

# ISLAMIC ALLEGATIONS AND OUR ANSWERS BASED ON EVIDENCE

In many - if not most - Islamic books dealing with religious matters, the Bible is depicted as being totally untrustworthy. We do not want to investigate the obvious reasons for this approach, but do have to point out, that by far the majority of statements are either based on ignorance, or are made against better knowledge or at best depend on information selected in a very biased way. Although we would have preferred to generalise, we shall have to mention a couple of authors, since we must quote in order to substantiate what we say.

In the book "The Light" by al-Haj Sultan Hafiz Abdul (revised by Maulana Syed Zia-ud-Din Ahmad Gilani) we are told that the synoptic writers (i.e. the three recorders of the Gospel that are more historically orientated and as such are rather similar in comparison to the fourth recorder, John, who looks at the events from a more elevated position) of the Gospel are Paul, Luke, Matthew and John. Actually there are only three; John's part of the Gospel is the exception; and Paul did not write an account of the Gospel at all! The "synoptics", as every Christian of even rudimentary learning knows, are: Matthew, Mark and Luke.

Christians rightfully look at "learned men" like this with suspicion, for they cannot make an acceptable contribution. We find it, however, extremely tragic that millions of Muslims get their sole information about the Bible from such uninformed or dishonest men, who build their arguments entirely on one-sided, sifted and selected knowledge, or who argue against better knowledge.

We must, however, hasten to add that by no means all Muslims argue in this rather base spirit. We shall confine our analysis primarily to one book, which is typical in its anti-Christian stance, is relevant to our situation, and is reasonably comprehensive.

The following arguments, queries and also quotations are taken from "The Bible - Word of God or Word of Man?" by Sheikh A.S.K. Joommal, formerly of Pretoria and now of Johannesburg.

In the foreword Mr Joommal is introduced as

"a defender of Islam against malicious slanders and as an exponent of Islamic teachings", and also as "one of South Africa's handful of original, creative thinkers."

The malicious slander against Islam, we take to be the Bible - a book that is pre-Islamic!

In his criticism, he follows the line of so-called "modern theology", which no doubt, supplied him with the required data. In addition he wrongly supposes that the character of the Bible must essentially be based on the same concept of revelation ("nazil") that Muslims believe in. This is indicated in the following sentence:

"A collection of every single word, commandment, permission, prohibition, censure and other teachings of the Master (Jesus) faithfully reproduced in its pristine purity in the original Aramaic language which he spoke, would no doubt comprise the true word of God or the Bible. The great question is, is THIS Bible in existence? The answer is clearly no, as every Bible scholar knows."

This is not quite consistent with early Islamic concepts:

"Among the things which have reached me about Jesus the Son of Mary stated in the Gospel which he received from God for the followers of the Gospel ... It is extracted from what John the Apostle set down for them when he wrote the Gospel for them from the Testament of Jesus ..." (Siratu'l

Rasool vs.149).

If we judge this quotation rightly the Good News (or 'Gospel') was given to Jesus. It does not say in writing. It also does not mention the language. These were "set down" in writing by the Apostle John. Part of this record is then used (rather falsely, however) to show a prediction concerning Mohammed in the Gospel. Nowhere is the authenticity and purity of John's record questioned by Ibn Ishaq (A.H. 85-151). The only real problem is that the quotation is not from original documents but from a rejected, corrupt text, the so called 'Palestinian Syriac Lectionary', as stated in the translator's foot-note.

In the quotations of Mr Joommal the emphasis is on the original language, which in the case of Islam is, of course, Arabic. To the Muslim the Qur'an is in fact a collection of every single word, commandment, etc. that Allah gave to Mohammed. To many the Hadis is also seen as inspired in its words and actions. It adds knowledge to and interprets the Qur'an, making it possible for practising Muslims to read the most detailed information about their prophet and his words and actions, which they then may follow. Whether every word that Mohammed said was recorded, is another matter, however. Muslims look at the Bible as they would look at the Qur'an. This is misleading, for such an approach does not allow for statements such as the greetings or advice on questions about life and faith in the Biblical "Epistles". In the opinion of Muslims such statements belong rather to the Hadis. We must make our Muslim friends aware of this. All that God wanted to convey to man in His Word, has been conveyed. It is in the hands of every Christian today. There is no room for additions or improvements. Even in the Qur'an we fail to see any improvements to the Bible.

We are told, however, that

"What used to be the word of God, has been so adulterated by human hands, that the word of God is hardly distinguishable from the word of man. In some places we do still find a glimmer of the truth that Jesus taught - the gems of divine wisdom that he uttered for the good of his people - but these are few and far between in the jungles of interpolations and contradictions with which the Bible is dense ... Christianity, as we all know, is founded on BLIND BELIEF, where rational thinking plays no part whatever ... It is admitted by the most learned men in the Hebrew language, that the present English version of the Old Testament contains at least 100,000 errors (this would amount to approximately three errors in every verse. G.N.) ... It is not known for certain who in fact wrote any of the books of the Old Testament ... Christians themselves are in disagreement as to what books are inspired."

It is alleged that practically all versions of the Bible have differed from one another and no-one knows yet which is right.

Again and again Christians are asked why there are so many versions. Muslims are surprised to hear that these versions are nothing other than different translations of the same original documents. The 'Authorised' or 'King James Version' dates back to the year A.D. 1611. With the changing of a living language a revision became necessary. In addition to that, many more manuscripts had since been found. Some verses were contained in some of these manuscripts, but not in others (see [pp. 17ff.](#)). These texts appear in italics in the 'Revised Versions'. To grasp the extent of these passages in relation to the whole text it ought to be said that besides two portions of 12 verses each (Nos. 5. and 6. on [pp. 19-20](#)) and two verses which are omitted for being repetitions (Mark 9:44 and 46 are repeated by vs.48), eight sentences or portions thereof (4) without any bearing on the message or meaning of the text are in question. This makes out 0.1% of the 7959 verses of the New Testament!

Some translations are aimed at great accuracy for the scholar; others are in a popular style avoiding less common words or phrases, catering for the young or less educated reader who is interested in the biblical story and its teaching rather than in theological concepts. The message and content of all is much more identical than the different translations of the Qur'an (i.e. Yusuf Ali, Dawood, Marmaduke Pickthall, George Sale, Rodwell, Arberry etc.).

"Although an extravagant claim is put forward by Bible Societies and other fanatics, that the Bible is the most read book in the world, the contrary is true."

The intimate knowledge claimed by Muslims concerning these things perplexes us. We note, however, that there is little or no substantiation for these claims. The "best known" Bible scholars and commentators referred to are men who are totally obscure personalities.

The fact that Islam has never tolerated textual criticism of the Qur'an, makes it easy for Muslims to assume that all theologians that practice the "higher (or formal) criticism", (not to be confused with textual criticism!) must surely give a true reflection of the Bible. That this is not so, is common knowledge, for "higher criticism" is based on philosophical speculations and makes for arbitrary statements, very often with no Biblical foundation. Speculative theology in the Nineteenth and Twentieth centuries has created vast numbers of claims and speculations, which were neither Biblical nor ever substantiated and were never taken seriously by Christians. To draw material from such theology puts the Bible in a totally false light.

Muslims, however, have concluded that:

"The Bible was once upon a time the word of God"

and that:

"the present Bible can never by any stretch of imagination be called the inspired word of God"

and that:

"faith demands total allegiance to the Bible with its faults, absurdities, everything. Reason, on the other hand, is loath to accept matters that constitute an insult to the human intelligence."

