Quran: 'We exalted among peoples of the world, Adam, Noah, the family of Abraham and the family of Imran.' ^[10] Surely, the Adam in this verse – if he was indeed an individual and a prophet – cannot be the same as the one in the symbolic story of Man. It is beneath a prophet of God to go against divine instruction and be punished for it by expulsion from Paradise. No messenger of God would have done so. Therefore, the myth of Adam just cannot be the story of a prophet.

Myth 2: The Status of Woman

Another part of the same myth says that, according to the Torah, God put Adam and Eve up in the Garden of Eden and provided them with everything, but forbade them to eat the fruit from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. The woman was duped by the Snake (the Devil/Satan) into eating it and she, in turn, tricked her husband into doing the same. God responded to this sin committed by the woman by saying to her:

I will greatly increase your pains in childbearing; with pain you will give birth to children. Your desire will be for your husband, and he will rule over you. ^[11]

Woman, the root of all evil

The woman was deceived by the devil and she deceived her man. This led to the conclusion that Woman is the root of all sins. Furthermore, it was said that every human child is born with the burden of that original sin. In other words, Man (both men as well as women) is naturally a sinner and a wrongdoer. History testifies to how this myth has degraded human life and disgustingly debased women. Half

of all humanity no longer remained fully human and the world became a forced imprisonment for mankind.

The Quran's version

The Quran negated this universal myth by asserting that it was a fabricated non-truth. It said that Woman is not the source of all sins nor did she dupe Man; they are both equally human, and by dint of that fact alone, equally worthy of respect. The two are mutual partners in life.

The Muslim contribution: Thus the Quran replaced fiction with fact. But soon the childish mind of man reverted to the myth. Subsequently, Muslims too, adopted the anti-Quranic view, i. e. Woman has a low intellect and an eternally crooked nature because of her origin (Adam's rib), and is created to be subservient to Man. This view was supported by fabricated reports in the Prophetic Tradition (*Hadith*). For example:

'He (Mohammed, pbuh) said, "If I could order prostration to someone other than God, I would have ordered wives to prostrate to their husbands."^[12]

Or:

'Ash'as reports: "Once I stayed with ('Umar) Farooq, the Great. There happened some dispute between him and his wife and he hit her. Then he ('Umar) said to me, 'Ash'as! Remember three things which I took, and have memorized, from the Prophet, pbuh -- one, a husband is not to be asked why he has hit his wife; two, don't go to bed without offering *witr* [additional] prayer'; and three, the narrator forgot."^[13]

Elsewhere, it is reported that the Prophet said,

"During the night of Ascension I saw that women formed the majority of Hell people."

The book also states:

‘When Cain slew Abel, the devil informed Eve and she began to scream and wail. Adam came along and asked Eve as to what had happened. Despite repeated queries by Adam, Eve did not reply and continued to weep and cry. Then Adam said to Eve, “That’s it, then. Go ahead if you want to cry. Your daughters are doomed to cry for ever.” That is why Woman is destined to cry.’ ^[14]

Fabricated Tradition was followed by some poets who portrayed Woman in a similar light. Even sages and saints did the same.

All this continues to this day in the name of religion and, in all probability, will go on. The irony is the kind of statements made about Paradise being ‘under the mother’s feet’. ^[15] Well, a mother is a woman after all! But that, being logic, has no place in a myth. That is precisely why we have another myth which states: ‘Religion needs no logic.’

Discriminated at birth

Muslims have adopted the myth of the Original Sin with some differences. Infants born to the poor and the rich are not equal. The fact that a poor child is looked down upon throughout his life appears to be a punishment for the ‘sin’ of his ‘low’ birth while a rich child is rewarded with enormous wealth just because of his ‘high’ birth. These mythical concepts degrade humanity even more than the one about the original sin. The practical fact that Muslims accord less respect and importance to women than men seems to be an echo of the myth of the original sin.

The Despicable World

Muslim religious literature contains fabricated Traditions like the one in which the Prophet is reported to have said:

‘The world is a prison and the faithful are prisoners. Nothing is more despicable for God’s chosen people than this world.’

One finds it very strange that in order to get close to God one has to despise the world, a creation He is so proud of!

Myth 3: Obedience to parents is obligatory

All religions have pronounced the myth of subordination to parents as divine instruction. All societies regard it as a higher value to be preserved. In Hindu mythology, Rama was elevated to be an *avtaar* (apostle) of *Ishwer* (God) solely because he readily obeyed his father. The young wife had asked the older husband to give her his word to do whatever she would ask. When he had, she demanded that her own son, instead of Rama, be declared heir to the throne. Despite the fact that both the father and the son knew the absurdity of the demand, they both carried it out. Rama, because he had obeyed his father, became not only an apostle but also an incarnation of God Himself.

