The Sources of Islam and the Quran

1. The Bible

On reading the Quran, any believer or regular reader of the Bible will find a close resemblance on a number of matters. These resemblances are often brief and often hamper the message that the Bible seeks to convey. There is a strong feeling that the Quran, for its own understanding, requires a Bible as a commentary or as a complimentary aid. Why is this true? The answer is quite simple. All the best teaching in the Quran and all the useful instructions – whether stories of the Prophet or accounts of what was happening in ancient times – are based on the Bible itself. It is the opinion of both Islamic scholars and Biblical scholars that about two thirds of Quranic statements are based on the Bible.

Sometimes there has been some modification and sometimes there is a distortion of the original Biblical material. Muhammad's contemporaries felt this strongly. Sura 25:4-5 relates that many Arabs and Jews in Medina mocked Muhammad, *"But those who scoff say, 'This is nothing but a lie which he invented while other people assisted him'. Thus they have done an injustice and set forth a falsehood and they say,'These are the myths of the ancients which he has written down and they are dictated to him morning and evening'."*

Quranic commentators suggest that one of the people who assisted Muhammad was Jabareth. There were several other possible candidates for the task. It is also said that there were two 'Roman' slaves who used to read the book – i.e. The Bible – and Muhammad took a great interest in listening. ['Rum' was the name of the Byzantine Empire based in Constantinople.]

There is another tradition that Muhammad had a Christian slave by the name of Bah'lam who assisted him in understanding Christian teaching. When the Meccans accused Muhammad of such things, Muhammad said that there were, of course, similarities because the Scriptures of the Jews and the Christians and the Quran are based on the same heavenly tablet.

So there are some similarities between the Bible and the Quran, but there are many differences. The obvious conclusion is that Muhammad never read the Bible for himself. If you read Suras 34, 43, 6, 156, 42 and 52 you will see that Muhammad learned many stories found in the Bible and also some from the Talmud.

The Quran claims it is a direct revelation from Allah via Gabriel (Jibril in Arabic) to Muhammad. Allah alone is thought to be the source of the Quran with no human source at all. See Sura 26:192, *"This is a revelation from the Lord of all worlds"*. See also Sura 46:2 and 7, *"The revelation of the Book is from God, the mighty, the wise … and when our clear signs are recited to them, scoffers say, when it comes to them, 'This is an obvious enchantment!' ".* Sura 10: 37 says, *"And this Quran is not something that could be manufactured without God, rather it is a confirmation of what preceded it and a fuller explanation of Scripture in which there is nothing dubious …."*

In fact, a good proportion of the tenets and doctrines of Islam can be traced to other faith or sources that preceded Islam.

2. The Practices and Beliefs of the Arabs at the time of Muhammad that are retained in Islam

- **The Name and Faith of the Religion of Abraham**

Abraham was the father of Isaac from whom Jews derive their origins, while Arabs believe themselves to be the descendants of Ishmael. Nabaioth, the son of Ishmael, (Gen. 25:13) is considered to be the ancestor of the Nabateans who built Petra.

Many of the ideas and customs that were prevalent in pre-Islamic Arabia were retained by Muhammad.

The eternal nature of the Quran was denied by the Mutazilis – an 8th century theological Islamic school. They taught that the Quran was created. They also taught that human free-will was a rational depiction of good and evil and the harmony between human reason and revelation.

So to many Muslims, Muhammad borrowed the faith and practices of Islam from a number of sources. As you know, Islam consists of six fundamental beliefs. Five of these are mentioned in Sura 4:136*, "Believers, believe in God and God's messengers and the Book that God has sent down to his messengers and the Book that God sent down before. And whoever repudiates God and God's angels, books, messengers, and the last day has already gone astray."*

So the unity of God in one God was not anything new to the Arabs. It has been found amongst other Semitic peoples in the Near East that a unique God was worshipped long before, but with idol worship slowly replacing it. So Muslims are allowed to learn from the Torah (Old Testament).

