

ALLAH, is He God ?

قُلِ اللَّهُ
هُوَ الْإِلَٰهَ ؟

Qawl-ul-Haq Publications

ALLAH: IS HE GOD?

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English Edition

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ALLAH: IS HE GOD?

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ALLAH: IS HE GOD?

Some claim that "God is one and the same, only people call him by different names". Such a statement aims to reconcile all the religions of the world. It sounds safe and friendly; making nearly all religions acceptable so that people are lulled into a false sense of security.

This false concept becomes even more misleading when the same names for God are used, such as the Almighty, the Merciful, the Creator. It is tragic because the outward differences that demand investigation are brushed aside. The unenquiring mind is deceived and dulled by the use of the same titles, just as a buyer may be satisfied by labels and pictures without examining the contents.

This booklet examines the attributes of God as the Creator in the light of three areas of teachings of Islam and Christianity. The first area is concerned with the punishment for theft. The second with some teachings about the rights of men and women. The third with the love of God.

The teachings of Christianity come from the Bible. The teachings of Islam come from the *Qur'an* (the Muslim's holy book) and the *Hadith*. ('The Tradition of Mohammad' - the accounts of Mohammad's deeds and sayings.)

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE HADITH

The *Hadith*-

"...has paramount importance side by side with the *Qur'an* in the formation of the religious life of a human being for the attainment of perfection. Indeed a *Qur'an*

minus *Hadith* remains unintelligible in many cases in the work-a-day life of a man."¹

The commentator Galalud-din as-Sayuti said that the *Hadith* "is the commentary on the *Qur'an* and its explanation"² This is why almost all commentaries rely in the first place on the *Hadith* to explain the *Qur'an*.

The authentic *Hadith* is believed to be "nothing short of revelation," [for the *Qur'an* says of Mohammad]

"he does not speak out of low desires. It is not but inspiration which is inspired" (Q.53:3-4). The only difference between the *Qur'an* and the *Hadith* is that whereas the former was revealed directly through Gabriel with the very letters that are embodied from Allah, the latter was revealed without letters and words."³

"Thus, next to the Holy *Qur'an* the *Hadith* is the second source of the Islamic Law of social and personal behaviour, because the commandments of the Holy Prophet are as binding on the believers as the commandments of Allah. 'Whenever Allah and the Apostle have decided a matter, it is not for a faithful man or woman to follow a course of their own choice (Q.33:36).'"⁴

The *Hadith* is to be followed exactly
"for that which differs from the *Hadith* to the extent of a hair shall be given up."⁵

"A Muslim therefore stands in absolute need of a copy of the *Qur'an* and a copy of the *Hadith* for the guidance of his life"⁶

1. *Mishkat al-Masabih*, English-Arabic, Book 1, Introduction: *Qur'an* and *Hadith*, p.3.

2. *Itqan*, Vol.II, P.182

3. *Mishkat-ul-Masabih*, the English translation, Book 1, the importance of the *Qur'an* and *Hadith*, P.2,3.

4. *Sahih Muslim*, Introduction to English translation, P. ii.

5. *Mishkat-ul-Masabih*, the English translation, Book 1, the importance of the *Qur'an* and *Hadith*, P.5, Quoted from Malabudda Minhu, P.8

6. *Mishkat-ul-Masabih*, the English translation, Book 1, the importance of the *Qur'an* and *Hadith*, P.2,3.

THE PUNISHMENT FOR THEFT

ACCORDING TO THE QUR'AN

The *Qur'an* teaches that the person who steals should have his hand cut off; stating:

"the thief male, and female: cut off the hand of both, as a recompense of what they have earned, and a punishment exemplary from God; God is All-mighty All-wise."⁷

This cutting off of the hand serves as retribution for any profit or gain the thief has made and as a punishment from God.

Later Muslim scholars insisted that this punishment could only be practised in a society where the basic needs of its citizens are adequately met.

ACCORDING TO THE HADITH

The *Qur'an* teaches that the hand of the thief should be cut off, the *Hadith* adds that Mohammad applied this form of punishment in his own time, as is clear from the following collection of incidences from the *Hadith*. (We assume that the citizens under his leadership were provided for adequately.)

1. Jaber reported that a thief was brought to the Prophet who commanded, "Maim him (his hand)" and it was done. He was brought for the second time. He said, "Maim him," and it was done. Afterwards he was brought for the third time. Again The Prophet said, "Maim him." And then it was cut off. Afterwards the thief was brought for the fourth

7. The *Qur'an*, 5:38

time and when the prophet said, "Maim him" his leg was cut off. When he was then brought for the fifth time, he said: "Kill him." So we took him and killed him. Afterwards we dragged him and threw him into a well and threw stones over him." ⁸

2. "Fuzalah-Ibn-Obaid reported that a thief was brought to the Prophet and his hand was cut off and on a further order from the Prophet, the hand was hung around his neck." ⁹

3. "'A'isha reported that Allah's Messenger cut off the hand of a thief for a quarter of a dinar and upwards." ¹⁰

4. "Abu Huraira reported Allah's Messenger as saying: 'let there be the curse of Allah upon a thief who steals an egg and his hand is cut off and steals a rope and his hand is cut off'" ¹¹

5. "It is narrated in Sharih Sunnat that Safwan-b-Umayyah came to Medina and slept in the mosque using his sheet as pillow. A thief came and stole his sheet. Safwan overtook him and came with him to the Messenger of Allah. Mohammad gave the order for the thief's hand to be cut off. Safwan said, "I did not wish it (that punishment); I give it (the sheet) to him as charity," upon which the Messenger of Allah asked, "Why didn't you (tell him) before you came with him?" ¹²

⁸. *Mishkat-ul-Masabih*, Book II, Chapter xxv, Theft, Hadith No. 129. Also mentioned in Abu Daud and Nisai.

⁹. *Mishkat-ul-Masabih*, Book II, Section 11, 1210-Theft, Hadith No. 130. Also mentioned in Tirmizi, *Abu Daud*, *Nisai*, *Ibn Majah*.

¹⁰. *Sahih Muslim*, Kitab Al-Hudud, hadith No.4157

¹¹. *Ibid.*, hadith No.4185

¹². *Mishkat-ul-Masabih*, Book II, Section 11, 1210-Theft, Hadith No. 127. *Ibn Majah* narrated like it from Abdulla-b-Sufwan and Darimi from Ibn 'Abbas.

In other words it is too late, and the man's hand must be cut off.

6. Tabari, commenting on the Table:38 reports an incident which supports this last teaching: "A woman stole jewellery from some people who then brought her to The Prophet. He ordered that her right hand be cut off. The woman then asked him if there was room for repentance to which he replied, "Today [that is after your hand is cut off] you will be pure from your sin like the day you were born."¹³

From the above we can see that:

1. Both the *Qur'an* and the *Hadith* require the amputation of the hand of the person who steals. From *Hadith* No. 6 and according to the teaching of the *Fukaha* (Muslim scholars), the thief's right hand is cut off at the wrist.¹⁴
2. The value of the stolen article that calls for the cutting off of the hand must be above a quarter of a dinar.¹⁵
3. Repentance by voluntary restitution and determining never to steal again, does not spare the person from having his hand cut off. This is also the opinion of Ibn 'Abbas who was one of the early renowned followers of Mohammad. This view is supported by commentators on the *Qur'an*, eg. see Razi.¹⁶
4. In all the collected *Hadith* on the subject, not once was a person forgiven or the punishment waived. In every case the thief's hand was cut off.

ACCORDING TO THE BIBLE

In the Torah (the first five books of the Bible), God gave laws whereby His people could deal with the problem of theft. We find four responses to the problem:

13. Tabari, commenting on the Table:38

14. *The Encyclopedia of Islam*, 1934, under section 'SARIK'

15. For Hanafi's and Zaidis the minimum amount is ten dirhams, but among the Malikis, Shafi'is and Shi'is is 1/4 dinar or 3 dirhams. Some reconcile the two figures by making it 1/4 of a dinar.

16. Razi, *Attafsir al-Kabir*, the Table:38

1. If a man steals an article, but is repentant he has to pay back the worth of whatever he stole plus twenty percent.

"The LORD said to Moses:

"If anyone sins and is unfaithful to the LORD by deceiving his neighbour about something entrusted to him or left in his care or stolen, or if he cheats him, or if he finds lost property and lies about it, or if he swears falsely, or if he commits any such sin that people may do - when he thus sins and becomes guilty, he must return what he has stolen or taken by extortion, or what was entrusted to him, or the lost property he found, or whatever it was he swore falsely about. He must make restitution in full, add a fifth of the value to it and give it all to the owner on the day he presents his guilt offering."¹⁷

2. If he is not repentant and whatever he stole is found in his possession he must pay back double.

"If the stolen animal is found alive in his [the thief's] possession--whether ox or donkey or sheep--he must pay back double."¹⁸

3. If he has disposed of what he has stolen, by selling it or using it, he has to pay between four to five times the value of the stolen article.

"If a man steals an ox or a sheep and slaughters it or sells it, he must pay back five head of cattle for the ox and four sheep for the sheep ... A thief must certainly make restitution, but if he has nothing, he must be sold to pay for his theft."¹⁹

4. If he can not pay back, he must be sold as a slave and work as such for six years, after that he is to be set free.

17. The Bible, Leviticus 6:1-5(NIV).

18. The Bible, Exodus 22:3,4.

19. The Bible, Exodus 22:1.

Unlike the punishment of slavery which was permanent, this one is temporary, lasting only six years. In addition, when freed, the man must be supplied with resources that will prepare him for and give him a good start in his new life. The Bible thus states:

"If a fellow Hebrew, a man or a woman, is sold to you and he serves you six years, in the seventh year you must let him go free. And when you release him, do not send him away empty-handed. Supply him liberally from your flock, your threshing floor and your wine-press. Give to him as the Lord your God has blessed you."²⁰

It is clear that the retribution is administered in such a way that stolen property is compensated for by property, even when the thief is enslaved for six years, his period of enslavement is repayment for the stolen property. Bodily damage is never made to compensate for property damage, as is the case in Islam. It should also be noted that the punishment is proportional to the severity of the sin - the more a person hides his sin and profits from crime, the more compensation he has to pay. The sooner he confesses his crime, the lighter the punishment.

WHY DO TEACHINGS IN THE QUR'AN DIFFER FROM THE BIBLE?

Moses was given one message in the Torah: In God's message to Moses, punishment for theft is mainly restitution and compensation with some concession for repentance. The message for Mohammad in the *Qur'an* is a different one, punishment for theft is the inflicting of a permanent physical handicap. Can the two messages be reconciled?