The Quran rejected this myth too by presenting its view that children need their parents’ guidance until they mature, which is when they should make their own decisions. They may benefit from other people’s experiences but are by no means obliged to follow them. Fortunately, this unrealistic view of children being subordinates of their parents has largely been theoretical and limited to individual cases. If men had actually adopted this approach of every new generation slavishly carrying out practically the wishes of their elders, mankind would not have taken even one step forward on the path of progress. According to the Quran, life is evolving progressively, making every subsequent era different from the preceding one. Therefore, each generation of men must run their affairs as they see fit. Men are obliged to follow Divine Values only according to

which the role-model is not Rama (the Hindu god) but Abraham who frankly told his father:

‘How can you consider these statues your gods? As I see it, you and your people are obviously mistaken!’ ^[16]

The Quran wants one to treat one’s parents nicely but not be subservient to them.

This myth extends itself into the view that one’s forefathers are also to be followed blindly. The Quran rejected this universal myth of ancestor worship and said that that was the Unbelievers’ way:

‘When they are told to follow what God has sent down, they say, “No, we’ll follow the path of our ancestors,”

It went on to comment:

...despite the Devil beckoning them toward a hellish torment.’ ^[17]

The Quran said all that but, sadly, we (Muslims) rediscovered the ‘sacred’ myth of subservience to ancestors and continue to cling to it.

Myth 4: The Reality of the Universe

It is widely believed that myths are only a product of religious superstition and are not to be found in philosophy. But, it is not so. The most conspicuous example of philosophical mythology comes from Plato who is widely considered to be the original thinker.

Plato’s illusion

He maintained that the physical universe around us does not really exist. The real universe is the ‘World of Ideas’ of which the physical world is a mere shadow. Plato’s highly convincing argument and captivating logic spellbound

humanity. His concept of our universe became the basis of a variety of philosophical movements, paralyzing the functional potential of mankind. The concept of the Universe as being unreal renders it unattractive and unworthy of human conquest.

The Quranic View

Mankind was under the sleepy hypnosis of Plato's theory when the Quran shook it awake by announcing loudly and clearly:

God created the Heavens and the Earth in reality.
[18]

It is also said that the creation of the Universe has a definitive purpose and those who believe it to be an illusion deny the truth. Practically, people who hold this view of an unreal world have their efforts wasted (burnt away).^[19] The Quran stated that the fact is:

Whatever there is among the highs and lows of the
Universe is conquerable by you.^[20]

This great proclamation by the Quran jolted Man out of slumber and the very first group of men to adopt it became the founder of a great empire in the span of a few years; they established a civilization based upon a revolutionary ideology serving as a divider between the ancient and the modern worlds.

Sadly once again, despite the Quran having done away with the Platonic view of the Universe, the same philosophy overcame Muslims – this time in the garb of mysticism.

The Myth of Mysticism

The entire mystic literature of Islam is nothing but a representation of the magical and misleading Platonic view hiding behind the veil of similes. Consequently, Muslims, who eradicated every false

and unrealistic system around are now dependent upon those very systems for their livelihood and existence.

Myth 5: Human Nature

Yet another myth from the world of philosophy, accepted universally as reality, is the one about human nature. 'Nature' has been defined as a constant, unchanging characteristic, or a group thereof, which something or someone possesses. In other words, one's nature cannot be altered. For instance, fire burns, fluids keep their level, lions are beastly, sheep are not, and so on. These natural characteristics are intrinsic to things. That is why things do not need messengers (prophets) from God, as humans do, to teach them how to behave. A goat needs no coaching in its food selection, i.e. yes to vegetation, no to meat; a snake poisonously bites (humans, for instance) not out of conscience choice but is driven by Nature. Such, then, is the state of affairs of all things non-human. But the mystery-loving human mind invented the myth that Man, too, has a nature. This view has been accepted as fact throughout history although no one has been able to define 'human nature.'

The Quranic View

The Quran appeared on the scene and dismissed as false the notion of Man having a nature. It says that Man does have a physical life and, like all other life forms, has some biological needs. These may be put into two categories: self-preservation and self-reproduction. These characteristics are animal instincts not human nature. Above the physical life, Man has the human life. He is not intrinsically programmed with human behaviour. He gets that information not from within but without. *That* is Divine Revelation. Man is entirely free to adopt or reject this guidance. ^[21] Thus the Quran declared Man to be

different from the rest of Creation in having FREEDOM OF CHOICE, an attribute he shares with God albeit with human limitations.

