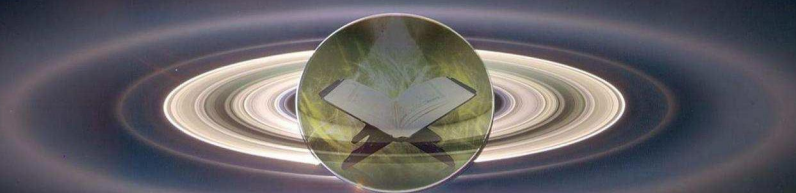


# The Ultimate Revelations

By  
Jamshed Akhtar

Dramatic new evidence  
about the extra-terrestrial origin  
of a message existing on earth



At an annual final assembly of the monks before they were to resume their wanderings, the Exalted One looked around over the silent company and said, “Well ye disciples, I summon you to say whether you have any fault to find with me, whether in word or deed.” And when a favourite pupil exclaimed, “Such faith have I Lord that methinks there never was, nor will be, nor is now any other greater or wiser than the Blessed One,” the Buddha replied:

“Of course, *Sariputta*, you have known all the *Buddhas* of the past.”

“No, Lord.”

“Well then, you know those of the future?”

“No, Lord.”

“Then at least you know me, and have penetrated my mind thoroughly?”

“Not even that, Lord.”

“*Then why, Sariputta, are your words so bold?*”<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Quoted from *The Religions of Man* by Huston Smith p-97. The italics are mine, and the original source is *Digha Nikaya* in J.B. Pratt's *The Pilgrimage of Buddhism and a Buddhist Pilgrimage*, p-12.

not to mention anything about the recently detected anomaly. "Ladies and gentlemen of the Press, if you permit, we will end our session here as I have to catch a flight to Washington. If you wish to see the observatory, Dr Harry will be happy to show you around. Thank you and *Khuda Hafiz*."

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**MARCH 21**  
**THE BOAT**

"Father, long-suffering and full of forgiveness, whose hands uphold the life of all mankind:  
Lord, Thy divinity fills the far-distant heaven and the widespread sea with reverence. On the surface of the peopled earth, he bids sanctuaries be placed, and proclaims for (each) its name.  
Father, creator of Gods and men, who causes the shrine to be mounted, who establishes his offering.  
In Heaven who is supreme? Thou alone art supreme!  
In Earth who is supreme? Thou alone art supreme!  
As for thee, thy will is made known in heaven, and the angels bow down their faces.  
As for thee, thy will is made known in earth, and the spirits kiss the ground.  
As for thee, thy will is spread on high as the wind, the stall and the fold bring forth.  
As for thee, thy will is declared on earth, and the green herb grows.  
As for thee, thy will is made known in the resting place, and the sheep-cote, and all living things increase.  
As for thee, thy will has created law and justice, in that man by it has made a law.  
As for thee, thy will is the far distant heaven and the innermost parts of the earth, no man has known it.  
As for thee, who can explain thy will; what can rival it?  
'...It is curious in these hymns, dating back certainly to the twenty-fifth century before the Christian era, to find phrases and expressions almost similar to those used by the Hebrew Psalmists....  
(The Religion of Babylonia by W. St. Chad Boscawen - Religious Systems of the world)

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*A pair of doves was busy in their mating ritual. The sky seemed overcast. The cold morning air was bringing with it strange smells and distant noises which Hamza could not identify. His west side view was blocked by a rising hillock. Towards the east he could see a narrow river meandering in the distance. In the north, tilled fields were visible, but the overall conditions indicated that the area probably had not received sufficient rains for a long time. The south side was also barren with isolated groves of olive trees. He was suddenly startled when with a loud flapping of wings; the doves flew into one such grove.*

*Hamza started to climb the ascending ground on the west side, but, as he came on the top, he froze.*

*He had never seen such a boat before. It was simply gigantic, almost as big as an ocean liner. The gunwales must have towered more than forty five feet in height and the boat must have measured a minimum of 500 feet from end to end. Hamza could see several men near the boat. Some were just hangers on looking curiously at the giant structure, while others were painting the hull with a tar like substance. The boat was almost complete. The men were filling the crevices suspended from crude ropes. Two of the workers had long wooden ladders. Hamza counted eleven of them working on his side, a few must have been on the other side too. He could also hear voices coming from inside the boat. They were speaking a language which was totally alien to him.*

*Who were they? Their apparel, the way they were working, the crude tools they were using, everything associated with them looked highly primitive or .. Hamza*

*tried to search for the right word, rather quaint in appearance.*

*But why had they made this giant boat so far inland? Hamza had seen the ships of this size being built only in a dry dock with a sliding ramp, so that the finished ship could reach the waters easily. But here there was no ramp, no equipment conventional or otherwise could be seen; besides the river too was far off. The boat also seemed too big to be of any use in that river. It must have had a different purpose. Was it some kind of a movie set? But Hamza rejected this notion immediately. The landscape had a very genuine air and no movie paraphernalia was present.*

*Gradually, Hamza also became aware of an inherent tension and hostility, pervading the scene. It lay threaded in the frenetic actions of the workers, who seemed to be working under pressure of some kind and in the comments and catcalls of the onlookers. The language being foreign to Hamza, he was unable to comprehend what was actually being said, but the jeering tone of the onlookers, and the sullen reactions of the workers, clearly conveyed the hostility. Two distinct groups seemed to be operating in that settlement. One group was building the boat while the other group seemed opposed to this project.*

*Suddenly a commotion ensued. An old man emerged from behind a hill that had probably obscured the main settlement from Hamza's view. The group of onlookers now turned towards him. Hamza could immediately sense that here was the leader of the boat builders. Although the distance was considerable, Hamza could see that the stately old man stood alone in the crowd. He seemed to be trying to explain something to them but the group seemed unprepared to listen and were gesturing threateningly. Gradually, as the arguments became more heated, the workers also left their posts to go to their leader's aid.*

*Hamza decided to move closer. His arrival on the scene might stave off the impending fight. He somehow wanted to help the old man. He also knew that by befriending the old man, he might be able to get the answers pertaining to the place, the language and nationality of these people, the strange mode of their dress, the elementary tools they were using, and about the purpose and dispute related to the giant boat. Hamza was fluently conversant in French, German and Urdu, apart from English. He felt confident that he would be able to communicate with this august old man.*

*He started climbing down the small hillock which had been his vantage point. All of a sudden, a bell started ringing somewhere in the distance. Hamza called out to the group to attract their attention, but nobody took any notice of him. Even the workers who were climbing down from the boat and rushing towards the melee seemed oblivious of his presence. The ringing sound began to grow on Hamza. He stopped and looked around, to identify the source. But it seemed to come from all directions and its intensity was increasing. Steadily, it acquired monstrous proportions. Hamza tried to cover his ears to shut off the persistent sound, but to no avail. The intensity was now such that he felt as if the source of the sound was within his own head. What was happening to him? Was he getting mad? He clutched his head with his hands. Unable to bear any more, he fell on the ground holding his head. Feebly, he prayed to his one and only God to deliver him from this nightmare...*

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“My God Hamza that was Noah’s Ark and the old man must have been Noah himself. You mean to say that you had deliberately set the alarm at 3 o’clock to interrupt such a dream? This is what I call the height of stupidity. Don’t you realise man, that these are not simple dreams but extremely rare windows opening into the past? You would have been able to bring the rarest of information that is needed by almost the total world.” Richard was literally wringing his hands in frustration. “Why the hell did you do it?”