God is sovereign, and could well provide different laws for different circumstances. Were the circumstances different for Mohammad to those at the time of Moses? Muslims claim that God did indeed speak through Moses but gave a later, perfect

20. The Bible, Deuteronomy 15:12-14 (NIV).

and final revelation through Mohammad. If His word to Mohammad is inconsistent with His word to Moses - does that mean that God cancelled His first message? Or could it be that the voice that spoke to one of them was in fact not that of God the Creator? The following discussion may throw light on this dilemma.

THE HAND: A DIVINE MASTERPIECE

1 . THE SOURCE OF POWER OF THE HAND

Let us look at the magnificence of the creation of God, manifest in the human hand.

The hand is a masterpiece of engineering. It is immensely strong. The whole weight of the body, for instance, can be supported by the small bones, muscles and tendons of the end joints of the fingers, of even one hand alone. There is enormous power in the hand for lifting weights, chopping wood or rowing a boat, yet the bulk of that power, while delivered by the hand, actually comes from the arm and the shoulder. Thus the source of the major part of the hand's power is located away from the hand leaving the tiny muscles which are located in the hand itself to be used in fine precision movement. Imagine how clumsy the hand would be if God had located the biceps within it. One would not then be able to thread a needle or play a violin or even write.

2 . THE NUMBER OF MOVEMENTS OF THE HAND

When God the Creator creates, He creates so magnificently and generously. When man first attempted to design an artificial hand, he came up with a two-pronged claw which could open (and shut) and rotate, two basic movements. The human hand has an infinite number of movements, with "seventy separate muscles contributing to hand movements."²¹ Even if man could

21. Dr. Paul Brand, *Fearfully and Wonderfully Made*, Hodder and Stoughton, London, 1981, P. 163.

invent an artificial hand that resembles the mechanics of the human hand, this artificial hand would not be able to function like the one God created.

If one is to move the tip of the little finger in a hand that has been severed from a body, "four minutes are needed to sort through the intricate network of tendons and muscles to arrange at least a dozen muscles in the correct configuration and tension, so that the little finger firmly moves without the proximal joints buckling."²²

Every day we make countless number of such movements without giving them a second thought, and they are done in a split second.

How generous God the Creator has been in providing us with such incredibly complex, in-built, multi-purpose tools which can hold, lift, push, pull, twist, wave, flick, caress, clap, slap, pinch, punch, touch, smooth, scratch, point, beckon, rub, knock, stroke, and squeeze!

3 .THE TISSUES IN THE PALM OF THE HAND

The tissue in the palm of the hand is a special tissue. It is not flabby like the tissue found in the cheeks and not as hard as the muscles, but of special design so that it fulfils the gripping function of the hand. Dr. Paul Brand the famous hand surgeon explains:

"Underneath the skin, in the palm of the hand, lie globules of fat with the look and consistency of tapioca pudding. Fat globules, so soft as to be almost fluid, cannot hold their own shape, and so they are surrounded by interwoven fibrils of collagen, like balloons caught in a supporting rope net."

22. Dr. Paul Brand, *Fearfully and Wonderfully Made*, Hodder and Stoughton, London, 1981, P. 163.

"... I grasp a hammer in the palm of my hand. Each cluster of fat cells changes shape in response to the pressure. It yields but cannot be pushed aside because of firm collagen fibrils around it. The resulting tissue, constantly shifting and quivering, becomes compliant, fitting its shape and its stress points to the precise shape of the hammer. Engineers nearly shout when they analyse this amazing property, for they cannot design a material which so perfectly balances elasticity and viscosity."²³

4 . THE MOIST PALM OF THE HAND

The palm of the hand is always moist. Any one who works with sand and cement becomes fully aware of this. When the palm of the hand is dry, the person has very little control of the object he grasps. This continuous wetness of the palm increases our ability to grasp any object, by creating a kind of vacuum between the hand and the surface of that object.

Also this continuous moistness acts as a little cooler in hot weather as the moisture continually evaporates; thus helping to cool the whole body.

5 . THE MEASURE OF THE HAND'S IMPORTANCE

The hand is not merely a masterpiece of engineering but a masterpiece of Divine design. While each of the other organs of sense; eye, ear, nose, tongue, are also important to us and reveal the generosity of the Creator, a good case can be made for regarding the hand as the most important of them all.

Every part of the body is represented by a specialised area of the brain. The eyes, the nose, the ears, even the toes are represented in the brain. Just like a factory operated by a computer, every department is represented in the computer. The larger the area of representation, the more important that department is. The area of the brain representing the hand is greater than that for the eyes or ears and, in fact, is about equal to the area representing

23. Dr. Paul Brand, *Fearfully and Wonderfully Made*, Hodder and Stoughton, London, 1981, P. 132.

the whole of the body from the waist down.²⁴ This is the degree of importance the Creator Himself placed on the hand. It is safe to say that losing a hand is really more disastrous than losing an eye or an ear. A blind person can still read Braille and find his way with a stick: knowledge is entering his brain through his hand. Deaf people can still talk to each other with their hands.

6. THE HAND PERFECT IN DESIGN

Dr. Paul Brand said "I could fill a room with surgery manuals suggesting various ways to repair hands that have been injured. But in forty years of study, I have never read of a technique that has succeeded in improving a normal, healthy hand."²⁵

In other words the hand is so perfect that no one can improve on the work of the Creator. It is not only precious and important, practical, and brilliantly designed, but it is also a Divine masterpiece fashioned by God the Creator Himself.

The question that must be asked is: "How do people treat masterpieces?" Or perhaps, "What does the artist himself do when one of his masterpieces are spoiled and tainted?"

ALLAH: IS HE THE CREATOR?

THE MARK OF THE TRUE GOD

If someone discovers a painting by Picasso, Van Gogh or Leonardo De Vinci - which is damaged on one side, is it likely that he will take a pair of scissors and cut away that damaged part? We would be horrified and would rightly deduce that that person has no idea of the real value of the painting. If an average person, with small knowledge of the work of Leonardo De Vinci would not dream of cutting that damaged part, is it likely that

24. Arthur C. Guyton, *Anatomy and Physiology*, Saunders College Publishing, 1985, p. 327, figure 18-6.

25. Dr. Paul Brand, *Fearfully and Wonderfully Made*, Hodder and Stoughton, London, 1981, P. 163.

Leonardo De Vinci himself would give instructions to cut parts of his paintings, even if they were damaged?

The frustrating attempt to capture the American satellite Intelsat 6, is a powerful illustration of the brilliance of the design of the human hand. This is what one of the newspapers commented on that event:

"They did it by hands? Mercy! Whatever will they think of next? After all those millions of dollars, computer hours, mathematical calculations, high-tech solutions and earthbound rehearsals in swimming pools, the answer to rescuing the disabled Intelsat 6 satellite was right there all the time at the ends of the astronauts' arms. Inspired by the pictures of your fellow shuttler, Pierre J. Thout, alone in space and facing the painful frustration of trying to nab that elusive floating tin can with his five-meter "capture bar" [which was worth 9 million dollars, and after trying for four days still failed to capture the satellite], your countrymen deluged NASA's mission control centre with more weird and wonderful suggestions. Use magnets, they said. Try bungee cords, giant fish hooks, Velcro strips and even some kind of superglue ...

All of our efforts to build a computer capable of the breadth and complexity of thought of the human brain have failed. All of our efforts to create robotic hands with the range and subtlety of manipulative skill of the human variety have failed. Let us face it. We haven't even been able to sort out the best way for astronauts to go to the toilet. But when we stop trying to be so clever and use what nature has given us by way of the remarkable design of our bodies and our innate commonsense, we are sharp ... What a piece of work is man, indeed."

The above news paper should've said 'What a wonderful creation is man, indeed'. Nevertheless, they made a point. The 9 million dollar capture bar, supported by the most sophisticated technology, after almost four days of attempts failed to capture the satellite. And the God given hand so simply did it in no time. Indeed, what a divine master piece is the human hand!

The human hand is not a human masterpiece but a Divine masterpiece. It is more precious, and far greater than any human

achievement. Will the Creator of the hand give orders for His masterpiece, to be cut off and destroyed to penalise a person for theft of property? Or did He command that a greater amount of property must be given back; that the punishment for stealing property should be property, as in His commandment given to Moses? Property damage should be compensated for by property. If we use the analogy of the human masterpieces it is safe to say that damaging part of the body to compensate for the loss of some property is like damaging the masterpiece to compensate for the loss of some paint. No amount of paint and canvas will compensate for one of Picasso's masterpieces. There is more than paint and canvas in a masterpiece. Could it be that the hand-cutting law originated from someone who was not the hand's creator?

Would the God who knows the worth of His creation order the destruction of one of His most important masterpieces -the hand- for the sake of property damage? If we compare the teachings of the *Qur'an* and the teaching of the Bible on the subject of theft, we can see that the God who spoke in the Bible behaves as a Creator- who knows the worth of the hand- and the one who spoke to Mohammad does not appear to behave like a Creator. When two mothers came to King Solomon with one child, each claiming that the child belongs to her and seeking his judgement on the matter king Solomon said, "Bring me a sword." So they brought a sword for the king. He then gave an order: "Cut the living child in two and give half to one and half to the other."

The woman whose son was alive was filled with compassion for her son and said to the king, "Please, my lord, give her the living baby! Don't kill him!" But the other woman said, "Neither I nor you shall have him. Cut him in two!"

Then the king gave his ruling: "Give the living baby to the first woman. Do not kill him; she is his mother."²⁶

26. The Bible, 1 Kings 3:16-28.

What made king Solomon come to this conclusion? It is because he saw that the woman who did not want the child to be cut in two behaved like a mother; she had the heart and compassion of a mother. She would rather lose the baby and spare his life than lose him altogether. Likewise it is the God who spoke in the Bible who behaves like a Creator, who knows the real worth of the human hand but the one who spoke in the *Qur'an* does not behave like a Creator.

THE MARK OF IDOLS AND MAN-CREATED GODS

It must be remembered that the crime of theft is a form of damage to property, but the cutting of the hand causes damage to the body. There is a big difference between property damage and bodily damage, for no amount of property damage will ever equal bodily damage. Property can be compensated for or replaced, but where can one find a replacement for the human hand? It is important to note that not one of the many prophets of the true God, the Creator, (before Mohammad's time) ever delivered a commandment specifying bodily damage as a compensation for property damage. Prophets of idol worshippers called for such punishments.

For example the Assyrian law states:

"If a seignior's wife has stolen something from another seignior's house, exceeding the value of five minas of lead, the owner of the stolen (property) shall swear, 'I never let her take (it); there was a theft in my house,' if her husband (so) desires, he may give up the stolen (property) and ransom her (but) cut off her ears. If her husband does not wish to ransom her, the owner of the stolen (property) shall take her and cut off her nose."²⁷ (emphasis added)

27. *Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament*, edited by James B. Pritchard, Princeton University Press, 1969, the Middle Assyrian Laws, Tablet A: Law 5.