The north and west of the Arabian Peninsula was occupied by the descendants of Shem, the eldest son of Noah. His descendants are known as Semitic people. The people of South West Arabia (Yemen) and the area around Aden are the descendants of Joktan. Even today Yemenis claim that Joktan was their forefather. On the Gulf side, some Arabs think they are descended from Hadad the grandson of Abraham – the son of Ishmael. (Gen. 25:15) In Northern Arabia there are the children of Abraham's second wife after Sarah's death – Zimran, Jokshan, Medan, Midian, Isbak and Shuah. These are ancestors of a number of tribes in the north of the Arabian Peninsula. (Gen. 25:1-5)

But the children of Shem had lost much of the purity of the faith in one true God. They mixed with other nomadic tribes of the northern Near East who had largely forgotten the unity of God (except the Jews). But in the Arabian Peninsula there was a certain retention of the unity of God.

- **In the Muslim creed there are three basic elements**
  - ✓ monotheism
  - ✓ the reality of the Last Day
  - ✓ the apostleship of Muhammad

Much of the Quran refers to aspects of the first two of these. The apostleship of Muhammad was added on later – so prophethood, prophecy, angels and *'wahij'* (inspiration) – particularly the divine inspiration of the Torah (Old Testament), the Injil (New Testament) and the Quran. The implication is that periodically God reveals His will in order to provide information to guide human affairs and to lead to a happy afterlife. These are the main elements of the foundations of Islam together with the *'Risalah'* (the message – treatise) which is oral or written – often written as rhyme or rhythmic prose. The Quran is really a *'Rasail'* (plural of *Risalah*).

Some Arab tribes at the time of Muhammad denied the future life after death as well as the fact that there was no creator. Other Arab tribes admitted both. So Muhammad's role was really to restore and affirm what already existed among his own people.

If we accept the Abrahamic descent of the Arabs which is difficult to prove, then their ancient faith would be similar to that of Abraham. The Bible tells us that the concept of there being only one God and also the rite of circumcision was present in Abraham's time (Gen. 17:1-14).

But in the Bible there is no mention of Mecca, the Ka'aba and the need to rotate around it, the Black Stone and the other holy places of Islam. Nor can there be any doubt that these things were the gradual creation of idol worshippers and had no connection at all with the faith and example of 'father Abraham'.

Whatever the base may be, in the time of the emergence of 'Muhammadanism' there was perhaps a faint knowledge that Allah (the one True and only God of the Bible) existed, but he was at the bottom of a pile of the prevalent pagan creeds and belief systems. Even so, the belief in there being only one God was being practised in Arabia prior to Muhammad.

So in Muhammad's time, monotheism was known among the Arabs, but there was also a multitude of lesser gods/goddesses that were represented by idols. But above and beyond them all was the old memory of one great creator God who still sustains and directs all things.

3. The Unity of Allah – the Only God

Allah was the chief supreme deity in an Arab pantheon of inferior, subordinate deities that were worshipped only in the hope that they would intercede on their behalf to Allah. "Allah" is frequently used in pre-Islamic Arab literature and poetry. It is a changed form of the Hebrew "Elohim" that is usually translated in the early chapters of Genesis. It is used nine times in Genesis 2 and seven times in Genesis 3.

There was a group of Arabs living in Arabia at the time called the Hanifs (one who is utterly upright in all of his/her affairs). Abraham was called a 'Hanif' because of his pure monotheism, his sincerity and his complete submission and obedience to God. It is also used of those who rejected all forms of polytheism. They kept some of their old Arab customs and they thought they were following the faith of Abraham. In his early adult life Muhammad was friendly with a number of Hanifs before he claimed to be a prophet. There were four Hanifs in Mecca at the time, one of whom became a Christian. Another became a Muslim and a third joined Al Khidr who was some sort of spiritual guide (see the Quran 18:65-82). A fourth, Waraqah ibn Nawful ibn Asad, was a Christian cousin of Muhammad's first wife Khadijah. He went yearly to a cave near Mecca to worship God and he had a great influence on Muhammad who used to visit the same place for quiet contemplations.

