

Chapter Sixteen

EPILOGUE TO JESUS' TEACHINGS

“Do not think that I have come to abolish the law and the prophets. I have come, not to abolish them, but to fulfill them. Of this much I assure you; until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter of the law, not the smallest part of a letter, shall be done away with until it all comes true.”

[Matthew 5:17-18]

Jesus knew that there was much more to be delivered to mankind than what he had taught, and that all of God's plan would be fulfilled. In John 16, when discussing the Paraclete to come, he said:

“I have much more to tell you, but you cannot bear it now. When he comes, however, being the Spirit of truth he will guide you to all truth. He will not speak on his own, but will speak only what he hears, and will announce to you the things to come.

[John 16:12-13]

Just as Jesus confirmed, corrected and fulfilled the previous scripture, the Quran confirms, corrects and fulfills the previous scriptures, the Torah and the Gospels. Even more significantly, the Quran consummates these scriptures and adds new material that the world was unprepared to receive prior to A.D. 600. The Quran completes an otherwise incomplete picture regarding the whole reason behind our existence.

CONSUMMATION OF PREVIOUS SCRIPTURE

The Quran confirms and consummates the previous scriptures. This is clearly documented in its Chapter 5:

We have sent down the Torah, containing guidance and light. In accordance with it, the prophets of Israel who were devoted to God, judged, as well as the rabbis and the scribes, who were entrusted with God's scripture, and were witnesses thereof. You shall not reverence humans, and reverence Me instead, and do not trade away My revelations for a cheap material gain. Those

who judge not according to God's revelations, they are the unbelievers.

[Quran 5:44]

Subsequently, we sent Jesus, the son of Mary, confirming the Torah. We gave him the Gospel, containing guidance and light, and confirming the Torah, and providing guidance and enlightenment for the righteous.

[Quran 5:46]

Then we sent down to you this scripture, containing the truth, and confirming the previous scriptures and consummating them....

[Quran 5:48]

QURAN'S TEACHING ON GOD & THE ANGELS

Note the plural tense in the above quoted verses: “*we sent Jesus,*” and “*we send down to you this scripture.*” Dr. Rashad Khalifa explains this (*QURAN: THE FINAL TESTAMENT*, Ibid., p. 656), “Whenever the first person plural form is used by the Almighty, it invariably indicates participation of other entities, such as the angels.”

According to the Quran, there was a time when only God existed, and nothing else. Then God created the angels to carry out certain functions where His physical presence is not required, or would be utterly devastating. For example, it is clearly pointed out that, although God is in full control of every atom in the universe, He is not physically present here on this earth:

When Moses came for an audience and his Lord spoke to him, he said, “My Lord, allow me to look at You; allow me to see You.” God said, “You will not see Me, but look at the mountain: if it stays in its place, then you can see Me.” Then, when his Lord manifested Himself to the mountain, He caused it to shatter, and Moses fell unconscious. When he came to, he said, “Be You glorified, I repent; I am the first believer.”

[Quran 7:143]

No place in our universe can stand the immense energy and power of the physical presence of God. Consequently, all affairs in this innermost universe are conducted by the angels, in accordance with God's plan and within His full control.

SATAN'S REBELLION

The Quran clearly states that the angels were all created with full freedom to serve God or refuse to do so. Of course, in refusing to serve Him, they would be going against the divine law of His absolute sovereignty.

Like all other laws, this divine law would not be demonstrated without at least one attempted violation. For example, if there is a law stipulating that you must stay in a room, this law will not be known unless you attempt to leave and are forced back. If you stay in the room, without ever trying to leave, there is no demonstration of the law.

One of the angels did choose to violate the law, and rebelled against God's absolute sovereignty. Satan, also known as Lucifer or Iblees, is reported in the Bible and Quran as being this angel who became infatuated with his God given powers. He was infatuated to the point of believing that he could be a god besides his Creator.

The Quran emphasizes that the universe would be utterly ruined if there were more than one God:

To God belongs everyone in the heavens and the earth. Those at Him are never too arrogant to serve Him, nor do they ever regret it. They glorify Him, night and day, without ever tiring. Have these found any other gods who can resurrect the dead from the earth? If the heavens and the earth had any other gods besides the one God, they would be ruined. God be glorified, He is the One with total authority, high above anything they describe. He is not to be asked about His actions, but everyone else must be asked. If they set up other gods, then say, "Show us your proof!"