And the Law of Hammurabi states:

"If a seignior hired a(nother) seignior to oversee his field, and lending him feed-grain, entrusting him with oxen, contracted with him to cultivate the field, if that seignior stole the seed or fodder and it has been found in his possession, they shall cut off his hand."²⁸ (emphasis added)

The true God, the Creator, never commanded any form of bodily damage as a punishment or compensation for property damage. He commanded bodily damage for bodily damage and property damage for property damage. The reason is obvious. The Creator knows that man is the crown of His creation on earth; man is God's vice regent on earth, property was made for him, he was not made for property. In ancient Israel God commanded Moses: 'an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth'.²⁹ The key issue in giving such order is fairness in punishment, and retribution. Never in all of God's commands to Moses did He prescribe a bodily damage as a punishment for property damage. For all property damages God commanded a certain amount of property restitution. To command that any part of the body be destroyed as a retribution for property damage, no matter how valuable the property, is inconsistent with the nature of God as the Creator. Bodily damage is the retribution for bodily damage, and property restitution is the penalty for property damage. For in the eye of the Creator, no amount of property will be a sufficient exchange for damage to the body of another human being, who was created in the image of God .

28. *Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament*, edited by James B. Pritchard, Princeton University Press, 1969, the Code of Hammurabi, Law 253.

29. The Bible, Exodus 21:24.

ALLAH: IS HE ALL-KNOWING?

THE MAGNITUDE OF THE LOSS CAUSED BY THE CUTTING OFF OF THE HAND

1 - IT CAUSES LOSS OF EFFICIENCY OF THE ARM AND THE OTHER HAND

The loss of the hand is not the only damage that results from this form of punishment. Cutting off the hand destroys the efficiency of the arm and makes it almost useless, for the hand is connected to the forearm which is connected to the upper arm. To cut off the hand that God created destroys the usefulness of the arm, for it makes the muscles and the tendons that empowers and controls the hand useless.

Not only does this punishment render useless the arm and the forearm God created to work together, but it makes the hands that were intended to work in pairs useless as well. The loss of one of them does not make it a loss of 50 per-cent of the ability of the hands. The cutting off of one hand is to a degree a form of destruction of the other hand. For the two work together. They were designed to work together, just as one side of a pincer works with the other side. Try to hammer a nail , or saw a piece of timber , or try to peel an orange or even to cut an onion with one hand. Cutting off one hand is a virtual destruction of the other, resulting in the loss of much of its effectiveness. The thief is left also with a permanent affliction that hinders him for the rest of his life. It jeopardises his chances of future employment, and ironically might force him to steal again merely to satisfy his basic needs. Is this a Divine solution to the problem of theft?

2 - UNEXPECTED AFTER-EFFECTS OF HAND CUTTING CAN CAUSE DEATH

In the first centuries of Islam, when its followers practised cutting off of the hand of the person who stole, "the stump of the hand used to be held in hot oil or fire to stop the bleeding "³⁰.

30. *The Encyclopedia of Islam*, 1934, under section 'SARIK'.

But this burning is an additional punishment.

Here the punishment was exceeded by the additional pain caused by trying to stop the bleeding and the infection. (Can this form of punishment come from the Just God?) There are even cases where people whose hands were cut off subsequently died from infection. The punishment in those cases grew in severity to equal the punishment for murder. We could deduce that whoever gave that law didn't know the implications of this form of punishment. Surely God knows exactly how to prescribe everything with precision, not only in His creation but also in imposing punishment. How would you react if your motor mechanic, while repairing the starter motor, ruins the engine and the transmission, causing the whole car to be written off? Or how would you react if your builder, while making an opening for a door in one of the walls brought the whole house down? God is far too wise to be taken by surprise. There are no miscalculations with God. Only people can fall into this trap.

3 - THE PSYCHOLOGICAL EFFECTS OF HAND CUTTING IN THE EAST

But that is not all. Hands have cultural as well as practical significance. There are vast numbers of people in the East in countries like Pakistan and India whose right hands have a special significance not found in Western countries. For example, they give money only with their right hand, and they eat with their right hand, because they use their left hand to clean their private parts. The left hand would never be used to place food in the mouth or even to pay money.

If a person in that part of the world steals and has his right hand cut off, he is doomed to eat with the hand with which he cleans himself. And if the left hand is cut off instead of the right, the problem still remains, for that person will still eat with the same hand which he uses to clean himself. The punishment does not stop at the loss of the hand but thus becomes a terrible stigma contaminating his social dealings with others, and brings him down almost to the level of animals.

Thus the punishment has at least been doubled in such countries. But God is just, and All-knowing. He knows the social customs of all peoples. His Laws and penalties will not have consequences which effectively make them twice as severe in some countries as in others. In such places it could, conceivably, be worse than death which is the punishment for adultery. The adulterer suffers death once but the thief suffers psychologically every day and every moment of his remaining life. The absence of his hand will proclaim every minute, "thief! thief! thief!" Even more humiliating is the personal agony caused by the inability of the victim to accept himself, and the unbearable revulsion he feels at his every attempt to eat food using the same hand with which he cleans himself. This form of punishment inflicts a different and extra kind of handicap; a disgrace that can not be wiped away from the mind of the 'victim' himself. So this punishment becomes a life long torture.

Is this new and added punishment consistent with the justice of the All-knowing God? Did the cutting off of the hand come from the One who knows the customs of all the peoples of the world or did it come from a mind that was unaware of the significance of the right hand in the east?

ALLAH: IS HE JUST ?

THEFT COMPARED TO FORNICATION IN PUNISHMENT

In Islam the prescribed punishment for theft is cutting off of the hand, while it prescribes one hundred lashes³¹ for the sin of fornication by a single man. We can only conclude that according to the *Qur'an*, property theft is many times more serious than sin against persons. A single man who commits fornication, can go and live in another city. There is no permanent scar, no permanent identification for all to see. But a person with a hand cut off is marked for the rest of his life. If a single man fornicates with someone's daughter, he will receive one hundred lashes, and gets banished from his city as a punishment, but if he steals

31. The *Qur'an* 24:2.

the money purse that belongs to the girl's father from the house, his hand will be cut off. Which will make the father's blood boil, the act of fornication or the loss of his money purse? Fornication involves another human being, while the sin of theft involves property. You can pay back the property, make amends and the matter is finished. But you can't undo the act of fornication; the consequences are harmful and lifelong. Surely the sin of fornication is far greater than stealing even a million dollars. Can these respective punishments be consistent with the God of justice?

Did the just God treat the sin of fornication which can result in life long scars, as a lesser sin than stealing, which could be compensated for by paying back money or property? Did hand cutting come from the just God or did it originate with the "haves" to protect themselves from the "have nots", Could it have originated with the rich who wanted to protect their belongings from the weak and the poor?

PAGANISM IS THE REAL SOURCE OF THIS FORM OF PUNISHMENT

If the commandment to cut off the hand of the person who steals (in a society that provides its basic needs to its citizens) did not have its origin in the Creator, the All-knowing, the Just God, then where did it come from?

Ibn Kathir the Muslim commentator states in his commentary :

"the cutting off of hands as a penalty for theft was practised by the Arabs in the 'days of paganism' (*ayyam al-Gahiliyah* - the days of ignorance), and was confirmed in Islam with the addition of extra stipulations for it.... It is said that the first to practise the cutting off of the hand was the tribe of Qoraysh in the 'days of paganism'. They cut off the hand of a man called Dowayk who was a chief to the people of

Malih b-'Amr from Khasa'ah when he stole a treasure from the *Ka'ba*."³²

Furthermore, the Encyclopedia of Islam says that this form of punishment (according to the '*Awa'il*' literature), had already been introduced in the days of paganism by Walid b. Mughirah and that this method of punishment might be of Persian origin.³³

It is undisputed then that this form of punishment was practised by the Arabs before the time of Mohammad, namely the days of paganism (*ayyam al-gahiliyah*), the times of ignorance where people worshipped idols.

ABRAHAM NEVER PRACTISED THIS FORM OF PUNISHMENT

This form of punishment was never practised by Abraham nor his descendants. Evidence of this is found in the *Qur'an* itself in the story of Joseph.³⁴ For when one of the brothers of Joseph was accused of stealing Joseph's drinking cup, the cutting off of his hand was never suggested as penalty. When they were asked by the Egyptians: 'What shall be its (that is the crime of stealing the drinking cup) recompense if you are liars?' The children of Jacob stated, in the *Qur'an* 12:75, how they deal with a thief : 'This shall be its recompense- in whoever's saddle-bag the goblet is found, he shall be its recompense. So we recompense the evil-doers.' They stated how they deal with such a crime when they said '**so we recompense the evil-doers**' They suggested the most severe form of retribution which is slavery- he (the thief) shall be its recompense, as they were very sure that they are all innocent of the charge of stealing Joseph's drinking cup. If the cutting off of the hand was known to them they would have said so, just as Mohammad once said "if Fatemah the daughter of Mohammad committed theft. I will cut off her hand"³⁵. Al-Galalyn and Razi

32. *Ibn Kathir*, commenting on the Table:38.

33. *The Encyclopedia of Islam*, 1934, under section 'SARIK'.

34. *The Qur'an* 12:70-81.

35. *Sahih Bukhari*, Arabic-English translation, vol. 8, Hadith No. 779.

the Muslim commentators admit that with the children of Israel, slavery as a punishment for theft stood in the place of hand cutting in Islam.³⁶

The important point to note is that according to the Qur'an the cutting off of the hand was never practised by Abraham nor his children. So neither Moses nor Jacob nor his grandfather Abraham practised hand cutting as a punishment for theft. For if Abraham practised it Jacob would have done so too. And according to history the cutting off of the hand was practised by the Arabs in the times of ignorance, the times of idol worship, before the time of Mohammad.

The fact that this practice belonged to the pagan times is evident from its condemnation by Amnesty International, which is fighting for human rights world wide:

"Amnesty International holds amputation to be cruel, inhuman and degrading punishment, and thus prohibited internationally by Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the United Convention against Torture or Other Cruel, Inhuman and Degrading Treatment or Punishment and by the International Convention on Civil and Political Rights.

In addition, any use of medical skill by physicians to assist in the infliction of any form of cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment would clearly be contrary to international codes of medical ethics."³⁷

IS HAND CUTTING THE PERFECT SOLUTION ?