4. Judaism

In addition to all this, the unity of God derived great significance through Muhammad's contact with Judaism. Many affluent Jewish tribes were found in the area around a town called Yathrib, north east of Mecca. These Jews were religious, influential and relatively rich through trading. Yathrib was later called Medina – the city of the Prophet – *Madinat al-nabi*. The Jews were numerous and powerful in many areas in Arabia. Muhammad sought to convert them to Islam, but didn't succeed. Later he fought them and even banished them from the country.

But in the meantime, he took much of his teachings from their books and scrolls – the Talmud – and their commentaries. One example is the first direction of prayer – the Qiblah was facing towards Jerusalem (Al Quds).

5. Christianity

The Bishop of Najran in Yemen had a great influence on Muhammad. The Sabaeans were great traders with a thriving trade to India and down the east coast of Africa. They dammed mountain streams and terraced the hillsides and developed their agriculture. In Roman times their chief export was frankincense. Muhammad listened to this Bishop and appealed to him for all the evidence that there was only one God.

There was also a Christian Kingdom in the Hira (near to Persia and not so far from the Euphrates). In Egypt there were the Monophysite Copts. In the west of Arabia (South Jordan) there was a tribe called the Ghassanids who were Greek Orthodox. In central Arabia there was a Christian tribe of Kinda. So the pagan Arab tribes were surrounded by monotheistic peoples. So a correct knowledge of Christianity in all its various forms was at Muhammad's disposal. Some tribes, such as the Kinda, had become Christian and most were greatly influenced by Judaism.

6. Zoroastrian faith in Persia

This faith was widespread in Persia. It too had an impact on Islam. Persia covered a wider area than today's Iran. They had sophisticated systems of irrigation. They were great metal workers – much superior to the Romans. The country was ruled by Parthians for several centuries but they were succeeded in 226 A.D. by the Sassanids. They too were devoted to Zoroastrianism, but tolerated Judaism. They had a strong, centralised administration. In Persia itself there were lots of Nestorian Christians, Jews and Buddhists. All could worship freely. Out of this mixture came a new religion Manichaeism that spread widely. So developing 'new religions' wasn't uncommon in the area.

The Quran and history appear to give the impression that Muhammad had friendly relations with the Jews at first in Medina with many confirmatory verses in the Quran. After all, it was the Jewish leaders from Yathrib who came to Muhammad and asked him to negotiate water distribution rights

with the three Jewish tribes living in and around Yathrib. There were also pagan tribes using the same wells. So gradually the persecuted early followers of Muhammad emigrated to Yathrib.

Finally there was the Hijrah. It wasn't a panicky flight. Small groups of Meccan Muslims moved to Yathrib. In the end they were joined by Muhammad and his family and Abu Bakr al-Saddiq – the father of Muhammad's wife Aisha and the person who led the Muslim community on Muhammad's death.

It was in Yathrib (Medina) that Muhammad was able to organise his followers into a "nation" (Ummah) which is a fundamental concept in Islam expressing unity and equality (in theory) of all Muslims from diverse cultural and geographical settings.

But in the Quran, there are many anti-Jewish verses that Muhammad never repudiated nor did he deny their authority. [This is one of the causes of the antagonism of the Muslim World towards the Jewish State of Israel.] But Muhammad also said (proclaimed!) that he never had any intention of founding a new religion. He affirmed that his mission was to exhort the people of Arabia to the purity of the faith of Abraham, of Noah, of Moses, of Jesus and the faith of the Hanifs.

Muslim scholars are of the opinion that out of the 99 names of Allah, about 75 have been borrowed from the Zoroastrian's holy book and the remaining 24 were borrowed from Judaism.

7. The Belief in Angels, Jinn and Afarit (plural of Ifrit) – Demons

This is where much "Folk Islam" is derived. Many of these "beings" were taken from the Jews. Angels are common in many books of the Old and New Testaments. The Sabaeans (in Yemen) also had a culture where their lives were shaped by the stars and the moon. Some of these beliefs were taken from the Zoroastrians. The concept of holy books was derived from the Sabaeans and also from Jewish and Christian sources. The concept of "prophets" is also indebted to the Bible. The idea of judgement to come after the final resurrection of the dead is taken from the New Testament not from hearsay. The pictures of heaven and hell come from Judaism and a few from Zoroastrianism. Some things like Purgatory are taken from a book called, 'The Testament of Abraham', put together over 1000 years after his death and the Jewish Talmud together with the Zoroastrian Avatar.

