Chapter Five

Comparison of soul between Islam and other religions

A comparative study of soul between Islam and other religions reveals that soul is the most common element of life in a living being. According to Greeks soul is a spiritual substance. Being more practical, the Christians thought in the beginning that the soul of man was nothing but breath. According to Christianity the soul is called "the breath of God's nostril." Hinduism holds that the souls emanate from the Supreme Soul as sparks emanate from fire. But the "Holy Qur'an" has given the earliest definition of soul that the spirit is nothing but the command of Lord. All religions acknowledge that soul is a dynamic, moving and animating state of human being.

According to the "Qur'an", Allah created the 'First man' (Adam) out of dust and breathed into him the soul (nafs) or the spirit of life (ruh) and out of Adam's soul were created the souls of his descendants. This fact can be co-related with Christianity and in the old Testament of the "Holy Bible" it is stated that God formed Adam out of dust and breathed into his nostrils the life giving force. And the Adam became a living soul. The word Adam is surprisingly common to both Christianity and Islam. It is evident

in both religions that Adam was made by dust\(^3\), and when he has fashioned them Allah's spirit was breathed into Adam from out side. Now it goes to prove that source of soul is God which is common in both religions. Besides, a parallel has been drawn between Islam and Christianity that Jesus could speak when he was an infant of few days of age, which was a quite unnatural event for human being.

**Some Muslim Theologians divided the souls into three kinds**

1. **Ar-Ruhul Insani**, "The human spirit," by which the mind of man is understood.

2. **Ar-Ruhul Haiwani**, "the animal spirit" by which life is understood.

3. **Ar-Ruhul A'gam**, "the exalted spirit" that human spirit which is connected with the existence of God.\(^4\) The idea of such kinds of soul's are not found in Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism and Christianity also.

But Islamic concept of three kinds of souls have their parallels in the pious, damned and ordinary souls in Christianity. So parallels are seen between the two religions and philosophical thoughts with regard to the origin, kinds, nature and relation of soul to body and the world. But all religions believe in pious souls that attain salvation. Additionally in both systems, the evil souls will go to the Hell.

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The Neo-platonic thought was absorbed into Christianity in the concept of Holy-Trinity in the “The Bible” God-Father, God-Son (Christ or Logos) and the Holy-spirit. On the contrary, Islam rejects the trinity of God. Because this doctrine destructs the pure monotheism of Islam. The idea of trinity is not found in other religions also.

For Christianity God is certainly love and out there to receive and redeem the sinners of the sin. According to “Holy Bible” God is love, and love is God. God created this world out of love and the human beings should love each other and especially love their neighbours. Similarly, Islam also regards God as love, merciful and judge and due to love He has created this whole world and also due to love, He is cherishing and sustaining this entire world and does not annihilate this universe. So the “Holy Qur'an” expresses that Allah is All Merciful and All loving. This idea is found in Hinduism also.

It is evident from the comparative study of Islam and Christianity that ‘Old Testament’ is a common heritage for both. Islam and Christianity. Moreover, they believe in common monotheism, the doctrine of transcendence of God, revelation to prophets by God, the Day of judgement, the doctrine of Heaven and Hell and the bridge over the Hell etc. But there are not common idea in case of Hinduism, Buddhism and Jainism also.

Both Islam and Christianity are of the openion that Jesus could raise the deed, perhaps, for this reason, he is called “the spirit of God.”
Some vital differences are found in Islam and Christianity. The Christians admits Jesus as the son of God and his sonship of God is one of the Doctrines of Christianity. Of course this idea is not found in other religions. But Islam admits Jesus as the prophet (Messenger) of God, because the "Holy Qur'an" holds:

"Oh people of the book! Don’t. Exaggerate in your religion: nor say of Allah aught but the truth. Christ Jesus the son of Mary, was only a messenger of Allah, and His word which he conveyed to Mary, and a spirit from Him. So, believe in Allah and His messenger." 5

Now from the Qur’anic Verses two things are evident that Mary was the mother of Jesus and Jesus was the spirit of God, like Islam Christianity also acknowledges Mary as the mother of Jesus and Jesus as the spirit of God and this is one of the most important doctrines of Christianity. Here Islam has rejected the christian attitude, which raises Jesus to an equality with God. Besides! Islam interpretes the term "spirit of Allah," a spirit proceeding from Allah but not Allah: 6 his life and his mission were more limited than some other Messengers, but we must pay equal homage to him as a prophet of Allah. The doctrines of trinity, equality with God, and sonship, are repudiated as blasphemies. Allah is independent of all needs and has

6. Ibid., Note, 676.
no need of a son to manage his affairs. Truly speaking, Christ often watched and prayed, as a humble worshiper of Allah; and his agony in the Garden of Gethsemane was full of human attributes, dignity, suffering and self humiliation.