What we (Muslims) did

Soon after the Quran having declared man to be possessor of FREE WILL, Muslims adopted the old concept of 'human nature' as an article of faith. Furthermore, following the Torah, they formed the view that 'Islam is the religion of Nature and God has created Man in His own image.'

'Religion of Nature'

Despite repeated pronouncements of Islam being the 'religion of Nature', one fails to find an interpretation of the term. The concept appears to be nothing more than '(mere) words (names) which you and your ancestors (have) coined.' ^[22] At best, the concept is illustrated by a hypothetical case of a child who, if shielded from all indoctrination and allowed to develop naturally, will surely grow up to be a Muslim. Akber, the great Mughal emperor of India, is reported to have tested the theory by actually having an infant sent to the wilderness. The child is said to have grown up into a beast. Apart from this unconfirmed report, some time ago a human child was found in an Indian jungle. The 'animal' child was hospitalised in the Indian state of Utter Pradesh. Despite expert endeavours to 'humanize' him, the kid remained – and eventually died – an 'animal.'

The fact of the matter is that Man has no nature. He is free. He has certain potentialities which he, of his own choice, can manifest into reality. God has given Man the guiding principles of life. If man follows that divine guidance to realize his potential, he will achieve individual welfare as well as collective success. Otherwise, life becomes a hellish

existence which, incidentally, is amply evident from the current state of affairs of our world.

Myth 6: Human Conscience

The myth of 'human nature' begot the myth of 'human conscience' – an innate ability to distinguish right from wrong. Universally accepted as fact, it has also been called 'the voice of one heart' and 'the inner light, among others. People who digress from the 'right' path are believed to have a 'dead' conscience whereas the 'righteous' ones are said to possess a 'living' heart.

The Quranic View

Rejecting this false notion, the Quran maintains that animals do possess an innate ability to tell the safe from the dangerous; for instance, young chickens do not have to be taught to avoid water while ducklings naturally adapt to it. This is termed 'animal instinct.' But Man has no such ability:

'And he (Man) beckons Evil as though it was Good;
Man is hasty!' [23]

That is why Man needs divine help to tell right from wrong, bad from good. He is born into the world with his slate blank. He becomes what his environment makes him. His attitude regarding Good and Evil is determined by his social upbringing. That is his conscience. In other words, human conscience is the 'internalized society.' A Hindu child cannot stand even the thought of meat whereas a Muslim child thrives on it. That is why the Quran says that things are right or wrong not because Man sincerely considers them so. For that, an objective standard is needed which is there in the form of Divine Revelation contained in the Quran.

What we (Muslims) did

Muslims readopted the notion of human conscience which

had been so clearly rejected by the Quran. The majority of Muslims continue to believe in it, ignoring the fact that 'right' and 'wrong' is decided by God's Book (the Quran) and not by human 'conscience.' The Divine Word is consistent whereas human conscience varies from one person to another. If human conscience was to decide the validity of an action, no criminal would fall liable for punishment; no capitalist may be blamed for exploiting the worker; no man may be put to shame for subjugating women, and so on. Therefore, the concept of human conscience is a myth. The reality is preserved in the Quran.

Myth 7: Destiny

From Christianity came the myth that every human child is born with the burden of its parents' (Adam and Eve) sins and cannot achieve salvation on its own. It was concluded that Man is helpless and is not free. The Hindu philosophy modified this view and, borrowing the notion of Reincarnation from Greek thought, maintained that every human child undergoes suffering as punishment of sins committed in a previous life, being absolutely unaware of his activities of the past existence! This gave rise to the concept of Pre-determination, i.e. whatever happens to an individual is pre-determined and unchangeable. In addition to religion, this concept influenced the world of philosophy as well and gradually came to be regarded as reality.

The Quranic View

Exposing the falsehood of this concept, the Quran said the Man is born with a clean slate on which he writes his destiny himself. His predicaments are a consequence of his own actions. ^[24] This is made very clear by the comprehensive expression of 'whatever your hands send on.' ^[25] Obviously, actions precede results. Therefore, according to the Quran, all results faced by Man are a

consequence of an action previously taken (not in a previous 'life' – the Quran does not recognize Reincarnation); it is all a result of his own deeds (4:62).