“I just wanted to avoid the climax of these dreams, because that is when they usually transform into nightmares. Besides, how was I supposed to know that I would see the prophet Noah himself?” Hamza also felt ashamed and depressed on what he considered now a very foolish act.

“But you very well know that nightmares cannot harm a person physically?”

“I sure agree that nightmares by themselves are harmless, but the ones generating extreme fear, could become an indirect cause of a heart arrest.”

“Don’t tell me you’re serious.” Richard asked incredulously.

“Yes, I am very serious. I sincerely wish you could have seen those monstrous jaws and vicious teeth of the Tyrannosaurus from close quarters. It was awful and very very real. Sitting inside a four hundred floor apartment of glass and concrete and surrounded by all these high tech gizmos, you can never have an idea of the blast of primitive, putrid breath that came out of that prehistoric carnivore’s mouth.” A shudder ran through Hamza. “But anyway, I do realise my mistake. Whatever happens, I will not repeat it again.”

“I am sorry.” Richard patted his friend’s shoulder in mutual understanding.

“You don’t have to be.” Hamza smiled “They say that every dark cloud has a silver lining. Well in my case, it looks as if every silver cloud has a dark lining. The ringing of the alarm bell has shown me that whatever I do, I cannot escape the nightmarish endings. That probably is the price I have to pay for these rare gifts out of the past.”

APRIL 12

## **THE TRAGEDY IN NEW ZEALAND**

No one on earth knew for sure what other effects the somewhat weaker sun had been generating on different planets, but one thing was certain. It had not lessened its control on them. They were speeding along their elliptical orbits without a change in motion.

And, as the earth, with its tilted axis, sped along its path, its northern hemisphere started getting a slightly reduced quota of summer warmth. At first, the humanity in general did not feel alarmed. It returned to its daily chores and quibbles. The prolonging of the winter for some time, the unusual cold wave, the unseasonal blizzards, all were forgotten and just became a matter of statistics, once spring set in.

But, the people in the southern hemisphere were not as fortunate. This part of the earth had just entered into its cold and dark season. And from the grim and bleak looks of it, it seemed as if it was going to experience the rigours of a cold, hard winter not seen before in a hundred years.

### **Mt. Alta, South Island, New Zealand**

In the last few days musterers had worked overtime and combed more than 40,000 acres of gullies and peaks, looking for about 10,000 merinos, and moving

them to lower ground. Strangely, this year the winter seemed to descend earlier than usual. After the mustering, the young owner of the herd had felt satisfied at the early completion of the job. Now at least he was free to go to the Mt. Alta, on a much awaited hiking trip with his two friends who had come over from New York. He thought he had never enjoyed life as much as he had done here. He liked everything about this breathtakingly beautiful country, the indigo ranges of Southern Alps, the glaciers, the larch and birchwood forests, the turbulent rivers and the clean invigorating air. This was so different from the shadowy and grim environment that he had inhabited till now with his father.

His father, the dreaded Mafiosi from Marseilles, the ruthless killer, the man behind the drug trade extending over seven countries, had bought this 'run', as these ranches were known in these regions, from an elderly couple, a few years ago.

A seemingly harmless man, with the crooked nose and silver hairs, the father had not only retired from the world of crime, but had strictly forbidden his son to dabble in it. The risks were too great to bequeath this legacy to his only son, whom he loved with an unusually passionate intensity.

The boy too loved his father, but he also had a rebellious streak, a genetic gift from his father. It was this that made him refuse his father's pleas to postpone his hiking trip for the moment.

Waiting in a tent at the foothills, the boy and his friends had watched the weather with growing annoyance. The temperature had fallen steeply and it had been snowing continuously for two successive nights. Cursing the weather heartily, they settled down in their warm sleeping bags for yet another night.

But the day dawned clear and the boys started the trek to the hills. It was sometime during the afternoon, that the cloud base lowered, a dense fog enveloped them, and it began to snow again.

Tiny hexagonal pieces of ice, feeding upon water vapour in the air, grew into crystals of breathtaking beauty, like exquisite diamond broaches and began falling to the ground, interlocking as snowflakes.

The boys had by now lost their way. The young rancher told his friends to stay put and himself went to reconnoitre.

The white cover that initially settled on the ground contained mostly air, but, with time, the crystals started reacting to their new environment.

Some of the tips of these crystals vaporised and then condensed out again as ice over their centre. Nestling closely, this ice packed hard against windward obstacles in the strong wind, acquiring shapes of waving cornices.

Such cornices were nothing but self-supporting mouldings over empty air, projecting several feet outward, looking from below like beguiling sculptures, and appearing from above deceptively like solid ground.

When the young man did not return even after four hours had elapsed, the two distraught friends somehow found their own way back to the foothills, and raised the alarm.

The search parties assembled by his influential father fanned out but found no sign of the young rancher, either on the peak or in the several gullies. It was then that special Volunteer Search and Dog Rescue Team was summoned.

The Alsatian bitch, Emma, had been trained to rescue victims of avalanches even in the dark. She and her handler started combing the area in the difficult snow.

A little while later, when Emma strained at her leash to go up one particular gully already searched by other rescue teams, her handler, fully trusting her instincts, allowed her to go free.

She frantically started digging far up the gully and soon the dead man was found

beneath the hard packed snow. He had probably walked across a cornice indistinguishable from the snow on firm ground and the cornice had broken off under his weight...

For the first time in his life, the man from Marseilles felt the hammer blow of acute pain, that had often been experienced by countless other fathers, all over the world, whose sons had become the victims of drugs, supplied by him.

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APRIL 28  
**THE FIRE**

‘When the student consults the works of the Egyptologists, he still finds himself compelled to choose between two diametrically opposite theories. The advocates of the one view see in the Egyptian religion what amounts to a pure monotheism, exhibiting itself through the manifestly silly or even barbaric forms of a multiform Polytheism, with the loftiest ideas hidden like a pure gem in the crude shell of magical arts and symbolical notions. The advocates of the other view see in it a religion which is still really barbaric, animistic, and therianthropic, and to which priests and scribes endeavoured to give a mystical sense - a sense not understood by the people, and one which left the superstitious practices undisturbed. Both views are maintained, with great knowledge and talent, by celebrated scholars; and they are supported by texts which seem to prove completely those different positions.’

(The Egyptian Religion- By C.P.Tiele, D.D. in Religious Systems of the world.)