Muslims also ask, referring to the Authorised Version, Revised Version and others,

"What need has the Word of God to go through so many versions? Our reason says, that the true Word of God should have remained unaltered, uncorrupted, unrevised, exactly as it was revealed to Christ."

We have to stop for a moment to consider these allegations.

First of all, the Word of God was not revealed to Jesus. He IS the revelation of God and He IS the Word of God. That is even supported by the Qur'an (Suras 4:171 and 3:45,59).

Then we would have to ask the categorical question: WHEN, WHERE And by WHOM was the Bible changed? Even the Qur'an bears witness that the Torah and the Gospel were definitely in existence during Mohammed's time ([pp. 5-6](#)). It goes against the facts to claim that the Bible was changed thereafter.

The Qur'an claims to be sent to guard the former revelations (Sura 5:47-51) and states explicitly that the Torah and Gospel are revelation. That means they came from God and are consequently His Word. The

Qur'an also states strongly that no one can change the Words of God (Suras 6:34 and 10:64).

The writings of the New Testament were composed in a certain context of history and time, more than 500 years earlier than the Qur'anic writings, and up to 1,500 years after those of the Old Testament. Unlike Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek, Arabic has remained a spoken language greatly influenced by the Qur'an to the present time. Hebrew experienced an interruption as a living language for about 1,500 years, during the time of the Diaspora, and Aramaic is no longer a living language at all. Research work in this century particularly, has greatly expanded our knowledge of Hebrew and has helped solve the language difficulty. This, as well as the inevitable ageing of every language (just try to read a book written 200 years ago) has made it necessary to revise existing translations of the Bible periodically to make the text true to the living language again.

To a Christian the need to read or recite Scripture or prayers in their original (language) makes no sense. Basically we are interested in the content of the message and not in the mechanics of the original. We deem it highly unlikely that the average Christian will manage to gain a knowledge of the original language(s) of the Bible equal to that of the highly qualified teams of linguists that do our translations. Besides that, we firmly believe that God understands us in our language when we worship, praise Him or speak to Him in prayer.

We also cannot subscribe to the Muslim view that the inspired character of a prophetic utterance is suspect when one cannot precisely determine the author. Ultimately the prophet or writer of an inspired message is just a tool in God's hand. If we seek to establish the authenticity of a letter, we do not make this dependent on our knowledge of the make and locality of the pen as long as we are sure that the message is genuine.

The charge that there are 100,000 errors in the Old Testament is too absurd even to need an answer, and the statement, that the Christian faith is essentially blind belief, throws poor light on the information at the disposal of the writer.

Within the framework of a book like this, it is obviously impossible to deal with all claims made against the Bible. There are, however some that are more prominent than others and we shall have to consider these first.

### **Alleged forgery, pollution, interpolation and contradictions in the Bible**

I quote again some passages from "The Light" by al-Haj Sultan Hafiz Abdul, revised by Maulana Syed Zia-ud-Din Ahmad Gilani. We read in the foreword (page XI):

"We hope to cull relevant non-Muslim material in support and denunciation of the Christian theories of the origin of sin, of Jesus' alleged sonship of God, the thesis of crucifixion of the Messiah, the doctrine of man's redemption through Jesus Christ and many other pressing and questionable matters. In this humble way I request above all things that this book would be an ambassador of goodwill and understanding between the East and the West, the forces of good and that of evil. Moreover, I am more than confident that a profound religious knowledge in the world scriptures and their diverse philosophies would incarnate the truest spirit of goodness in any nation, any people or any creed."

We fully agree with-the last sentence of this paragraph which, however, is in total contrast to the first part. There he tries to undermine the very foundation of the Bible by denouncing the four fundamental

Biblical teachings, namely:

1. Atonement or salvation by grace;
2. The crucifixion;
3. The sonship and deity of Jesus; and
4. The Trinity.

All other challenges against the Bible are subordinate to these, but will need clarification too. In the interests of uniformity, the attacks are taken from the previously mentioned book by A.S.K. Joommal. We have to be concise in our evaluation, however.

### **Changes to and interpolations in the Bible**

1.

"But this kind never comes out, except by prayer and fasting." (Matthew 17:21) according to the "Authorised Version", is missing in the "Revised Version."

As mentioned earlier, the "Authorised Version", also called the "King James Version", is a translation dating from 1611. In the meantime, particularly in this and the Nineteenth Centuries, a great number of other manuscripts, many more comprehensive and older than those available to the translators of the "Authorised Version" have been found and have put us in a far better position to locate copying mistakes and interpolations.

Interpolations are insertions in the text. Perhaps some scholar wrote a glossary, a remark or a parallel passage in the margin of the text. The next copyist copied this glossary and it then appeared in the new MS (manuscript) as a Scriptural text, which was then copied over and over again.

With the availability of many more ancient MSS, some containing the glossary and others not, scholars have the necessary leads to find out whether a text is an interpolation or whether it has been omitted by mistake. Hence the corrections in the newer translations. We must be aware that the Old Testament was copied by hand for 3,000 years and the New Testament for 1,400 years in isolated communities in different lands - even continents!

The revision of the Qur'an had already been completed shortly after the death of Mohammed, by Khalif Uthman who was aware of the problems that Christians and Jews had undergone. After all the variant readings had been destroyed, there remained only one original, which was copied straight away and multiplied, thereby virtually eliminating the risk of mistakes creeping in (see ["Christians Ask Muslims"](#)). Besides all this, the risk of mistakes entering any text increases greatly the further back one goes in history.

The verse in question here is found in manuscripts 'C' and 'D' of the Koine, but not in the others. An interpolation is not impossible; therefore this verse is given only as a footnote in the "Revised Standard Version". We may add a word of personal experience. The given text deals with the casting out of demons. The divine authority for this text can be put to the test and has been found to be "in full working order" by myself and many other Christians. We refer to John 7:17:

"If any mans will is to do His will, he shall know whether the teaching is from God ..."

2.

In Isaiah 7:14, the "Authorised Version" states:

"Behold a virgin shall conceive ..."

The "Revised Version" reads:

"Behold, a young woman shall conceive..."

This is not a case of interpolation, nor is it a revision of the original. The Hebrew word used is "alma", and means an unmarried young woman. We can safely presuppose that an unmarried female can rightfully be called a virgin in the light of Deuteronomy 22:28.

3.

Often the opinions of that "great commentator of the Bible", Reverend Dummelow, are quoted. According to him verses 24-25 of John 21 may have been added by the Ephesian elders who first put the Gospel in circulation after the death of the Apostle, and who wished to testify to its authenticity and trustworthiness. Dummelow is a liberal commentator who appears to be known only to Muslim critics of the Bible.

Christians are not really interested in the opinion of a man who speculates on unverified presumptions.

4.

Few of the points made by Mr Joommal are of serious consequence. The phrase "and was carried up into heaven" in Luke 24:51 no longer appears in modern versions of the Bible. The reason is that in some of the manuscripts available today (Codex Sinaiticus and Codex Cambridge), this portion is not mentioned. But it is found in Codex Vaticanus and Codex Alexandrinus.

This is another objection by Reverend Dummelow who thinks it possible that Christ did not ascend, but miraculously disappeared at the end of the "interview" with his disciples. The fact remains, that the same writer of Scripture in Acts 1:9 made an almost identical statement. We conclude therefore that no change in historical detail, or in doctrine has been brought about by the omission of the phrase. Besides, the Qur'an confirms this event (Sura 4:158).

5.

The passage from John 7:53 to John 8:11, the story of the woman taken in adultery, does not appear in contemporary translations, except in italics.