It is worth remembering at this point that the Devil:

- ✓ lies – Jn. 8:41
- ✓ tempts – Mt. 4:1
- ✓ harasses – 2 Cor. 12:7
- ✓ hinders – 1 Thess. 2:18
- ✓ sifts – Lk. 22:31
- ✓ accuses – Zech. 8:1
- ✓ binds with disease – Lk. 13:16
- ✓ kills – Jn. 8:44
- ✓ deceives – 2 Cor. 11:3
- ✓ leads astray – 2 Cor. 11:3
- ✓ devours – 1 Pet. 5:8
- ✓ snatches away the Word of God – Mt. 13:19
- ✓ tests us – Job 1:6-12
- ✓ blinds our minds – 2 Cor. 4:4
- ✓ flees – James 4:7 (Basically he is a coward and he knows he is defeated.)

8. The Origins of Some Islamic Practices

- **The Shahada**

This is the recitation of the Islamic witness of faith, *"There is no God but God and Muhammad is the messenger of God."* Saying this Shahada (witness) is accepted as a declaration that you are Muslim. The first part is similar to the Jewish Shamma, **"Hear, O Israel, the Lord your God is One Lord!"** The witness of the prophethood of Muhammad is clearly taken from the teaching of the Lord Jesus in the Gospel which Muhammad applied to himself.

- **Muslim Prayer**

The direction to pray five times a day is from the Talmud, but the timing of the prayers is borrowed from the Sabaeans. The postures are Jewish.

- **Fasting in the month of Ramadan**

The origin is a composite one. It was on the first day of Ashura – the 10th day of the Muslim month of Muharram (the first month of the Islamic lunar calendar). It is a fast in remembrance of the Day of Atonement. The 30 days were adopted from the Sabaeans.

- **Giving of Alms**

This practice, known as *Zakah,* comes from Jewish traditions.

9. "Heathen" practices of Pre-Islamic Arabs that were retained by Islam

These include family restrictions in marriages and the Hajj to the Ka'aba in Mecca with its various practices. Many of these were reinterpreted as being a re-enactment of events in the lives of Abraham, Hagar and Ishmael. One example is the running back-and-forth seven times between two small "hills" (now incorporated into the Grand Mosque in Mecca). This is said to be in imitation of Hagar's search for water to give to Ishmael (Gen. 21:14-19). The nearby well of Zamzam is believed to have appeared miraculously to save them both from death. The throwing of seven stones at a pillar of stone is a representation of Abraham's rejection of Satan's temptation to disobey God's command to sacrifice his son, Ishmael. (Gen. 22:1-2 says it was Isaac.) Then everyone eats a sheep as a sacrifice in memory of the fact that God accepted such a sacrifice in the place of Ishmael/Isaac.

All Muslim families have this sacrificial meal worldwide on the same day each year during *Id-al-Adha*. In some countries it is known as Greater Bayram on the 10th day of the month of *Dhu al-Hijjah* – the month of pilgrimage. The feast usually last for three days and includes the distribution of gifts and sweets as well as receiving and visiting the extended family and close neighbours.

After being in Mecca, pilgrims return to the valley of Mina – often several times. Properly performed, the Hajj absolves the pilgrim from all his/her previous sins. But it must be performed with sincere intention (*niyyah*). Intention is defined simply as someone intending to perform the activity he or she is performing as opposed to doing it accidentally. So it is with the intention of coming closer to God. Some other practices on the pilgrimage to Mecca have pre-Islamic pagan roots – customs from the 'Time of Ignorance'.

So Muhammad was trying to convert his people from the idolatry in Mecca to the faith of Abraham. At that time the Arabs had no religious writings, so it was very difficult to persuade the Meccans of their idolatry to many idols – both male and female – that were kept in the Ka'aba. Muslims believe the Ka'aba was built by Abraham and Ishmael. These idols were paraded around Mecca from time to time drawing large crowds from various parts of Arabia. All this helped the economy of Mecca! The Ka'aba contains the "Black Stone" which the pilgrims try to touch at least once as they go round the Ka'aba believing that it physically absorbs all their sins. If you watch this event on television you will see a door in the Ka'aba that is always kept open. This is to remind pilgrims that the idols have gone.