*He could feel the chill of the mountain air seeping into his bones. The plain expanded from the mountain's foot as smoothly as an inland sea, its distant shores invisible in the golden haze of the setting sun.*

*The temporary settlement that dotted the area seemed to belong to some nomads of this place. Hamza first heard the collective bleat and then saw the sheep returning amidst an air full of golden dust.*

*Through the fleecy turmoil, he saw a tall shepherd moving towards a large tent. The man was wearing a homespun cloak, and looked exceptionally graceful, strong and stately. He watched, fascinated by each single movement of this man, who seemed to have a kingly bearing even in this desert setting. He was walking among sheep as if a king was moving among his subjects.*

*As the man reached a tent, a woman emerged with a pitcher of water and greeted the man with a smile. The gentle woman, who must have been his wife, was wearing a loose flowing robe with a head covering. Her face had a soft ethereal quality which he had never seen among the coarse nomadic tribes he had encountered in the Thar deserts of India. Who were they? He knew that a lot of gypsies still preferred a nomadic existence, but these nomads seemed very different.*

*The woman who was looking towards the mountain pointed out something to the tall man, who turned to look. Others also arrived on the scene. They too stopped to look at the mountain. A hush fell suddenly on the assembly. Even the sheep seemed to fall silent. Hamza whose back was towards the mountain, turned to look at the object of attention.*

*The hill soared for thousands of feet into the sky. There was nothing to halt the upward path of the eye, except here and there, an irrelevant tuft of vegetation curling from the rock-face on a single stalk or a straight damp smear of some spring's overflow, like a snail track. But near the top, a strange luminescent glow was visible, lighting up the cloud layer that must have been near to its source.*

*Was it some kind of forest fire at the top? Hamza turned to look at the nomads. These people seemed equally perturbed about the cause of the light. The man was*

saying something to his wife. He gestured towards the path in the mountain and then towards the setting sun, which suggested that he was going to identify the cause of the fire, and promising to return soon.

Hamza felt a strong urge building up inside him. He wanted to talk to that man. But what was he supposed to do? Wait for his return or go after him? Hamza decided to go after him. He too wanted to see the source of the fire.

The shadows were lengthening. The sunlight was now mellow and golden. A deep gorge opened before Hamza, which narrowed and rose along a chasm between the mountains. He saw the man climbing steadily, and scrambled behind as fast as he could. Hamza had barely reached the end of this gorge when the sun dipped below the serrated edge of the hilly range. The mountain ahead turned greyish blue - sad, cold and threatening.

As darkness descended, the trail insensibly climbed higher and higher. Hamza had initially wanted to catch up with the man, but as he was climbing steadily and fast and Hamza was unaccustomed to steep climbs, he abandoned the idea and decided to catch up with him at the top, near the source of the mysterious fire itself.

The trail turned into a narrow ascent between overpowering volumes of rock, winding among boulders and gnarled trees and opening at last into a slanting world from which all sight of the plain was obliterated. But a turn of the path led from this labyrinth into the most brilliant moonlight, and the mountains were suddenly robbed of the menace and their oppressive weight. All was silver and light. The scene was magical in quality and miraculously silent.

Hamza started to enjoy the climb. He estimated that in another hour he would reach the source of that fire. But, then suddenly the silence was shattered by the screech of an owl. Hamza looked upwards. From a rock face, huge yellow eyes were surveying him impassively as if sizing him up. At the same time, a movement in the scrub caught his eye. A small rat like animal with hind legs like a tiny kangaroo jumped from the scrub, looked at Hamza with surprised large limpid questioning eyes and hopped quickly behind a rock. The large owl suddenly took off and flew ahead, as though the scurrying of this animal was a signal for him. Had he gone to inform others? Was Hamza trespassing into a forbidden territory? or violating some kind of sacred ground, where he didn't have the right to come at all? He laughed loudly. Was it fear, or the effect of the moonlight that made him see a conspiracy in the simple movements of nocturnal animals?

But the owl had robbed the moonscape of its ethereal beauty. The mountain once again loomed mysterious and threatening. Horrid thoughts of insects and slithering reptiles lurking under the rock pebbles that lay strewn on the trail, began to gnaw at him. Gradually he started regretting his impulsive decision to follow the man. That man was so familiar with the terrain, he knew its dangers. He should have waited for him at that settlement. He remembered that nomads were always known to be very hospitable. Had he stayed on with them, he might have by now been savouring a roasted calf or a hot cup of coffee instead of this offensive odour.

Suddenly Hamza became more conscious of the repulsive odour. As he rounded the bend, he saw a large hyena blocking the trail about hundred feet ahead. Till now, he had only seen the hyena in a zoo, but growing up on Indian folklore, he had heard a lot about their habit of entering villages and carrying off sheep and calves or even children from beside the sleeping mothers. They also had the evil reputation of violating graves by digging up recently buried bodies and feeding on them. And it



*seemed to him that true to its reputation, the animal now blocking his trail was extremely ugly and repulsive.*

*Hamza stopped, groped around, and threw a rock at it. He had heard that the hyena was basically a coward and had been known to retreat at the slightest suspicion of danger. But the animal ahead was probably too hungry. Instead of retreating, it started growling threateningly. Hamza was without any weapons. It was too dangerous now to proceed on the trail in the night. He decided to go back to the security of the human settlement. But he didn't want the hyena to get the impression that he was afraid. Hungry animals were known to attack at the first sign of weakness. Hamza started backing slowly. As he rounded the bend, he saw the hyena turn its ugly face towards the moon. Its mouth opened and with canines glistening in the moonlight, it sent the hills reverberating with the cacophony of a mad woman's laugh.*

*Hamza could bear it no longer. He turned and started running down the trail. He wanted to get away from the place as soon as possible, but again he stopped. Now the trail ahead was blocked too. He saw a pack of wild dogs blocking the narrow chasm. The dogs had large ears and spots on the right flank. He had read somewhere that amongst all the predators, a pack of wild dogs were known to be the most aggressive, persistent and ferocious. Even the greater cats avoided them. There seemed no way he could bypass them. He looked behind. The hyena was close and rounding the bend. Hamza knew that these hungry predators would not leave him now, unless he could find a tree or a ledge. He looked around in desperation. A vertical pillar like rock formation was near. He ran towards it. The dogs and the hyena too seemed to sense the abject fear of their quarry. They started closing in. Hamza tried to climb the rock, but the rock was slippery. He managed to climb a few feet up. The pack of dogs had encircled him now. One of them jumped to snap at his leg but his jaw closed in on empty air. And suddenly Hamza started losing his hold, he was slipping directly into the salivating jaws of the dogs. He closed his eyes and fervently prayed to his God to get him out from this nightmare....*