Shaping the Future

The basic question is: Is Man's destiny pre-determined for him, or does he shape it himself as he wills? The Quran states:

'O the Faithful! You must follow the divine laws, and each of you must be watchful of what he sends on for tomorrow.' ^[26]

The Concept of Pre-destiny is anti-Quranic

Some hold the view that all events occur as God wills them. According to the Quran, this view is incorrect:

'When asked, the polytheists say, "If God wanted it so, we or our ancestors would never have committed polytheism!"' ^[27]

Thus, the Quran rejects Pre-determination and maintains that Man is the architect of his own future. Obviously, to build one's own future, one needs consistent efforts and hard work, physically as well as mentally. The lazy, good-for-nothing parasites of society do not find this acceptable. Therefore, purposefully and deliberately, they replaced the Quranic view with the old myth of Pre-determination. And it was done subtly as well. The Quran has listed FIVE 'Articles of Conviction' – God, Angels, the (Holy) Books, the Divine Messengers, and the Doomsday. ^[28] But now Muslims believe in a sixth one - Pre-determination!

Myth 8: Capitalism

But, why invent the myth of Pre-destiny in the first place? The answer lies in history, in another myth. The story is very interesting and worthy of attention.

Before creating Man, God had already stocked provisions on Earth for his sustenance – air, water, light, heat, food, etc. God told Man that sustenance on Earth was to be available to all, free and readily. Mankind started their life on Earth in the socialistic atmosphere – referred to by the Quran as Adam’s Paradise – without any question of ownership. The situation was this:

‘And ate satisfactorily whenever, wherever they wanted.’ [29]

But, though air, water, light and heat were readily available, man had to toil to procure food from land. There were men who did not want to work hard and looked for ways to live off others. Their search culminated in the notion of private ownership of land. With that, ‘Adam’ (mankind) lost his ‘Paradise’ (peaceful, worrisless coexistence). Sustenance was free and easily available no longer. Men became exploiters of fellow-men. The Earth became a hell. Now, there were rulers and the ruled, masters and workers, exploiters and the exploited. Human dignity was crushed under the owner-slave system!

The Quran’s Proclamation

The myth of private ownership of land – the primary source of sustenance for Man – remained accepted as fact for millennia but then the Quran made the earth-shaking proclamation:

‘Everything in the heavens and on Earth belongs to Allah.’ [30]

Man’s assertion of owning land is tantamount to playing God. Therefore, the entire mankind was told:

‘So, do not put God in competition...’ [31]

And, men were told to keep the earth (land) ‘open and free for the needy.’ [32]

This great proclamation revolutionized humanity in an unprecedented manner. It uprooted the old myth of private ownership and founded human society anew. Consequently, Prophet Mohammed, on the occasion of the Last Pilgrimage, put it briefly but eloquently:

“Verily, time has come to the same as the day when Allah created the heavens and the Earth.”

That meant that sustenance was once again freely and readily available to all. But, once again, the lazy, parasitic, good-for-nothing men started working against this system and succeeded in gradually replacing it with the older, previous system of capitalistic oppression.

The following myth should explain and elaborate on these points further.

Myth 9: Religious Leadership (The Clergy)

Is it not surprising how a handful of people successfully exploit the vast majority of men? How is it possible that, under the capitalistic system of economy, the masses work hard and a small ‘elite’ live off and control them? No man in his right mind is likely to submit to this unfair set up, right? Absolutely right! That is why men need to be duped into it. They have to accept the ‘validity’ and the ‘truth’ of it. That is achieved through hypnotizing them by the most effective of all agents – the clergy. The Quran refers to them as ‘Haamaan’s (the Biblical Amon – Pharaoh’s high priest) hordes.’^[33] They peddle their ideology as ‘God’s Will’, going against which is punishable first by torture in one’s grave and, later on, by a permanent abode in Hell. They invented false notions like: ‘God Himself directly controls the distribution of wealth; every individual’s share of worldly possessions is pre-decided by the Almighty; and that is one’s destiny, pre-determined and unchangeable, beyond human control; therefore, one must resign to one’s

fate, never complain about it, and be grateful for whatever God has given him.’

Thus was the notion of Pre-determination peddled to consolidate the principle of Capitalism – an inhumane system in which masses toil for the crafty few, and remain psychologically docile. That is why we see non-Islamic (anti-Quranic) *fataawa* (religious decrees – plural of *fatwa*) such as the following:

‘Just as Islam doesn’t restrict private ownership of money, residences, businesses, cattle, cars, boats, etc, it doesn’t restrict ownership of land. Islam has not put any restrictive limits on any ownership. Anything legal, obtained legally, may be owned limitlessly as long as its legal religious dues are paid.’ ^[34]