Internal and external evidence indicates that this passage may not be the writing of John. This passage could be an interpolation, possibly by Papias, Elder of the Church of Hierapolis and companion of Polycarp of Smyrna (born 69 A.D.), who again was a disciple of John the Evangelist. Although none of his writings have been preserved, quotations from him appear in the works of Eusebius. Thus we can safely assume that, despite the possibility of this passage being an interpolation, it is an authentic Apostolic tradition and was canonized for that reason. We hold that the fact that Christians seek to be scrupulously honest and true in the presentation of the original manuscripts, should not be used as an argument to undermine the integrity of Scripture. One can only wish that Muslim scholars would apply the same scrutiny to their own scriptures.

6.

The final words of the Gospel according to Mark from verses 9-20 including the "Great Commission", are inserted in italics in the "Revised Standard Version":

"Go into all the world and preach the Gospel to the whole creation. He who believes and is baptized will be saved, but he who does not believe will be condemned-these signs will accompany those who believe: in my Name they will cast out demons; they will speak in new tongues; they will pick up serpents, and if they drink any deadly thing, it will not hurt them; they will lay their hands on the sick and they will recover. So then, the Lord Jesus, after he had spoken to them, was taken up into heaven and sat down at the right hand of God. And they went forth and preached everywhere, while the Lord worked with them and confirmed the message by the signs that attended it. Amen."

Again we have a case of some manuscripts having recorded this passage and others not. The Godices Ephraemi Rescriptus and Bezae Cantabrigiensis, which are generally considered copies of the originals, both include the end of the Gospel according to Mark.

Remarkable is the evidence of the most ancient fragments. The Curetonian manuscript lost all the Gospel according to Mark, except the last four verses-those in dispute. The disputed text is also found in the Syriac and Peshito (Second Century) texts; and the Memphitic, Sahidic and Thebaic texts of upper and lower Egypt contain it as well. Unfortunately, during the early period of Christianity, in which the first manuscripts were written, the writing material was papyrus, which was easily destroyed by moisture and insects; hence we have only fragments available, but these still testify to the reliability and accuracy of the later manuscripts, for if these pieces totally correspond with those of a hundred years later, one may safely assume that the full text is indeed acceptable. Also Jerome copied the end of this Gospel narrative in his Vulgate version (translated between A.D.382-390):

"Jerome certainly would not have admitted this portion ... had he not found it in undisturbed possession." (Commentary by F.C. Cook, Volume I of the New Testament, pages 302-303).

The manuscripts, that omit the disputed verses, belong to a particular period and were probably edited by one critic.

Justin Martyr made repeated mention of the said passage in A.D. 150 and so did his younger contemporary, Irenaeus. Irenaeus was a pupil of Polycarp's and was, so to speak, a spiritual grandson of John the Evangelist.

In order to verify the genuineness of this passage one should perhaps not rely only on the ancient manuscripts, and the testimony of the early Apostolic Fathers alone. There is other evidence, and parallel passages in other Gospel accounts. We find the heart piece of this message repeated in the Gospel account of Matthew 28:19-20, which is contained in all manuscripts, and so we dare not doubt its authenticity. But what about the signs mentioned that should follow those who believe? Were these signs apparent and recognised and known, or not? We can only conclude: Yes, indeed. (1) Demons have been cast out by Christian disciples throughout the ages. It is still done today. (2) "They will speak in new tongues". This happened on the day of Pentecost and we have adequately documented accounts of similar happenings elsewhere and at other times. (3) We have accounts, though isolated, of attempts to murder Christian missionaries by poison, but which did not have any effect. Indeed, we read of the Apostle Paul, after his shipwreck, Acts 28:3-6, being bitten by a poisonous viper, which had no effect on him.

The writer of this book was himself bitten by a snake at a Christian youth camp, without effect. While dressing at another, he discovered inside his T-shirt a large black scorpion, which was

caught by the shirt on his bare shoulder but nothing happened. Coincidence? Perhaps. But surely God had His purpose too. (4) It is also common knowledge that Christians here and there are endowed with the gift of healing practised even today with absolutely astounding results. All this evidence supports the fact, that this is authentic Scripture and consequently can be lived by and trusted.

The often repeated allegation that:

"Regardless of how pure a text may have been originally, it has no more claim to purity when extraneous matter creeps in"

is not acceptable. No ancient language had, for instance, punctuation marks, divisions into chapters or verses, sentences or even separate words. The translator who determines where a full stop, comma, quotation mark or question mark is placed, is already forced to interpret Scripture and without this no old manuscripts can be understood by contemporary man, except by those who have specialized in the study of the ancient language concerned. There can be no ancient writing, including the Arabic of the Qur'an, of which it can be said that no extraneous matter has crept in. We need only consider the diacritical marks and vowelling in the Arabic language, which were introduced after the compilation of the Qur'an.

Every Christian believer can testify to the changing power of God in man after conversion and faith in the message of the Bible. Yet this book, in the opinion of Muslims, consists only of some traces of divine message engulfed in a mass of human thought.

Muslim critics of Christianity stress that:

"The difference between man and animal is that a man has a capacity of REASON, to THINK. An animal cannot reason, it behaves by instinct. REASON it is that distinguishes man from the animal."

What is implied thereby is that Christians simply do not reason or think.

The uninitiated reader is encouraged to compare a good and popular commentary on the Bible with a commentary on the Qur'an before, reaching his own conclusion on this matter.

## **Contradictions in the Bible**

Many challenges by Muslims deal with differences in numbers or names pertaining to identical events. They are copyists' mistakes, but are of no significance whatever as regards the message of the text.

In 2 Chronicles 36:9, Jehoiachim was eight years when he began to reign; and in 2 Kings 24:8 he was eighteen.

In 2 Chronicles 22:2 Ahazia was 42 years old when he began to reign; and in 2 Kings 8:26 twenty-two years.

Similar cases may be found in:

2 Chronicles 4:5 when compared with 1 Kings 7:26;

2 Chronicles 14:3,17:6 when compared with 1 Kings 15:14, 22:43;

2 Chronicles 9:25 when compared with 1 Kings 4:26;

1 Timothy 6:16 when compared to 1 Kings 8:12, Psalm 18:11;

John 1:18 when compared with Exodus 33:11;  
2 Samuel 24:24 when compared with 1 Chronicles 21:25;  
2 Samuel 8:4 when compared with 1 Chronicles 18:4;  
2 Samuel 10:18 when compared with 1 Chronicles 19:18;  
2 Samuel 24:1,9,13,24 when compared with 1 Chronicles 21:1,5,11,12,22,10; and  
Genesis 38:7 when compared with Matthew 1:3.

In no way would any reputable historian conclude that merely because of this type of discrepancy, manuscripts have been rendered unreliable or even polluted. Besides this, none of these errors is of any consequence or affects vital matters.

Here now are some more detailed allegations:

1.

The Creation and Flood accounts to "modern theologians" are based on two narratives "whose differences of matter and style betray two authors" and that these accounts have been blended by an editor, who has slightly vetted them". We are told that in Genesis 6:19 God commanded Noah to bring into his ark "of every living thing ... *two* of every sort ... male and female." The second author, the critic says, tells us that Noah was commanded to preserve from the flood "of every clean beast ... *seven* male and female: and of the beasts that are not clean *two*." (Genesis 7:2-3).

Muslims looking for a contradiction here have overlooked the fact, that in Chapter 8:20 these extra animals were used as follows:

"Then Noah built an altar to the Lord, and took of every clean animal ... and offered burnt offerings on the altar." (My emphasis).

That statement should explain the "grievous contradiction".

2.

In another "contradiction", we again find a gross neglect of the context.

"Everyone who seeks, shall find" (Matthew 7:8).