Sayid Qotb, a modern Muslim scholar, has written -

"the cutting off of the hand as a penalty for stealing is the best foundation upon which the punishment for theft is

36. *Razi*, and *Al-Galalyn* commenting on the Qur'an 12:70-81.

37. Amnesty International, United Kingdom, Medical Letter-Writing Action, Amputations, Muhammad Ahmed al-Hariri, Yemen Arab Republic, 28 March 1989.

established since the beginning of the world to this day."³⁸

Does this mean that those idol-worshippers had a regulation dealing with theft, superior to that which God had given Moses? and which was practised by Abraham? Did those pagans (who did not know God) possess this perfect answer to the problem of theft since the beginning of the world? And then, did God give Moses (who worshipped the true God and to whom God spoke directly) an inferior regulation as the answer to the problem of theft, while the pagans who worshipped stones practised the perfect solution for theft, which is hand cutting?

Did Abraham (who rejected idol worship and worshipped the one true God) and his children receive from God an inferior solution to the problem of theft, while the idol worshippers of Arabia possessed this perfect solution?

Is it possible that God the Creator gave Moses the true and best regulations for dealing with theft? If so, this is the voice to which we must listen. We must listen and adhere to the true voice of God, for it is to Him that we must give account of ourselves.

To ascribe to the perfect God, the barbaric regulations of the pagans is a terrible insult indeed. To take the inhumane and pagan practices of the idol worshippers and make it the will of God is a form of blasphemy. God is far greater and wiser, and fairer than those who devised this savage form of punishment. God is so much higher than the image this form of punishment portrays. If this form of punishment belongs to Allah, then Allah can not be God the creator.

OBJECTION

Does not the Bible speak also of hand cutting? Can the above argument apply to the Bible also?

38. Sayid Qotb, *Fi Zilal al-Qur'an*, commenting on the Table:38.

Yes the Bible does indeed speak of hand cutting. But there is a big difference between the teaching of the Bible and the teaching of the *Qur'an*. Here is what the Word of God Jesus said:

"And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to go into hell."³⁹

The difference is that Jesus the Christ was not legislating the cutting off of the hand. In other words He never gave one person the right to cut off the hand of another. So you are your own judge and I am my own Judge. The Word of God Jesus was not trying to pass laws to be administered from outside by others. He came to rule from within the hearts of his followers, and not from outside. The thrust of His words was not the literal application of hand cutting or eye plucking, but that if there is any thing causing us to sin, we must be decisive in removing it from our life, even if it is as precious as our hand or our eye. Also this way of speaking is not unknown to his hearers, for we read in the book of Proverbs:

"When you sit to dine with a ruler, note well what is before you:

And put a knife to your throat, if you are given to gluttony.

Do not crave his delicacies for that food is deceptive."⁴⁰

Of course it does not mean to cut one's throat in this situation. But if that person is that way inclined, he must be extremely careful not to let the stomach influence his decision.

So the Word of God Jesus was not legislating and was not giving a command that the hand should be cut off. The *Qur'an*, however, was.

THE TEST OF INTERNAL CONSISTENCY

Muslims claim that if the cutting off of the hand as a form of punishment was implemented by any government it would almost eliminate the problem of theft.

39. The Bible, Matthew 5:30. (NIV)

40. The Bible, Proverbs 23:1-3 (NIV)

The Islamic solution to the problem of theft is not that simple, but is full of anomalies as will be seen from the following discussion.

The well verified *Hadith* provides specific teaching complementary to the *Qur'an*. It can sometimes even cancel specific teaching of the *Qur'an*.⁴¹ For example, the *Qur'an* prescribes a hundred stripes for the sin of fornication (Sura 24:2), but that was abrogated by the *Hadith* that commands the stoning to death of the married fornicator.

NO HAND CUTTING FOR USURPERS OR EMBEZZLERS

The *Hadith* distinguishes between theft (*sarika*) and usurpation (*ghasb* - taking by force) and confiscation (*khiyana*). The punishment of cutting off the hand applies only in the case of theft (*sarika*) but not in the cases of usurpation (*ghasb*), that is taking the property of another by force and confiscation (*khiyana*).

The *Hadith* states-

"There is no cutting [of hand] for a confiscator or usurper or embezzler."⁴²

The English translator of *Mishkat al-Masabih* wrote "There is no cutting of hand ... for criminal misappropriation, nor for theft committed by a marauder or a dacoit"⁴³

WHAT IS THEFT?

"The jurists defined theft for which the *hadd* punishment (cutting the hand) is prescribed as the clandestine removal of legally recognised property (*mal*) in the safe keeping

41. The *Qur'an* prescribes a hundred stripes for the sin of fornication (Sura 24:2), that was abrogated by the *Hadith* that commands the stoning to death of the fornicator if he is a married man.

42. *Ibn Magah*, Vol.II, *Hadith* No.2591,2592.

43. *Mishkat-ul-Masabih*, the English translation, Book 2, Introduction of Chapter xxv section 11 on theft.

(*hirz*) of another to which the thief has no right of ownership; it is so distinguished from usurpation (*ghasb*) and confiscation (*khiyana*)"⁴⁴

For the Hadd punishment to be applied the property must be removed in a clandestine or secretive way. "For the stipulation of stealth excludes open robbery (*nahb*) and snatching things unawares (*ikhtilas*, used of pick-pockets.)"⁴⁵

So stealing is the removal of property by stealth, but usurpation (*Ghasb*), (*nahb*) and (*ikhtilas*) are not considered stealing.

The translator of Mishkat Al-Masabih defines *ghasb* - usurpation - as follows:

"*Ghasb* in its literal sense means forcibly taking a thing from another. Technically, it signifies the taking of the property of another without the consent of the owner in such a manner as to destroy the owner's possession of it."⁴⁶

So *Ghasb* is not considered stealing in Islam because it is not done secretly. Therefore it is not punishable by the cutting off of the hand. The offender only has to make a restitution of a similar kind according to the *Hadith* "the hand is under obligation to return that which it took."⁴⁷

The translator of Mishkat Al-Masabih then went on to add -

"By encroachment of the rights of another ... a sin is committed. Forcible possession is an oppression in an extreme form."⁴⁸

44. *The Encyclopedia of Islam*, 1934, under section 'SARIK'.

45. *The Islamic Quarterly*, Vol.xxvi (Number 3), Third Quarter, 1982, Offences and Penalties in Islamic Law, p.161.

46. *Mishkat-ul-Masabih*, English translation, Book II, Chapter XIV on usurpation.

47. Samarqandi, *Tuhfat al-Fuqaha*, Dar al-Fikr, Damascus, Part three, p. 113.

48. *Mishkat-ul-Masabih*, English translation, Book II, Chapter XIV on usurpation.

Ghasb is not only a worse form of stealing the property of another, but it is the oppression of another. *Ghasb* is not only a despicable form of property damage, but it is also an ugly form of aggression against people, or to use the words of the translator of Mishkat - an oppression in an extreme form. *Ghasb* combines stealing and oppression, but the God of Islam did not command the application of the *hadd* punishment for this flagrant double sin, but prescribed the cutting off of the hand for stealing only!! The God of Islam commands a light punishment for the 'extreme' sin (*ghasb*), but commands an extreme punishment for the lighter sin *sarika*!! Where is the justice? Can such a commandment come from the Judge of the whole earth? God forbid.

NO HAND CUTTING FOR ROBBERY FROM A PUBLIC PLACE

According to the definition of theft, the stolen property must be classed as *Hirz*.

"By *hirz* is meant guarding by a watchman or by the nature of the place (eg. a private house) Thus theft from a building accessible to the public (eg. shops by day, baths) is not liable to the *hadd* punishment"⁴⁹

If a person steals an article from a supermarket or a library, the *hadd* punishment is not applied to him, because this is not considered stealing in Islam, because a supermarket or a library are public places. But if the same article was stolen from a private place, that is considered stealing. And if a person takes the property of another by force this is not considered stealing, and no *Hadd* punishment is applicable.

NO HAND CUTTING FOR INCOMPLETE THEFT

The above inconsistencies are not the only ones. For

"Only a complete theft is punishable by *hadd* [hand cutting]. Therefore if, for example, a thief entered a house

49. *The Encyclopedia of Islam*, 1934, under section 'SARIK'

and took some property, but was caught before taking it out of the house, he cannot be punished by hadd ... This is the opinion held by the majority of jurists. According to Abu Hanifah, hadd does not take place if a thief from inside the *hirz* hands the object to an accomplice outside."⁵⁰

So according to Abu Hanifah, who enjoys the largest following of the Muslim world, a person can enter a house, take a TV. for example, hand it to his accomplice from a window, and this man's hand will not be cut off because what he did was an incomplete theft!

Similarly "if a thief makes a hole in a shop, but left without taking anything, then another came and placed his hand in that hole and took some articles from the shop, no hand cutting can be applied on either men [because the first one did not steal] and the second person did not violate the *hirz*."⁵¹ For the hole made by the first man rendered the shop as non-*hirz*. So the second man's action is not considered stealing because he did not take from a *hirz*.

But "if a person enters a house, takes some articles, and ties them to a dog and he prompts the dog to go outside, his hand will be cut off, but if the dog goes outside by itself with the articles which the thief then retrieves, no hand cutting is applicable."⁵²

NO HAND CUTTING FOR STEALING A HUMAN BEING

"If a person steals a free child [in contrast to a slave child], no hand cutting is applied to him, because a free person is not considered a property."⁵³

50. *The Islamic Quarterly*, Vol.xxvi (Number 3), Third Quarter, 1982, Offences and Penalties in Islamic Law, p.161. See also 'Abd ar-Rahman al-Gaziri, *al-Fiqh 'ala al-Mazahib al-Arba'a*, Dar al-Kutub al-Elmeyah, 1990, vol. 5, p. 173.

51. 'Abd ar-Rahman al-Gaziri, *al-Fiqh 'ala al-Mazahib al-Arba'a*, Dar al-Kutub al-Elmeyah, 1990, vol. 5, p.177.

52. 'Abd ar-Rahman al-Gaziri, *al-Fiqh 'ala al-Mazahib al-Arba'a*, Dar al-Kutub al-Elmeyah, 1990, vol. 5, p.173.

53. *Ibid.*, p.174.

So a person can steal a child without having his hand cut off. But if that child is wearing some jewellery, then the opinions are divided. According to Abu Hanifah, and Shafi'i there is no hand cutting for taking the jewellery, because the jewellery belongs to the free child. But some of the followers of Shafi'i said hand cutting is applicable because the jewellery is a property.