The Coalition

One may ask: What do the clergy get by supporting a capitalistic arrangement? The answer lies in the last sentence of the ruling above: ‘...as long as its **legal religious dues are paid.**’ Of course, the clergy pockets the ‘religious’ dues. That is why the Muslim priests strongly object if *zaka* ^[35] is referred to as ‘income tax.’ They maintain that ‘income tax’ is for the worldly government while *zaka* is for the Divine Kingdom. And, who else are better managers of ‘divine’ money than ‘divine’ representatives – the priests? That is precisely why the Quran classes capitalists and priests together:

‘O the Convinced! Surely, the majority among priests and religious scholars eat up people’s money improperly, and block the way to God. And as to those who hoard gold and silver and not spend it in God’s Way, give them the news of a painful torture.’ ^[36]

The fact of the matter is that, in the Quran's view, the term 'capitalist' applies not only to one who hoards wealth but also to one who, despite being able-bodied, live off others, even a beggar. Such individuals are termed *mutrefeen* by the Quran. Hoarders of wealth as well as the clergy have been termed 'capitalists' by the holy Book. Actually, the 'capitalism' of the clergy is far more powerful than that of the money people. The latter at least do so much as invest money to exploit others whereas the former do not do even that! They live off the workers as well as, ironically, the wealthy. Bulley Shah, a mystic poet of the last century from the Sind area in southern Pakistan, very aptly labelled these self-proclaimed representatives of God 'robbers of robbers.'

Myth 10: The Distinction of *Sharia* and *Tariqa*

Please refer back to the verse from Sura *At-Tauba* (9:34) where the Quran mentions two groups of people: *ahbaar* (priests) and *ruhbaan* (spiritual guides). This duality springs from another interesting myth.

God revealed His system (set of eternal values, meant to be the basis of human societal life, enshrined in the Quran) to Man for his guidance in a very clear and simple language and style. The code of life needed to be implemented practically in a system in which men obeyed God and not their fellow-men. But power-hungry men succeeded in overthrowing the divine system and establishing their own rule over men, thus degrading human honour and respect. In addition to these temporal rulers (kings and emperors) of men, there emerged the 'religious' rulers.. They claimed their authority on the premise that: 'a political set-up is for earthly life alone; the Hereafter can only be taken care of by following God's Law; so, men have to obey God through obeying priests; otherwise, men will end up in Hell.' Scared, the simple-minded masses submitted in obedience to these *ahbaar* (religious scholars). Thus, free

Man was doubly shackled by temporal as well as religious rulers (men of *sharia* – scholars who have the self-claimed right to interpret religion). This situation prompted yet another group of ambitious men strive for their share of supremacy and control over fellow men. These were the men of *tareeqa* [the mystics (the *sufi*'s)]. They asserted their claim on the thesis that: 'the state deals with worldly matters while the priests deal with religious affairs, but the thing that really matters is the soul/spirit which neither of the two groups mentioned know anything about; the domain of the soul is dealt with through arcane knowledge which cannot be obtained through conventional education; this can be done through private tutelage of men, dead or living, who are 'close to God'; one can avoid the longer route of religious rituals to God and take the direct – and the shortest – way; for that, one needs the blessings of a *murshed* (spiritual guide). Lazy men were strongly attracted to this idea and submitted themselves to shackles of the third kind, the spiritual guides – dead or living!

Originally a Judaic practice (their mystics were called *ruhbaan*), this tradition was termed *tareeqa* [literally, a 'path' (to God)] in Islam. Thus were established, in addition to the temporal government, two rival governments in the realm of religion. The *sharia* rulers kept the masses bound by the carrot of houries (beautiful maidens) in Paradise and the stick of Hellfire. But, that pertained to the Hereafter. The *tareeqa* people, on the other hand, performed 'miracles' right here in this earthly life to cater for the masses. Naturally, the common man was attracted more to *tareeqa* than to *sharia*. Tombs and monasteries became more popular than mosques. The *sharia* people possessed, as their best tool, the practice of supporting their views by the sayings of renowned *imaams* (religious scholars), or even the Prophet himself. The *tareeqa* people did one better on them by claiming to have

direct communion with God! Thus was created the myth of *kashf* [or *ilhaam* (the Lesser Revelation)].