[Quran 21:19-24]

EARTH AS SATAN'S DOMINION

God informed Satan that he was not capable of ruling as a god. The Quran tells us that God backed this up with a practical demonstration. When a statement like "you are not capable of ruling as a god" is made, the way to prove it is to allow the claimant to try being a god.

God told Satan that He would set up a temporary kingdom for him to rule, and thus demonstrate Satan's incompetence. In providing Satan with a dominion, it is quite obvious that God went out of His way to ridicule Satan's projected dominion in relation to His own. Thus, He created seven vast universes (see Chapter 8), and created in the innermost universe a billion trillion stars. One of the smaller stars in the smallest universe was surrounded by a dozen planets, one of them the planet Earth. It is on this insignificant speck in the smallest universe that Satan is to demonstrate his abilities as a god.

A successful god would rule over a 'perfect' kingdom: a kingdom where there are no diseases, no accidents, no misery; where all constituents enjoy perfect health, wealth, peace and happiness.

This is what God promises those who choose Him as their King:

It is not for you to be in search of what you are to eat or drink. Stop worrying. The unbelievers of this world are always running after these things. Your Father knows that you need such things. Seek out instead his kingship over you, and the rest will follow in turn.

[Luke 12:29-31]

God promises those who believe and lead a righteous life, that He will make them sovereigns on earth, as He did for those before them, and He will strengthen for them the religion He has prescribed for them, and He will substitute, in place of their worries, happiness and security. All this, if they worship Me alone, without setting up any idols besides Me....

[Quran 24:55]

Absolutely, God's allies have nothing to fear, nor will they grieve. They are those who believe and lead a righteous life. Their lot is happiness in this world, as well as in the Hereafter. This is God's inviolable law. Such is the greatest triumph.

[Quran 10:62-64]

The Bible, in Matthew, and even more clearly in Luke, demonstrates that Satan is the king of this world:

Then the devil took him (Jesus) up higher and showed him all the kingdoms of the world in a single instant. He said to him, "I will give you all this power and the glory of these kingdoms; the power has been given to me and I give it to whomever I wish. Prostrate yourself in homage before me, and it shall all be yours."

[Luke 4:5-7]

THE HUMAN'S ROLE

But what about the constituents of Satan's minute kingdom? How did we end up here?

Rashad Khalifa explained the whole issue in the introduction to his final translation of the Quran (projected publication date 1991):

It all began billions of years ago when one of God's high-ranking creatures, Satan, developed a supercilious idea that he could run a dominion as an independent god besides God. This challenge to God's absolute authority was not only blasphemous, it was also erroneous. Satan was ignorant of the fact that God alone possesses the ability to be a god, and that there is much more to godhood than he realized. It was the ego—arrogance augmented by ignorance—that led Satan to believe that he could take care of a dominion, as a god, and run it without disease, misery, war, accidents, and chaos. The vast majority of God's creatures disagreed with Satan. Yet, the minute egotistic minority that agreed with him to various extents were in the billions. Thus, a profound dispute erupted within the Heavenly Community (38:69). The rebels' unjustifiable challenge to God's absolute authority was met and resolved in the most efficient manner. After giving the rebels sufficient chances to renounce their crime and submit to Him, God decided to exile the hard core rebels on a space ship called Earth, and give them yet another chance to redeem themselves.... Those who agreed with Satan...were given a chance to kill their egos and submit to God's absolute authority. While the vast majority of the guilty creatures took advantage of this opportunity, a minuscule minority consisting of about 150 billion creatures failed to take advantage of this offer (33:72).

We are among those who did not take advantage of that offer to submit. Khalifa goes on to describe the division of all of God's creatures into four classifications as a result of this feud.

The angels are those creatures who never questioned God's absolute authority. This group makes up the vast majority. The Quran tells us that the size of this group is so great that only God knows their number (74:31).