The alleged contradiction to this statement is found in Proverbs 1:28:

"Then they will call upon me, but I will not answer, they will seek me diligently but will not find me."

The reason (conveniently left out by the critic) is:

"Because they hated knowledge and did not choose the fear of the LORD, would have none of my counsel, and despised all my reproof, therefore they shall eat the fruit of their way and be sated with their own devices."

Isaiah 1:15:

"When you spread forth your hands, I will hide my eyes from you; even though you make many prayers, I will not listen!"

The omitted reason is:

"your hands are full of blood."

and Psalm 18:41:

"They cried for help, but there was none to save, they cried to the Lord, but he did not answer them."

The omitted reason for this "contradiction" follows:

"Thou didst deliver me from strife with the peoples;"

Here is the case of David's enemies who did wrong in trying to kill him for no reason but jealousy. They were not heard by God, but righteous David was. The reader will immediately detect that those who shall not find God are those, who reject God's ways and commandments. The immediate remedy given (in Isa: 1:16) is to:

"Wash yourselves, make yourselves clean, remove the evil of your doings from before my eyes; cease to do evil, learn to do good, seek-justice, correct oppression ... Come now and let us reason together, says the Lord: Though your sins are like scarlet they shall be as white as snow ... *If you are willing and obedient, you shall eat the good of the land; but if you refuse and rebel, you shall be devoured by the sword for the mouth of the Lord has spoken.*" (My emphasis).

3.

The same principle applies to the occupation of Canaan. Our critic chooses to call God "cruel, merciless, destructive and ferocious".

We are tempted to quote the proverb about glass houses, but shall rather look at the subject matter. The above-mentioned passages (Jeremiah 13:14, Deuteronomy 7:16, 1 Samuel 15:3, etc.) all have something in common: the destruction of the Canaanites. The reason for this order by God was to preserve His people. The enemies of God's people were out to exterminate Israel, ultimately with the spiritual purpose of preventing the outworking of God's Word and the coming of the Messiah who had to come from among the Israelites. In Deuteronomy 20:10-18 we read:

"You shall save alive nothing that breathes, but you shall utterly destroy them as the Lord your God has commanded; *that they may not teach you to do according to all their abominable practices, which they have done in the service of their gods and so to sin against the Lord your God.*" (My emphasis)

I think it is necessary to be reminded of the foreknowledge of God, which is an aspect of His omniscience, and thus to remind all who ignorantly or maliciously use these arguments that it is rather a presumptuous undertaking to prescribe to God what He may do or command and what He may not. God needs no advisers. Our job is not to criticize God, but to establish the reliability of His Word, live by it and to establish what we can learn from its admonitions.

Furthermore, we need to take into account Genesis 15:13,16. God was indeed very patient with the Canaanites (Amorites). For more than a hundred years, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob lived among them and they saw true faith and character demonstrated. Altogether, God waited 400 years for them to turn to Him and repent from their sins. They also had the warning of Sodom and Gomorrah (Genesis 18-19), but did not heed it.

4.

Sometimes it is explained to us that in certain Scriptures God delights in burnt offerings and

sacrifices. Indeed, we may add, that God even demands them.

"The life of the flesh is in the blood; and I have given it for you upon the altar to make atonement for your souls for it is the blood that makes atonement by reason of the life."  
(Leviticus 17:11).

The critic, however, then discovers that in other passages God has no pleasure in burnt offerings and claims that the two standpoints are mutually contradictory. The context again, will reveal the truth. A sacrifice offered by unrepentant and disobedient people is an abomination to the Lord:

"Bring no more vain offerings, incense is an abomination to me. New moon and Sabbath and the calling of assemblies and I cannot endure iniquity and solemn assembly. Your new moons and your appointed feast my soul hates; they have become a burden to me, I am weary of hearing them." (Isaiah 1:13-14).

"When you *offer blind animals in sacrifice*, is that no evil? And when you offer those that are lame or sick, is that no evil? Oh, that there were one among you who ... might not kindle fire upon my altar *in vain!* I have no pleasure in you says the Lord of Hosts and I will not accept an offering from your hand ... *you bring what has been taken by violence* ... and this you bring as your offering! Shall I accept that from your hand? says the Lord. Cursed be the cheat who has a male in his flock and vows it and yet sacrifices to the Lord what is blemished; for I am a great King, says the Lord of Hosts". (Malachi 1:8-10,13-14) (My emphasis).

"Has the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice ... For rebellion is as the sin of divination, and stubbornness as iniquity and idolatry." (I Samuel 15:22-23).

5.

Some objections refer to God and His dealings with man. God is heard and seen by some:

"Thus the Lord used to speak to Moses face to face, as a man speaks to his friend." (Exodus 33:11);

"But the Lord God called to the man, and said to him, 'Where are you?' And he said, I heard the sound of thee in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself."  
(Genesis 3:9-10);

"So Jacob called the name of the place Peni'el, saying, 'For I have seen God face to face, and yet my life is preserved.'" (Genesis 32:30);

"I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up; and his train filled the temple."  
(Isaiah 6:1);

and yet we read:

"No man has seen God at any time." (John 1:18),

"heard his voice at any time" (John 5:37) and

"seen God's face and lived" (Exodus 33:20), etc.

We deem that these statements about Moses, Adam and Isaiah were of a metaphorical nature. God

is Spirit and obviously He cannot be seen physically, unless He manifests Himself as in Genesis 18:1-2, 32:24-28 and 14:18-20. In such a case man does not see God as such either, but rather a manifestation of Him. Regarding "seeing" God, do we not sometimes hear people say, "We saw God's hand in this", or "We noticed God working in that"? We see a like principle outlined in the Qur'an:

"In it are verses basic of fundamental (of established meaning). They are the foundation of the Book; others are allegorical. But those in whose hearts is perversity follow the part thereof that is allegorical, seeking discord, and searching for its hidden meanings, but no one knows its hidden meaning except Allah and those who are firmly grounded." (Sura 3:7).

To interpret the above texts literally suggests that the writer of Genesis and Exodus was stupid enough to introduce such obviously contradictory statements in what he wrote even within one chapter (Exod. 33). This man was Moses. Apart from this, the whole context of the Bible contradicts the idea that God as such can actually be seen.

6.

The critic scorns the text in which the Almighty God is said to be unable

"to drive out the inhabitants of the valley, because they had chariots of iron." (Judges 1:19).

He has "overlooked", however, that in the earlier part of the verse it says:

"The Lord was with Judah and he drove out the inhabitants of the mountain."

"He" is not the Lord, but Judah. Therefore Judah could not drive out the inhabitants because of the chariots. The fact that God is with a person does not necessarily mean that all things run smoothly in life (e.g. Joseph was sold, enslaved and imprisoned and God used this event to save his brothers. The death of Christ certainly looked like a defeat, yet was the greatest victory). Indeed, we read in Romans 8 that:

"Neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation will be able to separate us from the love of God."

and in Romans 8:28:

"We know that in everything God works for good with those who love him."

And that incorporated what Paul, proclaiming the message of God to the heathen of his time, had to state:

"We are in disrepute ... we hunger and thirst, we are ill-clad and buffeted and homeless ... reviled ... persecuted ... slandered." (I Corinthians 4:10-13).

"... We are afflicted in every way . . . perplexed ... struck down." (II Corinthians 4:8,9).

The explanation of this (verse 7) is:

"We have this treasure (the Word of God and the glory of God) in earthen vessels to show that the transcendent power belongs to God and not to us."

We may add here that God has limited Himself in His power by binding Himself to His law and His promises. God cannot lie or breach a promise and consequently renders part of His power to

man, who by obedience to His Word can expect God to stand by His promises.