The Arcane Knowledge

According to the Quran, God sent His messages to His prophets through a process termed *wahy* (Revelation). The reception of *wahy* is exclusive to God's chosen men (prophets) and this mode of communication between God and Man was permanently suspended with the death of Mohammed, the last of the divine messengers. Now, the only way for men to know God's Will is to read the Quran because the finality of Mohammed's prophethood means that no man after him will ever receive *wahy* (direct messages from God). Mystics, however, claim to receive messages directly from the Creator, essentially in the same manner as *wahy* but term it *kashf* (discovery) or *ilhaam* (inspirational thought). Moreover, they insist that Lesser Revelation is to continue till the end of the world. Thus, the door of Revelation, closed shut by the Quran, was re-opened. One of the top leaders of *tareeqa*, Elder Sheikh Mohieddin ibn Arabi, the great mystic of 11th century Spain, writes in his *Fusul al Hakam* (Bezels of Wisdom):

'The *sharia* people rule by the Quran and the [Prophetic] Tradition. ^[37] When they cannot find clear instructions there, they conjecture and confer but their basis remains the same. On the other hand, among us [mystics] there are those who can obtain the same thing directly from the Almighty via *kashf* and *ilhaam*. Therefore, in a way, the source of *kashf* and *ilhaam*, and that of the Prophet's *wahy* is one and the same. This puts the *kashf* man in the same category as the Prophet as far as obtaining knowledge from God is concerned.'

Thus the great reality of Divine Revelation was replaced by the most sacred myth of *kashf* / *ilhaam*. By terminating the

line of prophets, God had blessed Man with unprecedented intellectual freedom but, the mystics managed to enslave Muslims anew so successfully that even to this day a vast majority of 'believers' so very sincerely bow to their magical spell. The mystics are successful because they claim to fulfil people's desires in return for offerings. The prospect of having one's wishes granted without having to work for it is simply magnetic. That is why a great number of Muslims all over the world have taken to amassing wealth by unfair means in an effort to become millionaires overnight. That is one big reason for the proliferation and success of sacred tombs and monasteries in certain areas of the Muslim world.

Myth 11: Spiritual power of the Dead

As mentioned, mystics became popular mainly because of the 'miracles' they perform. This ability elevates them in the eyes of the public and enhances the intake of offerings. But the problem was that this set-up discontinued with the death of a 'spiritual leader.' One way out was to have the dead leader succeeded by a living one. To make the continuation of the system certain, they invented the belief that spiritual leaders never die; their spiritual powers remain potent as before. Consequently, we find the tombs of dead mystics more crowded with devoted visitors than are the seats of the living ones. Thus, these graves become regular estates.

The Quranic View

The Quran negated this myth too, when it announced that no man has the power to harm or benefit another. Every individual action of man bears its own result according to God's determined, unchanging laws. ^[38] That is why the Prophet, the greatest spiritual leader, announced:

‘Say, “I cannot harm or benefit my own self (let alone others) save by the Will (Law) of Allah...”’
[39]

As far as miracles are concerned, the Quran reports at several places that the Prophet, when challenged to perform a miracle, always stated that his miracle was the Quran, or his own personal character. Therefore, anyone who claims to have the power of performing miracles puts himself above the Prophet. The ‘miracles’ performed by the mystics have absolutely nothing to do with *ad-Deen* (the Quranic code of life). As to the dead, the Quran very clearly states:

‘If you call out to them, they don’t hear your call; and even if they did, they would not respond to you...’ [40]

And also:

‘... and they are unaware of their invocation.’ [41]

That is why God told men, ‘...and don’t invoke (anyone) other than Allah; they cannot benefit or harm you...’ [42] because harm and benefit come to men according to the Laws of Allah.

What Muslims did

Despite the Quran saying all that Muslims did exactly the opposite - they readopted the spellbinding myths of old, mistaking them as their religion.

CONCLUSION

I started with just a few topics in mind but had to include many more. In a nutshell, then, *ad-Deen* was simple – some permanent values and unchanging principles given to Man by God; these were to be implemented in human society as an all-encompassing system. The result was to be man’s real freedom – freedom from kings, capitalists, priests,

spiritual leaders, and even his own animalistic urges. Man was to evolve into a better being. He was also warned to beware of 'magic weavers.' But alas, the magicians have succeeded in making Muslims addicts to the opium of (traditional) religion. Sadly, Muslims also believe that addiction to opium – or any other addiction, for that matter – is incurable. That, of course is another myth as we know that it is not true and addictions are curable. Let me cite you the example of China which shed off the opium habit. It happened as follows:

It is reported that, after the Chinese Supreme Council had passed the Opium Prohibition Law, it was sent to the prime minister for final signing. He was an addict himself. Putting the paper aside, he flung away the opium box he had, got into a boat and went out to a secluded stretch of open sea. He stayed in the boat for a month. He returned when he was confident that he had kicked the habit and signed the bill into law.

That is exactly what the Quran says:

'It is a big vice when you say to people what you (yourselves) don't do.'^[43]

That is the only way to deal with an addiction – the rulers must do it first.