Both the religions proclaim that Jesus' mother, Mary was pure and virgin. In this connection the "Holy Qur'an" declares.

"And remember her who guarded her Chastity. Therefore, we breathed into her (something) of your spirit and we made her and her son a sign for all people."

But it is found that in some moral and ethical points Islam and other religions observe the same, such as to tell the truth, to behave with others courteously, to follow the straight path, not to deceive anybody, not to follow falsehood. All the religions show the path of salvation for soul.

Islam and Christianity believe that Jesus was not crucified rather, another similitude person was crucified instead of Jesus Christ and Jesus ascended into the heaven where he is still living. Additionally Islam holds that Jesus will come again to the world with his physical body from heaven and spread religion on earth.

There is also a difference between Islam and Christianity regarding the concept of God.

The Christian don’t regard Muhammad as a prophet of God. But it is observed that the religious vision and insight of Muhammad is quite de-
serving as a world leader for any religion of the world.

Both Islam and Christianity are missionary religions. But at a time both have used violence for propagating their religions. The Christians believe that the denial of the crucification of Jesus Christ means denial of the atonement of the sin of the sinners. This denial is equal to the denial of Christian way of salvation.7 It is found that Jesus did not say distinctly about the immortality of soul because he says that the soul can be destroyed by God if men insist in their evil doings.

Similarly, Islam also does not believe obviously in the immortality of soul. Because Islam holds that soul is a creature like other creatures of the world. So, being creature soul can not be immortal and eternal. Because it has beginning although it goes to prove that it is indestructible after being created. But according to Hinduism "Weapons can not cut it, nor can fire burn It: water can not drench It, nor can wind dry It."8

In Christianity, emphasis is given more on the Doctrine of Trinity, God father, God son (Jesus) and the Holy Ghost. But in Islam emphasis is given more on the doctrine of unity of God. Because, "there is no God but Allah is the first and fore most message of Islam and it is the real essence of Islam.

According to Hinduism, Buddhism and Christianity soul comes to the human birth over and over again according to his deeds. But in Islam emphasis is given more on the soul Hereafter. The soul comes to the human birth only for once and according to his deeds he will be rewarded. Islam believe in eschatology. After death man enters into spiritual world and then he will have to face the judgement day and other stages of hereafter.

In the light of tradition it is obvious that when the dead body is kept in grave the soul returns to the body and the angel of God asks him some questions related to his religion. If he can answer the questions properly then he would be blessed and got salvation, otherwise he would be being punished severely till the resurrection. It is noteworthy that pious soul would be automatically able to answer the questions aptly. However, this idea of grave is not found in the Christianity and other religions.

There is the idea of resurrection in Islam as the "Holy Qur'an" holds "The trumpet shall be sounded, when behold ! from the graves (men) will rush forth to their Lord ! They will say : "Ah ! Woe unto us ! Who has raised us up from our beds of repose ?" — This is what the Most Gracious had promised. And true was the word of the messengers !”

10. Al-Qur’an surat Yasin, Juz 23 verse 51, 52.
So, it goes to prove by Qur'anic verses that the deads will rise from their graves in the dooms day for judgement. But such vivid idea about resurrection is not found in Hinduism, Buddhism and Christianity.

Like Christianity it is in favour of the view that the existing world is continuously moving towards climatic and cataclysmic and after its hidden meanings will be completed and the world will come to an end then the dead will rise from their own graves. They will appear before Almighty God who will declare his final judgement on the deeds and misdeeds of man." 11

Hinduism, Buddhism and Christianity believe in a cycle of birth and death. On the other hand, Islam repudiates belief in a cycle of births and deaths, it puts man on trial once only; if he fails on this opportunity, he will not be given any further chance.

It is found in the records that Jesus was miraculously born of virgin Mary. 12 Moreover, he could speak in his infancy. It is stated in the Holy Qur'an also.

Regarding man, the christians subscribe to the old Testament view that God created man after his own image and hence, it is duty of man to strive for ethical holiness. Islam also holds the similar view in this occasion. 13

11. Chatterjee P.B. studies in comparative Religion, P 323
12. Ibid, P 309
13. Ibid, P 314
The Christians believe that Jesus Christ has sacrificed his life in the name of redemption of whole mankind so he will not be reborn or come back again to this world physically. But in contrast to this, Islam holds that Jesus has not been physically crucified, rather he has been lifted up to the sky by God where he with physical dimension will be living till he will come back to the world.