So in Islam if a person steals a free child (with the exception of the followers of Malik), no hand cutting is applied to him, but if he steals a **slave** child, his hand must be cut off, because a slave is a property.⁵⁴

So the god of Islam, at least, differentiates between theft (*sarika*) and usurpation (*ghasb*), confiscation (*khiyana*), and embezzlement (*ikhtilas*), while the God of the Bible treats them equally. In the Bible the LORD said to Moses:

"If anyone sins and is unfaithful to the LORD by deceiving his neighbour about something entrusted to him or left in his care or stolen, or if he cheats him, or if he finds lost property and lies about it, or if he swears falsely, or if he commits any such sin that people may do- when he thus sins and becomes guilty, he must return what he has stolen or taken by extortion, or what was entrusted to him, or the lost property he found, or whatever it was he swore falsely about. **He must make restitution in full, add a fifth of the value to it and give it all to the owner on the day he presents his guilt offering.**"⁵⁵

So whether a man steals from his neighbour \$500 - or takes an article by force from his neighbour to the value of \$500 - or confiscates articles to the value of \$500 - or embezzles \$500 from him - or finds a lost article to the value of \$500, and hides it from his neighbour - all are treated as the same sin deserving the same punishment. The act of stealing is no different from the act of embezzlement in the Bible, and is no different from usurpation or confiscation. All amount to an unlawful gain at the expense of

54 'Abd ar-Rahman al-Gaziri, *al-Fiqh 'ala al-Mazahib al-Arba'a*, Dar al-Kutub al-Elmeyah, 1990, vol. 5, p.140.

55. The Bible, Leviticus 6:1-5.

one's neighbour and all come from the same self centred, greedy heart, and the end result is the same damage.

Here are two differing sets of directions. One is from the *Qur'an* and the *Hadith* and the other from the Bible. The God of Islam differentiates between theft (*sarika*) and usurpation (*ghasb*), confiscation (*khiyana*), and embezzlement (*ikhhtilas*). The God of the Bible treats them all as equal.

Which God is consistent in his teachings concerning the damage done to the property of one's neighbour? It is inconsistent to cut the hand of a person who "steals" \$100, while sparing the hand of the one who embezzles the same amount of money. Such inconsistency is unworthy of a human magistrate. How much more is it unworthy of the God of justice.

It is in the Bible that God is honoured as the Just One. To Him be all glory and praise.

If the woman who stole a piece of jewellery in *Hadith* No.6 took it by force from its owner, she would have kept her hand. But it was not possible. If she was discovered, she would be overpowered by the owner. She is weaker than the owner. This is why stealing is done behind peoples' back. But the act of *ghasb* is done in defiance of the people's attempts to stop the thief. *Ghasb* is theft committed by the powerful, while stealing is theft committed by the weak. Whose hand gets cut off? The one who steals in weakness. The God of Islam protects the powerful thief, but cuts off the hand of the weak one! Is this justice? Does God have double standards, or is Allah, the god of Islam not God at all?

ALLAH: IS HE THE FORGIVING THE ALL-MERCIFUL

If one is to survey the *Ahadith* (plural of *Hadith*) concerning the punishment for theft, it will be observed that during the life-time of Mohammad every person who was caught stealing had his hand cut off. Not once did Mohammad say to such a person :you

deserve your hand be cut off. But in the name of Allah, the forgiving, the merciful, the All-compassionate your hand will be spared, make an appropriate restitution, and go unpunished, as a demonstration of the mercy of Allah, go in peace, but do not do it again.' Not once did that happen. But every time a person was caught stealing his hand was cut off, every time a married person was caught committing adultery he was stoned to death. The *Hadith* even tells us about a woman who came to Mohammad confessing that she is pregnant because of adultery. "Mohammad then called her master and said : 'Treat her well, and when she delivers bring her to me. He did accordingly. Then Allah's Apostle pronounced judgment about her and her clothes were tied around her and then he commanded and she was stoned to death."⁵⁶

Compare the above story with a similar incident in the life of Jesus the Word of God.

The Jewish leaders brought to Jesus a woman who was caught in adultery, wanting to stone her according to the Law of Moses. Jesus said to them, ' If any one of you is without sin, let him be the first to throw a stone at her. The people hearing this began to go away one at a time, the older ones first, until only Jesus was left, with the woman still standing there. Jesus asked her, 'Woman, where are they? has any one condemned you?' 'No one, sir,' she said. 'Then neither do I condemn you,' Jesus declared, 'Go now and leave your life of sin.'⁵⁷

The two incidents are very similar, but with a dramatically different outcome. Notice that the woman Jesus did not condemn did not come voluntarily confessing her sin, as the other woman who came to Mohammad. Yet Christ did not condemn her. There are two other incidents about similar women recorded in the life of Jesus, a prostitute who came weeping at the feet of Jesus⁵⁸, and a loose woman who had five husbands whom Jesus deliberately travelled to meet⁵⁹. Jesus forgave both women. It is amazing to note that three women who were implicated in sexual sin were

56. *Sahih Muslim*, English translation, Kitab al-Hudud, Hadith No. 4207

57. The New Testament (N.I.V.), the Gospel of John 7:53-8:11.

58. The Bible, Luke 7:36-50.

59. The Bible, John 4:1-26.

forgiven when confronted by Jesus. While every married person that was caught committing adultery and was brought before Mohammad was stoned to death. The contrast is the difference between life and death. Some might ask why Christ did not order the stoning of the woman who was caught in the act according to the Law of Moses? It is because Christ came to prove that God is not only Just but also merciful in time and space, and in deed and word. Christ came to demonstrate the true God, who has the power not only to punish according to the Law, but also to forgive because He is the All-compassionate. Even the *Qur'an* Concur that Christ was a 'mercy from God to mankind.'⁶⁰

THE PLACE OF WOMEN

The purpose of this section is to compare some aspects of the place of women in the pure teaching of Islam with the pure teaching of Christianity. Four areas of comparison will be considered under this heading. (1) Man's right to beat his wife; (2) sexual rights between husband and wife; (3) Woman's right to do optional fasting (4) the number of wives a man may marry.

MAN'S RIGHT TO BEAT HIS WIFE.

The man in Islam has the right to desert his wife sexually, and to beat her in order to control her undesirable behaviour. The woman, however, cannot resort to such measures, as is clear from the following two *Qur'anic* verses:

"If a woman fears rebelliousness or aversion in her husband, there is no fault in them if the couple set things right between them; right settlement is better."⁶¹

But concerning the women the *Qur'an* states:

60. The *Qur'an* 19:21.

61. The *Qur'an* 4:128. (Arberry's translation).

"Righteous women are therefore obedient ... And those you fear may be rebellious, admonish; banish them to their couches, and beat them."⁶²

It is clear from these two verses that the *Qur'an* recommends diplomacy when a woman fears rebelliousness in her husband, but when the man fears rebelliousness in his wife, the *Qur'an* recommends the use of violence and sexual desertion.

This is confirmed by the sound *Hadith*. Most commentators mention that the above verse was revealed in connection with a woman who complained to Mohammad that her husband slapped her on the face, which was still marked by the slap. At first Mohammad said to her:

'Get even with him', but then added : 'Wait until I think about it.' Later on the above verse was revealed, after which the Prophet said: 'We wanted one thing but Allah wanted another, and what Allah wanted is best.'⁶³

Ibn Kathir, in his commentary mentioned a *Hadith* on the authority of *zal-Ash'ath Ibn al-Qays* who was visiting 'Omar and at that time 'Omar took his wife and beat her, then said to Ash'ath:

'Memorise three things from me, which I memorised from the prophet who said: "The man is not to be asked why he beat his wife ..."⁶⁴

This beating however is not like the whipping of a slave, ⁶⁵- it should be a " beating without causing injury"⁶⁶ (agreed upon).

62. The *Qur'an*, 4: 34. (Arberry's translation).

63. Razi, *At-tafsir al-Kabir*, on Q. 4:34.

64. *Ibn Kathir*, Commenting on Q. 4:34, this *Hadith* is also reported by *Abu Dawood* and *al-Nisa'i* and *Ibn Magah*.

65. *Mishkat al-Masabih*, English-Arabic, Book 1, section 'duties of husband and wife', *hadith* No.50.

66. *Ibid.*, *Hadith* No.76.

Sayyed Qotb a modern scholar and commentator tries to justify the provision found in the above Qur'anic verse, for the man to beat his wife this way:

"The facts of life, and the psychological observations of certain forms of deviations indicate that this approach (beating the wife) is the most appropriate one to satisfy a particular form of deviation, and reforming the behaviour of the person .. and gratifying her .. at the same time! Even without the existence of this form of psychological deviation, perhaps some women will not recognise the power of the man whom she loves to have as her guardian and husband, except when he conquers her physically! This is not the nature of every woman. But this kind does exist. And it is this kind that need this last treatment to be set straight, and remain within the serious organisation [marriage] in peace and tranquillity."⁶⁷

So whatever the reason behind wife beating a husband according to the *Qur'an* has the right to beat his wife if he fears rebellion in her.

On the other hand Bukhari gives an example of the wife's options if she fears cruelty or desertion or her husband's part in the following *Hadith*:

"Narrated 'Aisha (regarding the verse - 'If a wife fears cruelty or desertion on her husband's part...') It concerns the woman whose husband does not want to keep her with him any longer, but wants to divorce her and marry some other lady, so she says to him: 'Keep me and do not divorce me, and then marry another woman, and you may neither spend on me, nor sleep with me.' This is indicated by the statement of Allah:

'There is no blame on them if they arrange an amicable settlement between them both, and such settlement is better.'⁶⁸

67. Sayid Qotb, *Fi Zilal al-Qur'an*, commenting on the Women 4:34

68. *Sahih Bukhari*, Arabic-English translation, vol. 7, Hadith No. 134.

So according to Bukhari's sound *Hadith*, the correct settlement for the woman who fears cruelty or desertion on her husband's part, is to submit to her husband's will to marry another woman, and to relinquish her financial and sexual rights.

At least the *Qur'an* recommends peaceful settlement when a woman fears rebellion in her husband. On the other hand, when the man fears rebellion in his wife, the *Qur'an* recommends the use of violence and sexual desertion.

While in Islam, wife beating is permissible, such a commandment is unknown in the Bible. On the contrary, husbands are commanded to love their wives. The concept of the husband and the wife becoming one flesh through marriage leaves no place for wife beating.

"Even so husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. For no man ever hates his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, as Christ does the Church."⁶⁹

Marriage makes the husband and the wife one flesh, one body. The Bible states-

"For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother, and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one."⁷⁰

The Bible says: **"Let each one of you love his wife as himself"**⁷¹ This is consistent with the one body, one flesh, one soul concept that is intended by the creator. For God made a woman from the rib he had taken out of the man Adam. And when Adam saw the woman he said, **"This is now bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh."**⁷²

69. The Bible, Ephesians 5:28,29.

70. The Bible Ephesians 5:31.

71. The Bible, Ephesians 5:33.

72. The Bible, Genesis 2:22-23.

Elsewhere the Bible even goes further than commanding the man to love his wife as himself, stating: "Husbands love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her."⁷³ This presents the supreme example of love to the husbands to imitate, the kind of love that goes to the point of sacrificing one's life for the sake of the other.