10. The Jews – another contributing source in the development of Islam

They were numerous in Arabia at the time of Muhammad. Among their chief tribes were the Beni Nuhaner, the Beni Korasa and the Nabier. Each tribe had a village or small town near Yathrib.

When it became clear to Muhammad that the Jews would never recognise him as a prophet, he and the Muslims who had left Mecca fought several serious battles against them, but not without difficulty. Muhammad took them prisoner and killed them with a sword or he expelled them from the area.

Most of these Jews were not as well versed in the Law as other Jewish communities in the Fertile Crescent, yet they carefully possessed and preserved the Torah and the Psalms etc. and were called, by the pagan Arabs, "The People of the Book". Later this was a title given to Christians as well. Though most of them knew little Hebrew, they were familiar with the stories of the Talmud and other stories that had come down from their ancestors.

So these Medina Jews, being often ignorant of their own sacred books, still regarded them as divine in origin. The ignorant Arabs looked up to their Jewish neighbours with respect as being the seed of Abraham and possessors of the Word of God – the Torah. So when Muhammad turned away from idolatry as hateful, to worship the only true God seeking to bring back his people to the one and only true God and to the faith of Abraham, he tried to learn all he could about Judaism – the customs and obligations of the Jewish faith. Muhammad made Jerusalem the direction of prayer – the *Qiblah* for all Muslims was also the direction of Jews as they prayed. There are few ruined mosques that have two *Qiblahs* – one towards Mecca and the other towards Jerusalem. If you compare Islam and Orthodox Judaism, you find a great deal of similarity between the two religions. The Quran witnesses throughout to the faith of Abraham and to the truth of Judaism and the heavenly origin of the Old Testament.

The Hadith is a report of the words/deeds of Muhammad and other early Muslims and is considered an authoritative source of 'revelations' second only to the Quran. There are various collections of Hadith. Perhaps the most authoritative collection for the Sunni is Al Bukhari's. The Shia have their own Hadith accepting as valid and authoritative reports from descendants of Muhammad through Ali and Fatima.

If we compare the details of the Quran with the Talmud, it becomes evident that the Quran speaks of Abraham and many others in the Torah. Some of the "wilder" Jewish stories are taken from tradition outside the Torah. As an example, there is the story in the Quran of Cain and Abel. Abel was murdered by Cain. Their parents, Adam and Eve, were weeping. Then a raven came and showed them how to bury the dead. This story has been told in a variety of ways by the Jews. One of their traditions says, **"He who has killed a Jew is as if he had killed everyone and he who saves a single Jew, it is as if he had saved the whole world."**

Compare this with Sura 5:35, *"Believers, be conscious of God and seek the way to God and struggle for the sake of God that you may thrive."* Clearly there is overlap with Bible-based traditions. See Gen. 15:7, ***"He also said to him*** (Abraham), ***'I am the Lord, who brought you out of Ur of the Chaldees to give you this land to take possession of it."*** "Ur" means fire or light. Jewish communities referred to the Babylonish translation of the Chaldean word "Ur" meaning a firing oven.

Another Biblical story in the Quran is the visit of the Queen of Sheba (Yemen) and the uncovering of her legs as she walked before Solomon over a glass floor which she took to be a sheet of shallow water. This was taken from Jewish tradition and incorporated into the Quran (Sura 27:17-44)

Another example is the story of the two evil spirits – Harut and Marut – in Sura 2:96 and other evil spirits sent to tempt mankind. We read, *"You will find them, indeed, the most eager people for life, even more than the atheists. Each of them wishes he could live a thousand years, but to be granted long life would not distance him from retribution, for God sees what they do"*.

In Jewish sources Harut and Marut are named as Al-Alel and As-Asamjie. The two angels Harut and Marut were the two angels that lived on Mount Arafat – a hill outside Mecca. So some of the foolish stories of the Jews in Arabia have been incorporated into Islam.