“The light you saw was the start of the ministry of Moses.” Father Joseph was looking at the jungle of skyscrapers from the wide glass wall of Hamza's apartment. He was a friend of Richard and a Bible scholar. His work was recently published, under the title, ‘How the Pentateuchal traditions were transmitted’ Richard had already told him about his dreams and he had come straight from the church to Hamza's apartment. Throughout the narration, he had maintained an absolute silence without any interruptions or questions. It was only when Hamza finished his monologue that Father Joseph began speaking dreamily. “How strange it feels when one considers the fact that you personally saw an event that had actually occurred more than three thousand years ago... All the while that you were fighting wild dogs and hyena in the mountain and Moses was climbing higher and higher for a tryst with destiny, who knows what sufferings were being encountered by Hebrew families in Egypt. The same moon must have been shining on the opulent palaces of the Pharaoh and on the slave labour camps, where the slaves were rebuilding the fortified cities of Pithom and Remesis. I wish you could have stayed behind and waited for the return of Moses.” He looked literally crestfallen. “Just imagine, the source of light you missed seeing last night was God's light Himself, the most mysterious event in the history of humanity. It was the key incident in the whole drama. The gift of Moses' staff came from within that fire. The plagues, the turning

of Nile into blood, the shadow of death, the exodus, and the parting of the sea all followed later. It was that light, the fire that was all important. I wish I could have been in your place, I would have definitely waited for Moses to return instead of taking this stupid risk and losing the chance for ever. Oh my God!” He covered his face with both hands.

Hamza and Richard looked towards each other. Richard had a slight smile on his face.

“I am sorry Father, I regret that I do not have any control over my actions in the dreams.” Hamza said gently. “But, I will appreciate if you could enlighten me on these events of the past. I would like to know, how much of these incidents have received corroboration from the knowledge of the world and how much is considered a myth. I want to probe deeper into this matter and want you to help me out as much as possible.”

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MAY 14

### **THE COLLECTOR MECHANISM**

The entire planet needed energy from the sun. It was the driving force behind all activities. To collect and absorb this energy, the planet had evolved an immensely complex “Collector Mechanism” whose working depended upon billions of variables.

These variables encompassed immense differences in the topography of the planet, embracing diverse land surfaces, disparate vegetation covers, desolate deserts, ice sheets, freshly fallen snow, and the most substantial and consequential of all, the oceans. All these surfaces absorbed and reflected back the energy from the sun in varying degrees.

To ensnare the energy escaping back from the surface, the planet had evolved two ‘heat traps’ in its atmospheric envelope. These traps depended upon the presence of Carbon-dioxide and water vapour content of the atmospheric envelope that varied from place to place. Interestingly enough, the planet had also contrived a way to bypass these traps. Warm vapour rising from ocean and carrying latent energy with it, often condensed above the level of these traps, releasing energy directly into space. But the most significant component of this collector mechanism was the phenomenon of cloud. With their shape, and capacity of absorption, depending upon the energy falling from the sky, the clouds covering the entire planet acted as the best regulators of this energy.

Thus, ‘Gaia’ had floated merrily along the orbit around its parent star, using its quota of sustenance as it thought fit, till its intelligent children arrived on the scene. In their relentless but thoughtless march towards progress, they began cutting, exterminating and competing with such forms of life that had been sent prior to their arrival, to make their ‘crib’ habitable for them.

The planetary organism had the ability to heal itself, provided the wound was within the limits of its inherent healing capacity. Unfortunately, the limits were not far off. The constant depletion of forest cover, and the pressure of industrialisation had increased the carbon-dioxide content in the atmosphere. The growth in the efficiency of one heat trap had affected the other trap also. More heat, resulting in greater water vapour content of the atmosphere, was gradually warming the planet.

Thus, for the last several years, the fever of ‘Gaia’ was rising slowly but surely, increasing the frequency of heat waves, droughts, flooding, outbreaks of plant diseases, greater invasion by insects and a definite increase in the sea level. Food output had already fallen in Africa and other areas where it mattered most, and global agricultural strains were pushing the prices up everywhere, putting food out of reach of the poor. Besides, owing to the rise in sea level, coastal cities of all the countries were suffering heavily, and the very existence of one of the island republics was being gravely threatened.

In the last few decades, men had woken to the danger, but there were too many countries, too many democracies, and too many politicians controlling these democracies with selfish interests, to care for the planet as a whole. And thus, in this state of affairs, when the solar crisis occurred, it arrested and offset the global warming in its incipient stage, ironically producing a beneficial effect on the planet initially.

For the first time in several years, the surging mass of humanity that resided in the northern hemisphere got a taste of the mild summer and the clear days, and started enjoying them as if it was their first and the last summer. And the media, without understanding the gravity of the situation, and associating lesser heat with lack of spots on the sun, began praising the good fortune of humanity, as a Godsend.

But men whose job it was to watch the weather and the skies were worried and irritated by this naiveté and the show of blissful ignorance going on all around them.

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MAY 21

### THE PREACHER

“There is a Life that is uncreated;  
 There is a Transformer who is changeless.  
 The Uncreated alone can produce life;  
 The changeless alone can evolve change.  
 That Life cannot but produce;  
 That Transformer cannot but transform.  
 Wherefore creations and transformations are perpetual,  
 And these perpetual creations and transformations continue through all time.  
 They are seen in the Male and Female Principles of Nature,  
 They are displayed in the Four Seasons.  
 The Uncreated stands, as it were, alone;  
 The changeless comes and goes;  
 His duration can have no end,  
 Peerless and One - His ways are past finding out.”

(‘Works of Lieh-tzu,’ - quoted by Frederic H. Balfour in ‘Taoism’ - Religious Systems of the World.)

*The river tern that was flying low over the surface dived cleanly into the water. The boat was primitive, small and fashioned entirely out of wood. An old man was rowing the boat with the help of a long pole, which he was using to push against the bed of the river. A small boy, probably his grandson, was sitting patiently besides him. The river was wide, but despite its expanse it did not seem very deep. The sky being clear, water was shimmering under a bright sun. And the vivid green dense jungle, on both sides of the river was gliding past in silent savage splendour.*

*Time had not left any scars on this primeval wilderness, the waterscape seemed frozen into eternity. The dark black clouds, ascending the horizon and the cool caressing water laden air, were bringing the message of impending rains.*

*Seated on wooden planks, fitted crudely at regular intervals all along the boat, there were, besides him, five other passengers, clad in yellow robes of the monks. One of them asked the boatman a question, who gestured towards the right bank slightly ahead. Although some words did sound familiar, Hamza could not clearly understand what was being said. From the presence of Indian faces, he knew that he was in some part of India, but was unable to guess where.*

*The weathered old face of the boatman had now taken on additional lines of worry. Hamza lost count of the number of times he had turned and cast furtive glances at the dark and threatening clouds. Gradually, he felt a subtle change in the speed of the boat. The young boy too had taken up the oars. The boat started veering towards the right bank. Suddenly a fresh water porpoise leapt clear of the*

water and fell back with a splash. Although it was doing it at regular intervals, this time it had surfaced very near to the boat. The boy excitedly pointed towards the fish, and yelled "Soons".

The word "Soons", synchronised with the rain drops that started to fall. The large drops soon turned into a downpour. And by the time, the boatman brought the boat to a clearing in the right bank; the downpour had turned into a blinding storm. The men, completely drenched by now, climbed the bank and ran to take refuge under a small thatched roof by the side of the clearing.