If we consider the concept of the one flesh, one body , intended by the creator, through marriage, some implications will present themselves. One of the implications is that 'no man ever hates his own flesh', and equally true, no man ever beats his own flesh. This understanding befits the Creator. The one who is not the Creator would permit only the man to beat the wife. The picture given in the Bible is that the man and his wife are one flesh. The story of creation is the source of the one flesh belief. This belief is implied in the *Qur'an* 7:189 'It is He who created you out of one living soul, and made of him (Adam) his spouse (Eve) that he might rest in her'⁷⁴. Although the one flesh concept is referred to in the *Qur'an*, the *Qur'an* recommends wife beating contrary to that concept. Will any person beat his left hand with his right one, because he dropped and broke an expensive vase he was carrying with his left hand? Of course not, both hands belong to the one flesh. When one hurts the other suffers too. To beat one's wife is exactly like that. The teaching of the Bible is consistent with that concept. But the teaching of the *Qur'an* is not consistent with that belief, because it teaches that one part of the body (the man) can beat the other part (the woman) even though it should not cause an injury.

SEXUAL RIGHTS BETWEEN HUSBAND AND WIFE

As stated earlier the *Qur'an* gives the husband the right to desert his wife in the following verse : "Righteous women are therefore

73. The Bible, Ephesians 5:25.

74. *Tafsir al- Galalayn* on the *Qur'an* 7:189. & 39:6

obedient ... And those you fear may be rebellious, admonish; banish them to their couches."⁷⁵

But "the woman cannot withdraw from the man's bed, or travel, or leave his house except by his permission. The man however has the right to do whatever he wills"⁷⁶ as the following *Ahadith* confirms-

"The prophet of Allah said : When a man calls his wife to satisfy his desire, let her come to him though she is occupied at the oven."⁷⁷

(The above *Hadith* is agreed upon, that is, no scholar doubts its authenticity.)

"The messenger of Allah said: Whenever a man calls his wife to his bed and she refuses, and then he passes the night in an angry mood, the angels curse her till she gets up at dawn."⁷⁸

The famous commentator Qortobi stated the reason behind such position as follows:

"The woman was created so that man can rest in her ... for by her he gets rid of his sexual storm. The female sexual organ was created for men. For when Allah the most high said '(You) leave what your Lord has created for you of your wives?'⁷⁹ Allah made it known that that place of the women was created from them for men's sake. So the woman must yield it whenever the husband calls her. If

75. The *Qur'an*, 4: 34. (Arberry's translation).

76. Tuffaha, Ahmad Zaky, *Al-Mar'ah wal-Islam*, first edition, Dar al-Kitab al-Lubnani, Beirut, 1985, pp. 33.

77. *Mishkat al-Masabih*, English-Arabic, Book I, Section 'Duties of husband and wife', Hadith No. 61.

78. *Ibid.*, Hadith No. 54 (agreed upon). See also *Bukhari*, Arabic-English translation, vol. VII, Hadith no. 121.

79. The *Qur'an*, 26:166, Maulvi Mohammad 'Ali's translation.

she refuses then she is an oppressor and in a grave position."⁸⁰

The above view is well established in the Islamic law:

"The accepted understanding in the different schools of jurisprudence, that what has been contracted in marriage is the benefit by the man from the woman, not the opposite. The followers of Imam *Malik* declared the marriage contract is a contract of ownership of benefit of the sexual organ of the woman and the rest of her body.

The followers of Imam *Shafi'i* said: 'The most accepted view is that what is been contracted upon is the woman, that is the benefit derived from the her sexual organ. Others said, 'What has been contracted is both the man and the woman. So according to the first opinion the wife cannot demand sex from her husband because it is his right [not hers], and according to the second opinion she can demand to have sex with him.

The followers of Imam *Abu Hanifah* said, : 'The right of the sexual pleasure belongs to the man, not the woman, by that it is meant that the man has the right to force the woman to gratify himself sexually. She on the other hand does not have the right to force him to have sex with her except once [in a lifetime]. But he must, from a religious point of view, have sex with her to protect her from being morally corrupt. "⁸¹

As a result it is accepted as a fact that "Sexual intercourse is an action, and the woman does not act."⁸²

The Bible from the other hand teaches that the sexual rights are mutual between men and their wives-

80. *Qortobi*, commenting on Q 30:21.

81. 'Abd ar-Rahman al-Gaziri, *al-Fiqh 'ala al-Mazahib al-Arba'a*, Dar al-Kutub al-Elmeyah, 1990, vol. 4, p. 9.

82. *Ibid.*, p. 7.

"Let the husband fulfil his duty to his wife, and likewise also the wife to her husband.

The wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband does: and likewise also the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife does. Stop depriving one another..."⁸³

According to the *Qur'an* the husband can use sexual desertion to control rebelliousness in his wife. However, the wife cannot resort to such measure.

In Islam, the husband rules over the body of his wife, though she cannot rule over his body. If the husband wants sex, the wife cannot refuse him. The Bible teaches that the sexual rights of the husband and the wife are mutual. This is because the God who inspired the teaching of the Bible is the Creator who knows that the needs of both husband and wife are equal. He created them equal. The one who spoke in the *Qur'an* considers the husbands sexual needs to be more important than the wife's. The one who spoke in the *Qur'an* is inconsistent with the created nature and the equal needs of men and women. For this reason he cannot be the creator.

The method of regulating and fulfilling the sexual needs of the husband and the wife as revealed in the Bible is a brilliant one indeed. According to the Bible the man controls the body of the wife, in other words she cannot say no to the man. Conversely the wife controls the body of the man, he cannot say no to the wife, except by agreement.

The following analogy might illustrate this point: Suppose there are two fridges in a house, which can be locked. The first fridge belongs to the husband, in it meat is kept. But the woman has the key to the husband's fridge. The second fridge belongs to the wife, in it vegetables are kept. But the man has the key to the woman's fridge. So if the woman wants meat, she has complete access to it. And if the man wants vegetables, he also has complete access to it. Likewise the woman has complete access to

83. The Bible (N.A.S.V.), I Corinthians 7:3,4.

the man's body. The man cannot say no to her. And the man has complete access to the woman's body, the woman cannot say no to him. This is the solution provided by the Bible.

In Islam the man has all the keys. The woman has no access to the meat fridge, so to speak.

Which arrangement is consistent with the created nature of men and women? Which arrangement is worthy of the creator?

The one that comes from the *Qur'an* which considers the husbands sexual needs to be more important than the wife's? Or the one that comes from the Bible which is consistent with the created nature and the equal needs of men and women?

WOMEN'S RIGHT TO DO OPTIONAL FASTING

In Islam "The woman cannot withdraw from the man's bed, or travel, or leave his house except by his permission."⁸⁴ She also cannot do any optional fasting, or engage herself in any spiritual seclusion, except by his permission. The man however has the right to do whatever he wills."⁸⁵

The above is one of the implications of rights of the husband over the wife's body, and the lack of the wife's rights over the man's body.

In Islam the man has the right to deny his wife her sexual rights, but the woman cannot refuse the man. She cannot do any optional fasting without her husband's permission, because he cannot have sexual relations with her during that fast. On the other hand, he can fast without her permission. She has to wait until he finishes his fast, but he does not have to wait. She must be available to gratify and fulfil his desires all the time.

84. Tuffaha, Ahmad Zaky, *Al-Mar'ah wal-Islam*, first edition, Dar al-Kitab al-Lubnani, Beirut, 1985, pp. 33.

85. *Sahih Bukhari*, Arabic-English translation, vol. VII, Hadith No. 120. See also *Al-Musanaf* by Abu Bakr Ahmad Ibn 'Abd Allah Ibn Mousa Al-Kanadi who lived 557H., vol. 1 part 2, p. 259.

A woman went complaining to Mohammad that her husband breaks her fast because he wants to have sexual relations with her. The man complained to Mohammad, "She goes on fasting and I am a youthful man, and cannot therefore keep patience." The Prophet said: No woman shall keep fast except with the permission of her husband"⁸⁶

Although that man had to wait only for a few hours till his wife broke her fast at the end of the day, the sexual need of the husband came first before the woman's fasting. The Bible on the other hand gives men and women equal sexual rights.

"Let the husband render unto the wife due benevolence [her conjugal rights]: and likewise also the wife unto the husband.

The wife hath not power of her own body, but the husband: and likewise also the husband hath not power of his own body, but the wife.

Defraud ye not one the other, except it be with **consent** for a time, that ye may give yourselves to **fasting and prayer**; and come together again, that Satan tempt you not for your incontinency."⁸⁷ [Emphasis added]

Because the Bible acknowledges that the sexual needs of the man are as important as that of the woman's, when one of them wants to fast, this is done by mutual consent. The wife has as much right to fast as the man.

Once again the above arrangement can only come from the creator, who is consistent with the nature He placed equally in both the man and the woman. For according to the Bible not only the sexual needs of the man and the woman are equal, but also the spiritual needs of both are equal. However, the arrangement suggested by Mohammad is inconsistent with the created nature and the equal needs of men and women. For this reason, Allah, the god of Mohammad, cannot be the creator.

86. *Mishkat-ul-Masabih*, Book 1, duties of husband and wife, hadith No.72.

87. The Bible, I Corinthians 7:3-5.

THE NUMBER OF WIVES THE MAN MAY MARRY

In Islam a provision for men to marry more than one woman is as follows:

"If you fear you cannot treat orphans [girls] with fairness, then you may marry other women who seem good to you: two, three or four of them. But if you fear that you cannot maintain equality among them, marry only one or any slave girls you may own. This will make it easier for you to avoid injustice."⁸⁸

The reason for marrying up to four free women is given by Gazali, the great Muslim scholar:

"Some men have such a compelling sexual desire that one woman is not sufficient to protect them [from adultery]. Such men therefore preferably marry more than one woman and may have up to four wives."⁸⁹

And the reason for marrying the slave girls beside one's wives is given also by Ghazali :

"Since among Arabs passion is an overpowering aspect of their nature, the need of their pious men to have sex was found to be the more intense. And for the purpose of emptying the heart to the worship of God they have been allowed to marry women slaves if at some time they should fear that this passion will lead them to commit adultery. Though it is true that such a marriage could lead to the birth of a child that will be a slave, which is a form of destruction..... yet enslaving a child is a lighter offence than the destruction of religious belief. For enslaving the new born is a temporary thing but by committing adultery eternity is lost."⁹⁰

88. The *Qur'an* 4:3.

89. *Ihya' 'Uloum ed-Din* by Ghazali, Dar al-Kotob al-'Elmeyah, Beirut, Vol II, Kitab Adab al-Nikah, P. 34.