The next category are those creatures who accepted God's offer to submit and return to His dominion. They chose to renounce free will, kill their egos and come to this world in a submissive role:

We have offered the responsibility (freedom of choice) to the heavens and the earth, and the mountains, but they refused to bear it, and were afraid of it. But the human being accepted it; he was transgressing, ignorant.

[Quran 33:72]

All creatures within our universe, except humans and their jinn companions, fall into this category. This also includes humans who die as children, or are retarded and obviously unable to exercise free will. These beings are redeemed back into God's eternal kingdom by their acceptance of submissive roles.

The final two categories, humans and jinns, are interrelated. Dr. Khalifa gives so much valuable information on these two critical groups that I will again quote from him:

(3) The Humans

The hard-core rebels—humans and jinns—refused to denounce their crime, and opted for witnessing a demonstration of Satan's claim. These egotistic creatures who failed to submit to God's absolute authority, even when offered a chance to do so, were divided in half. The half that were less convinced of Satan's point of view became classified as humans. Although they harbored doubts about Satan's claim, they failed to make a firm stand regarding God's

absolute authority. It is the ego that prevented these creatures from appreciating God's omnipotence, it is the ego that prevented them from submitting when such an opportunity was offered to them (33:72), and it is the ego that stands between most of us and redemption to God's kingdom (25:43). This is why "Kill your ego" is one of the first commandments in the Quran (2:54).

(4) The Jinns

The other half of the guilty creatures, those who leaned closer to Satan's point of view and exhibited the biggest egos, became classified as jinns. It was God's plan to assign one jinn to every human being from birth to death. The jinn companion represents Satan and constantly promotes his point of view (50:23, 27). Both the jinns and the humans are given a precious chance in this world to re-educate themselves, denounce their egoism and redeem themselves by submitting to God's absolute authority. Whenever a human being is born, a jinn is born and is assigned to the new human. We learn from the Quran that the jinns are Satan's descendants (7:27, 18:50). When a jinn being is born and assigned to a human being, the jinn remains a constant companion of the human until the human dies. The jinn is then freed, and lives on for a few centuries. Both humans and jinns are required to worship God alone (51:56).

CHILDREN OF GOD vs CHILDREN OF SATAN

The scriptures divide the human race into two groups: children of God and children of Satan. Those who do the will of God and follow His commandments are consistently called sons or children of God. Those who use their free will to avoid God and His commandments are siding with the devil; they are his children.

A complete picture of these groups emerges when we review the scriptures. Early in the Book of Genesis we note that the human soul emanated from God Himself:

—the Lord God formed man out of the clay of the ground and blew into his nostrils the breath of life, and so man became a living being.

[Genesis 2:7]

As just quoted from R. Khalifa, according to the Quran, humans are all descendants of Adam, each with a soul coming from God. Everytime one of these descendants of Adam is born, a descendant of Satan is also born. The 'newborn' descendant of Satan is attached to the newborn human and becomes a lifelong companion. So, every human has a piece of God (the soul) and a piece of Satan (the companion) within him.

Though it may sound new, this concept is not foreign to the Judeo-Christian framework. The traditional cartoon character caught between his angelic conscience sitting on his right shoulder and his satanic lust on his left is familiar to us all.

Haven't we all done something so alien to our own values and goals that we can't believe that it came from us?

This concept is also closely paralleled in the *Manual of Discipline*, one of the Dead Sea Scrolls. The following is quoted from Theodor H. Gaster's compilation and translation of the scrolls (*THE DEAD SEA SCRIPTURES*, Third edition, 1976, pp. 48-49). The *Manual of Discipline* laid down the rules for all the members of an esoteric Jewish community in existence at the time of Christ's birth and has this to say about the two representatives:

...God created man to rule the world, and appointed for him two spirits after whose direction he was to walk until the final Inquisition. They are the spirits of truth and of perversity.

The origin of truth lies in the Fountain of Light, and that of perversity in the Wellspring of Darkness. All who practice righteousness are under the domination of the Prince of Lights, and walk in ways of light; whereas all who practice perversity are under the domination of the Angel of Darkness and walk in ways of darkness. Through the Angel of Darkness, however, even those who practice righteousness are made liable to error. All their sin and their iniquities, all their guilt and their deeds of transgression are the result of his domination; and this, by God's inscrutable design, will continue until the time appointed by Him.