The storm was intense while it lasted. It abated quickly. The afternoon sun appeared faintly in the mist and a rainbow formed. The boatman and the boy went back to the boat and started scooping out the rain water that had collected in the boat. The monks seemed all set to go on a trail that led into the jungle. Hamza found himself in a quandary. He did not know where he was. Who were they? What was he supposed to do? Had he already paid the boatman or was he supposed to do so now? He wanted to ask a lot of questions but ironically communication seemed the biggest hurdle, even in his native place.

The problem resolved itself as the monks started on the trail. The boatman and his son tied up their boat and not only joined the party but actually started leading the monks towards some destination, which only they knew. Hamza was left with no other alternative but to follow the party.

Slowly the jungle engulfed them. Enormous trees, most of them Sal, interspersed with Sheesham, Bargad, Neem, Jamun, Sirsa, and Peepal loomed overhead. A ray of sunshine occasionally broke through the canopy, otherwise the entire jungle was immersed in a green twilight. The humidity was awful, every thing dripped moisture. Monkeys were to be seen everywhere. Myriad bird calls filtered down from the branches thick with leaves. Hamza caught fleeting glimpses of several known and unknown birds. Ahead, the boatman was clearing a path with a machete. Hamza did not know about the others, but walking silently on the bed of sodden leaves that felt like sponge, under the huge canopy, he was awe-struck by the majesty and diversity of creation.

The jungle trail became an aural, visual and olfactory treat for Hamza. He had never seen so many birds of different varieties, size and shapes, flitting from one branch to another; so many flowers, in hundreds of different shades and hues; butterflies of breath-taking beauty; droves of animals, known and unknown that came to the trail, stopped for some time, looking quizzically up at the humans and then vanishing into the lush dense growth. Never before in his life, had he encountered such diverse and exotic smells that were emanating from the combined array of flora and fauna, present in this tropical forest. And he had never heard such a symphony of jungle sounds that included multitude of bird calls, animal calls and the chirping of the ever present crickets, having a rhythm of their own. Hamza had a musical ear. He reacted to musical compositions much more intensely than his colleagues. Sometimes, even the prosaic mundane background sounds of a rural or urban day, blended into pleasing compositions for him. But, this aural experience was something different. It was much more richer than anything he had heard before. He wanted to stop and savour each and every note, every movement and colour that was dancing before his eyes, and every exotic smell he was experiencing. But the monks were moving inexorably towards their destination. And Hamza did not want to be left behind.

*The jungle had kept him so engrossed that he lost track of the time. Suddenly, he heard the voice of the boatman calling the monks. He was not visible from here, the trail had curved ahead into the forest. One by one, all of them joined the old man.*

*The forest had thinned from this point onwards. Through the branches, a large clearing was visible, where hundreds of men were sitting cross-legged on the ground, listening to a discourse being given by a man, not clearly visible from this distance. Hamza saw scores of people coming to the clearing and joining the congregation from all sides of the encircling forest. Many of them were in monks' apparel but common people too were sitting among them.*

*The boatman and the party of monks with him joined the congregation. They sat reverently in the last row, which soon got filled up by the new comers.*

*The rows were neat, and the large gathering extremely attentive and silent. Barring the clear and melodious voice of the preacher, Hamza did not hear a single murmur, whisper or even somebody coughing. Sometimes one of the monks from the front row spoke something, but that seemed to be in reply to a poser by the preacher himself. The discipline was absolute.*

*Who was this man? How come so many monks and common people were getting attracted to his sermons? Did he belong to some Buddhist order? Buddhism was very popular in the eastern lands but it had practically vanished from India, long long ago. Hamza did not know about any preacher in India, Buddhist or otherwise, with such a mass appeal. Then who was he? He had seen the photographs of Dalai lama. But he was sure that this man was somebody else.*

*Hamza decided to take a closer look at the enigmatic preacher. Together with the young boy, who had not joined the congregation, and walking on the periphery of the clearing without disturbing the congregation, he reached behind a tree, from where the man was clearly visible.*

*Sitting still on a raised mound in the lotus position, he seemed to have absolute control over his perfect body. The hair neatly tied up in a bun on the head, showed his clear broad forehead, the sharp long nose, the glowing complexion and the large eyes that were closed in meditation. All these factors had combined to give him an extremely handsome and stately appearance. But, the thing which struck him most about this preacher, was the peace and serenity on his face. Such calm, such peace, he had never seen in a human face before.*

*Suddenly, the man opened his eyes. And even from this distance, Hamza felt the power behind those black, unfathomable eyes. As the man looked around, he looked straight at Hamza and Hamza felt, as if he had been scanned by a very powerful source of X-rays.*

*The preacher started saying something to the gathering. His voice was hypnotic. Although not understanding the content, Hamza still got mesmerised by the melody and the inherent rhythm of the speech.*

*He did not realise how long the boy had been trying to attract his attention. The sun had by now dipped behind the forest. The man, his speech ended, had closed his eyes again and was silently meditating. The entire assembly was silent and peaceful. Hamza walked around. He saw lying at the periphery of the clearing, some trees that had been felled recently. A colony of insects, in the hollow rotting stems left of some trees, were attracting numerous birds. The dusk was falling quickly, although the light was still adequate.*

*The boy looked at Hamza and pointed towards the forest. He probably wanted to*

*show him something. Hamza entered the forest behind him. Once in the jungle, he found it was much darker. Moving nimbly, the boy, like an experienced guide, took him deeper and deeper into the forest, straight towards a grove, and pointed at some of the trees.*

*All apprehension vanished at the fascinating sight, which greeted Hamza's eyes. It was well worth all the trouble he had taken. Several trees in the grove were the home of millions of fireflies that were shining like clusters of stars, within easy reach. It looked as though the entire cosmos had descended into this grove, with the wave of a fairy's magical wand.*

*But he was surprised to note that where some trees had millions of fireflies, others were totally dark. Hamza tried to identify the trees to find a design but there was no fixed pattern. He stood marvelling at the scene for a long time. Suddenly he felt some insect drop on his shoulder from the branches immediately above. It was a big spider with long hairy legs. Hamza brushed it away with revulsion. But the spider reminded him that he was deep in the forest, the dusk had fallen and although it was a full moon night, the occasional silvery shafts of light through the thick foliage were insufficient. He decided to go back to the gathering. But where was the boy? He shouted in his native tongue: Larke (boy)! O! Larke! He waited for a reply. But only the forest answered back with a cacophony of bird calls, chirping of insects and the croaking of frogs.*

*It was then that Hamza realised his stupidity. He had neither told the boy to stay nor had even asked his name. While he had been lost in his reverie, the boy must have gone back to his grandfather thinking that Hamza would be able to find his own way back.*