90. *Ibid.*, p. 33.

Ghazali gave us an example of this overpowering sexual desire in-

"the son of 'Omar who was an ascetic, and a scholar. He used to break his fast by having sex before having food. And he might have had sex with three of his slave girls before the last meal."⁹¹

And Bukhari reported:

"The Prophet used to pass (have sexual relations with) all his wives in one night, and at that time he had nine wives."⁹²

For -

"He [the Prophet] once said of himself that he had been given the power of forty men in sex."⁹³

And -

"Ali who was the most ascetic of all the companions had four wives, and seventeen slave girls as concubines."⁹⁴

While -

"some of the other companions had three and four wives and those who had two wives were countless in number."⁹⁵

Concerning the provision for marrying slave girls - found in the last part of the above Qur'anic verse - Razi said:

91. *Ihya' 'Uloum ed-Din* by Ghazali, Dar al-Kotob al-'Elmeyah, Beirut, Vol II, Kitab Adab al-Nikah, p. 33.

92. *Sahih Bukhari*, Arabic-English translation, vol. 7, Hadith No. 142.

93. Mohammad Ibn Saad, *at-Tabaqat al-Kobra*, Vol 8, Dar-el Tahrir, Cairo, 1970, p. 139.

94. *Ihya' 'Uloum ed-Din* by Ghazali, Dar al-Kotob al-'Elmeyah, Beirut, Vol II, Kitab Adab al-Nikah, P. 27.

95. *Ibid.*, P. 34.

"God made the provision of marrying many slave girls as easy as marrying one free woman. Besides the responsibilities and provisions of the slave girls are lighter than those of the dowers, no matter if you have a few of them or many, no matter if you were fair in apportioning sex to them or not, no matter whether you completed the sexual act or not."⁹⁶

Because "the need of the pious men to have sex was found to be the more intense, and for the purpose of emptying the heart to the worship of God", men have been allowed in Islam to marry up to four women and an unlimited number of slave girls.

In Christianity a man is to have only one wife. The reason for that is that God, the creator, created them in pairs, male and female, He created them. God the creator did not create Adam and two or three or four Eves. God created one woman for Adam. And He is still creating one woman for every man that comes to this world. He is still creating them in pairs. If we look at the percentage of men compared to women at any time in history we will find that it fluctuates around the fifty percent mark. There was never thirty three percent men and sixty six women, so that every man can have two wives, much less four.

Suppose you enter a car factory, that is producing an equal number of car bodies to the car engines. And there you see for the assembly line one thousand car bodies, and one thousand engines. How many engines will fit in every car body? The answer is obvious. Now what will you say if one of the foremen wants the workers to put two engines for every car body? and another wants the workers to assemble one engine for every car body. Which foremen should the workers obey? The designer designed the car to have one engine. Of course they should obey the one who asks them to place one engine for every car body. The great designer, the Creator, created them male and female, one wife for the one man, and out of the 'production line', the number of men coming is still equal the number of women.

⁹⁶. Razi, *At-tafsir al-kabir*, commenting on Q. 4:3.

There was no time in the recorded history when the number of women was twice the number of men. God is still creating one woman for every man. The number of wives recommended by the *Qur'an* is inconsistent with the intention of the creator, and His activity through out history, for He is still creating men and women almost in equal numbers. Hence the god of Islam cannot be the Creator.

MUT'AH MARRIAGE

We shall consider another ethical issue that deals with men's sexuality, in which the sexual desires of men while being away from their wives was taken care of through a form of marriage called Mut'ah marriage.

The commentator Razi says:

"Mut'ah marriage involves a man **hiring** a woman for a specific amount of money, for a certain period of time, to have sex with her. The scholars agree that this Mut'ah marriage was authorised in the beginning of Islam. It is reported that when the Prophet came to Mecca to perform 'Omrah, the women of Mecca dressed up and adorned themselves. The companions complained to the Prophet that they had not had sex for a long time, so he said to them: 'Enjoy these women.'"⁹⁷ (emphasis added)

The translator of Mishkat al-Masabih inform us that

"Mut'ah or temporary marriage is a marriage which is contracted for a fixed time, say a month, a year or some days with some dower specified. It has recently gained currency among the Shi'as. It is **absolutely illegal**. This kind of marriage, the Shi'as establish on the basis of the tradition reported by Ibn Mas'ud [which will follow]. But all the companions agreed that the prophet once allowed temporary marriage for three days at war time but afterwards cancelled his order."⁹⁸ (emphasis added)

97. Razi, *At-tafsir al-kabir*, commenting on Q. 4:24.

98. *Mishkat-ul-Masabih*, Book II, section 18, 1368 Mut'ah marriage

The following is the *Hadith* Ibn Mas'ud which is agreed upon by all teachers of *Hadith* :

"Ibn Mas'ud reported: We were fighting along with the Messenger of Allah while (our) wives were not with us. We said: Shall we not undergo castration? The Holy Prophet forbade us from that. Afterwards he made lawful for us Mut'ah Marriage. So all of us married a woman for a fixed term in exchange for a cloth. Afterwards Abdullah recited: O those who believe! do not make unlawful the good things which Allah has made for you (5:87Q) "99

In a footnote the translator of *Mishkat al-Masabih* said:

"this allowance was given only for three days when the companions felt the necessity of their wives in the war time owing to their long absence from home."100

But the same source mentioned that this allowance was not only given in war time but also in peaceful time of trade, for Tirmizi mentions:

"Ibn 'Abbas reported: Mut'ah marriage was in the beginning of Islam. A man used to go to a city wherein he had no acquaintance. So he used to marry a woman for a time which he considered good for his stay. She used to protect his goods for him and cook his food till this verse was revealed-Except their wives or what their right hands possessed-23:10. Ibn 'Abbas said: Then every private part except that of these two became unlawful."101

The commentator Razi stated:

"No Muslim disputes that Mut'ah marriage was allowed in early Islam, the difference is whether it has been abrogated or not."102

99. *Mishkat-ul-Masabih*, Book II, section18, 1368 Mut'ah marriage, Hadith No.115

100. *Ibid.*, commenting on Hadith No.115

101. *Ibid.*, Hadith No.116

102. *Razi*, commenting on Q4::24.

That is not only for three days. For if it was allowed only for that short period, the question whether it has been abrogated or not would have not risen.

'Ali said "Had it not been for 'Omar who abolished Mut'ah marriage, no one would've committed adultery, except a miserable wretch."¹⁰³

In other words this form of marriage continued from the time of Mohammad until 'Omar abolished it. And to this day the Shi'ah Muslims still practise it.

Even if the Mut'ah marriage was only allowed for those three days when "the woman of Mecca dressed up and adorned themselves, and the companions complained to the Prophet that they did not have sex for a long time, so he said to them: 'Enjoy these women.'", was this allowance according the will of God and His character?

The translator of Mishkat said that 'Mut'ah marriage is absolutely illegal'. What makes it now illegal, if it was for even three days legal? This is a moral and ethical issue. Moral issues do not change with time or circumstances. For example homosexuality will never be lawful before God, whether it be for three days or three minutes. Oppressing the widows and the orphans will never be lawful before God. Incest will never be lawful before God. etc. Why did the god of Islam allow this Mut'ah marriage even for three days. Because he is not the Creator. The Creator wants all human beings to live in honour and equality. If we go back in history to those three days, we notice that these women were the loose ones of Mecca. All the decent women were inside their homes, about their proper duties, but of these women the *Hadith* stated "they dressed up and adorned themselves" for the men. It is an insult to the institution of marriage to call what happened in those three days marriage, even if it is temporary. There is another name for it, indeed the Arabic word *Mut'ah* means pleasure or enjoyment.

Besides, which father would've given his daughter in marriage to any one for those three days? No one, because marriage is a

103. *Razi*, commenting on Q4::24.

covenant that was meant for life. God did not create women for rent, but for permanent relationship. The Creator cares for his creatures more than any human father.

Not only that but think of the results of this permission given by the Prophet of Islam: What will happen to the children born as a result of this three day marriage. Why should they come to a world, where they miss the love and the care of their father? That temporary provision for Mut'ah marriage can only come from other than the Creator. For the Creators provision for the children and the whole family is consistent with the order of creation. The one who gave the permission of this Mut'ah marriage is interfering with and spoiling the order of creation.

Listen to what the true Creator commanded the Prophet Moses in somewhat a similar situation:

"When you go to war against your enemies and the LORD your God delivers them into your hands and you take captives, if you notice among the captives a beautiful woman and are attracted to her, you may take her as your **wife**.

Bring her into your home and have her shave her head, trim her nails and put aside the clothes she was wearing when captured. After she has lived in your house and mourned her father and mother for a full month, then you may go to her and be her husband and she shall be your **wife**."¹⁰⁴

God did not give Moses any provisions for a Mut'ah marriage. Even with a captured girl, the only relationship one can have is proper marriage.

And Jesus the Christ the Word of God said:

"You have heard that it was said, 'Do not commit adultery.' But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart."¹⁰⁵

104. The Bible, Deuteronomy 21:10-13 (NIV)

105. The Bible, Matthew 5:27-28 (NIV)

These are the words that is worthy of the character of the Creator. Who not only wants all his creatures to live in honour and dignity, but he wants them to be pure, because He is pure and Holy.

THE LOVE OF GOD, WHO DESERVES IT?

The study of the idea of divine love in the *Qur'an* provides the deciding evidence as to whether Allah is God or not.

Professor Daud Rahbar, a modern Muslim scholar wrote: "Unqualified Divine Love for mankind is an idea completely alien to the *Qur'an*. In fact 'to love' is a phrase too strong to convey the idea of *ahabba* which can be rendered equally well as to like or to approve Even if we adopt the translation 'loves' for *yuhibbu* when it is used with God as the subject, nowhere we find the idea that God loves mankind. God's love is conditional."¹⁰⁶

This is not only true of all the derivatives of the word '*uhibbu*' -to love or approve- but it is also true of the only three passages where the word '*wadda*' is used (19:96, 11:91-92, 85:12-14). In all the Qur'anic passages where the above two words were used God's love is conditional. ¹⁰⁷

In the whole of the *Qur'an* there is not one verse that talks about the love of God for the sinner, the wicked, the ungodly. While in the Bible the love of God for the sinner is stated both in words and in deed.