The Quran says (sura 2:60), *"When Moses sought water for his people, we said, 'Strike the earth with your staff' and twelve springs flowed from it. Each tribe already knew its own watering place. Eat and drink of sustenance from God without becoming corrupt and doing evil on the earth."*
This is different from the account in Exodus 17:1-6!

So there were three distinct religions prevalent in the Arabian Peninsula at the time of Muhammad: The Sabaeans, the Jews and the Christians. Each of these helped to 'nurse' the birth of Islam. The Sabaeans brought to Islam the concept of the necessity of having a right relationship with God, truth, bravery, care of the poor and the avoidance of evil. They had to pray seven times a day – five of which were the same as those chosen by Muhammad. Sabaeans also prayed for the dead, but without prostration. They fasted 30 days from sunset to sunrise and observed feasts. They also venerated the Ka'aba. So we can see how some Sabean traditions are still practiced by Muslims.

There are many Arabic words that were originally Jewish words like Torah, *Jahannun* (Hell), *Jahiliyyah* (ignorance), *Furqan* (discrimination or proof). All are non-Arabic words in the Quran either Jewish or Chaldean in origin. Many Muslim commentators on the Quran have sought to find the roots of these words in Arabic. In their eagerness to find these they have often made mistakes and misled the readers.

11. The Idea of Seven Heavens and Seven Levels of Hell

These are similar to Persian Zoroastrian teaching or even Hinduism. The "lode-stone" of being above the waters in the Quran is similar to the Jewish concept in Gen. 1:2, ***"Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters".***

The Jews also spoke about the Prince of Hell – Satan (in Arabic *Shaytan* meaning 'adversary'). Satan is sometimes called *Iblis* – the disobedient angel cast out of heaven for disobeying God. The Quranic version is that it was *Iblis* who tempted Adam and Eve to disobey God. Molech (the god of fire) is also mentioned. In 2 Kings 23:10 we read that during a time of apostasy children were sacrificed to Molech.

12. Examples from Other Sources

Another link between the Bible and the Quran is the story of Noah. Sura 11:3 says, "They (those whose lands were flooded) said*, 'Noah you have argued with us and multiplied your arguments against us now bring us with what threatens us"* (i.e. the flood). See also Sura 23:27, *"So we inspired him* (Noah), *'Build the Ark under our oversight, according to our suggestion. Then, when the water sources overflow, lead mated pairs of every kind into the Ark along with your family, except those of them against whom pronouncement has been made before. And do not speak to me of those in the wrong, for they are going to be drowned."*

Some of the stories are taken from the Sabeans. The words, "Eat and drink until you can distinguish a black thread from a white one, then you can fulfil the fast" come from a Sabean tradition that you could distinguish between night and day by distinguishing a black thread from a white one. Muslims use the same method to determine when Ramadan has ended. Muslims should also pray five times a day – mainly in public. This is the same practice the Jews used. It is referred to in Mt. 6:5, ***"And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing up in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen of men. I tell you the truth; they have received their reward in full. But when you pray, do not keep babbling like the pagans for they think they will be heard because of their many words. Do not be like them for your Father knows what you need before you ask Him."*** This is followed by the Lord's Prayer.

Much of the practice of Islam is rooted in the practice of the Jews and early Christians and especially the Bible. The Quran repeatedly refers to the Torah and Injil as Scripture and as the Word of God. Yet there is only one quotation from the Bible in the Quran – Sura 21:105, *"And we recorded in the Psalms, after the Reminder, that my servants, people of integrity, will inherit the earth."* In Ps. 37:29 it says, ***"The righteous shall inherit the earth"*** and in Ps. 37:11, ***"But the meek will inherit the land and delight themselves in abundant peace."***

The Jews had the idea that all the books of the Old Testament were deposited in the Ark of the Covenant or on "the preserved tablet". When Muhammad heard this about the Jewish law, he imagined this should also be the case for his own Quran – it should be preserved on tablets. See Sura 85:21-22, *"But this is a glorious recital on a preserved tablet"*.

The origin of the calf clearly originates from the Jewish writing of Exodus 32 describing the Golden Calf. So it is obvious that many Jewish writings from the Old Testament formed one of the chief sources of the Quran .