*There was no sign of a breeze. The air was heavy with dankness and decay. The grove lay away from the trail. Wanting to get away from the place quickly, Hamza started moving towards where he thought the trail lay, leading to the clearing. But as he stumbled ahead, the jungle became thicker and thicker. He did not even have a torch. Alone in the darkness, all the latent horror of the jungle swelled to a crescendo within him. He first heard the buzzing, then saw large wasps with four inch wing spans, brush past his face. Beetles with long curving tusks settled on his shoulders. He could hear the menacing slither of armies of unseen snakes and other reptiles moving all round him in the thick vegetation.*

*With mounting horror, his only thought was to get away from that cursed place. He lost track of how long he was walking. He should have reached the clearing long ago. Had he missed the trail in the darkness?*

*Oh my God! Was he moving in a circle up till now, like a dying and desperate animal? He realised that he had again reached the trees with the fireflies. Was it another grove? The ray of hope kindled a few seconds before, died down immediately. Hamza had identified the trees at leisure. He was sure it was the same grove.*

*The sight which had gladdened his heart a few hours before was now thoroughly depressing. Wanting to rest his aching muscles, Hamza sat on a mound. The piercing black eyes of the preacher, started haunting him. The man seemed to know everything. There was peace and security in his presence. He should have sat in the congregation instead of coming to this place.*

*It was the hiss of a snake that broke his reverie. The snake was hovering hardly two feet away. The "V" on its hood, identified it. It was the Cobra, the king of*

*Indian snakes, highly venomous, known to reach its pray, guided by the victim's body heat. Hamza dared not move an inch. Any little movement would have galvanised the snake. He remembered that its victims, once bitten, had been known to die within a few seconds. He dared not even breathe. The time started ticking slowly. Suddenly, with horror, Hamza realised that he was sitting on an ant hill. Inch long ants were now crawling over his body, attracted by the heat. Some were crawling under his shirt, some had managed to crawl up his legs. Hamza knew that these ants too were poisonous. Their stings were known to kill infants or to put a full grown man in agony for hours. His fate was now sealed. A bite from even a single ant, was going to produce sharp shooting pain and involuntary contortions of his body, which would then become a signal for the waiting snake.*

*With utter revulsion, he willed himself to let the small creatures crawl all over his body. But, he knew the situation was hopeless. It was only a matter of time.. With eyes closed, and a thudding heart, Hamza prayed to his one and only God, to save him from this nightmare...*

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MAY 22

### THE TIDAL WAVE

“There is, O monks, an unborn, neither become nor created nor formed...Were there not there would be no deliverance from the born, the made, the compounded.”

(Sayings of Buddha quoted from Iti-vuttaka, 43; Udana, viii, 3. Cf. J.B. Pratt, op. cit., pp. 88-89, and E.A. Burtt, op. cit., pp-113. by Huston Smith in ‘The Religions of Man’.)

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“The ‘Soons’, or the Gangetic dolphins, do not identify the period. They had been there for God knows how many years and they are still present, in Ganga and Ghagra, although in much reduced numbers. The all wooden boat, its primitive design, the lack of even iron nails, all suggest an older period, probably before Ashoka, but again that is not confirmation enough. We must not forget the reality of general poverty in India. Iron in any form must have been costly for a long time in comparison to wood, which was plenty and cheap, at least up to the first half of twentieth century. For a poor boatman, an all wooden boat would have been more affordable. The presence of yellow robed monks in the gathering, too, do not identify the teacher. The ochre robes have always been the favourite of all ascetics who had renounced the world. Therefore, you cannot pinpoint the period from their presence.” Dr Deepak paused. He was a Molecular Biologist by profession, and a very well informed man, with religion as his favourite topic. Hamza was glad that Deepak had come immediately on receiving his call.

“The man was not an ordinary teacher, I am sure. He was somebody eminent, somebody very important.” Hamza was still haunted by the all-knowing black eyes, with their inbuilt x-ray gaze.

“The pattern of your past visions, the extra ordinary personality that you have described and the peculiar discipline of the mixed crowd, all suggest that most probably, you saw the ‘Enlightened One’ himself.”

“You mean the ‘Buddha’?” Hamza was not surprised.

“Yes, ‘Buddha’, ‘The Awakened One’, ‘The Truth-winner’, ‘The Unmeasurable’ and the *Sakyamuni* or ‘silent sage of the Sakya clan’, who used to spend nine months of the year, travelling and preaching among people and the

remaining three months of the rainy season, in quiet retreat with his monks. You probably dreamt of one such assembly during the rainy season.” Dr Deepak lapsed into silence for some time. “The silence and discipline is especially peculiar. In fact, I remember reading somewhere that a king visiting one such assembly initially thought that a trick was being played on him.”

“Why?”

“During the entire session no one sneezed, coughed or made any other sound, out of a large gathering of about 1250 brethren, and even after the meeting had got prolonged into a full moon night.”

The information did not surprise Hamza. He could still clearly remember the entire congregation seated quietly around the preacher. But the silence of the congregation reminded him about other background noises, he had heard in the dream. “The village and the river must have been near. We probably took a short cut through the forest due to early rains.”

“May be. You may not realise it, but you are a very fortunate man Hamza. Last night, what you saw, was part of a tidal wave of religious revolt that had started sweeping the entire planet at that time. No other time is as important in the history of the world as that short period of probably fifty years.”

“Tidal wave of religious revolt?” Hamza’s curiosity had awakened considerably now.

“Yes. Zoroastrianism, Buddhism, Jainism, Confucianism, Taoism, Vedanta philosophy and Monism all seem to have appeared within fifty years of each other, during that period.

“Within such a short period?” - Hamza asked incredulously - “And what were the causes behind this tidal wave?”

“It is very difficult to be absolutely certain. The scholars say that it was a revolt against the widespread decay that had engulfed all religions of the ancient world and an uprising against the hold of the priest craft over general masses. But why it should have happened simultaneously all over the globe is still a mystery.

“Dr Deepak, can you explain it a bit more. I am intensely interested in solving the riddle of these strange dreams. They are as real and as vivid to me, as any incident of my waking life and yet, I have not been able to unravel the cause behind these visions.

“I too am curious Hamza, and I will try to help as much as I can. But to comprehend the background of your remarkable dreams, you will have to delve deep into the very phenomenon of religion, I think.” Dr Deepak extended the word ‘deep’ for emphasis.

“You are the expert, you tell me, what is your opinion?”

Dr Deepak thought for some time and then began - “Everyone knows that religion is an eternal mystery, and almost everyone agrees that it has tremendous potential for generating both good and evil. But surprisingly, few have the capability to study this phenomenon objectively and gain benefit out of it. In my opinion, there are basically two ways of looking at the religion, depending upon whether you believe in a Creator or not. Those who do not accept the concept of God, say that man’s religion is his own creation, and it has undergone evolution, just like his own. But people who accept the presence of a Creator believe that religion was neither invented, nor evolved nor discovered by man, but was instilled in his mind at the time of his birth on the planet. And the present diversity in



religions that we see, is on account of the degeneration brought about by human hands in that one pure religion.”