According to the Quran, throughout the life of every human being, Satan's representative, the jinn, does his job of trying to convince the human soul, i.e., the real person, that God's commandments need not be followed. This is precisely what the Bible tells us Adam and Satan went through; Satan duped Adam and Eve into breaking God's law, as symbolized by the forbidden tree:

...The serpent asked the woman, "Did God really tell you not to eat from any of the trees in the garden?" The woman answered the serpent: "We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden; it is only about the fruit of the tree in the middle of the garden that God said, 'You shall not eat it or even touch it, lest you die.' " But the serpent said to the woman: "You certainly will not die! No, God knows well that the moment you eat of it you will be like gods who know what is good and what is bad." The woman saw that the tree was good for food, pleasing to the eyes, and desirable for gaining wisdom. So she took some of its fruit and ate it; and she also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it. Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized that they were naked;

[Genesis 3:1-7]

This concept of our satanic jinn companion is new, and perhaps strange for many. However, it clarifies an otherwise puzzling passage in the Book of Matthew. When Jesus started to prepare his disciples for his impending crucifixion, Peter protested that Jesus might be spared. Jesus reacted strongly:

Jesus turned on Peter and said, "Get out of my sight, you satan! You are trying to make me trip and fall. You are not judging by God's standards but by man's."

[Matthew 16:23]

We are constantly dealing with our satanic companion who is trying to influence us to follow Satan's urgings rather than God's commandments. The scriptures clearly state that those of us who follow Satan's urgings are children of Satan, while those who follow God's commandments are God's children. Following God's commandments results in the growth and development of the godly entity, the real human person (the soul). Thus, any human being, whether perceived by this person or not, is either a child of God, or a child of the devil, depending on which entity has grown and developed. This is exactly what Jesus taught:

They cried, "We are no illegitimate breed! We have but one father and that is God himself." Jesus answered: "Were God your father you would love me, for I came forth from God, and am here. I did not come of my own will; it was he who sent me. Why do you not understand what I say? It is because you cannot bear to hear my word. The father you spring from is the devil, and willingly you carry out his wishes...."

[John 8:41-44]

So here we have it—the reason for our existence: We are here to try to kill our egos, convert our jinn companions, submit fully to God alone, and thus redeem ourselves back into His kingdom.

HOW DO WE GET BACK?

What exactly do we need to do to redeem ourselves back to God? Clearly, there is not just one path to follow:

Surely, those who believe, those who are Jewish, the Christians, the converts; anyone who (1) believes in God, and (2) believes in the Hereafter, and (3) leads a righteous life, will receive their recompense from their Lord; they have nothing to fear, nor will they grieve.

[Quran 2:62 & 5:69]

The issue is not what you call yourself—Jew, Christian, Buddhist, Muslim, etc. The issue is devotion to God alone, of worshiping God as Jesus and all of God's messengers taught:

"...You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength."

[Mark 12:30]

This automatically precludes associating anything with God—and this is the difficult thing for human beings. We are idolatrous by nature. That is why we are here in the first place. If we did not have the tendency to associate idols with God we would have stood solidly with Him in the heavenly feud instead of leaning toward Satan's point of view.

GOD'S HELP

The Quran tells us that, in spite of our continued rebellion, God, in His great mercy, gave us the natural instinct to worship Him alone before we were sent to this testing ground:

Recall that your Lord summoned all the descendants of Adam, and had them bear witness for themselves: "Am I not your Lord?" They all said, "Yes. We bear witness." Thus, you cannot say on the Day of Resurrection, "We were not aware of this." Nor can you say, "It was our parents who practiced idolatry, and we simply followed in their footsteps. Will You punish us for the sins of the innovators?" We thus explain the revelations, to enable them to return.

[Quran 7:172-174]

Besides this, God has sent prophets and messengers again and again to warn the people and deliver good news to those who do devote themselves totally to God. Whenever the message has been corrupted beyond recognition, it has been renewed. The Quran is such a renewal. It is the final scripture. Perhaps that is why it is guarded by its miraculous numerical code.

We know that all the prophets and messengers brought one and the same message: Worship God alone. Following this message is not always easy. We must fight against Satan, and his descendants—one of whom is our own constant companion. We must fight against our own egos.