13. Another Source of Islamic Information was Christian Apocryphal Writings

These writings were borrowed and incorporated into Islam. Different tribes in Arabia belonged to different heretical sects. These tribes had sought refuge in the desert from persecution in Roman-controlled land in the Fertile Crescent. This was when the Roman Empire was dominated by Greek Orthodoxy. These largely Bedouin peoples who understood little of their own Injil, imagined many fables. Muhammad gladly believed these some are found in the Quran. Here are a few examples:

- **The story of the seven sleepers** who slept in a cave for ages fearing persecution – Sura 28 This is a story from the period of the Roman Emperor Decius (249-251 A.D.) when Christians were terribly persecuted. Apparently seven men took refuge in a cave and fell asleep for 200 years! It is a story from a book of early Christian martyrs.
- **Stories about the Virgin Mary** are found in the Quran and the traditions. Mary's mother is called Hannah and there are stories of her childhood. Hannah was fed by angels and with supplies from God in the temple. Joseph was chosen by a miracle of a rod. Some of these stories are in the Proto-Evangels and in Egyptian/Coptic writings. Aaron's sister Miriam is confused with Mary the mother of the Lord Jesus.
- **The story of the Lord Jesus speaking in the cradle**. Muhammad may have heard this story from Mary, his Coptic concubine, as it is mentioned in Coptic books – perhaps also from the Gospel of Thomas.
- **There is also the story of Jesus, as a boy, breathing life into a clay bird** he had modelled and watching it fly away.
- **The story of the descent of the Table** (Al Maida) from heaven – perhaps the table of the Lord's Supper. See Sura 5:112, *"The apostle said, 'Jesus, son of Mary, can your Lord send down a feast from heaven?' He said, 'Be wary of God if you are believers'."* See also Sura 5:113-115.
- There is an allusion to Acts 10:9-16 – Jesus' promise of a prophet to come called "Ahmed". Sura 61:6 says, *"And Jesus, son of Mary, said, 'O children of Israel, I am God's messenger to you confirming the truth of the Torah before me, and heralding a messenger who will come after me. His name is Ahmed – most praiseworthy'."* This is a confusion with the coming of the Holy Spirit. Apparently there was a mistake in spelling (transmission) between *'periclatos'* and *'paracletos'*.
- There is also a myth that **the real Jesus did not die on the cross** but someone was made to look like him. Sura 4:157 says*, "… 'We killed the Messiah Jesus, son of Mary, messenger of God' whereas they did not kill him, they did not crucify him although it was made to seem thus to* them. As for *those who differ on this, they are certainly in doubt about it they have no knowledge about it, only following conjecture, but they surely did not kill him."*

  Much of this was derived from the heretical teaching of the Basilites.
- The tradition that Muhammad said **Jesus would descend again to live on earth** for 40 years, get married and have children etc.

  This complete imagination arose from a misunderstanding of Rev. 19:7-9 where it says, ***"The Marriage of the Lamb has come and His Bride has made herself ready …."*** and v. 9 ***"Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb."***

  In Sura 3:48 we read, *"And God will teach him Scripture and wisdom and the Torah and the Injil* (Gospel)*."* The context is about the death of the Lord Jesus. The assumption is that after his return to earth again, Jesus will die!
- The myth that Adam was created from a handful of earth was taken from the heretical writings of Marcion and also from Zoroastrian sources.

- The idea of the Bridge (Sirat) and the Balances and that there are seven heavens and houris (beautiful dark eyed companions of the faithful) who inhabit Paradise as well as the evil spirits from hell like Azazeal and other spirits, are all from Persian literature and from farther east.

All these sources are very misleading and purely of human origin. One good thing is that there is, in the Quran, a strong testimony to the Torah (Old Testament) and to the Injil (New Testament). So our Lord and Saviour Jesus the Messiah should be studied both in the Old Testament prophecies of what He would accomplish and in the New Testament. Our Lord Jesus, our Saviour, will fulfil all the true promises given to us by God the Father from our Fall in the Garden of Eden to the Second Coming of the Lord Jesus in great power and glory.