7.

Other objections deal with the Scriptures that appear to contradict themselves by stating sometimes that God is, and at other times is not, the author of evil. The problem touched on here is rather philosophical and cannot be solved by reasoning. If God is the Creator of all, then He must have created the devil and is consequently also the author of evil. Ultimately, God would then be responsible for these actions of man that are evil and would act unjustly if He were to hold man responsible for his actions, but this is not so. God did not create Satan. Satan was created as Lucifer, the Angel of Light who, in turn decided to become a rebel, plotting to overthrow God, and sit on His throne (the name Satan means adversary or accuser). All this is beyond human comprehension, but one thing is clear: that the Angel of Light and man, have both been created with a free will - a necessity for deciding for or against God, for no love can spring forth from compulsion. Therefore, we must examine the Scriptures referred to, which appear to contradict each other in the light of II Thessalonians 2:9ff.:

"The coming of the lawless one (Antichrist) by the activity of Satan will be with all power and with pretended signs and wonders, and with all wicked deception for those who perish, *because they refuse to love the truth and to be saved*. Therefore God sends upon them a strong delusion to make them believe what is false so that all may be condemned *who did not believe the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness*." (My emphasis).

God is instrumental in letting man believe the lie that man desires to follow.

The following set of passages is alleged to contradict the set below:

A.

"The law of the Lord is perfect reviving the soul, the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple; the precepts of the Lord are right rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes:" (Psalm 19:7-8),

"For God is not a God of confusion but of peace." (I Corinthians 14:33),

"The Rock, his work is perfect for all his ways are justice. A God of faithfulness and without iniquity, just and right is he." (Deuteronomy 32:4), and

"Let no one say when he is tempted, 'I am tempted by God'; For God cannot be tempted with evil and he himself tempts no one;" (James 1:13).

B.

"Moreover I gave them statutes that were not good and ordinances by which they could not have life;" (Ezekiel 20:25),

"Is it not from the mouth of the Most High that good and evil come? (Lamentations 3:38).

"Thus says the Lord, Behold, I am shaping evil against you and devising a plan against you." (Jeremiah 18:11), and

"Does evil befall a city, unless the Lord has done it?" (Amos 3:6).

We have to refer to the context of these verses, which has been somewhat neglected by Mr Joommal.

"Out of the mouth of the Most High proceeds not evil and good" - is how Mr Joommal quotes Lamentations 3:38.

The full text, however, reads:

"Who has commanded and it came to pass, unless the Lord has ordained it? Is it not from the mouth of the Most High that good and evil come? Why should a living man complain, a man, about the punishment of his sins? Let us test and examine our ways, and return to the Lord!

Let us lift up our hearts and hands to God in heaven: We have transgressed and rebelled, and thou hast not forgiven. Thou hast wrapped thyself with anger and pursued us, slaying without pity; thou hast wrapped thyself with a cloud so that no prayer can pass through. Thou hast made us offscouring and refuse among the peoples." (Lamentations 3:37-45).

So the evil that comes from the Lord, is the punishment for sin, which is the just reward for a mans actions. The same applies to the other texts:

"Then I thought I would pour out my wrath upon them and spend my anger against them in the wilderness. But I withheld my hand, and acted for the sake of my name, that it should not be profaned in the sight of the nations, in whose sight I had brought them out. Moreover I swore to them in the wilderness that I would scatter them among the nations and disperse them through the countries, because they had not executed my ordinances, but had rejected my statutes and profaned my sabbaths, and their eyes were set on their fathers' idols. Moreover I gave them statutes that were not good and ordinances by which they could not have life; and I defiled them through their very gift's in making them offer by fire all their first-born, that I might horrify them; I did it that they might know that I am the Lord. Therefore, son of man, speak to the house of Israel and say to them, Thus says the Lord God: In this again your fathers blasphemed me, by dealing treacherously with me. Wherefore say to the house of Israel, Thus says the Lord God: Will you defile yourselves after the manner of your fathers and go astray after their detestable things?" (Ezekiel 20:21,22-24,26,27,30).

"Then the word of the Lord came to me: 'O house of Israel, can I not do with you as this potter has done? says the Lord. Behold, like the clay in the potter's hand, so are you in my hand, O house of Israel. If at any time I declare concerning a nation or a kingdom, that I will pluck up and break down and destroy it, and if that nation, concerning which I have spoken, turns from its evil, I will repent of the evil that I intended to do to it. And if at any time I declare concerning a nation or kingdom that I will build and plant it, and if it does evil in my sight, not listening to my voice, then I will repent of the good which I intended to do to it. Now, therefore, say to the men of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem: 'Thus says the Lord, Behold, I am shaping evil against you and devising a plan against you. Return, every one from his evil way, and amend your ways and your doings.' But they say, 'That is in vain! We will follow our own plans, and will every one act according to the stubbornness of his evil hearth.'" (Jeremiah 18:5-12), and

"Hear this word that the Lord has spoken against you, O people of Israel, against the whole family which I brought up out of the land of Egypt: 'You only have I known of all the families of the earth; therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities. Do two walk together, unless they have made an appointment? Does a lion roar in the forest, when he has no prey? Does a young lion cry out from his den, if he has taken nothing? Does a bird fall in a snare on the earth, when there is no trap for it? Does a snare spring up from the ground, when it has taken nothing? Is a trumpet blown

in a city, and the people are not afraid? Does evil befall a city unless the Lord has done it? Surely the Lord God does nothing, without revealing his secret to his servants the prophets." (Amos 3:1-7).

8.

"Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works." (Matthew 5:16) is placed in opposition to:

"Take heed that you do not your alms before man to be seen by them." (Matthew 6:1).

The critic expediently sees a contradiction in these two statements in Jesus' "Sermon on the Mount". As usual, he has "overlooked" the context, for this sentence follows the first statement immediately:

"and glorify your Father, who is in heaven."

Christ deals with two different aspects here:

- i) that our actions may glorify God;
- ii) that we should not perform them so that we get the praise.

This is therefore no contradiction.

9.

Jesus, we are told, preached:

"Be not afraid of them that kill the body." (Luke 12:4),

but in practice was afraid Himself, for we read:

"After these things, Jesus walked in Galilee; for he would not walk in Jewry, because the Jews sought to kill him." (John 7:1).

His time had not yet come. He had forecast His death a number of times:

"From that time Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised." (Matthew 16:21)

"I lay down my life that I may take it again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord." (John 10:15,17,18).

"When the days drew near for him to be received up, he set his face to go to Jerusalem ..." (Luke 9:51) (He knew what was waiting for Him there!).

When Christ announced that He would go to Jerusalem (John 11:15-16), one of His disciples exclaimed: "Let us also go, that we may die with him." Again a contradiction is seen where there is none. The disputed text does not state that He was afraid to go to Jerusalem, but that at that particular stage, His time had not come. Critics also forget to mention Gethsemane where Scripture records that Christ said:

"My soul is very sorrowful even unto death ... My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me."

But then He continues:

"Nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt."

Obviously Christ was in agony at the thought of His crucifixion; which is natural, because He felt pain like anyone else.

10.

Circumcision is enjoined in Genesis 17:10:

"It is commanded that every man child shall be circumcised",

and in Galatians 5:2 this is apparently contradicted by Paul's saying that:

"If you are circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing."

Again a remarkable ignorance of Biblical theology is apparent. The Covenant that included circumcision as a covenant-sign, was with Abraham and his offspring. At no time was this covenant extended to the Gentiles. But already in the Old Testament we read repeatedly that the circumcision of the flesh made by hands is not sufficient in God's sight.