We must convert our companion to God's point of view. And we must kill our own ego. Essentially, we must diminish the power of the piece of Satan within us (which is our companion) and we must increase the power of the piece of God within us (our soul).

How do we cause our souls to grow? We must obey God's commands and do righteous works. All faiths have their own rituals, but God gave mankind a specific set of especially powerful practices through the father of monotheistic religion, Abraham. To some degree or another these practices still survive in Judaism, Christianity and Islam. The Quran talks about each of these practices.

ABRAHAM'S RELIGION

The most important practice is the contact prayers. These prayers are a specific set of words and motions to be performed five times a day at specific times. The words are simple, and turn out to be also mathematically composed. In fact, all aspects of the prayer are tied to the code, from the number of prayers recited, to the words themselves, and the number of units in each prayer. Though each prayer takes only a few minutes, it brings the soul into actual contact with God, and causes enormous growth.

The universal nature of this practice is seen in the fact that the prayers of the Samaritan Jews are almost identical to those discussed in the Quran, though said in Hebrew rather

than Arabic. Among Christians the words have been lost, but the motions of a priest giving the Mass are almost the same as those of the contact prayer. Before the contact prayer is performed, the worshiper performs a symbolic ablution. This practice is also a common one, and may be the origin of the practice of baptism.

The second practice given through Abraham is a purification charity. Two and one-half percent of one's net income must be given to the poor on the day it is received. The recipients begin with one's own parents and family. If the family is not in need, the charity goes to orphans, the traveling alien and the poor, in that order. This charity is the right of the recipients, and is given to purify one's income. Of course, charity is also an integral part of all faiths.

The third practice given to Abraham is fasting during a specified month of the year. The fast is observed from the earliest light of dawn to sunset. Nothing is taken into the body during this time period (except in health emergencies). In what are probably modified observances of this same practice, Jews observe a complete fast for twenty-four hours on the Day of Atonement. Christians have modified this to a forsaking of a special food during Lent, though some denominations still do observe fasts, and others do not observe either fasts or giving up foods at Lent.

The last practice is to go on a pilgrimage once in one's lifetime, if one is able, to commemorate Abraham's submission to God, and God's redemption of him and his son.

These simple but powerful practices nourish the soul greatly. We cannot picture the degree of that nourishment, but God tells us that just the charity alone is like "*a grain that produces seven spikes, with a hundred grains in each spike.*" (Quran 2:261) In other words, we are rewarded for our charities an equivalent of seven hundred times what we give.

HEAVEN AND HELL

The Quran tells us very clearly that the descriptions of heaven and hell in the scriptures are allegorical (47:15 and 2:24-26). If the soul is strong, it can withstand the immense energy and power of God, and being in His presence is heaven. For weak souls, being in the presence of God is painful, and they will run as far away from God as possible to escape that pain. Separation from God is hell.

Thus we see that each of us determines our own position. God does not put anyone in hell; they run there to escape the greater pain of being in God's presence. This stratification of souls in the Hereafter is mentioned in the Bible:

...Whoever breaks the least significant of these commands and teaches others to do so shall be called least in the kingdom of God. Whoever fulfills and teaches these commands shall be great in the kingdom of God.

[Matthew 5:19]

Then they who fear the Lord spoke with one another, and the Lord listened attentively; and a record book was written before him of those who fear the Lord and trust in his name. And they shall be mine, says the Lord of hosts, my own special possession, on the day I take action. And I will have compassion on them as a man has compassion on his son who serves him. Then you will again see the distinction between the just and the wicked; between him who serves God, and him who does not serve him.

[Malachi 3:16-18]

CONCLUSION

Now, with our added knowledge from the Quran, we realize that any who do not serve God alone are enslaved by Satan.

Our existence is not a simple matter. We are here in this life as a final chance to renounce all forms of idolatry, to return to the pristine worship of God alone—to love God with all our heart, all our soul, all our mind, all our strength. If we are not successful, we will be doomed by our lack of growth to exile from God—to hell. If we are successful, then the following good news is for us:

You have no idea how much joy and happiness are waiting for you as a reward for your (righteous) works.

[Quran 32:17]