“Quite contradictory views!”

“Yes, and both sides support their respective views with arguments.”

Hamza felt that the time to delve ‘deep’ into religion had now come. “What exactly is the evolutionary theory of religion?” he asked.

“This hypothesis says that in the embryonic period, man’s religion probably consisted of only a simian chatter, and intense fear of the dark unknown. This fear, in the first stage, gradually transmuted into ‘Animism’, the religion of the most isolated tribal who had never been exposed to civilisation. For them, the many spirits of the jungle are to be feared and propitiated before embarking on any important work.”

“And what happens in the second stage?”

“The development of city-state civilisations, with time, transformed this ‘Animism’ into ‘Polytheism’, a form of religion where every object, having the potential to benefit or harm, acquires a personality of its own and becomes the object of worship and adulation. This surmise is based on the evidence that the oldest civilisations discovered, the Sumerians and the Harappan, have been found to practice polytheism.”

“And what about monotheism, the concept of one Creator God. When did that enter the scene?”

“The experts believe that it was the nation of Israel that narrowed down the many Gods of the surrounding nations to only one tribal God. This one Creator-God of Hebrew prophets, together with the philosophical monotheism of Plato, paved the way for higher religion.”

“The Greek legacy seems to have played a part here also?” The western intellectual’s obsession with the Greek past, always irritated Hamza, although he knew the emotion was unreasonable.

Dr Deepak nodded in affirmation “Experts have of course pointed out numerous other complex factors associated with different civilisations, but this is the basic hypothesis, in its most simplistic form.

“And what does the other side say, the ones who believe in the Creator factor?”

“Different religions have different theories pertaining to the origin of humanity and its religion, but the majority view is that the birth of man was not a product of chance. It was a deliberate purposeful event that occurred at a particular place on the planet, in a singular moment of time. How it happened, and which were the agencies involved, are not clear. But this much is believed that the first mutant and his mate were not only different from others, but had also received from the Source, an ability to communicate, and a basic concept of religion.”

“What would this basic concept of religion be?”

“It’s the concept of one Creator God, a sense of purpose and an inclination towards values, needed for co-operative living and generation of an expanding order.”

“OK So then, after this mutational birth took place, what happened?”

“The progeny of this single couple expanded and multiplied on the planet. And as they diverged out of their place of birth, the different types of environment they encountered, brought about in them minor genetic and other changes gradually, ultimately resulting in the diversity of nations, colour, traits and language, as we see

it now.”

“And how did the basic religion get distorted?”

“It seems that laws of ‘Cosmic Design’ are laid down in such a way that the entire beneficence of Creator comes down to man through an intricate web of agencies and sub-agencies. The early Man knew the difference between the Creator and the created, so he worshipped the Creator alone, but that knowledge eroded gradually. Humanity started sliding down the path, innocently enough initially, by accepting that these agencies were intermediary creations, but with *the power of Creator residing in them*. Slowly as time passed, these agencies were attributed with acquired powers of their own, and thence became independent from Creator.” Dr Deepak paused for some time and gazed out of window with a far-away look in his eyes. Hamza, not wanting to disturb his chain of thoughts, waited patiently. Dr Deepak was speaking again. “In the jungle, since the vistas of the inhabitants were limited, it was only the all-powerful elements of nature that acquired forms, producing ‘Animism’ in these tribes. But as life settled in city state civilisations, man’s exposure to the material world acquired increased dimensions, widening his horizon and resulting in the mushrooming of deities. This proliferation of deities became especially rapid with the advent of another factor - the birth of professional priesthood. With priests controlling and exploiting the latent human fear of the unknown, the personalities of these deities acquired all human traits and began to lie, lust and fight with each other.”

“Is this theory supported by arguments also or is it simply a matter of belief?”

“The first premise of this theory, regarding the birth and flowering of humanity from a single parent, has received scientific support from genetic scientists belonging to Dr Allan C. Wilson’s laboratory at Berkeley, University of California. These scientists, through a series of studies published from 1987 onwards<sup>2</sup>, have shown that mitochondrial DNA from placentas donated by mothers of diverse origins, contained an unmistakable genetic signature of a woman, who lived in Africa about 200,000 years ago.”

“When you say mothers of diverse origin, what exactly do you mean? Did these include women from outside America also?”

“Yes, the study gradually encompassed women of all origins. It even included such diverse races as Eastern Pygmies of Zaire, Western Pygmies of Central African Republic or the Yorubans of Nigeria.”

“And all the samples showed the same results?”

“Yes, that’s exactly how it was. The genetic analysis showed conclusively that each and every single one of us has descended from the same mother.”

“But why this emphasis just on the mother? Was there only Eve in the beginning and no Adam?”

“A male must have been there to help pass her genes along. But the researchers were able to trace only the woman, because they had restricted their studies only to mitochondrial genes, which are passed exclusively through the maternal line.”

“Has the theory received universal acceptance?”

“Paleoanthropologists, from the very beginning have objected to this discovery on several points, but the Berkeley scientists have managed to redress all such

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<sup>2</sup> Reports were published in the journal *Science* and later quoted by various newspapers like New York Times, and Hindu etc. Mitochondrial DNA has many advantages. It is built of only 16,500 DNA base pairs, compared with the three billion base pairs found in the cell nucleus.

objections in their successive reports, published during all these past decades. But there is still one objection, which no has yet answered satisfactorily.”

“What is that?”

“The objection pertains to the replacement theory of this hypothesis. You see, the Paleoanthropologists have reasonable fossil evidence to show that several types of man-like creatures existed at that time, in different locations throughout Africa, Asia and Europe. The orthodox view was that the modern humans had developed independently in these locations, forming various races. But genetic analysis tells an entirely different story. As per this theory, the progeny of this mother began migrating out of their African homeland about 50,000 to 100,000 years ago. Coming out of Africa, this nomadic race not only kept its breeding confined to within its own members, but with the acquisition of a considerably lightened skeleton, more capacious brains, and probably a basic ability to communicate amongst themselves, completely prevailed over their competitors wherever they roamed. It is this absence of a single gene or the evidence of a total replacement that has confounded the Paleoanthropologists and other scientists.”

“Quite interesting”, Hamza thought about the intense reaction, which this discovery must have produced in the men of religion. “Apart from this genetic analysis, what are the other arguments?”

“The second type of arguments is provided by anthropologists, archaeologists and historians. These arguments relate to the universal presence of a ‘Deity above all deities’ in the myths and beliefs of all nations and civilisations, which Sumerians called Enlil, Babylonians ‘An’, Chinese Shang-ti or Hao-tien, Egyptians ‘Re’, Aryan’s Ila, Brahm, Greek’s Zeus, Phoenicians Allon, Canaanites Ado and Israelis’ Yahweh, Elohim or Adonai.<sup>3</sup> The presence of this Parm-Atma or a Supreme soul in the basic belief of all nations showed that in the beginning there must have been one Creator God and all other deities followed Him later with the passage of time.”