Islam has given illustrative and vivid description as regards the resurrection, accountable day, the day of judgement, Heaven and Hell etc. These are the spiritual stages in the world Hereafter. Immediately after death one after another stage commences for the soul. Qur'an recommends that in all stages the pious soul will be successful and rewarded whereas as the evil doer soul will be unsuccessful and punished. On the contrary, in other religions we have not found such illustrative description about aforesaid subjects.

In the Islamic theories about salvation of soul have their parallels in other religions also. Some mystics of the different period have taught that man can obtain salvation of soul from his own strength by dint of his knowledge. On the other hand, the Christian churches have always maintained the standpoint that man can be rescued and saved by only God's mercy. In this connection, we see the parallels between Islam and other religions regarding the doctrine of grace. Islam reports that without God grace we can do nothing, so, every while and every where God grace is essential.
Moreover God is Almighty, most Gracious, so, man can be saved by God grace.

The Christianity holds that salvation of soul is the deliverance of mankind from the sin which specially denotes the disobedience to God of first man Adam and Eve. In contrast to this, Islam holds that salvation of soul is the deliverance of the individual being. Furthermore, the Christians observe that by and large, salvation of soul has been made possible only by a free act of divine mercy; by the incarnation of Jesus Christ, the son of God; by his death as an expiatory offering, Jesus redeemed the whole mankind from sin, and earned for it salvation. It is seen that this objective salvation has been a subjective salvation of the individual person only when Jesus enters (through his sacrament) into a special spiritual connection with Jesus.

Islam also observes that salvation of soul is an act of divine mercy, but this act is definitely for the benefit to the individual. However, the idea of a universal atonement of human race, that had through a fall lapsed from its pure state of life, through the sacrificial death of a divine, divine incarnation is to them, as foreign as the view that the eternal salvation of every soul is related with the belief in an event isolated in the time of the whole world process.

Nevertheless, differently, in detail, the Islamic and Christian doctrines of salvation, judge of salvation, they all agree in one moot point, that
is in the belief that man can not be blessed so long as he is attached to the real and substantial and that his growing beyoned his innate natural limit-edness can bring about real salvation of soul. Because salvation is some-thing supramundane that is elucidated by expressions like illumination and ‘grace’ but is not sufficiently narrated or rendered intelligible.

Many texts teach that salvation of soul can be brought about by carrying out of definite rites. Of course, Islam with other religions agreed with this point of view.

According to some logical justification, in the sense of the Tantric philosophy that the correct pronunciation of certain sacred syllable se-cures salvation of soul, of course, it is to some extent, correct in the eye of Islam in the sense that Islam teaches that some sacred word such as ‘Astagfirullah’ means o God, I only seek your forgiveness and the word ‘Alhamdolellah’ means all praises be to God. Such words means to be-come completely surrendered before God. So God may pardon his all sins and he may obtain salvation for his soul. But this is not all for salva-tion,. These words are one of the means of salvation. And perhaps, so far my belief is concerned, it is a popular belief in other religions also.

The philosophical systems maintain that by purely spiritual moment, salvation of soul can be obtained. It is admitted by Islam also. Islam men-tions in the Qur’an that there are some special spiritual moment for every human being. If he whole heartedly surrendered before God at that mo-
ment then he may obtain salvation of soul. Because there are some auspicious moment in every day, auspicious day in every week, auspicious month in every year also. According to popular belief, this idea is admissible in other religions also.

However, there is a popular view that death at certain holy places, like Benaras Puri etc which have great salvation as its sequel. Such speeches are found in 'Puranas' and 'Manikarnika astaka' ascribed to Sankara and elsewhere. The religious Hindu has no objection in this connection. He has faith that some definite places are so powerful in benevolence, that those who fortunately die there see with the eye of knowledge, or that, in such places, God always achieves their deliverance from Samsara. Such belief is contained in Christianity and Islam also. According to popular belief there are some holy places under the sun in conformity with all religions. Keeping this point, parallels are drawn between Islam and other religions. Islam recommended that if any pilgrim goes to Mecca to perform his pilgrimage (Haji) then he may obtain salvation for soul. Because Mecca is considered as the holy place for Muslim people. Similarly the grave of prophet Muhammad also sacred place, the traditions recommend that any believer goes to the grave of Muhammad (S.A.S.) and thereby pray to God for his soul’s salvation then his soul may be obtained salvation by the grace of God.