GLOSSARY

Ad-Deen.

Linguistically, the word *deen* (pronounced with a soft 'd') springs from the three-letter root DYN, which is the source of several well-known derivatives such as *deen* (system), *medina* (city), *diyaana* (behaviour, specifically in religious matters), *mudun* (cities), *dain* (loan), etc. The Quran has used the word *ad-deen* (literally, 'the' deen) to denote the set of values and principles, which form the basis of this divine message, called Islam, contained in the book known as the Quran (Sura Aal-e-'Imran, 3:19; Sura al-Ma'eda, 5:3).

Ahbaar

From HBR, such as al-hibr (ink); ahbaar (singular al-hibr) means 'scholars' specifically, of the People of the Book (Sura al-Ma'eda, 5:44).

Houries

It is the Anglicised form of *Hoor-en-'een* which springs from HWR and is plural of *ahwar* (masculine) or *hawra* (feminine). *Al-hawra* is the sharpness of black and white in the eye, and fairness of skin. Therefore, both men and women, who have these characteristics, are *hoor*.

The word '*een*' is derived from 'YN, which means 'an eye' (Sura al-Ambiyaa, 21:61) or 'a spring' (Sura as-Saaffaat, 37:45). '*A een* (masculine) is singular of '*een*' which means someone with big and beautiful eyes like those of a wild bull. The feminine singular of '*een*' is '*ainaa*. Therefore, *hoor en 'een en* – in Sura Ad-Dukhaan (Sura 44:54) or

Sura At-Toor (52:20), etc means 'companions who are good to look at as well as good of character.'

Ilhaam

From LhM, with the basic notion 'to (make someone) swallow or to gulp;' as in Sura ash-Shams, 91:8 – the potential of going right or wrong has been put in every soul (person). However, in the conventional sense of mystical Islam, it refers to the mode of receiving divine information directly from God as claimed by Sufi's (the Mystics).

Imam

Leader; literally, 'one who is in front'; from AMM with, the basic idea of 'to lead', as in Sura Baqara, 2:124.

Kashf

From KShF , with the basic idea of 'to reveal, to remove (take away)'; as in Sura Q, 50:22, and Sura al-A'raaf, 7:134. However, in mystic Islam the term is used for a Sufi to observe Reality and Truth of the Universe as well as things which are hidden from ordinary people.

Murshed

Guide; from RShd meaning 'to find the right way;' as in Sura Hood, 11:87. Again, in Mysticism the expression is the title for a spiritual teacher.

Mutrefeen

The indulgent; from tRF which has the basic notion of 'opulence' and 'luxury' as in Sura al-Waaqe'a, 56:45.

Anchorites; religious hermits of the Judeo-Christian tradition; from RhB meaning 'to be extra careful;' as in Sura at-Tauba, 9:11.

Sharia'

It is another term for *deen*, i.e. the Islamic System referring more to its practical aspect; from ShR' meaning 'to clarify, to show the straight path;' as in Sura ash-Shoora, 42:13, and in Sura al-Jaathia, 45:18.

Sufi

One adhering to the Islamic mystic tradition.

Tareeqa

Path; from tRQ as in Sura Taaha, 20:77. In Islamic mysticism, the term is used for the mystical practices Sufi's adopt to attain their goal of spiritually reaching God.

Teene laazib

'Teen' (clay), and 'laazib' (wet and clinging); the basic material from which Life originated; as in Sura as-Saaffaat, 37:11.

Wahy

Revelation; from WHY with the basic notion of 'a quick and sharp signal', or 'a gesture'; as in Sura Maryam, 19:11; in the meaning of 'prophetic revelation', see Sura ash-Shoora, 42:51.

Zaka

It is derived from the three-letter root ZKW with the basic meaning of 'to grow, to thrive;' as in Sura al-Kahaf, 18:19; also, 'clean and pure' as a secondary

meaning; however, the basic meaning remains 'to grow, to thrive.'

It is commonly accepted that *zaka* is the amount of money (or equivalent in kind) paid annually to the poor and the needy. It is a certain percentage of the surplus wealth which lies unused at the end of a given year. The percentage varies with the particular tradition of any given sect but the most widely known figure is 2 ½ %. Although in some Muslim countries there is a rudimentary central system in place for collection and spending this amount, it is in principle left to the discretion of the individual.

The Quran, however, has used the term to refer to the entire system of meeting people's needs so that there is universal growth of body, mind, and soul.

NOTES & REFERENCES

^[1] The present Torah is no longer the original divine book revealed by God; Man has tampered with it.