Again and again God challenges people to have their hearts circumcised meaning that the covenant is not an outward thing, but something that should affect the soul and heart of man. The New Covenant or New Testament threw the doors open to all who were interested in receiving God's gift of forgiveness through Jesus Christ. Consequently, the New Testament superseded the Old Testament, since the Old Testament was only "a shadow of things to come."

Under the New Covenant people were baptized, a ritual with a different significance, but in itself, of course, as meaningless as circumcision in the flesh. Only when this act is filled with meaning, is the New Covenant effected in a man or woman. Jews at the time of Paul, demanded that Gentile believers also be circumcised; in fact they demanded strict adherence to the Law of Moses in addition to faith in Christ. Now the context of the disputed verse must be appreciated, for it continues:

"I testify again to every man who receives circumcision that he is bound to keep the whole law. You are severed from Christ, you who would be justified by the law; you have fallen away from grace ... for in Christ Jesus neither circumcision, nor uncircumcision is of any avail, but faith working through love ... If you brethren, still preach circumcision, why am I still persecuted? In that case, the stumbling block of the cross has been removed." (Galatians 5:3,4,6,11).

We are made aware in this text that there are two ways of coming to God: the old way, by keeping God's laws, *all* of them *all* the time (James 2:10) to be saved - which is impossible; OR to rely on the grace of God, accepting the New Covenant, and not relying on one's own works. However, through pride, man often rejects the mercy and grace of God. It can clearly be seen that the "stumbling block" is the cross. God declares us unfit to save ourselves by good deeds, and that is a deathblow to all self-sufficiency. (Please consider [pp. 78-79](#)).

Islam, has chosen the way of works and for that reason cannot offer grace, but can only await the righteous judgement of God, Who will judge the living and the dead on the Last Day. A pardon refused, is a pardon forfeited.

11.

Critics hold that Leviticus 20:21:

"If a man takes his brother's wife, it is impurity;"

and Deuteronomy 25:5:

"If brothers dwell together, and one of them dies and has no son, the wife of the dead shall not be married outside the family to a stranger; her husband's brother shall go in to her, and take her as his wife."

contradict each other. In the first passage a man is allowed to marry his brother's widow, and in the other it is forbidden. We find it incomprehensible that the critic has overlooked the fact, that the commandment (Leviticus 20:21) not to take a brother's *wife* in no way contradicts Deuteronomy 25:5, where the *widow* of a brother is spoken of.

12.

It is frequently pointed out that the genealogies of Jesus in Matthew 1 and Luke 3 respectively, are different. Christians are aware of this. A possible answer is that in Matthew we have the genealogy of Joseph and in Luke the genealogy of Mary (In that case Heli was the father-in-law of Joseph.)

13.

The death of Judas in two differing Biblical accounts is sometimes challenged. In Matthew 27:5, Judas hanged himself, and in Acts 1:18, he

"fell headlong, burst asunder and all his bowels gushed out."

The word "fell headlong" is a little obscure in the Greek and probably means "swell up". We suggest that the latter verse refers to what happened later, i.e. that the body, probably half putrefied, fell from the rope.

14.

A frequently quoted "contradiction", is that, on the one hand:

"By the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified (Romans 3:20); and

"A man is not justified by works of the law, but by the faith of Christ Jesus." (Galatians 2:16).

Yet both seem to be contradicted by James 2:21,24 and Romans 2:13 on the other hand:

"Was not Abraham our father justified by works? Ye see then, how that by works a man is justified and not by faith only."

"The doers of the law shall be justified."

In the case of the latter verse, we must refer again to the context. This refers to the people living under the Old Covenant:

"... All who have sinned under the law will be judged by the law. For it is not the hearers of the law who are righteous before God, but the doers of the law."

Studying the Bible superficially will inevitably lead to such misconceptions. If we do not consider a text within its context and dispensation, we are bound to get highly distorted facts. In the case of the other Scriptures mentioned, we need also point to the context. The critics should have continued by quoting about Abraham's justification by works:

"Abraham was justified by works, when he offered his son Isaac upon the altar. You see that faith was active along with his works and faith was completed by works."

This answers the "problem".

The complete text brings home the obvious message that theoretical faith (i.e. belief in the existence of God and certain of His attributes), is "dead". "Living" faith is thus action in response to God's Word ("Lord, we have fished all night and caught nothing. But *at your word, I will* let down the nets." Luke 5:5) (My emphasis).

15.

Another common challenge concerns Matthew 27:9-10:

"Then was fulfilled what had been spoken by the prophet Jeremiah, saying, and they took thirty pieces of silver, ..."

This passage is not found in Jeremiah, but in Zechariah 11:12-13.

This could be a very serious problem were we to insist that the Bible is "nazil". As mentioned earlier, Christians do not see the Biblical writers as typewriters of God, but rather hold that God gives the message; which, however, is often clothed in the words of the writer, reflecting his character, style and temperament, and occasionally, his knowledge and wisdom. God addresses Himself to man on his level of understanding, allowing for the concepts of the time and environment in which he lives. (We refer to [pages 10-11](#)).

In the disputed passage, Matthew 27, we have a historical narrative, which Matthew records. This narrative, i.e. its message, is inspired. (I Peter 1:21). Matthew's reference to Jeremiah being the author of a text from Zechariah is wrong. This, however, does not alter the message. The problem may be detected in earlier manuscripts. Some read:

"then was fulfilled that which was spoken by the prophet",

omitting the name Jeremiah. In that case the word "Jeremiah" would be an interpolation. However, there is quite a strong possibility that Zechariah is actually quoting an unrecorded utterance of Jeremiah's. (Torrey: "Difficulties in the Bible").

16.

There is also a "contradiction" between Matthew 2:11 (where Jesus was born in a house); and Luke 2:7 (where He was born in a stable). Perhaps the critic is not quite used to observing passages carefully enough, for there is no mention of the birth of Christ in Matthew 2:11.

A considerable time had elapsed between the birth and the coming of the "wise men" from the East. The fact that Herod ordered all children two years and younger to be slain, after he had diligently inquired of the Wise Men when they saw the star first, is very suggestive, for who would mistake a baby a week old for a child of two years playing in the garden? We must also consider that the journey from the East, probably from Babylonia to Palestine, had taken a considerable time. At that stage, Mary and Joseph had long since moved from the stable into a house.

17.

Another "contradiction" is that, according to Luke 3:23, Jesus was about thirty years old and in John 8:57 the Pharisees say to Jesus:

"You are not yet fifty years old."

When someone is thirty he is obviously not yet fifty years old!

## Objections to the Bible

1.

Why should God care whether a man rounded the corners of his beard or not, asks the critic, referring to Leviticus 19:27

"You shall not round off the hair on your temples or mar the edges of your beard."

This is a relevant question but we would return it by asking the Muslim critic why he should keep his beard

"equal on all sides"?

It is in fact

"sunnat for a Muslim to keep beard."

We would also ask why

"beards should be oiled, combed, and washed, and worms be removed with dusters."  
(Mishkat I, page 602).

and not with, say a fork or tooth-pick? (Mishkat I, page 605).

2.

"Do you really believe that men who lap water like a dog make the best soldiers?" we are asked with reference to Judges 7:5. We find this story repeated, incorrectly, though, in the Qur'an. In the Biblical story it were the men of Gideon who were selected in that way; in the Qur'an (Sura 2:249) we find them to be Saul's soldiers, who were tested in a similar fashion. We presume that this is a rhetorical question like most others. We are sometimes asked with regard to Gideon's victory:

3.