“But Dr Deepak, if all of us had one mother and the concept of a single Creator-God existed from the very beginning, then don’t you think that even those tribes that have remained isolated since Stone Age should have retained this notion in their memory?”

“Yes. It is exactly so. You see, researches by a group of anthropologists<sup>4</sup> on hundreds of such tribes, have shown that almost *all the tribes adhered to a memory of a ‘high God’, a benign Creator-Father-God, who was above all the other spirits of the jungles*. In fact, if you happen to ask a Zulu tribesman what *uMvelinqangi*<sup>5</sup> is, he will explain to you that ***He is a pure and Holy Spirit, He does not beget and He is not begotten, and further there is nothing like Him.*** And if you ask other African tribesmen, about *Tixo or Modimo or uNkulunkulu*, they will all give concepts similar to that given by the Zulus, though in their own languages, of course.”

“And could they explain why this Supreme Entity happened to lose its exalted place of worship in their minds?”

“About that no one seems to be sure. But the anthropologists do think that

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<sup>3</sup> More recently, this Entity has been called as God in English, Got in Afrikaans, Gott in German and Gudd in Danish, Swedish and Norwegian languages or Deus in Portuguese, Dieu in French, Dio in Italian, Dios in Spanish, Dia in Scotch and Irish and Duw in Welsh etc. etc.

<sup>4</sup> These group of anthropologists were led by Fr. Wilhelm Schmidt of Vienna - *Origin and Growth of Religion*.

<sup>5</sup>What is His Name? - Ahmed Deedat, Islamic Propagation Centre Int., South Africa.

probably with the passage of time, this Entity became too distant to generate fear, as compared to the savage spirits of the jungle, or the menace of the witch doctor which evolved later.”

“Yeah, that sounds very true. Tell me; are there other arguments also in support of this hypothesis?”

“The third and last type of argument is provided by historians and archaeologists, who feel that an upward gradual evolution of religion does not fit in with several facts of history. To support that, they have shown that the rise and fall of many civilisations has been invariably associated with a cyclic degeneration from monotheism to polytheism..

*‘I may fail to carry conviction in concluding that, both in Sumerian and Semitic religions, monotheism preceded polytheism and belief in good and evil spirits. The evidence and reasons for this conclusion, so contrary to accepted and current views have been set down with care and with the perception of adverse criticism. It is, I trust, the conclusion of knowledge and not of audacious preconception.’<sup>6</sup>*

...A degeneration which has been linked eternally with the problem of priestcraft. These researchers have also pointed out that though Sumerians, Babylonians, Harappan, Egyptians, ancient Chinese, Persian and Aztecs all had gone the same way, the clearest documented account of this degeneration appears in the history of the Hebrew people and more specially in the Brahmin priesthood of India.”

“Do you think this could be the reason why the ‘Power’ has shown me this dream, displaying a segment of India’s religious scene?”

“I would say, most probably yes. Consider the facts logically. Scientifically there is no way to prove the truth of religions. It’s true that monotheists did not use Idols or images, so no such objects can be found and put up as evidence. The evidence that dead were buried in the prehistoric times, neither corroborate nor negate a particular hypothesis in any way. Similarly the discovery of stone altars showing early sacrificial worship of animals also proves nothing, as animal proteins have always constituted a major component of man’s diet besides vegetables and cereals etc. It was only after the rise of Buddhism and Jainism, that a section of society started abstaining from meat, so as to avoid harming any life. But humanity at large was, and still does, consisted of meat eaters.”

“So, what are you arriving at?”

“What I want to say is that by its very nature, true monotheism would not have left its record till it had already slid past the original stage, and degeneration had set in. Therefore, to trace the path of such a religion, all one can do is to show how the early sacrificial worship, usually conducted by the head of the family or tribe, gradually acquired, in settled conditions, the building of permanent facilities, elaborate altars and the development of a regular priesthood, with the passage of time. And then, with the development of priesthood, how the original monotheism gradually changed into Henotheism, and later to Polytheism, with all its associated problems.”

“Henotheism?”

“The priests, during the sacrificial worship, chanted the praise of the Supreme

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<sup>6</sup>Comment of Dr Langdon, probably the greatest authority on cuneiform literature, from his book *Semitic Mythology*, Introduction, p. Xviii, and quoted by Sir Charles Marston, a leading archaeologist, in his book *The Bible is True*.

Entity, addressing Him through various names. These names did not indicate different Gods, but were simply the different facets of one God. This practice is called Henotheism. Henotheism changes into Polytheism when the names of God become so personified that various Gods become separated, and then they begin to disagree and fight among themselves.”

“And do you think that Indian scene can provide the answer?”

“Yes. India holds the key. In the post Noah, Nuh or Manu(h) period, Hinduism is decidedly the oldest religion. It not only starts its calendar from the period of Manu(h) but it has fortunately much more exhaustive literature than is available on the Hebrew prophets. So, through the sequence of Vedas, the Brahamanas, the Upanishads and the writings of the early Buddhists and Jains we can gauge very clearly, what must have happened in India and probably throughout the planet, as similar cycles of religion must have repeated themselves everywhere in the world.”

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JUNE 12

### **EARTH’S HEAT ENGINE**

If the planet’s mechanism for ‘collection’ of energy from sun was elaborate, then the one evolved for its distribution was even more intricate.

Due to the peculiar tilt of the planet’s axis towards its parent star, its surface received unequal energy all through the course of its rotation around the sun. To distribute this energy, the entire planet acted as an efficient heat engine, moving energy from hotter to cooler regions, mainly through two natural agents - water and wind.

By converting the bulk of energy into water vapours, the planet made the winds ferry it to distant corners of the planet, for a quick and efficient distribution. Whatever small amount of energy remained, was moved through the actual motion of the carrier itself, in the form of oceanic currents.

But here the complexities intruded. The rotation of planet not only affected the oceanic currents, but the gravity acting as an ally to spin of earth, produced ‘Coriolis force’, a force that always compelled the warm air to move sideways, as soon as it used to begin its journey from the equator to the poles. This sideways motion, in conjunction with diverse topography of the planet produced cyclones, storms, tomadoes and all the low pressure and high pressure pockets that had always determined the climate, and eternally troubled or benefited humanity.

But, all its vagaries notwithstanding, the weather machine was generally considered as having worked smoothly enough, moving and distributing energy all over the planet, as long as the donor of energy behaved normally. *But now the problem seemed to lay with the donor itself.*

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It was a depression building up in the Bay of Bengal that had started moving towards this hilly region of Assam.

By noon, it had drifted over an area around a picturesque town in the state of Manipur.

Gradually, the banks of clouds accompanied by deep and rumbling thunder, became so thick that the ensuing darkness, brought on the street lights of the town, automatically.

A little later it seemed as if the skies had opened up and torrential rain fell, as though a huge bucket in the heavens had been tilted.

The rain poured so intensely that it penetrated windows, cascaded down walls and reduced visibility to zero. Soon water started gushing down the roads with