106. Daud Rahabar, *God of Justice*, Leiden E.J. Brill, 1960, p. 172.

107. *Ibid.*, p. 174.

According to the *Qur'an* God only loves the righteous¹⁰⁸, the godly¹⁰⁹, the repentant¹¹⁰, and those who fight for his sake¹¹¹. But God does not love the wicked¹¹², the wasteful¹¹³, the proud¹¹⁴, the infidels¹¹⁵, and the ungodly¹¹⁶, etc.

Another Muslim scholar, observing the above, stated:

"The love of God was not stated by the *Qur'an* except for those who possess great virtues which result in the good of mankind and human society. And was denied by God for those who are described by extreme wickedness which results in spreading harm and corruption."¹¹⁷

But in Christianity, God loves not only the godly but also the ungodly, the wicked, and the sinner. The Love of God is stated in the Bible as being for the whole world: "For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."¹¹⁸

God according to Christianity loved the whole world, the godly and the ungodly.

God loves the ungodly not after he repents and becomes good, but God loves him even before he is transformed. **God hates sin but loves the sinner.**

Unlike the *Qur'an*, the love of God in the Bible is directed towards and expressed for the sinner in the highest possible form, and in the following clear words:

108. The *Qur'an* 3:159.

109. The *Qur'an* 3:76.

110. The *Qur'an* 2:222.

111. The *Qur'an* 61:4.

112. The *Qur'an* 3:57.

113. The *Qur'an* 6:141.

114. The *Qur'an* 16:23.

115. The *Qur'an* 30:45.

116. The *Qur'an* 28:77.

117. 'Afif abd-Al-Fatah Tabarah, *Roh al-Din al-Islami*, Manshourat Gama'at 'Ebad al-Rahman, First edition, Beirut, 1955, p. 131.

118. The Bible, John 3:16.

"For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.

For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die.

But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."¹¹⁹

Indeed this is the main message of Christianity.

Allah does not love the sinner because he is not the Creator. For loving the sinner is an act of creation. Only the creator can love the sinner, the wicked, and the ungodly. For what is the act of creation? It is bringing something out of nothing. The act of creation is bringing into existence that which does not exist. And loving the sinner is an act of creation because it is love, in spite of the absence of any virtue or any thing that deserves love, thus creating that which is lovely. The true God starts with the sinner and the unlovely and by His Divine power creates loveliness and righteousness. But the one who is not God, loves only the lovely. Indeed men behave like that. Even nature reacts that way. For every action, there is a reaction equal in magnitude and opposite in direction. There is no virtue in loving those who love you. There is no virtue in being kind to those who are kind to you. This is the law of the created order, not the Creator. For the Creator is much higher than his creation.

SALMAN RUSHDIE AND SAUL OF TARSUS

The Salman Rushdie incident brings to life the difference between Allah and the God of the Bible.

Ayatollah Khomeini, repeating his sentence of death on British novelist Salman Rushdie said:

"Even if Salman Rushdie repents and becomes the most pious man of all time, it is incumbent upon every Muslim

119. The Bible, Romans 5:6-8.

to employ everything he has, his life and his wealth, to send him to hell."

While in my opinion, Salman Rushdie's book is offensive on many accounts, the above words are not words of love and forgiveness.

The question of 'Whether Salman Rushdie can be forgiven is debatable. For while some Qur'anic verses speak of forgiveness to those who repent¹²⁰, this forgiveness is conditional, according to the following Qur'anic verse.

"God shall turn only towards those who do evil in ignorance, then shortly repent; God will turn toward those; God is All-knowing, All-wise. But God shall not turn towards those who do evil deeds until, when one of them is visited by death, he says, 'Indeed now I repent,'"¹²¹

Some ten months later, it is claimed that Salman Rushdie has repented. But it can be argued from the above verse, that Salman Rushdie has repented because he has in some sense been 'visited by death' as a result of the death threat on him. Hence 'God shall not turn towards him'. Salman Rushdie should have 'shortly repented' to qualify for God's mercy. But what complicates the matter and makes this mercy far away from Salman Rushdie is the *Hadith* that makes lawful the shedding of the blood of any one who insults Mohammad.

Whether pardon is possible or not, whereas Mohammad called for the killing of any one who insulted him¹²², Christ prayed for forgiveness for those who were crucifying Him.¹²³

Now compare the incident of Salman Rushdie with the story of Saul of Tarsus. This man did to the Christians more that Salman

120. The *Qur'an*, 4:110 & 5:39

121. The *Qur'an*, 4:17,18

122. Bayhaqi, *as-Sunan al-Kubra*, Da'erat al-Ma'aref al-'Uthmaneyah, HYDERABAD, India, vol. 7, p.60.

123. The Bible, Luke 23:34.

Rushdie has done to Muslims. He was not only a blasphemer, but also a persecutor of the first century Christians. Salman Rushdie wrote a book and then hid himself: Saul of Tarsus went about destroying Christianity and causing Christians to blasphememe. God could have wiped him out, but on his way to Damascus to destroy the Christians;

"suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven:

And he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?

And he said, 'Who art thou, Lord?' And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks'.

And he trembling and astonished said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do.

And the men which journeyed with him stood speechless, hearing a voice, but seeing no man.

And Saul arose from the earth; and when his eyes were opened, he saw no man: but they led him by the hand, and brought him into Damascus.

And he was three days without sight, and neither did eat nor drink.

And there was a certain disciple at Damascus, named Ananias; and to him said the Lord in a vision, Ananias. And he said, Behold, I am here, Lord.

And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the street which is called Straight, and inquire in the house of Judas for one called Saul, of Tarsus: for, behold, he prayeth,

And hath seen in a vision a man named Ananias coming in, and putting his hand on him, that he might receive his sight.

Then Ananias answered, Lord, I have heard by many of this man, how much evil he hath done to thy saints at Jerusalem:

And here he hath authority from the chief priests to bind all that call on thy name.

But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel:

For I will show him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake.

And Ananias went his way, and entered into the house; and putting his hands on him said, Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus, that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost.

And immediately there fell from his eyes as it had been scales: and he received sight forthwith, and arose, and was baptised."¹²⁴

God did not wait for Saul to repent. On the contrary He met him on the way to destroy the Christians who lived in Damascus.

Instead of rejecting him because he 'did not shortly repent', when the Word of God Jesus met Saul of Tarsus, He loved him and made him an ambassador of his love. And he became the greatest advocate of Christianity.

It is true that the Word of God Jesus made him blind for three days. But suppose the Word of God Jesus stopped at that. The first century Christians would have been very happy indeed. But what would that prove? It only proves that God can blind his enemies, and that God is *only* a vindictive, unmerciful, vengeful God.

But such a god is very small. God is far greater than that. For it is said "Great is he who can conquer his enemies but greater is he who can gain them." God is greater than the greatest sinner. God is greater than the worst sin. When God loved Saul of Tarsus to heaven He was proving that He is the Creator. Listen to the greatest enemy of the Christians praising the true God, the God who loved him:

"I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who has strengthened me, because He considered me faithful, putting me into service; even though I was formerly a blasphemer and a persecutor and a violent aggressor.

124. The Bible, Acts 9:3-18.

And yet I was shown mercy because I acted ignorantly in unbelief.

And the grace of our Lord was more than abundant with the faith and love which are found in Christ Jesus.

It is a trustworthy statement, deserving full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, amongst whom I am foremost of all.

And yet for this reason I found mercy, in order that in me as the foremost, Jesus Christ might demonstrate his perfect patience, as an example for those who would believe in Him for eternal life.

Now to the king eternal, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honour and glory forever and ever. Amen"¹²⁵

This is the result of the creative power of God. The story of Saul is the story of the Creator in action. Only the Creator can create love out of hate, and praise out of blasphemy. And Saul of Tarsus became an example of the creator in action, for he wrote 'And yet for this reason I found mercy, in order that in me as the foremost [of sinners], Jesus Christ might **demonstrate his perfect patience, as an example for those who would believe in Him for eternal life.**'

And this was not just superficial talk. This is the Divine ability of God the Creator for Paul and for you and for me, and the whole world.

This God is not a reactor, who loves only those who love Him, and forgives only those who qualify by shortly repenting. But He is the Creator who transforms his enemies into dedicated followers.

THE TRUE AND THE COUNTERFEIT

When comparing two bank notes with the purpose of determining which is the counterfeit and which is the genuine - we must not concentrate on **the similarities**. For we will find that the two notes will almost look the same. But we must concentrate on **the differences**. For it is the differences which will prove

125. The Bible, 1 Timothy 1:12-17.

which is the genuine one. Two genuine notes will have no differences.

The similar things in the two notes will be the things that are easy to copy. So we should look also for the **things that are missing**, for they will be the things that are difficult to copy. The work of the counterfeiter is the work that contains only the parts that are easy to copy. The love of God for the sinner and the ungodly is totally missing from the *Qur'an* because it is the difficult, even the impossible thing to copy. The love of God for the sinner is not a copy from any thing here on earth. It is the reactor principle we do find on earth. But the love of God for the sinner did not come from the human experience, but through a revelation from above. The God who is capable of loving the wicked is the Creator, the most high and the true God.

This is the God who is worthy of worship.

Allah is called in the *Qur'an* the Creator, but he cannot love the sinner, thus showing himself to be only a reactor. His orders concerning hand cutting coupled with the unnatural treatment of women, and the permission of pleasure marriage are diametrically opposed to the character of the Creator who knows the magnificence of the hand, the equality of men and women, and the unchangeability of His moral laws.

He is called the Just but he punishes the single man who fornicates less than the one who steals.

He is called the All-Knowing, but the side and after-effects of hand cutting, coupled with the resulting psychological devastation of hand cutting in the east shows him to be otherwise.

He is called the Forgiving, the Merciful, and the All-Compassionate, but not once did he exercise his power to have compassion over one who was caught stealing or one who was caught committing adultery, as Christ did many times.

Allah is called the creator, the forgiving, the merciful, the just, and the All-Knowing, but he is not.

God as revealed in the Bible is the Creator. God as revealed in the Bible is the Merciful, the All-Knowing, the All-Wise, and the Just. He is also the God of love. He is consistently shown to be so in this booklet.

The God who is revealed in the Bible is the true God. In the last day all of us will stand before the true God, our creator, and maker. We will not stand before an imaginary god. We will not stand before a man-made idea about God. But that is not all, we must be sure as we bend our knees to worship, that we worship the true God. For to worship a man-made idea about God is the ultimate form of straying indeed. It is more deadly than worshipping an idol made of silver or gold. For an idol is shown to be an idol, but a man's idea dressed up like God, with titles such as the creator, the merciful, yet without the reality of what God truly is, is diabolical indeed.