"Do you think that a man could hold a lamp in his left hand, a trumpet in his right, blow his trumpet, shout 'The sword for the Lord and of Gideon', and break the pitchers at the same time?"

Nowhere in the given verse (Judges 7:20) does it say that all this was done simultaneously.

4.

"Can you believe that Pekah slew 120,000 men in one day?" (II Chronicles 28:6).

We believe it as surely as Hitler killed 6 million Jews.

5.

It is observed with contempt that

"God tells someone that 'thou shalt betroth a wife and another shall lie with her'  
(Deuteronomy 28:30)."

The context of this chapter is a prophecy concerning the nation of Israel. In the text (verses 1-14 of Deuteronomy 28) it shows what would have happened if the Israelites had obeyed God and from verse 15 on wards we read of the curses that would befall Israel if they were to be disobedient, and within the long list of happenings foretold, this verse also appears. The irony of fate was that Mohammed himself actively helped to make this prophecy come true. One of Mohammed's

concubines was Rihanah, a Jewish woman, whom he chose as booty after the defeat of the Jewish tribe of the Quraiza and the slaughter of their men. (Ibn Ishaq: Siratu'l Rasul vs. 693 p.466).

6.

In II Peter 3:3-10 we are made aware that the return of Jesus need not be an event to be expected soon, as

"the Lord is ... not wishing that any soul perish, but that all should reach repentance."

This is explained in the sentence:

"With the Lord one day is as a thousand years and a thousand years as a day",

demonstrating God's detachment from time. The critic, Mr Joommal, calls this a "quibble ... too ridiculous to be discussed". He must have been ignorant of the fact that the following texts:

"God will not fail His promise. Verily a day in the sight of thy Lord is like a thousand years of our reckoning",

and

"The angels and the Spirit ascend unto Him in a day the measure whereof is (as) fifty thousand years"

are found in the Qur'an. (Suras 22:47 and 70:4).

May these arguments be representative of many others that have been omitted, for they are repetitive and largely irrelevant.

We can see that in almost all cases the "contradictions" are the creations of an overcritical mind; of someone who rejects the Biblical message, because it conflicts with his own and who is either too ignorant or too presumptuous or too faint-hearted to look at the evidence before reaching a conclusion and deciding matters in the light of the facts.

By now the Muslim reader will have acknowledged the invalidity of many an accusation, but will still seriously wonder how any mistake can come into God's Word.

We do not find it illegitimate to ask our critics for a list of the 100,000 errors in the Old Testament (Mr Joommal's quotation) or at least of the 50,000 errors in the Bible (according to Mr Deedat's booklet "Is the Bible God's Word?"). Without substantiation we cannot accept such ridiculous claims, even if they come from one or other unknown and unacceptable "Christian".

The most grievous "errors" of the critics' publications have been looked at and evaluated. We found out, however, that just about all of these 'errors' and 'pollutions' turned out to be malicious accusations without base. As we saw earlier ([pp. 14ff.](#)) eight of a possible 7959 verses offer the possibility of having been interpolated, besides John 7:53-8:11 - none of any consequence, however. The contradictions and objections pointed out are on feebler ground still. Besides 10 copyist's errors involving differing numbers or names of purely historical records ([p. 22](#)) we can only pick out two of the listed ones (and again these are just about all those of any consequence) that have an explanation that could be queried (points 12 and 15 of [pp. 32-33](#)).

Visualizing the above in the context of a large book like the Bible, written between 3500-2000 years ago

and copied ever so many times by hand until the printing press was invented some 400 years ago, makes the text more than trustworthy.

Muslims have been reared to accept that there is no contradiction in the Qur'an and not a trace of a human hand in it. We should like to challenge any one to read on in "[Christians ask Muslims](#)" where we shall look critically into the Qur'an and the Hadis. This is not meant to be a justification of possible errors, copying mistakes or the like within the Bible. They do creep in when copying is done over extended periods of time. We have to point at problems of a much deeper nature with which the above problems cannot even be compared. We speak about the establishment of facts and evidence regarding divine inspiration. Again we would like sincerely to assure the reader that we are not out to retaliate or win an argument. But we would like you to become aware of facts that must have escaped your attention and of which you are unaware, but which you ought to consider, for they are of vital importance in your quest to establish where you find divine revelation.

### **Do Christians believe in inherited sin?**

To answer this question we must first define words. What exactly is meant by the term "inherited sin"? In order to be Christian we ought to be Biblical. What does the Bible say about inherited sin? Exactly nothing!

There is, however, another term that one might use: Original sin. That is the sin Adam and Eve committed in the Garden of Eden. Their sin was not, as has been speculated in earlier times, sex. Sexuality is a gift from God. It may be abused. Then it is sin. But in itself as used in the bond of marriage it cannot be sin.

There is one verse in the Psalms (51:5) which states: "... in sin did my mother conceive me." If we look at the text carefully, however, we perceive that the conception was not the sin, but in a state of sin conception took place. And there is a world of difference between these two views.

There are only two more passages in the Bible touching on this subject (Rom. 5:12-18 and I Cor. 15:21-22). It states here quite clearly that sin came into the world through one man, and the trespass of that one man led to the condemnation of all mankind. But it also states that death (the result of sin) spread to all men BECAUSE ALL MEN SINNED.

So no man will be condemned because Adam sinned! Man will be condemned because he sinned against God himself. So it is not right to speak of inherited sin, but rather of original sin.

Sin originated in Adam, and since then one generation after another - up to now - inherited the sinful nature, the compelling drive to sin. And because we sin we are sinners. So no man inherited any sin from his forefathers, but the desire to sin.

We must hasten to add, however, that God gave with the 'sickness' a remedy: "Then as one man's trespass led to condemnation for all men, so one man's righteousness led to acquittal and life for all men". This man is Jesus. We note that there is no compulsion. One man's sin led to his children's sin etc., but each man individually consents to the actions he does. Likewise the acquittal is not by compulsion, but by choice.

### **Bible obscenities and atrocities**

Many Muslims are of the opinion that

"the moral tone of the Old Testament is coarse and barbaric."

This is said with reference to "obscenities" that make the Bible a book that ought to be scrutinised by censors.

Without entering into the controversy, we should like to mention two points.

The fact, that these "obscenities" are still in the Bible can prove one of two things:

a)

that the author and readers of all times deemed this a welcome piece of pornography to indulge in;  
or

b)

that they had such respect for the revealed Word, that they dared not change it, although it exposed the most humiliating and disgusting facts of their own forefathers, such as Lot's relationship with his daughters; or the wicked sin of King David; or the events concerning Tamara and the revolting story of rape and cowardice, recorded in the book of Judges (19).

The Bible constitutes the written history of the Jews. Historians of any country endeavour to record history in such a way, that the country and its people are glorified. Historical records of identical events may vary vastly from country to country according to their bias. In the frank recording of the shameful sins of Israel we particularly see an obvious sign that nobody tried to "improve" the image of the Jews. This weighs heavily in favour of the integrity and truthfulness of the Biblical record.

We are told that the Hebrew word for a "woman" "simply refers to the sexual interest that a man has in her".

This statement is untrue. The Hebrew word "Isha" is the feminine form of Ish, which mean man. Without wishing to retaliate, we are tempted to refer to a Hadis in the "Mishkat" (II, page 426), where Mohammed intending to go to war, exempted

"a man who made lawful the private part of a woman intending to cohabit with her."

This is what today would be called legalised prostitution.