^[2] Genesis 2:7.

^[3] Genesis 2:21-23.

^[4] The Quran 37:11.

^[5] From an Urdu translation of Commentary by Ibn Kathir, part 1, pages 90, 98, and 101.

^[6] The acronym pbuh stands for 'peace be upon him' which is a literal translation of the Arabic 'aleih essalaam, the appellation usually reserved for revered religious figures such as prophets. The same English appellation is used for Mohammed, the Prophet of Islam, though the Arabic expression is different in his case, i.e. salallahu 'aleihe wasallem, in essence carrying the same meaning as 'aleih essalaam.

It is important to point out that Ibn Kathir uses this appellation for 'Adam' assuming, in the popular conventional tradition, it to be one individual. The Quran, however, disputes with this view and has used 'adam' (aadam) as a generic term denoting the entire human species of Man.

^[7] These are the two utterances normally exchanged in the conventional Muslim tradition when someone sneezes. "All praise be to the Sustainer of all worlds" is the literal translation of al hamdulillahe rabble 'aalemeen (a passage taken from the Quran, 1:1) while "God be kind with you" is the meaning of yarhamkum Allah.

Intriguingly, one may ask, why would God respond by referring to Himself in the third person, and in a supplicating manner?

^[8] The name Eve (Hawwa in Arabic) for the first created individual woman is not mentioned in the Quran which uses the term 'your partner' (2:35).

^[9] Ibn Kathir, part 4, page 73.

^[10] Sura 3, verse 32.

^[11] Genesis 3:16.

^[12] Ibn Kathir, part 5, page 21.

^[13] Ibn Kathir, part 5, page 22.

¹¹⁴ Ibn Kathir, part 6, page 85.

¹¹⁵ It refers to a popular saying in Urdu which says, 'Paradise lies under the feet of one's mother.' It emphasises the importance of looking after and being nice to one's parents, especially mother. It originates from a Prophetic Tradition which says the most worthy of a Muslim's respect and love is his mother.

¹¹⁶ The Quran, Sura Al-An'aam – The Cattle – 6:74.

¹¹⁷ The Quran, Sura Luqmaan – The Wise – 31:21.

¹¹⁸ The Quran, Sura Az-Zumar – The Groups – 39:5.

¹¹⁹ The Quran, Sura Saad – Saad – 39: 27.

¹²⁰ The Quran, Sura Al-Jathiya – Bowing the Knee – 45:12.

¹²¹ The Quran, Sura Al-Kahaf – The Cave – 18:29.

¹²² The Quran, Sura Al-A'raaf – The Heights – 7:71.

¹²³ The Quran, Sura Beni Israaeel – The Children of Israel – 17:11.

¹²⁴ The Quran, Sura Ash-Shura – Consultation – 42:30.

¹²⁵ The Quran, Sura An-Nisaa – Women – 4: 62.

¹²⁶ The Quran, Sura Al-Hashr – The Gathering – 59:18.

¹²⁷ The Quran, Sura Al-An'aam – The Cattle – 6:148.

¹²⁸ The Quran, Sura Al-Baqara – The Cow – 2:177.

¹²⁹ The Quran, Sura *Al-Baqara* – The Cow – 2:33.

¹³⁰ The Quran, Sura Al-Baqara – The Cow – 2:284.

¹³¹ The Quran, Sura Al-Baqara – The Cow – 2:22.

¹³² The Quran, Sura Fusselat – (The) Explainer (Book) – 41:10.

¹³³ Haamaan, in the Quran's version of the story of Moses, was the Pharaoh's advisor and chief priest.

¹³⁴ Syed Abul 'Ala Maudoodi; *The Question of Land Ownership*, pp.52-72.

¹³⁵ Commonly referred to as 'poor tax' by the West; the author takes this term to mean the management of the entire monetary system.

¹³⁶ The Quran, Sura At-Tauba – Repentance – 9:34.

¹³⁷ Hadith, the record of Mohammed's sayings and actions.

¹³⁸⁾ The Quran, Sura Faater – Originator [of Creation] - 35:43.

¹³⁹⁾ The Quran, Sura Younis – Jonah – 10:49.

¹⁴⁰⁾ The Quran, Sura Faater – Originator [of Creation] - 35:14.

¹⁴¹⁾ The Quran, Sura Al-Ahqaaf – The winding Sand-tracts – 46:5.

¹⁴²⁾ The Quran, Sura Younis – Jonah – 10:106.

¹⁴³⁾ The Quran, Sura As-Saff – The Battle Array – 61:3.