Christians could make similar claims concerning atrocities within Islam. There is no way of denying (although this is sometimes done) that at least the early conquest of Islam was full of atrocities. Be that as it may, we see in the recording of atrocities a sign of the trustworthiness of the Bible. The Bible does not condone the act of sin, nor does it offer any praise for dirty actions, but proclaims rather the impending judgement of God. (See II Samuel 11:26,27 - 12:1-19):

"When the wife of Uriah heard that Uriah her husband was dead, she made lamentation for her husband. And when the mourning was over, David sent and brought her to his house, and she became his wife, and bore him a son. But the thing that David had done displeased the Lord.

And the Lord sent Nathan to David. He came to him, and said to him, "There were two men in a certain city, the one rich and the other poor. The rich man had very many flocks and herds; but the poor man had nothing but one little ewe lamb, which he had bought. And he brought it up, and it grew up with him and with his children; it used to eat of his morsel, and drink from his cup, and lie in his bosom, and it was like a daughter to him. Now there came a traveller to the rich man, and he

was unwilling to take one of his own flock or herd to prepare for the wayfarer who had come to him, but he took the poor man's lamb, and prepared it for the man who had come to him.' Then David's anger was kindled against the man, and he said to Nathan, 'As the Lord lives, the man who has done this deserves to die; and he shall restore the lamb fourfold, because he did this thing, and because he has no pity.'

Nathan said to David, 'You are the man. Thus says the Lord, the God of Israel, 'I anointed you king over Israel, and I delivered you out of the hand of Saul; and I gave you your master's house, and your master's wives into your bosom, and gave you the house of Israel and of Judah; and if this were too little, I would add to you as much more. Why have you despised the word of the Lord, to do what is evil in his sight? You have smitten Uriah the Hittite with the sword, and have taken his wife to be your wife, and have slain him with the sword of the Ammonites. Now therefore the sword shall never depart from your house, because you have despised me, and have taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be your wife.' Thus says the Lord, 'Behold I will raise up evil against you out of your own house, and I will take your wives before your eyes, and give them to your neighbour, and he shall lie with your wives in the sight of this sun. For you did it secretly; but I will do this thing before all Israel, and before the sun.' David said to Nathan, 'I have sinned against the Lord.' And Nathan said to David, 'The Lord also has put away your sin; you shall not die. Nevertheless, because by this deed you have utterly scorned the Lord, the child that is born to you shall die.' Then Nathan went to his house.

And the Lord struck the child that Uriah's wife bore to David, and it became sick. David therefore besought God for the child; and David fasted, and went in and lay all night upon the ground. And the elders of his house stood beside him, to raise him from the ground; but he would not, nor did he eat food with them. On the seventh day the child died. And the servants of David feared to tell him that the child was dead; for they said, 'Behold, while the child was yet alive, we spoke to him, and he did not listen to us; how then can we say to him the child is dead? He may do himself some harm.' But when David saw that his servants were whispering together, David perceived that the child was dead; and David said to his servants, 'Is the child dead?' They said, 'He is dead.'" (II Samuel 11:26 - 12:19). A somewhat similar situation is reported in Joshua 7:18-26, etc.

## **Unfulfilled Bible prophecies**

The commentator of the Mishkat (IV, page 396) states:

"The greatest thing in miracles is a prophecy, i.e. a forecast of future events. This is not a political forecast, but a forecast of future secrets derived from Divine Knowledge. Prophecy is the greatest (miracle) for the following reason: It can be historically proved, but a miracle cannot. Prophecy manifests God's foreknowledge, while miracles manifest God's power. As knowledge is greater than power, prophecy is greater than a miracle."

A true prophecy must be beyond human foresight and in enough detail not to be generally applied to this or that event. According to Bible standards prophecies are likewise the credentials of a prophet:

"How may we know the Word which the Lord has not spoken? When a prophet speaks in the name of the Lord, if the Word does not come to pass or come true, that is a Word which the Lord has not spoken, the prophet has spoken it presumptuously, you need not be afraid of him!" (Deuteronomy 18:21-22).

"... bring your proofs ... Let them bring them and tell us what is to happen. Tell us the former things, what they are ... or declare us the things to come. Tell us what is to come hereafter, that we may know that you are gods." (Isaiah 41:21-23).

As a general rule we have to mention that a number of prophecies have not yet been fulfilled. Some prophecies, such as the re-establishment of Israel and the return of the Jews to their former land, are being fulfilled in our generation. The bulk of the prophecies have been fulfilled already.

Muslim critics have picked out some unfulfilled prophecies to disprove the divine character of the Bible.

The Biblical statement:

"This generation shall not pass away till these things be fulfilled." (Matthew 24:34)

is given as an example.

"This generation passed away long ago", is the claim made by such critics. Which generation is the question? The context will give us more information.

"From the fig tree learn its lesson: as soon as its branch becomes tender and puts forth its leaves, you know that summer is near. So also, when you see all these things, you know that he is near, at the very gates. Truly, I say to you, this generation will not pass away till all these things take place. Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away." (Matthew 24:32-35).

It is the generation that lives when "the branches of the fig tree put forth leaves." The fig tree in Scripture is the symbol of Israel. Israel is putting forth its leaves now after being "dead" for almost 2,000 years.

Another false prediction, so it is claimed, is the statement:

"There be some of them standing here which shall not taste of death till they see the Son of Man coming in his Kingdom." (Matthew 16:28).

The Son of Man came in His Kingdom (consider the Kingdom parables!) at Pentecost, which is the birth of the Kingdom. Most of the people that listened to Christ at that time, were still alive at the time of Pentecost.

It is also said, that the prophecy concerning the destruction of Tyre by Nebuchadnezzar in Ezekiel 26:7-14 was not fulfilled.

"Thus says the Lord God: Behold, I will bring upon Tyre from the north Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon, king of kings, with horses and chariots, and with horsemen and a host of many soldiers (to attack an island? G.N.). He will slay with the sword your daughters on the mainland; he will set up a siege wall against you, and throw up a mound against you ... His horses will be so many that their dust will cover you; your walls will shake at the noise of the horsemen and wagons and chariots, when he enters your gates." (on a small island fortress? G.N.).

We note the change of person thereafter from "he" to "they":

"They will break down your walls ... your stones and timber and soil they will cast in the midst of the waters."

This happened when a mole was built as a pathway in the sea to the island which is about 700m away from the mainland.

"I will make you a bare rock,"

This latter phrase is the part that may be disputed:

"you shall never be rebuilt."

but we would pose the question: What? The walls and houses or the city as such, the most lustrous trading centre of the then known world? In case of the latter the prophecy was right. Nebuchadnezzar did destroy Tyre, though not all of it.

Tyre consisted of two parts; the smaller on the island and the bigger one on the mainland. Nebuchadnezzar conquered mainland or Old Tyre and besieged the Island Tyre (Tyre = Rock) for 13 years. History has left us no record of the outcome of the siege except that the rulers following the kings of Tyre appear to have been vassals of Babylon. (Josephus in Apion i, 21, reports from a Phoenician annal, and since Tyre was part of Phoenicia probably concealed the outcome, which was humiliating).

Nevertheless, the prophecy took its course and was completed when the ruins of Old Tyre were used by Alexander the Great some years later as a mole that was laid right up to the Island City, which was subsequently destroyed. This had been foretold in the prophecy of Ezekiel. We are aware that Tyre was rebuilt several times, but destroyed as many times and never regained its former power and influence. For the last 800 years Tyre has been an uninhabited rock in the sea: fulfilling the last part of Ezekiel's prediction.

But all this is comparatively obsolete and remote prophecy. Stopping here would give the appearance that such is all the Bible offers as far as prophecy is concerned. This is most definitely not so. Let us have a look at:

[Biblical Prophecies Fulfilled](#)

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